

1 Corinthians 12: 4-7

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to all for their particular service. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.”

Our Story

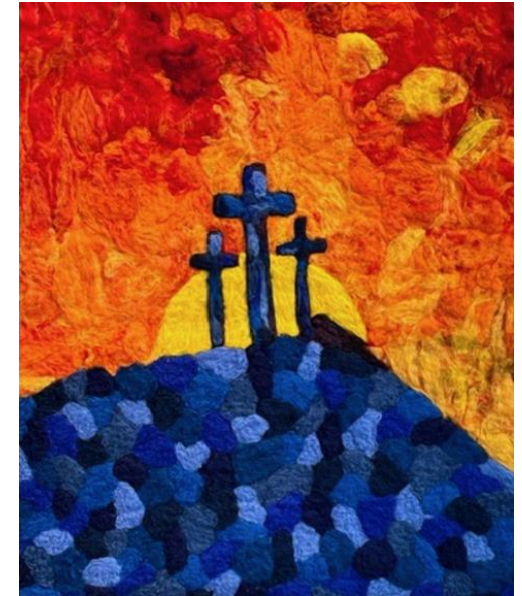


We are a group of seven churches within six rural parishes (coloured red) in the Diocese of Bath and Wells which are coming together to form a new Benefice. At present we are grouped into the Benefice of Pilton with Croscombe and North Wootton, and The Fosse Trinity Benefice (FTB) consisting of Ditchheat with Alhampton, East Pennard and Pylle.

Within the Pilton group we have been in a vacancy for eleven months, during which time retired clergy have taken our Holy Communion services, supported by our Reader and Churchwardens. The Reader has taken other services and in North Wootton the Lay worship Assistants are leading a monthly service of the Word. Support, rites of passage services and pastoral care have continued across the communities, and monthly united service links with Pilton Methodist Church have been on-going.

At Fosse Trinity we have been in a vacancy for fourteen years during which time a retired Minister has taken most of our services. We have therefore developed expertise of lay management, and our Benefice worshipping community is already firmly committed to supporting all our churches, villages, and Benefice events. Our services are at present conducted by two retired Ministers who have recently moved to our area.

We wish you a warm welcome from all our communities and Messy Church.



The Journey We're On

Our new priest will join our existing benefices and will have a crucial role in leading us during a time of mergence, both exciting and challenging for us, to become the first Priest in Charge of our newly formed larger benefice.



We recognise that our churches are spread over a wide rural area, and that our differing Benefice service patterns will require rationalisation, but we Church Wardens are getting to know each other socially, and trying hard to bring our cumulative strengths to this venture. During our first tentative steps towards working together we have realised that we have common and positive hopes for our new benefice, that we are united by our work to spread the presence of God in our wider community, and that we are very much looking forward to welcoming and working with our new priest.

Our churches have a faithful core membership, but in order to sustain a meaningful presence in our communities we recognise the need to engage with families and young people. Our three local primary schools will welcome you. The East Pennard wedding ministry swells our congregations and we're working out how this can give young couples meaningful insight into accepting God into their lives.



The Glastonbury Festival is on our door-step but our church communities do not at present have active involvement in what could be a significant opportunity for missional outreach.

Our Aspirations

- To work together to become a thriving new benefice that is united but also celebrates individual strengths.
- To 'be' the Church by encouraging and empowering more people to take up lay leadership roles in worship and pastoral work.
- To use existing as well as new opportunities in exciting fresh ways to reveal our faith across the age ranges, especially in our school links.
- To deepen our faith and reach those seeking a wider variety of worship and spiritual experiences, through word, music and greater informality.
- To be a loving Christian presence reaching out to all members of our wider communities in ways that are relevant to our situations and times.

What we Offer

We offer an environment where traditional worship comes naturally, with buildings soaked in centuries of prayer and praise. This comes along with opportunities to grow church involvement in local communities in a friendly and energetic environment with a common purpose.

- Our seven beautiful churches are all in good state of repair, open during daylight hours, most with disabled access and some with toilet facilities. We have willing helpers in the form of organists, bell ringers, vergers and cleaners.
- Each church has an enthusiastic team of PCC members and Church Wardens, and is autonomous with individual PCC meetings, Lay Chairs, accounts and treasurers. The FTB holds regular joint PCC meetings, and both administration and finance for weddings and funerals within it is undertaken by lay persons.
- You will be supported by two retired priests with PTO living near Ditchat, and a licenced Reader living in Pilton. North Wootton has three Lay Worship Assistants.
- There is a bible study group, and the villages have very active village or church halls well supported by the local communities.



What we Offer

The Glastonbury Festival



We are fortunate to be able to enjoy the world-renowned Glastonbury Festival event on our doorstep, and for one month a year our villages are transformed. The festival is the largest in Europe, and the site is adjacent to the village of Pilton. The neighbouring parishes of North Wootton, East Pennard and Pylle are also affected during this time. Because for a few days our villages are filled with visitors, the festival does benefit the local economy providing employment and encouraging tourism in the area. Neighbouring villages benefit from funding opportunities through festival stewarding, and there are an ever-growing number of local campsites around the villages. Bishop Michael explored mission possibilities from the Pyramid stage this year, and there are a variety of opportunities for local Priest involvement during this event if so wished – you could experience your largest ever congregation, as well as having the opportunity to obtain complimentary villagers’ tickets!

Local school involvement



We would like, along with our new priest, to focus our future efforts on making the church and church community more interesting, accessible and attractive to families and children. Our three local primary schools welcome acts of Collective Worship, and Ditchheat has a monthly Messy Church.

The Ditchheat year 6 children said they would like to see a new incumbent who is:

“open-minded and empathetic”
“listens to children’s thoughts and views, someone who knows how to work with children”
“caring for animals and people”

The Year 2 children’s thoughts were slightly different:

“someone who must believe in God”
“someone who talks about the magic of God”
“someone who smiles and is happy”

What we Offer

East Pennard Wedding Ministry



The church is adjacent to the [Pennard House](#) events venue which opened 12 years ago, and some couples from outside of the Benefice request to be married here. There have been 16 weddings during 2024 which has challenged the lay administration, but which enriches the church both financially and spiritually. Our small local congregation enjoys meeting lovely younger people at services before their wedding, and whom we hope in return gain a fulfilling experience of Christian worship.

All the FTB wedding administration is conducted by a lay person at present. There are 14 weddings booked for 2025 but it will be for the newly appointed priest to discuss their personal involvement, as our PTOS are willing to assist.

The Rectory

The Rectory is within the Pilton Conservation Area and has a pleasant, elevated position at the top of a south facing slope. It is situated alongside other houses but on its own plot just to the South of the A361 via a short and shared driveway. The house is well within the central area of the village and 300m from the Church and Village Hall. Bus stops are 100m away along a pavement walk.

The house has 4 bedrooms, a bathroom and a shower room upstairs, with a sitting room, dining room, kitchen and utility room downstairs. An adjoining study is separate from the main house. There is a garage and additional parking space for two cars.

The Diocese may acquire a more modern and sustainable property to replace the existing house at some point. Pilton is close to Shepton Mallet, Wells and Glastonbury, and there is a direct rail link to London from Castle Cary.



Is this You?

We hope you enjoy reading about our villages and life here in the rural heart of Somerset. We are keen to begin the next stage of our story as we begin to work together in a larger rural benefice. We are optimistic and full of hope for our future but aware that we need to have realistic expectations of our incoming priest, to work with them and be open to change. We have reached the following hopes through prayer and discussion.

- **The Church supporting village life.** In the busy and pressured life that exists today we want to support people's well-being, recognising that issues and problems can be hidden within what seem to be idyllic villages. We pray that you will understand and be a source of support, and also look to identifying parishioners to share this pastoral role.
- **The Church as a growing Worship Team** You will need to be a Team Player and an experienced, enthusiastic Team Leader who will identify, empower and enable a wider group of people to share in leading worship to ensure regular services in our churches.
- **The Church Team sharing areas of ministry** Whilst having oversight of all areas of ministry, you will consider the existing gifts and strengths of both ministers and key people and enable them to take responsibility for certain areas that they themselves as one person cannot cover.
- **The Church for everyone** You will bring care and nurture to church members through worship and by developing deeper faith through teaching; exploring other worship material that will bring a fresh dimension to worship and spirituality. You will value the initiatives that are beginning to bring our parishes together, and you will be a bridge alongside the links with local schools. Your presence at key community events will be appreciated.
- **The Church for our priest** We hope you will bring a variety of gifts to our Benefice but we want to assure you that we will respect and support your needs too. A considerable amount of administration is carried out locally and additional funding will be available. We will encourage you to take time to nourish your spiritual life and seek the refreshment you need for your own well-being.

Looking forward can be daunting but it is also an opportunity for a new beginning. We hope that having read about our Church life and communities you will want to come and work with us. There are lots of plans and ideas to develop church life, to build up the Christian presence in the communities and to work together with our new priest. Coming to a newly joined group of parishes with fresh eyes will mean that you have a key role in uniting us and enabling us to move forward in exciting ways. We are ready to be re-energised by a full time incumbent and simply need a person who, encouraged and supported by our vision of spiritual growth, can light the blue touch paper!

Our Villages

Our villages are close to the towns of Glastonbury, Shepton Mallet, Castle Cary and Wells, however each parish serves its communities with involvement in a wide variety of village and community groups. The larger villages have pubs and very busy village halls hosting a variety of activities, clubs, film nights and events.

- Pilton village amenities are extensive and include a Methodist Church with a community coffee shop, a Co-op with Post Office, social club, Tithe Barn and a children's recreation ground with a pavilion and skateboard park. There is a village show including a full weekend of entertainment and an evening barn dance.
- Croscombe holds an annual Fun-day and a quarterly Charter Market selling local produce, plus supporting a local drama group and village orchestra.
- Ditcheat village hall offers sports and fitness activities, a monthly village lunch and cinema. Alhampton has very popular community pub and its own community owned woodland area.
- North Wootton church holds a weekly café and runs a St Peter's Cares team offering practical help with shopping, lifts and small jobs. Supporting one another is an important part of life in this village because there is no shop or bus service.
- East Pennard church hosts an acoustic concert every year.
- Pylle is situated adjacent to the West of England's premier outdoor events centre - the Bath and West Showground.
- Ditcheat is the home of a large Racing Stable, a Cheesemaker, plus a Vineyard, and many weekly activities take place in the Village Hall.



Facts and Figures

The Current two Benefice worship grid

				Fosse Trinity Benefice			
	Pilton	Croscombe	N. Wootton	Alhampton	Ditcheat	E. Pennard	Pylle
1st Sunday	Alternating United Service 10.30 H/C				10.00 Benefice H/C		
2nd Sunday	9.30 H/C	11.00 H/C	11.00 H/C				10.00 Benefice H/C Or Zoom service
3rd Sunday	11.00 Pilton Churches Working together		9.30 H/C (BCP)			10.00 Benefice H/C	
4th Sunday	9.30 H/C	11.00 H/C	11.00 Morning service or Matins. Lay led	10.00 Benefice H/C			
5th Sunday	Rotating United Service 10.30			10.00 Rotating Benefice H/C			

	Pilton	Cros'mbe	N.Wootton	Alhampton	Ditcheat	E.Pennard	Pylle	F.T Zoom
Electoral Roll	54	43	42	in Ditcheat	43	20	8	-
Worshipping numbers	20	15	15	18	29	25	17	21
Weddings baptisms and funerals	9	13	4	0	12	18	2	-

Facts and Figures

	C'combe	Pilton	N.Wootton	Ditcheat	E.Pennard
Finances 2023 Total Income	26,500	26,000	27,200	24,000	28,500
Total Expenditure	23,000	24,500	21,500	14,265	16,500
Parish Share	9,500	14,650	14,000	13,000	6,395
Parish Share paid	100%	100%	100%	10%	100%



Local Primary Schools

Ditcheat <https://ditcheatprimary.org.uk>

West Pennard <https://westpennardschool.co.uk>

Croscombe V.A <https://croscombestokefederation.co.uk>

Village Websites

Ditcheat <https://fossetrinitynews.co.uk>

Pilton <https://piltonvillage.com>

Croscombe <https://croscombeparishcouncil.co.uk>
<https://croscombevillagehall.org.uk>

Church websites <https://ditcheatchurch.org> <https://eastpennardchurch.org> <https://alhamptonchapel.org>

[https://www.achurchnearyou/PiltonSt John the Baptist](https://www.achurchnearyou/PiltonStJohntheBaptist)

www.bathandwells.org.uk/supportingparishes/finances/parish-spotlights/

Deanery Statement



The Shepton Mallet Deanery

The six Somerset parishes forming this new Benefice lie to the North-Eastern edge of the Somerset levels, south of the Mendip hills, around two outlying ridges. The Benefice is part of the Shepton Mallet Deanery, which includes the larger settlements of Wells and Shepton Mallet and the surrounding rural areas. A small but supportive and friendly Deanery Chapter meets monthly, usually for lunch. This includes the six stipendiary clergy, any curates, and other licensed clergy.

The 18 Deaneries across the diocese are in the process of being reshaped following a clergy deployment review influenced to a large extent by the financial effect of the pandemic. However, Shepton Mallet Deanery has been significantly less affected than some and the plan for the Deanery is now largely settled. This appointment is to

one of three rural benefices in the Deanery, and it is anticipated that, in addition to co-operation at Deanery level, the three rural incumbents and their ministerial colleagues will work together to share resources and ideas where useful and convenient.

The Deanery has worked hard to make sure that the new arrangement of ministry is suitable to the various local contexts, and that parishes understand the rationale and way forward. To support the process of change the diocese has developed a strategy of Shared Local Ministry, inspired by the focal ministry model, and further work is now required to develop and embed this model in the local church culture.

Reverend Samuel Denyer

Diocesan statement – our vision for growth and transformation



We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Priest in Charge of the Parishes of Pilton, Croscombe, North Wootton, Ditchat, East Pennard and Pylle in the Diocese of Bath and Wells might be right for you. In order to help your prayerful discernment, we want to share a bit about our diocesan vision, within which we hope your own ministry might flourish.

Appointing a priest incumbent is amongst the most significant decisions that any benefice makes. When appointments work out well, they contribute significantly to parishes flourishing and growing in a host of different ways – in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities and in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church. Such flourishing is not, of course, all down to the person appointed as priest. It depends first and foremost upon God. It also depends upon everyone in a benefice being willing and able to contribute their unique gifts, skills, resources and abilities: working alongside their priest and sharing in the ministry of the benefice.

The flourishing and growth of churches always needs attention, but especially now as we come out of the shock created by the COVID pandemic. The impact of the pandemic created a sharp acceleration in the pattern of decline in church attendance that has been seen in our diocese over many years. Thankfully there are some signs that we are recovering from the COVID decline. For example, data showed that average adult weekly church attendance in our diocese rose between 2021 and 2022. Statistics only ever tell a partial story. It is even more encouraging to see churches around our diocese developing approaches that respond to the opportunities and challenges in their local context and enable growth to happen.

A vision for growth and transformation

Our diocesan context, described above, has convinced us that for our next season at least, our aim across all our parishes needs to be growing our churches, within and beyond our church buildings, in both numbers and depth of faith, so that we can better work for the transforming of our communities and the life of God's Kingdom amongst us.

Shared priorities

To help us pursue this aim, and following consultation across the diocese in 2023, we are inviting all parishes to focus on four particular areas of our ministry together. It is important for clergy considering working in our diocese to know what these priorities are, even though what they look like in practice will vary in each place.

To value and cherish the people and resources we already have

We aim to ensure each person is well supported and equipped as a follower of Jesus Christ and for any ministries they may feel called to undertake, within the local church and wider community. We are committed to supporting the well-being of all our leaders and church officers, both lay and ordained. We have a fully funded clergy well-being service, the offer of peer support groups, and an excellent team of Diocesan support staff fully focused on supporting our parishes, chaplaincies and schools.

To develop new Christian worshipping communities

Whether it be new forms of worship in a wide variety of settings and times, church revitalisations or church plants, we long to see the good news of Jesus connect with the people in

our communities that our traditional offerings struggle to reach.

To share in ministry and leadership

We are committed to the New Testament vision of the church as a vibrant body of people all using their God-given gifts. We are committed to a model of shared local ministry: raising up and equipping lay and ordained leaders able to share together in leading the church and serving God's world.

To deepen and grow faith

This is foundational to all we do. We long to see people of all ages and backgrounds, but perhaps especially children, young people and young adults, having more opportunities to discover, explore and grow in faith.

Diocesan Statement

The outcome we are looking for

When he talks about his own ministry in 1 Corinthians, Paul captures the dynamic we are seeking to achieve. “I planted,” he says, “Apollos watered, but God gave the growth” (1 Cor 3: 6). We know that our churches will only flourish and grow as a result of God’s action among us – it is God who gives the growth. But Paul is also clear that we have a part to play too – in watering and planting, in doing the things that enable the conditions for God’s growth to be supported. So, covered by prayer, our confident hope is that if we are intentional in seeking God’s guidance in planning and supporting growth, then God will honour that to see his people flourish and thrive - in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities, in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church and in transforming communities locally and beyond.

Local shaping and diocesan support

There can’t be any ‘one size fits’ all approach to turning the priorities outlined above into action. They always need to be adapted to local circumstances, opportunities and needs. The task of our diocesan support services is to get behind all that local benefices are doing and apart from their general support, there is specific support for exploring how to grow new Christian communities, how to discern and equip a growing range of ministries in your context and how to work well with children and young people. All these areas of support are grounded in exploring what it means to live out our faith.

What implications does this have for the appointment of clergy?

It is important for us all to appoint clergy to benefices who are ready, willing and able to pray for and share in the vision we have for the flourishing and growth of churches and Christian life in our diocese. We want to create an environment that could be described as high challenge, high support. This means appointing clergy who will not only value all that already exists but will be eager to work with others to build on and develop it. It means appointing clergy who are committed to learning, being creative, and to starting with the gifts God has given to them, their benefice and the wider community. We are therefore looking to appoint candidates who will

- be committed to praying and intentionally seeking the growth and flourishing of the benefices in their care
- relish and expect to work in an environment that is high challenge, high support
- work joyfully and collaboratively with those who share with them locally in ministry and leadership, with their congregations and with others in their locality, to identify ways to grow and develop their churches with the grain of local priorities, resources, skills and passions
- enjoy working in partnership with deanery and diocesan colleagues.

We hope this might be you! We hope that you’d like to join us on the adventure and course we’ve set for our next ten years. We’re praying that God will send us the right labourers for the harvest that God has set before us. Could this be you?



Bishop Michael



Archdeacon of Wells

Benefice Vacancy Prayer



Heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit, at this time of uncertainty and change, to fill us with vision and energy, and faithful prayer that we may be true to our calling to bring life to our new community. We know that you have plans for us and that these plans are good. We ask now that you will help us to share responsibility, grow in faith, love one another and care for those in need, reach out to others and welcome newcomers. Guide with your wisdom those who are to choose an incumbent for this new benefice, that the one whom we receive may be a wise and gentle shepherd of your people, ready to serve with joy, to build us up in faith and to lead us by example in loving obedience to your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

And a message from the Ditchheat school children.....



Seven villages, six parishes, one Benefice

THE FOSSE TRINITY BENEFICE



St Thomas A Becket, Pylle



St Mary Magdalene, Ditcheat



All Saints' East Pennard



Alhampton Chapel



THE BENEFICE OF St John the Baptist, Pilton **with** St Peter's, North Wootton **and** St Mary the Virgin, Croscombe