Abbeylands Team Ministry

A Brochure for the Post of Mission Priest

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The Abbeylands Team

Abbeylands Team comprises three parishes, stretching along the Aire Valley two to six miles North West from the centre of Leeds. The Team’s name references Kirkstall Abbey, one of the most complete examples of a medieval Cistercian abbey in Britain, set in parkland along the banks of the River Aire and in the parish of St Stephen’s.

Abbeylands is a vibrant area of Leeds, home to young professionals, students, families, older and retired people, with a relatively small BME population, mainly of East European, Asian or Afro-Caribbean origin. The area has good communication links via road, rail and air, and there are good primary and secondary schools. Whilst forming part of suburban Leeds, the area has many woods, open green spaces and parkland. Work has recently begun on a number of new housing developments along the banks of the River Aire, most particularly at ‘Kirkstall Forge’ with a new railway station and office developments.

The Team Ministry was established in November 2011 with a Team Rector (living in Horsforth) and a Team Vicar (living in Hawksworth Wood) covering three parishes and four churches. The present Team Rector was appointed in May 2013 and the Team Vicar joined us soon afterwards, moving to his present role in January 2018.

The new post of ‘Mission Priest’ is intended to develop outreach, particularly to the new communities along the banks of the River Aire.
**The Churches**

**St Margaret’s Church, Horsforth**

The church of St Margaret’s is led by the Team Rector. It has three services each Sunday and a strong choir and Junior Church. The main service has an average adult congregation of 82.

The church and Parish Centre are used extensively by the local community hosting weekly retirement groups, pre-school classes, and choir rehearsals as well as events and parties.

St Margaret’s also runs a Real Junk Food Project café every Monday and hosts a Craft Aid International workshop for the disabled on Fridays.

**St Mary’s, Hawksworth Wood**

The churches of St Mary’s & St Stephen’s are led by the Team Vicar.

The congregation of St Mary’s averages 35 adults and there are 52 names on the Electoral Roll. There is a Junior Church (usually about 9 children) led by a paid Children’s Worker.

**St Andrew’s, Moor Grange**

St Andrew’s is a Chapel of Ease built to serve Moor Grange Estate, part of St Mary’s parish. Two years ago, the parish’s congregations combined for a single Sunday service at St Mary’s while retaining a small Wednesday morning service at St Andrew’s. The nearby Abbey Grange C. of E. Academy now uses St Andrew’s as an offsite facility for supporting vulnerable students and we are currently exploring the best use of this building for mission.

**St Stephen’s, Kirkstall**

Average Sunday attendance is 44 adults plus a small Sunday School. Wednesday communion has around a dozen attendees and up to sixty people attend the monthly Messy Church on Saturday afternoons.

The church has a choir and a strong musical tradition led by our organist, Tim Knight, who is also a composer and Director of a number of local choirs.
The Mission Area

With a significant new development emerging at Kirkstall Forge the Team recognises a need to move beyond the traditional reach of the existing churches and develop an appropriate Christian presence in this new community. Further along the river new housing is being built on the edge of Horsforth. St Margaret’s Church was built at the northern edge of the parish so the whole riverside area feels a long way from the church.

The brief of the Mission Priest is to concentrate their ministry on the whole of this southern edge of the Team. Without primary responsibility for any of the churches, the Mission Priest will have a freedom to develop new initiatives and build links between these and the church communities.

Kirkstall Forge

Kirkstall Forge is a major new mixed development on the banks of the River Aire, four miles out of Leeds City Centre. The site will ultimately become home to a thriving mixed-use community, comprising 1,050 new homes, 300,000 ft² of offices and 100,000 ft² of retail, leisure and community space. Once complete, more than 10,000 people will live, work and visit the site. The first office block is now up and running, a new railway station has opened with a direct link to Leeds (10 minutes), and the first residential units are being built in 2018. A new primary school is also being opened on the site.
Horsforth Vale is a large mixed housing development on the site of the former Clariant factory adjacent to the River Aire. It is planned to build around 500 houses on the site and the first stages of the development are now complete with new families in residence.

**Newlay & the Victorias.** Between these two new developments there is a residential area of Horsforth, mainly developed in the 50’s and 70’s, which is geographically farthest from the Parish Church and separated from the rest of the town by both the A65 and the Leeds Outer Ring Road.

**Kirkstall Abbey** is a twelfth century Cistercian monastery, the ruins of which are now looked after by Leeds City Council and are set in an area of parkland. There are good relationships with the church. Team clergy run Easter and Christmas events in the Abbey and St Stephen’s Church has a presence at the annual Kirkstall Festival, the largest community festival in Leeds run entirely by volunteers (which last year attracted around 25,000 people).

**Kirkstall Bridge Retail Park**

The westernmost part of the southern area of the Team parishes comprises two retail areas, one around a large Morrisons store and the other the recently opened ‘Kirkstall Bridge Shopping Park’.
Who are we looking for?

We would love to welcome:
- A Priest with enthusiasm for reaching out into new communities
- Someone who is a sociable communicator, approachable and who will be happy to mix in with all aspects of life in the communities.
- A Priest with vision to imagine new ways of developing Christian communities and the energy to bring them into being.
- A person of prayer, whose faith is lived out in their actions and ministry.

What we can offer:

The Mission Priest will be supported by the clergy Team and the laity of the three congregations. This is a part-time post working Sundays and two days a week (or equivalent). According to circumstances, the Diocese is offering either a 0.4 stipend or a House for Duty post. The House for Duty would initially be in an existing Diocesan house (there are presently two available within the Team area) but the Bishop is keen on the possibility of a church house being purchased within the Kirkstall Forge development itself. The first houses on this site are likely to be ready in late 2018 or early 2019.