The Masham Group of Parishes
Welcome...

...to the Masham Group of five Parishes*, at the gateway to Wensleydale. Thank you for your interest in our vacancy.

We are a predominantly rural group of parishes, with a number of thriving villages, and at our hub, the lively and picturesque market town of Masham (pronounced “Massum”). Our largely unspoiled countryside stretches from the heather moorlands above Masham and Healey to the edge of the Cathedral city of Ripon. The River Ure flows south-east through three of our parishes - it is Yorkshire’s finest salmon river and one of its best trout rivers, much of it wooded, and with lovely riverside walking.

However, although we are rural we are in no sense isolated. Ripon, Harrogate, Northallerton, Thirsk and York offer extensive entertainment and shopping facilities. Within our Group of parishes there are superb pubs, restaurants and hotels. London is 2.5 hours away from Northallerton and Thirsk by train, and we are 5 miles from the A1(M) motorway which connects with all of England’s arterial road systems.

We sincerely hope that God may be calling you to come and join us in North Yorkshire to minister to us, lead us, teach us, sustain us and inspire us on our Christian journey and mission together.

*St Mary’s Masham, St Nicholas’ West Tanfield, St Michael’s Well with the Chapel of St Mary Snape, St Paul’s Healey, and St Mary’s North Stainley.
The Diocese of Leeds

The Diocese of Leeds comprises five Episcopal Areas, each coterminous with an Archdeaconry. This is now one of the largest dioceses in the country and its creation is unprecedented in the history of the Church of England. It covers an area of around 2,425 square miles, and a population of around 2,642,400 people.

The Diocese comprises major cities such as Bradford, Leeds, and Wakefield, the large industrial and post-industrial towns of Halifax, Huddersfield and Dewsbury, the spa town of Harrogate, the market towns of Skipton, Ripon, Richmond and Wetherby and the deeply rural areas of the Dales. The whole of life is here, along with all the richness, diversity and complexities of a changing world.

The Diocesan Bishop, The Rt Reverend Nick Baines, is assisted by five Area Bishops of Bradford, Huddersfield, Kirkstall, Wakefield and Ripon and five Archdeacons of Bradford, Halifax, Leeds, Pontefract and Richmond & Craven.

The Bishop of Ripon is the Rt Reverend Dr Helen-Ann Hartley.

The vision of the Diocese is about confident clergy equipping confident Christians to live and tell the good news of Jesus Christ. For all appointments, the Diocese is seeking clergy who have a joyful and confident faith with a view to inspiring church growth both numerically and spiritually.
Our Group of Parishes

- Five fine churches, and a chapel, all but one listed, offering a lively Christian presence, worship, witness and service in our local communities. Our churches are usually open every day, all day.

- We offer our new priest strong support from an enthusiastic team of a stipendiary Curate, a Licensed Lay Minister, 4 recently commissioned Lay Worship Leaders, 3 active retired clergy, a competent and effective Parish Administrator (part-time), lay helpers, churchwardens and PCCs. We recognise the demands which five parishes can make on a vicar. We are keen to lessen those demands as much as possible, for example by sharing out the leading of services every Sunday in all five parishes, by holding joint PCC meetings, and byshouldering some of the admin to free up our priest for pastoral commitments.

- Over two decades, we have enjoyed a warm, inspiring and spiritually fulfilling relationship with our recently retired priest, and we look forward to an equally happy relationship with our new priest. We do recognise that things will evolve with our new priest, and you will find open-hearted and thoughtful congregations used to a variety of liturgies, and welcoming fresh spiritual leadership. We are keen to grow and connect more with our communities, and while we are quite traditional in many ways, we would also welcome guidance and ideas for promoting more diverse forms of worship.

- People from all the parishes are welcome at our Bible study and prayer groups and Lent “Food for Thought” evenings (with a meal and a well-known speaker talking about some aspect of faith).

- Our parishes all meet together for a joint service when there is a 5th Sunday in the month and for other occasional celebrations. Our Parish Magazine goes to every house in the parishes. We are continuing to explore further ways of working and worshipping together.

- We present no major outstanding financial concerns, and in normal times most parishes are able to pay their parish share in full. We pay full parish expenses to our clergy.
Our Area

- Our principal economic activities are farming and tourism, light industry, agricultural and other commercial supplies and services, and two popular breweries. There are several hotels (including Swinton Park), and numerous pubs and restaurants. We also have a major Theme Park (Lightwater Valley).

- Our population is a mixture of farming families, agricultural and hospitality workers and suppliers, local business people, shopkeepers, commuters, and a significant number of retired people.

- Masham is an unspoilt small market town set around a large and attractive square, on a hill above the river. It has a very good selection of food shops (2 butchers, baker, fruit & veg, Co-op, fish & chips, cafés), a chemist, a GP surgery, a veterinary practice, pubs, a garage/petrol station, and a range of further independent and artisan shops and galleries. There is a golf club, the Sports Association with cricket club, tennis and bowls; there is a popular and very busy market in Masham twice a week, an annual sheep fair, and a major steam rally.

- We have four primary schools within our parishes, all rated “Good” by Ofsted. Three of these are C of E schools, each closely linked with its local church. There is a range of secondary schools serving the area, including two C of E High Schools.

- The river, woodlands, fields and moorland provide excellent sporting and recreational facilities. There are sports grounds and clubs (cricket, football & golf), fishing lakes and reservoirs, tennis courts, bowling greens, and lots of quiet roads and tracks suitable for walkers, cyclists and for horse riding. The Tour de France came through four of our five parishes in 2014, and was succeeded by the annual “Tour de Yorkshire”.

- There is also easy access to wonderful countryside not much further afield (the Dales, the North York Moors, the East Coast). The small city of Ripon is only just outside our boundary, with its cathedral, grammar school, cinema, multiple supermarkets and a wide range of other shops and services. Harrogate, with its very extensive facilities, is 25 minutes further on from Ripon by car.
The Vicarage

The detached, five-bedroom Vicarage in Masham (one of the Sunday Times Best Places to Live in 2021) is set well back in a quiet residential road, surrounded by its garden. It is within easy walking distance of the Church, the primary school, the celebrated Market Square, and the shops.

The diocese is committed to making alterations and refurbishments to make the house more comfortable for our new vicar, and our community is also ready and willing to assist with this in any way we can.

Each parish has been asked to contribute its own section and will tell you more about itself...
Masham is a wonderful place to live and worship. Here’s why...

**Worship**

- Beautifully maintained church and churchyard, with recent refurbishments to create a more flexible space, including removing pews in the North Aisle, now often used for meetings, coffee mornings and church social events.
- Common Worship and BCP used regularly; many special services such as a Pet service, Remembrance service, Plough service and an extremely popular Christingle to name but a few.
- Weekly Holy Communion service attended by pupils from our Church School.
- Weekly Bible study and prayer group - monthly joint Anglican/Methodist group praying for Masham.
- Monthly *Pram Praise* and children’s’ activity mornings during Lent and Advent.
- A Childrens’ Corner with toys and books to welcome the littlest members of our congregation.
- Many parishioners are BRF readers.
- Much appreciation of commitment and standard of our adult and junior choirs and our fine organist.
- Tradition of four churchwardens.
- A wonderful peal of ten bells.
Pastoral

- Regular *Pop In* coffee mornings promoting fellowship.
- Team of pastoral visitors who help with visiting the sick and housebound, taking home Communions and assisting in Baptism preparation. This has been temporarily suspended during Covid and due to resume soon.
- Singing for Fun, musical plays, barbecues and a range of social events which all help strengthen the bonds in our church and town’s community.

School

- Our V.A. Church School - Vicar is the ‘Chaplain’ and also a Governor. Help given to children with reading and music.

Fund-raising and fellowship

- Social Committee presenting calendar of events for fellowship and fund-raising.
- As a ‘Peculier’, Masham’s Four and Twenty are active supporters of youth training programmes.

Finances and Fabric

- Parish Share met and we expect to meet all the conditions in current Quinquennial Report on time.
- Active and enthusiastic Social Committee.

Masham

... has all the necessary shops and amenities for daily living.

...is a thriving community and attracts tourists - many visit the church.

...hosts major events e.g. Steam Rally and Sheep Fair as well as many Town Hall events.

We look forward to welcoming our new vicar to help us grow in faith together.
Our beautiful C12th, Grade 1 listed church is in excellent condition. Extensively renovated in Stuart times and again in the C19th, it seats 200+, and has lovely early C20th wooden choir stalls. It houses an exquisite medieval alabaster double sarcophagus (the Marmion Tomb), and some fine stained glass.

The Church lies at the end of a very attractive cul-de-sac, lined with old chantry buildings originally spawned by Fountains Abbey. It has the very popular Bull Inn at its other end, with its riverside pub garden, voted one of the finest in Yorkshire. The Church is adjacent to the C14th Marmion Tower, managed by English Heritage, which features one of the two earliest oriel windows in the North of England, and a fascinating second floor latrine. (See www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/marmion-tower/history/ for pictures.)

All these buildings overlook the picturesque River Ure, 4 miles downstream from Masham. The famous bridge over the river, carrying the main road from Ripon to Masham and on into Wensleydale, offers views of our village and woodlands upstream (a scene unchanged since it was drawn by JMW Turner). With our thriving village shop and Post Office, well-appointed village hall, garage, two pubs, successful artisan enterprises, tennis courts, bowling club, an excellent cricket ground, and many community activities, we are a popular hub for surrounding villages and towns. The village is also a major tourist attraction, and offers upmarket rural holiday facilities and a caravan park, easily accessed riverside footpaths, and very good cycling on quiet roads.
We have a lively congregation of 20-30 on a typical Sunday, an occasional choir, a fine organist, a quality peal of 6 bells and bellringers, and a well-supported programme of outdoor and riverside services, pub-related lent lunches and carol singing. We follow the Common Worship Eucharist, but we also hold our much-liked BCP non-Eucharistic services, and a monthly Family Service. We are a very happy, cohesive village, and our parish also includes the two nearby villages of Nosterfield and Thornborough, which have no church of their own. The Church enjoys genuine widespread goodwill and support, attracting big congregations to our special events, but not on ordinary Sundays. We would welcome help and ideas for how to draw on those attendances to increase the numbers of our regular congregations.

We also enjoy very good relations with the Methodist Church in the village, regularly sharing harvest and Christmas celebrations and participating together in the JAM children’s programme. Our church monthly newsletter lists services in both churches, and is delivered to every house in the village, and all newcomers receive a joint welcome pack from both churches.
Healey

The Parish of Healey is almost entirely rural, with much of the land farmed by the same families for generations. As the need for labour reduces, the houses and cottages are being bought by incomers, working and retired, who like to be part of the community. As a result church activities such as Harvest Lunch, the Lambing service and the summer BBQ are well supported. There are also coffee mornings in Masham and events centred around the pub in Fearby.

The two churchwardens have worshipped at St Paul’s since they were children and are well known and respected throughout the Parish. They are supported by a loyal PCC who, amongst other responsibilities, look after the church and churchyard. The most recent QI commented on how well maintained the church is. St Paul’s has always been able to pay its Diocesan Share in full (apart from the year of Covid).

The regular congregation of about 12-15 includes two (amateur) organists, a Lay Worship Leader and all enjoy reading the lessons, decorating the church and mowing the churchyard. The church is becoming popular for small weddings. We have a service every Sunday, alternating between a priest-led Holy Communion and Evensong, often LWL led, using the BCP.

The PCC has good links with Masham and before Covid used to hold combined PCC meetings.
Well with Snape

The Parish is situated in the Vale of Mowbray in a beautiful location between the National Parks of The Dales and The North York Moors. The two villages at the heart of the Parish are Well and Snape, having a population employed in farming and other local services industries, together with commuters and retirees.

Our Churches

The villages of Well (pop. c.220) and Snape (pop. c. 370) are a mere 1.5 miles apart and have two wonderful, but quite different places of worship. St. Mary’s Chapel, Snape Castle c. 1430 is a Grade 1 listed building, annexed to the much larger castle which was once home to Tudor Royalty. St. Michael’s Church in Well is a larger, more traditional church, also Grade1 listed. Mentioned in the Domesday Book, its earliest current construction dates from 1190, with the majority dating from the 1350s. Lottery funding of £110k has recently helped to reroof most of this church. Well was the parish church for both villages until 1928 when St. Mary’s became a Chapel of Ease to Well, having been gifted to the Church of England.

Both buildings are popular with visitors such as walkers and tourists. The congregation in both villages operates as one community. Services are shared between the two places of worship, first and third services in a month at Well and second and fourth at Snape.

The congregation is very active outside the formal church services. Often involved in fundraising activities, we manage an annual car boot sale in the nearby town of Bedale. Also “Snape Open Gardens” is a popular, biennial, visitor attraction. Village fetes also contribute to fundraising.

Snape has an active village institute where we are involved in various fundraising activities, such as the “Pudding Club.” “Wonderful Well” is a very active group which organises events and funds the floodlighting of the Well church tower at Christmas.
North Stainley

North Stainley is the southern-most parish in the Group. Our beautiful, little church was built in 1840 and, since 1972, has been associated with various other churches, finally happily becoming one of the present Masham group of parishes. Surrounded by countryside, our village has grown over the years, now blending the old with very attractive newish housing developments. In the centre of the village, the church and school stand on one side of the road; on the other side is the recreation ground with a fine village hall doubling as a cricket pavilion for the flourishing cricket club. There is provision in the council’s Local Plan for extending the village further.

North Stainley is a lively place! We have a pub, The Staveley Arms (which serves great food), a B & B, a popular Church primary school (with excellent relations with St Mary’s), as well as good play facilities for children. The village hall provides a venue for a multitude of social, cultural and sporting activities. Three large ponds are home to ducks and other wild life. Lightwater Valley Theme Park and the quarries are major local employers, but most residents travel to work elsewhere. Families, dog-walkers and cyclists abound here and young people pour out of the buses from secondary schools in the area. The local bus service links us with West Tanfield, Masham and Ripon.

St Mary’s has a service of Holy Communion (CW) twice a month. We look forward to being able to restart our Sunday afternoon service “Revive” and our innovative midweek café style “Bacon Church” soon, post-Covid.

Our small, but faithful, congregation is boosted by many others at festival times and special occasions. Open air services during lockdown proved popular. We enjoy working together with West Tanfield Anglicans and Methodists to run regular JAM (Messy Church type) sessions.
Children and Families

Schools:
Our 4 primary schools all greatly value their close links with our church communities.

- Our clergy regularly lead Collective Worship. The schools enjoy coming into our churches for their own special services and also joining in parish services, especially at festival times.
- The clergy and some members of the churches are active Foundation governors.

In Masham:
- Well-attended workshops for children in Advent and on Good Friday.
- Several musical plays starring many of the local young people.
- Masham Youth Choir regularly lead worship and participate in community events.
- Pram Praise, a monthly baby and toddler group, is a great opportunity for young families to meet up.

JAM (Jesus and Me) and JAM-Extra:
- JAM, our half-termly after school club, similar to Messy Church, is held at West Tanfield and North Stainley Schools. We explore Biblical themes through storytelling, activities, games, crafts and worship.
- We also hope to build on the success of our JAM-Extra inter-generational Pancake Party.

Keeping our families together in COVID
- Collective Worship, JAM and Pram Praise were delivered digitally and via online videos.
- Over 250 DIY Christingle bags were delivered to the children of the parishes, which were very well received. Often the most popular service of the year, we look forward to resuming Christingle services in person this year.
Life in our part of the world

What is so striking about our part of the world is how strong the sense of community is within our parishes, and indeed within our church congregations too. Life with us is varied and lively, and we hope you will embrace it and enjoy it to the full.

Services in our parish range from formal Eucharists to informal Bacon Church. Many of our seasonal services are packed to the rafters, while weekday morning prayer (usually in Masham) may be a more intimate gathering. We also love to take our worship out into the community, as with our popular carol services held on village greens, car parks, and Masham’s Market Square.

Pastoral care is of great importance to us. Members of our congregations are very proactive in helping with this and will support the vicar in their pastoral role.

Our prayer and study groups are unafraid of tackling difficult questions or delving into tricky passages of the Bible, while our close links with our schools offer many opportunities to engage enquiring young minds!

We have a thriving Arts scene within our church communities, with permanent choirs in more than one of our churches, regular concerts musicals, and art installations. We organise Harvest suppers and winter lunches in our village halls, and you might find us in the pub for “Pie and Pint” lunches!

We look forward to welcoming a vicar who can bring energy, compassion, spiritual inspiration, and a sense of team spirit to our parishes, so that together we may deepen and encourage faith across our communities.
Growing our church and our faith

- **Youth.** We want to launch a number of projects to welcome the children of our community to our church. We would like to build on North Stainley’s and West Tanfield’s JAM sessions, and also Masham’s Pram Praise, to improve our outreach and engagement with our young people.

- **Families.** We would like to make our church life more appealing to families, both children and parents, and as such we are keen to support them on their parenting journey, and to develop events for young families.

- **Regular attendance.** We want to widen our appeal so that the multitudes who attend sporadically feel inspired to join us more regularly. We are keen to work on new formats and events that might draw our larger church community together more often, so that our community may find a more regular spiritual home in our churches.

- **Taking our faith to the community.** We believe that we can find even more ways to get involved in the community at large, to give our faith a better presence out and about in the parishes. We will look to host events at locations other than our churches and locations our communities are already familiar with.

- **Charity.** We believe strongly that we should ‘love our neighbour’, wherever they may be, and we would like to continue to find new ways to fundraise for local, national and international charities.

- **Finances.** We want to continue to meet our parish share as well as continue to keep our beautiful churches maintained, and we look forward to working on this in our PCCs with our vicar to ensure the continued upkeep of our churches.

- **Togetherness.** We would like to continue to strengthen the bonds between our parishes, and look to organize more events that would bring us all together.

Our new vicar: We are looking for someone who loves God and is passionate about sharing the good news of the Gospel of Jesus, someone who will have a heart for our communities, someone to build on our present foundations and inspire us to move forward with vision.
Useful Information

The website for our parishes: www.mashamparishes.org

Find us on Facebook: St Mary’s Church Masham; St Paul’s Church, Healey; St Nicholas West Tanfield; Chapel of St Mary in Snape; St Michaels in Well; St Mary’s Church, North Stainley.

Local Preschools

- Acorns Preschool for children aged 2-5 in Masham; St Nicholas School Nursery class, West Tanfield; Snape School Nursery class.

Local primary schools

- Masham CofE (VA) School; St Nicholas CofE School, West Tanfield; Snape Community School; North Stainley CofE School.

Local secondary schools include:

- CofE High Schools: St Aidan’s Harrogate; St Francis Xavier, Richmond
- Bedale High School; Thirsk High School; Ripon Grammar School (selective); Outwood Academy, Ripon; Nidderdale High School, Pateley Bridge

Nearest train stations:

Thirsk, Northallerton, Harrogate

Nearby local tourist attractions include:

Lightwater Valley Theme Park, Hackfall Woods, Brymor Ice Cream Parlour, Jervaulx Abbey, Thorp Perrow Arboretum, Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, Ripon Cathedral, Newby Hall, Himalayan Garden, Bolton Castle, Wensleydale Creamery, Swinton Estate, York, beautiful villages, nature reserves and countryside in the Yorkshire Dales and Moors (as seen on TV in All Creatures Great and Small, Yorkshire Vet, Our Yorkshire Farm etc).

Local websites include:
