



The Church of England  
Diocese of Ely

 **CHANGING**  
market towns 

# March Team Ministry



**St John ~ St Mary ~ St Peter ~ St Wendreda**

 **THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND**



# Contents

<b>Covid-19 Impact (Team-wide)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Welcome to March:</b>	<b>4-5</b>
Overview	<b>4</b>
Population Information	<b>5</b>
Health Service	<b>5</b>
Schools	<b>5</b>
<b>The Anglican Churches in March</b>	<b>6-7</b>
The March Deanery	<b>7</b>
Churches Together in March (CTIM)	<b>7</b>
People Fully Alive: Ely2025	<b>7</b>
<b>March Team Ministry</b>	<b>8-13</b>
Development of the Team Ministry	<b>8</b>
Team Ministry Vision and Culture	<b>8</b>
Electoral Roll Maps	<b>8-10</b>
Opportunities Created by a Vacancy in the Team	<b>11</b>
Team Leader in Mission (Team Vicar)	<b>11</b>
Development of Work at Neale Wade Academy	<b>12</b>
Vicarage House	<b>12</b>
Team Roles	<b>13</b>
Websites and Social Media	<b>13</b>
<b>Market Towns Initiative</b>	<b>14</b>
Operations Manager	<b>14</b>
Children and Families Worker	<b>15</b>
Community Mission Worker	<b>15</b>
<b>St John the Evangelist</b>	<b>16-18</b>
<b>St Mary</b>	<b>19-20</b>
<b>St Peter</b>	<b>21-23</b>
<b>St Wendreda</b>	<b>24-26</b>

## Covid-19 Impact

The impact of the epidemic with its various forms of lockdown is, of course, both significant and on-going. This leaves uncertainty and stress. For some people there has been much trauma with loss of people, ways of life, livelihoods, and fragmentation of relationships with isolation or overcrowding. For some people there have been positive aspects, such as more time with family members, less stress or pressure, a chance to look at priorities and lifestyle.

For March as a town, there are older people who have only ventured out rarely, there are those with health concerns, there are businesses striving for new viable ways of working, there are schools tentatively opening. Much of the voluntary sector has gone into hibernation, some are finding new ways of operating, some may never resume. Much of the food production industry has carried on, albeit with poor weather for harvest this year. Some people are yearning for a return, others embracing a new tomorrow, some feeling, life is on hold, and as this is written, considerable numbers concerned about the immediate future of darker nights, colder weather, and second spikes which will have significant impact on well being. We all live with the uncertainties of the realities of life, timescales for change and communal and individual lives.

For our churches there has been developing change. Initially, communications were put in place to keep people in touch. We have developed weekly email of worship resources to 230 addresses, and then when possible a leaflet delivery to about 100 people who are not on-line, alongside zoom services morning and afternoon. Socially distanced church services returned in three of our churches from July, whilst the fourth kept the morning zoom service going. Since July we have been providing and delivering (typically 35) hot meals 3 days a week. Most weddings have been re-arranged, but some have taken place, similarly with christenings. Funerals have been greater, the Covid deaths were almost all associated with residential homes and concentrated Apr-Jul, now returning to normal or lower levels.

We are looking forward to our new Team Leader in Mission helping us to respond to this changed and changing world and are open equally to innovations and tried and tested methods to develop traditional church, especially at St Wendreda's, and to create Fresh Expressions of Church for the Town.



# **Welcome to March...**



## **Overview**

March is a market town situated in the north of Cambridgeshire in the Fenland area of the county and is home to a population of approximately 24,000. It is a delightful town in which to live and work. It is small enough for there to be a real sense of community but big enough to be well served by schools, health services and social amenities, with a wide range of activities for young people and adults.

It also has the advantage of being close to several large cities, with Cambridge lying 30 miles away, Peterborough 20 miles, and Ely 15 miles. The railway station offers very good connections to the north and south of the country and the Midlands.

The Town hosts a number of Community Events during the year, including St. George's Day Festival, Summer Carnival and Christmas Market, and Christmas Lights 'Switch On', all of which draw large crowds of people.

The town is well catered for by a variety of coffee shops, eating places, two supermarkets, shops, Wednesday and Saturday market days and other facilities which include: a modern library, museum, health and fitness venues, swimming pool and golf course. Additionally, there is a flourishing amateur dramatic society, University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age (U3A), dance groups, orchestras and bands, and several sports clubs which include cricket, football, rugby and bowls and March hosts the minor Counties cricket matches. Other interests include Coarse Fishing, the North London Parachute Club, Wild Fowl and Wetlands. March has a welcoming Christian Book/Coffee Shop in the town which is staffed with volunteers from the churches.

The River Nene meanders through the middle of town where there are riverside walks and a lovely maintained park. (West End). There is a marina and facilities for boat users in the town centre which attract narrow boat visitors travelling from the remote wild fen landscape to a very urban riverscape, where pretty gardens run down from the town houses to the water's edge. There are river-side walks and the park is used for Park Runs and for Sunday band concerts throughout the summer.



## Population Information

March is the centre of the Fenland District, one of the five Districts of Cambridgeshire. The town, which now has a population of about 24,000 people, has faced expansion in the last 30 years, due in large measure to the development of good housing at significantly lower prices than many other areas of Cambridgeshire and the Country, and continues to grow, placing some pressure on local services, especially health care and education services. Cambridgeshire County Council's population projections for the 20 years 2011-2031 show approx. 20% growth across Fenland. The projections for March are for growth of 33%, with the majority in the March East and West Wards. This will place considerably more pressure on local schools, health and care services.

The latest Census figures (2011) indicate that in the Fenland District as a whole, the percentage of the population over 65 is higher than in the rest of the country (19.63% compared with 17%). Fenland has the lowest proportion of people aged 25-44 and the highest proportion of people aged over 65. There are also challenges in terms of March having higher than average levels of deprivation, particularly in the East Ward.

The population of the town remains predominantly white British in origin, although there has been a large influx of migrant workers, mainly from Eastern Europe, in recent years, a number of whom are employed in agriculture and local factories.

Whilst March is surrounded by good arable land, and a number of sizeable farms, fewer people are now employed in the agricultural sector than in the past due to increased mechanisation of farming. Former farm properties in March have been purchased by people working in other sectors, or who have retired.

The railway, and marshalling yards, around which much of the town and its housing were first built up, are no longer a major provider of employment. However, HMP Whitemoor, the high-security prison on the outskirts of the town is a significant source of employment, as are local factories, in Wisbech, and Peterborough and the surrounding areas. The Headquarters of Fenland District Council is also in March, and the retail sector is also a source of employment. The establishment of a new rail track materials and recycling centre at the old marshalling yards, has brought some additional employment to the town.



## Health Services

March has good local health services, including three Medical Practices. Doddington Community Hospital, which lies in the heart of the Fens, has a minor injuries unit and offers a wide range of clinics and services including out of hours GP services.

## Schools

- All Saints Primary Academy (RC/CofE joint) ~ 1 form entry
- Burrowmoor Primary Academy ~ 2 form entry
- Cavalry Primary Academy ~ 2 form entry
- Westwood Primary School ~ 5-6 form entry
- Neale Wade Academy (Secondary and Sixth Form)



## The Anglican Churches In March

**St John's**: Electoral Roll 73 - is situated near the Station in the north of the town surrounded by residential areas. It has good family and children's work, and a traditional congregation regaining their confidence and a Hall that energetically serves the community.

**St Mary's**: Electoral Roll 57 - situated on the north-west edge of the town on the busy A141 Wisbech Road, now surrounded mainly by industry and factories. Historically the farmers' church, it was almost completely destroyed by arson in 2010, was subsequently rebuilt and reopened in 2014. Worship is traditional, and the congregation have a strong sense of belonging.

**St Peter's**: Electoral Roll 101 - is situated in the town centre, it was open every day (pre-covid) and has a large variety of activities meeting needs across a wide range of interests and age groups. Worship is Eucharistic.

**St Wendreda's** Electoral Roll 56 - the oldest church in the town, stands on the southern edge of March. It has an emphasis on biblical teaching, and seeks to become an outward looking Anglican evangelical church bringing people to Christ and deepening people's relationship with God.



## March Anglican Deanery

This consists of quite a large part of the Fenland area including the Team Ministry in March, a Team Ministry of four Churches around Whittlesey (currently vacant), the Parish of Chatteris, and a benefice of six churches (Benwick, Doddington, Wimblington, Manea, Welney, Christchurch). The March Team Rector is also currently Rural Dean.

The Chapter meets for support, fellowship, prayer and reflection 5 or 6 times a year. The Synod, now re-focused on Mission and Encouragement and support of Lay Ministry, meets 4 times a year. This of course is being reviewed in the light of Covid-19 restrictions.

## Churches Together in March (CTIM)

The four Anglican Churches are all involved in CTIM, along with Centenary Baptist Church; Trinity Methodist/United Reformed Church; Our Lady of Good Counsel RC; Pentecostal Church; March Evangelical Fellowship and March Community Church. There is also a Providence Baptist Church in the town, which is not a member of CTIM.

All the CTIM churches take part in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, hosting joint services, fellowship meals and prayer meetings. The other main joint service is held on Good Friday on March Market Place. We have shared in a low key way the Global Wave of Prayer 'Thy Kingdom Come'

Christian Aid is supported by CTIM through a separate committee and we collect shoeboxes for the Operation Christmas Child appeal.

The other main initiative, which came about through CTIM, is the March Foodbank. This is run in conjunction with the Trussell Trust and both the food store and weekly distribution session are staffed by volunteers, many of whom are church members.

We reach out to the local community at the annual St. George's Day Fayre and March Carnival weekend; have a nativity display and hand out leaflets at the Christmas lights switch-on and sing carols at Tesco in aid of the Children's Society.

## People Fully Alive: Ely 2025

The Diocesan vision, '**We pray to be generous and visible people of Jesus Christ**' reminds us that we are in this together. This vision gives us something to aim for, compliments the strategy, and its plans to grow and evolve over the next ten years. There are three imperatives:

- **Engage** fully and courageously with the needs of our communities, locally and globally
- **Grow** God's church by finding disciples and nurturing leaders
- **Deepen** our commitment to God through word, worship and prayer

and five levers for change:

- **Nurture** a confident people of God
- **Develop** healthy churches and leaders
- **Serve** the community
- **Re-imagine** our buildings
- **Target** support to key areas

More details can be found at: <http://www.elydiocese.org/about/our-strategy-ely-2025>

 ely2025

## **Development of the Team Ministry**

The March Team Ministry was formally established in 2014 and came into effect with the arrival of Andrew Smith in 2015. In 2017 the Team Vicar with responsibility for St John's and St Wendreda's was head hunted and this enabled a redistribution of responsibilities to create a Team Leader in Mission who also had pastoral responsibility for St Wendreda's who was in post from 2018-19, and who then sadly resigned. Meanwhile the Diocese's Changing Market Towns strategy included March and led to the appointments over the next years of three workers. We also have a large number of dedicated volunteers, some in authorised and licensed roles, some ordained, and many fulfilling their calling in other ways.

## **Team Ministry Vision and Culture**

Within the team there is a shared vision to celebrate the range of ways the gospel may be presented to try and meet more people. We also recognise that many aspects of church life work best at local level, but some have strengths when offered on a bigger, town-wide scale. We offer support, encouragement, friendship and shared human resources between churches. We continue to learn from each other's church life, culture and emphasis, and where there is difference of style, culture, emphasis, or indeed content of our message, learning to listen, understand, and appreciate, and sometimes to admit that, although this may work for others, it does not do so for us as individuals. We continue to learn to celebrate the richness of God's relationship and the myriad of ways in which this is understood and lived.

At Team-level we have weekly morning prayer, services on special days, both midweek and sometimes on Sunday evenings. The combined choirs combine to lead worship to a high standard and spiritual depth. Working collaboratively means offering cover for weddings and funerals, Confirmation training and sharing in Confirmation. The Team Council, comprising representatives from all four churches, clergy and Licensed Lay ministers, meets on a regular basis.

## **Electoral Roll Maps**

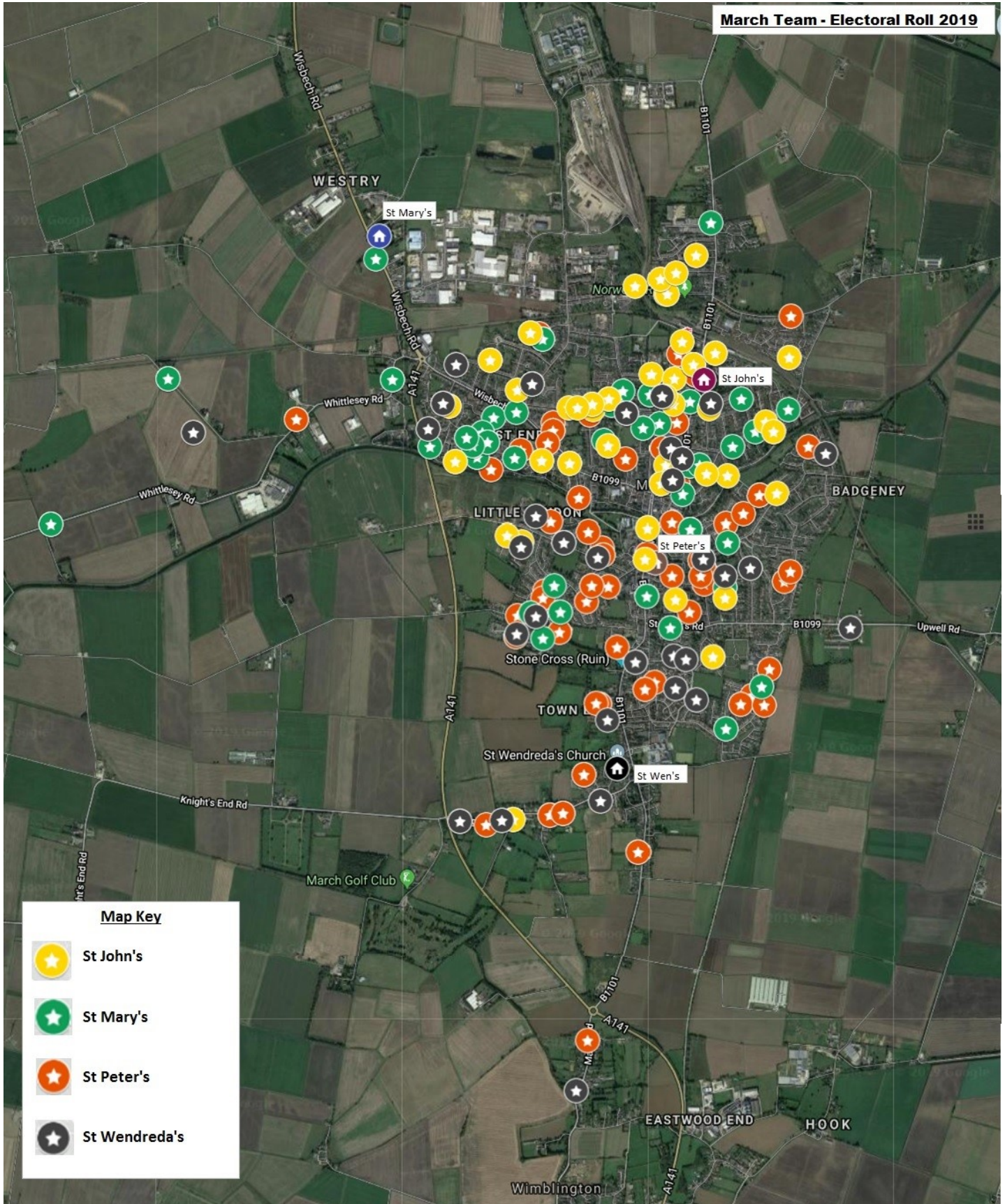
Some people have very strong connections to one of the parish churches, however one of the advantages of the Team Ministry is that we are not restricted by Parish Boundaries, and people can find the 'flavour' of church that enables them to grow closer to and respond to God.

The following images plot the addresses of those on the Electoral Rolls of each parish within the Team; there is a separate one for each of the churches, as well as an overall sheet to show the location of them altogether. These maps concentrate on the town itself - there are some addresses that fall outside of this area that do not show on these maps (but these are few in number).

The spread of the locations is very interesting and reiterates the reason for pulling the churches together into a Team, as no one church is covering a particular area; parish 'boundaries' are evidently not important within the town. It also highlights some of the gaps within the outer edges/estates of the town where outreach needs to be improved.

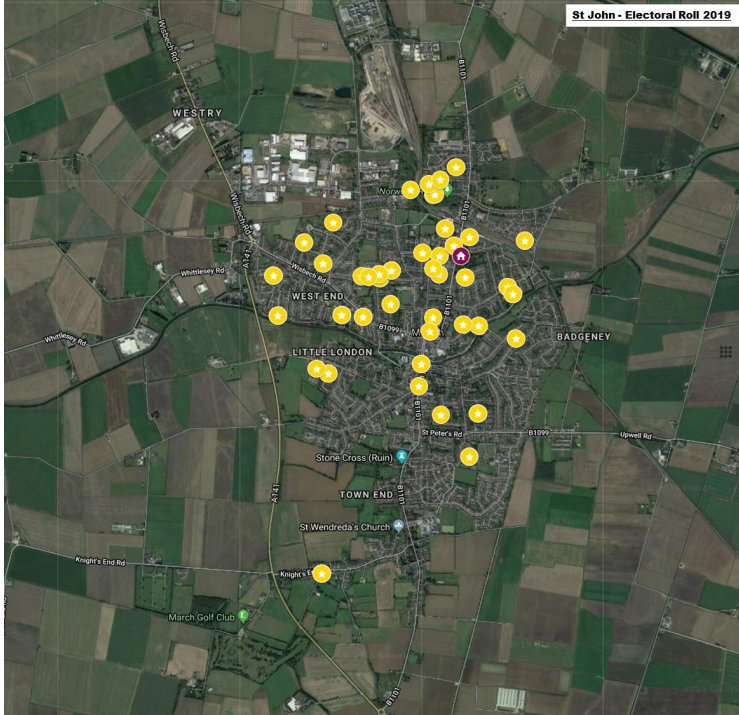


## Electoral Roll Map - Whole Town

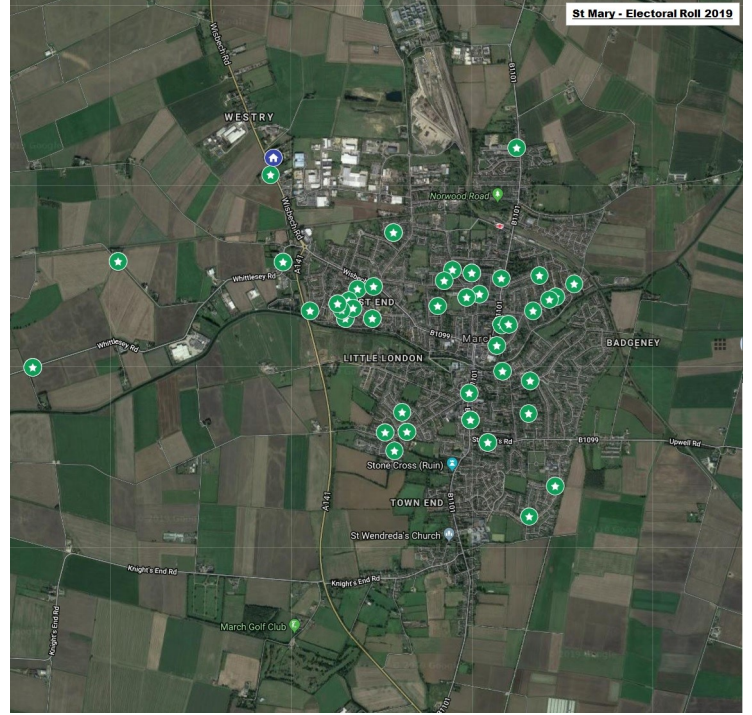


# Electoral Roll Maps - By Church

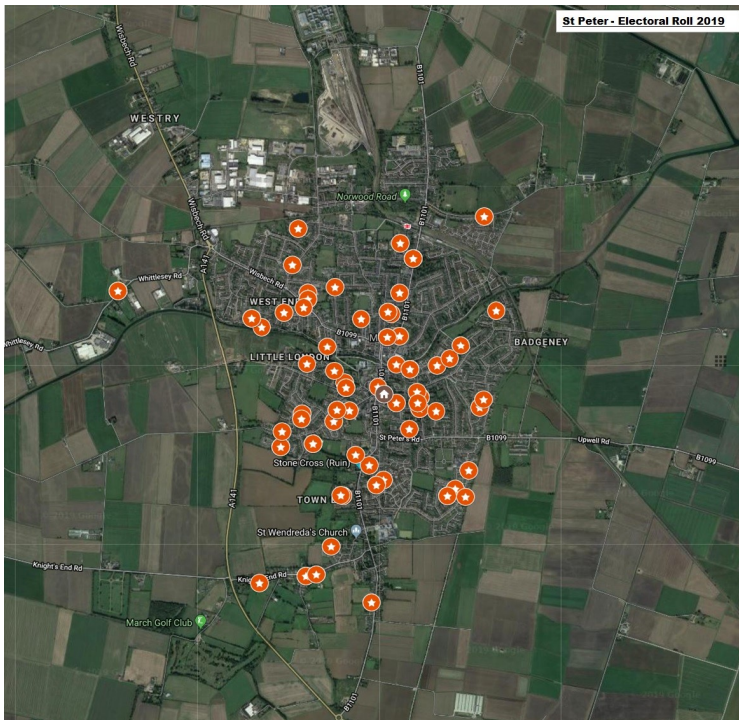
St John's



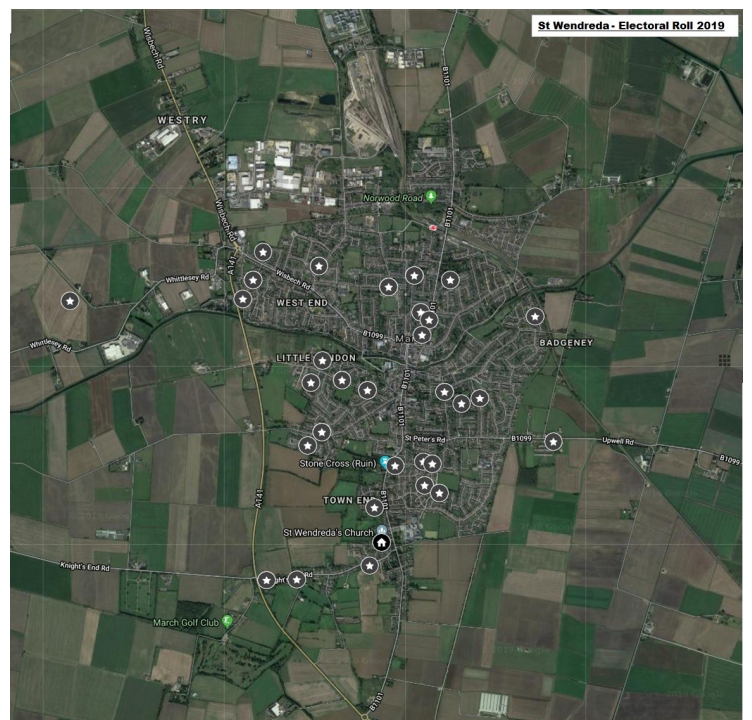
St Mary's



St Peter's



St Wendreda's



## **Opportunities created by the vacancy in the Team Ministry**

As a result of the vacancy for a Team Vicar we have taken stock of our current situation, our aspirations, and opportunities for growth within the town. Amongst our considerations have been:

- ◆ The distinctive gifts and ethos of our individual churches and, in particular, the importance of encouraging the growth of St. Wendreda's Church as a strong evangelical Anglican church within the town.
- ◆ The need to free up Clergy resources to reach out to those people with whom we currently have little contact. The Diocesan aspiration is to have as many Fresh Expressions of church as traditional ones.
- ◆ The Ely Diocesan Market Towns initiative has led to the appointment of an Operations Manager and two field workers, with strong potential within the Team to pioneer ministries and to enable the church to grow both wider and deeper. It is anticipated that the Team Vicar will collaborate extensively with them. This represents a considerable investment and confidence in the March Team by the Diocese, and hopefully the national church.
- ◆ To give all the churches a confident future and to ensure that effective pastoral care is given to people within all our parishes.
- ◆ The gifts which Clergy, lay ministers and people of our churches within the town can bring to support the on-going ministry in all four churches.
- ◆ The welcome of the Revd Jane Rees, an SSM minister with considerable spiritual and education gifts to join Rev Anthony Chandler and Revd Jenny Webb, who continue beyond retirement in their long standing service to the town of March.

## **Team Leader in Mission (Team Vicar)**

In the light of prayerful consideration, we changed the previous pattern of ministry within in the Team, particularly with regard to pastoral responsibility for individual churches. We are enthusiastic and excited about the opportunity to embrace and develop different patterns of ministry. We are therefore seeking a Team Vicar with significant pioneering enthusiasm and skills to develop New Expressions of Church; to be a key operator in on-line church and response to Covid-19, to support existing outreach work and discipleship growth, develop work at Neale Wade Academy; and have pastoral responsibility for the St. Wendreda's Anglican Evangelical Church.

Without prejudicing new developments, they will also offer some ministry in the other churches. It is anticipated that some new work and Fresh expressions of Church will be associated with the existing parish churches and some will develop to be more free-standing.

The Team Rector has pastoral responsibility for St John's, St Mary's and St Peter's and the ministry there will be shared and collaborative in delivery, as well as offering overall leadership and responsibility for governance and structures, and support for all ministers.

The Team will continue to be served by one Self Supporting Priest, two retired Priests, Licensed Lay Ministers and Authorised Lay Ministers, and the CMT staff of an Operations manager, Children's and Family Worker, and Community Mission Worker.

## **Development of Work at the Neale Wade Academy**

We hope to build on opportunities for further development of the work at the Neale Wade Academy, the only secondary school in March, with approx. 1400 pupils aged 11-16, plus a Sixth Form <https://www.neale-wade.org/>

In the past, the Principal of the Neale Wade Academy has been keen for the role to develop in the following ways: and we await post COVID exploration;

- ◆ To work with small groups or individuals as identified by the Student Welfare staff. This work would involve listening to student concerns and offering advice and guidance as appropriate.
- ◆ To have the opportunity to present to whole classes in a more formal setting, possibly working with RE, PSHE and Citizenship teachers.
- ◆ There is also the scope to work with our pastoral year teams across a range of activities including year group assemblies.
- ◆ To work more closely with the Academy during periods of celebration such as Christmas and Easter.

## **Vicarage House**



**March Vicarage, 177 Station Road, March.**

A very energy efficient and easy to run modern house almost adjacent to St. John's Church. A most desirable 4-bed family home with good garden, well equipped kitchen, living and dining rooms and pleasant spacious study. It is convenient for the Town and Station.

A bungalow vicarage close to St Wendreda is currently let by the Diocese but could be available for housing of Clergy or other future staff.

The Team Rector lives in the Rectory which is adjacent to St Peter's Church in the Town Centre.

## **Team Roles**

Team Rector (Overall leadership & St J, M, P)	Revd Andrew Smith
Team Leader Mission and St Wendreda's	Vacant
Associate Vicar SSM (Team-wide)	Revd Jane Rees
Retired Priest	Revd Jenny Webb
Retired Priest	Revd Anthony Chandler
LLM St. Wendreda's	Barbara Taylor
LLM St. Peter's and St. Mary's	David Harrison
LLM St. Peter's and Team	Hannah Taylor
LLM St. John's	Diane Wise
ALM St. Wendreda's (Youth Work)	Gary Canham
ALM St John's (Music Ministry -in Training)	Mark Rengert
ALM St. Peter's (Pastoral Care + Worship)	Judith Rooke
ALM St. Peter's (Pastoral Care)	Eva Willox
ALM St Peter's (Pastoral Care + Baptism)	Linda Walker
ALM St. John's (Pastoral Care)	Jamie Woodcock
CMT funded Children's and Family Worker (May '19) ALM St. John's (Youth Work) Licensed as LLM October 2020	Karen Pritchard
CMT funded Operations Manager (Jan '19)	Rebecca Parnell
CMT funded Community Missioner (Started Sept 2020)	Rachel Hawksworth

ALM = Authorised Lay Minister. LLM = Licensed Lay Minister)

## **Websites and Social Media**

The Team is actively working to increase its online presence by way of Facebook, websites, YouTube and Google:

<http://www.stjohnmarch.co.uk/>

<http://www.stmaryschurchmarch.co.uk/>

<http://www.stpeterschurchmarch.co.uk/>

<http://www.stwendreda.co.uk/>

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14034/>

<https://www.facebook.com/rebecca.marchchurches.3>

<https://www.facebook.com/StPetersMarch/>

<https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsMarch/>

<https://www.facebook.com/StWendredasMarch/>

<https://www.facebook.com/PlayGroup8/>

## **Market Towns Initiative and Potential for Growth in Resources**

As part of the Diocesan Strategy, the Diocese of Ely is focusing support on key areas. The market towns of the Diocese, including March, have been identified as one of these areas of both need and potential.

Over two million pounds of investment from the Church Commissioners' Strategic Development Fund is being committed over a five year period, matched by significant Diocesan support. Canon Mike Booker, Bishop's Change Officer, is overseeing the Changing Market Towns initiative, working with market towns to support mission, share good practice and encourage innovative outreach.

Across the market towns of the Diocese, Changing Market Towns Workers have been appointed, with a brief to engage with their communities in new ways, in partnership with local church members, and to invite people to join a journey to faith. Each town also has an Operations Manager, working to back up and resource mission, and to help churches move into new ways of working.

As well as support from Mike and the central CMT team, Changing Market Towns is working to encourage networking and mutual learning and encouragement across the towns. The Fenland Learning Community is an important resource in this, delivering training at all levels across the northern part of the Diocese, and backed up by a theological library just up the road in Wisbech.

### **Operations Manager - Rebecca Parnell**

- \* Perhaps the most central element of my role: to support our churches as they endeavour to improve their visible outreach to the local community. By enabling each church to develop the great things they already have on offer, as well as creating new ideas and events and working to make these evident and accessible to a wider audience, it is hoped that we can encourage more people to find or further their faith.
- \* Creating and maintaining Facebook pages for each church, designing posters and information booklets for the promotion of events across the team. Updating each churches' profile on the Church of England's A Church Near You website and ensuring all churches are visible on Google Maps. Providing IT/computer/online support to PCCs and clergy as well as submitting mission statistics online, as required by the diocese.
- \* Compiling and emailing a weekly e-newsletter to over 225 people within our parishes as well as designing and organising the delivery of a town-wide flyer, delivered to 10,000 homes during lockdown.
- \* Completing and submitting grant application forms for church and community funding streams.
- \* Creating/updating forms, documents and policies to ensure compliance to GDPR
- \* Working with Parishes to maximise their income streams, encouraging Gift Aid giving and setting up online giving platforms to establish more efficient ways of receiving donations and payments. Undertaking financial reviews for parishes, to enable PCCs to see where best to focus their attentions to maximise income
- \* Supporting the Children and Families Worker and new Community Mission Worker within their roles, to provide feedback, guidance and direction where required.
- \* Reporting monthly data to the Changing Market Towns team in Ely, to report ongoing attendance, giving amounts, successes and problems, in order to provide benchmark figures for ongoing monitoring of the project's success.

## **Children & Families Worker - Karen Pritchard**

The focus for the first period of being in post has been to build up community relationships and links with the schools in town. Pre-Covid this meant that I had been able to work in two of the primary schools in the following roles:

All Saints Inter-Church School – working with a group of approximately 16 year 4-6 children to support and guide them in planning and leading Collective Worship in school. Burrowmoor Primary School – working collaboratively with the school-based Family Worker in providing support to children to build up their confidence and self-esteem. Additionally, I had been leading one whole school assembly per term. Currently, I am in conversation with both schools as to how we continue to build on our church-school links and relationships in a post-Covid environment.

I have also been working with local authority agencies planning and developing initiatives to tackle food poverty within our community. Last year, this took the form of a Holiday Hunger programme held over part of the summer holidays whereby we provided family breakfasts, followed by various activities (including lunch) for the children once their parents had eaten. This year, we were due to hold similar events during both the Easter and Summer holidays, but the lock-down forced us to rethink how to do this. During the Easter holidays, this group worked with another charity to provide ‘Rainbow Boxes’ containing activities for children and their families to do at home, which were delivered to approximately 100 families in our town at the beginning and end of the Easter period.

During the summer holidays we provided families with bags of groceries and recipe books to cook at home once a week for five weeks of the holidays. The families also received a craft activity bag and a sports activity bag for use at home.

The immediate future is providing challenges with face to face and group working but I have been spending time planning how to launch a younger-age youth group aimed at Years 4-6 to build on the foundations provided by the churches in their Sunday children’s churches.

## **Community Mission Worker**

- ◆ Create opportunities to engage with people, especially 20-50 year-old adults.
- ◆ Grow faith amongst these people, by developing and creating places and events that will develop into Fresh Expressions of Church, and enable others in the Christian community to join in this.
- ◆ Be alongside people as their faith deepens and to help them find ways to be true to their calling as disciples.
- ◆ Assist, where appropriate, members of our existing church communities to share their faith and to be involved in mission opportunities in the town.
- ◆ Develop an outward-looking culture through modelling and training where mission in word and action become part of the life of our parishes.
- ◆ Grow and support volunteers for established and new missional activities.
- ◆ Play an active role in delivering our shared mission and plan through strong collaboration and partnership working.
- ◆ Actively seek partnerships with other churches and voluntary groups for the good of March and its citizens.
- ◆ Work imaginatively, flexibly and confidently, using technology to meet these aims in the light of the emerging situation caused by the impact of COVID-19.

# **St John the Evangelist**



## **Regular Services at St John's**

**Sunday (1st):** 9.30am Laying on of Hands service (in Church)

**Sunday (1st):** 9am Family Worship (in the Hall)

**Sunday (2nd/3rd/4th/5th):** 9.30am Holy Communion - 9.15am John's Juniors (in Hall or church grounds)

**Tuesday:** 10am Said Holy Communion

**The mission of St John's is to celebrate the healing love of Christ in Sacrament and service through Eucharistic worship, pastoral care, the healing ministry and service in the community.**

## **Covid-19 Activity**

Initially, steps were put in place to ensure all members of the congregation received a weekly phone call. Soon morning and evening zoom services were provided for across the team and a weekly worship resource sent to all on email. When restrictions allowed, a printed worship leaflet was hand delivered to those not on email, and a email prayer list sent every week. Also resources were prepared and emailed for children and families. With time people were encouraged to be in communication with each other, and the frequency of phone calls relaxed. We also collected some prescriptions and helped with deliveries for people and liaised with other institutions in the town to provide help and information. From July Sundays at 9.30am, Tuesday services in the socially distanced church building, and JJ's and study groups in the church grounds resumed and since then most people have gradually returned. The choir plans to return to singing in September. Church working parties and ground maintenance continued in safe ways throughout.

In the Hall Chat-tea changed into a very effective operation providing and delivering Hot food and continues to develop in meeting needs and in volunteer commitment. The Sunday meal restarted in August.

From September other activities are being found ways to resume, Toddlers, Hands of Hope, Forest School, AA and Irish Dancing are planned.

We continue to search and find ways to meet people's spiritual and physical needs and serve our community in Christ's name.

## **Our Church Community (Pre-Covid)**

The Sunday Main Service congregation averages about 35-45 adults and a dozen children, when they join us from the Junior Church. The 8 am service averages 4-6. The Family Breakfast Service held in the Hall on the first Sunday of the month averages a mix of about 20 adults and children, many of whom do not come to Church Services. A robed choir leads singing during worship and joins in with other Team services; the congregation actively support the special services held across the Team. St John's has strong roots in the community, so there are a good number of occasional offices. Members of the Team take a significant number of funerals in Church and at the Crematorium. We welcome children and adults for Baptism - these services normally take place on Sunday afternoons.

There have been a number of very successful Fun Days and Messy Church sessions as well as social events which bring people together, which are continuously developing. As well as the excellent children's work, we also have a well-attended monthly study group, which meets monthly on Tuesdays and weekly in Lent. We produce a weekly news sheet with information about our activities and worship. We also now keep our website and Facebook pages up to date.



Our Youth Group for young people aged 11 and over, meets on the third Sunday of the month. They had the idea to set up and run a monthly community meal called Chat-Tea; this has now been running for almost two years and continues to be enthusiastically supported by the congregation and wider community. We have regular and well-supported children's groups within the Church Hall including John's Tots (pre-school age), Hands of Hope (after school club), Revolutions (SEND group) and youth group. The Hall also hosts many church-led and external groups such as craft club, a 'First Thursday' club, Brownies/Guides, Ballet, Irish Dancing and Zumba to name but a few.

St. John's is a middle of the road to catholic tradition (vestments worn) based around the centrality of the Eucharist as well as the Word; there is a Guild of St. Raphael which brings an emphasis on a prayer and healing ministry. A robed choir leads singing during worship and joins in other Team services. The congregation actively support the special services held either in St John's or across the team.

As well as the excellent children's work, we also have a monthly well attended study group, which meets monthly on Tuesdays and weekly in Lent. We visit a local care home, and also offer Home Communion and pastoral visits to people who are house-bound.

We admit children to receive Holy Communion before Confirmation. Communion classes are arranged, normally on an annual basis. Confirmations, usually annually, are arranged on a Team basis. St John's has strong roots in the community, so there are a good number of occasional offices. We welcome children and adults for Baptism. Baptism services normally take place on Sunday afternoons. In 2019 there were 16 baptisms, 5 weddings, 9 church funerals and 7 at the crematorium.

### **Parish Location**

The parish is the largest of the four Anglican parishes in March, with a population of some 10,000+ people. It covers the whole of the town north of the River Nene, and some of the North East open farmland. It includes HMP Whitemoor (although the prison has its own chaplaincy team), stretches to the Town Centre, and to the industrial estates to the West and North of the town.

### **The Church Building and Church Hall**

St. John's is built in a Victorian Gothic style with plain exterior belying fine architecture within. It was completed and consecrated in 1872; the West Turret houses one Bell. The Vestry was built onto the North side of the building in 1904. A small purpose built kitchen area enables the serving of hot drinks and we have rearranged pews to create space for children, prayer, groups greatly enhancing the feel of the church. Volunteers maintain the grounds very well; a fallen tree at the East end of the church has provided an opportunity to create an adventurous environment which is used by JJ's and by Forest School The Fenland Foragers.

The Church Hall is a large building situated 100 metres away on the opposite side of the road to Church; it comprises of a kitchen, a large Hall with a stage and small hall/meeting room. A small office was built onto the hall in the late 1980's which is now the Changing Market Town Project workers' base. The Hall is used by the church and is also hired to a variety of community groups and private parties. The kitchen has recently been refurbished and received a 5\* Food Hygiene rating in July 2019.



## **Chat-Tea**

Chat-Tea arose out of Youth Group and a homeless man sleeping in the porch. The young people chose to provide a meal once a month for anyone who came. It has developed in size and depth with the young people organising, serving and developing the initiative. It is a great blessing.

With the first release of lockdown it transformed into a thrice weekly cooking and delivery service of hot meals for families and isolated elderly people serving over 2000 lunches by October (typically about 35 a day). It remains supplying three sessions, moving to early afternoon, and as young people move back to education it has crossed the generation gap to remain sustainable.

## **Finances**

For a number of years, the Church struggled financially and had to make difficult choices between maintaining the fabric of the premises. However, more recently the financial circumstances of the church have stabilised, and for the past three years, we have been able to pay the Parish Share in full. There have been some legacies left to the church which have enabled us to provide a buffer against unforeseeable expenses as well as make some emergencies repairs which have cropped up. These have included work on the Church Belfry and the removal of a very large tree which was badly damaged in a storm during the winter of 2019 and subsequently had to be removed as it presented a severe danger to users of the church building.

Additionally, through the use of legacies and grants, we have been able to make substantial improvements to the Church Hall, including the repair to the roof, replacing all the windows, completely refurbishing the kitchen and improving the heating. These improvements have allowed the use of the hall to increase significantly for both church-based and community groups and it is now approaching a fully booked position. In financial terms, this has meant that the increased income from the hall has been available to support other aspects of church life, including helping us meet the Parish Share.

As always, there are further opportunities to be explored in increasing income to support church activities. Currently, we are looking to introduce the use of a card reader to enable collections and donations to be made electronically, particularly during fund raising events and occasions such as weddings or baptisms when members of the congregation might wish to make a donation but do not have cash available. At the same time, we are investigating the use of the Parish Giving Scheme to enable more members of the congregation to contribute to the collection by direct debit.

As with most churches, traditional social and fund-raising activities are a regular part of the church life and are enjoyed by all. These include the Summer Fair, a Mayday Fun Day, A Christmas Fair and Carol Concert, New Year Eve and Valentine's Day dinner dances and a variety of privately run activities to raise funds, both for the church and for other local and national charities.

## **Our Hopes for the Future**

St John's is a thriving, committed church with many signs of life, and has attracted significant numbers of new people in the last few years. After some difficult years where the burden of the church building lowered morale, we are now feeling much more positive and people are coming forward to offer their time, talents and ideas. We wish to develop a church where families and new people are welcomed and their faith deepened, and where those who prefer traditional church are also nourished and valued. The Church hall has been extensively upgraded in the last two years and has become a very real resource and centre to serve the local community.

# St Mary



## Regular Services at St Mary's

**Sunday:** 9.15am Traditional Holy Communion

**Thursdays in Lent:** 9.15am Holy Communion

Services are also arranged for festivals and other special occasions such as Rogation Sunday, Quiet Days, Flower Festival and Harvest. St Mary's support and host many of the Team's 'special' services.

**We are a small Church, serving people from across the town who value traditional forms of worship, with strong links to the community of March.**

## Covid-19 Activity

Since many of St Mary's congregation are older, the initial focus was to ensure that people had their practical needs met whilst isolating. Phone calls were initially weekly, gradually becoming monthly whilst encouraging linking networks of communication. Although there were soon zoom services and email communications, many St Mary's people are not online, so a regular leaflet was a priority, when possible. From July, Sunday services were resumed and have remained at about ½ the previous levels, with some people returning but significant numbers still isolating. A main Hall user has folded, so the Hall has not yet restarted. After months of lockdown, the grounds were very overgrown and there has been a heroic and committed tidy up by a range of people that have effectively restored the graveyard. Several regulars passed away during the pandemic but despite fear and isolation, the bonds of St Mary's are strong, and we continue to evolve in these unique times.

## Our Church Community (Pre-Covid)

The majority of people with links to St Mary's had historic roots within the farming community; The average attendance at the main Sunday service is about 25. The majority of people travel from other parts of the town, with few living in the scattered rural parish. This is largely due to the worship ethos of the Church which is based on the Book of Common Prayer, and the warmth of the welcome which people receive at the Church. The Church community is noted for the way in which people know and care for one another.

The majority of members of the congregation are over retirement age, although there are some families linked to the Church who regularly attend Sunday worship. The young people linked to the church are encouraged to take part in the Church's worship through serving at the altar, singing in the choir, bringing the bread and wine to the altar, and leading prayers. St Mary's is unique in March in having a young person elected to the PCC, and he now takes responsibility for rotas; we shall miss him in term-time as he starts university.

Some of St Mary's parishioners are also active in church groups based at St Peter's. Social events, such as coffee mornings, suppers and lunches and other fund-raising events such as Open Gardens and Flower Festivals play a significant part in the life of St Mary's worshipping community. They aim to bring people together and also raise money for the church funds. These all help to bring cohesion to the community, as well as involving others who have an association with the church, but do not regularly attend worship.



We are fortunate to have an accomplished organist, there is also a very small choir who help lead the singing during Sunday worship. Our organist arranges a number of musical events within the church and some members of St. Mary's also join Church choirs for special Team services. Some weddings have strong local connections, others who appreciate the intimate nature of the church building, they vary from year to year being 2 in 2019, 8 in 2018.

We welcome children and adults for Baptism of which there were 3 in 2019 and 8 in 2018; services normally take place on Sunday afternoons. Confirmations, are usually arranged annually on a Team basis. We welcome couples for marriage and are willing to conduct marriages of people who have previously been divorced. The Team take funerals in Church and at the Crematorium - in 2019 there were 4 in church 2 at the Crem (9 and 1 in 2018).

### **Parish Location**

The Church is situated to the north of the town on the busy A141 Wisbech Road, also leading to the A47 for Peterborough or Kings Lynn. It is close to the March Trading Park, which includes a Tesco superstore, a DIY/building store, and several other businesses, including 'Cobblestones' and KFC restaurants/food outlets about 100 yards from the Church. The Parish covers a sizeable, but sparsely populated geographical area, incorporating several agricultural farms.

### **The Church Building and Church Hall**

St. Mary's was one of three new parish churches built in March, consequent upon the coming of the railway. The parish was formed in 1868 and the church was dedicated in 1873 at a cost of £2,500 with seating for 200 people. The building was built of stone, with chancel, nave, vestry and a western turret with one bell. St. Mary's is unusual having an apse with a south facing altar.

In March 2010 St. Mary's Church was destroyed by fire as a result of an arson attack. Fortunately, the building was fully insured and work began immediately to plan for the restoration whilst worship was maintained in the neighbouring Hall. After four years the church was re-dedicated on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. The Church has level access, a unisex, accessible toilet and changing area, a small kitchenette, a small side-chapel/meeting room, a digital Makin organ situated on the balcony, projector and screen, with seating for 100, plus choir members. The main regular usage of the building has been for Sunday worship. Week-day use is limited to funerals, occasional weddings and weekly Communion Services in Lent. The Church has its own, very well-maintained graveyard, surrounding the building.



There is a Church Hall with adjacent parking space within the Church grounds. It has good access for less-able visitors and, despite the location on the edge of the town, it is reasonably well used by community groups, such as dance classes, private parties and funeral refreshments.

### **Our Finances**

The Church has always met its annual 'Parish Share', this is only possible through the organisation of a significant number of coffee mornings and fund-raising events throughout the year, including flower festivals, lunches and race nights. The costs of running the restored church is more than previous running costs.

### **Our Hopes for the Future**

Our hope is to remain a caring congregation very much open to others who value traditional Church of England Worship. We hope to reach out to support and grow the faith of those we encounter through occasional offices. We offer a fine venue for concerts and quiet days.



# **St Peter**

## **Regular Services at St Peter's**

<b>Sunday:</b>	8am Holy Communion 11am Holy Communion 11am Sunday Club (Junior Church in the Hall) Pre-CV-19
<b>Sunday (1/3):</b>	6.30pm Evensong (4.30pm in Winter) Pre-CV-19
<b>Wednesday:</b>	10am Said Holy Communion
<b>Thursday:</b>	8.30am Morning Prayer (Team Zoom)

**St Peter's is a thriving town centre Church, with Eucharistic worship and strong links to the local community.**

## **Covid-19 Activity**

Keeping in touch with the numbers of people associated with St Peter's was a logistical challenge as it had a larger fringe without current contact details. Phone, emails, worship resources and prayer leaflet deliveries became possible alongside zoom services. St Peter's perhaps especially appreciated the daily communication in Holy Week. The organist also put out a lot of resources that were appreciated throughout. In July Sunday 8am and 11am, and Wednesday Communion Services all resumed in socially distant ways, but with attendance at about 1/3 and only growing slowly. The restoration of music was appreciated, but the loss of singing keenly felt. The hall has not yet had much significant use, and it is anticipated that some of the groups dominated by older people may not return for some time. This may provide an opportunity for some new missional activities.

Financially St Peter's has been very hard hit by the loss of occasional office and community fundraising ventures, notwithstanding a very enterprising plant sale at the height of lockdown, and an almost industrial production of cloth face masks. As very much a belonging and social church, the challenges of the future are significant.

## **Our Church Community (Pre-Covid)**

Our Electoral Roll comprises 101 people; there are 140 individuals and families on our database of those regularly associated with worship. Of these, the proportion of men to women is approximately 1:3. There are about 10 people who regularly attend the 8am Communion Service, as their main act of worship. The average adult attendance at all Sunday services is approximately 60-80 during term-time with the number of communicants ranging from approximately 50-70. The main Sunday service attracts a good mix of age groups, including families bringing their children. A core of about 50 people attend every week. The evening service, other than on special occasions or full choral evensongs, is about 6-8 people. The Wednesday morning Communion Service attracts between 22 and 35 people and provides an important worship space for people who can no longer attend on Sundays, as well as several others who attend on both Sundays and Wednesdays. Special services are well attended. Lay people assist with worship as sides-people, readers, intercessors, lay altar assistants, flower arrangers, Junior church helpers and presenting bread and wine at the altar.

St Peter's congregation support the team Services marking the Christian year (Ash Wed, Ascension Day, Advent etc) which take place on a team basis using all the churches, sometimes midweek evenings or Sunday evenings. There is also a full range of services in Holy Week, and good attendance at services aimed at those recently bereaved. A small team of servers are part of the procession to open and to close the service, led by a Crucifer. There is lay administration of the Chalice and a Gospel Procession, the Sacrament is reserved in the aumbry, incense is used occasionally and vestments are worn. We have a Church Orchestra which plays once a month; members of the choir participate in Team Services, special events and musical concerts at Ely Cathedral.

There is a 'Sunday Club' Junior Church, with enthusiastic leadership. Children attend the opening part of the worship, then leave during the Gloria to go to their own activities, returning during the communion. Our Thursday morning Tiny Tots group is a parent/carer and toddler group open to the whole town community and is supported by the Children and Families Worker.

Social events, such as barbecues, race nights, concerts and pancake suppers aim to bring people together and also raise money for Church funds, as do our Annual Christmas Fair, Plant Stall and Bacon Butty Festival. A number of our social events are organized by our Family Committee which also plays an important role in supporting the work of our Junior Church, and funding special items of equipment. We also run a weekly 'Knit and Natter' Coffee group in the meeting room as part of our outreach work. The St. Peter's Mothers' Union continues to thrive, with a membership of over 30 ladies. There are a number of Church groups that meet regularly, including a Men's Group, a Ladies' Group, Craft and Gardening Group.

As well as outside concerts there have been free monthly Saturday morning recitals of a high standard by professional and other musicians. They are also a popular venue for private functions and other community activities, including March Brass, Fenland Music concerts, Alan Morris Swing Jazz band, an activity group for young people with disabilities, Kick Boxing, meetings of the local Deaf Group, the Women's Institute, the Museum Society, and March Wildlife Group

We welcome children and adults for Baptism. Baptism services normally take place in or after the main Sunday morning service. Confirmation is arranged on an annual basis – this year's was due in April so will have to be picked up. In 2019 there were 22 baptisms. We welcome all couples for marriage. Our Clergy have been willing to conduct marriages of people who have previously been divorced. In 2019 there were 4 weddings. We conduct significant numbers of funerals in church and at the Crematorium, in 2019, 30 and 17 respectively.

St Peter's has links with assemblies, visits and RE lessons with Cavalry and Burrowmoor Schools (an exciting initiative for Holy Week was postponed by COVID). We have an enthusiastic group who meet monthly to explore a wide variety of faith issues through bible study, reflection, listening monthly on a Wednesday evening at St Peter's, meeting weekly in Lent. We also share the daytime option at St John's. A weekly joint notice sheet, 'Spotlight' is produced for St. Mary's and St. Peter's Churches. A monthly joint magazine, 'Windows', is also produced and is well received by those who subscribe.

Our clergy and a small team of Lay Assistants are pleased to visit people in their own homes and to offer Home Communion Services. Currently 8-10 people receive Communion at home on a monthly basis. When people are admitted to hospital we always request the hospital Chaplain to make contact, and our Clergy and lay people visit whenever possible. Distance from hospitals can make this problematic. We also offer a bereavement service following funerals.



We offer pastoral care, home communion and other service to people at Aria Court care home. Members of the Church are involved with a number of local organizations including leadership of Uniformed Organisations, school governors, the Prison Fellowship, the Solo Group, the Lions, the Rotary Club, Probus, Women's Institutes, the March and Fenland Red Cross, the University of the Third Age (U3A), March Brass and Fenland Music centre.

As a church, we support the work of the Christian Aid and the Food Bank; the Sylvia Wright Trust and a Ugandan Children's Trust through our Lent Giving; the Historic Churches Trust; the Children's Society at the Christingle Service and Embrace, through the Nativity Service collection. We also have periodic displays about the work of national or local charities with which our members are involved.

### **Parish Location**

St. Peter's Church is located in the Town Centre, close to shops, the market, the museum, the police station, the leisure centre and the library. The church is well-placed for town-wide services and other events such as concerts. The population of the parish – approximately 6200 people in 2011, is increasing with new housing estates being built.

### **The Church Building and Church Hall**

St. Peter's was the last of three new parish churches built in March in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; it was consecrated on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1881 and is a fine example of a Victorian Church, built with Ancaster stone with Bath stone mouldings. The building is in a good state of repair, following work on the roof and spire, both of which have incurred considerable costs. During the past few years it has also been necessary to replace the boiler, purchase a new organ and undertake repairs to the tower. The grounds are well-maintained by a small gardening group and a volunteer who cuts the grass

The Church building is well used for worship, not only by the congregation of St. Peter's but also other community groups for a range of worship and community activities, including Civic, Remembrance, WI and school services and concerts. Our Christmas Tree Festival, during which we hold the Christingle Service, has become a very successful annual event, as have our Flower and Craft Festivals, all involving a large number of groups and individuals in the town.



Since January 2011 our church has been open during daylight hours for anyone who wishes to look around the building, or just to sit quietly or light a prayer candle. At 12.30 pm each day, a prayer is said by a volunteer. The community hall, built in 1894, was more recently extended to adjoin the church, and includes kitchen and accessible toilet facilities. The hall is well-used for Church activities such as the Junior Church, St Peter's Tiny Tots, St. Peter's Mothers' Union, St. Peter's Craft Group, St. Peter's Ladies and Men's Groups as well as Christian Aid lunches. It is also a popular venue for private functions and other community activities.

### **Our Hopes for the Future**

We hope that we may grow the church in numbers and spiritual depth, that our Church will be a place of welcome for all people, where the gospel is proclaimed and manifested in action and we wish to see people encouraged to use and develop their gifts within our worship and pastoral care. We would like to see our Church continue to be a focal point within the town centre for Civic and community activities, that the building will remain open during daylight hours for people to find a place of quietness and prayer and that our premises, both Church and hall, will continue to be well used by the local community



# St Wendreda

## Regular Services at St Wendreda's

**Every Sunday 11am:** Wendreda Worship (Zoom)  
**Sunday (2nd/4th):** 8am Holy Communion (Pre-CV19)  
**Sunday (1st/2nd/3rd/5th):** 11am Service of the Word (Pre-CV19)  
**Sunday (4th):** 11am Holy Communion (Pre-CV19)

**As a church fellowship, St. Wendreda's exists to bring Christ to the community and the community to Christ.**

## Vision and Mission for our Church

We are a Bible-based Christ-centred fellowship with a strong, historically Evangelical background. We concur with the Basis of Faith as stated by our patron, the Church Pastoral Aid Society <https://www.cpas.org.uk/basis-faith> We also agree with the additional declarations of the Church of England Evangelical Council's basis of faith <http://www.ceec.info/basis-of-faith.html> with regard to same sex marriage. In consultation with the congregation, over 80% wish to affirm that Christian marriage is between a man and a woman.

There is a loving, welcoming group of people at St. Wendreda's, who are pastorally minded, whilst also looking out to the needs of the local community. We have a real desire to spread the Good News of Jesus to our neighbours, as well as supporting those believers who already attend. Our worship life is warm and informal, and we want to become more and more a part of our community so that people see the church as relevant to them rather than just another old historical building. We acknowledge that, as beautiful as the building is, it can present a barrier for many non-churchgoers. Despite opening our doors for occasional offices to many families over the years, few have returned to worship regularly. So we need to create new accessible ways into our shared life and worship.

We celebrate the fact that our members are involved in all aspects of community life and are encouraged that we have people in key roles in healthcare, education, local government, March Foodbank, March Christian Bookshop, Christians against Poverty and many other organisations where their Christian faith can be lived out. We support the Churches Together in March, working alongside Christians of different denominations.

There is a secondary school next door to the church where we have had warm relations in the past, and we would like to begin to make the most of that opportunity for outreach once again.

## Our New Minister

We gathered together as a fellowship, in prayer and discussion, to seek the way forward. We should like to see a minister appointed who, first and foremost, has a personal relationship with God, knowing Jesus as their Saviour and who is equipped by the Holy Spirit for their ministry. As an evangelical church, we seek a minister who shares the same priorities of faith as expressed in the CPAS basis of faith; principally an acceptance of the whole Word of God as being inspired by God and our ultimate reference and guide. We are looking for a leader who can:

- ◆ help us grow in faith and develop our mission within local community and beyond, having an ability to communicate the love of Jesus to the people of the town, and to encourage us to share our faith;
- ◆ preach from Scripture with faithfulness, integrity, warmth and power;
- ◆ with a relaxed leadership style, help us grasp a new vision to grow and move forward;
- ◆ create entry-points for mission into the Neale-Wade Academy and mobilise the congregation to capitalise on them;
- ◆ lead us in welcoming, lively, informal worship and help us sustain our online presence;
- ◆ draw us into the wider ministry of the team and help us make our own valuable contribution, whilst balancing and handling competing expectations;
- ◆ continue to build and develop our lay preaching and ministry teams and grow new leaders within our congregation;
- ◆ help us to care for one another.



## Our Church Community (Pre-Covid)

Our main service of worship is led by a Worship Band and there is also a church organ that is used within some main services and for occasional offices. There are many other services throughout the year at Christmas, such as a Christingle service, carol service and midnight communion on Christmas Eve, and at Easter, with a Maundy Thursday agape meal and a dawn service on Easter Day.



There are currently 56 on the electoral roll at April 2020. The 8am Traditional Said Communion service attendance averages at 4; for the Informal Worship at 11am, the average number attending weekly in 2019 was made up of about 40-50 adults from a wide age range as well as 14 young people, (the number of children attending has increased since 2017) - we have four Sunday school teachers. Many of our congregation do not live in the parish but live throughout the town and a number travel from the surrounding villages.

Wen's Wrigglers for toddlers and their carers is held in the Church Hall on Friday mornings which is run by members of St. Wendreda's, as are Brownie and Rainbow groups who meet weekly. There is also a Friday evening youth club for the local community, led by our youth ALM (we were prepared to support the Higher mission to secondary schools this autumn, pre-Covid). There are two evening house groups and two morning house groups that meet weekly for Bible study and fellowship and an early morning prayer meeting is held on Thursdays. The Bell ringers are a growing team who practice weekly, call us to worship regularly and whose services are much in demand for weddings.



There is one LLM currently in post and one ALM for youth ministry. Confirmation classes are arranged, normally on an annual basis, for those wishing to be confirmed and are now being arranged on a Team basis. We welcome children for Baptism (services normally take place after the main Sunday morning service), and couples for marriage - our Clergy have been willing to conduct marriages of people who have previously been divorced. We conduct funerals in church and at the Crematorium. In 2019 at St. Wendreda's there were 2 Baptisms, 5 Weddings, 10 Funerals in church and 7 at the Crematorium.

Pastoral care is offered through the housegroup network and by a range of people in the fellowship; we have a pastoral care committee, headed by our soon-to-be-licensed Pastoral Care ALM, who visit and support fellowship members and their families at times of need and our LLM offers Home Communion to those requesting it. There is a Parish Prayer Diary and Prayer Chain for urgent prayer requests and a weekly notice sheet provides information for those attending and those not able to attend church, who receive it via friends from the fellowship.

- Team Clergy take assemblies in the Junior school within the parish (Cavalry) and the All Saints Academy (Anglican and Roman Catholic foundation). Both schools have visited the church and met with regular members to discover what happens in an Anglican Church.
- The Neale-Wade Academy (Secondary school) also welcomed a previous incumbent into the academy, weekly, as part of the pastoral care team and he was involved with the RE department.
- School concerts and services have been held in our church over the years.
- Coffee mornings are held monthly, except in the winter months. Local people enjoy meeting together and funds are put towards items needed in the Hall or Church.
- Meals at a local restaurant, quizzes at the March Cricket Club, monthly sausage and mash meals and Social evenings in the hall provide opportunities for members to invite friends/family to meet with the church family.
- The Church Tower is open twice a year to raise awareness of what happens in St. Wendreda's, as well as funds, and attracts people from far and wide. (One of these occasions is the annual church fair, held on the green in front of the church.)
- A recently formed Christian Book Club (has recently been formed and) meets in local coffee shops and homes.

## **Missionary Support**

Currently St. Wendreda's support the following six missionary societies, both financially and prayerfully:

**Barnabas Fund** - Supporting Persecuted Christians

**Church Missionary Society** - Bible Translator Tim Curtis in Paraguay

**The Leprosy Mission** - Jannine Ebenso – Global Disability Advisor

**Mission Aviation Fellowship** - Engineer Ben Sibthorpe and family in Australia

**New Foundations** - Local Healthcare provision to people in the Niger Delta run by a March-based GP and his wife

**Armenian Ministries** - Provision of Relief materials to people in poverty in Armenia run by a family based in Lincolnshire and Armenia

## **Covid-19 Activity**

Pre-Covid days seem a long time ago now. However lockdown has not found us locked up! Of course we have missed our physical fellowship together etc etc. None-the-less, we have risen to the challenges presented by lockdown and reached out to each other and our wider community in a number of ways. Morning services have continued via Zoom since March 22<sup>nd</sup> reaching well beyond the town averaging 40-50 attendees, Bible study groups have also taken place via this method, as well as a PCC meeting and a Christianity Explored course. A newsletter has been delivered to those who cannot access Zoom.

## **Parish Location**

Situated to the south of the Town the Parish has an old settlement area around the Church known as Town End, which contains some of the oldest dwellings both in the Town and Parish. Most of the parishioners live in the predominantly urban housing area around the Church (over 2500 dwellings) made up of a mixture of small, medium and large developments dating from the 1960's to early 2000's.

The Northern boundary skirts the Town Centre including Burrowmoor Road from number 100. To the South and West it is largely a rural area of arable and mixed farming, the Southern boundary encloses Mill Hill Garage. Crossing the Railway to the East of the Town is again a rural area, with its boundary along Upwell Road to White Gates Farm. Land is mainly planted with arable crops.



## **The Church Building and Church Hall**

St. Wendreda's church building is a grade 1 listed building of great historical interest. The original church was founded by Anglo-Saxon princess Wendreda, a healer, in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century. Parts of the present building date back to 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century and the medieval double hammer beam angel roof is world famous, attracting many visitors throughout the year. It is a light airy building, seating 300 people comfortably and has a recently completed under-floor heating system and new floor. Other recent work was carried out to restore the South Parapet, this was done with the aid of a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant. Consequently, the latest Quinquennial report (2017) has not revealed any major outstanding work.

The church hall was completely rebuilt, being rededicated in 2006 and is a very good, modern facility with several meeting rooms, a well-equipped kitchen and toilet facilities. As well as being used for church events the hall is hired out to the wider community.



## **Our Finances**

As a parish we have paid our Parish Share for three of the last five years. Replacing the heating and floor have meant that our finances have been stretched, but we are aiming to meet the parish share this year. Ten percent of our income is given to the Missionary Societies we support.