

Thatcham Team Ministry

St. Mary's & St. Barnabas Churches



Parish Profile 2019

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Introduction

Welcome to Thatcham:-

In this profile we have tried to give a fair picture of the Parish Church in Thatcham and of what the role of Team Vicar might look like. We know that good people will shape a role to fit their strengths, so we hope we have not been over-prescriptive, but you will discern some themes running through – this is a pastoral post, which doesn't carry responsibility for a building or a PCC; there is a community focus – outward looking and beyond Sunday; and there are the opportunities brought by the relationship with Thatcham Park School. There is much else besides – more opportunities than we have resource to take – our recently departed Team Vicar Pat opened a number of doors for us, and we are looking for someone who can help us to step through with confidence into our community. Our ideal candidate will be excited by this, but will almost certainly also feel rather daunted.

The ordained clergy in Thatcham wear status lightly – to the world we are simply clergy, and we represent Christ and the Church, bearing the love of God for our community. We work together as colleagues and try to get the best out of each other. Our differences are a strength as is our unity of purpose.

To be a little more formal about it, we are looking for an ordained priest to join the team here in Thatcham, with a particular focus on St Barnabas Church and its base at Thatcham Park School. St Barnabas originated as a church plant from St Mary's, the traditional parish Church, and has been on an extraordinary journey these last seven years with a church based on relationships and networks rather than buildings and structures. The key to the whole thing is our relationship with God, of course, but the relationship with the school has also had extraordinary power. We have learned to be involved in mission and evangelism beyond the buzzwords, and that God's love shared with a practical passion changes lives. There isn't a formula for what we do, simply an expectation that God is alongside us and guiding us and creating opportunities for us. One challenge we continually face is to engage the many people we meet with a more personally committed faith.

Thatcham is by far the largest parish in the Newbury Deanery, with a population of 27,000 against a combined total of about 100,000 spread between 11 benefices. Of the benefices 5 are urban, 5 are rural multi-parish benefices and we also include the market town of Hungerford. For all our diversity, our clergy maintain warm and supportive relationships, and we are looking for effective co-working and mutual support. The whole Deanery seems to have an exciting passion for working with its schools.

One enduring feature of the Thatcham Team is the consistent support St Mary's church has given to the church plant which is now St Barnabas. Through its various incarnations the vision of a church rooted and based in its community as a response to Thatcham's rapid growth has remained a

constant goal, and found its current base at Thatcham Park School some ten years ago.

The two churches differ greatly in style and character, but we need to hold them together as well as allowing each to be true to its own distinctive identity. We would dearly love to see St Barnabas grow so it becomes self-sustaining. With more housing developments planned in the Deanery we also hope that what we have learned in Thatcham can be shared more widely.

If you are looking for a home for your family as well as a place to work, you might be interested that many of our wedding couples and baptism families move to Thatcham as a relatively affordable place to live, and choose to stay because it is a good place to make a home.

My own daughters have attended Thatcham Park and Kennet Schools – the elder moving to Kennet from an all-girls school half the size. We felt the size of the school might be rather daunting, but the way that it is run – particularly the strong house system – makes for a surprising sense of human accessibility. A recent curate had children of primary age who attended Francis Baily School. Interestingly we have teachers from a number of other local schools in our congregations.

It would be wrong to leave an introduction without also mentioning our positive links with ecumenical colleagues. Thatcham seems to be the kind of place which simply throws people together on a sensible scale for common work and occasionally common worship. Although we are all busy, whatever our interest, we can usually find a colleague, lay or ordained, to work alongside us. Thatcham is a big place, but we are still able to work on a human scale.

If you would like to explore further what it might mean to be part of the life and work and ministry of the team here in Thatcham, this profile is for you. But also feel free to contact us, or to visit (announced or unannounced). My colleague Brenda reminds us often that we need to discern before we decide. Discernment is mutual, so please do get in touch. I asked my colleague Brenda to give her personal take on ministry here – you will see some duplication, of course, but I hope you will also start to get a feel of the team.

Mark Bennet, Team Rector Thatcham

Area Dean Newbury

Revd Brenda Harland writes:

Thatcham is a great place to be; although the population is large it still retains a village feel and so is a very friendly place.

So, there is never a dull moment ministering in Thatcham. In fact, there are 27,000 people living here. They don't all come to church, but they all need us in some sort of way.

Lots of people = lots of occasional offices – what an opportunity!! Days can be really varied; you can find yourself singing about Jesus with babies, greeting and chatting with the regulars in the local café, telling a primary school class about the church building or helping a family say goodbye to a loved one then talking to a young couple about their future life together. Whatever your gifts are they will be used here, and you just might discover some you didn't know you had!

One of the things I enjoy so much is the scope to work with young families. Baptisms are very popular, so this is a great opportunity to meet people and be with them during a very happy and exciting part of their lives. Most baptisms take place at St Mary's but both churches offer baptism welcome as part of the Sunday morning services. This creates a wonderful opportunity for the church family to greet new people.

One of the great strengths of our congregations is hospitality, especially St Barnabas. We love sharing food with people through cafe worship, SOS (messy church) and helping the PTA of Thatcham Park do the BBQ at the school fair.

Working alongside people from the other churches is something that works well in Thatcham. Together we can reach more people through Easter story related activities in the town centre on Good Friday and the switching on of the Christmas lights, holiday club in the summer and Douai Abbey day towards the end of the school year to mention a few. As ministers in Thatcham we meet once a month for mutual support, planning and encouraging fellowship and maybe just a little bit of debriefing if needed.

So, I hope you agree that Thatcham could be a great and varied place to live, plenty of green and open spaces and beautiful villages nearby. Come and give it a try!

Brenda Harland

St Barnabas Church

The Clergy Team



The clergy team brings a variety of experience from the workplace and understand the local community well. They work collaboratively with a sense

of freedom to be themselves as ministers sharing responsibility for all aspects of parish life.

Brenda is based at St Barnabas Church and has overall responsibility for children's work especially ABC and SOS; the Safeguarding Team.

Leonard is our Curate in training and is currently getting to know all aspects of ministering in a busy parish including organising an Alpha group for 2019.

Marion covers the Little Churches and those who administer Communion to the residents; the annual Time to Remember Service and is based at St Mary's Church.

Mark leads the team and has overall responsibility for both churches; he is also Area Dean of Newbury.

A Church Wardens view of the Parish

St. Mary's is the Parish Church and is seen as the main church by the people of Thatcham. It is used for many Civic events including the Mayor's Christmas Carol Service and the Town's Remembrance Services. This year it was also the venue for a Concert commemorating the end of WW1. Every year in October the church building is transformed into a craft fair for the Annual Festival of Arts and Leisure and is also the venue for many of the concerts and activities during that fortnight. St. Mary's is also used for concerts during the year by local choirs, bands and schools.

So much for the venue. The people involved in these activities are from the congregations of both St Mary's and St Barnabas churches, of course. Some of the activities in the building have had a direct influence on the evolution of worship styles in each church. For instance, ABC is an Adult and Toddler Group which meets in St. Mary's every Wednesday morning after a 9.45 Communion Service. This communion service is attended by mainly pensioners from both churches. There is a cross over time when the young families meet with the congregation over coffee. This used to be a short 15 minutes slot but now some 'oldies' stay for most of the session and have commandeered some of the colouring table! Interaction between generations and churches at its best!

St. Mary's congregation is generally older than at St. Barnabas. The preferred style of worship is traditional with choir and organist including Evensong once a month and a pianist with singing group on the first Sunday. There is Communion every Sunday and Wednesday. Because St. Barnabas meets in Thatcham Park school hall, the style of worship is less prescribed, designed to be more accessible to non-church and people of all ages. St Barnabas congregation meets every Sunday and regularly hold either a 'Messy Church' known as Sunday on Saturday (SOS) or Café Worship held on a Sunday. It also has a Music Group which plays every Sunday.

This is a detailed snapshot of just a part of our church life but there are many other good things about both churches. Many visiting comment on the

friendliness and happy feel to both church families. There are groups concerned with the prayer life, pastoral care, elderly and bereaved, as well as young people. We are also committed to community ventures outside our church walls. The Food Bank, Soup Kitchen in Newbury, Local Government forums concerned with the well-being of the Town and its young people come to mind. The Rector and all three church wardens are also trustees for two local charities and we are sure there are many other areas with which our congregations are concerned.

Thatcham is a very busy place

The Church Wardens



Glenn Peters

St Barnabas Church



Chris Watts

St Mary's Church



Viv Druce

St Mary's Church

Thatcham Team Ministry

So who is it we are looking for? This profile contains a fair amount of varied information. We don't want you to imagine that you have to do everything yourself. Here we've put our advert and job description, as a reminder (to us, as well as you) of the main focus of the role.

The post of Team Vicar

This is a key appointment not only for the 2 churches but also for the local community.

Is God prompting you to change direction?






Are you ready for a new challenge in 2019 and beyond?

Our base is at Thatcham Park School – we have a leadership team and congregation in place. We are looking for a colleague who will help us to live our faith beyond our comfort zone and lead us out to fulfil our mission statement 'Serving to Build Community'. Our new Team Vicar will also contribute to our work with young people and share in the occasional offices at St. Mary's church.

For St Barnabas the pastoral care of people and the nurture of relationships with God and each other, is at the heart of our church community. Could you help us to grow that community even without a traditional church building?







Job Description

We are looking for a new Team Vicar who will make a substantial contribution to:

-  Developing the established and strong relationship between the Church and Thatcham Park School at a variety of levels, working with both children and adults in the school and seeing the school as a window into our community.
-  Sharing in the pastoral work of the team including Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals
-  Discerning where the community is and comes together in Thatcham and leading the church to join in
-  Taking a lead, and building on work already done, in refreshing the vision of St Barnabas Church and in developing the gifts and creativity of the congregation in worship and mission
-  Sharing in discipleship and stewardship

Person Specification

We think that a person who will be able to make an impact in the areas we need will be a discerning **human being** with a grounded and hospitable faith who:

-  Has well developed pastoral gifts
-  Gets the best out of a diversity of others both as team leader and as team member
-  Is at ease with people in the places where they make home and community and across the whole age range, including families living in challenging circumstances
-  Communicates well with both adults and children
-  Enjoys working with schools
-  Is comfortable with informal and contemporary expressions of worship as well as more formal and traditional services

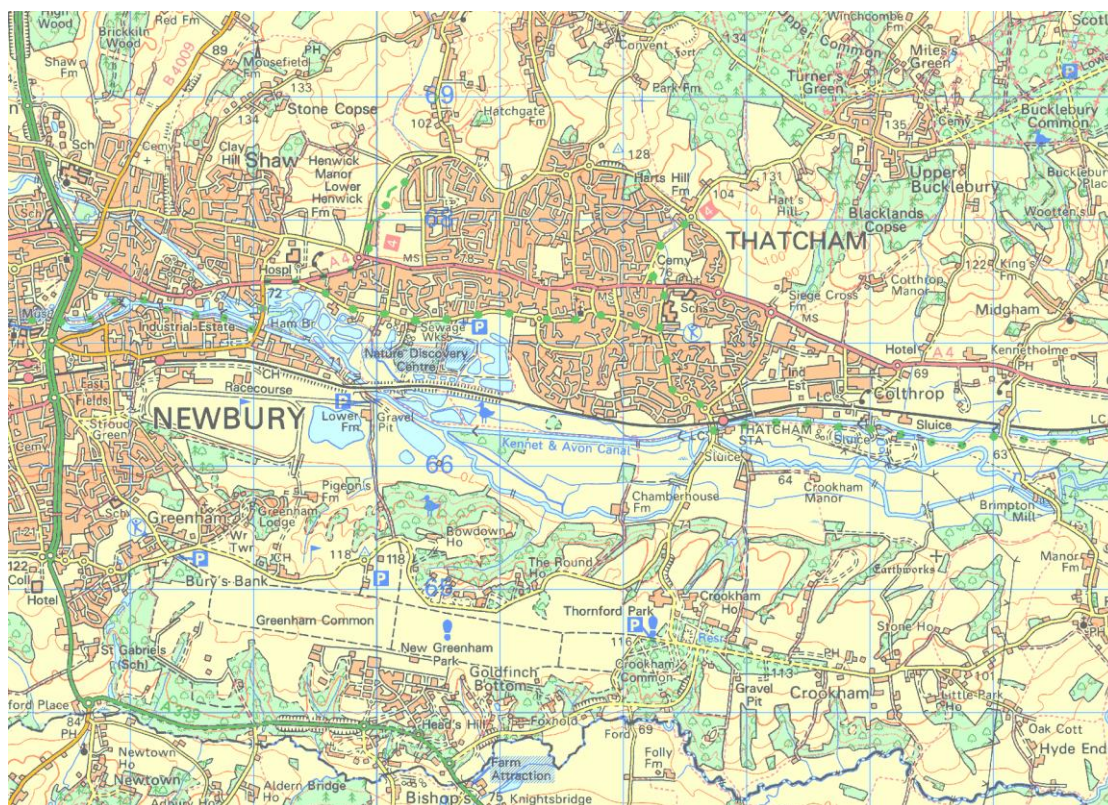
This is a post under Common Tenure open to ordained priests of the Church of England.

Introducing Thatcham

Thatcham is a market town in the historic county of Berkshire, centred 3 miles east of Newbury, 14 miles west of Reading and 54 miles west of London.

The town lies in the valley of the River Kennet with areas of beautiful countryside within easy reach. The settlement predates Newbury, but until the mid-60s it remained a village of some 5,000 people. Housing development since that time has expanded the village into a town of over 27,000 people – almost the same size as Newbury. There is easy access to the M4 and M3 with good rail links to London Paddington.

Local employment is chiefly in light industrial premises, sales and distribution, retail and public sectors. Vodafone and AWE are significant employers in the area; a number of people commute to Reading and London for work.



The annual Festival of Arts when the town showcases the skills and talents of local community groups is one of the highlights of the year. Over a period of about 2 weeks in October there are concerts, taster sessions and exhibitions to see and take part in.

Community Facilities

Thatcham can boast a vibrant and active community from social groups meeting for coffee and a chat in one of the local cafés to many people belonging to various local clubs and societies.

Parks with open green spaces are within easy reach of most residents, many with children's play equipment. Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre with its lake and reed beds offers a relaxing area to for anyone to enjoy the walks around the lake itself and down to the Kennet and Avon canal and up to Greenham Common. The Discovery Centre often organises nature and bird watching walks and activities for adults and children. Close to the Centre is the recently planted Community Orchard.



Thatcham is home to non-league football club Thatcham Town who play their matches at Waterside Park, close to the railway station and there was great jubilation amongst supporters last year when the team reached the final of a national cup competition and played at Wembley.

Newbury and Thatcham Hockey Club and Thatcham Rugby Union Football Club are based at Henwick Worthy Sports Ground. A number of youth sports teams use these grounds which also has tennis courts, netball courts, a floodlit artificial pitch (football and hockey) and 10 football pitches.

Every year the sports ground is the venue for Thatcham Fun Day. The amount of free parking makes it an ideal place for a community event.

Kennet Leisure Centre next to Kennet School and Harris Mind and Body in Church Gate offer a range of sports activities and fitness classes.

The Vicarage

The Vicarage was built as a family home within the Dunston Park estate in 1995 and is in excellent decorative order.

The house lies within the catchment area of Thatcham Park C of E Primary School and of Kennet Secondary School, (other schools are available). It is close to a Co-Op supermarket, play park, takeaways and a community centre.



The ground floor, from the spacious entrance lobby, leads to a well-proportioned kitchen with adjoining laundry room. There are 3 further reception rooms offering flexible space; they are currently used as a dining room, lounge and church office/meeting room. The latter was converted from one of the 2 garages and is fully insulated and heated.

The 1st floor has 3 double bedrooms, 1 with an en-suite, a single bedroom and separate family bathroom. The large landing window gives views of the front garden and beyond.

The front and rear gardens are laid mainly to lawn with some herbaceous borders.

The main town centre is within walking distance.



Introducing St Barnabas and St Mary's Churches

St Barnabas Church

As a church we try to live up to the example set by our namesake Barnabas the encourager. Barnabas shows us what it might be like to live out the command of Jesus 'to love one another as I have loved you'; to risk loving without limits and to encourage and support others with practical help, standing alongside them in times of need.

Our strap line is 'serving to build community' which we also try to live out. One of the ways of doing this is to be at the centre of the school community in as many ways as we are needed. We try to be a relaxed, friendly, adaptable and encouraging presence which is reflected in our worship style.

The music at St Barnabas is predominately "modern" chorus songs with some traditional hymns. The worship is led by the Music Group which comprises a piano and/or guitar leader and a small number of singers who sing the melody and/or harmony depending on the song. The songs for any given service are selected to fit with the theme (i.e. readings, sermon, and liturgical date) by the clergy but the Music Group leader is always available to suggest songs when needed. The Music Group know a broad range of songs from the Songs of Fellowship books 1-4 and are always willing to learn new ones when requested. They are capable of singing quiet, reflective songs or joyously upbeat ones and all the tonal shades in between.

Sunday services reflect a variety of worship patterns; on alternate weeks there will be either worship or a communion service. 2 or 3 times a year café worship takes place with breakfast served in the middle of the service followed by informal talks e.g. testimonies from various members of the congregation.

3 or 4 times a year Sunday on Saturday (SOS) takes the place of a Sunday service; this is a family orientated event with a theme running through each session followed by a hot meal. It is very popular with members of both churches.



Sunday on Saturday



St Barnabas are always trying out new things and this is one which has stuck and become a firm favourite and a bridge with our community. SOS is great fun and is for people of all ages! A few times a year we meet on a Saturday afternoon (instead of Sunday morning) from 4.30pm to 6.30pm. SOS is all about as many different people as possible sharing and having fun together. Through craft and worship activities we discover more about each other and the God who loves us unconditionally.

Then we share a lovely meal together.



St Mary's Church

Civic Life and the Church in Thatcham

Thatcham is a single parish with two churches, and though St Mary's provides the focus of a building, all the members of the team tend to get drawn into civic life and civic events. These include the Civic Carol Service, Remembrance Sunday (regularly over 3000 people at the war memorial and this year – 2018 – estimated at 4000) and a regular summer service at the cemetery for those who have been bereaved where local ministers from the churches lead prayers and give an address. More recently we have managed to reinstate a (brief) prayer at the turning on of the Christmas lights in the Broadway. Several of our church members have received civic awards for their service to the community while many others provide a living link with community organisations.

Sunday services follow a traditional pattern of Communion with an RSCM affiliated choir leading the worship at many of the Sunday services. There are activities for children and young people during the service apart from the first Sunday of the month which is more informal service and includes a welcome for the newly baptised and their families.

The church has a rich history of playing and performing all kinds of music. You can listen or take part either at a regular or special service or at one of the many concerts held at St. Mary's. In fact through the relationships we have developed with the Town Council, local schools and other community groups we are seeing the church used increasingly as a popular venue for a wide range of activities.



Serving our Schools

In our first draft of this profile, schools were all over the place, in just about every section – we all care about our schools so much that we all wanted to talk about our work, so we thought we'd have one section instead of lots of bits. Bishop Steven has serving our schools as a strand of his vision for the diocese, and we think we live that out, though we would like to do more and better.

With St Barnabas Church based at Thatcham Park School we have one obviously key relationship to nurture and build on. Over recent years there has been a change of gear in how the Church and the School community relate and support one another. In the December 2018 Ofsted Report we read:

'There is a palpable sense of community threaded through all aspects of life, with the school's core values integral to the family atmosphere'.

We are part of that family. Moreover,

'Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding. Staff provide excellent support for vulnerable families. The overall attendance of pupils is very high'.

We have used our contacts in the community to extend what the School has been able to achieve. And the pupils get what we are about:

Pupils have very caring attitudes towards each other. They demonstrate the highest levels of respect and tolerance. In part, this is due to the effective way in which the school promotes its values, together with the frequent opportunities pupils have to reflect upon them. One pupil commented on the strength of the school, saying: 'It's an inclusive learning environment where you do lots of different things in a Christian ethos.'

There is an opportunity to be part of something very special here, and to make a huge difference to a school which serves a surprisingly needy part of the Thatcham community. It is part of our mission to relate to both adults and children in the school community, supporting staff as well as contributing to learning and welfare.

But Thatcham Park School is not the only school in the parish. We share some of the schools work with our ecumenical partners, but we have a live relationship with all our schools. At Kennet School, for example, Revd Mark Bennet is currently chair of the Kennet School Academies Trust. One curate who wanted experience of school governance became a governor of the Parsons Down Partnership. Kennet, Spurcroft and Whitelands Park schools hold regular events at St Mary's – concerts as well as carol services. We welcome pupils on visits, and we often visit schools to talk about our work. And if we don't mention Francis Baily School in the same breath, it is because they have a long-standing relationship with Thatcham Baptist Church, and our

interaction is rather less – and definitely not because our largest local primary school has been forgotten.

When we step back a little we notice how many teachers and other school staff attend our churches, and we hope we play our part in supporting and encouraging them in the important work they do.

Two features of our work with Thatcham schools stand out – our termly breakfast with the local primary head teachers, and our annual day for Year 6 in the summer at Douai Abbey in Woolhampton, culminating in a service in their extraordinary chapel, with between 300 and 400 children in attendance.

Why do we do it? Well in a world when it seems that children are growing up without any idea of what it is to live a Christian life or to have a Christian faith, who else will show them? And Jesus taught us that our credibility comes not from our words, but from our actions.

Schools are important to us, and serving our schools is a core part of our mission. You might be interested, though, that our Team Rector once told his Theological College Principal that he didn't think he was cut out for schools work and probably wouldn't be doing any, and once didn't get appointed to a post because he'd no experience of school governance – we all make mistakes, and life brings its challenges. We don't all come into post fully-formed, but in this role we do need someone who will be on the front foot with schools and ready and willing to learn.

Head teachers' Breakfast

Ministers from the various Thatcham churches invite Head teachers from the primary schools in the Parish to breakfast once a term, giving them space and time to share the challenges and joys of their roles and for ministers to offer support and to listen to their concerns. It is an opportunity to look ahead and to see how the church may support the local schools in the best way possible. Several initiatives have built from these contacts, including the purchase of age-appropriate Bibles for schools, holiday support for vulnerable families, connections with local charities, and support in finding school governors

Douai Abbey Day



This is a Thatcham initiative which helps to prepare children moving from year 6 to year 7. It takes place at Douai Abbey and involves a morning of outdoor activities arranged by the participating schools and churches – pupils get a go at four different things – you will see one challenge in the photograph. It is a special day for all involved and draws together different schools to celebrate good endings and form new friendships for the future and ends with a service in the Abbey. This year 9 primary schools from the area and 2 secondary schools took part.

Groups and activities linked to the Thatcham Team

We have a mixture of activities, many of which are lay led – over the years some have faded while others have grown. There are opportunities to join in with existing groups as well as starting new ones. Our new Curate Leonard has some potentially exciting initiatives starting in early 2019.

Come and Meet Each Other (CAMEO)

The aim of CAMEO is to bring together people in Thatcham who live on their own, who feel lonely, or have been bereaved to chat over tea and cake, make friends and have fun and laughter. CAMEO meets weekly at St Mary's.



Each meeting incorporates time for people to talk with each other and an activity e.g. bingo, quizzes, word games, singing, beetle drive game, dominoes to name just a few followed by tea and cake. A weekly raffle of 50p covers the cost of the 4 lunches we have throughout the year.

Adults Babies Children (ABC)

This is a lively and welcoming group for absolutely anyone in St Mary's Church, and is a great way to meet other local parents & carers; we meet every Wednesday, including school holidays for crafts, refreshments, conversation and a short service.



Pathfinders

This is our group for secondary school age which takes place at St Mary's Church during the Sunday 10am service. Sometimes called Sunday school but it really is more than that, we meet together three times per month, we see films, share stories, and eat together. Nothing formal, sweets and cakes. We work our way through the Gospels and see where we can relate the teachings to our life. To compliment this we use material from Scripture Union, have quizzes and do craft. Sunday is a day when there is no school and that's how we keep it. Our time is relaxed getting to know where God wants to take us.

Younger Children

There is also a group for younger children (primary school age) which meets at 10am each Sunday in St Mary's during term time, except the 1st Sunday.

At St Barnabas the Children's discovery group find exciting ways to explore the Gospel. The children chose the name 'Discoverers' themselves. The session involves; a warm-up activity, a Bible Story often dramatized or by using puppets and figures, Discussion – often quite inhibited and a profound part of the session, Prayer and a craft activity. We often use the 'Roots' resources and the children share their theme with the congregation afterwards.

Home Groups

The groups are informal and friendly and have developed a flexible approach to choosing the subjects for study including the Emmaus course, the Gospels, and the Beatitudes. Meeting weekly the idea is to share thoughts and insights in response to a Bible passage or a topic to do with faith and life.

During the vacancy our Curate, Leonard, is running an Alpha course for some of our newer (and some older) members

Share and Prayer

This informal group meets on the 2nd Tuesday during the daytime to discuss various topics and views and give time to reflect on how God works in us and around us.

Little Churches

The last few years have seen a major expansion in the number of sheltered housing and care home complexes in Thatcham and still more are being planned. We have a team of people who visit the various homes, usually monthly.

Barfield Handbell Ringers

The team was founded in 1965 by Bill Butler when he and some of his fellow tower bell ringers of St Mary's Church started meeting to practise tune ringing at his home in Barfield Road - hence the team name. They used a set of 16

handbells purchased by the church back in 1885 for practising change ringing and the team is still using these today.

As members of the Handbell Ringers of Great Britain (HRGB), the team regularly attends regional and national events, performs an average of three concerts per year, and participates in local events such as Thatcham Arts Festival and the Civic Carol Service.

Bell Ringers

The 10 bells in St Mary's Church tower are rung by a team of ringers before the Sunday services and at other significant times.



Men's Breakfast

Once a month there is an opportunity for the men from St Mary's and St Barnabas Churches to enjoy fellowship with men from other churches in Thatcham over a tasty full English breakfast. This is hosted by the Baptist Church who also arrange for a speaker from a variety of organisations to come and share the work that they do.

Home Communion

For anyone unable to come to a church service because of illness, we will bring 'church' to you, either on a regular basis or when you request it.

Sewing Group

The sewing group help to create and maintain many of the beautiful linens/cloths in the church from altar frontals to kneelers. At the moment some of the older kneeler tapestry covers are being removed and sewn onto fabric and stored as a book.

Also throughout the year items are knitted or sewn to support fundraising events.

Memory Café

St Mary's Church meeting room provides a welcoming space for people with dementia and their carers to meet each Friday. It is a chance for all to be in a different place where short term memories can helped to be formed. Volunteers from the church often visit too.

Churches Together in Thatcham (CTiT)

For a large number of years the churches in Thatcham has been part of Churches Together, both in Berkshire and nationally. In Thatcham this group consists of St Mary's, St Barnabas, Thatcham Baptist, Thatcham Methodist Church, The Well (which was until recently Thatcham Free Church), Our Lady of the Assumption Roman Catholic and the United Reformed Church. The ministers meet together each month for prayer, reflection, support and share planning for upcoming activities. An executive committee plans joint activities and services alongside advertising Christmas and Easter to the local community.

Activities include the Douai Abbey day, but also sharing in civic events like the Carol Service, Remembrance Sunday, and the annual service at the town cemetery. There are activities on the Broadway on Good Friday, Lent Lunches, and daily prayers and a pulpit swap during the week of prayer for Christian Unity. We have had united services on Advent Sunday and Pentecost, and a quarterly "Prayer for Thatcham" meeting. Our strong relationships mean that if we have a good idea, we generally find a way of doing it.

Mission and Growth

The mission statements of our two churches echo in all that we do; we are passionate about 'serving to build community' because we are 'inspired by the love of Christ to build God's Kingdom' here in Thatcham.

To do this effectively we are building a more Christ-like church, compassionate, courageous and contemplative as encouraged and

challenged by Bishop Steven. We try to reflect this in our sermons and talks, home groups, activities and everyday conversations with one another.

This Parish Profile is written as we prepare for Christmas, you may be reading it in a different season but our mission is the same – to take the light of Christ into our community.

We joined other local churches in a pilot of a 'Partnership for Missional Church' inevitably known as PMC. The Partnership has encouraged us to join in specific spiritual practices which open our eyes to God at work in our community and community partners.

We have also been encouraged to discern with care what we choose to do and where we should take our next steps in faith.

It quickly became evident that St Barnabas congregation were already building relationships with the community in many places but a significant achievement is the firm, collaborative relationship that has been built with the PTA at Thatcham Park C of E School.

A newly developed team from St Mary's discerned that God was leading them to work with teenagers who hang out in the centre of Thatcham or in the parks in the evening. The team are working with Detached Youth Workers in the area but there is still much to be done for this to be effective.

Current Service Structures

St Barnabas Church

Sunday

10am	Morning Services
1 st Sunday	Worship
2 nd Sunday	Communion, children's groups
3 rd Sunday	Worship
4 th Sunday	Communion, children's groups
5 th Sunday	Communion, children's groups

- On periodic occasions Café Worship replaces All Age Worship
- Baptism Welcome is included when appropriate
- Periodically SOS (Sunday on Saturday) from 4.30pm – 6pm replaces the Sunday service

St Mary's Church

Sunday

8am	Holy Communion (CW)
10am Services	Common Worship
1 st Sunday	Parish Communion, music group, baptism welcome
2 nd Sunday	Parish Communion, choir, children's groups
3 rd Sunday	Parish Communion, choir, children's workshop
4 th Sunday	Parish Communion, choir, children's groups
5 th Sunday	Parish Communion, choir, children's groups
2 nd & 4 th Sundays	Baptisms at 12noon and 3pm

6.30pm Evening Services

1 st Sunday	Sung Evensong (BCP)
3 rd Sunday	Healing Service

There are occasional evening services with our ecumenical partners. We hold an annual service for people recently bereaved, and a number of civic services during the year

Wednesday

9.45am	Holy Communion (CW)
10.30am	ABC (Adults Babies Children)

Every Weekday

9am to 9.30am	Morning Prayer
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Some Facts about our Churches

Occasional Services

Thatcham is a large parish where ministry is shared with ecumenical colleagues. Nonetheless we find that we have more baptisms, weddings and funerals than many of the churches round about. There are some facts to grow your understanding of who we are.

The occasional offices statistics fluctuate from year to year. However as a guide to the frequency of the services taken, in 2017 we conducted 76 Baptisms, 26 Weddings, and 44 Funerals. In addition there were 3 Confirmations.

Electoral Roll, Usual Sunday Attendance Figures and Family Roll

At the 2018 APCM 193 names were on the Electoral roll from St Mary's and St Barnabas. The usual Sunday attendance figures for 2017 for St Mary's were 85 and for St Barnabas 26. At Easter 2017 this was 201 and at Christmas 2017 this was 687, at St Mary's. We also have a database known as the family roll showing the local people we are often in contact with and including the electoral roll totals approximately 350 people.

Money

However we think about it, we can't get away from the fact that Thatcham faces a financial challenge. Like many churches much of the support comes from a few committed people, who feel like a diminishing band. Over recent years we have run a small deficit most years and we are running out of resources to make the difference. We are therefore looking at doing rather more intentional fundraising (we hope there will be some fun events), and looking beyond our traditional supporters as well as revisiting our teaching on stewardship. The message of the Gospel is close to our heart, so we cannot afford for money to be the first or only message people hear – but we know we can't sustain our mission if we are unable to pay our way.

Pastoral Policies

Children and Communion Policy

Following its nurture programme for young people, the parish of Thatcham has seen the admission of children to communion as one of its central features. Children are seen to be fellow pilgrims on the journey of faith and are nurtured through all stages of that journey. Usually at the age of seven (or earlier if that is seen to be good for the child's development) the children are prepared for Holy Communion and admitted during the service on Advent Sunday at St Mary's.

At St Barnabas Church children are admitted to Holy Communion when they are ready.

The parish sees baptism as the entry into full membership of the church community and communion is therefore offered to all who have been baptised.

Second Marriage Policy

The PCC has agreed to the marriage of divorced people under the bishops' guidelines with a process of appropriate pastoral care.

Safeguarding

The PCC has fully implemented the policy for the well-being of both children and vulnerable adults based upon the diocesan guidelines. All children and youth leaders have been approved by the PCC and have completed DBS checks as recommended. This is kept under review in accordance with national guidelines. All appropriate people have undergone Safeguarding training. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Appendix (i) – Our Prayer Diary

We thought we'd include our prayer diary because we find that we pray about the things we care about. There are some edits we need to make to reflect changes and new initiatives, but it will give you another window into our work and our community.

Praying day by day

- 1 Those recently baptised, and all who will be baptised this month.
For those exploring confirmation or a vocation to lay or ordained ministry.
- 2 The recently bereaved. The work of the Samaritans and Cruse. West Berkshire Crematorium, Thatcham Cemetery and the funeral directors who serve Thatcham. For CAMEO.
- 3 Churches Together in Thatcham Unity and co-operation.
- 4 The clergy team. Our three churchwardens. The growth of lay leadership. The PCC, its committees and working groups.
All those who serve on our rotas.
- 5 All who live and work in Central Thatcham, and along the A4.
For the public transport that serves Thatcham – trains, buses and taxis.
- 6 Our linked diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman in South Africa.
St Michael and All Angels Church in Batlharos.
- 7 Our home groups and confirmation groups, leaders and members, and all who are growing in their Christian faith.
- 8 The people who come through the doors of our churches.
- 9 For imagination and boldness in engaging new people with the Good News of God's love for us shown in Jesus. For the Partnership for Missional Church and the team involved.
- 10 For all those who will not eat today, for the homeless and those in financial hardship. For the West Berks Food Bank, its volunteers and referrers, Loose Ends and the Two Saints hostel.
- 11 The uniformed organisations of Thatcham – Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Cubs, Rainbows, Beavers, Rangers, Boys' and Girls' Brigades.
For the Royal British Legion.
- 12 For all who live and work in North Thatcham, Dunston Park, The Whitelands Estate, the Rivers Estate
- 13 The secondary schools which serve Thatcham and their pupils, staff and governors. COINS outreach work.
- 14 Those recently married and those preparing for marriage.
For those whose relationships are fragile or broken.
For our organists, choir, musicians bellringers and handbell ringers.

- 15 For those who live in Sheltered Accommodation and Residential Homes. For those who are struggling or isolated or lonely in their own homes
- 16 Those caught up in addiction or vice – those dependent on drugs or criminal behaviour to get them through the day
- 17 All who work in Thatcham. For the Almshouses and the Thatcham Parochial Charities. For our pastoral group.
- 18 For the health service, our Doctors, Nurses, Midwives and Dentists, the West Berkshire Hospital and our health centres. For Thornford Park and Prospect Park.
- 19 Our work with children and young people – The BeAt, Pathfinders, Explorers, ABC – for those who lead and those who come. The Bus of Hope.
- 20 All who live and work in the South of Thatcham, the Moors, Kennet Heath and Station Road
- 21 The work of Christian Aid, US (was USPG) and the Childrens' Society. For our mission links.
- 22 People without purpose or direction in their lives, or who suffer in body mind and spirit. For those feeling overwhelmed by circumstances. For students suffering with mental health issues.
- 23 The primary schools and pre-schools which serve Thatcham, including our local church school - Thatcham Park School.
- 24 The local economy, banks and building societies. For the Broadway the High Street, the Kingsland Centre and the market.
- 25 All who live and work in the East of Thatcham, Siege Cross, Kennet Lea and Crookham Common
- 26 West Berkshire Council, Thatcham Town Council, the mayor and the council staff.
All whose voluntary efforts contribute to the life of our town. For the volunteer bureau and the transport it provides
- 27 The Mothers Union in the UK and around the world.
- 28 The colleges that serve Thatcham and those studying at university. For those who use the town's leisure facilities, and for those who run and maintain them.
- 29 All who live and work in the West of Thatcham, Lower Way, Henwick Lane and Benham Hill
- 30 The emergency services which serve Thatcham. For our Police Community Support Officers.
- 31 Those who work away from home, and those whose work patterns separate them from their families.

Parish links to remember in prayer

Schools

In the parish

Fir Tree Primary School
Francis Baily Primary School
Kennet School
Parsons Down Infant School
Parsons Down Junior School
Spurcroft Primary School
Thatcham Park School
Whitelands Park School
The Reintegration Service
The Oaks

Associated with the parish

Cold Ash VA Primary School
Newbury College
St Bartholomew's School
Trinity School

Ecumenical Partners

Thatcham Baptist Church
Thatcham Community Church
Thatcham Free Church
Thatcham Methodist Church
Thatcham United Reformed Church
Our Lady of the Assumption RC

Mission Partners

US – St Frances Ketete, Zambia
Sarah Lowe
Sharon Wilcox

Newbury Deanery

East Downland Benefice
Greenham
Hermitage Team Ministry
Hungerford with Denford
Lambourn Valley
Newbury St Nics with Speen
Newbury St George with St John
Shaw cum Donnington
Thatcham Team Ministry
Walbury Beacon
West Downland Benefice

Retired Clergy of the Deanery

Area Dean: Mark Bennet
Archdeacon: Olivia Graham
Area Bishop: Andrew Proud
Diocesan Bishop: Steven Croft
The Diocesan Office
Christ Church Cathedral

Appendix (ii) Useful Web Links

Oxford Diocese

<http://www.oxford.anglican.org>

St Mary's Church

<http://www.stmarysthatcham.org.uk>

St Barnabas Church

<https://stbarnabasthatcham.weebly.com>

Thatcham Park C of E Primary School

<https://www.thatchampark.w-berks.sch.uk/>

Kennet School

<https://www.kennetschool.co.uk/app/os#!/home>

For further information please contact:

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