



The Benefice of Ashchurch and Kemerton

BENEFICE PROFILE

“Everyone has something Jesus Christ has given them which has to be shared with the whole community.”

Dr Rowan Williams

Welcome to our Benefice



- Our Benefice of two parishes lies east and north of Tewkesbury, close to the Cotswolds.
- Ashchurch is semi-rural with large areas of housing either side of the M5 motorway and scattered hamlets to the east with a total population of around 8,000. The population will increase when several new housing schemes become a reality.
- Kemerton is a small village community of just over 400 people.
- A diverse Benefice formed 7 years ago, when the previous rector of Kemerton retired.



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Our schools



- Within Ashchurch there are four primary schools, also a secondary school and a special needs school.
- The “Open the Book” team from Ashchurch visit three of the primary schools once a month. The interim priest now holds an assembly in two of these schools which is valued.
- Kemerton has a play school only.



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Engaging the next generation 1

We asked the children of our parish primary schools what they would like to see in our new priest. Here's what they told us...

“Interesting”

“Visit the school”

“Faith in other people”

“Caring”

“Willing to take care of the church and congregation”

“Brave in front of an audience”

“Be friendly and kind”

“Good at conversation”

“A Prayerful Person”

“Loves God”

“Not shy to speak out”

“Good at doing things with children”

“Inspired”



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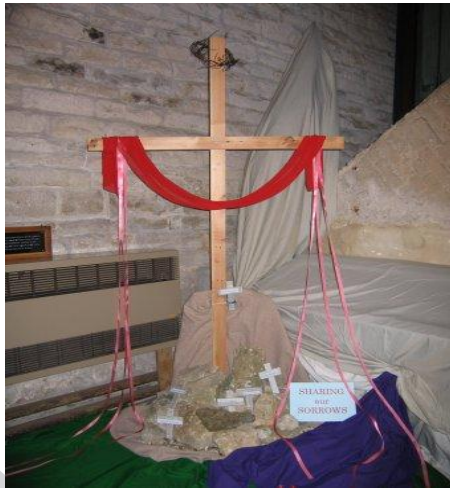
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Engaging the next generation 2



Little Fishes

This simple service is designed for pre-school children and their carers. Mums, Dads, Grandparents, and child minders are all welcome with children from babies to school age.



Experience Easter

Children from local primary schools are invited to take part in this interactive and stimulating activity in church when we seek to teach and explore the truths of the Easter story.



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Values, Vision, Growth and Opportunity

- We value our present mode of worship which we would like to nurture.
- We appreciate that for our parishes to grow we must engage with the younger generation and, with our Priest, go out into the community.
- Both parishes have small congregations and to survive we must change to appeal to the wider community but to do so we must re-energise. The opportunity for growth is immense.
- We believe in the importance of lay ministry in partnership with the clergy.
- We are a Benefice that is full of energy and optimism for the future.



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Our new priest

- Our priest will need to be open to the challenges of ministry in both urban and rural parishes, while respecting our existing traditions.
- The vision to develop the ministry to the schools in the benefice.
- Lead and inspire both congregations to be fully involved in a full church life.
- Build a viable vision and share our optimism of the future for both parishes.
- Bring infectious enthusiasm, motivation and energy to our Churches work in the communities.



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What we can offer

- Both parishes have a Lay Worship Team who lead the All-Age service during the vacancy.
- Ashchurch has a panel of 5 who are authorised to assist the priest with the Holy Sacraments and Kemerton has a team of 4.
- The churchwardens have realised during the Interregnum that there several duties which they could fulfil for the new priest.
- Church members already provide pastoral services in our communities.
- There is a possibility of a Lay Reader, who lives in Ashchurch being licensed once we have a new priest.



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Pattern of services

- Eucharistic (Common Worship) services are held in both parishes every Sunday except the last per month when an All-Age service is held.
- Ashchurch has a Holy Communion (BCP) every Sunday.
- Refreshments are served after the main services in both churches.
- Every Tuesday a Holy Communion (CW) is held in the side chapel at Ashchurch by our Interim Priest.
- All major festivals are celebrated, some of which are run as Benefice services.
- The average Occasional Services held over the last three years have been:
Weddings: 28 (17 Jan to Aug 2014, 7 more booked for 2014 and 6 for 2015)
Baptisms: 50 (28 Jan to Aug 2014 and 21 booked for the rest of 2014 so far)
Funerals: 45 (20 held up to the end August 2014)



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St. Nicholas, Ashchurch - Buildings



- The church is a Grade II* listed building of the Norman period, initially built about 1145 with numerous additions over the centuries.
- Within the church there is a modern quiet room where parents can take their young children but still partake of the service. This room is also used for mid week meetings etc.

- A scheme of re-ordering is being pursued involving removal of the front pew to create more space for movement in front of the Rood screen. Shortening of the three back pews to provide circulation area at the tea/coffee counter. In addition replacing the stone flags at the font.
- The PCC are actively investigating replacing the existing pipe organ with an digital organ, which will also provide additional floor area.
- The existing Grade II listed vicarage is being re-configured by the diocese to make it suitable for the 21st century.



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St. Nicholas, Ashchurch - Finance

- Income and expenses are approximately £50,000 per year and total funds are at £83,000.
- The General and Fabric funds stand at about £35,000 each, the rest is in funds for the bells, organ etc.
- We have not met our full ministry cost for several years, but have agreed to a 5% yearly increase. Total funds have been rising over recent years and is now £3,000 more than in 2010.
- A significant proportion of regular giving is through the Diocesan Parish Giving Scheme.



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St Nicholas, Kemerton

- Our church dates from the 1200's, but it was comprehensively rebuilt by a Victorian rector (apart from the tower). The current building, which is Grade II* listed, largely dates from 1845.
- The fabric is in good condition, and we now have a social and family corner with a built-in toilet.
- The graveyard, church cleaning and flowers are all kept in good condition by volunteers and supporters.
- We expect to continue to invest in our church, to keep it as an effective and welcoming building both for its regular congregation, and for visitors and special services.



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St Nicholas, Kemerton - Finance

- Our savings position is sound, with over £80,000 in reserves. We anticipate a substantial bill for internal re-decoration in due course, though this is not urgent.
- Since joining the benefice, we have been paying a third of the benefice Parish Share. Increasingly, we have had to draw on reserves to do so. We have now told the diocese that we will need to drop to a quarter Parish Share in 2015.
- We hope that we will be able to return to a more generous position once we can rebuild our church's membership and support.



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St. Nicholas, Kemerton – Our future diocese?

We value our shared benefice with Ashchurch, and our good working relationship with the staff of Gloucester diocese. However ...

- Kemerton village is in Worcestershire, and all our neighbouring churches are in Worcester diocese. Our local connections, particularly schooling, are Worcester-based.
- Gloucester diocese has reviewed our ministry position, and supports our belief that moving to Worcester diocese should give us a stronger future, by working in partnership with our neighbouring churches and communities.

With this as our likely future, we must still care for tomorrow ...

- We look forward to developing our ministry within our present benefice, under the leadership of our new priest.
- Although we are a small rural parish compared to Ashchurch, we share the same values and hopes, and we wish to offer similar contributions to the growth of effective ministry.



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