

## IME2 Placement Profile

### The Parishes of St Matthew, St Leonards on Sea and St Ethelburga, West St Leonards

#### TRAINING INCUMBENT INTERVIEW

*Rev Matthew Foy*



**Tell us about your ordained ministry to date:**

I was ordained in 2016 following my theological training at Oak Hill College. I served my curacy in the London Diocese and I moved to become Priest in Charge of St Matthew and St Ethelburga in 2019. Prior to my appointment, each church had their own incumbent. My role has therefore been about drawing the parishes together and creating a pattern for sustainable ministry, mission and outreach.

I am a reformed evangelical by theological conviction and see the ministry of word and prayer as a key priority in ordained ministry.

Since 2024 I have also been Rural Dean of Hastings and have recently been an Assistant Archdeacon whilst the post of the Archdeacon of Hastings was vacant. I am therefore very familiar with the Diocesan structures and have good relations with local clergy. Both churches are actively involved in both deanery chapter and synod.

#### **What are your current priorities in ministry?**

I am passionate about helping local people follow Jesus Christ. Both the churches are made up of a wonderful cross section of local people that increasingly reflects the diversity of our parishes.



The parishes themselves are some of the most deprived in the country and our two church schools have around 30-40% of children on free school meals. This means I have had to work hard to ensure our services are clear, faithful and accessible for local people.



Since my arrival, I have worked hard at keeping Jesus Christ crucified at the centre of both churches. I have introduced expository bible teaching on a Sunday and, by the grace God, we have seen people to come to faith.

It has been a joy in recent months to welcome a number to church who are exploring the Christian faith

but have no previous church background. We are currently exploring how best to disciple these people and as they come to faith to use their gifts in church life.

We are also connected to two church primary schools, with whom we have a really good relationship. This means we have the privilege of leading collective worship to over 1000 children each week.

Following 6.5 years of consolidation and slow but steady numerical growth, the two parishes are about to begin a significant new chapter. In March 2026 we are hoping to announce some significant investment as part of the Diocesan Investment Programme. Any curate joining this summer would be joining as we begin an exciting chapter of outreach, evangelism and discipleship.



I would hope that a curacy in the two parishes would give someone a wide experience of all aspects of parochial ministry and would prepare someone well for a future incumbency. There would be plenty of opportunity for preaching, small group work, personal discipleship, occasional offices, outreach and work with schools.

## TRAINING CONTEXT

### What metaphor would you use to describe the Curate/TI training relationship?

I would see us as being fellow workers in the Gospel, working together for the glory of Christ. I would hope that my relationship with any curate would be similar to the relationship Paul has with those he trained, equipped and built up in the pastoral epistles.

### What would your ideal ministry team look like?

I have always sought to recruit diverse teams of people each bringing their own gifts, ideas and experiences to the role. I would hope that our ministry team would model Christ in how they love and care for one another. All our pastoral staff hold our evangelical convictions.

### What types of people do you find it hard to work with?

I am used to working in a very diverse context and I have learnt to be generous and patient with all. I struggle most to share leadership with those who have small view of God and all he can do among us!

## INFORMATION

**Church Website:** [www.stmatts.co.uk](http://www.stmatts.co.uk)  
[www.stethelburga.org.uk](http://www.stethelburga.org.uk)

### Service Pattern:

10am Morning Service at St Ethelburga [ASA 45-50 adults and 5-10 children]  
11am Morning Service at St Matthews [ASA 60-65 adults and 10-15 children]

Monthly Messy Church at St Ethelburga

### Groups, Activities, Mission Opportunities and Schools

#### Staff and Team Members

There are no PTO clergy or readers based at either church. Rev James Clarke former Vicar of All Saints Lindfield provides some clergy cover at St Matthews.



St Matthew's Church employs two part time administrators and a part time caretaker. They will be advertising for a new full time Families and Schools Worker this Spring.

St Ethelburga's Church has a part time Families Worker who started in June 2025 and has a volunteer administrator and volunteer families' worker.

#### Extent of lay involvement in the church:

Significant at both churches. St Matthew's Church has 3 Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs) and St Ethelburga's Church has 5 ALMs.

#### House, study and prayer groups:

We have a range of midweek groups at both churches and over 100 people are part of a midweek group across the churches. We also have monthly prayer gatherings for both churches, attended by a total 25-35 each month.

#### Parochial organisations:

We are linked to two church primary schools.

St Matthew's Church is linked to St Paul's CE Academy c.650 children  
St Ethelburga's Church is linked to St Leonard's CE Primary Academy c.420 children

#### Mission Activities

St Ethelburga's Church

- Weekly Toddler Group
- Community Choir
- Weekly Friday evening social group

St Matthew's Church

- Two weekly groups for seniors



- Weekly Community Café
- Weekly Toddler Group
- Annual Holiday Club for 5-11s
- Befrienders to the Christians Against Poverty Debt Centre

