

## IME2 Placement Profile

### The Parish of Eastbourne, St Mary the Virgin, Old Town

#### TRAINING INCUMBENT INTERVIEW

##### *The Reverend Arwen Mary Folkes*

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

After three years training at Westcott House, Cambridge, I was ordained in 2016 and served my title parish in the Diocese of Truro. I took up my first incumbency of two small Sussex parishes in 2019 and served them for just over five years. Since August 2024 I have been the Vicar of Eastbourne, leading and serving in the ancient civic parish church of this town. As an anglican-catholic priest, the ministry I exercise is rooted in the traditions of the church, encountering Christ in the Sacraments and Word, held through liturgy and prayer. These are the source of all else we do. I am driven by church growth and helping people to return to their faith, deepen their faith or enter it for the first time. With a background in the community sector and local politics, building and contributing to the wider community is vital - as I often say, 'the Eucharist is not complete until it leads to service in the world'. I am committed to collaborative ministry and strengthening the ministries of others in the various callings that make up the Body of Christ. This means that the Anglican charge to hold the 'Cure of Souls' for a geographical area shapes, guides and informs my understanding of what it is to be the Parish Church. It helps that I grew up in lighthouses (my father was a keeper) and so the sense of the church being the lighthouse for the people is an enduring and guiding vision. I have BA & MA in theology and a specialism in St. Augustine of Hippo and my current doctoral studies are taking that academic research into conversation with the patristic thinkers who have shaped Eastern Orthodoxy.



**Mthr. Arwen Folkes**  
Vicar of St Mary's

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

Being in priestly ministry is like being the conductor of an orchestra. There are many parts and aspects which make up the complete symphony and all have their place and are equally important, therefore it is getting the balance between these things that provides a constant challenge to any priest and parish. Personally, I am passionate about excellent teaching and preaching, meaningful and enriching formation of the laity, of good pastoral care across all ages, beautiful liturgical practice for worship and leading the church to be safe, faithful, welcoming and able to bear an honest and confident witness to the work of God amongst us. For these priorities to be met, it is necessary to work hard to make sure that the building and administrative demands are organised and do not become a distraction.

## TRAINING CONTEXT

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



For this I have to return to my lighthouse roots. The curate–incumbent relationship is something like a Principal Keeper and a trainee keeper tending the same lighthouse. They work side by side, learning the rhythm of the light, the weight of responsibility, and the quiet disciplines that keep the beam sweeping out across the dark.

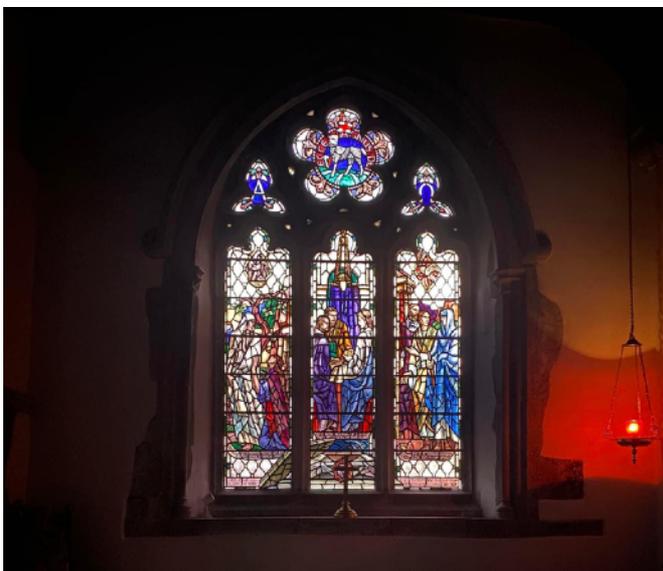
For a time, the Principal Keeper carries the ultimate responsibility. They show how to clean the lenses, check the mechanisms, read the weather, and listen to the sea. They teach not by command, but by presence. The trainee keeps watch with them, learning the art of tending a light that is never their possession, only their charge.

But in a lighthouse, change comes quietly. One evening you realise the trainee keeper has already checked the lamp, adjusted the bearings, noted the fog, and wound the clockwork without being asked. The light is shining because they kept it shining. Formation completes itself in that moment – when the trainee becomes a keeper in their own right. The Principal Keeper does not disappear; they simply step back, confident that the light will still sweep across the water.

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

Above everything I pray daily for a team that is mature and collaborates well in ministry, working with honesty, faith, and a genuine respect for one another. A team who take safeguarding seriously enough to hold one another accountable. In my

ideal ministry team I hope that we all keep our eyes firmly fixed on Christ, praying regularly together and instinctively reflecting on the places where God is evident and working hard to identify and reach into the places in need of such presence.



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

I welcome difference in a ministry team as long as it is held in a spirit of collaboration. Being a can-do person I struggle with people if they are overly negative or defeatist, cultivating a vibrant and energising virtue of hope is vital for the growth, witness and well-being of any church community.



## INFORMATION

Church Website: <https://www.stmaryseastbourne.co.uk>

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/eastbourneparish](http://www.facebook.com/eastbourneparish)

### Service Pattern:

#### Sundays:

8am BCP (1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays)  
9.45am CW Sung Eucharist with full choir  
12.15pm BCP (2nd & 4th Sundays)  
3.30pm Family Mass (1st Sunday of every month)  
6pm Evensong (Choral on 2nd Sunday, Sung with  
Benediction on 3rd Sunday, Sung on fourth Sunday)

**Mon - Thurs** 9am Morning Prayer



#### Wednesday

10.30am Midweek Communion (BCP 1st Weds & CW all others)  
4pm Silent Prayer  
7pm Online Compline

### Groups, Activities, Mission Opportunities and Schools

We are a very busy parish with a very engaged church community. The doors of the church are kept open every day for the community to enter for peace and prayer and this often leads to some acute pastoral needs. The electoral roll stands at 220 with attendance at our main service of around 120. New faces pop up all the time. We have a beautiful 16th century Parish Hall which houses the following church groups:

Noah's Ark Play group (Monday am)  
Stitchers Group (Tuesday am)  
Community Coffee (Thursday am)  
Mother's Union (Thursday pm)  
Junior Choir (Thursday pm)  
Adult Choir (Thursday pm)  
Gardening Team (Friday am)  
Pastoral Care Team (when needed)  
Vicar's Book group  
Regular Talks and courses  
History Group  
Spic n Span Cleaning Team  
Social Committee  
Flower Guild  
Bellingring Team for our eight bells



In addition to this we serve in the wider community with activities such as the Cozy Book Club (Pashley Rd School), Gildredge House School & Eastbourne College, a care home ministry, dog show & Pet Service, the Old Town Church Leaders, Motcombe Pool project, and much more is in development.





**ST MARY'S, OLD TOWN**

# ADVENT WORKSHOP

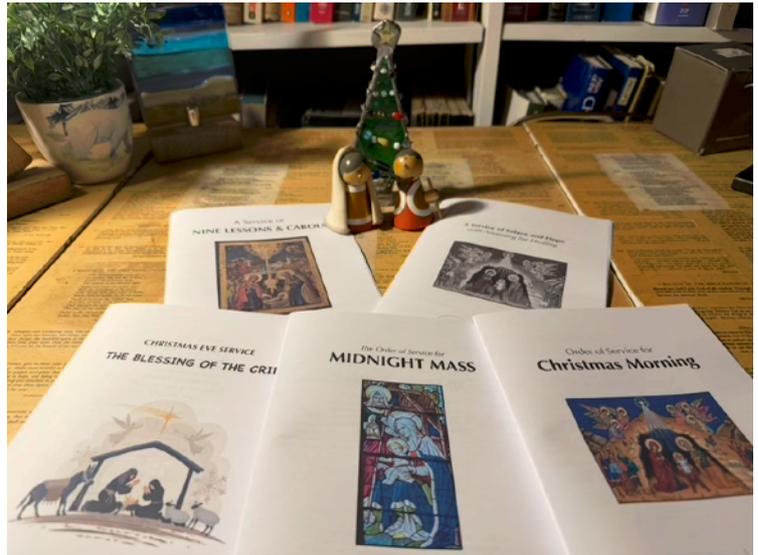
**SUNDAY DEC 7th 2.30pm-4pm**

For Families with children 3-11yrs  
Followed by a service of



# CHRISTINGLE & TREE BLESSING

**DEC 7th 4pm**



**Booking Essential**  
scan here to book your free place!



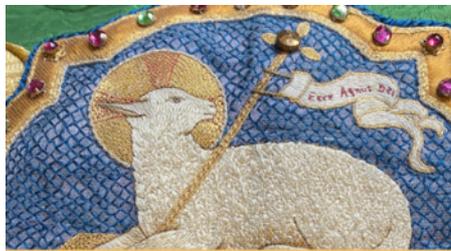
## ALL SAINTS & ALL SOULS

**All Saints - Sunday 2nd Nov**

8am BCP Eucharist  
9.45am Sung Eucharist  
3.30pm Family Eucharist

**All Souls' - Monday 3rd Nov**

7pm Requiem Mass for All Souls'



## The Fabric of Faith

An exhibition weekend to celebrate a beautiful history with displays of textiles, artefacts & guided talks

### Exhibition Opening Times

Fri 6th & Sat 7th June ~ 10-4pm  
Sun 8th June ~ 1-4pm

Free entry but donations welcome  
Refreshments will be served

*Come and see your parish church in detail*



# Civic Carol Service

**Saturday 13th December 2025**

Church of St Mary the Virgin,  
Church Street, Eastbourne, BN21 1HS

**From 4pm**

At the end of the service, a retiring collection will be held in aid of the Mayor's chosen charities:

Mayor's Charities  
2025/26



Book tickets online at Eventbrite:

[www.eventbrite.com/e/inspiring-angels-civic-carol-service-tickets-1700997147239](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/inspiring-angels-civic-carol-service-tickets-1700997147239)

[www.facebook.com/eastbourneangels](https://www.facebook.com/eastbourneangels)

[www.eastbourneangels.com](http://www.eastbourneangels.com)



FOR THOSE WHO FIND CHRISTMAS DIFFICULT

# A SERVICE OF SOLACE & HOPE

5.30PM 22ND DECEMBER

CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF THE

# Epiphany

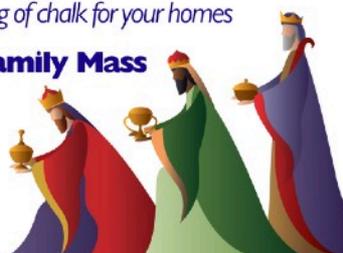
4th JANUARY 2026

**8am BCP Said Service**

**9.45 Sung Eucharist**

*with the blessing of chalk for your homes*

**3.30pm Family Mass**



ST MARY THE VIRGIN

Eastbourne Parish

## PARISH MAGAZINE



IMAGE TAKEN BY KEVIN GORDON