



St Mary's Church Northiam

To the Glory of God, serving the community in love

Enthusiastic leader wanted as incumbent (0.5) for this single benefice evangelical parish church in the historic village of Northiam. Bible based teaching, together with a strong pastoral ministry are essential.

Northiam offers a beautiful location, an active and engaged village community and a welcoming, committed church fellowship. The Rectory is a 5 bedroom, modern detached home in the centre of the village.

We hope you can bring enthusiasm, energy and ideas to help us share God's love with our neighbours and bring them into a relationship with Him.

Our Vision at St Mary's is to be:

- A Worshipping Community
- A Growing Community
- A Loving Community
- An Outreaching Community

Are you the Rector we need?

We are looking for someone who, fired by the Spirit:

- has a passion for preaching the Gospel
- will champion prayer, personally and corporately
- has a desire to see church growth
- will engage with the local community, both churched and unchurched
- will build on the existing strong relationship with our Primary School
- will help us re-establish fellowship with members of the village who attend church elsewhere as well as maintain close ties with our Deanery churches.





Our Parish

The Parish of Northiam is nestled in glorious rolling countryside with wonderful walks through fields and woods which energise and refresh the spirit. Northiam is in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with easy access to beautiful countryside, the unique habitat of Romney Marsh and the tourist areas of Camber Sands, the Cinque Ports of Rye and Hastings, Bewl Water, Bedgebury Pinetum and, within the village, the world famous Great Dixter House & Gardens and a station on the Kent & East Sussex Railway (steam and diesel engines).

Northiam is home to about 2,250 people in approximately 1100 homes, mainly owner-occupied, with two areas of social housing, with some second homes. It is a long village developed along the A28, with a central Conservation area.

Although we are in the heart of farming land, increasingly we will be peopled by folk who have no direct connection with past rural life, but by those seeking a pleasant place to retire or to bring up their families.

Unusually for a village of this size, we are able to be reasonably self sufficient, having two convenience stores, one incorporating the Post Office, a Bakery/cafe, hairdresser and beauty salon, DIY store and large veterinary practice. These are supplemented by many small businesses operating from homes and offices as well as our farms and other rural enterprises. A high standard of medical provision is provided by our Doctors' Surgery, Optician and Dentist.

All major supermarkets can be found within a 10 mile radius, and a wider range of shops are available in Tunbridge Wells and Ashford.

Our Sports Hall was built in 2007 following a community fundraising drive, winning support from the Lottery, East Sussex County Council and Rother District Council and provides a shared community/school resource.

Our Playing Fields, in the heart of the village, are home to the Football and Bowls Clubs as well as providing a children's play area and the venue for our annual Midsummer Festival, Boot Fairs and other communal activities, including Open Air Church Services.

We also have Village Cricket, Snooker, Badminton and Shortmat Bowls Clubs, and a wide range of Keep Fit activities in the Pretious Sports Hall and Village Hall.

Larger Leisure Centres, including swimming pools, are found in Tenterden, Rye & Hastings.

Northiam is a lively village with active involvement by a high proportion of residents. We hope to attract you to our community as much as to our church, as the two are intertwined. A range of interests and hobbies are covered by Northiam Societies and Clubs, and if yours isn't yet covered, we are sure you will find fellow enthusiasts to join you.

As an exciting recent development, the village undertook to purchase 34 acres of pastureland in the centre of the village, which had previously been the site of the Blue Cross animal sanctuary. Although the pandemic has slowed down developments, already the managing committee have established a community orchard and run an occasional pop-up pub (which is very well received!) and land has been allocated for a natural burial ground near the church.





St Mary's Church

Church members are active in all aspects of village life, and have warmly welcomed large numbers of families to the church for school services and at Christmas. Our vision is to extend that welcome throughout the year on a weekly/monthly basis.

Weddings and Baptisms are less frequent than in the past, but are still a joyful part of our ministry, and many local people prefer to have their funeral service held in their home church.

Worship

As the Parish Church, we welcome members of all denominations of the Christian church, and aim to glorify God by offering an inclusive style of worship, combining tradition with use of modern communication, so that the Gospel is accessible to all.

Until the interregnum, we have held a Service of Holy Communion (BCP) at 8am each Sunday, with Holy Communion (CW) once a month at 10.30am. Morning Worship on the other Sundays, at 10.30am, follows the Service of the Word. Music is provided by our organist, using Hymns Old & New, supplemented by Worship Songs in various formats. Messy Church was a monthly service at 4pm on a Sunday.

During the week, we have met in Home Groups, and recently (January) completed our latest Alpha course, which became somewhat extended due to restrictions on meetings in the past years. At recent Christmases, we have assembled a `scratch choir` of 40+ local residents and primary school children which has proved very popular.

People

Some members of our church family are now housebound, and are visited by church members, and we would like to reinstate offering Holy Communion to people in their homes. There is a weekly Seniors' lunch club in the Village Hall assisted by many church members.

Aware that our church family lacks younger members we earnestly pray that God will send us someone who, though not working full time, will be able to engage with the many young families in the village – a visible ordained presence who can both reach out to those who do not yet know Christ's love and lead those who do to a deeper faith based on God's word in the Bible.

Clearly that person will be well organised, faithful, caring, lively and committed. A tall order? Yes, certainly, but with God's help not impossible. We, at St. Mary's, will offer prayerful and practical support.

Outside our boundaries, we have links with a missionary in Chad through AIM, we support Family Support Work (and a member of our congregation is a Practitioner covering the Rye area) and the village as a whole has close links with Chitiwiri, a village in Malawi, thanks to a retired teacher who originally made contact through Starfish Malawi.





Buildings & Resources

The church building dates from the 12th century, with later additions, and is generally in good condition, with recent or current work including lighting, heating and sound, with relevant funding allocated. We have a Tower of 6 bells, disabled access, a designated coffee area, light catering facilities and toilet. It is open from dawn until dusk and is visited regularly by local people and many visitors.

Our recently refurbished Church Centre is a hall on the main road which is a convenient size for hosting meetings and parties and is made available to individuals and groups to hire. In the past, we have held a weekly Coffee Stop which we intend to revive as a social space for all ages.

Friends of St Mary's organise 3-4 fund-raising events each year. A Flower Festival, Concerts and Recitals are held in church, with quizzes in the Village Hall.

We are thankful that we have continued to meet our financial promises to the Deanery & Diocese, and have strong take-up of the Parish Giving Scheme, which facilitates budgeting.

Northiam Parish Magazine is produced by St Mary's Church and aims to serve the community by providing information about everything going on in the village. With a circulation to over 600 homes, we consider it to be an invaluable resource for sharing the Good News and making St Mary's visible.

Education

NORTHIAM PRIMARY SCHOOL.

We enjoy close links with our Primary School, which has a firm Christian ethos, and has recently acquired Academy status through the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust.

The school states that: *'Living, Loving and Learning in abundance with God is at the heart of all we do.*

'We have close links with St Mary's Church Northiam. We are proudly Christian in character and base our Vision and Ethos on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Gospel stories form the basis of most of our daily acts of Collective Worship.

'In everything we do, we use the example of Jesus as our inspiration, and share stories of his ministry as a guiding light for how we want to be, and how we should live our lives. Christian values permeate the school and follow Collective Worship themes.'

Members of the church regularly lead school assembly using the 'Open the Book' format, and the school enjoys walking over to the church for services to celebrate special events in the calendar.

On the Primary School site, there is a weekly Toddler Group, a daily Pre-School in its own self-contained building, Farm School and Forest School.

FREWEN COLLEGE provides day and boarding school for pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties and provides 'all through' education from age 7 to 6th form. Students come from throughout the UK and the school also welcomes some international pupils.

There is a choice of Secondary education available to Northiam residents, and our young people attend schools in Robertsbridge, Rye and Tenterden. There is also a selection of private schools which serve the locality.





Challenges & Opportunities

- We are told we are a welcoming church, but we are ageing. In fairness, this reflects the demographic of the village, but there is still plenty of scope to engage with families and mid-life people. We are encouraged that, as a result of the pandemic and Work From Home, we have recently seen an increase in people of working age who are now more attracted to Northiam.
- Our fellowship fully embraces our vision to serve the community to the glory of God, but we need to reach out to encourage people to join us. People are happy to come to us for special events but we long to make them at home in St Mary's.
- Before the pandemic, we held monthly Messy Church services on a Sunday afternoon. Someone with experience of working with younger people would be an asset. We are conscious that Sundays may not be the best time to reach families, and you may have experience in tailoring worship to attract younger people.
- As our congregation hopes to increase in number, there will be a need to blend the worship needs of the existing members with those for whom church is a new experience.

What's important to us

- A passion for preaching the Gospel, reflecting the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Willingness and ability to take a central role in village life – you will be invited into parishioners' homes and we feel that being seen at (and, we hope, enjoying) village events and meetings is an essential part of witness and pastoral care. Experience has taught us that casual interactions in the village reap many rewards.
- Confidence in leadership through the Holy Spirit, to enthuse and motivate an active team of parishioners.
- We have enjoyed the support of clergy and Readers during the interregnum, and are keen to maintain links with other churches. We are aware that there are many Christians in the village who attend other places of worship, and we would like to re-establish fellowship with them.
- We are ready to grow in number and spirituality – and we need help!





What we can offer you

- We have 8 people on our PCC who work well together and bring a range of skills and experience. The PCC meets once a month.
- Out of 66 people on the electoral roll, 21 regularly assist in the Sunday services.
- A committed and adaptable congregation, most of whom assume they have a role to play in the life of the church and appreciate that ministry belongs to the whole church community.
- A modern 5 bedroom home on the edge of an estate in the heart of the village, with a good-sized study, recently upgraded kitchen, garaging and a manageable garden.
- Until his retirement, we have been in the fortunate position of having a full-time incumbent. We are committed to working with you to ensure that we honour the part-time nature of the post and respect your non-duty life.



Messages from Bishops Will of Lewes & Martin of Chichester:

Good things come from the East

St Mary's church has stood at the heart of the community of Northiam since the 12th century. As you will read in this profile the church plays an active role in this vibrant, creative, and community-minded village. We seek a minister who will sustain the strong links built with the primary school and community to lead and grow the people of God in Northiam. You will of course not be expected to undertake this ministry on your own but supported by a team of local Christians and the Deanery and Diocese whose principal calling is to nurture, encourage and aid the growth of the communities of faith of Sussex which it has the privilege to serve.

+William Lewes

Proclaiming the Mystery of Faith

In 2025 this diocese celebrates the 950th anniversary of witness and evangelisation from a mission base in Chichester, building on the earlier mission founded by St Wilfrid at Selsey.

2025 also marks the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea with its reminder of the formative claim upon us of the catholic creeds.

These anniversaries are more than historical footnotes. They speak powerfully about the richness of faith and mission that is our inheritance locally and universally.

Inspired by that inheritance, we seek to be a household of faith that is endlessly curious about how the Holy Scriptures and the sacraments of the New Covenant enable us to know, love and follow Jesus Christ in today's noisy and distracted world.

If God is calling you to join us in the task of proclaiming the mystery of faith in some part of this diocese, we pray that the contribution of your gifts and experience will enrich our witness and deepen your own discipleship.

+Martin Chichester





Thank you for reading this. If God is calling you to serve Him in Northiam, we look forward to welcoming you into the family of St Mary's, and hope that you will find this next stage of your ministry happy and rewarding.

Parish: St Mary, Northiam
St Mary's Church, Church Lane,
Northiam, Nr Rye, East Sussex. TN31 6NN

Deanery: Rye

Diocese: Chichester

Patron: Church Pastoral Aid Society

Links:

St Mary's Church website:
www.stmaryschurchnorthiam.co.uk

Northiam CE (C) Primary School:
www.northiamcep.e-sussex.sch.uk

Frewen College: www.frewencollege.co.uk

If you would like further information about the church before making your application, please contact one of the churchwardens: Geoff Brown - 01797 252332
geoffreybrown565@btinternet.com