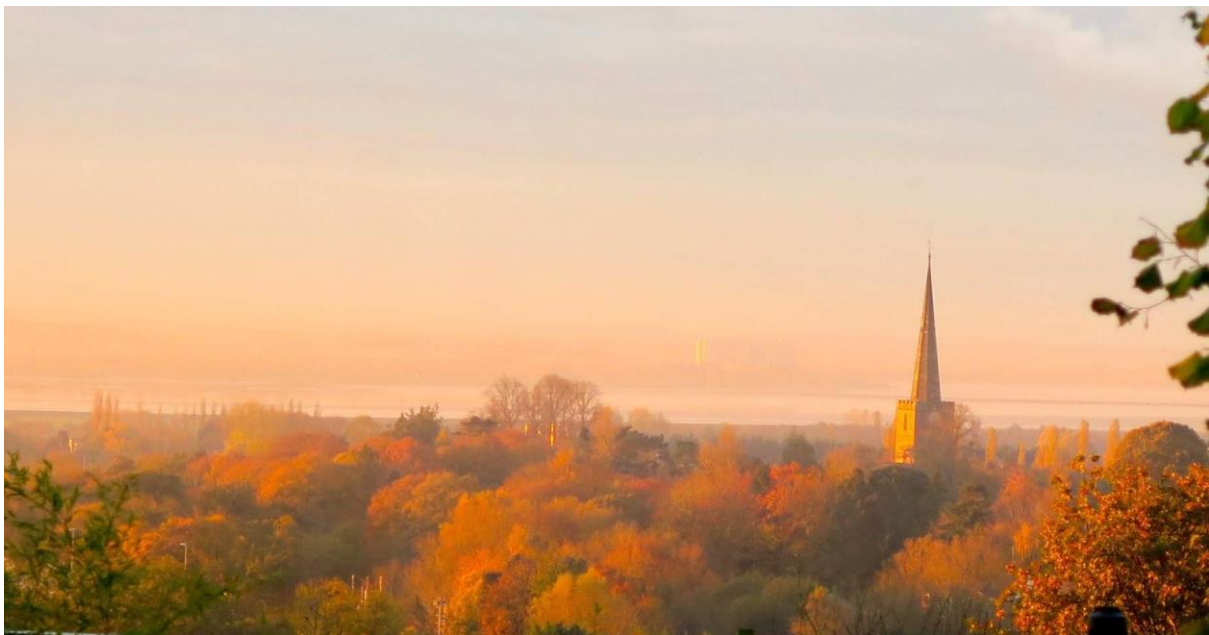


The Benefice of Lydney, Woolaston, Alvington and Aylburton.

The Parishes of Lydney and Woolaston with
Alvington and Aylburton
seek a new Vicar.



‘We’re building a community where everyone matters’

A real opportunity to help our church communities
come together and forge a vision to reach out in
word and action.

Visit our website www.lydneyparish.org.uk

We are looking for a leader who will help us to work together to do just that, “build a community where everyone matters.” We have made a great start; phase 1 of our re-ordering at St Mary’s is complete. These are exciting times; we are looking for somebody with energy and imagination.

We need somebody to:

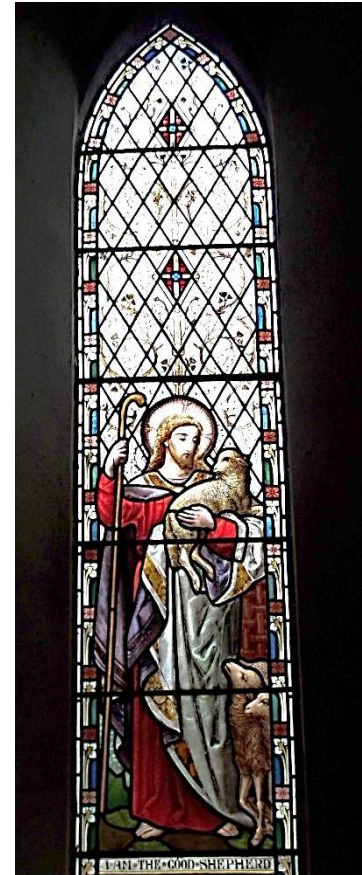
- ❖ help us take the gospel out into our Town and Villages in imaginative and compassionate ways.
- ❖ help review our plans for the next phase and keep the momentum going.
- ❖ help our Village Churches consider accessibility and the provision of hospitality facilities



‘...Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works...’

Are you?

- ❖ A prayerful person, able preacher and teacher.
- ❖ A priest who will facilitate and lead a wide variety of worship styles in imaginative ways, for all ages and ensuring that all in our community feel included.
- ❖ Someone with a vision for the development of our Children and Young person's ministry.
- ❖ Able to bring collaborative leadership and oversight to a benefice with exciting opportunities.
- ❖ A team builder, who can inspire and challenge others to develop and grow in God.
- ❖ Able to build meaningful relationships with other Churches in our community, neighbouring parishes and the wider Diocese.
- ❖ Do you feel drawn by the Holy Spirit to join us in this beautiful part of the country and to help us in the next stage in the life of this Parish and our community?



Then we look forward to hearing from you.

- ❖ We are a varied group of congregations working together in different ways and with different communities. We are eager to work together to bring enthusiasm and energy in all that we do.

‘..For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, Plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.’.....Jeremiah 29:11

INTRODUCTION TO THE PARISHES

Lydney, Woolaston, Aylburton and Alvington are a group of rural Gloucestershire parishes on the West bank of the River Severn. They are shortly to complete the formal process of becoming a united benefice, although we have worked together as such for a number of years. Located on the edge of the Forest of Dean, these churches have strong links with each other and to the Communities they serve. Located along the A48 they have easy access between their Church buildings and to Gloucester and the M4 and M5 motorways, made easier by the recent lifting of tolls on the Severn Bridge.

The Forest of Dean and the Wye Valley are popular tourist destinations, catering for many outdoor activities; the area has a rich industrial history and its outstanding natural beauty makes it a particularly popular destination.

The main centre of population is the town of Lydney, with close to 10,000 inhabitants and a further 2000 homes under construction. Lydney is best known for its Roman temple complex, its heritage steam railway and its association with the Wintour, Bathurst and Watts families. It is situated 20 miles from Gloucester. It has 3 primary schools (2 of which are Church of England), a comprehensive secondary school with public leisure facilities. There are 2 Supermarkets, a good array of local shops and a local hospital. Lydney is blessed with numerous parks, sports fields and public open spaces. Employment is mainly in Lydney or nearby towns such as Coleford and Chepstow; with increasing numbers commuting to Bristol, Gloucester and beyond due to its good road and rail links; Lydney has a main line railway station.

The village of Aylburton lies one mile to the south west of Lydney; it is a rural community with a population of about 690. The village is divided into 3 distinct areas - the village, upper and lower common, and is predominantly agricultural in nature with most of the land owned by Lydney Park Estate; however there are some business units to the south of the village, 2 public Houses and a Church of England Primary School.



The Parish of Woolaston with Alvington has a population of approximately 2000 spread across the two main settlements of Netherend and Alvington and other scattered hamlets. The Parish has 3 public houses, a village school and a restaurant.

OUR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

The Benefice has six Church buildings, ranging from traditional mediaeval buildings to smaller mission chapels; each offers something distinctive and has a diverse mix of congregations.

Lydney Parish currently has 148 on its electoral roll (St Marys ~ 107, Holy Trinity ~ 41) with around 80 in the congregations each week. The services are varied and cover different styles of worship on a rotation basis, with people of all age groups. In addition there are house groups that meet regularly. As the main town church, St Mary's also hosts a number of large town and school celebrations throughout the year, including a major district Remembrance Service.

The town of Lydney has six churches of various denominations including United Reformed, Roman Catholic, two independent evangelical churches and our two Anglican Churches (the Methodist and Baptist Churches have recently closed and their congregations are exploring ecumenical ways of working). All the town's churches support each other through 'Churches Together in Lydney'; with an annual programme of shared events.

The congregations in the Villages (Aylburton, Woolaston and Alvington) have in recent years combined forces and now rotate services on a weekly basis around the 4 churches in their group, with a variety of service styles. They also enjoy well attended school, festival and seasonal services

All of our congregations are eager to learn and grow and discover and use their unique gifts for ministry. We have recently established a new Home Group in Lydney and are also planning a benefice-wide Day of Prayer and Reflection as we seek God's will for us as the Body of Christ in this place.

The congregation at Holy Trinity are planning some occasional lay-led morning services to enable them to engage with families and especially to build on the close relationship they have with the local Church of England Primary School.

STAFF and PASTORAL CARE

We have a dedicated part time (self-funded) Curate, who together with the assistance of 3 retired priests and our readers are providing service cover throughout our vacancy and are looking forward to assisting our new priest.

The Parish of Lydney has a strong and committed PCC, with separate Management Committees for the two churches (St Marys and Holy Trinity) and an active pastoral and visiting team.

Lydney has a part time Parish Administrator based in the Parish Office located in the Old Vicarage next to St Marys Church.

The Village group of Churches are now a single Parish with one strong and well organised PCC. Lydney Parish and The Villages group both have Local Ministry Teams who now meet together regularly and pastoral care includes two trained pastoral ministers.

A 'House for Duty' priest to assist the incumbent is also planned, with a house provided in the Villages. This post is currently also vacant and will be filled after this appointment has been made in consultation with the new Priest.

WORSHIP

Over the years, worship at St Marys has been varied, maintaining traditional forms of service and exploring new expressions of worship. Currently services include Common Worship Communion and non-communion services on Sundays, All age services and occasional Celtic Praise. The 8.15am 'spoken communion service' has a dedicated congregation. The 10.00am service sees around 40-60 worshippers on a regular basis, the congregation being made up from across the age groups. There is a 4.30 service at Holy Trinity with around 25 worshippers and organist and choir.

St Marys has an exceptional Organist, to complement our fine organ that was refurbished in 2001. Historically, St Mary's had a strong choral tradition, however in the last 20 years, since the loss of our choir, a dedicated Worship Group has developed a more contemporary music repertoire.





The Village Churches have a strong and regular attendance of 30-40 people that rotates on a 4 weekly cycle around the 4 churches; they have a number of organists to call upon and have a dedicated team of 3 licenced Servers.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Parish of Lydney is seen as a local hub; being accessible, spacious and, because of the warm welcome that we provide, enjoyed by all sectors of the community. We have good links with the town's schools and regularly host awards evenings, school concerts, 'I sing pop' events and Christmas carol services, Remembrance and Harvest services.



An active ecumenical 'Open the Book' team visits all 3 primary schools regularly and we have representation on the Board of Governors for both C of E Schools. The Churches Together team organises a number of annual events in the town, including a Walk of Witness, summer 'Fun in the park' and Songs of Praise.

We collect for the local 'food bank' and have strong links with various other organisations and charities including:

- ❖ Goode Court sheltered housing.
- ❖ Victoria Centre ~ Lunch club for over 55's.
- ❖ Christians Against Poverty, including support of a local debt counsellor
- ❖ Gateway Housing ~ a supported hostel for homeless young people (16-25)
- ❖ Forest of Dean Dementia Action Alliance

One of our most popular events is our annual Christmas Tree Festival where around 40 local charities, community groups, schools and organisations come together to provide themed trees for our Christmas services. We have also hosted a number of music events and concerts including an audience with Stuart Townend.



Aylburton Village has a very strong community spirit and holds an annual Carnival and Fete to fund its Memorial Hall. This and other church fundraising events are always well supported. Community organisations include a Football Club, Women's Institute, Toddler Club and Beavers.

The wider benefice has an 'Open the Book' scheme which visits the primary schools twice a month.

Woolaston with Alvington hold a variety of fundraising events including the annual summer fayre. There is an active Women's institute, a keen gardening club and many uniformed groups.

WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Children and Young People are an integral part of the church community. At St Mary's 'Sunday Club' currently offers activities for a range of age groups. In addition young church members are encouraged to participate in worship in a variety of ways.

In Lydney we have well supported midweek groups for toddlers, that offer weekly opportunities to engage with toddlers and their carer's, we combine these with older Children for 'messy church' activities to the community during the holidays.

There continues to be a willingness to develop further work and outreach with young people.

CHURCH BUILDINGS

Lydney, St Mary's is a grade 1 listed building ~ This is a large (seating for 300 plus), mainly 13th century building, which has been subject to a recent major re-ordering to provide excellent hospitality facilities, inclusive access and accessible toilets. The building is in good condition with no major repairs outstanding, and has the benefit of a number of trust funds to provide for its upkeep. The surrounding graveyard is closed and now under the control of Lydney Town Council. There is a reasonable amount of parking adjoining the Church. It has a set of 10 bells that are rung regularly.

As part of the recent re-ordering works a new sound system and lighting scheme were introduced, and internal redecoration completed. The church has a built-in screen and digital projection system.



The Old Vicarage, situated next to St Mary's Church, is owned by a Family Trust Fund for the benefit of the Church. It provides meeting space and the Parish Office, together with a day nursery and 2 small residential flats (which provide income to maintain the building).

Holy Trinity Church is a mile from St Marys on Primrose Hill, once a separate community. The present church was built in 1933 to replace a smaller mission church. The building was extended in 1990 to provide a community meeting room with toilet and kitchen facilities and a new vestry. The Church Centre is hired out to a number of Local organisations during the week, including two Brownie groups. The Church is well used and has very strong links with the Primrose Hill Primary Academy and who make regular use of the Church. This church also has a sound system and digital projection facility.

St Mary's Church, Aylburton is grade 2 listed. This is a small 14th century building seating about 150 people and was originally sited on Chapel Hill outside the village. It was moved to its current site 'stone-by-stone' in 1856 by the Bathurst Family and rebuilt in almost exactly in its original form. It is in a good state of repair, the churchyard is now closed. Parking is limited but it is in close proximity to the Aylburton Village School with which the Church has close links.

Aylburton Common Mission Church is an unlisted building. Built in 1867 on the Lower Common, it is about 1 mile from the Village. It is in a good state of repair and seats about 40 people.

St Andrews Church, Woolaston is a Grade 2 listed building and is the Parish Church for Woolaston with Alvington. This is a 12th century church, much re-modelled in the 19th Century. The churchyard is closed. There is good parking, although this church is sited some distance from the village. The church is in a good state of repair.

St Andrews Church, Alvington is a Grade 2 listed building and is a chapel of Woolaston built by Llanthony Priory around 1140, although much remodelled in the 19th century. There is a peal of 5 bells, rung regularly by a recently formed award winning team of ringers. The churchyard is closed and there is reasonable parking at the adjacent Village Hall.



CHURCH FINANCE

All Churches in the group are currently financially viable, meeting agreed levels of contribution to the Diocesan Parish Share, running and maintenance costs; however, we do not currently contribute to Parish Share at a level which we would like and working on increased 'giving' needs to be addressed. In addition St Marys has a number of trust funds providing for maintenance and additional expenses. Fundraising for the recent re-ordering raised in excess of £200,000.

VICARAGE ACCOMMODATION

The main Vicarage is located in a quiet residential cul-de-sac close to the town centre in Lydney. It is a modern 5 bedroom detached family house, designed to meet the requirements of the Church Commissioners 'Green Guide'. There is a second house located in Alvington, which is a 1970's detached house, adapted by the Diocese in the 1990's to provide 'Green Guide' standard accommodation and used historically as the 'House for Duty'.

