

PARISH PROFILE FOR

ST MATTHEW

WITH ST MARTIN AND ST PAUL CHURCHES, TIPTON

INTRODUCTION

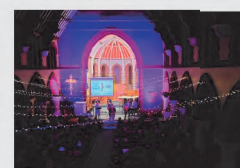
Welcome to our parish profile and thank you for taking the time to read through it. We hope it will give you the information you require to prayerfully consider whether God is calling you to join us.

In the following pages we will seek to give you a taste of life at St Matthews, what our core values are, our aspirations for the future and how we strive to make a difference in our community by seeking Gods word and applying it to everyday situations.

We are a welcoming community of faith nestled in the heart of Tipton in the Black Country, praying for the right person to both lead our church family and have a heart for mission and outreach in the wider community. We pray God will speak to you as you read through these pages and if God is calling you here that He will confirm it in your heart. We are excited to welcome a new vicar who will lead us in our spiritual journey, inspire us with their teaching, and work alongside us to serve our community.

PARISH CHANGES & TRUSTEES

St Matthew's parish, when new, was formed from part of the original St Paul's Parish to offer an evangelical alternative. St Matthew's church now serves the combined parishes of St Matthew, St Paul and St Martin. The latter two church buildings still exist. St Paul's was sold recently and was taken over by The Elite Church, St Martin's is now a private residence. Our original patrons, Simeons Trustees, have helped us many times with engaging new ministers, although, with the joining of the parishes of St Martin and St Paul with St Matthew's, we now have CPAS as joint Trustees with Simeons Trustees.



DEANERY & DIOCESE

The Diocese of Lichfield is one of the largest in the Church of England, serving a population of over 2 million. It covers Staffordshire, the northern half of Shropshire and the Black Country boroughs of Wolverhampton, Walsall and half of Sandwell. Under the overall leadership of Bishop Michael Ipgrave, it is divided into 3 Episcopal areas; Wolverhampton, Shrewsbury and Stafford. Tipton is part of the Wolverhampton area under The Right Reverend Dr Timothy Wambunya.

We are part of the Wednesbury Deanery in the Archdeaconry of Walsall. We are the southernmost part of the Diocese of Lichfield and only a short distance from our neighbours in the Worcester Diocese.

The Rt Revd Dr Tim Wambunya

Bishop of Wolverhampton

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Now is a truly exciting time to serve God in the Wolverhampton Episcopal Area!

The Wolverhampton Episcopal Area (WEA) covers a large geographic area, from beautiful, rural Staffordshire and Shropshire, where churches lie at the heart of village communities; to the bustling and diverse urban centres of Wolverhampton, Lichfield, Walsall, Cannock and the Black Country.

The WEA genuinely offers the widest possible range of ministry contexts including parishes, new worshipping communities, and many chaplaincy contexts - schools, prisons, hospitals, universities, hospices - as well as the full breadth of Anglican traditions.

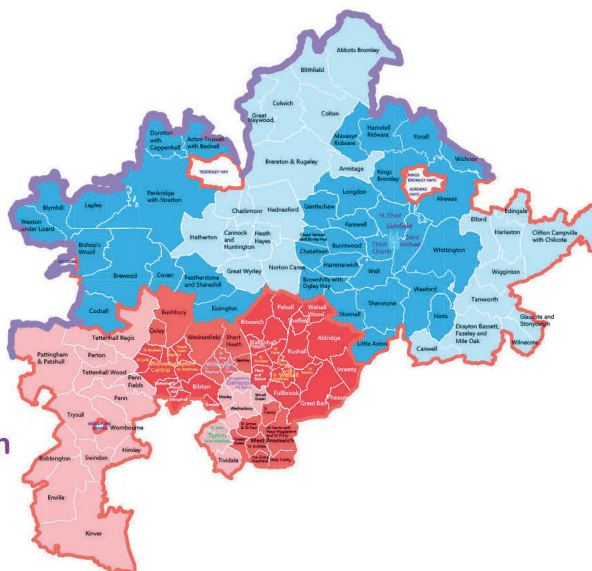
Myself and the WEA Team would love to speak with you about your sense of God's call and help explore opportunities to join us as we serve together ~ worshipping God, dwelling in His Word, and praying; seeking to equip and strengthen faithful disciples; and joining in God's mission to share the Gospel message with all in our communities, making new disciples.

Please do read on, and be assured that we are praying for those discerning God's call to join the wonderful Wolverhampton Episcopal Area, and feel free to get in touch about this, or any other vacancy.

Lichfield
Archdeaconry
See of Wolverhampton
Walsall Archdeaconry



DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD
The Church of England in Staffordshire,
northern Shropshire and the Black Country



RURAL DEAN'S STATEMENT

Wednesbury Deanery comprises nine Parishes in the heart of the Black Country. It is an urban Deanery throughout and the people have a legendary sense of humour and a strong sense of history. Indeed Wednesbury is mentioned in the Domesday Book and there is a 14th Century document that described Birmingham as 'a small village on the outskirts of Wednesbury'.

The Parish of St Matthew's (St Matt's) has a congregation with great faith and resilience. In the last two years they have experienced the death of their previous Incumbent and a church split due to 'Living in love and faith'. Congregations diminished at the time but have since nearly trebled with new people joining almost every week. Having moved into the church Hall for worship, they have now grown to the point when they need to move back into the main church again. You only have to walk into the church on a Sunday and the worship is alive with the presence of the Holy Spirit. As Rural Dean, I am incredibly proud of this church and am certain that the next Incumbent will be blessed to lead such a special group of people. There are many mission opportunities to engage in and a supportive and encouraging congregation to work with.

Wednesbury Deanery is part of the Wolverhampton Episcopal Area. Bishop Tim and Archdeacon Liz are proactively focussed on mission and aim to significantly grow congregations across the area. Wednesbury Deanery is comparatively small and we have recently reformed our chapter and Deanery Synod which meet regularly as a place for support, prayer, discussion and vision. St Matt's have a great team of Wardens and PCC who keep mission and prayer at the heart of all they do.

Please do pray whether you might be the person to take this wonderful congregation to the next stage of their life in God.

Canon Ben Whitmore

Interim Rural Dean of Wednesbury

THE VISION, THE ROLE, THE PERSON

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THE VISION

To share the love of Christ, make disciples, and serve the community

THE ROLE

We are seeking a vicar who will:

- Provide strong spiritual leadership that will help us to move forward into a new era for the church, and help us shape an exciting vision for growth.
- Is an Evangelical Charismatic, dependent on God through individual and corporate prayer.
- Be a visible and approachable presence within the parish and help us to become even better at showing Christ's love, and sharing our faith with the wider community, through daily interaction, Evangelism and welcoming social events.
- Be committed to preaching and living the truth of God's Word.
- Nurture the faith of all ages and encourage spiritual growth, through discipleship, encouraging our gifts and growing new leaders.
- Be enthusiastic and committed to engaging with the local schools in our parish two of which are Church of England schools.
- Work collaboratively with the PCC, diocese and lay leaders to develop the mission and ministry of the whole parish, particularly to children, families and young people, showing that the church is here to serve the community as well as being a place of worship.
- Embrace our traditions while also being open to new ways of engaging with the modern world, by building up our online presence.
- Foster passionate, Spirit-led worship.
- Build authentic relationships within a caring church family who demonstrates loving pastoral care and support to those in need.
- Be committed to the Episcopal oversight of the Bishops of Lichfield and Wolverhampton and have no desire to be part of any other Diocese.

We are looking for a person who will lead a group of people who have been through difficult times as a church, following the sudden death of our previous incumbent and the traumatic split of the congregation. A shepherd with a pastoral heart who can build on what we are, develop what we have and encourage us through the Love of Christ to the future.

Someone who is a good communicator and can teach the Bible to a wide range of ages and abilities, that encourages the development of talents, gifts and ministries, while keeping to Bible truths, but making it relevant for today's modern world. Someone who appreciates how useful technology can be in the furtherance of the Gospel.

THE PERSON

LEADERSHIP AND CONGREGATION

EVERY MEMBER MINISTRY

St Matthew's is a medium size urban church. We are Charismatic, Evangelical, with a commitment to all-member ministry. In 2013 we were recognised as a Covenanted Parish in shared ministry. We recognise the God given gifts many members of the congregation have. Individuals are encouraged to use these gifts in service to the Lord, church and community and a rota is created to help organise those who serve in various ways on Sundays.

Our congregation is diverse in age, background, and life experiences. We have a strong core of long-standing members alongside newer families and individuals. At the start of 2024, whilst in interregnum due to the sudden death of our vicar, we were just over 100 on the Electoral roll, but at the 2024 APCM a majority of the PCC resigned, left the church and the Church of England and formed their own church, as a result, we lost about half of the congregation. The reason this happened was that they disagreed with the Church of England leadership over their inclusion of the 'Prayers of Living in Love and Faith'.

Since these events, the church has shown consistent growth in numbers. The electoral roll is currently 52, but the number of attendees regularly exceeds that. At least 20 new people have become regular attendees during the past year. We believe that the growth is due to the joyous atmosphere and welcoming fellowship that is tangible within our congregation. The word of God is easily expressed by members at opportune moments during the service.



These moments occur in such a way that newer members have felt comfortable enough to join in at later meetings. This often results in interesting and searching comments during our after service refreshments time. This time allows us all to get to know each other better as the weeks pass by.

Some have said that it's like an electric current dancing from person to person and that the presence of God is apparent in this hour of caring, sharing and often laughter, every bit as much as during the service. The presence of the Holy Spirit is attracting more people to spontaneously join us, as is noticeable in our Thursday "Light Break" drop-in coffee mornings. We are enthusiastically looking forward to seeing more people joining us, whatever stage they find themselves in their spiritual lives. Most of all we want to learn and listen to what God wants us to do to expand his love more and more in our community.



TRAINING & TEACHING

The church has been a training ground for Clergy, having had two Curates in recent years, along with placements for Curates and Readers partway through their training programme. Within the last decade, the church received funding that enabled us to support two full-time staff members: one focused on children and families, and the other serving as a Youth and Worship Pastor. During this period, we were also able to offer a Youth and Worship Internship. The intern later joined the team as a full-time staff member, contributing to our youth ministry, going into local schools, and assisting with the daily operations of the church. We appreciate the value and need for teaching programmes at other times of the week for our church and non-church members, and have offered Alpha, Freedom In Christ and various other teaching courses programmes.



PCC AND LEADERSHIP

We have a newly formed PCC with some members that have been attending St Matthew's for many years, some that have rejoined us and some new members. We aim for the PCC to be open and transparent and try to keep the congregation informed of our discussions and decisions. We also publish the Minutes of our meeting on our notice board. We have nine members of the PCC, a vice chair, two Church Wardens, one is also the Treasurer and one of two Deanery Synod members, and the other is our Safeguarding lead, a PCC secretary and 4 other members. During our interregnum our Rural Dean has also attended our PCC to help guide us in our meetings. He also comes to us once a month on Sunday to officiate at our Communion service. Leading and preaching the other services is covered mainly by our PCC vice chair and one of the Church Wardens, with others from time to time.

PCC



NIGEL WATSON
Warden | Treasurer



IAN WILKES
Warden | Safeguarding Lead



KEVIN SMITH
Vice-chair



CHRISTINE WILKES
Secretary



TOM TOWNSEND
Deanery Synod Rep



JAYNE CHARLESWORTH
PCC Member



JULIA O'MEARA
PCC Member



ANDY SUTTON
PCC Member



LES HILL
PCC Member

MINISTRY & OUTREACH

WORSHIP STYLE

Our main Sunday service at 10:30 is generally, Morning Worship, Worship 4 All, (family-friendly with contemporary elements) or Holy Communion, but open to having a variety of services at different times. Our Liturgy comes from "Common Worship", and we use the "Patterns for Worship" to help us put together our services. We use a mixture of different styles of music from well known hymns and modern worship songs. At the moment we use mainly Worship Lyric Videos, but we have live worship from time to time as musicians are available.

Prayer ministry is at the heart of Church life at St Matthews, seeking God's guidance for us personally and as a body of his Church. As a Church we encourage and nurture people to have a personal relationship with God through regular personal prayers.

Over the years, there have been many different ways that the body of St Matthews have collectively prayed together, this has included a healing prayer ministry. We continue to be open to the creative ways of encouraging personal prayer life and engaging members for praying together.

In the last year, intercessory prayers have continued to be part of our weekly Sunday service with a rota of members of the Church faithfully taking turns in leading us in our prayers. We have a dedicated mobile phone to receive prayer requests that are sent onto signed up members of the Church to pray.

During a Sunday service before each PCC meeting, we will take time to wait on God and pray for the PCC, for God to guide them in the decision they make for the Church. As well as, asking people to pray for the PCC as they meet in the week.

PRAYER



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Some members of St Matthew's congregation help to run a local youth club, and we have a stay and play group for babies and toddlers on a Monday morning called Mini Matts.



PASTORAL CARE

We have a Prayer chain via dedicated Phone and text system. This system works by text so that we can respond quickly to requests. This is also used for communicating to the church members when needed. We also have WhatsApp groups that help us communicate with certain groups. We value caring for one another within our church family and beyond.

LAY INVOLVEMENT

We are blessed with a dedicated and active laity who contribute in many ways.

PCC

Serving on the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

SERVICES

Leading, preaching and assisting with worship (e.g., reading, intercessions, welcoming, refreshments, tech).

CHILDREN'S WORK

Organising and running our children's group, Mini Matts in the week.

LIGHT BREAK

Running a 'Place of Welcome' coffee morning called 'Light Break' on a Thursday morning.

PASTORAL CARE

Providing pastoral care and support.

MAINTENANCE

Maintaining the church building and grounds.

CHURCH HALL

Managing and hiring out the Hall to local groups.

FELLOWSHIP

Organising social events and fundraising activities

STRENGTHS OF OUR CONGREGATION

We have a strong sense of community and are welcoming to newcomers. As a close-knit congregation, we genuinely care for one another, offering support, friendship, and a sense of belonging. Newcomers are met with open arms, and we strive to create a welcoming space where all feel respected and valued. Our commitment to outreach reflects our belief that faith calls us to serve, both locally and globally, as we live out our values in meaningful ways.

AREAS FOR CHURCH GROWTH

We would like to engage more with younger adults, strengthening our online presence and website, and expanding our outreach to a wider area now that we are a combination of three original parishes. We recognise the importance of digital connection in today's world and aim to create content that is relevant, accessible, and engaging for all age groups. We hope to build stronger relationships, share our mission more effectively, and invite a broader community into our life of faith.



FELLOWSHIP AND SOCIAL EVENTS

We enjoy spending time together through tea and coffee after services, Light break Coffee morning on Thursdays, (also a place of welcome), social evenings and picnics at Baggeridge Country Park, and BBQs in the vicarage garden.

LOCAL SCHOOLS

We have links with 3 local Junior Schools, and previous vicars have served as governor. At times our closest school bring a year group to the church as part of their RE lesson, and they have used our church building for their school carol service.

CHARITIES

We collect food for the local food bank and support charities through our tithe, including CAP UK, Compassion, Barnabas, and Simeons. Our supported charities are reviewed annually. We have strong ties to CAP, having been a CAP Centre, and some members sponsor children through Compassion. Occasionally, we invite charity representatives to speak at services.

OTHER GROUPS

Several groups use the hall during the week, including our own Parents and Young Children's play and stay group called Mini Matts. Other independent groups are Karate classes, Artventures classes and Yoga classes. A local Christian church with cultural roots in Kerala, Southern India, also uses the hall for Sunday afternoon services, which are primarily conducted in Malayalam.

RESOURCES & FINANCES

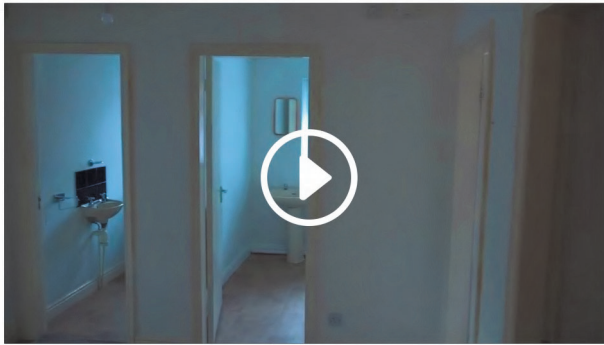
CHURCH BUILDINGS

St Matthew's Church, Tipton was consecrated on 1st December 1880. It is described as being built in brick in the English style, designed by J.H. Gibbons. It consists of a nave with clerestory, a lower two-storey west porch, a lower chancel, a north vestry and a tower with a bell to the south-east. It cost £6,000, which was raised by public subscription. Subscribers included the Earl of Dudley. The building consists of a porch at the front of the church and a balcony. The church building became Grade II listed in 1987. We have a Church Hall which was built in 1900. To commemorate the ending of the First World War a Vestry extension was added and toilets to the Church Hall. A kitchen extension was added to the Hall later and is now kitted out as a professional kitchen. The Hall originally had a stage. This was made into another room which has been used as a Sunday school. Room under the stage is used for storage. The Church hall is used for services in the winter and various meetings over the year and church & community groups all year round.

The church and church hall extend over a large footprint; however, usable space is still limited, we have tried to utilise as much of these spaces as possible to allow for multiple activities. There is only limited onsite parking available, this can cause problems when hosting events, as its urban setting means surrounding areas are quite congested anyway.



THE VICARAGE



The Vicarage is sited next to the church. The original vicarage was sold off in the 1980s and is now a Care Home called Mathias House. From the proceeds of this sale a new 4 bedroom detached vicarage was built, with adjoining and partially separate office/study, on part of the very large original garden. Some of the garden was made into a car park for the Church Hall and the rest was divided into two for Mathias House and the new vicarage. The house is centrally heated and has a good-sized garden. All the windows were replaced with UPVC windows in 2012, a new kitchen was refitted at the same time. The vicarage is fully Green Guide compliant.

CHALLENGES

Our beautiful Grade II listed church building, while much loved, presents significant challenges and limitations. The heating system is a costly and inefficient Victorian single-pipe setup powered by a single working gas boiler, taking 24 to 48 hours to warm the church to a reasonable temperature—at a cost of around £4 per hour. This makes regular use during the winter months financially unviable, so we often meet in the Church Hall, which is much easier and cheaper to heat. We do heat the church for funerals, but this requires charging for 24 hours of heating.

REORDERING

We hope to build stronger relationships, share our mission more effectively, and invite a broader community into our life of faith. Unfortunately, the building lacks essential modern facilities such as a disabled toilet, wheelchair access to services, and running water at the back for refreshments. The immovable pews limit flexibility of use, and the building is generally expensive to maintain and repair. Our 3-manual pipe organ also currently has an electrical fault, rendering it unusable. We have developed extensive plans and drawings to reorder the space to make it more functional and accessible, the cost of implementation remains beyond our reach at present.

FINANCES

Due to a decline in congregation numbers and a reduction in income from both offertory collections and Standing Orders, we experienced a financial loss last year. Despite this, we continued to contribute approximately half of our parish share.

This year, we are taking further steps to reduce expenses, including cancelling some previous service commitments. Currently, we are contributing only one third of our parish share, while still relying on the Building Fund to cover essential repairs to both the Hall and the Church.

We are grateful that the Diocese has provided access to an accountant who now compiles and manages our online accounts, as well as oversees Gift Aided donations. To help stabilise our income and plan more effectively, we strongly encourage all who are able to consider setting up Standing Orders and Gift Aiding their contributions.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR
THE PERIOD FROM 01 JANUARY 2024 TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year total funds
Receipts					
Donations and legacies	30,239.73	304.33	-	30,544.06	92,503.44
Income from charitable activities	6,106.00	-	-	6,106.00	5,823.00
Investments	-	905.9	-	905.9	762.02
Total income	36,345.73	1,210.23	-	37,555.96	99,088.46
Payments					
Net income / (expenditure) resources before transfer	-9,554.32	-7,405.52	-	-16,959.84	8,317.79
Transfers:					
Gross transfers between funds - in	998.45	1,302.97	-	2,301.42	-
Gross transfers between funds - out	-1,791.96	-509.46	-	-2,301.42	-
Net movement in funds	-10,347.83	-6,612.01	-	-16,959.84	8,317.79
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	53,569.70	53,666.27	-	107,235.97	98,918.18
Total funds carried forward	43,221.87	47,054.26	-	90,276.13	107,235.97

TIPTON – THE AREA

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Tipton is a town at the centre of the Black Country. The Black Country can roughly be defined by the three Metropolitan Boroughs of Sandwell (of which Tipton forms a part), Walsall and Dudley, plus the City of Wolverhampton. There is some dispute over its exact extent. There is no dispute, however, that it does not include Birmingham. No Black Country person will let you confuse them with a “Brummie”! Tipton originates from the Anglo-Saxon family name of Tibbi and the word Tun, which means farm. Tipton was originally a collection of rural hamlets, until the march of the Victorian Industrial Revolution and the discovery of huge coal seams in neighbouring Dudley turned the skies black with smog and the once sleepy hamlets became a quintessential Black Country working town.

As with many other industrialised and manufacturing areas, Tipton's fortunes and status have waned in recent years. Factories closed and the coal pits have long been filled in and reclaimed by nature. Despite this, the small-town community feel that would have been prevalent in days gone by, does still cling to the town and most people are proud to be Tiptonians. This is illustrated by the ever-popular Canal Festival and annual Community Carnival that draws everyone together. The demise of the factories has, as already stated, led to an expansion of house building, many new estates have appeared, and new families have arrived in the area. To cater for the needs of a growing local population there is the Neptune Centre, a large and all-encompassing health facility, one of the first of its kind to be built in the country. There are three major Hospitals that serve the area, Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley, Sandwell General Hospital and the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, all between 10 and 20 minutes drive away. A new Tesco superstore on the edge of Tipton, coupled with a large Asda Walmart superstore locally provide grocery shopping and of course Tipton has its own shops and market. There is also a large out of town shopping area at Merry Hill Centre, Brierley Hill.

Tipton has it's own Railway station which runs from Wolverhampton to Birmingham New Street. In the near future we will have a new tram line from Wolverhampton, to Dudley through Wednesbury and West Bromwich and onwards to Edgbaston Village via Birmingham City Centre, with a station within walking distance of the church.



LOCAL INTERESTS

A short distance from the church is The Black Country Living Museum. This excellent museum has many historic buildings from the area that have been dismantled and rebuilt on site. Some scenes from the BBC drama “Peaky Blinders” were filmed at the museum. Well worth a visit! Next to the museum is the Dudley Canal Trust, where boat trips through the tunnels and caverns underneath Castle Hill are another attraction. Dudley Zoo and Castle, just a little further away, is also a popular local attraction.



Opposite the Black Country museum is Castle Gate Park, which has a cinema, a bowling alley and various eating establishments. Not far is The Wren's Nest which is a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest within walking distance of the church north west of the town centre of Dudley. It is one of the most important geological locations in Britain and fossils found there have been given the nickname The Dudley Bug. Tipton has two public parks which are safe places for families with children to enjoy family time together. For the sporty, there is the Tipton Sports Academy with a running track and lots of indoor sports available. The swimming baths offer state of the art facilities and are a welcome addition to the town. There are several well-equipped gyms in the area, Tennis is also catered for.

The town does have two large secondary schools (Gospel Oak Academy and the Q3 Academy) and three local junior schools.

D I V E R S I T Y

Tipton has become more diverse, but still retains much of its character. This diversity is reflected in the congregation at St Matthew's, where everyone is welcome. It is the unshakable aim of the church to welcome and include all ages, all cultures and people, whatever stage they are at in their Christian life, whether they are firm believers or searching for a deeper understanding.

CONCLUSION

As a PCC, we are encouraged, excited and blessed at the direction that God has been leading his church at St Matthew's Tipton over the past 12 months or so.

The present congregation has a desire to meet together; grow together, pray for and with one another; praise and worship God together; to hear and try and apply Gods word to our lives and serve and love one another.

There is a real enthusiasm in the church by people to offer their time and energy to help the church be seen as a beacon in the community.

We feel that we have made some progress but are excited that there is still more for us to achieve in sharing Gods love in our parish. We believe that we are a warm and supportive community at St Matthew's who are dedicated and committed to serving the needs of the fellowship and the families in the parish. There is a commitment to wanting to help make a positive difference in the lives of other people.

We are very excited about the opportunity to welcome a New Vicar to St Matthew's to join us here and seek God's heart in respect of his plans and purposes to build his church in our community. We offer you a chance to lead a group of people with a strong identity and desire to grow.

We trust that this profile gives a picture of where we are at this time and ask that you will give prayerful consideration as to whether you feel called to join us on our journey. We are very much looking forward to receiving your application.

