

Vacancy in the Benefice of East Dere Street – Bishop’s Letter – December 2024

Thank you for your interest in the post of Rector of the Benefice of East Dere Street. This is an interesting and hopeful time in the life of these seven churches (six parishes), with a combined population of over 3000 people including three Church of England primary schools, located in the North of the county within easy reach of bustling towns, historic cities, stunning countryside and beautiful coastline.

This year the Diocese of Leeds has been celebrating its 10th birthday, marking its creation from the former dioceses of Ripon and Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield. There is a growing appreciation of the ways in which the breadth of vision and depth of resources of a large diocese can support the ministry of parishes in our various contexts. We have also embarked on the Barnabas programme, supported by central funding, to encourage and enable clergy and parishes to be confident in our mission, in our future, in our leadership and our witness. There is much more to be found on the diocesan website at [Barnabas](#).

I arrived in the Diocese 18 months ago and personally I have found an incredibly warm welcome, supportive colleagues and an enabling culture. There is a sense of ‘youthfulness’ in the structures which encourages creativity and innovation and is not hampered by deep seated tradition which can limit openness to change. Further, the unsettling journey of establishing a new organisation is now complete. In the Ripon Episcopal Area, as is the case across the Diocese, clergy and ministers are deeply committed to mission and ministry and appreciate the collegiality they enjoy with one another, working together to overcome challenges, develop vision and implement plans. In my opinion, and based on my experience, this is a very positive and hopeful time for someone to consider joining the Diocese of Leeds (or moving within it).

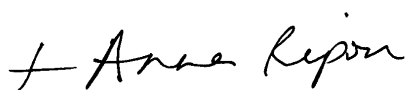
We hope the new Rector, with understanding of the joys and particular challenges of rural ministry, will work creatively with colleagues in the Richmond Deanery, including the newly appointed Rural Change Enabler, to explore new ways to help our churches and people sustain their loving presence and outreach in their communities. The area deanery is strong and clergy and lay people support one another and work well together.

The previous incumbent retired early due to ill health but in her short time in the benefice worked with congregations to develop shared worship, new ways of working and vision. Members of the congregations are keen and committed to develop this approach further and will support their new rector in enabling collaboration where possible while retaining and nurturing the distinct characters and gift of each church, unified in a shared mission of welcome, prayer, pastoral care and making disciples.

In return, my personal hope is that someone reading this discerns a call to love deeply those in the churches, as much as those beyond. The uncertainty of the last couple of years has not been easy and as well as the bright hopes the churches have for the future, they would be grateful for compassionate priestly care in the present.

I hope that you will find in this brochure and other papers prepared by the parish a sense of the opportunities for growth in your ministry and your own discipleship, and that you will be able to perceive whether you are being called to take further this process of discernment. If you wish to have an informal conversation with me, I would be glad to hear from you.

With all good wishes and prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Ripon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.