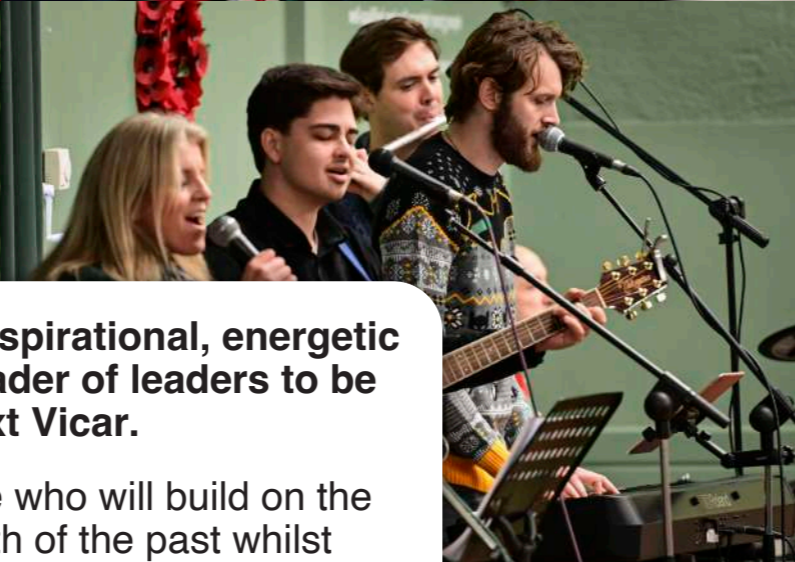
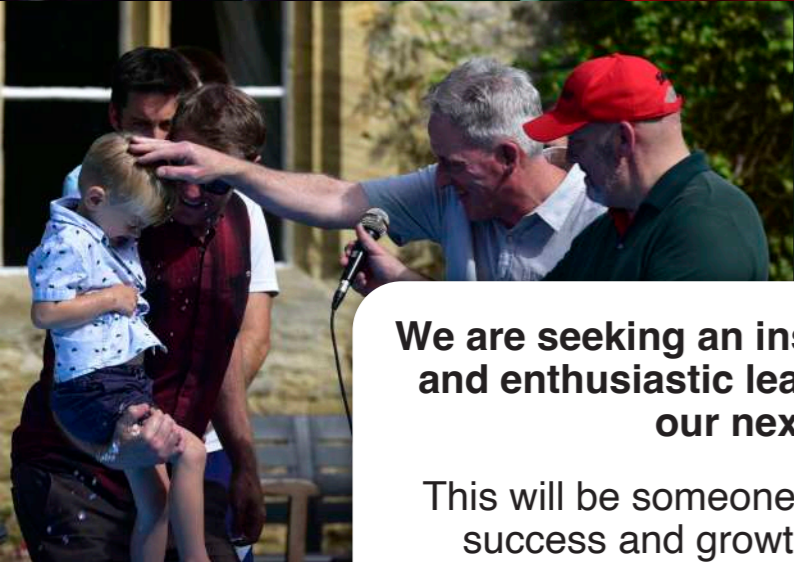




The Benefice of  
**St. Mary's Cogges** and  
**St. James The Great South Leigh**  
Parish Profile | May 2024



**We are seeking an inspirational, energetic and enthusiastic leader of leaders to be our next Vicar.**

This will be someone who will build on the success and growth of the past whilst harnessing and fulfilling the significant potential that exists in this committed and passionate church family. Key is the ability to envision and equip us in continuing to build and develop our mission and ministry to meet the needs of our community in Witney and the surrounding area.



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## Foreword by the Bishop of Dorchester

Dear potential applicants,

I am delighted that you are reading this profile, and encourage you to pray about whether this position might be the role to which God is now calling you.

The Benefice of Cogges and South Leigh are seeking an experienced, spiritual minister who will lead one of our largest churches. Listening and communicating will be key skills as the successful minister shares their passion for Jesus with the church congregations and beyond. Whilst firmly and distinctively Evangelical in commitment, the benefice has recently been resourced by the Diocese to allow the Vicar to be able to lead local churches of all flavours and theologies in a 'Greenhouse' initiative, encouraging outreach and evangelism. Both churches have their challenges, Cogges church building lacks space for the large and vibrant worshipping congregation, whilst South Leigh, being situated in a small community, struggles to attract significant regular congregations and some healing and restoration may be required. That said, at Cogges in particular, there is a wealth of energy, spiritual maturity and expertise, and so it will be essential for the new leader to offer experience and credibility and to effectively delegate, ensuring church structures allow flourishing.

The Benefice recognises that they are under-represented in a number of key characteristics and would particularly welcome applications from those who would increase their diversity. You will find an experienced and friendly Deanery with supportive colleagues. Our Episcopal Area and Diocese are in good heart, expectant for all that God will do and thankful for all that God is doing.

Please pray about whether you might be the right minister to join us. If you decide to apply, I would be delighted to receive your application for this position and look forward to the possibility of welcoming you as a potential colleague to partner in the gospel with me.

With every blessing,

**Rt. Revd. Gavin Collins,  
Bishop of Dorchester**



# Area Dean's Foreword on Witney Deanery

Witney Deanery consists of a vibrant collection of 38 churches, on the edge of West Oxfordshire in the Dorchester Area of the Diocese of Oxford. It includes the towns of Witney, Burford and Carterton (also the home to the RAF base of Brize Norton), and many smaller villages. There are nine benefices with seven full-time stipendiary clergy, four house for duty posts and several retired clergy alongside considerable lay support.

The Deanery fully supports the common vision developed by the Bishop of Oxford that the church should be Contemplative, Compassionate and Courageous (Our vision and values - Diocese of Oxford ([anglican.org](http://anglican.org)))

The Deanery Synod meets three times a year, holding lively meetings which focus not only on administration and financial organisation, but also to provide encouragement and resources and sharing positive ideas and future plans. We particularly try to support smaller, rural parishes who don't always have the financial or personnel resources. We discuss current topics and share best practice, good news and whatever particular challenges we face. At a recent meeting we revised our Deanery priorities to:

1. *Working with youth, schools, children and families.*
2. *Supporting those experiencing poverty and loneliness.*
3. *Working together to care for our environment.*

These are some of the areas that Cogges and South Leigh are already working on as you will see throughout this profile and by looking at their website.

As a Deanery, we have been able to meet our parish share fully over the last 10 years. We try to help the smaller parishes by creating 'smart and achievable parish share targets' and support each other to continue to enable our mission and ministry to grow.

Witney Deanery is a largely rural area on the edge of the Cotswolds, renowned for being a popular area for walking and cycling. A deanery pilgrimage walk, of about 90 miles, around all the churches was developed a couple of years ago and several people are working on creating some short, manageable circular walks.

The Deanery Clergy Chapter meets monthly, alternating between Zoom and in-person, to offer mutual support and share ideas, and resources for ministry and mission. We are particularly proud of the active hub for Greenhouse projects (Church of England Fresh Expression) that is led and supported by the Vicar of Cogges, their team and the Diocese. It has been a huge encouragement to many churches, particularly the smaller rural parishes, in working together for mutual support while developing ideas to nurture faith and spiritual growth. This is an important aspect of the Deanery's mission programme and one that needs to continue. The new vicar needs to be able to build upon the work that has been developed over several years and help to develop the faith of new Christians as well as deepening that of more established members of the congregations through the greenhouse project.

As a deanery, we encourage you to make a fully-informed decision about the role so that you can discern whether God is calling you to the Deanery and to serve at Cogges. As well as talking to parishioners and PCC members we encourage applicants to speak informally to Archdeacon David, or to the Area Dean and to read the benefice website to fully understand all that is going on in churches and local community.

We are excited to have the opportunity to have a new colleague join our chapter and to share in ministry in this beautiful area of the country and we can assure whoever God calls among us, that you will have a warm welcome and firm support!

I am happy to talk to anyone who has further questions about the Deanery or aspects of the becoming the vicar of Cogges and South Leigh.

**Rev. Margaret Dixon**  
Area Dean



# Part 1 | Overview

## a - Introduction

St Mary's Cogges and St James the Great South Leigh are situated in West Oxfordshire and comprise a flourishing Christian community of around 400 men, women, children and young people. Situated on the east side of the market town of Witney, the church is committed to transforming Witney and the surrounding communities by empowering and equipping its congregations and the next generation to follow Christ and share their faith with others.

Over the previous 10 years the church has experienced a period of significant growth, both numerically and in terms of commitment and openness to God, seeing lives changed and embracing our role as ambassadors for Christ in the community. Strategically St Mary's holds a position of significance within the Diocese of Oxford who through encouragement and significant financial support have designated us as a 'resourcing

church', seeking to share what we have to encourage, bless and help build other churches in the surrounding area. Our new vicar will continue playing a key role in leading, facilitating and coaching other leaders from a variety of churches in the area through the 'Greenhouse Project', which seeks to promote, support and encourage others in developing missional activities, releasing leaders to share the love of Christ both spiritually and practically, within and throughout their communities.

We believe that lives are transformed through connecting with God and as a result we have increasingly sought to bring his healing, transforming presence into the lives of people in our community. This has been demonstrated through our response to Covid, the cost-of-living crisis, loneliness and other societal challenges. St Mary's has delivered food parcels, established a compassion fund (gifting c£50k to individuals and families facing financial hardship since Covid), starting a community café, and setting aside our normal Sunday Services on the second Sunday of each month in order to participate in missional initiatives.

Together, the two churches form part of the

Diocese of Oxford which has an estimated population of just over two million and covers the counties of Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire. It is one of the largest dioceses in England serving over 800 churches. Within the Diocese, the churches are part of the Deanery of Witney which occupies over half of the district of West Oxfordshire. Ecclesiastically, the Deanery is divided into nine benefices and 36 parishes.

## b - Geography

The Benefice includes the eastern part of the market town of Witney, about twelve miles west of Oxford, the hamlet of High Cogges (one mile to the east of Witney) and the village of South Leigh (three miles to the east of Witney). Witney is a prosperous historic market town of over 30,000 inhabitants and the economic and commercial centre of West Oxfordshire. It is situated in the Oxfordshire Cotswolds between Oxford and the Gloucestershire border. A dynamic town, the local plan indicates Witney is designated to grow by a further 2000 homes over the next 7 years. Served by the A40 main road, it is within easy reach of the M4, M5 and M40 motorways. Witney is on the banks of the River Windrush and is set between that river's tranquil lowlands and the broad sweep of the Cotswolds. Three frequent bus services link the town with Oxford. Local buses serve the outlying villages. South Leigh lies to the south of the A40 between Witney and Eynsham, looking out over rolling fields towards the Lower Windrush Valley.

Witney has excellent local shops on its high street as well as in its two shopping centres, and a full range of health services with three GP practices (which also serve the surrounding villages), a Minor Injuries Unit

and a Community Hospital ([oxfordhealth.nhs.uk](http://oxfordhealth.nhs.uk)).

Educational opportunities in Witney are good. There are 14 primary schools, two of which are in Cogges Parish. We work closely with The Blake CE Primary ([blake.oxon.sch.uk](http://blake.oxon.sch.uk)) and Madley Brook Primary ([madleybrook.org](http://madleybrook.org)) lies within the Madley Park estate.

Children from South Leigh usually go to primary school in Witney, Eynsham or Stanton Harcourt. Two secondary schools serve the Witney area, one of which, Wood Green School, ([wgs.witney.org.uk](http://wgs.witney.org.uk)) is in Cogges Parish, although again children from South Leigh may also go to Eynsham for secondary education. Springfield School is a special school in Witney for children with learning difficulties, which is also in Cogges Parish

([springfield.oxon.sch.uk](http://springfield.oxon.sch.uk)). A significant number of our church families attend The King's School ([tkswitney.org.uk](http://tkswitney.org.uk)), which is one of the largest evangelical Christian independent schools in the country for ages 3-16 years.

Witney is home to two campuses of Abingdon and Witney College ([abingdon-witney.ac.uk](http://abingdon-witney.ac.uk)) is one of the major providers of FE in Oxfordshire).

Services for older people include day services in the centre of the town, and a number of residential care homes, two of which are in Cogges Parish. West Oxfordshire has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the UK.

The parish of Cogges covers approximately 3.5 square miles on the east side of the town of Witney. The parish is bordered on the west by the River Windrush and to the north by the Woodstock Road. In the 100 years up to the 1970s, the population of Cogges was





between 700 and 800. Housing developments in the 1980s, such as Wadards Meadow, Oxlease and Blakes Avenue saw the population grow to approximately 4,700. The most recent development on Madley Park brought a further 1,000 homes to Cogges Parish resulting in an estimated population of more than 7,000.

Next door to the church is Cogges Manor Farm ([cogges.org.uk](http://cogges.org.uk)) – a well-regarded and formerly publicly funded farming museum which is now the responsibility of a Trust and often used as a film location. This is a popular local amenity with whom we have built a good relationship including our annual Christmas Carols in the Barn event.

The Church, churchyard, Church Centre, Priory and Museum are in an area listed as a scheduled ancient monument.

The Parish of South Leigh sits east of Cogges and outside the Witney town boundary with the A40 marking the border between the two. A small rural community, the village is home to c360 people. The facilities within the village are limited to the Mason’s Arms pub, the church of St James The Great and the Village Hall. The church building itself is of significant historical interest and is loved by the local villagers as it attracts people to the area. For this reason the church is open daily during daylight hours for visitors to come and look around.

**Greenhouse**

Greenhouse is a national Church of England initiative designed to help churches to establish and grow new Christian communities, it aims to help any church to make their mission plans a reality.

In September 2021 as part of their Resourcing Church role, Cogges piloted one of the first Diocesan Greenhouses with a

small team. Since that date the Greenhouse has met termly as a learning community. Projects have joined and left the process and to date 20 projects have participated, representing 8 different benefices.

Greenhouse continues to be a place for supporting and encouraging mission in the Witney Deanery and beyond, and continues to be considered strategically significant by the Diocese.

## c - The Worshipping Community

Our electoral roll currently stands at 286 members although we have 473 adults on our ChurchSuite database. Our normal monthly pattern of Sunday services across the two churches is shown below.

Time / Location	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday
<b>9am Cogges Church</b>	Holy Communion: (B.C.P.)	Holy Communion (Common Worship)	Holy Communion: (BCP)	Holy Communion (Common Worship)	Holy Communion (Common Worship)
<b>10.30am Cogges Church at Wood Green School</b>	Morning Worship: Extended sung worship, Bible-based teaching and prayer, with children's and youth activities	No service but opportunities for missional activities called Second Sundays	Morning Worship with Communion: Sung worship, Bible-based teaching, communion and prayer, with children's and youth activities	Morning Worship: Extended sung worship, Bible-based teaching and prayer, with children's and youth activities	Morning Worship: Extended sung worship, Bible-based teaching and prayer, with children's and youth activities
<b>10.30am South Leigh</b>	No service	A service of sung worship, Bible teaching and prayer	No service	Holy Communion (Common Worship)	No service
<b>6.30pm Cogges Church</b>	Evening Worship: An informal service with extended sung worship and prayer	No service but opportunities for missional activities called Second Sundays	Worship: An informal service with extended sung worship and prayer	Worship: An informal service with extended sung worship and prayer	Worship: An informal service with Extended sung worship and prayer



## d - Ministry Team

We are looking for a dynamic leader with the vision, passion, energy and drive to continue to grow, coach, facilitate and develop our strong and healthy ministry team who have ably assisted the vicar in the flourishing of the Church.

### Associate Minister

Rev Andy Reid (ordained in 2012) joined us in September 2022 working full-time as a paid employee of the church. Andy, who originally hails from Northern Ireland, left a successful 20-year career in Management Training and Development, responding to the call to ministry in 2010.

*“Helping people discover their full, God-given potential remains a central part of what I most enjoy”.*

The Associate Vicar role was created in order to release the Vicar to be more outward looking, overseeing the ‘Greenhouse Project’, and to develop Cogges Church as a Resourcing Hub. In 2019, St. Mary’s Cogges was awarded a £250k grant from the Diocese of Oxford’s development fund for a six-year project to develop it into a “Market Town Resourcing Hub” aimed at planting fresh expressions of church, equipping rural church mission and supporting ‘church and congregation planting’ in the Cotswolds and beyond. The Associate Minister role is initially being funded through this project, with the benefice taking increasing financial responsibility for this role.

Andy is resident in the Parish in a property rented from the Diocese on the local Madley Park estate. He is based at home for work which, along with his normal parish duties, includes:

- The first point of contact for occasional services (baptisms, weddings and funerals)
- Line management of children’s workers

- Oversight of Cogges Connect Groups (there are around 20 of these)
- Oversight of prayer ministry in its various forms
- Leadership and oversight of St James The Great Church, South Leigh
- Pastoral Care (alongside our Operations Manager)
- Men’s ministry
- Administration of the Compassion Fund
- A ‘Transforming Lives for Good’ coach at the Blake C of E School.

### Curate

Rev. Chris Rimmer has had a significant impact since joining the benefice in June 2023 after training at Wycliffe Hall. Whilst there he represented Oxford in the Isis Crew at the Boat Race in 2021 & 2022. Ordained in September, he oversees Alpha and the young adults ministry. He is passionate, prayerful and a great evangelist and has been encouraging and inspiring us to get out there and share our faith with people in the community. He loves to play golf and enjoys his food.

### Theologian & Missioner

Rev Greg Downes is an evangelist and Director of Kingfisher Ministries. Greg spends a significant amount of his time travelling but helps to train the church in the work of evangelism and occasionally preaches and officiates at services.

### Worship Pastor

Arjan Binnema who joined us part-time (20 hours per week) in September 2022, came to the UK from the Netherlands 4 1/2 years ago and is currently finishing his studies at Regents Theological College. Following Christ and making music has always shaped his life and he leads and organises our Sunday service musicians, AV and live-streaming teams as well as the worship needs for other

church family and community events. Arjan has also initiated and leads a Connect Group for all involved in sung worship at Cogges Church.

### Youth Ministry Directors

Joy and Darin Stevens joined us part-time (20 hours per week) in January 2023 having led youth groups for 20+ years. Working with teenagers still makes them smile! They oversee Sunday youth work as well as mid-week groups and activities, including the mentoring of our young people by members of our church family. Naomi Taylor joined the team in April 2024 (20 hours per week) as a trainee youth worker.



### Children and Families Lead Pastor and Worker

We have had a number of very committed Children’s & Families workers over the last 8 years who have developed this ministry. Anna Smith and Fabi Angel have joined us part-time (5 and 15 hours per week respectively) since February 2024. Anna is overseeing the whole of the children’s work alongside her current part-time teaching post. Her emphasis is on the Sunday Children’s Church activities. Whilst Fabi, assists the Sunday team, is also leading the church’s children’s work within the local community, particularly the weekly carer and toddler groups (Cogglets) and other one-off invitational children’s events during the year.

Fabi is married to Rev Andy Angel, Director of Formation in Ministry for the Diocese of Oxford. Andy kindly provides occasional support officiating at services, particularly at the 9am at Cogges and at South Leigh

### Retired clergy with permission to officiate

- Rev Roger Howell – Regularly assists with services at Cogges and South Leigh
- Rev Canon John Hughes – Very occasionally assists with services at

Cogges and South Leigh

### Licensed Lay Ministers:

Our small team of LLMs assist occasionally in leading services and preaching at Cogges and South Leigh and are very much valued for their contributions.

- Mari Graves – Regularly assists with services at South Leigh and is also a Connect Group Leader with her husband Paul.
- Ian Smith – Is part of the senior leadership team and occasionally assists with leading services at Wood Green and South Leigh.
- Sam Tippetts – Regularly attends our 9:00am and 10:30am services with his wife Rachel and their young family. Sam has preached on a number of occasions at the 9:00am service.

## e - PCCs and Lay Leadership

The lay leadership of Cogges PCC is strong with lay leaders involved in a wide range of activities such as Connect Group leaders, Prayer Ministry Team, Finance Team, Community Garden Team, etc.. It meets five times a year and currently has 22 members including 5 Deanery Synod representatives. It is generally chaired by the Incumbent. The Operations Manager attends PCC meetings as an observer and in their role as Parish Safeguarding Officer.

There is a smaller Leadership Team comprising of the Vicar, Associate Vicar, Curate, Churchwardens, Lay Chair, Treasurer, Operations Manager, Youth Director and Prayer Ministry Lead which meets at least once a term, generally to pray and discuss what to bring to the PCC.

The PCC of St James the Great South Leigh currently comprises of the Vicar, Associate Vicar (Chair), 4 elected members and a volunteer bookkeeper. At present there are no elected Churchwardens and so a wide range of roles are split among the PCC and the small congregation at St James. The Cogges Operations Manager is also the Parish Safeguarding Officer for South Leigh.



## f - Church Building

### St Mary's Cogges

The Grade I listed church building is small and medieval, dating from the late 11th century. Its most distinctive architectural feature is the small tower, set diagonally at the north-west angle of the church which is of unusual design with the square base rising to an octagonal tower with a tiled conical cap. The interior of the church has been carefully preserved and has many original architectural features and historic monuments. The Church roof has been comprehensively repaired in the last 5 years.

A major reordering of the church was carried out in 2007 regenerating the interior of St Mary's by providing flexible liturgical space. The typical layout for a service offers seating facing west for 200 people. The Blake Chapel in the north-east corner of the church can provide up to 40 seats for an eastward-facing Communion service and otherwise can be used for smaller and more intimate services.

There is an AV desk providing a projection system with a large screen and additional flat screens mounted in areas of restricted view. There is a sound system with a mixing desk and an induction loop. With an underfloor heating system, the church can also accommodate larger church sponsored events throughout the year such as prayer spaces for the Blake School, children's light party and celebratory Events.

### St James the Great, South Leigh

The Grade 1 listed building dates from Norman times. The earliest part of the church

is Early English. The rest of the church is perpendicular in style, with some Tudor arches. The tower at the western end contains a ring of eight bells, and a former chantry chapel on the northern side of the sanctuary now serves as a vestry.

### Other Church Buildings

At St Mary's Cogges, the Church Centre (formerly the Old School) at the front of the church site, was extensively refurbished in the late 1990s and again in 2017. It was redecorated during the summer and autumn of 2023 and is used mainly for the mid-week youth groups, church evening meetings and events, and the daytime Cogglets group. The building is hired during the day from Monday until Thursday lunchtime by Cogges Pre-School during term time.

The Old House adjoins Cogges Church Centre and is used as the Church Office for the employed staff. It has a kitchen, lounge (which can be used for small meetings and appointments by anyone in the church family who wants to book it in addition to the staff) and offices - one downstairs (for the Operations Manager and Church Administrator) and two upstairs (one for the children's and youth workers and one for the volunteer treasurer + one vacant desk). There is a small mortgage on the Old School House. The Church Centre and Old School House are together Grade II listed.

There are no additional church buildings in South Leigh, although the church hires the village hall (the former school) when the need arises.

## g - Clergy Housing

Cogges Priory (reputedly the oldest residential property in Oxfordshire) owned by the Diocese, is in a beautiful setting adjacent to St Mary's Church, and provides housing for the Incumbent. It is a listed building with original medieval features and was extensively refurbished in the 1980s. It comprises an entrance hall, study, two reception rooms each with fireplaces, large kitchen, separate utility room and cloakroom, four large bedrooms, a bathroom and separate toilet.

There is a pretty garden surrounding the property and a small terrace outside the living room with views down over the Priory paddock to the river Windrush. There is a garage and large gravel driveway to the front of the property enclosed with full height wooden gates. There is a ride-on mower provided for the grass cutting.

During lockdown a significant area of the paddock which was originally an orchard, was

cleared by the current Incumbent and has become the Cogges Community Garden. From March until November, the garden is open one morning and one afternoon a week. Volunteers from within the church family and anyone interested in joining them, tend the garden and vegetable patch and/or show members of the public around, invite them to stay for a drink and a chat, and to take any produce available. It is hoped that the new Vicar will allow this project to continue and build upon it for the missional opportunity it is, but that will be in their gift.

## h - Ministerial Support

Two paid staff members provide Operations Management and Church Administration support to the Ministry Team. The Operations Manager works 32 hours a week and the Church Administrator 35 hours a week which includes 5 hours for comms and 5 hours for children's work support. Clergy working expenses are reimbursed in full, including reimbursement at the Inland Revenue approved mileage rate.



## Part 2 | St. Mary's Cogges

**TRANSFORMING**

### a - Vision and Mission

**VISION:** We want to see our community transformed through encountering God's love, following Jesus and being filled with His Spirit.

**MISSION:** To achieve this vision, the Church sets out to be a **transforming, flourishing** and **resourcing** community.

1. A **transforming** community by empowering and equipping our congregations and the next generations to follow Christ.
2. A **flourishing** community by connecting people with God, each other and their world.
3. A **resourcing** church, engaging in mission in our community and beyond.

**RESOURCING**

**FLOURISHING**

## b - Desired Expressions of our Vision and Mission

### TRANSFORMING

**Expression 1: “Personal Rhythms”** – we encourage every person and family to develop rhythms for their faith growth. This would typically include:

- Daily prayer and scripture reading
- Weekly worship
- Being a part of a “pocket of belonging”
- Sabbath taking
- Habits of serving and blessing others
- Generosity in giving

We don’t imagine this to be a one-off rhythm for life but to deepen and grow as we press into God. We encourage everyone to ‘find their place and go at their pace’.

**Expression 2: “Discipleship pathway”** – we believe that all Christians are called to be disciple-making disciples, people who seek to grow in their own faith, bring others to faith and help them grow in their commitment to Jesus. We wish to provide opportunities for everyone, of all ages, to grow through organised and informal relationships and groups – always with mission in mind. In our different discipleship activities, we encourage people to move along a discipleship pathway through the stages of welcoming, belonging, growing, giving, discipling others and leading. The focus is on everybody “being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus and doing what Jesus did” particularly through discerning their own calling and taking their part in the work of the church to make disciples.

### FLOURISHING

**Expression 3: “Pockets of Belonging”** – we are encouraging every person and family in our church to develop at least one relationship with another person or family outside their own household which is intentionally about growing their faith. This could be through a connect group, missional community, WoW (Women of Witney) group, mentoring relationship, prayer partner or prayer triplet.

**Expression 4: “Leadership pipeline”** – we want to be a church which develops leaders. We have adopted a model for developing leaders (recruit-train-deploy-review) and through huddles we look to create a pipeline where people can move from personal leadership through to leading others - from small group leaders to leading teams, and from leading leaders through to leading networks. As part of the resource church work, we will continue a training pipeline for church planting curates as well. The aim is to raise leaders in a low control and high accountability culture, where leaders are supported through mentoring/coaching relationships and we are all moving in the same direction together with a shared vision.

### RESOURCING

**Expression 5: “Blessing our neighbour, building community, bringing good news”** – we are encouraging every person and family to be missionally minded in every part of life, seeking to practically help their neighbours near and far, finding ways to build community within the church family and in the wider community, and to speak of the good news about Jesus whenever they have the opportunity. Through listening to our community, we believe that in particular we should be looking to develop initiatives and support:

- The lonely and isolated
- Children and young people
- Parents of young children
- Vulnerable families
- Homeworkers

**Expression 6: “Missional communities and church planting”** – in line with our desire to increase our impact in the town and the way we serve Witney and beyond, we have a goal to become a Market Town ‘resourcing hub’ planting fresh expressions of church, equipping rural church mission, and enabling ‘church and congregation planting’ in West Oxfordshire and beyond. Therefore, we wish to become a church made up of missional communities focused around a common, shared mission to a place, people group or

activity. These are groups that intentionally share life on a deep basis to embody faith and fuel that mission. At the same time, we believe that we should be part of a wider network of church planting.

## c - Core Values

Cogges Church is a dynamic community and we want to become an even more vibrant community of faith and hope, where everyone can find their place to belong, their place to recover/heal, their place to grow and their place to serve.

To enable this, our core values are:

- **Charismatic** - *making space for the ministry of the Holy Spirit*
- **Generous** - *giving our time, money and people and our gifts to serve others*
- **Compassionate** - *seeking to serve and support the lonely and isolated, children and young people, parents of young children, vulnerable families, homeworkers*
- **Empowering** - *seeing and encouraging potential especially through the identity and use of spiritual gifts*
- **Emotionally Healthy** - *encouraging rules of life and health-giving rhythms*
- **Missional** - *looking outward particularly in the areas of church planting and encouraging new forms of church*

These Expressions and Values are what lie at the heart of St Mary’s Cogges – to be a blessing to the town and its community. This has been a hallmark of the church since its foundation more than 900 years ago.



## d - Community Links

We have close links with the community through our church school (The Blake C of E Primary) and the other schools in the Parish (see below). Members of the congregation are closely involved with local charities such as Besom, Adventure Plus, Open Doors and Apollos Clothing. Others are trained Street Pastors (although not active in Witney currently) and Town Chaplains. We are active members of Churches Together in Witney. We also hold services in one of the local care homes once a month. There is much potential for further development of our whole-church involvement in serving our local community.

## e - Church and other Schools

There are four schools within the Parish boundaries:

- The Blake Church of England (Aided) Primary School
- Wood Green, a leading secondary school of some 1,200 students
- Madley Brook, a successful Primary school built as part of the Madley Park development
- Springfield Special School, which shares a site and some facilities with Madley Brook Primary School

St Mary's church is actively engaged with the local schools and has particularly close links with our Church of England primary school. Our clergy also regularly conduct assemblies at The Kings School.

### The Blake School and St Mary's Cogges Church

The Incumbent is an ex officio foundation governor.

The strong connection between St Mary's Cogges Church and The Blake School goes back for well over a century. Traces of the School's first home can be seen today in the Church Centre. This was once a tithe barn given in the 1860s to house what was to become The Blake School. The name remembers William Blake of the Manor, who

endowed charitable trusts in Cogges and Witney, (the Blake Education Trust is still an important benefactor of the school), and started schools in Newland and High Cogges. The building was adapted to house the School, and the shape of the big window looking out on to the churchyard shows its conscious link with the church building. 'Church House' (now the Church Office) was built at the end of the nineteenth century to house the Schoolmistress and her husband.

The Blake School was still in its original home in the second half of the twentieth century. In 1982, having outgrown these premises, The Blake School moved to its current home in Cogges Hill Road – still within the parish, and still with the closest possible links to St Mary's including financial support for a Home School Link Worker in conjunction with the Blake Educational Trust. Children from The Blake regularly visit St Mary's for special services (Leavers and Christmas) and events (Y1 wedding and prayer spaces) within the year.

## f - The Worshipping Community

Our church family is made up of three distinct congregations, one meeting at 9.00am, one at 10.30am and one at 6.30pm.

**The 9am Service:** This Holy Communion service has a thriving and caring congregation with an average attendance of between 20 and 25. A significant proportion of those attending have been in the parish for over twenty years; one or two have worshipped all their lives at Cogges. The congregation is

stable but not static, and its boundaries are permeable. Newcomers and visitors are welcomed, as are those whose 'main' service is the 10.30am, but who intermittently attend the earlier service. On occasion, coffee and croissants served after the service help to strengthen what is already a healthy spirit of fellowship.

Services alternate between a quiet service of Holy Communion following the Book of Common Prayer liturgy including hymns, and Common Worship - a traditional service with hymns, Bible reading and a talk.

**The 10.30am Service:** The congregation of this service represent a church that wants to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and is a member of the New Wine Network. Extended sung worship, Bible-based teaching and prayer, with children's and youth activities alongside, characterise this

service. Equally as important is the space made intentionally within it for the Holy Spirit to minister to us and, where possible, opportunities for people to share what God is doing in their lives.

Communion is held at this service once a month and refreshments are served after the service twice a month. There is always prayer ministry offered at the end of the 10.30am from a strong team of prayer ministers who have, over the past year, increased in numbers and been developed through training, mentoring and supervision. The service prayer ministry team reflect part of the wider church ministry of prayer which includes prayer and listening appointments, prophetic prayer ministry appointments and single issue Restoring the Foundations

Ministry.

The 10.30am Service (which is also live-streamed) moved to our local secondary school (Wood Green) in September 2021 to accommodate more easily our congregation numbers of around 200. As part of this move we initiated our Second Sundays project. On the second Sunday of the month we do not hold the 10.30am or 6.30pm services but encourage our congregation to gather in grassroots mission projects for worship and outreach. In the wider Benefice this has included a new informal service at St James the Great South Leigh, which has seen new growth. Current projects also include:-

- St James the Great, South Leigh
- Madley Community Cafe
- Cogges Photowalk
- Pub Church (with Witney Community Church)
- Ignite (worship in Charlbury)
- Aston, Bampton and Clanfield community activities
- Standlake informal congregation
- Youth Extra

### The 6.30pm Service

Evening Worship takes place in our church building and is an informal service with extended sung worship and prayer, particularly as there are less constraints upon time. With a younger but not exclusive demographic, this service sees numbers from around 30 upwards.

The vision for this service was recast by our Curate back in the summer 2023 and includes:-

- Keeping the content based upon the question what is the purpose of church?
- Basing the practice around the core values of Presence (hosting the Holy Spirit), Praise (blessing the Lord's name) and Promise (encouragement and challenge)
- Using this service as part of the church's leadership pipeline to raise up new worship leaders, service leaders and preachers





### Other Services

The traditional seasonal services are held during the year along with termly Everyone Worshipping Together (EWT) services at Wood Green School which may be a festival service.

During the summer, from the end of July until the end of August, the 10.30am service is not held at Wood Green School but instead a summer programme of shorter services, with children leaving for a group activity during the talk, are held in the church. There is generally no 6.30pm service during the summer holiday period.

### Occasional Offices

2023: Weddings 8; Funerals 11; Infant/Child Baptisms 8. The number of weddings in particular was higher than normal, possibly as a result of coming out of the pandemic.

## g - Life of the Church

### Prayer

We are a church whose first priority is to seek God and hear from Him so that all our mission flows from His heart. There is a strong commitment to intercessory prayer by some of the church members but is an area where we would like to encourage more of our church family to participate. A monthly prayer gathering called A Passion for Change takes place in the church on the first Wednesday of the month. Recently an in-person prayer gathering each week at 8am on a Thursday morning has moved earlier to 7 – 7.30am on-line and has seen an increase in participants.

### Outreach and evangelism

Along with our Second Sunday missional projects, we run the Alpha Course once or twice a year, mostly in-person now but sometimes online. Numbers of guests vary but 6-8 seems our average and can include people who already profess a faith but wish to grow by getting back to basics, or Christians who want to find community this way. Alpha courses also include guests who wish to have

their child/ren baptised at Cogges who are asked to do the first five weeks of the Alpha Course in preparation for this. We currently have 22 Connect Groups (home groups), some of which are post-Alpha groups and one of which meets online. There are also 2 WoW Groups (Women of Witney) that meet weekly. 200 people are signed up to the Connect Groups.

We will also intermittently offer Marriage Preparation and Marriage courses.

Our men's ministry has recently been re-imagined and has seen attendances of around 40 men gathering for a Saturday morning breakfast, and during the week at a local food venue for conversation and a talk from a Christian speaker.

Our women's ministry includes occasional Saturday morning breakfasts with a speaker held at The Milking Parlour. This is housed in a converted building on a farm belonging to a church family member. Those involved with the Milking Parlour also have a vision for it to be a centre for other imaginative outreach and evangelistic gatherings.

### Children

We believe children are a key part of our church and we aim to encourage them in their journey of faith, through worship, encounter, discipleship and teaching.

Children's Church is available for all 0-10 year olds. They meet on Sunday mornings at Wood Green School in 3 age-specific groups: Ignite for 0-4 year olds, Flames for Reception-Y2s, Blaze for Y3-5s (all children stay in the service until after the first song). We encourage the children to explore and develop their faith though looking at the Bible, worship, encounter, craft, fun and games. (Year 6's join the Youth for this time).

We believe that the family is the key place for children to develop and grow in their faith, and we aim to support families in their development and journeys of faith through communication, gatherings and parenting courses.

Coglets is a baby, toddler and carer group run by St Mary's Church in Cogges. We welcome all children aged 0-5 years and their parents or carers. They are welcomed with a fresh cup of coffee or tea and a team of friendly faces. At Coglets, our focus is on the carer. We believe that if the carer is well cared for, the children they are caring for will be too.

Coglets meets from 10am to 11.30am (term time only) on Thursdays at Madley Park Hall, OX28 1UE and on Fridays at Cogges Church Centre, OX28 3LA.

We aim to run seasonal events for families throughout the year including, for example, a 'Hot Cross Bun Event' on Good Friday and an Alternative Halloween party on 31st October.

### Young People

We currently run two youth group gatherings a week (Sundays and Wednesdays) that aim to help young people to encounter Jesus and learn how to flourish through a relationship with Him. In these groups we help young people discover who God says they are, wrestle with the big questions of life, learn how to pray, worship and be led by God and His word. Currently this is done through interest groups called Tracks, setting up mentoring relationships and offering opportunities for growth outside of the young people's comfort zones!

The vision for Cogges Youth is:

- **Discipleship:** We want to equip, empower and release young people to be lifelong disciple-making followers of Jesus.
- **Community:** We want to create a community of trust, vulnerability, encouragement and challenge, where everybody has unique gifts and personalities to bring to the group
- **Growth:** Whether exploring faith, growing in relationship with God or up for investing in others, all young people are welcome at Cogges Youth where they will be helped to grow wherever they are at.

### Special Events

Special events in the life of our church recently have included the Celebrate St Mary's community event after re-opening the church after major roof repairs, the hosting of the Oxfordshire New Wine Leaders' Network lunches, the development of an outdoor Good Friday café and Easter community activities and the re-instating in 2023 of a residential Church Weekend Away.

## h - Giving and Money

### Recent major projects

The church has been able to undertake the following major building projects in recent years:

- Church Centre kitchen and toilets renovation and churchyard toilets installation in 2017
- Phase 1 church roof repairs as per the Quinquennial Inspection of 2016, completed in 2019
- Phase 2 church roof repairs as per the Quinquennial Inspection of 2016, completed in 2022
- Church Centre internal re-decoration in 2023/24

### Income and Expenditure

Most church income comes through offerings and donations including tax reclaimable via Gift Aid. There is some rental income from the Church Centre and other minor sources such as fees and cash investments.

Members are encouraged to use Gift Aid to increase the value of their donations. Members are also encouraged to give regularly via the Parish Giving Scheme and also at additional dedicated gift days, generally twice a year. The latter are for clearly communicated specific purpose(s).

A copy of the 2023 Annual Report and Financial Statements of the PCC is available on our website [coggesparish.com](http://coggesparish.com). Total expenditure including all funds approximately £397,000.

Unrestricted expenditure £350,000.

Budgeted unrestricted deficit for 2024 is £16,000 which should be eliminated by planned gift days.

The church has a policy of giving away at least a tithe of unrestricted income which is divided between evangelism and relief work at home and overseas. There is also a separate Compassion Fund administered by the Associate Vicar as a discretionary fund. This fund has been generously supported by the church family and we have given away over £50,000 over the last three years to individuals in our community facing financial hardship.

The following charts from our 2023 Short Annual Report give further details:

### Possible future expenditure

The Quinquennial Inspections of the Church Centre and Office in 2021 and the Church Building in 2023 have outlined:

- Internal repairs and plastering to the Office, especially the attic
- Monitoring of external wall cracks of Office
- Roof and external repairs to the Church Centre
- Continued repair and restoration work on the Church roof

## i - Links with the Wider World

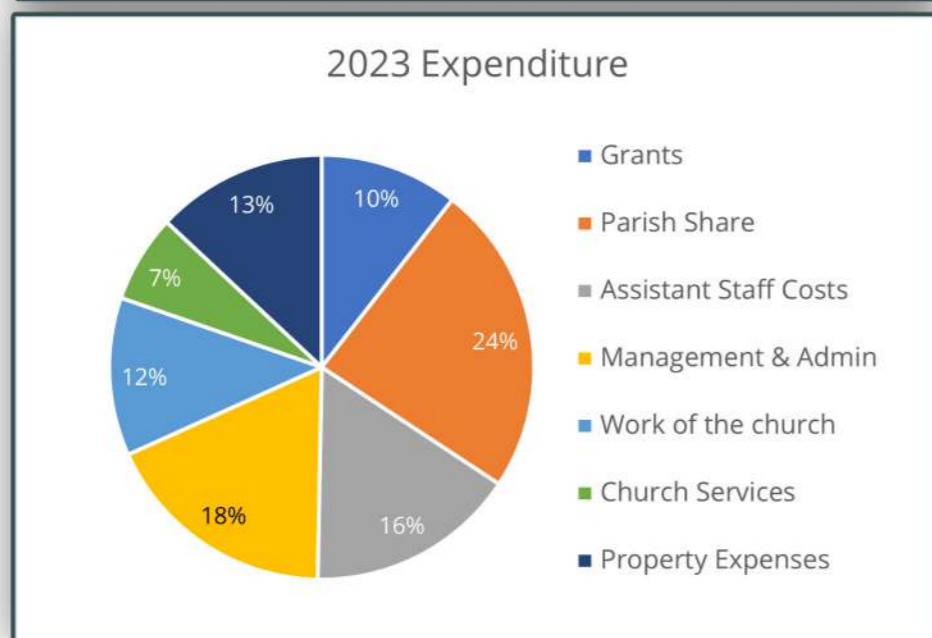
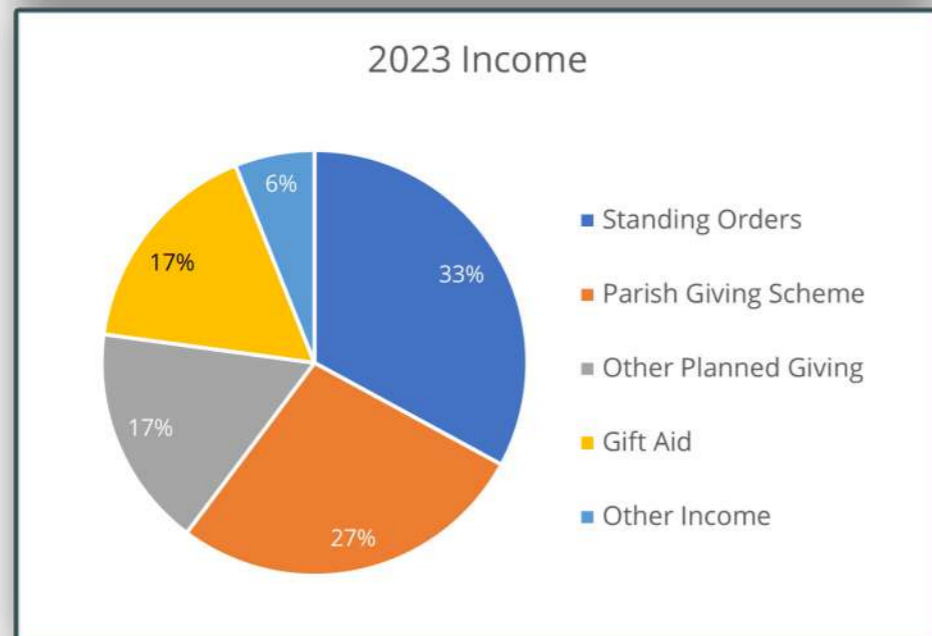
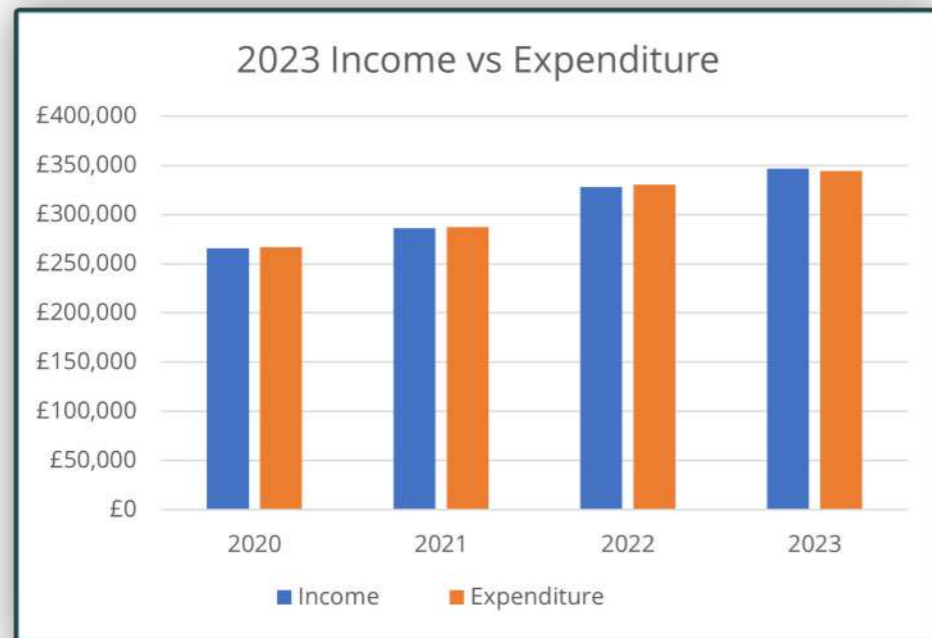
Cogges Church prioritises people and organisations in S.E. Asia, Africa (Burundi) and the Middle East (especially Lebanon).

With the current crises in the Middle East, the church adapts its support and engagement as different situations arise. Our partnership with The Life Centre in Beirut continues to grow, with a substantial contribution to the refurbishment of a new outreach centre and grants for refugee support, discipleship training, and pastoral support. Open Doors continues to be a key local partner, with smaller but strategic grants given to the training of leaders across North Africa, plus using satellite and digital media to support isolated believers through SAT-7.

Our longstanding partnership with Gasenyi parish in Burundi continues. We provide fees and equipment for local children to attend school, enable renovations of houses when needed and invest in future leaders by helping fund the theological training of four students from Gasenyi.



# Part 3 | St. James the Great, South Leigh



## a - Vision

The congregation of St James the Great have a vision to take the good news of Jesus to the village. As a church family and as individuals, St James the Great Church aim to offer worship worthy of the living God. Through worship, prayer, and Bible study, we seek to know God better and to be conformed to His purposes for our lives. In partnership with other Christians in South Leigh and Witney we wish to make His love known within the local community within our area, nation and throughout the world.

## b - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges

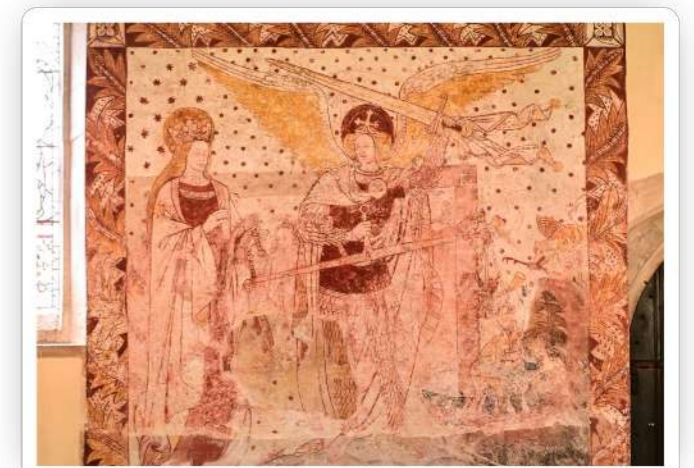
The nature and demographics of the village have changed over the years with most of the former village facilities now closed. There is no village shop, post office or school. Children who attend state schools do so in Witney, Eynsham or Stanton Harcourt (Witney and Eynsham for secondary education). Bus services are rare, there is a pub which is working with the village to develop a stronger community feel. There are strong local affiliations around the Village Hall which was recently extensively refurbished, and the village in the past has been very supportive in fundraising for the Church, contributing extensively to the restoration of the medieval wall paintings for which the Church is famous,

the clock and roof repairs.

At the start of 2024 we conducted a Village Consultation seeking their views on the church, and how they valued its place within the village. Of the responses we received it was clear that the villagers value the church due to its historical significance (ancient murals on the walls and links with John Wesley). However, they did not express any particular value to the church as a worshipping space, other than somewhere where they might have occasional services (baptisms, weddings and funerals) and festival celebration services (Christmas and Easter).

For many years St James has been dependent on people travelling from Witney to be part of the Church to fulfil the roles of officers and to enable the worship to take place. There are some great community events in the village that members of the church help organise and support.

You will be someone who communicates love and fellowship, with a heart to work towards reconciliation and forgiveness, seeking to build positive, mutually supportive relationships with people on the periphery of the church and in the village. Our small congregation longs to draw more people from



the village into our worshipping community. St James' church needs to move to a more financially viable position where it is self-supporting once more.

## c - The Worshipping Community

The Church Gather for Worship on the Second and Fourth Sundays of the month and are supported by the clergy and lay ministers. The Electoral Roll on 31st December 2023 was 21 with 15 residing in the parish and 6 non-residents - a small decline on the previous year. Attendance on Sundays over the past year has been an average of 20.

## d - Life of the Church

### Worship services

Worship services occur twice a month. Since Cogges Church introduced the new "Second Sundays" initiative whereby they encouraged its members to use the second Sunday of the month to participate in "missional" activities, St James the Great has benefitted from a number of the Cogges Church members attending services on those Sundays. This Second Sunday service comprises of sung worship, Bible teaching and prayer. The fourth Sunday is a Common Worship Service. Either service can include Holy Communion which happens once a month.

Occasional Baptism, Wedding and Funeral services do take place at the church although there tend to be only one or two a year.

Festival Services including a Carol Service, Christmas Day Communion and Easter Sunday Celebration do take place at the Church and are generally well attended by families from the Village and surrounding area. The Carols By Candlelight Service in December 2023 had an attendance of around 110 people.

### Weekly Prayers

The church building is open during daylight hours for private prayer and reflection. On

Wednesdays at 9.15am a small group gather to pray for the church, the village, our nation and the world.

### Bell Ringing

There is an active and enthusiastic group of bell ringers at St James' who loyally ring the bells before most services. Although not active members of the congregation, practice evenings held on the first, third (and fifth) Wednesdays of each month have recently gained in strength, mainly due to attendance by 'improvers' from Witney tower (St Mary's the Virgin, Witney). Along with the occasional wedding and Christmas carol services, the bells ring out for important occasions such as the King's Coronation. These occasions have generated ring-fenced funds for the maintenance of the bells. There is potential for more income from this source, given the high reputation of the quality, maintenance, and accessibility of the eight bells of St James the Great. One of the drawbacks to wider use however is the lack of toilet and kitchen facilities in the church building.

### Tower - Gold Standard

Over recent years an enormous amount of work has been undertaken to bring the tower up to scratch, culminating in the ODG Gold Maintenance Award in 2021, and again in 2023 with an even higher mark, of which the Church is very proud. Since then it has been a case of ongoing maintenance to maintain this hard achieved standard, principally down to an impassioned and conscientious member of the village.

## e - Giving and Money

Finances at St James have remained relatively stable over the past two years but are subject to challenges given the small congregation, for example the regular gift-aided income has fallen and the contribution to the Parish Share has gone up as have the regular costs. A recent sizeable donation has helped but this is allocated to specifically replacing the boiler. More information can be found in the End of Year Financial Statements Year ending 2023: Financial Statements St James the Great 2023.

# Part 4 | Our New Incumbent

**Having experienced significant growth and development over the last ten years, the challenge for our new Vicar is to maintain that momentum and missional trajectory by harnessing the potential that exists within our church family. In order to continue to glorify God through being a place of healing, restoration and resourcing, our next vicar will challenge, inspire and motivate the church family in order that every member can fully utilise their gifts in the life of the church and our wider community.**

**One of the biggest challenges we face is around the limitations of our existing buildings. Our 10:30am congregation has outgrown our Church building and is now meeting in one of the local schools. We continue to see steady growth and we are now nearing full capacity (250 max.) for the school hall where we meet. The new vicar will need to lead the church to find a clear way forward. Various options have been explored in recent years, including: constructing a new building, refurbishing an existing venue or adding additional services. The current feeling is that God may be calling us to somehow plant a congregation or multiply smaller worshipping communities. This will be one of the primary challenges for our new vicar.**

**A further challenge will be to continue to inspire a missional heart in every member through initiatives like Madley Park Café, Town Chaplains, the Cogglets Toddler Groups, other Second Sunday activities and beyond. There is a strong foundation to build on, demonstrated through our existing children's and youth ministry, Connect Groups and our staff and leadership teams.**

**As a Resource Church we are blessed with sound finances and many faithful, gifted and capable people. However, tapping into those resources to encourage more volunteering/serving and more generous giving will be vital if we are to continue to fulfil our vision for growth and development for the future.**





## a - Profile

We are looking for a 'Leader of Leaders' to oversee our two churches, each with their own distinct personality. You will need a heart for the surrounding community in both town and countryside. You will need to guide us with a clear vision of God's Kingdom, open and receptive to the leading of the Holy Spirit for yourself and the churches. A sound, Biblical teacher and pastor who is responsive to the Holy Spirit, you will confidently lead others to know the fullness of life in the Spirit also. The future flourishing of our people depends upon our reliance on God and him working in and through his people, rather than by the scale of human effort we put in. You will be vital in inspiring, envisioning, equipping and pastoring people of all ages to see what God is doing around us on a day-to-day basis, and nurturing the faith, courage and compassion we need to join in with that work.

You will be actively engaged with others in the ministry team: assistant clergy, retired clergy, churchwardens, lay leaders, worship, youth and children's pastors. A talented team leader, you will need to recognise the personality traits, strengths and allowable weaknesses in yourself and others, in order to build upon the team building work and leadership training recently done. As a result you will make good use of the strengths, abilities and experience of each team member, whilst also challenging each of them to flourish and grow, supporting them in any areas of personal growth and development.

Cogges is a multi-generational church family and you will creatively maintain and develop this core component of church life. As has been common across the country, since the pandemic we have found it harder to attract and engage volunteers to assist within the life of the church. As a result, we believe that there are many untapped talents waiting to be discovered. Unleashing this energy will engage much needed volunteers to carry our missional heart into our community and beyond.

## b - Person Specification

### General ministerial skills and experience

- Proven leadership experience and the ability to grow leaders, teams and communities
- A person whose life and ministry is rooted in prayer and the Bible and who can effectively communicate its truth to our culture, sensitive to the breadth of Christian understanding and able to lead people into a deeper understanding of their faith
- Gifted in inspiring and encouraging the development of lay ministry; able to recognise spiritual gifts in others and encourage them
- Outward looking, a people person, ready to encourage the development of relationships with individuals and organisations in the parishes and the wider community
- Cogges is a charismatic evangelical church and the new vicar will be from this tradition

### Specific skills linked to the needs of the church and wider parish community identified through consultation with key stakeholders

- Commitment and ability to lead with authenticity and integrity in the broader Anglican liturgical tradition, from charismatic worship to the Book of Common Prayer.
- Good facilitation, listening and coaching skills which s/he will use to oversee the Greenhouse Project (seeking to initiate, grow and develop smaller missional groups across the deanery) continuing the development of Cogges Parish as a Resourcing Hub, and in developing existing and future leaders in the church.
- Effective management capable of delegation, team building, training and support
- An ability to foster, across the churches and congregations, a strong sense of common identity and purpose in our

shared mission

- The ability to work confidently with a wide variety of people of all ages, pastoring, equipping coaching and developing them to recognise and use their God-given gifts for his glory.
- Emotional literacy, resilience, excellent communication skills and a good sense of humour
- An ability to envision and foster growth, guiding the church into its next steps of planting and/or multiplication enabling and promoting future growth.

*N.B. The Cogges PCC have passed a resolution that the vicar of Cogges should hold the historic Christian view of marriage.*





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