THE UNITED BENEFICE OF
ST ANNE, ST MICHAEL, AND ST THOMAS AT CLIFFE
WITH ALL SAINTS IN LEWES, EAST SUSSEX

Benefice Profile
September 2020

### CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Who we are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Rector we need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Our town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Our parishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Our ministry team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The ministry of women and men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Our worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Our churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Our parish halls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Our clergy housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Our finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Our church activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Our outreach to the wider community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Our mission strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Our ecumenical links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Our safeguarding commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Parish map, Facts and figures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

“**This beautiful church has sustained me for 25 years and continues to do so. I know that the strength and love at St Anne’s will survive.”**

---

**Enter his gates with thanksgiving ...**

“St Thomas’ is a truly wonderful community where everyone is accepted and welcomed.”

---

Harvey’s brewery harvest thanksgiving service
WHO WE ARE

We are three welcoming church communities in the attractive county town of Lewes.

The Eucharist is at the centre of our worship.

We can offer:

• A strong supporting team of clergy and Readers
• Committed and energetic lay people
• Distinctive worship styles within the Catholic tradition of the Church of England
• Well-loved and well-maintained historic church buildings
• Long-standing engagement with the local community.

The challenges and opportunities we face:

• We need to grow, numerically, spiritually and financially
• We need to develop ways of working more collaboratively as a united benefice
• We need to attract more families and young people.

Our websites:
https://www.stannelewes.org.uk/
https://www.stmichaelintlewes.org.uk/
https://st-thomas-lewes.org.uk/

THE RECTOR WE NEED

We are looking for a man or woman as our new Rector who will:

• offer strategic and sensitive leadership, working collaboratively with clergy and lay colleagues
• discern and nurture the gifts of all, encouraging participation and fostering a sense of community
• lead worship confidently and adeptly across the range of Catholic tradition
• build on our existing links with the wider community to develop the benefice’s mission and outreach
• engage constructively with other churches in the town.

The person we seek to appoint should be:

• a person of deep pastoral and spiritual sensibility
• sustained by personal prayer and have strategies in place to manage the stresses and demands of parish life
• an accomplished preacher and teacher, using reflective theological practice to offer insight and guidance
• able to manage time and resources effectively
• ideally, a person with a love of music and the arts.

Festival Mass at St Michael’s
OUR TOWN

Lewes is an attractive and lively town with a population of about 17,000. It is the county town of East Sussex and retains much of the character of an historic market town.

The skyline is dominated by the Norman castle in the town centre, whilst the ruins of St Pancras, the first Cluniac Priory in England, are on the southern edge of the town.

The town has a colourful history of dissent and radicalism. It was the site of the Battle of Lewes in 1264 when Simon de Montfort defeated Henry III. The burning of 17 Protestant martyrs under Mary Tudor is still commemorated each year in the famous town Bonfire celebrations. Lewes was the home of Thomas Paine and in the 20th century it nurtured a strong pacifist movement.

Today, Lewes is a popular place to live, with good transport links to nearby Brighton and to London (1 hour 10 minutes to Victoria by direct train). It has a good range of independent shops and restaurants, many of which are in the lively pedestrian area of Cliffe, pictured below.

There are three supermarkets, a weekly food market and a twice-monthly farmers’ market.

The town is home to a strong community of musicians, artists and makers, and has an independent cinema and a thriving theatre club. Glyndebourne Opera is 3 miles away and is a major local employer, together with East Sussex County Council, the Universities of Sussex and Brighton, Harvey & Sons, our local brewery, the Courts and the East Sussex Police Headquarters.

There are well-regarded state and independent schools (including two Church of England primary schools) and a tertiary college in the town.

Although generally prosperous, Lewes contains significant pockets of social deprivation and currently has three foodbanks. There is a large category B prison within St Anne’s parish.

OUR PARISHES

Our three parishes embrace the western and central areas of Lewes and the Cliffe at the eastern end of the town (see map on page 11).

St Thomas’ and St Michael have small populations (around 2250 and 350 respectively) but attract gathered worshipping communities inspired by their distinctive liturgical traditions (see chart on page 11).

St Anne has a population of around 7,500 and has more of the character of a traditional parish church.

OUR MINISTRY TEAM

The benefice has three associate vicars:

- Canon Judith Egar (SSM) is based at St Anne. Judith is also currently Rural Dean of Lewes & Seaford.

- Fr David Broad (half-time house for duty) is based at St Michael.

- Fr Herbert Bennett (SSM) is based at St Thomas’.

The benefice is also well supported by retired clergy with PTO, notably Fr Paul Yates at St Michael and Brother George Linnegar at St Thomas’.

Dr Roger Homan (Reader) is based at St Michael. Peter Shears, based at St Anne, will be admitted and licensed as a Reader in September 2020.

THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND MEN

The benefice affirms the ordained ministry of both women and men, and no resolutions have been made by any of the PCCs in accordance with the House of Bishops’ Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests 2014.

However, there is a small number of regular worshippers at St Michael who, through strongly held theological conviction, cannot receive the eucharistic ministry of a female priest.

We would ask our new Rector to respect their position. St Michael’s PCC looks forward to discussing with him or her how this may be achieved in practical terms, without compromising the full exercise of his or her eucharistic ministry in all the parishes.
OUR WORSHIP

St Michael's

St Michael has a long tradition of Anglo-Catholic worship, inspired by the Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century.

Its worshipping life is centred around the sung Sunday Mass (Common Worship Order 1), where incense is used, a full complement of servers is employed, and the Angelus is sung at the end.

There is one weekday said Mass on a Wednesday.

Feast Days are observed throughout the year and the Easter Triduum is celebrated.

Night Prayer is currently sung during Advent and Lent.

St Thomas'

At St Thomas', the Book of Common Prayer is used for all services and readings are from the 1611 Authorised Version of the Bible.

The PCC is a corporate member of the Prayer Book Society. The Sunday service of Holy Communion is accompanied by Merbecke's organ setting and hymns. Mattins, Holy Communion and Evening Prayer are said daily, and there is an additional service of Holy Communion at 10am on a Thursday.

St Anne's

The principal Sunday service at St Anne is a sung Eucharist (Common Worship Order 1).

Holy Communion according to the Book of Common Prayer is said on Sunday and Tuesday mornings. Choral Evensong has, until recently, been held once a month from April to September.

Covid pandemic

During the COVID 19 pandemic, St Anne has recorded a weekly Service of the Word, posted on YouTube, which has been well-received.

St Michael and St Thomas' have provided written reflections and other resources for their congregations.

All three churches have now reopened for Sunday worship, with appropriate hygiene and social distancing measures in place, and numbers are encouraging.

St Thomas' has also reopened for private prayer and meditation during the week, which has been much appreciated by the local community and visitors.

Our worshipping communities

Our church communities are faithful and committed. As in many Anglican churches, our demographic is markedly older than the wider population (the average age in the Lewes District Council area was 44 according to the 2011 census, whereas most of our worshippers are over 60).

We recognise that this presents a challenge to our future sustainability.

There is no Church of England school in the benefice, which limits our opportunities for contact with young people.

St Anne is fortunate in having several families with young children who worship on a Sunday. The parents supervise craft activities for children, connected with the theme of the service.
On a typical Sunday, the pattern of worship across the benefice is as follows:

8.00 a.m.  Holy Communion (BCP)  
St Anne

9.45 a.m.  Sung Holy Communion (BCP)  
St Thomas’

10.00 a.m.  Sung Eucharist (CW)  
St Anne

10.30 a.m.  Sung Mass (CW)  
St Michael

OUR CHURCHES

Our three parish churches are all fine historic buildings in sound condition. St Anne and St Michael are listed Grade I and St Thomas’ Grade II*.

St Anne’s

St Anne’s Church dates from the 12th century. Its treasures include an original Norman basket-weave font, a rare anchorite’s cell dating from the 13th century, a Jacobean pulpit, a gallery with the royal coat of arms of George IV and a set of Arts and Crafts windows.

The roof and tower were repaired in 2006. Ramped disabled access has recently been installed and a faculty application has been submitted for an extension to the building to provide toilets and kitchen facilities. The churchyard, which remains open for burials, is attractive and well-maintained.

St Michael’s

The earliest features of St Michael’s Church, including its unusual round flint tower, date from around 1200.

The church was enlarged in 1748, when the notable south aisle wall of knapped and squared flints was built abutting the High Street.

It was enlarged again in and after 1878, when its character was redesigned to align with the ideals of the Oxford movement and a fine set of windows by Henry Holliday was installed.

More recent additions include the figure of St Michael on the tower (1976) and the Pentecost East Window (1987) both designed by members of the congregation.

In the last ten years new lighting and a new sound system have been installed, together with a glass porch.

There is a fine two-manual Hunter organ (with additions by Browne) reputed to be the best in the area.

The churchyard was closed in 1854 and is now maintained by the local authority, with a small area available for the interment of ashes.
St Thomas’s

St Thomas’s Church is of 12th century origin and was originally a chapel of the Fraternity of St Thomas’ of Canterbury.

Notable features include a hagioscope (or squint) cut into the 12th century wall linking the chancel to the south aisle; the royal coat of arms of Elizabeth I dated 1598 and those of George I and George II painted on panel.

The clock was made in 1670 and one of the ring of four bells is dated 1619. There is no surviving churchyard.

Building repairs are necessary from time to time because the tower moves independently of the church, as both are built on marshy subsoil. The most recent of these repairs were carried out in 2013, 2016 and 2019.

The former church of All Saints was closed for worship some years ago and is now used as an arts centre run by the town council. The benefice has no responsibility for the building.

The former parish of All Saints has been incorporated into the parish of St Thomas’.

OUR PARISH HALLS

The parish hall of St Anne’s (known as St Mary’s Hall) is on the Nevill Estate almost a mile away from the church, in a residential area developed over the last century. The building is licensed for public worship, though services have not been held there for some years. The hall is one of the few community facilities in the area and is reasonably well used by a good mix of local clubs and family groups and by some small businesses. A side room has been refurbished in recent years and is now available to hire in addition to the main hall.

St Michael’s Church House, built in 1881, is immediately adjacent to the church and is listed Grade II. It has toilets and a kitchen and has recently been upgraded to meet health and safety requirements. It is used for church meetings but is financially self-supporting from lettings to local organisations. It is managed by a committee appointed by the PCC, of which its chairman is a member.

Cliffe Hall, which is next to St Thomas’s Church, is owned by a separate charity, the Cliffe Feoffees, which was founded in 1604 to support the church and those in need in the parish. The hall is modern and purpose-built, with excellent facilities. The Feoffees allow the church free use of the hall, and it is also well-used as a social centre for community activities.

OUR CLERGY HOUSING

The previous Rectory (now deemed unsuitable) is to be sold and a replacement house purchased. Further details may be obtained from the Archdeacon of Brighton and Lewes.

Fr David Broad and his family occupy the former St Michael’s Rectory, a pleasant four-bedroomed house in the centre of Lewes.
OUR FINANCES

Copies of the Annual Reports and Accounts for 2019 for the three parishes are supplied with this profile.

The benefice pays its Parish Ministry Costs in full and plans to continue doing so.

The PMC is apportioned informally between the parishes: St Anne and St Michael pay 40% each and St Thomas’ 20%.

Clearly, the income from giving by regular worshippers is insufficient to meet expenditure. We are fortunate in having some other income and capital resources.

St Thomas’ has the generous support of the Cliffe Feoffees, who provide an annual allowance and match-funding for large-scale maintenance and improvement work, as well as free use of Cliffe Hall.

St Michael has rental income from a parish-owned property and hire income from the church and from St Michael’s Church House.

St Anne has hire income from St Mary’s Hall and has benefited from donations and legacies in recent years. The PCC is expecting to receive in the next few months a very generous legacy which should (when added to fundraising and grants) cover the cost of the proposed toilet and kitchen extension.

We are not yet able to assess the likely impact on our finances of the COVID 19 pandemic.

“St Michael’s has been part of my life for many years. The building has a wonderful atmosphere, so close to the bustle of the high street and yet it has such a peaceful interior. It is remarkable how many people come in during the week to experience a period of quiet reflection and perhaps light a candle.”

While Cliffe Hall has reopened, St Michael’s Church House and St Mary’s Hall remain closed at the present time.

OUR CHURCH ACTIVITIES

At St Michael, events such as parish retreats to Bec, Ascot and Ty Mawr and the ‘Keble Seminars’ organised by our Reader, Roger Homan, have brought members of the congregation together to think about their faith and the place of Anglo-Catholicism within it.

Fr David Broad has organised some more contemplative events and Lent and Advent Groups.

“St Anne’s for me is an alma mater: a quiet holiness at heart and a poetry of place continuing over nearly a thousand years.”

“St Thomas’ is a loving community; particularly evident during the Covid lockdown.”

Let us go into the House of the Lord...
At St Anne, our patronal festival has in recent years been a focus for bringing together worship, contemplation, talks on history and theology, and artistic and musical events.

All these activities are currently suspended because of the COVID 19 pandemic.

**OUR OUTREACH TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY**

St Thomas’ and St Michael are open daily for private prayer and the peace and sanctuary they provide is much appreciated by visitors.

St Anne is currently open only for services and special events, but the PCC is keen to find ways to keep the church open during the week.

St Michael and St Anne have fine grand pianos. Both churches organise their own recital programmes each year, which offer classical music performed to a high standard and are very well supported. In addition, the churches are popular as concert venues for the Sussex Bach Choir and other local choirs and orchestras. Three choirs rehearse regularly at St Anne and the Lewes Festival of Song takes place there each July. St Anne and St Mary’s Hall have also been used as exhibition venues for the Lewes Artwave Festival.

The benefice has strong links to Lewes Town Council. The previous two Rectors have been chaplain to the Council and the Civic Carol Service and the annual Judges’ Service are traditionally held at St Anne, while St Michael has hosted the Town Remembrance Service in recent years.

St Thomas’ welcomes Harvey & Sons for their annual Harvest Thanksgiving Service, which is extremely popular with supporters from across the county.

The three parishes also maintain their links with the local community through fundraising and social activities.

There is a monthly Ploughman’s Lunch for the elderly at St Mary’s Hall. St Anne hosts a Big Book Sale in August and both St Thomas’ and St Anne hold popular Christmas Fairs.

St Anne has developed links with one of the local foodbanks, offering donations at Christmas and Easter and small grants to families in urgent need. Meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous are held at St Michael’s Church House. and a Family Climate Change Action Group meets there monthly on a Sunday.

“**The deep and selfless commitment of so many I have known at St Michael’s over some 40 years, particularly in the serving team, has been a source of lasting inspiration.**”

Sussex Harmony performing at St Thomas’
OUR MISSION STRATEGY

We recognize that we need to revise our Mission Action Plans, taking account of the Diocesan Vision for Growth 2020-2025.

St Michael’s PCC has already begun work on this and we look forward to the leadership and support of our new Rector in helping us to formulate a benefice-wide mission strategy.

OUR ECUMENICAL LINKS

Lewes has a rich variety of Christian communities, and ecumenical relations are good.

There are three other Anglican churches in the town, which are now united as a single parish benefice known as Trinity in Lewes. They are strongly evangelical in character.

Churches Together in the Lewes Area organizes a Walk of Witness on Good Friday and ecumenical events and study groups in Lent and Advent.

St Anne has developed links with Christ Church (Methodist/URC) and the two communities share Lent discussion groups.

Through Churches Together, the Lewes churches have staged a Passion Play in the town to mark Holy Week on several occasions since 2000. This has been enthusiastically supported and has drawn in participants and audience from the wider community.

The 2020 Passion Play has been postponed because of the COVID 19 pandemic but will be revived when conditions permit.

The Orthodox Parish of the Nativity of Christ, which is part of the Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain within the Ecumenical Patriarchate, holds services at St Thomas’ on most Sundays. This arrangement is valued by both congregations and is properly regulated.

St Anne stands opposite the Roman Catholic Church of St Pancras: the clergy and congregations of the two churches have established a friendly and mutually supportive relationship.

OUR COMMITMENT TO GOOD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE

The benefice takes safeguarding seriously and the parishes have adopted the national and diocesan safeguarding protocols. St Anne has achieved Level 1 SQP (Simple Quality Protects) and St Michael and St Thomas’ are actively working towards this.

“As a recent new member of St Anne’s, I was happy to find that I was very warmly welcomed by many of the other parishioners. I have found that the atmosphere continues to be friendly, even in these difficult times.”

St Thomas’ stages popular annual flower festivals
Parish maps

Parish facts and figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>St Anne</th>
<th>St Michael</th>
<th>St Thomas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electoral roll (2020)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Attendance</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Weekly average October 2019)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at Easter services 2019</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at Christmas Services 2019</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Including crib services)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptisms 2019</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weddings 2019</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals 2019 (including memorial services)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>