

The New Benefice of Dunham Massey, Rostherne with Bollington, Over Tabley

This new benefice seeks a full-time Incumbent to help four active and committed church congregations grow in number and in our connections with our local communities.

We are four churches in beautiful villages close to Altrincham and Knutsford, near to Manchester Airport and on the edge of the south-western edge of the Manchester conurbation. Our communities include a mix of long-standing families and people who are attracted by the beauty of the area, outstanding local schools and excellent transport networks.

The benefice is newly created, with St Mark's Dunham joining Rostherne, Little Bollington and Over Tabley who have worked together closely and effectively for several years. The villages are all unique but have much in common. Church buildings are loving cared for and are important to their local communities. Our different congregations get on well with each other, want to grow and are open to exploring new ideas.

We are seeking a future incumbent who:

- will offer wise and prayerful leadership that is rooted in a strong personal faith in Christ.
- is an enthusiast for the opportunities for ministry in a rural context and will thrive living among us.
- can communicate effectively with people from diverse social and economic backgrounds.
- will respect our existing approaches to worship and ministry.
- is experienced in encouraging the development of lay leadership and can readily delegate and work collaboratively.
- will commit to working with local schools, particularly Little Bollington Church of England Primary School.
- will prioritise and develop existing ministry with children and young families.
- has strong pastoral skills and a good sense of humour.

St Mark's, Dunham Massey



Reaching out to all in our Community

Introduction

Our Village is home to the National Trust property of Dunham Massey Hall, the parkland offers open access all year round as a green space for the people of Altrincham and Greater Manchester and is one of the busiest properties of the National Trust in the Northwest. The 3500 acre estate includes 14 farms covering dairy, sheep, beef, cereals, potatoes and apple orchards. Newer enterprises are a micro-brewery, ice cream tea rooms, apple juice and cider production. Three farms have stabling and livery for horse riders.

The Village Hall, formerly the Village School, has a large function room, stage, committee room and well-appointed kitchen, lobby and toilets. It is used by several village organisations like, Parish Council, Dunham Massey Women's Institute and Young Farmers Club.



The Parish Church of St Mark was built by public donations on land donated by the 7th Earl of Stamford. Building began in 1866 and the church opened in 1867. Formerly parishioners walked to St Mary's Bowdon, our Mother Church.

St Marks, is right in the centre of the village and is an integral part of our community of 14 farms, rented from the National Trust Estate and many cottages too. There are some homes now privately owned, but all form part of our thriving community.

Our church welcomes all who wish to worship with us, and many who have attended occasional offices. We enjoy an informal relaxed atmosphere style of worship with many of the congregation taking part in the choir, reading lessons, administering the chalice at Communion and even giving an address from the pulpit.

Services

We hold a weekly service at 9.30am.

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| 1 st Sunday | Service of the Word and Family Service |
| 2 nd Sunday | Morning Prayer and Holy Communion |
| 3 rd Sunday | Sunday School in Geoffrey Seddon Room and Holy Communion |
| 4 th Sunday | Morning Prayer and Holy Communion |
| (5 th Sunday) | Morning Prayer and Holy Communion |



Music

Under the Leadership of our musical Director, Isaac, we have a small but enthusiastic choir who lead the hymn singing at our weekly services and often give choral contributions during worship. They particularly enjoy singing the anthems to help celebrate events during the Christian Year.

Easter vigil



Blossom walk



Remembrance day at St Mark's



Harvest loaf



Nativity in the stables



Wassailing in the orchard



St Mark's Church Building

The Church is well maintained by our band of willing volunteers for cleaning and garden maintenance. Our stained-glass window has been professionally cleaned recently and the small leaded windows repaired and cleaned. All funded by generous donations from our congregation.

15 years ago our bell tower was replaced by a new fibreglass structure, again from generous donations and funding events.

The Geoffrey Seddon Room, adjoining church, is used for small meetings and a space for Sunday School and mid-week reflection times.

Fellowship at St Marks

The Friendship Club for our elderly residents meets monthly at the village Hall and has been meeting since December 1975. Associated with our church is the Men's Breakfast Group that meets monthly at The Axe and Cleaver pub, and use the event to support charities through fund raising at their meetings.



Our Annual Rose Queen festival and Fete in May, brings together all the village people with families and friends.

Leadership at St Mark's

We currently have 12 members on our Parochial Church Council, 2 Deanery Synod representatives, 1 Church Warden and are seeking another warden. Two vergers assist weekly and at weddings and funerals. Members take a lead on areas like Safeguarding, Church Fabric, Health and Safety, a Gift Aid Secretary, PCC Secretary and the Hon Treasurer. We also run a Sunday School.

We actively encourage people to be involved and have recently used a questionnaire survey so we can improve the church's mission to our parish.

We have commenced connecting the various organisations in the Dunham Massey community to enable us to better support each other.

We have addressed village residents by voice and letter regarding finance and this has led to an increase in giving and Standing Orders from parishioners and extra giving in the envelopes showing and extra £290 from January 2019.

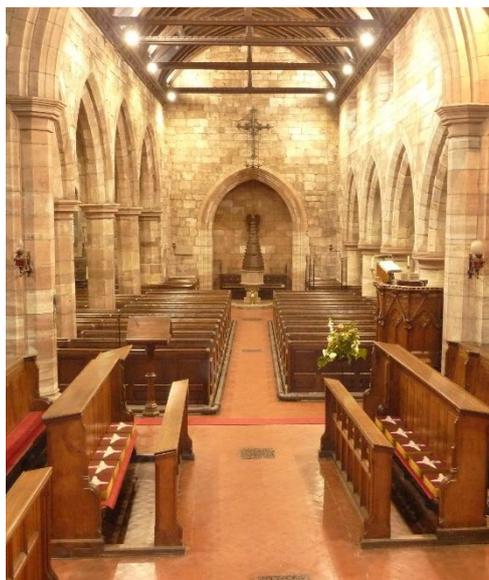
St. Mary, Rostherne

St. Mary's is the largest church building in the benefice. It was founded over eight hundred years ago and was the mother church for an area, including Knutsford, considerably larger than now. It stands on the edge of the village of Rostherne on rising ground overlooking the bird sanctuary of Rostherne Mere. The building is Grade 1 listed and demonstrates varying phases of construction.



The fabric of the church is in good condition, and the last quinquennial inspection took place in 2024. Considerable work has taken place over recent years including the addition of toilets in a new stone-built extension, the installation of a kitchen in the choir vestry, creating a meeting space by joining two adjacent chapels, putting in a chair lift for the disabled, and a new sound system. The lighting in the church has been converted to LED lighting. The Simpson memorial and the lychgate, both Grade II listed, have been restored, and there is a similarly listed sundial which is

missing its dial plate. Two of the three dormer windows in the nave roof have been repaired. The third will be restored when funds permit. St Mary's has a church cat who is a very popular part of the church community, particularly with the children. The churchyard at St. Mary's is open and was extended in 2012.



One of the attractions for the congregation at St Mary's is the use of traditional services based on the Book of Common Prayer. In addition, Storytelling Services started by the previous incumbent attract younger church members and parents.' Services at Holy Trinity Little Bollington, and St Paul's Over Tabley, are also based on the Book of Common Prayer but they also use the form of Common Worship. There is no parish room, but the Egerton Hall in the village is used regularly for social activities.



Holy Trinity, Little Bollington

Holy Trinity stands beside the Lymm road. It is somewhat smaller than St. Mary's and was built to the design of Anthony Salvin in 1854.



The fabric is in good condition. Much work has been carried out in recent years and the reordering includes refurbishing the organ (the village war memorial), complete rewiring, a new boiler and putting in a new kitchen and accessible toilet. Externally the church has disabled access ramps and the bell was recently refurbished. The graveyard is open and is lovingly cared for.





Church school

Next to Holy Trinity is the flourishing Church of England primary school. Voluntarily controlled, the school is now an Academy with the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust. The latest OFSTED inspection graded it a Good School. The latest SIAMS inspection rated it Outstanding. There are one hundred on the roll and the numbers are increasing. The school buildings are in good repair and the latest addition has been an eco-classroom. The school has strong connections with the parish which enjoys good relations with the excellent head teacher and staff. Little Bollington School is partnered with Ndege School in Kenya and staff have made reciprocal visits.



St. Paul, Over Tabley

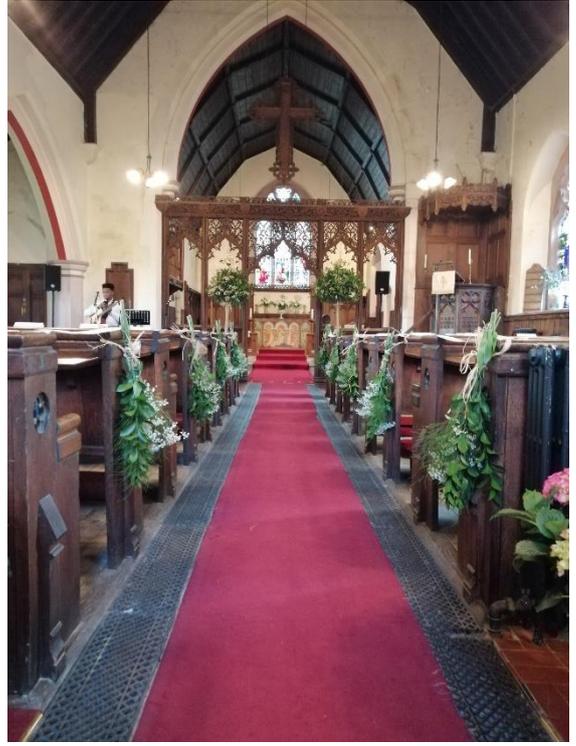
St Paul's is in what is now a quiet cul-de-sac (formerly the A556) with ample parking and a riding, cycling and walking track. Built in 1853, again to the design of Anthony Salvin, the church is Grade II listed and the graveyard is open and well maintained.

There are two day-nurseries and a pre-school in the parish.



The church building is in good condition and the interior has been renovated very recently. The floor has been partly replaced, a new kitchenette and accessible toilet have been installed and a meeting space created. Decorations are a work in progress. Magnificent new embroideries have been completed by members of the congregation. The Plough Service is an annual highlight.

Traditionally St Pauls has had a very full calendar of events, and a regular coffee and chat which is now held in the church building. This is intended to be dementia friendly. The nearby and recently refurbished Mere and Tabley Community Club is used by all three churches for social activities, including the harvest lunch.



The Future

We are a group of churches that are proud of our buildings, with committed congregations who are keen to see our congregations grow and bless our local communities.

We are committed to meeting our Parish Share and work hard at raising funds. The scope for increasing the income of all our churches depends on these events and on increasing the numbers attending church, as many in our congregations are retired or on fixed incomes.

We all long to see more children and families engaging with us and are willing to try new things in order to reach them. It is vital that the new incumbent recognises the importance of our Church of England primary school in Little Bollington and is open to reaching out to the various nurseries and care homes in our villages.

The Vicarage

The vicarage for the parish is a short walk away from St. Mary's Church in the village of Rostherne which adjoins Tatton Park. It is a short drive away from the other villages. The vicarage was extensively refurbished some fourteen years ago and is in good condition.

