

PRAYING FOR THE NEW RECTOR OF THE ARLE VALLEY BENEFICE

Growing in Faith, Growing New Life in Christ

Many of the words and bible verses are taken from the Benefice Profile so that you can pray through what the applicant might be reading.

This is designed as guidance for the hour vigil, please feel free to amend and pray as you feel appropriate.

We pray for the Arle Valley Benefice to be a place where God is calling the person to serve in the next stage of their ministry.

We pray for the priest thinking about joining us in the joy of what God is already doing here in The Arle Valley Benefice; to help us fulfil our vision in ever deeper ways; and take us forward with a clear direction, pioneering new strategies for growing our churches.

We know we are far from perfect, but many good things are already in place, and at our heart is a genuine desire to work alongside our Rector to build up the community of faith, sharing the transforming love of God with the people we are called to serve.

We pray for guidance to recognise the person you have chosen to help us realise this vision, and that they will inspire us with joy and energy as they lead us in faith and mission here in Bighton, New Alresford, Old Alresford, Ovington and Itchen Stoke.

God our Father You have welcomed each one of us in Jesus and called us to be His Body in this place; send us Your Holy Spirit at this time of uncertainty and change to fill us with vision, energy, and faithfulness in prayer, that we may be true to our calling to bring new life to our community. Guide with Your heavenly wisdom those who are to choose a new Incumbent for this benefice, that the one who we receive may be a wise and gentle shepherd of Your people: ready to serve us with joy, to build us up in faith, and to lead us by example in loving obedience to Your son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

Our Vision

So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen.

2 Corinthians 4:18

We pray that our priest will enable us:

To be a church that listens to God and has prayer at the heart of all we do

To faithfully teach the Bible as the word of God

To grow a range of services across the Benefice that will enable people from all backgrounds and ages to see what a life in Christ can bring

To develop further a 'not just Sundays' approach to the activities and services we provide by building relationships across our communities

To enhance a mission-led approach to work in the parishes ensuring our Gospel message is clear and strong

To minister to all members of our congregation meeting them at their point of need

To increase the number of children, younger people and families in our churches

To help the parishes continue their growth together as a benefice enabling the effective sharing and development of resources

To encourage people with a calling to lay ministry

To nurture the growth of pastoral care in each parish

To increase our digital media presence across the benefice enabling more people to engage with the Church and its mission to spread the Gospel of Christ.

To explore closer working together across neighbouring benefices, particularly for clergy and ministry teams for mutual support and the sharing of resources.

Who we're looking for

Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually.

1 Chronicles 16:11

We pray for a priest to:

...be called by God to this place, being bold and imaginative to inspire us in our relationship with Him

...challenge and encourage us, harnessing and underpinning our energy, enthusiasm and creativity to grow our living faith
...relate relevantly and meaningfully to children, young people and families
...confidently lead us to be a church that grows deeper and wider in faith
...be a team player, willing to share and develop ideas with others showing resilience and leadership
...be open to developing new directions, enabling us to be sensitive and courageous

Loving God, you alone bring growth to Your Church and transformation to our communities. Send Your Holy Spirit to give vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions, and grace in living and telling Your story. Send us the leaders we need so our churches can grow in commitment to You, in numbers and diversity, and in partnership with our local communities in all that gives life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

We pray for what we can offer the new Rector:

Welcoming and supportive congregations across four unique parishes - each one with its own character, challenges and joys
A committed team of volunteers and lay leaders ready to be guided and empowered
Strong pastoral support provided by both the Ministry Team and the laity
Four strong, experienced PCCs to support you
The resources of an excellent benefice administrator
Churchwardens with a wide range of skills and knowledge with a willingness to be involved in all aspects of church life
Each church is blessed with an organist
Well maintained churches
A real enthusiasm to support you in helping us become the church God is calling us to be.

*Father, help us to be true to the commitment of what we can offer and how we can support the person You have already chosen to be our new Rector
Amen*

Our People

We your people are the sheep of your pasture, will give thanks to you forever.

Psalms 79:13

We thank you for all those guiding us through this period of vacancy: Our 6 Churchwardens, 3 Focal Ministers, 4 Licensed Lay Ministers and all visiting Ministers enabling our patterns of worship to continue.

We are grateful for all continuing the pastoral ministry, prayer ministry and the many unseen acts of love, kindness and commitment from all our congregations.

We give thanks for every member of our churches and communities as we work together to continue with the command to 'love one another'. Encourage each one of us to pray for the needs and growth of the Arle Valley Benefice

Heavenly Father, You have drawn us all into this church and community, and filled us with Your love. In our time without a Rector, help us all to share the responsibility of continuing to offer Your welcome and love to all, so that we will care for all those in need. Lord Jesus, help us to love one another and to grow in faith as we serve You together. Guide those who are seeking to find the right Rector, who will help us follow Your way for the future and grow your Kingdom in the Arle Valley Benefice. We ask this for Your love's sake.

Amen.

Our Churches

Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.

Colossians 4:2

We pray for the Arle Valley Benefice with the churches and communities of All Saints Bighton, St John's Alresford, St Mary's Old Alresford, St Peter's Ovington and St Mary's Itchen Stoke.

As we walk round this beautiful area, please help us to remember to pray for people's homes, shops, businesses, schools, leisure activities, community groups, Supported Housing, Care and Retirement Homes and those in any kind of need.

Thank you for the beauty of creation and help us to be mindful of what we can do to raise the profile of eco-church within the wider town community.

Gracious God,

We bring before you the life of our churches, Your Church.

We ask for Your guidance as we look to the future, help us grow in faith, in fellowship and in service.

We praise You for all who have served these churches over the years, who have nurtured and encouraged our faith, who have been part of our continuing life and witness. You have called us into the body of Christ.

Loving God, as we journey together through this period of Interregnum, we thank You for Your everlasting faithfulness to us. At this time of uncertainty and change we ask that You send us Your Holy Spirit, to fill us with Your vision, energy, and faithfulness in prayer.

Amen.

Our Organisation & Communications

But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

1 Corinthians 14:40

Please pray for all 4 PCCs as they continue to sustain and encourage us all as we work together to share the mission of Jesus, keep everyone safe and our church buildings in good order.

We are truly thankful for all the work sustained by our Benefice Administrator to ensure the smooth running of all the usual and extra tasks during this time of vacancy.

Help us to communicate effectively and lovingly to all.

Our Church Life

Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Mark 16:15

Themes and Prayers for Church Life

Unity and Love: *Father, we pray that our church serves as an example of the unity that only Your love can bring, helping us to overlook differences and keeping our focus on Christ.*

Leadership Wisdom: *Lord, inspire our church leaders and strengthen their resolve to fulfil Your calling. Grant them wisdom, courage, and enthusiasm to guide our congregation.*

Spiritual Growth: *Heavenly Father, we pray for the maturity of every believer, that we may grow in our faith and be rooted in Your Word.*

Community Outreach: *God, help us to reach out to our community and share Your goodness, letting Your love overflow from us to every person we meet.*

Worship and Joy: *Lord, teach us how to worship You in spirit and in truth, filling our hearts with the joy that comes from Your presence.*

Missionary Spirit: *We pray that our church would be a gospel-bearing community, where the Lord's message sounds out from us into our community and beyond.*

Prayer for the Congregation

Dear Lord, thank you for our church family. Strengthen us, keep us united in love, and guide us to be Your hands and feet in this world. Let our lives reflect Your peace and hope. Amen

Discipleship and Faith Development

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your energy, love and patience that You give to us to enable us to share Your teaching and Your love and care for others.

Guide us to those hungry to know more about You and to those in need of spiritual care and support. Amen

The Rectory

*For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything
Hebrews 3:4*

We pray for Your Holy Spirit to fill the Rectory and to keep safe all who enter in during the interregnum and to protect the fabric of the building. We ask for your peace and joy to fill the Rectory when the new Rector arrives.

Our Worship

*For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise.
1 Chronicles 16:25*

We know there is an opportunity for growth at all services. Help us to respect each other and to ensure everyone's needs and worship styles are catered for, especially as we welcome new people to join us. Help us to always put You at the centre of our worship focussing on You and not necessarily what 'we' would like.

Finance

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.
1 Peter 4:10*

For Provision and Abundance:

We lift up our church's financial needs to You. We ask that You would bless our resources, multiply our giving, and guide us in stewardship so there is no lack in Your house.

For Wisdom in Management:

Heavenly Father, we come to You now praying for the people who help with the finances at our church. For those who count and record the giving, and for those who allocate and oversee the expenses—give them diligence, gratitude, attentiveness, and wisdom.

Let us finish by praying the prayer Jesus taught us:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

The advert will be placed on Friday 6th February on the Winchester Diocesan website and in the Church Times.

Pray for the person God is calling to see these adverts or to hear about this post in some other way.

Shortlisting will be on Tuesday 10th March.

Introductions will be held on Monday 23rd March and the interviews on Tuesday 24th March.

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