THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

DIOCESE OF RIPON & LEEDS

The Benefice of Middleham with Coverdale and East Witton and Thornton Steward

seeks to appoint

a Rector

Set in Wensleydale, these parishes are deeply rural and offer unique opportunities for someone with a heart for rural life and ministry. The area is 20 miles from end to end. Middleham is a historic market town with its castle and deep horse racing traditions; East Witton and Thornton Steward are small villages with strong communities, while Coverdale has the hamlets of Carlton and Horsehouse and several outlying farms. Farming and tourism both have a strong influence and the populations are a mix of long-established families, incomers or second or holiday homeowners and more transient employees in the stable yards. Some commute to Richmond, Northallerton, Teesside, Harrogate, York, Leeds or even further afield. There is a CofE Aided Primary School in Middleham; the Wensleydale Secondary School is in the nearby market town of Leyburn. Jervaulx Abbey attracts many visitors and is used annually for worship on Ascension Day.

The tradition of the parishes is central, open and welcoming, and children are admitted to Communion before confirmation. We have two readers and a dedicated group of wardens. We also currently have a curate who is in her fourth year and a reader emeritus. We have one PCC with four church committees. Our lay teams include worship assistants, a parish visiting team, study group leaders, young people and children's leaders and a team who produce and distribute the parish magazine. We work closely with the Methodist churches and there is a joint Anglican/Methodist youth project employing 2 youth workers who organise work with children and young people in our parishes and in the neighbouring parish of Masham with Healey. Parish activities include the Burns Supper, the Coverdale Fun Day, lambing and harvest services, Lenten Food for Thought sessions, the Palm Sunday Procession and Good Friday Stables Open Day, parish lunches, Service on the Green at East Witton, the annual Middleham Town Service and an annual parish pilgrimage. For children, there is Tuesday Trekkers, a fortnightly after-school club, Tots' Praise and craft sessions at some services. The ER is 139 with an average Sunday attendance of 70. The largest age group is 60-70. Our buildings range from a 9th Century foundation (at Thornton Steward) to mid-Victorian and the School Room at Carlton (a licensed building) has been granted planning permission for conversion to residential dwellings. We have one person currently exploring the possibility of ordination.

Our new Rector

We are looking for someone with an understanding of the delights and challenges of rural life and a sympathy for country ways and sports to lead us into the next phase of ministry, engaging with all our congregations and communities to further God's work. He or she will be a public face of the church in the communities and school, will have the energy to cope with the distances and spread of communities and will encourage lay development in all areas of church life, building on the foundation that is already there. In particular, we would like the priest appointed to:

- Be a prayerful, inspiring, collaborative spiritual leader;
- Help us develop our mission priorities and pastoral outreach;
- Encourage more people to join our churches and to take responsibility;
- Maintain excellent relationships with Middleham C.E. school
- Re-energise and support the congregations where they are elderly;
- Identify new vocations.

There is a pleasant 4-bedroom rectory at Wensley (just outside the parish) with beautiful views. It is situated two miles from Middleham.

For further information and application forms, or if you would like an informal conversation please contact Janet Henderson, Archdeacon of Richmond, on 01765 601 316 or email janet.henderson@riponleeds-diocese.org.uk.

Closing date for applications: Friday, 20th of April 2012

Interviews: Tuesday 8th/Wednesday 9th of May 2012