

Amelcote Benefice

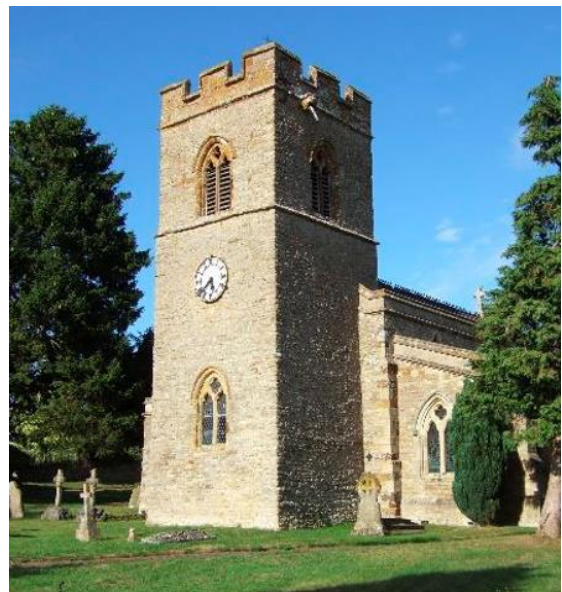
Holy Cross, Pattishall



St. Luke the Evangelist, Cold Higham



St. Mary the Virgin, Gayton



St. John the Baptist, Tiffield

Benefice Profile August 2023

Our Mission is to spread God's word of abiding love, and to be disciples of Christ in the community. We aim to reach out to all, telling of the good news and encouraging the message of love for one another.

Welcome to our Benefice

Welcome to our churches and the Benefice. Thank you for showing interest in our beautiful area of South Northamptonshire. Amelcote Benefice formed in 1991 when the two smaller benefices of Pattishall with Cold Higham and Gayton with Tiffield were joined together. We are in Towcester Deanery.

We are seeking a new rector who will be happy and enthusiastic to work with us to grow the church within our communities, who can delegate and embrace the diversity of each church with their respective gifts and abilities.



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Our Vision and Mission

Our Mission is to spread God's word of abiding love, and to be disciples of Christ in the community. We aim to reach out to all, telling of the good news and encouraging the message of love for one another.

Our church worship is traditional, using Common Worship liturgy. Singing may be accompanied by organ, digital piano, and backing tracks on occasion. We often sing the 'Peruvian Gloria' alongside said responses, and we have introduced modern songs and hymns found in the updated hymnals we use.

As congregations, we are welcoming and warm, offering refreshments after the weekly service and on other occasions. Two of the churches have modernised their service area with a WC and servery.

We are outward-looking and receptive to new ideas. We are very willing to be flexible and to seek new ways of promoting our churches within the benefice.

We are active in promoting God's love through our community involvement, through being aware when people are ill, visiting them if appropriate, and offering prayers for them in church. In Pattishall we have a Food Bank Donations box, organised by volunteers.

We want to connect with adults, young people and children and this is why our links with the village schools are so important.

We seek to improve these links by regular contact and cooperation with school initiatives, also using our lay capacity to offer help in assemblies and inviting the school to join in church social events.



Tiffield School Nativity

What we can offer you

As a benefice we wish to warmly welcome our new Rector with openness and a spirit of cooperation and to work with you in ministry. We would respect your privacy and time off, being mindful that a house for duty tenure offers two days a week plus Sundays. We can provide administrative help by producing a weekly news sheet, the benefice magazine and by having an online contact group for the weekly services and upcoming events.

We desire to grow as a benefice and whilst we are loyal to a regular monthly service of Holy Communion in each church, we would also like to have additional shorter services of Word and Worship, with the support of our Reader and Lay Pastoral Minister.

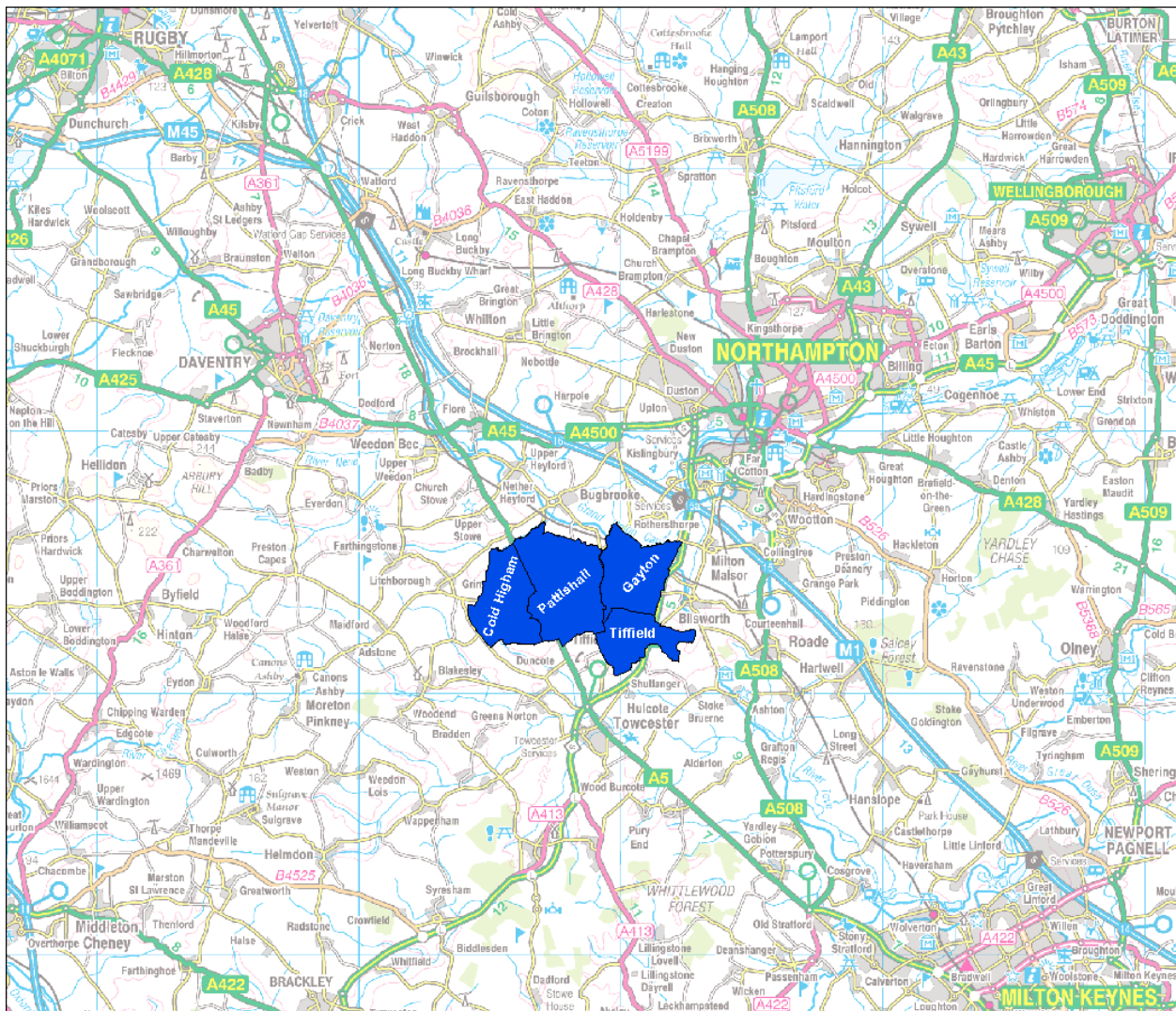
We see our churches as assets which could be used more creatively, as they are part of our national heritage and are important to many people even if they don't attend services on Sundays. Because of this our churches are regularly open for village residents to visit and use. We use them also for secular events such as

concerts and various social events. Fund-raising, mainly by donations, enables us to keep our churches in a good state of repair.

Our Administrative Team are volunteers and do an excellent job of producing the quarterly Messenger magazine and the weekly Amelcote News. The team assists with electronic correspondence and online forms which come from the Diocese. We can offer a new rector strong technological assistance with online publicity and equipment, for instance amplification in all but one of the churches and Wi-Fi in Holy Cross, Pattishall.

Our vision is hopeful, and together we are united in a great desire to see others, old and young, come to faith in Christ. We aim to work together, to support one another and to trust overall in God's purpose for our lives, lived out day to day in our villages.

Our Benefice



Map of the Benefice and Parishes

The villages of Cold Higham, Gayton, Pattishall and Tiffield lie just north of Towcester in South Northamptonshire, bordered by the A5 to the west and the A43 to the east. The largest village in the benefice, and the one in which the modern rectory is located, is Pattishall.

The benefice has an active farming community, an above average proportion of self-employed and people who work from home, many young families whose children attend the primary schools at Gayton, Pattishall

and Tiffield, and an engaged retired population. Many residents commute to the neighbouring towns of Towcester, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Banbury and Oxford, while some travel further afield to London, Birmingham, Cambridge and Coventry. Nearby Silverstone motor racing circuit has been a stimulus for growth with employment provided by companies at both the circuit and surrounding towns. South Northamptonshire is one of the most affluent areas of the country, with an abundance of picturesque villages and a low crime rate. It also has areas of poverty, which may not be immediately visible, and can frequently be forgotten.

Transport links

- M1 and M40 motorways easily reached by good road links
- Local public transport provision is sparse - Tiffield has none.
- Gayton and Pattishall are connected to Towcester by a daily bus service which stays for little over an hour, then returns
- From Pattishall there is an early bus to Northampton which returns between 5-6 pm
- For Tiffield the nearest bus service is a mile away on the A43, serving Northampton, Towcester, Milton Keynes and Brackley/Bicester.
- A Community minibus, shared by Gayton and Tiffield, and available for hire, has twice weekly services to Towcester and Northampton.
- Nearest Rail Stations are Northampton, Long Buckby and Milton Keynes at 20-30 minutes by car.
- London Luton, Birmingham and East Midlands airports are all within an hour's drive.

Local amenities

- No local shops or Post Offices– but Pattishall served by a fish & chip van
- All major supermarket chains in Towcester or on the outskirts of Northampton
- Towcester has good range of shops, restaurants and pubs; Northampton has many chain stores; Milton Keynes is the regional shopping centre
- Public houses in Pattishall, Gayton and Tiffield; some bed and breakfast accommodation
- Hotels in Towcester, a Hilton Hotel at Collingtree on the A45, and Whittlebury Hall, with its restaurants, spa and golf course, also close by

Recreation

- Public footpaths and bridleways surround and connect the villages in the benefice
- The villages are all relatively close to the Grand Union Canal, and well-known Stoke Bruerne, with its canal museum, is just a few miles away
- Nearby Salcey Forest is also a popular recreational site
- Museums in Towcester, Northampton and Milton Keynes
- National Trust at Canons Ashby and Stowe Landscape Garden
- Silverstone motor racing circuit (hosts British Grand Prix), Towcester Racecourse, Northamptonshire County Cricket, League Football in Northampton and Milton Keynes, and The Saints Premiership Rugby in Northampton – all 10-30 minutes by car
- Two golf courses and three riding establishments
- Well-equipped leisure centre including a large swimming pool in Towcester
- Public libraries in Towcester and Northampton

Population

Cold Higham: about 300

Gayton: about 510

Pattishall: overall population of Pattishall parish with Astcote and Eastcote is around 1,800- 2,000

Tiffield: about 340

Schools & Education

Pattishall CE school (also attended by children from Cold Higham) is diocese linked with 143 pupils and a good OFSTED rating. The school is warmly invited to use the church and designs its own services for key occasions in the church calendar, such as Easter, Christmas (a Christingle), harvest, remembrance, Mother's Day, and School Leavers' service when a bible is presented to each child by our lay minister or pastor from the Methodist church. In addition the school has regular year assemblies every week, is active in promoting the Christian faith and works well with Pattishall PCC and church members <https://pattishallschool.co.uk> The school is due for a SIAMs inspection as the last one was in 2016.



There is a private nursery, Little Dragons, next to the school.

Tiffield CE Voluntary Aided school and Gayton CE school are part of The Forest Federation of Schools, together with Stoke Bruerne CE, Whittlebury CE. and Yardley Gobion CE ([The Forest CE Federation - The Forest CE Federation \(forestfederation.co.uk\)](http://The Forest CE Federation - The Forest CE Federation (forestfederation.co.uk))). Gayton School received an outstanding rating from a SIAMs inspection earlier this year.

Health Care

There are hospitals in Northampton, Milton Keynes and Daventry, with A&E at Northampton General, and an ambulance station in Towcester.

There are GP practices in Greens Norton, Towcester, Blisworth and Weedon. There is a Medical Centre and an Ambulance Station in Towcester. Northampton General Hospital has A & E.

There are dentists and two veterinary practices in Towcester.

Other Churches

There is a Methodist church in Astcote with whom we, in Pattishall parish, have had long standing ties and a history of cooperation and working together. Examples of this in previous years have been United Services, such as for Remembrance Day, and Messy Church held in rotation at the churches and in the Pattishall Village Hall. We jointly run the Women's Well Group, a social monthly lunch and speaker occasion.



Astcote Methodist Church

Our Parishes

Cold Higham

Cold Higham is probably the most rural of the parishes in the benefice, and consists of the villages of Cold Higham, Grimscote, Fosters Booth (west of the A5), and Potcote. The population is approximately 300 (including about 25 children), and includes farmers, their employees, and commuters.



Apart from a few council properties, housing is predominately medium and large family homes. The parish includes several farms and the offices of a company housed in the Old Rectory.

The village hall was handed over to a management committee some years ago, but we can still use it (rent free) and have a booking priority should we ever need to enforce this.

The village of Cold Higham is said to be the highest point between it and the North Sea to the east, possibly how it became 'Cold' Higham, as in the Domesday Book it appears as "Hecklam" or "Hecklam Parva" meaning "Little Higham". However, there is nothing cold about the welcome that people receive when they visit Cold Higham – just warm and friendly.

Gayton

Gayton lies on a high outcrop of Northamptonshire sandstone set in 1,725 acres of South Northamptonshire countryside and has a population of around 550.

Village activities include adult education classes, horse-riding, walking, cycling, table tennis, singing, Gardening and Allotment Society, Gayton Evergreen Club for the over 50's and socialising in the village public house. Many of these activities take place in the large, well-equipped Village Hall. The play area is popular with village children. Local marinas and tourist hot spots provide opportunities for cruising the local stretches of the Grand Union Canal, which is also a popular fishing location. Also within the Parish are a fishing lake, a campsite and a small caravan site.

Gayton has a C. of E. primary school which maintains strong links with the church, with frequent involvement in church services. Foundation governors ensure that this link is a two-way process.

The main historical features of the village are a manor house built in 1540, being built in the shape of a cross, it is considered to be quite unique. There are a number of other listed buildings within the parish and a conservation area was established in 2001.

Pattishall

Pattishall parish, comprises Pattishall, Eastcote, Astcote, Dalscote, Fosters Booth (east side of A5) and Cornhill. Housing is a mixture of affordable private housing, local authority, cottages, executive detached houses and listed buildings. The church stands at the centre of the village with Northamptonshire stone cottages bordering the road next to it.

The Eastcote Arms in Eastcote is popular with locals, and Peggotty's Pub and Restaurant in Fosters Booth (Pattishall parish) offers British, Nepalese and Indian cuisine and has a Function room.

Our Village Hall, located in Astcote, is at the heart of village life and is in constant use by various organisations catering for all ages and interests. Larger events include an annual Picnic in the Park music festival and the September Produce Show, as well as WI, keep fit classes, badminton, and other activities. There is a well-maintained playing field on site with an all-weather tennis court, cricket and football pitches and children's play equipment. There are a further two small playing fields in Pattishall.





Eastcote, Gayton Road

Astcote



Tiffield

Tiffield is a small village of around 340 people, situated three miles from Towcester, with easy access to both the M1 and M40. Until 1964 Tiffield was mainly a farming village with a small quota of local authority housing (now largely privately owned). At that time there was the addition of a new development of starter homes, followed by a few executive homes. Subsequent development has been infilling and barn conversions. This has produced the village as now - a mixture of ages and families, with many long-term residents.

The village is surrounded by agricultural land, a mixture of arable and livestock farming. Areas of employment are Towcester, Northampton, Milton Keynes and further afield.

The village has an active and well supported pub and a Voluntary Aided Primary School. Pupils attending Tiffield school mainly come from the village, nearby Caldecote and Towcester. The nearest secondary school is Sponne School, Towcester.

There are numerous village organisations including Evergreens, Gardening club, Art club, Historical Society, and sporting teams run by the pub.

Tiffield parish includes St John's Centre, a mile out of the village near the A43. Formerly a Reformatory, it was then a Community Home plus Secure Unit. These are now all closed. There is a community special school, Gateway school, for children with behavioral, emotional and social difficulties on the site. A new special school for 250 pupils is planned for 2025.

Our Churches

St Luke the Evangelist, Cold Higham



St Luke's church was built in the 1300's, although this has been a site of worship for well over a thousand years. There are the remains of a preaching cross in the churchyard dating back to about 900. After all these years of prayer and praise, it is not surprising that God's presence is so apparent in the church.

The church is built in Northamptonshire sandstone, with a Collyweston tiles and copper roof. The church is a Grade II* listed building. It is very distinctive due mainly to the saddleback, or 'helm' tower, originally containing four bells. In the Potcote chapel is a richly carved arch beneath which stands a delicately panelled Altar Tomb and an oak effigy of a cross-legged Knight in plate armour and surcoat, representing Sir John de Pattishull, who was Lord of the Manor circa 1350. The church can accommodate up to 160 people.

There are structural issues, which mean we are currently unable to use the chancel. The item most needing attention is the tower. This was noted by Historic England, who have entered St Luke's on the Heritage at Risk Register for 2017. There has been visible movement in the Chancel. This is being monitored and we are currently awaiting permission to excavate exploratory holes. We are also awaiting the report of our last quinquennial inspection in 2021.

The church is floodlit every night, and a roof alarm has been fitted, both to aid security.

The churchyard is maintained by the District Council and includes two war graves. Burials can no longer take place, but the Parish Council extension cemetery still has places. There is also a place to receive ashes. Cremations take place at Northampton Crematorium, some 10 miles away.

Our Church has six bells. They are rung for most services and national occasions. The tower is popular for visiting teams of ringers and is also used for training purposes.

The children of the parish attend Pattishall Church of England Primary School, moving up to Champion School in Bugbrooke, or other secondary schools in the area after completing Year Six. Most of the primary school services (end of term or year) are held in Holy Cross church.

Since 2010, we have paid our parish share in full, and will make every effort to continue to do so.

St Mary the Virgin, Gayton

Gayton church, built of local stone, is in the Norman and early English styles, consisting of chancel, cloistered nave, aisles, south porch and a tower with pinnacles. The transom of a window on the south side of the tower and the lines of a sloping roof seen from the inside of the church, are evidence of the building's Norman origins. In 1765 the Lord of the Manor sold the advowson to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, which remains our supportive patron to this day. The current capacity is in the order of about 240.



In addition to the financial support generated by the Gayton Church Heritage Trust, several years ago, the PCC placed a successful bid for funding from the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund to replace the aged roof lead and the work has been completed. The roof is also protected by a monitored intruder alarm system.

The last quinquennial inspection was in 2020.

A major consideration for the PCC in the future is an upgrade of the current heating system, a number of options need to be explored and costed before more progress can be made.

The church tower houses six bells, rung regularly by a dedicated band of ringers. The church clock, made by E. J. Dent, was installed in 1848 and is maintained by the Parish Council.

The church is open daily and attracts visitors throughout the year.

The maintenance of the churchyard is subsidised by Gayton Parish Council and a contractor employed to undertake much of the routine work. Given the nature and layout of the area, additional maintenance is required and is currently undertaken by a volunteer group of residents one Saturday morning each month.

The grounds were also registered with the Northants Wildlife Trust's Churchyard Conservation Scheme several years ago.

The church yard is still open for burials and the interment of cremated remains.

Holy Cross Church, Pattishall

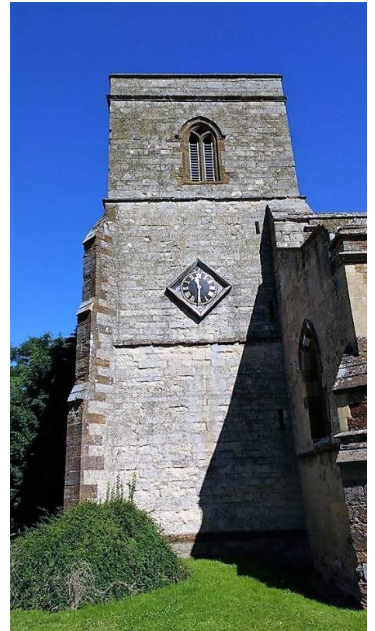
Holy Cross Church has been established on the site since Saxon times and is recorded in the Domesday Book. It holds a prominent position in the village, standing on rising ground, and is built of Northamptonshire limestone with sandstone quoins. It underwent a major restoration programme and is in a good state of repair. The church can seat 180 people, mostly on chairs with padded seats.

The church roof is protected by an 'Ebound' system, which whilst being a significant annual cost does provide some degree of peace of mind. Through keeping the church open, in response to occasional minor interference or damage to various items we have installed a CCTV system which is connected to the internet, which may be helping to deter repeat occurrences.

Holy Cross had its last quinquennial inspection in 2016, and we are currently arranging one this year.

The churchyard is maintained by volunteers and Pattishall Parish Council and is kept tidy and mown during the year. A wildflower garden was planted in 2000, which resembles a pocket park in its plants, grasses and insect life. This is strimmed in August, once the seeds have fallen.

A rota of volunteers unlock the church and lock it again at the end of the day, and we keep in touch frequently on WhatsApp to cover for each other if someone is away.



We are a child-friendly church and always pleased to welcome newcomers.

The church has easy access, with servery and toilet facilities. A recent installation of effective heating and lighting has transformed this Grade 2* building into a cosy space for worship and other community activities.

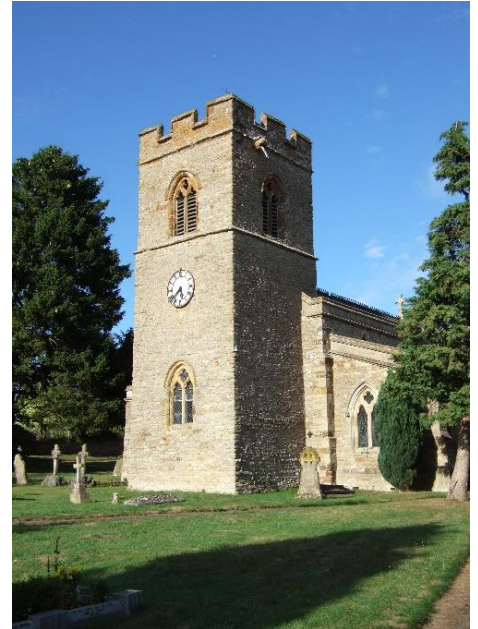
A Food Bank donation box is kept inside the church door, so that residents can contribute during the week. Volunteers take it to the Towcester Food Bank every weekend.

St John the Baptist, Tiffield

St John the Baptist Church is of Norman foundation, which was extended in the 19th century.

Overall, for its age, it is in sound condition but there is work required to the roofs and some stonework. The last Quinquennial inspection was in 2019. It was recently added to the 'At risk' register at Historic England due to the roofing repairs required. However, a lot of the roofing issues were addressed in 2022 with a re-roofing contract of £75,000.

One of the Churchwardens is a retired Chartered Surveyor and has been instrumental in looking after the building for over 30 years. He spearheaded the project raising funds from the village and obtaining grants from charities. The huge support from the village, which raised over £17,000, showed how the church is highly regarded by those who are not regular attendees. This support from the village was instrumental in obtaining the necessary grants from the various funders.



The church does not have an organ and has used an electronic instrument in the last few years. The PCC have just approved the purchase of a new electric piano. The church is open every weekend from 10 until 5.

The adjacent wooden Church Room, formerly the village Reading Room, is used by various village groups including the Gardening Club and Evergreens, in addition to PCC and United Benefice meetings. It has recently been redecorated externally and has a new kitchen and new accessible toilet. It is used as a polling station for local and national elections and is available for hire.

The churchyard, which is still in use for burials and for interment of ashes, has some mature trees and is well maintained by parishioners. It is crossed by a public footpath to Shutlanger. There is one war grave.

St John the Baptist welcomes worshippers of all backgrounds and can seat about 100 people. There is a small, regular congregation of mainly older people but currently no children despite efforts having been made to attract them. There is a regular rota of lesson readers.

A benefice communion service is held on the second Sunday of the month and there are occasional Songs of Praise services on Sunday afternoons. One of the services for Holy week is held in Tiffield as well as Harvest and Remembrance Day services. At Christmas there is a Carol service and also a lay-led Christmas morning service followed by mulled wine and mince pies. Both these services are well supported by villagers.

Our Worship

Monthly Service Structure

As a benefice we support one another by attending each others' churches and sharing our talents as needed. Several pianists turned organist can play for baptisms and memorial services at the other churches. We are welcoming congregations, and there is always a welcomer at the church door to give out service books.

As well as a monthly Holy Communion which rotates in turn around the four churches, we continue to hold an occasional Songs of Praise and Evensong. The schools in the benefice are closely linked to their respective village church and pupils regularly attend for special services throughout the year.

Monthly Pattern	Cold Higham	Tiffield	Pattishall	Gayton
First Sunday	10.00am Benefice Holy Communion			
Second Sunday		10.00am Benefice Holy Communion		
Third Sunday			10.00am Benefice Holy Communion	
Fourth Sunday				10.00am Benefice Holy Communion
Fifth Sunday			10.00am Benefice Holy Communion	
Occasional services	Evensong, Songs of Praise, Morning Worship, special services eg. Mothering Sunday, harvest and crib service as requested by the parishes			

Average attendance at benefice services

Service and location	Children & Youth (0 – 16 yrs)	Adults	Totals
Cold Higham Benefice Holy Communion	-	18	18
Gayton Benefice Holy Communion	1.5	20	21.5
Pattishall Benefice Family Communion (including Mothering Sunday)	2	21	23
Tiffield Benefice Holy Communion	0	11	11

Attendance at festival and 'special' services - Average Attendance

Special Services including schools - average attendance	Children & Youth (0 – 16 yrs)	Adults	Totals
Cold Higham			
Good Friday 'Hour by the Cross'	-	8	8
Harvest Festival	-	16	16
Gayton			
Wedding (3), Baptism (1) and Funeral Services (4)	8	54	62
Parish Remembrance	2	20	22
Carol Service	5	50	55
School Welcome, Leavers, Easter, Harvest & Nativity Services	76	51	127
Civic Service	2	60	62
Pattishall			
Memorial & Funeral, Baptism (4 services, as information is only available since January 2023)	4	54	58
Special services, including Carol Service, Remembrance day, Celebration events including Family communion with Baptism, Crib service	12	41	53
Coronation Praise	-	17	17
Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Ascension,	-	5	5
School services in Holy Cross - Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, Remembrance, School Leavers, End of Term, Infants and Year groups	140	40+	180+
Tiffield			
Baptism (1 service)	N/Available	35	35+
Café church (2 services)	-	5	5
Morning worship Christmas Day service	-	12	12
Harvest service	-	6	6
Carol service	N/Available	c36	36+

Special Services including schools - average attendance	Children & Youth (0 – 16 yrs)	Adults	Totals
....Tiffield continued			
Easter Vigil and Service of Light	-	11	11
Songs of Praise	-	10	10
School services inc. Easter, Welcome (in September), Harvest and Nativity	40	48	88

Our Church Community: Congregation

Cold Higham

Our congregations are small and include people from outside the parish who prefer our more traditional form of worship. Currently we do not have any children attend our services. In addition to the service rota, other services include our Good Friday ‘Hour by the Cross’, and the Harvest Festival. Services are attended by worshippers from the benefice and other parishes, and refreshments are usually served after the service.

While wishing to retain and uphold a traditional form of worship, we as a PCC are always looking for new ideas and challenges to promote St Luke’s with the parish and encourage more people to join us in worship and praise. Lay people read lessons, lead intercessions and welcome people into church.



Members of the congregation work well together and this ensures that our various fund-raising events are normally popular and successful. We have regular coffee mornings, church open days (at the same time as the village fete and other village activities), and a Christmas Fayre was very well supported.

One reason for the success of a number of our events are the wonderful refreshments prepared by the ladies, most folk stay to partake and meet and chat, which helps build up the community spirit.

Gayton

St Mary the Virgin in the village of Gayton could be described as a typical rural church, supported by a friendly and caring congregation of a mixed age range.

We currently provide the benefice communion service on the 4th Sunday of each month, this being typically augmented by sung hymns accompanied by an organist resident in the village.

Variations on the services have been well received in the past and any suggestions for the future development/evolution aimed at enhancing regular attendance, especially by the younger generations, would be very welcome.

Our seasonal services such as the Harvest Festivals and Carol Services have proven to be popular in recent years, particularly when there is the involvement of the children from Gayton CE Primary School and also Gayton Festival Singers, a community choir originally formed to support the 800th celebrations in 2006.

In addition to the ecumenical function, the church has also hosted popular classical, jazz, and folk concerts, together with art and photographic exhibitions - examples of the church being used for the benefit of the community, providing fellowship and an opportunity to raise funds for ourselves and for others.



Gayton Church Heritage Trust, (GCHT) a registered charity since 2005, works closely with the PCC and actively raises funds to maintain and make improvements to the church such as the construction of the north porch, a WC and servery plus general restorative/fabric repair work.

The church enjoys a good relationship with the local public house, in fact it is not out of the ordinary for the PCC to hold meetings at the Ekyn Arms.

Pattishall

“The thing I love most about being part of the church family is the warm camaraderie and fellowship felt amongst us. We work and worship as a team.”

“I have really enjoyed having the chance to perform in church on Music Sunday and I like going up to church with my school friends for our own services. I really enjoy the stay and play sessions on Fridays where I can see my friends and make some cool crafts and enjoy the delicious cakes!”

“Since we moved to the village six years ago, we have really appreciated the opportunity to make connections through Holy Cross. We have enjoyed hearing the bells every week and love that there is an enthusiastic group of bellringers. We have enjoyed the family services we have attended and like the varied opportunities to attend different types of service, such as the Crib service, Remembrance, Christingle and Epiphany.”

“I love being part of Holy Cross because it's such a welcoming, supportive and friendly community. The events are always fun to attend especially the lunches and quiz nights, and the Church itself is such a beautiful building.”

Lunches and Teas at Holy Cross, Pattishall



At Holy Cross, we have enjoyed celebrating the national events of the Queen's Jubilee and the King's Coronation.



On the First Sunday in the month there are Winter Warmer lunches and Teas in the summer. We often have live organ music during the lunches and teas, contributed by a member of the parish.



We decorate the church to suit the time of year or a festive occasion

Music in Worship

Holy Cross has a long history of music in worship. It has a fine two-manual pipe organ, refurbished in 1989, and had a regular robed Sunday choir until 2015. The Pop-Up Choir was created in 2016 with members of the previous choir, supplemented by other local enthusiasts, to support services on special services and occasional Sundays.

In our congregation there are musical people and singers, so we love to get together as an occasional choir to practise for a special service or celebration event. We are fortunate in having a musical colleague who directs us skilfully, and we can enlist the services of an experienced accompanist and local organists.



Prior to pandemic restrictions, choral services were held during Lent and Easter, Advent and Christmas, and several sung evensong services each year.

We have recently invested in a high-quality digital piano. We learned an anthem to sing after the Coronation this year, which the Royal School of Church Music had commissioned to be sung in parishes. We also like to have the choir to support us when we have a sung Evensong.

Concerts in Holy Cross

We aim to serve the community in the parishes by offering good quality concerts in various genres to suit all tastes. These raise funds for the parish, as well as covering the cost of the skilled musicians and groups we book. We have had repeat visits from a Gilbert & Sullivan group, the Wandering Minstrels, and the Northampton Concert Band which are all very popular.



Choral Days

With the aid of our musical friends and the core support of the Pop-Up choir, we organise an annual Come and Sing Choral Day, which attracts singers from all over the county and beyond. For several years, despite the interruption of covid, we have hosted about 80 singers for the day, and finished with a performance in front of a packed house usually, with an audience of families, friends and local residents. Most recently we performed Mozart's Requiem.



Collaboration with School and Community

We are keen to expand relationships with the local primary school, and with uniformed organisations. Scouts and Beavers participate in Christmas carol services, and recently we celebrated Music Sunday with a musical event that included the Pop-Up Choir, a school brass ensemble, handbell ringers, organ works and a performance on autoharp.



Music Sunday
2023



Tiffield

“The Church is at the centre of our village and brings the community together both at the services and the social fund raising events .”

“I would love to be able to encourage more people to attend our services and I think services other than Holy Communion could help towards this.”

“I think it would be helpful to increase the congregation in church by having different services in church than always communion, which may suit other worshippers and make the village a friendly place to meet like-minded people, especially when so much effort has been put in to restore many areas of the church”



The main fund-raising event of the year is held in May with the Open Gardens Day (arranged in collaboration with Tiffield Gardening Club) when some of the village gardens are open and there are also stalls selling various items. Light lunches and cream teas are served from the Church Room.

There is usually a regular Harvest supper, an annual Safari supper and the occasional social evening, which are well supported. However, these were disrupted by the pandemic and have not been fully restored.



Our Children, Young People and Families

Amelcote Benefice is committed to providing the best possible experience of worship and Christian Faith for Children and Young people. We value them as members of our Parish and congregation.

Gayton

Gayton school holds some services in the Church and some jointly with other schools in the Federation in a larger church which can hold them all. Some services are led by the Rector and some organized by the school. These have included Harvest, Christingle, Easter and the school leavers' service. The Rector has also taken regular assemblies in the school.

Pattishall



At Holy Cross Pattishall, we welcome children of all ages at any of our services. Looking for ways to improve our contact with the primary school, the children and parents is high on our list of priorities.

In church there is a Children's Corner with books and toys. Our main contact with children in church however is during a Friday afternoon play



session in church, making use of the great spaces we can create for crafts and play. There are close ties with the school including regular assemblies and Christingle and a Crib service near Christmas. Key stage one and two have regular visits to the church and churchyard as part of their Christianity Curriculum. Members of the PCC attend school assemblies at church when possible.

Week day Group - Crafts and Play

At Holy Cross, Pattishall, we run an after-school craft and play weekly session for parents, grandparents, child minders and children during winter to spring.

Village residents, as well as everyone attending the session, are made welcome for tea and cake during Crafts and Play. The weekly event is advertised by the primary school to parents and is popular. With the advantage of portable chairs, not fixed pews, we can adapt the nave and aisles as needed.



Tiffield

Tiffield school holds some services in the Church and some jointly with the Federation in a larger church which can hold them all. Some services are led by the Rector and some organized by the school. These have included Harvest, Christingle, Easter and the school leavers' service. The Rector has also taken regular assemblies in the school.



Our Groups

Gayton

As mentioned above, in Gayton we benefit from an enthusiastic volunteer group of residents to maintain the churchyard. The church also is also looked after on the inside by those unsung heroes, ie willing members of the congregation who provide decorative flowers and do the church cleaning etc.

Further examples of community involvement have included: the annual Open Gardens event in the village, organised by the PCC as a bit of fun and also a very useful fund-raiser; hosting an exhibition of the Great War and the recent Coronation. Of course, other fund-raising events such as quizzes often make it onto the village calendar.



Pattishall

Our regular group activities are:

- ◆ Ladies' Well group monthly
- ◆ Men's discussion group
- ◆ Teas or lunches monthly
- ◆ Children's Weekday activity club in winter to spring

Benefice

Our spiritual growth has developed over the last few years, by having Bible studies, prayer groups, Lent and Advent courses, and an Alpha course. We see these as valuable times of fellowship, often including breakfast or lunch.

Our Lay Pastoral Minister visits the elderly, lonely, sick and bereaved members of the community, in their own homes, in care homes, hospital and hospice taking communion to the housebound as required.

In the benefice we have an ecumenical Ladies Fellowship group, organised with friends from the Methodist church. This meeting has a light lunch with fellowship, followed by a speaker on a religious topic. There is also an independent men's group that discusses various current affairs and religious topics.

Amelcote Benefice Bell Ringing

The ringing of our church bells is seen as an important contribution to the witness of our churches in our local communities. Three of the four churches in the benefice have bells hung for change ringing. Cold Higham and Gayton each have six bells and Pattishall is at present being augmented to a ring of 8. The three bells at Tiffield cannot be change rung but can be operated using an Ellacombe apparatus.

The bells at Pattishall were last overhauled in 1908. They have a lovely tone but had become difficult to ring well due to the wear and decay of the bell wheels and other mechanical parts. The present project will see the existing 6 bells re-hung in a new frame with the addition of two smaller bells thereby giving a full octave ring of 8 bells. We are also to upgrade our silent ringing apparatus which is used for training, and install a system of sound control so that the loudness of the bells can be reduced at certain times. The project has been funded by several very generous private donations, grants, and volunteer labour providing a cost saving of around 15%.



We have a thriving team of bell ringers who range in experience from several who have only recently started ringing through to others who have rung for half a century and more. We ring the bells prior to Sunday worship, weddings and other special occasions. In addition, the band meets at least once a week to practise. The bells are popular with visiting ringers and generally very well received by our local communities. Routine maintenance is carried out by members of the band, who keep the bells in good working order. As a band, we have always welcomed the opportunity to teach new recruits and our practices are always very busy affairs, run with the aim of developing the skills of individual ringers as well as maintaining and improving the accuracy and sound of our ringing. Three members of the band are accredited to the Association of Ringing Teachers and are actively involved in teaching others to ring, both at our towers and elsewhere. Members of our band actively support our local Branch, and the Peterborough Diocesan Guild of church bell ringers.

Residents in the four parishes support the annual 'Ride and Stride' event for the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust, in which our churches participate. Several people cycle or walk to visit churches within range and sign up sponsors. Our churches offer refreshments to participants, and try to man the church for part of the day. Significant amounts of money are raised and donated to the NHCT, while half of the donations are given directly to the nominated church. The benefice has been a beneficiary of grants from the Trust for building works, repairs and improvements.

Our Team

In the Amelcote Benefice we have a team of committed church wardens and PCC members offering a wide variety of talents and skills. For example, the churchwarden in one of our parishes has vast experience of working with historic buildings which has been invaluable in the maintenance of the building and churchyard, as well as being able to advise other members of the benefice. During lockdown a member of the congregation had the technical skills to set up the facility in one of our churches to enable Zoom services throughout that period which greatly added to the cohesion of our benefice. In addition, there are a number of people skilled in baking and catering for events across the benefice.

Administrative Support

We can provide administrative assistance to the Rector in a number of ways. We use Life Events Diary for wedding administration and have two volunteer workers trained to produce the 'Marriage Document'. Life Events Diary has the potential to be used to manage contacts and invitations relating to other 'life events', including Baptisms, Confirmations and Funerals, and administrative assistance could be extended to cover these areas if required.

Technology and Digital Church

We maintain our presence on the internet through web pages on A Church Near You

- <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16505>, which we use as a basis for keeping the public informed of what we do when and we also maintain a dedicated fb page
- <https://www.facebook.com/amelcote.info/> to connect with the local community. We also manage a mailing list which can be used for the distribution of news / pew sheets on a weekly or ad hoc basis by email.

The PCC have 'not-for-profit' registration with Microsoft and have cloud-based storage and 365 Business Premium licenses available. With this we have started to create a digital archive of records. These services can be made available to the Rector if required.

Like many churches, during COVID we moved to providing opportunities for worship at home using Zoom. We also created a YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8rZFuAPJHgKTmvruAJs8g/videos?view=2&live_view=503 so that those unable to join worship at the time could do so when convenient. Once conditions permitted, worship moved back to church and at Holy Cross we installed a 4g based internet connection so that those not yet ready to return to worship in person could continue to worship via Zoom. We have considered upgrading the digital facilities at Holy Cross (cameras, screens, improved audio facilities), and would look at this again if encouraged to do so by the Rector.

We have a Reader, who is very willing to be active in assisting and leading services, and a Lay Pastoral Minister who both actively support the clergy in visiting any in need across the benefice. Both of them are an invaluable asset to the rector.

There is a rota for lesson readers and leading intercessions for all our benefice services. Generally, each parish has its own reading rota, however intercessions are arranged across the benefice. Members of the congregation are always willing to step in if needed at the last minute!

In our churches there are groups of volunteers who help by welcoming others and serving refreshments at services. The vital work of keeping the church clean, arranging flowers, and organising social and fundraising events is all done by church members and supporters. Each village has its strengths, and the Tiffield and Gayton Open Gardens are separate well supported annual events, largely organised by church members, collaborating with other groups in the villages.

Our Finances

Each PCC administers its own finances with the treasurer reporting to the PCC on day-to-day matters and to the benefice committee on what payment of their part of the benefice share has been achieved to date. The Parish Giving Scheme is used across the four parishes, but some parishioners still choose to give at services in envelopes supplied.

Once a year the benefice share is apportioned by agreement between the parishes using the number of individuals on each electoral roll as a guide. Currently, Pattishall pays 46% of the parish share and the other three parishes pay 18%.

Following the Covid pandemic our incumbent altered the service pattern resulting in one service of Holy Communion a week apart from occasional special services. Naturally this has had an effect on our giving in all the parishes. It has reduced total giving in the parishes, which have also been affected by ageing congregations. Heating costs also rose sharply last year.

The benefice share has been paid in full since 2017, but Pattishall has had to make up an income shortfall by using savings in the last three years.

Cold Higham: We continue at present to cover our routine running costs although energy price levels are of concern. The allocated Parish Share is paid in two instalments each year and we make every effort to continue to do so. A specific saving account is held for repairs.

Gayton's Parish Share is typically paid in full each year, as is Tiffield's, and the annual income generally keeps in line with outgoings.

Clergy expenses are paid promptly and apportioned to each parish.

Each church organises its own fundraising including concerts, choral events, quizzes and open gardens. Two of the churches now have serveries and a WC which makes holding events there easier.

With the addition of new heating and lighting in Holy Cross, Pattishall, we have greatly increased the number of fund-raising events we can hold in the Church building, particularly with the advantage of not having fixed pews.

Monies raised from events are generally, but not exclusively, reserved for the major repair programmes that are inevitably required in the quinquennial cycle. Each PCC maintains a fund for major works and there is no benefice-wide fund.

In Tiffield, fund-raising is augmented by donations from villagers who are keen to see the fabric of the church building preserved (as in the recent appeal to support the roof repair project referred to above). Villagers also sponsor the floodlighting.

Our Organisation

We have a Benefice Council which usually meets quarterly (5 times in the last year) and includes the churchwardens, treasurers and lay ministers. The minutes are very efficiently taken then concisely produced by the secretary. These meetings are constructive, amicable and essential for maintaining the effective cohesion of the benefice.

Each PCC meets on a regular basis where the regular business of the parish is discussed as well as fund raising events. An annual APCM is held in each church.

Heating and lighting improvements at Holy Cross:

Four years ago, another sub-committee visited other churches to look at their heating and lighting systems, to compare brands and costs. This was successful, as we then installed six chandeliers combining radiant heaters with up and down lights. These have radically improved comfort and make the ambience attractive for social and community events.

New piano

Similarly, we organised another group with musical knowledge to choose a digital piano, and after research we tried out some models and bought a piano for £1600 which is serving us well particularly for certain services and concert occasions.



Our New Rector

We very much look forward to welcoming our new rector who can continue the work in the parishes building on the cohesion between our churches and promoting spiritual growth. Over the past five years we have “grown into” our benefice, working together and supporting each other. We would like you to help us make the church relevant to local people’s concerns, and ready to respond to the many needs in our communities.

Our new rector will benefit from being in a lovely part of South Northamptonshire living in a modern, well-equipped rectory. They will be serving a friendly benefice of 4 parishes with a compact geographical footprint. They will be ministering in 4 beautiful historic churches, all of which are II* listed. There are dedicated churchwardens who attend to the spiritual and physical demands of these churches.

The challenges are significant but achievable. Congregations have reduced since Covid and need to be revived. They are ageing and need to be revitalised with younger members.

We would love to welcome someone who can :

- ◆ engage with our initiatives to connect with parents and children whether in services of worship, or through play groups and collaborative events.
- ◆ be open to working with us to offer a variety of service types, including our traditional patterns of worship.
- ◆ be creative in bringing together people from different backgrounds in our villages.
- ◆ encourage and lead us in initiatives for study groups, prayer breakfast and reflective groups.

We would look to a new rector to :

- ◆ have a visibility of presence, to be seen around the parishes and be supportive of community events.
- ◆ have a genuine interest in the church members, their families, their cares and joys.
- ◆ work with the PCC’s as teams utilising everyone’s abilities.
- ◆ be ready with new ideas for reaching out to our communities.
- ◆ use more efficiently our licenced Reader and Lay Pastoral Minister in congregational and schools’ work.

There needs to be good contact with the village schools and school children, then hopefully also with their parents.

We realise that with a working week of 2 days plus Sundays, our new rector has a limited amount of time. However, we can support them with our Reader and Lay Pastoral Minister, who are both very willing to assist the incumbent. Other members of our congregations, who have a wealth of talents and skills, are also available to help with some of the tasks and duties.

The rewards will be seeing the Church and Christianity growing again in our villages. There is a large groundswell of goodwill and support for our churches, which, if it can be tapped, will help to revive and grow the presence of God in our communities.

A place to call Home



The Rectory is in the village of Pattishall and located just 100 m or so from the church.

The detached residence, constructed in the 1990's of brick with a tiled roof, comprises on the ground floor:



kitchen / breakfast room



lounge with log burner



generous sized study

Also on the ground floor are

- dining room;
- utility room;
- WC;
- entrance lobby with cupboard.

The study with an adjacent cloakroom and WC are separated from the rest of the house by an internal door.



Stairs lead to the first floor, comprising:



master bedroom



en-suite



2 additional double bedrooms



family bathroom

There is also a single bedroom. Bedrooms include fitted cupboards throughout.

The property is heated by a new high-efficiency condensing oil fired boiler with radiators throughout, and is connected to mains drainage.

A reliable high speed broadband internet service is provided via Openreach / BT, and an ultra-high speed fibre service is available through Gigaclear. There is generally a very good 4g mobile service within the property.

The lounge enjoys views to open countryside and patio doors lead to a moderate sized garden which is mostly laid to lawn, with an outdoor seating area and garden shed.

There is a detached double garage, with ample space for the parking of additional vehicles.

A position for you?

Is God calling you?

Please use the following link to find out more about our Benefice:

St Luke's, Cold Higham	https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16493
St Mary's, Gayton	https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16497
Holy Cross, Pattishall	https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16505
St John the Baptist, Tiffield	https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/16512

Further information about our communities can be found on the links below:

Cold Higham

[St Luke's Church
coldhigham-pc.gov.uk](http://coldhigham-pc.gov.uk)



Gayton

www.gayton-northants.co.uk (NB this site is in the process of being updated and re-launched)

Pattishall

[Holy Cross Church
pattishallparish.org.uk](http://pattishallparish.org.uk)



Tiffield

Tiffield Parish Council

Informal contact can be made with:

The Rural Dean The Revd Richard Stainer
Email: canon.stainer@gmail.com
Tel: 01604 857619

Or

The Archdeacon of Northampton The Venerable Richard Ormston
archdeacon.northampton@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Archdeacons Office:

Cheryl Cullen (PA)
Tel 01733 887019
E pa.archdeacons@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

An application form can be obtained from the Diocesan website, vacancies section,
www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/vacancies2