

THE RIVERFOLD NEWSLETTER



*Growing Disciples
with
Compassion, Confidence
& Courage*

A Letter From The Riverfold Lead Mission Enabler

BY REV. BECKY HANCOCK



Welcome to the very first The Riverfold Newsletter, and to the beginning of a new year and an exciting new chapter in our shared life together.

My name is Becky, and I am the Vicar of the River Idle Benefice of Churches, as well as the Lead Mission Enabler for our newly formed The Riverfold Cluster. Alongside my day-to-day ministry within my own parishes, I have the privilege of sharing oversight for the development of missional opportunities across our benefices—opportunities that enable people of all ages to encounter God and grow in faith.

The Riverfold core team is made up of Laura, our Operations Team Leader, and Lucy, our Children and Families Team Leader. Together, we are working closely with Rev Liz (Oswaldbeck), Rev Louise (Blyth, Scrooby and Ranskill), and with lay leaders across the Idle and Sands Benefice. Our shared task is to prayerfully discern where God is already at work and how we might join in, as we seek to revitalise faith communities in this new season of ministry together.

We are deeply thankful that this initiative has been made possible through the Diocesan Church Growth Programme, with funding secured through the National Church. We look forward to partnering with you on this journey and to seeing what the Lord will do among us. One of my favourite Bible verses comes from Luke 15:10, where Jesus says: “In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” Just before this verse, Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep—a hope-filled picture of the Good Shepherd who risks everything to search for the one sheep that is lost, even though ninety-nine are already safely gathered. This story speaks powerfully of Jesus’ love for every person, but it also challenges us as the Church today.

This image of gathering the lost is at the heart of why we chose the name The Riverfold for our cluster of benefices. As Christ’s people in this generation, our mission is to mirror the heart of the Good Shepherd: to seek out those who are lost and gently bring them back into the fold. Alongside this, we also hold the image of streams of living water—God’s life flowing in us, through us, and out into the communities we serve.

You are warmly invited to join us in this exciting adventure of faith. I look forward to hearing stories in the months ahead of the many ways you are seeing God at work across The Riverfold.

Every blessing, Becky

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LUKE 15:10

The Riverfold Churches in Focus: Festive Moments During Christmas



Lucy and Carol from All Saints Eaton & Gamston took part in Retford Rotary Club's annual Santa Fun Run in December. As well as supporting the Rotary Club who have helped fund improvements to the church in recent years, they also raised £200 for the upkeep of the building.



A magical Christmas Eve in Bawtry as the whole town came together in the Market Square to sing carols, led by Rev. Becky Hancock, and Janette Barton, on behalf of the Town Council, and celebrate the season—plus, we even dodged the rain!

Rev. Louise Bearder led a heart warming Christingle Service at St Mary & St Martin's Church, Blyth, uniting families and children in a joyful celebration of songs, prayers, and candlelit Christingles.

In December, All Saints Eaton & Gamston celebrated the 90th birthday of the wonderful Joyce Smithson, who has done so much to sustain the church over the decades. For more than 60 years, she has organised fundraising events, played the organ, rung the bell, sold plants and flowers, cared for the churchyard, and served as churchwarden and PCC treasurer, among many other roles. She even took part in our 2020 New Year's Day sponsored swim in the River Idle at the age of 84!



Stories of Faith from the Heart of The Riverfold

BY ADRIAN ARGENT-COOK
CHURCHWARDEN, ALL SAINTS, EATON & GAMSTON
THE IDLE & SANDS

Hello! I'm delighted to contribute to the first Spotlight in the The Riverfold Newsletter. Faith has been central to my life from an early age, growing up at St Saviour's Church in Retford—where I was baptised, confirmed, and later married. Moving to Gamston in 2010, I worshipped at St Peter's and now at All Saints, Eaton, where I've served as Churchwarden since 2011.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US IN PRAYING FOR THE RIVERFOLD USING THE RIVERFOLD PRAYER..

Loving God,

You have called us from many parishes—

River Idle, Oswaldbeck, Idle & Sands, Blyth, Scrooby, & Ranskill—to flow together as one Riverfold.

Unite us in faith and friendship, renew us by your Spirit, & guide us to grow as disciples, sharing your love and bringing life to all we meet.

Amen



I spent 34 years in the NHS as an Occupational Therapist in mental health services. Since retiring, my faith has grown in new ways, drawing me closer to Christ and inspiring me to share His love with others.

I'll begin training for Licensed Lay Ministry—a new and exciting chapter I'm very much looking forward to. I'm thrilled to be part of The Riverfold community and to serve, grow, and connect with its parishes and people

Riverfold Announcement: Say Hello to Our New Children & Families Lead, Lucy McCann

BY LUCY MCCANN
CHILDREN & FAMILIES LEAD

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Lucy McCann to The Riverfold team as our new Children & Families Lead. Lucy brings a wealth of experience and a deep connection to our communities, as she shares below in her own words.

Hello! It is a real joy and privilege to introduce myself as the new Children and Families Lead for The Riverfold Benefice. I am excited to combine my lifelong roots in these communities, my experience as a teacher, and my faith to support our wonderful volunteers and the young people and families they serve.

I have lived in the River Idle Benefice most of my life, nurturing and developing my faith through worship, children's and youth ministries, and more recently Alpha and home groups. I was confirmed in Clayworth, married at St Nicholas, and I already serve at the Little Lambs group each week.

As a wife and mother, I understand the complexities of modern family life and am committed to bringing my skills and professional training to support this exciting vision for our rural communities.



I am really looking forward to working alongside Rev. Becky, Rev. Liz, Rev. Louise and Idle & Sands benefice as we continue to build strong relationships across our churches, schools, and wider communities. I feel privileged to be part of this Spirit-led mission.

Please look out for opportunities to get involved and support the work across The Riverfold as we warmly welcome Lucy to the team. We look forward to sharing this new chapter together and would really value your prayers for Lucy as she begins her role, and for the families and communities she will be supporting.

SHARE YOUR RIVERFOLD FAITH STORY

The Riverfold is looking for people of faith in the benefices to share short video testimonies for Living Hope Stories on the Diocesan website. Your story could encourage others and help them explore faith.

Contact Laura Korczyk at laura@theriverfold.com or 07802 480 869 by the end of March to take part in April.

Not-to-miss news:

Special Visit This Holy Week: Bishop Paul at Oswaldbeck Benefice



We are thrilled to announce that Bishop Paul will be visiting the Oswaldbeck benefice during Lent and Holy Week! He'll be spending time working along side Rev. Liz and Children & Families Lead, Lucy in support of our priority to develop our ministry of children through our Church Schools.

Let's give him a very warm Oswaldbeck welcome!

A Winter's Farewell: Snowdrops at All Saints' Church, Babworth

Spring is just around the corner, and with it comes the enchanting sight of snowdrops carpeting churchyards across the country. We are lucky to have this natural beauty at one of our Riverfold churches—All Saints' Church in Babworth. Known as the "Church in the Woodland," the church opens its doors for the much-loved snowdrop weekends on 14th and 15th February. Come and wander among the delicate white blooms and experience the magic of a truly spectacular winter-to-spring transformation.



The World Famous Watoto Children's Choir is coming to St Peter & St Paul's church in Gringley-on-the-Hill



Experience the joy, energy and hope of the Watoto Children's Choir live in Gringley-on-the-Hill! Join us at St Peter & St Paul's on 29th January at 6pm for an uplifting evening of music and dance. Free tickets via Eventbrite – don't miss out! Search Watoto choir - numbers are limited so get one quick!

Thank You...

We recognise and understand that all of our churches depend on the willingness of so many volunteers. Whether you arrange flowers, clean the pews, sort out the finances, chase after toddlers, plan service rotas, visit the sick, feed the hungry, or undertake any other voluntary role in our Riverfold churches — THANK YOU.

We are truly excited about what God is doing in this new season of our life together, and we are expectant that through the power of the Holy Spirit we will see a revelation of faith in our communities.

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

(1 Corinthians 15:58)

With every blessing,

The Riverfold Core Team

Get to Know Us

✉ laura@theriverfold.com

☎ 07802 480869