



## Working with Children and Young People in Ashwell and Hinxworth

is exciting and rewarding. There is so much going on for people to enjoy here, and the churches are an integral part of life in the villages of the United Benefice. The Benefice also includes St Vincent's at Newnham, but the Children's and Youth Worker will be based in Ashwell and Hinxworth.

Ashwell is the largest village of the three, with a population of about 1700 and a thriving school which children from Ashwell and surrounding villages attend up to the age of 11. It is not a church school but we are invited to contribute to events and assemblies and many church families have children there. A group from the school environment club helped plant the Holy Hedge of Hodwell in St Mary's churchyard last autumn. Ashwell is an ecumenically-minded parish and we share facilities for youth work with the United Reformed Church.

It is hoped that the Children's and Youth Worker will help with a holiday club in Hinxworth, as well as attending church there as per the job description. Hinxworth has a population of about 300. Family services at St Nicholas' are lively, informal, and joyful and there is great support for reaching out to the village. A recent Harvest Festival began at the allotments before stopping for prayers at the pub, then paused at a local farm before concluding in the church. There is a small but enthusiastic group of under 10's, and a volunteer Junior Church teacher who regularly contribute to the services.

### **You are not alone!**

There are several volunteer helpers with a wide range of experience who help with children's work at St. Mary's. Activities begin out of church on Sunday mornings and are then shared with the whole church family when we join together for eucharist.

There is also monthly Toddler Praise, seasonal Messy Church, a Junior Choir that practices on Friday evenings and joins with the robed choir for Sunday morning services. One a month we have Thank God It's Sunday which is informal, non-eucharistic, and usually lay-led.



Photos on this page are of the Ashwell Noise, the Nativity, and from one of our regular youth meals.

The **Ashwell Noise** was held over a week-end in July in 2012 and gave some of the young people of the village the opportunity to work in groups on several projects. These benefitted the community and individuals in the village who had jobs too vast to tackle alone. The school fence and shed were given a fresh coat of paint, a pensioner's garage was cleared and cleaned, and there was a mass tidy-up of the local Springs. The young people slept in St Mary's overnight and after a barbecue lunch on Sunday, rounded the project off with a service of praise in the church.

The Nativity was created by children at our December **Messy Church** and displayed in the Lady Chapel at St Mary's alongside our crib and figures donated by a local potter, Marie Whitby. As part of a wider Ashwell Village Advent Window



project many people came to visit both the crib and the window, and the Crib Service on Christmas eve saw the usual huge attendance of children and families from the village. Photos of the masks that the children made at Messy Church helped illustrate the theme of how the animals in the stable experienced being part of the nativity.

Also popular are the **Youth Meals**. These take place every couple of months and travel from home to home. Menus are prepared by the young people who enthusiastically support one another's culinary expertise. After dinner conversation has produced the basis for a Nativity Play in 2013 inspired by the #.



**Asheteria** happens in Ashwell, at the moment on a monthly basis, but we hope that you will be able to build this back to a fortnightly meeting during term-time. It is a drop-in club for younger teens based in the United Reformed Church hall in Ashwell. activities have included trips to concerts and ice-skating.



Our website is at [www.stmarysashwell.org.uk](http://www.stmarysashwell.org.uk) From there you will be able to find out more about the variety of life in the United Benefice. Contact details for the Application pack are on the front page in the Site Menu. Please get in touch with the Vicar, Chris, if you have any questions.