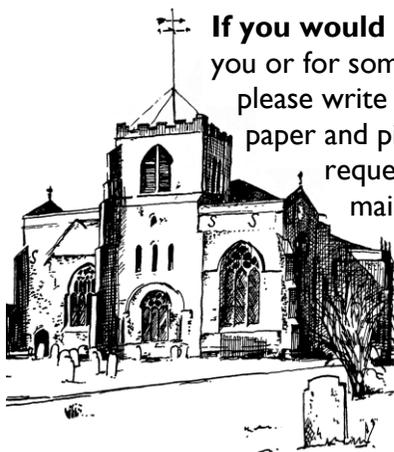


Prayer has been offered on this spot for over a thousand years. During your visit, we invite you to find a few moments to be still and quiet and to absorb the peaceful atmosphere of this beautiful, ancient building, where God has been worshipped and the Christian faith proclaimed for generations.

Whether you have never prayed before, or you are used to speaking with God, you will have **something to thank him for**, and some **special needs to bring before him**. Prayer is not only talking to God, but also listening to him and allowing him to speak to your heart.

The chapel underneath the tower at the east end of the church is **set aside for quiet prayer**. You can **light a candle** in front of the icon of Our Lord. The Blessed Sacrament is also reserved here.



If you would like us to pray for you or for someone you know, please write the name on a slip of paper and pin it to the prayer request board near the main entrance of the church.

Before you leave, please pray for this church and for all who serve and worship here.

This leaflet is gladly provided free for visitors to our church. However, if you are able to offer a **donation** towards the upkeep of this ancient and beautiful House of God, please place it in the wall-box provided by the main entrance. **If you pay tax**, yellow Gift Aid envelopes are available. You can also donate on your phone:

to give £5, text **ATTL99 £5** to **70070**. Thank you.

giftaid it

You are most welcome at any of our services or Church Family activities...

...at St Mary's Attleborough

Every Sunday

8am Holy Communion
40 minutes; short address; no music

10am The Parish Eucharist
1 hour and 10 minutes; sermon; music for choir and congregation; family friendly; includes Sunday Club or supervised children's activities; coffee served afterwards

6.30pm Evensong
40 minutes; short address; three hymns
Choral Evensong sung by the full choir on the last Sunday of the month

Every day, Monday to Saturday

8.45am Morning Prayer 5pm Evening Prayer

Every Thursday

10am Holy Communion

...and at All Saints' Besthorpe

1st and 3rd Sundays of the month

11.30am Holy Communion
1 hour; sermon; music for all to sing

5th Sunday of the month

11.30am Family Service
45 minutes; short address; music for all to sing

We welcome your enquiries about baptisms and marriages and will be pleased to help you in any way we can.

Contact the Parish Office on **01953 454977** or **attleboroughchurch@btinternet.com**

St Mary's Church, Church Street,
Attleborough NR17 2AH



ST MARY'S
ATTLEBOROUGH

Welcome to our church

Come in and discover its beauty,
its treasures and its peace



www.attleboroughchurch.org.uk

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The Church of England in the Diocese of Norwich

Free – please take

St Mary's Church (the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

Mary) has stood at the heart of the market town of Attleborough since mediaeval times. Christian worship has been offered on this site for **over one thousand years**. The church is Grade I listed. Whether you are a visitor, a pilgrim, a newcomer or have lived here for years, **you are most welcome**.

The church still plays an important role in the life of this thriving community, and is growing as the town expands. St Mary's is home to an active worshipping Church Family of all ages. **The church is open** every day of the year from morning until evening. The **Church Hall** is used daily by many organisations, and as a day centre for the elderly.

A very brief history

St Mary's has Saxon foundations and is built in Norman and Early English styles. The present church is only part of the original construction. The square Norman tower, now at the East end, was at the centre of a cross-shaped building in 1100. Over the next 200 years the church was altered and extended. By 1300 the tower had a spire, which was to fall around 1700. The whole of the Eastern end beyond the tower, consisting of the chancel and choir, was given over to the College of the Holy Cross, a college of priests founded in the late fourteenth century by Sir Robert Mortimer. He enlarged the nave for the parishioners. After the closure of the College at the Reformation, the chancel was demolished. A mediaeval record suggests that the young St Edmund, who became King of the East Angles, spent a year with the priests in Attleborough before his Coronation in Suffolk in 856.

*These and other features are described in more detail in the **Guide to the Church**, available for £1.50 near the main entrance. In the same place you can find our monthly magazine and other literature about the church and the Christian faith.*

Some interesting things to see

walking in a clockwise direction from the main door

The porch was added in the mid-fifteenth century. Its stone vaulted ceiling has lovely bosses. The central boss, obscured by centuries of overpainting, shows the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin. In the nineteenth century the parish fire engine was kept here. Above the porch is a room called a 'parvise'. Perhaps this was originally a priest's room; later it was used as a schoolroom. Normally closed to the public, it is reached via a fifteenth century door in the church and an unusual turret staircase.

An ancient grave slab is set into the floor to the right as you enter by the porch. Much older than the present nave, it is a relic of the earlier church.

The stone benches along the walls in the nave would originally have been used by the elderly and the sick, as naves would have had no other seating – hence the phrase 'the weakest go to the wall'.

The Stations of the Cross were erected in 2009. The artist, Helen McIldowie-Jenkins, used techniques and motifs familiar to mediaeval artists to depict the journey of Jesus from Pilate's headquarters to his Crucifixion and burial. The sequence of fourteen Stations begins in the south-east corner and continues clockwise to the north-east.

The pulpit, carved in the early eighteenth century and attributed to the workshop of Grinling Gibbons, was acquired from a chapel in Westminster in 1845.

The screen, for which St Mary's is famous, has been described as 'one of the most precious possessions of our English churches'. Dated around 1475, the 52 foot long oak screen is the only one in Norfolk to stretch across the nave and both side aisles. The painted figures represent (*north to south*) St John the Baptist, the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven with the Christ Child, St John the Evangelist, (probably) St Thomas Becket, the Holy Trinity and St

Bartholomew. After the Reformation Biblical texts were painted over the original decoration. The richly carved rood loft was overpainted in 1615 when the arms of the 24 Bishoprics of the day were added. The screen was moved to the back of the church in 1845 and restored to its rightful place in 1931.

The mural on the wall above the screen is the remains of a painting from around 1500. It depicts the Adoration of the Cross by saints, prophets and angels. Concealed at the Reformation, it was uncovered in 1844 but whitewashed over immediately, and uncovered for a second time in 1935. Some of the original painting, including the central portion of the Cross, was lost when two ancient windows, plastered over in mediaeval times when the mural was painted, were reopened in 1909 to give light for the bellringers.

A marble floorstone near the nave altar commemorates Captain John Gibbs who notoriously drove his carriage and four horses up and down the deepest part of the Devil's Ditch on Newmarket Heath for a £500 wager in the time of Charles II.

The stained glass windows are principally Victorian or early twentieth century. The surviving mediaeval glass is in the great West window; the central lights at the top depict the Annunciation.

St Christopher is partially visible in the remains of a mural above the south door. His presence would have been a reassurance to passing travellers.

An alms box by the south door is made of solid oak. Dated to the seventeenth century, it is bound with iron, with three locks and set with pebbles to make it 'burglar proof'.

The font is mediaeval but has only stood in Attleborough since 1975. Note the comical faces.

The carved iron lectern steps were a gift from the Churchwardens in 1816, in a most unusual style. The eagle lectern is probably some years older.