

6 May 2025

To the Rector and Congregation of Broughton, Marton and Thornton

Dear Robert

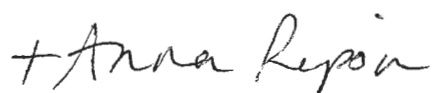
I am writing to thank you and the people of the parish for your very warm welcome to All Saints, Broughton on the first Sunday after Easter. It was very good, at long last, to worship with you and to meet so many lovely people and appreciate the beauty of the location of the three churches, more fully.

I was grateful to you for thinking through the practicalities of the service carefully and how we might honour well the Church of England's Five Guiding Principles and Mutual Flourishing together. Although this is always tinged with sadness, I so appreciated how you and parishioners welcomed me, invited me to preach and were all so kind. The hospitality was joyous and the conversations after were a mix of challenge and celebration which I also gratefully received. I was very impressed how you reassured people they should and could come and talk to me, which some did. Please do reassure your parishioners if they would still like to have a conversation with me or the Archdeacon, they are very welcome to do so.

I know that it is not easy maintaining small rural churches. But we must trust God, keep praying, and remember our call to be a faithful Christian presence in our communities however that looks. Even when churches can't open every week, we still pray and we still love and care for those in our charge, drawing people to the light and love of Christ and transforming lives by the Spirit's power. In the Kingdom of God 'small is beautiful' – the mustard seed, the pearl of great price, the widow's mite.... And faith, hope and love springs from the smallest of beginnings.

Thank you to you all for your faithfulness in prayer, worship, ministry and mission. The church is the people as much as the buildings and your presence makes the world of difference to the anxieties and confusions of our world and to the lives of those who are feeling weary, burdened and uncertain.

Please be assured of my ongoing prayers for you all and keep trusting in the grace and mercy of God and of his son Jesus Christ, our Lord.



Bishop Anna
Bishop of Ripon

cc Archdeacon of Richmond & Craven