



The Benefice of Crick, Lilbourne and Yelvertoft Northamptonshire



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Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in our Benefice.

A recent benefice meeting produced a clear vision of the qualities we're seeking in our new Rector and also considered 'strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats' in the benefice.

We are looking for someone who feels called by God to serve in our benefice. Their ministry will be centred on Jesus and evidenced in prayer, relationships, leadership, and teaching.

Ideal qualities and priorities include

- The drive to support and encourage the development of faith
- The insight to strengthen teamwork, mutual support, and collaboration while valuing and preserving the distinct identities of our parishes.
- A proactive approach to sustain and develop what's successful, and to work with the PCCs in addressing areas needing improvement or finding innovative ways to further God's work in the benefice
- Strong interpersonal skills, with the caring attitude and sense of humour necessary for developing community relationships, nurturing skills and delivering effective pastoral care. Will be out and about meeting people in our villages as well as in the context of church.
- Competence in management and communication. We also value enthusiastic support for our fundraising and other activities - though not necessarily expecting a personal involvement in the entire organisation!

Our next Rector will of course bring their own personality, experience and skills to the role, and we look forward to getting to know this special person as we work and worship together.

Our strengths:

- A will to serve God in our communities
- Parishes have individual areas of strength including welcome, hospitality, music, etc.
- Effective, friendly teamwork and mutual support across the benefice.

Our weaknesses / opportunities for improvement / threats:

- **Reaching children, young people and families:** despite our best efforts, our children's groups / services are not flourishing. There is no provision for teenagers - we have struggled to resource this – and a better connection with young parents is needed.
- **Pastoral care and Mission:** ongoing needs that can be hard to address. Clergy may sometimes have to hurry from one church to another for the next service, making it difficult to find time to talk to and listen to parishioners. Laity may need to develop their skills in welcoming and following up after first contacts.
- **Creating space for our own faith:** our very committed volunteers work extremely hard and do so with grace and skill, but there is a constant risk of our becoming over-burdened and not finding time and space for peace and connection with God. Developing faith and spirituality is important, whether through home and prayer groups, or through open programmes like Start, alongside our weekly pattern of services.
- **Church finances**
- **Upkeep and development of our ancient Grade-I listed buildings**

What We Offer



The Rectory: (Main Rd Crick, NN6 7TU) is a four-bedroomed detached house, set back from the road. Built in the 1960s, it has a large garden laid mainly to lawn, a single garage, and parking for four cars.

We want our Rector to live in the Rectory.

A friendly attitude and a desire to help: We are conscious that the role of Rector is challenging, with many expectations placed upon it. We will do all that we can to help you settle in quickly. We will support you in prayer and with sound organisation. We know that you will need retreat periods and holidays. We don't expect you to be superhuman!

Personnel and other support:

- **Reader:** Lorna Taylor, licensed in September 2020
- **Volunteer children's worker for the Benefice:** Barbara Brazier, who is currently studying for a DipHE in Theology, Ministry and Mission.
- **Shepherd's Delight children's worker:** The only paid role, but assisted by volunteers
- **Lay preachers:** Three members preach periodically across the Benefice.
- **Churchwardens:** Two churchwardens and an assistant churchwarden in each parish, collectively forming a strong and committed team with a 'can do' spirit.
- **PCCs:** Each with an experienced Treasurer, Secretary and Safeguarding Officer supported by other roles. They currently meet six-weekly.

- **Musicians:** We have seven organists who serve across the Benefice. At Crick a worship group leads worship at the informal Morning Praise service. There are regular choirs in Crick and Yelvertoft and an occasional choir in Lilbourne. Each tower has working bells.
- **Technology:** An excellent lap-top was purchased recently for the clergy's use, and we have a photocopier and a large portable speaker. Crick and Yelvertoft churches have audio-visual equipment; Lilbourne church has a sound system, its installation being a good example of cooperation in the benefice.
- **Deanery:** The Brixworth Deanery comprises forty-three parishes in nine benefices. The Deanery Synod meets three times a year, but the Lay Chair and others are working hard to extend its activities into a mutual support network. The Deanery Secretary and Deanery Treasurer are both members of the Lilbourne congregation. We have a full complement of representatives on the Diocesan Synod; two are members of our benefice,
- **The Chapter** meets regularly and is a good source of mutual colleague support.

Background of the Benefice

The ecclesiastical parishes of Lilbourne and Yelvertoft were joined in 1954, and in 1984 were combined with Crick to form the current three-parish benefice. (Although four villages appear in the name of the benefice, the church in Clay Coton closed many years ago.) The villages of Yelvertoft and Lilbourne retain their rural character and their population sizes are stable. Crick, however, has tripled in size since the 1990s and this has affected its demographic make-up.

Our churches are usually open daily. Visitors' books and comments show that the availability of the churches is important.

Weekly Sunday worship in each parish is augmented by children's clubs / services and by home groups.

We enjoy a close relationship with our two primary schools (neither of which is 'C. of E.') This is achieved through school governorship, leading school assemblies, enabling school visits to our churches to support the RE curriculum, hosting school services for leavers, and Christingle services. The schools are prepared to loan to us - when they are not in use in the school - items such as display boards or sports equipment.

Finance: We have paid our Parish Shares in full since 2021. Rises in the Parish Share, energy costs, and the relentless maintenance of our Grade 1 listed ancient buildings mean, however, that our finances are collectively quite fragile. Each PCC has made progress with Stewardship campaigns, and preaching on 'giving' is done at least once a year. All three churches run fundraising / social events that are well supported by their communities and by others in the benefice and beyond. These help to balance the books, but require a huge input of time and energy in planning and delivery.

Services in our Benefice

Day	Crick	Lilbourne	Yelvertoft
1st Sunday	9.45am Informal Morning Praise	9.30am Morning Praise	11.15am Holy Communion
2nd Saturday		3pm Saturday Afternoons in Lilbourne (S.A.I.L) Lilbourne Village Hall	
2nd Sunday	9.45am Holy Communion	9.30am Morning Praise (lay led)	11.15am Songs of Praise
3rd Sunday	3pm SHINE!	9.30am Holy Communion	11.15am Morning Prayer
4th Sunday	9.45am Songs of Praise	6pm Evensong	11.15am All Age Service
5th Sunday	11.15am Benefice Holy Communion and lunch. Hosted by rotation in each church		
Wednesdays	10.30am Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer		

A weekly Sunday service in each church has been established for many years and is very greatly valued. Finding a good liturgical balance that caters for a wide and possibly competing range of needs and preferences can be challenging, but we are reasonably happy with the current pattern (except, perhaps, for the children's services.) It was developed from our attendance at a 'Leading Your Church into Growth' conference in March 2022, and has been in place since October 2022.

Before any changes were made, we gave prayer-for-mission top priority and 'Prayer and Puddings' evenings were established in each parish. Two of these have become home groups for Bible study and prayer.

The informal Morning Praise service in Crick is evangelical in style and its flexible liturgy allows more freedom in worship through the music, prayers and preaching. In contrast, a service of BCP Evensong at Lilbourne once a month is greatly appreciated.

The benefice worships together at our 5th-Sunday Holy Communion (followed by lunch) and on key days in the church year. The mid-week Holy Communion (BCP) in Crick is also a benefice service and is often attended by members of all three churches.



In our mission to families and children, new monthly Fresh Expressions of worship began, with the Shine service in Crick and S.A.I.L (Saturday Afternoons in Lilbourne). In response to feedback from families, both featured a different day, time, or location. We continue to offer a monthly All Age service (Yelvertoft). Little Saints (Crick) is a well-supported pre-school group, meeting on Mondays in term time, and there is an equally popular weekly after-school club called Shepherd's Delight held at Yelvertoft School.

Occasional Offices 2024

	Crick	Lilbourne	Yelvertoft
Baptisms	4	0	3
Weddings	2	0	3
Funerals	8	4	7

Our previous Rector was proactive about quality of relationships and encouragement of particular gifts in individuals. Three lay members received training to preach at any of the churches in the benefice.

In June 2023 we held our first Benefice Pilgrimage – now an annual event - an 11-mile route that connects the three churches. We worship together along the way.

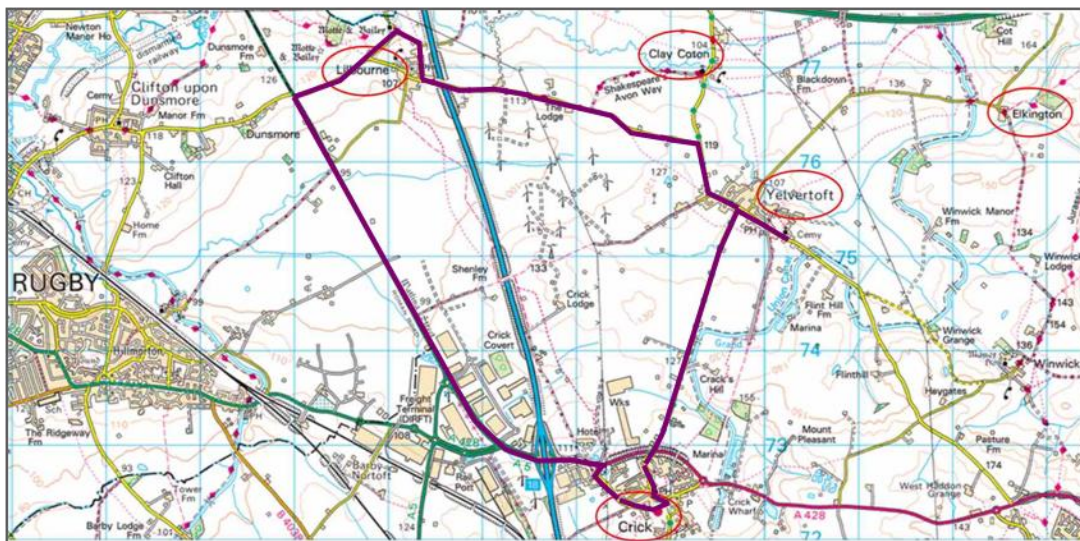


A Start course in January 2025 was attended by twelve people and was very well received. There is definitely scope to offer more of these, perhaps targeting different groups: parents, young adults, and teenagers.

Safeguarding underpins everything we do and is on PCC agendas at every meeting. Each parish has a Safeguarding Officer, and DBS checks and training are up to date. Training certificates are displayed prominently and safeguarding information is displayed on our pre-service notices slide presentations in Crick and Yelvertoft, and on the notice board in Lilbourne.

An Introduction to our Parishes

On Northamptonshire's borders with Leicestershire and Warwickshire, our benefice is 53 miles (1 hour 10 minutes, A14) from Peterborough. Bouverie Court in Northampton, 22 miles away, is often used for Archdeaconry business.



1 mile

We are at the edge of the Northamptonshire Uplands, an area of beautiful countryside and much history. Our three villages are rural in nature, but major industry is very close - the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal abuts all three parishes and is still growing.

Transport: The M1, M6, A5 and A14 run close to the benefice. Peterborough can be reached in 75 minutes. The West Coast mainline railway can be accessed from Rugby.

Schools: Primary schools at Crick and Yelvertoft feed into the Guilsborough Academy, although other secondary schools can be accessed. Lilbourne children attend Yelvertoft School.

Health Care: Crick Medical Practice provides primary healthcare; surgeries elsewhere are also available. There is a hospital in Rugby, and larger ones are 15-20 miles away in Coventry, Northampton and Kettering.

The table gives at-a-glance information about the three villages, and is followed by a section on each of the three churches.

	Crick	Lilbourne	Yelvertoft
Approx. size of village	2,200, in 900 houses	300, in 170 houses	800, in 350 houses
Socio-economic category	B	B	B
Housing	Predominantly owner-occupied with some rental and social housing and some residential moorings at the marinas in Crick and Yelvertoft. The new housing in Crick has attracted many young families.		
School	Primary: 193 pupils	0	Primary: 91 pupils
Shops	Co-op. Post Office	0	Delicatessen
Pubs	3	1	1
Public transport	Bus service to Rugby & Northampton	Minibus service to Rugby	Minibus service to Rugby
Hotels	2	0	0
Cafes	2	0	0
Other amenities & features	- Canal & marina - Village hall - Crick Old School - Sports Centre - Garden centre - Hairdresser - Scouts and Guides - Ex-servicemen's club - Funeral directors	- Village minibus - Village hall - Garage - Nature reserve - Castle mounds - Fortnightly coffee morning run by the village hall	- Canal & marina - Village hall - Reading Room - Pocket park 'Last Saturday Café' run by the village hall - Bowls, cricket, Tai Chi

	Crick	Lilbourne	Yelvertoft
Churchwardens	Two churchwardens & assistant churchwarden, each parish		
Electoral Roll	54	21	37
ASA	20	13.3	20
2024 Parish Share paid in full?	Yes	Yes	Yes
% allocation of Parish Share total	50%	13%	37%
Clergy expenses paid in full	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parish Giving Scheme	Yes	Yes	Yes
2024 accounts	From the Archdeacon on request		
Church grading status	1	1	1
Latest Quinquennial	2022	2023	2023
Church seating	250	100	200
'Friends' groups	Yes	Yes	No
Bells (working)	8	5	6
Church property other than church building	0	0	0
Other Christian groups in the village	United Reformed Church	0	Independent Chapel Roman Catholic Church

St Margaret's, Crick

St Margaret of Antioch Church is in the centre of the village and is open every day. Its spire can be seen from the M1 and the surrounding countryside and lends its name to the latest new housing area - St Margaret's View – on the western edge of the village.



We have two churchwardens and an assistant churchwarden. Our PCC has ten members and meets six times a year. We are blessed with a motivated and capable core group of people committed to discipleship who help to keep the church running as smoothly as possible. Refreshments are provided at all services; indeed, food is something of signature activity at fundraising events too.



We have developed our outward-facing communications and keep them up to date and welcoming. During the pandemic we set up a regular newsletter - St Margaret's Voices – that reaches over 100 people by email and home delivery. We built an attractive website and set up a Facebook page that now has over 200 members.

Our Average Sunday Attendances (ASA) in 2024 declined to 20, from 28 in the previous year. The informal Morning Praise and Shine services represented a significant shift away from our traditional patterns of worship. We feel they demonstrate our openness to change to encourage missional growth even if the pathway to achieving this isn't straightforward.



The ASA calculation is, however, incomplete as a measure because it doesn't take into account the range of services offered each month. We typically have

30 people attending Holy Communion and Songs of Praise and 20/25 at our informal Morning Praise. Our Shine service is treated as a Fresh Expression of worship and attendances at this service have averaged 17 adults and 5 children in 2024.

There is a strong heart for worship at all our services and we pay a lot of attention to the welcome we give to visitors and regulars alike. At specific times of the year the church is full to capacity, for example, on Remembrance Sunday and at the two services held in church for Crick Primary School (the Leavers' service in July and their Christingle service in December

Our Christmas services, especially the traditional carol service and the Crib Service on Christmas Eve, are very popular.

Our Grade 1-listed building is much admired and a review of it was carried out by Simon Jenkins as part of his 'Great English Churches' project (referenced at the end of the Profile). There has been a place of worship on the site for 1,300 years.

From the quinquennial inspection report of December 2022, the most urgent issues relating to the chancel ceiling have been addressed. The remaining priorities relating to wear and tear to stonework are being progressed. Fundraising for the fabric is supported by an enthusiastic charitable group 'Friends of St Margaret's'.



St Margaret's is ideally suited to the hosting of concerts, children's activity days and community meetings. We do some of this already but there is scope to make greater use of the building for these purposes.

St Margaret's doesn't have a church hall but it has the use of the Crick Old School located directly opposite the main gate. This offers toilets and a meeting space. The Rector and churchwardens are ex-officio trustees of the

charity that manages the building; [these three role-holders are also ex-officio trustees on two other small charities in the village].

Crick is the largest of the three villages in the benefice. It is a lively place to live with a strong community spirit. Each year, the Crick Scarecrow Festival is a popular community event raising money for local and national charities. Crick Boat Show is held annually at the Marina attracting visitors from far and wide.

The relationship with the primary school is strong, with weekly assemblies led by clergy or a lay team and regular visits to the church by different year groups as part of their RE curriculum. Our previous rector and curate were on the governing body.

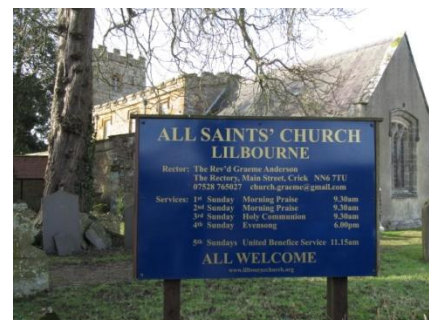


The Scouting and Guiding groups in the village are thriving and the relationships between the church and their leaders are excellent. The groups attend the annual Service of Remembrance and have attended services at other times.

Our links with the United Reformed Church are good. Their small congregation appreciates its links with St Margaret's and three members of our congregation, and our clergy, lead Sunday services for them, periodically.

All Saints', Lilbourne

The only centre of worship in Lilbourne, All Saints' is a small but vigorous Church, serving the smallest of the three villages of the benefice. It is open every day, with free basic refreshments available; we believe that this is vitally important, so that the community is



encouraged to see it as their church despite its position almost half a mile from the residential area of the village. Comments show that this accessibility is appreciated by villagers and by visitors from elsewhere (some of whom, having noticed the church and the castle mounds from the M1, 'had to come and find it') and many mention the special atmosphere in the building. We know a lot about its history, and this information is available inside.



Usual attendance at weekly services is 10 -15, with many more attending 'special' services. For example our 'Candlelit Carols' is very popular - we are joined by Bilton Silver Band, and a light buffet is served afterwards. We try to meet differing needs with very different types of service through the month. Our two

Morning Praise services were designed to be short and modern. The second, taking place the day after Saturday's SAIL session, is lay led and informal – we sit in a loose circle with a 'cuppa', there are no hymns, and instead of a sermon we discuss the reading. Prayers are led by different people. It is much enjoyed, and when Revd Graeme sat in on one we think that he was impressed. As part of the changes made in 2022, we made the monthly Holy Communion service Order One, while the 4th-Sunday Evensong is BCP. All services offer refreshments, and this is an important part of our fellowship and outreach. SAIL (Saturday Afternoon In Lilbourne) is a monthly session aimed at young children and their families, held in the village hall. The children enjoy

craft and construction activities, a Bible Story, song and prayer, and - of course! - refreshments.



The church seats about 100. At present, use of the building other than for services is limited by lack of facilities. We have plans for a WC, servery, and a larger open area for socializing, but we very urgently need to renew the heating as two of the three oil-burning heaters are obsolete. We want to move toward carbon-neutral. We have recently created a Friends group, to gain the necessary charitable status for accessing grants.

We hold several fundraising events each year; all are a form of outreach. We have a very good reputation for catering, despite the lack of facilities in the church! We have a good relationship with the Parish Council and the village hall committee, and some of our PCC members serve on them.

Lilbourne's church is the oldest building in the area. It is in reasonably good order. A quinquennial inspection at the end of 2023 highlighted a need for some repointing, and attention to rainwater goods, which have not yet been addressed. A commercial security system protects the roof. There are five bells, restored in 2012, and they ring for Evensong and for special services.

The churchyard, which is open, achieved a Gold Award for nature conservation (Wildlife BCN) in 2024. We aim for a balance between managed semi-wild and tended. It has been professionally surveyed, and we have the positions of all known graves numbered, with a full list of all legible inscriptions.



There are seven members of the PCC, including the churchwardens, supported by a wider group that helps at special occasions and events, and with church music, cleaning and flowers, refreshments, the bells, and the

churchyard. The PCC meets on alternate months in the home of one of our members, and we enjoy a light buffet while dealing with business. We're a friendly team.

A carefully-planned Stewardship Campaign in 2023 met with some success though not as much as we had hoped. Our aim is to continue to engage with the village community and beyond, and to find ways to translate the evident goodwill that exists into Christian discipleship – to help people see that 'church' is so much more than just an old building down the lane, belonging to a past time, and to want to share in its life and its worship.

We are also very conscious of the need to preserve our lovely, ancient church for future generations, retaining the ambience of 1000 years of continuous history and worship while - as the community always has - adapting the building to fulfill the needs of the time.

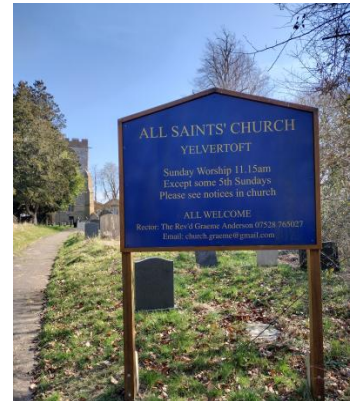
***'The days of old have dowered us with gifts beyond all praise;
Our Father, make us faithful to serve the coming days.'***

GW Briggs

All Saints', Yelvertoft

At All Saints' we have a small but faithful congregation and an active, committed PCC. Our congregation has not recovered fully following the pandemic, although we enjoy good support from our friends and neighbours in Yelvertoft.

All Saints' is one of three churches in Yelvertoft, serving alongside the Roman Catholic Church and the Independent Chapel, and sharing some combined services with the latter. The parish includes two hamlets, Clay Coton and Elkington. The redundant church in Clay Coton is now a private dwelling.



Our Grade-1-listed church dates back to the 12th century, with 13th - 15th century additions, and is located at the eastern edge of the village. It has a meeting room with kitchen facilities and a toilet. It is generally in good repair but requires redecoration.

Choral music is important to us and our four-part choir sings for all services except the All Age Service.

Our interactive All Age services are enhanced by the imaginative use of our audio-visual system and interactive intergenerational talks. A small group of volunteers enjoys worshiping and exploring faith with the children and families at these services. Each service is followed by a very valuable time of fellowship with refreshments.

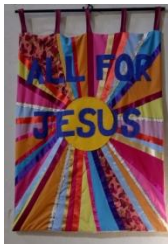
We have no specific outreach to secondary school aged children but there is a Christian youth group led by Yelvertoft Independent Chapel and attended by many of our primary school leavers



We have an exceptional team of bell ringers and are affiliated to the Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers.

Our Christmas services and fundraising events are well supported by our local community.

The PCC has ten members, including two churchwardens, an assistant church warden, treasurer and secretary. It meets every six to eight weeks. Members of the PCC raise funds through events like the village fete, coffee mornings and fashion shows. The PCC also organises church and grave yard maintenance, church flowers, music, bells, and refreshments and maintains the church website and communications.



Our relationship with Yelvertoft Primary School is good. The head teacher is very welcoming to church members and our clergy have taken weekly Bible-based assemblies shared in rotation with members of Yelvertoft Independent Chapel. To strengthen links with the school, each month church members take in baked gifts to bless the school staff and to let them know they are being prayed for. One church member, who lives in Crick, is a parent governor. Our PCC sponsors a children's worker to run Shepherd's Delight.

Yelvertoft is a friendly village, with many social groups. The strong farming community lives happily alongside residents who are retired, working locally, or commuting via the good road and rail links.

The village has many amenities, with a primary school, village hall and reading room (educational charity) which are widely used for clubs, meetings, recreation and foodbank collections. We also have a lively pub and a deli/butcher's shop.



Further Information

Thank you for your interest in our benefice. For more information, you could access the sites below. We look forward to meeting you and taking the conversation further.

Church websites

- St Margaret's, Crick <https://www.stmargaretschurchcrick.org.uk/>
- All Saints', Lilbourne <https://www.lilbournechurch.org/>
- All Saints', Yelvertoft <https://www.allsaintschurchyelvertoft.org/>

Facebook pages

- St Margaret's, Crick
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2590164284595506>
- All Saints', Yelvertoft
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089294512719>

Other reference sites

- The Crick Old School <https://crickoldschool.co.uk/>
- History of St Margaret's (external website)
<http://greatenglishchurches.co.uk/html/crick.html>
- Crick Primary School <https://www.crick.northants.sch.uk/>
- Yelvertoft Primary School <https://www.yelvertoftprimary.com/>
- Guilsborough Academy <https://www.guilsborough.northants.sch.uk/>

To apply please contact:

Chel Cullen, PA to the Archdeacons of Northampton and Oakham

(Working hours 8am – 4pm Monday – Friday) Telephone: 01733 887019

Email: pa.archdeacons@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Our Benefice Prayer

Reshape us, good Lord, until - in generosity, in faith, and in expectation that the best is yet to come - we are truly Christ-like.

Make us passionate followers of Jesus, rather than passive supporters.

Make our congregations places of radical discipleship and signposts to Heaven.

*Then, in us, through us, and if need be despite us, **let your kingdom come.***

Amen.