

Keith Jones

Associate Minister St. Margaret's Church, Ipswich

Retiring to Ipswich last year was not a difficult decision for Viola and me. My time as vicar of St Mary le Tower for 13 years had been very happy, and from our first arrival in 1982 we have loved and revelled in this ancient and friendly town, at the heart of a wonderfully beautiful region. This is where our three daughters grew up, and attended St Margaret's School, and have many lifetime friendships. We also love seeing old friends and renewing acquaintances in the various churches, and have also have a link with the cathedral in St Edmundsbury where we recently led Holy Week devotions. Being here in Suffolk, and in this corner of Suffolk, is a daily pleasure and cause of thanks.

Being welcomed into the parish of St Margaret is a further source of delight. Years ago I used to join the clergy here to say morning prayer every week (after a morning swim), and have always loved the light and grace of the building. Now, after being so immersed for 16 years in directing and leading two great cathedrals in succession it is a pleasure to relate to a parish and belong to the particular area cared for and prayed for by its church. Not that I was glad to leave York: it is a most marvellous post to have been allowed to hold, and thankfully I dearly love all the places where we have lived – I say “we” because Viola and I have in so many ways shared a ministry throughout. It was simply the right time, and God who watches over our years has provided the next step.

I continue to conduct retreats in different parts of the country, and to mentor and guide clergy where I am asked, so I am kept busy and am glad I can say Yes as well as No with the privilege of the retired. While the Lord allows, I hope to continue to encourage friendships between the churches, of which my membership of the Carmelite Order (a privilege of great rarity of which I am immensely proud, not having sought it) is a sign, and to be allowed to contribute to the life of the wider church as well as the parish of St Margaret. David directs and trains me with the sweetest patience! I am really pleased to be part of the parish team. God bless us all!

Keith Jones