

Parish Profile

St. John's Church, Chester

DECEMBER 2024



Church Warden
Simon Oliver



Church Warden
Jeremy Jones

Use the QR Code below to view our website



Little St. Johns St.
Vicars Lane
Chester CH1 1QX

Welcome To St. Johns Church:

Welcome to St. John the Baptist Church, Chester! We are a warm and welcoming Church of England parish located in the heart of this historic city. Our doors are open to everyone, regardless of where you come from or where you are on your spiritual journey.

At St. John's, we believe in embracing the diversity of our community. Whether you are rich or poor, happy or sad, you have a place here. We welcome singles, couples, families, and those who may feel alone. We celebrate the uniqueness of each person and extend our love and support to all.

If you are a newcomer, a lifelong believer, or someone exploring faith for the first time, you will find a welcoming community here. Our services are rooted in the rich traditions of the Anglican Church, yet we strive to make everyone feel at home, regardless of their background or beliefs.

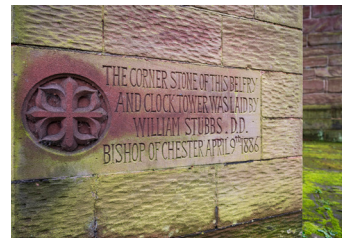
Our church is dedicated to embodying the principles of the Chester Diocese, striving to be "Together in Christ, Sharing Hope." We aim to help bless each individual among the 1.5 million people in our community, focusing on one life at a time. Our mission encourages us to grow in faith that is fuller and braver, to practice loving service that transforms lives, and to engage meaningfully with our local community through strong partnerships.

St. John's is a place where you can be yourself, find new friends, and grow in your faith. We invite you to join us for worship, fellowship, and service to our community. Come and experience the warmth and love of our parish family.

Welcome home!

"Together in Christ, Sharing Hope"

THE ORIGINAL CATHEDRAL





Our Parish

The Parish of St. John the Baptist, Chester, located in the bustling inner city of Cheshire, is a vibrant and diverse community nestled within the historic and picturesque city of Chester. Known for its rich heritage, Chester boasts ancient Roman walls, a stunning medieval cathedral, and the iconic Eastgate Clock, all of which contribute to the city's unique charm.

Our parish reflects the eclectic mix of people who call Chester home. From young professionals and university students to families and retirees, the community is a tapestry of different ages, backgrounds, and walks of life. The historic city's heart is alive with activity, featuring a blend of modern amenities and timeless architecture that attracts both locals and tourists alike.

Chester is known for its friendly and welcoming atmosphere, and this is mirrored in the parish community. The people here are united by a shared sense of belonging and a commitment to supporting one another. Whether you're a long-time resident or a newcomer, you'll find a place where you can connect, grow, and contribute.

The community is characterised by its inclusivity and openness. We welcome everyone, regardless of their life circumstances or faith journey. From the affluent areas to those facing economic challenges, the parish is a place where individuals from all walks of life can find common ground. This diversity enriches our community, fostering a spirit of understanding and compassion.

Local businesses, schools, and cultural institutions thrive in Chester, creating a dynamic environment where tradition and innovation coexist. The parish actively engages with these elements, supporting local initiatives and participating in community events. This engagement strengthens our bonds and enhances the quality of life for all residents.

In the Parish of Chester, Cheshire, you'll find a community that celebrates its heritage while embracing the future, where every person is valued, and where the love and support of neighbours make the city's heart beat a little brighter. Join us, and be part of a community that truly cares.



THE PROFILE OF OUR PARISH

The number of people living in our parish is approximately 4,000.

As we are a city centre location, the population tends to be younger but this does not reflect in our congregation.

A full guide to our area can be read at the following link.

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/asset-library/housing-strategies-policies-and-research/chester-housing-market-report-2022-23.pdf>



Our Church

St. John's is the oldest continuously used place of worship in Cheshire, steeped in nearly a millennium of history.

As a Grade I listed building, it holds a significant architectural and historical importance.

In 2025, we will proudly celebrate the 950th anniversary of the founding of the current church.

Our church is truly blessed to have His Grace, The Duke of Westminster, as our Patron. His steadfast commitment to our mission has enriched our parish in countless ways. His Grace's dedication to preserving our church's values and fostering our growth reflects both his noble heritage and his compassionate spirit. We are grateful for his guidance and honored by his involvement, which brings us strength and inspiration as we work together to serve our community.

Our site's rich heritage extends even further, as it once housed a Saxon Minster, traditionally founded in 689 by King Æthelred. This Minster likely succeeded an even earlier church, given our proximity to the Roman amphitheater.

If you have a passion for history, architecture, or archaeology, you may find a unique and fulfilling role as our new incumbent at St. John's.



Worship

Join Our Parish:
A Unique Opportunity to Lead and Grow in Faith

We are a vibrant parish with a rich Catholic tradition that we deeply cherish and wish to retain.

Currently, our community gathers for five weekly services:

Sunday: 8:00 AM Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer), 10:00 AM, Sung Eucharist, and 6:30 PM Evensong (Book of Common Prayer, compline last Sunday of the month). Wednesday: 10:00 AM Eucharist and Friday: 12:00 PM Eucharist

Our ministry team consists of three dedicated priests with Permission to Officiate (PTO) and a committed reader, all of whom are passionate about celebrating these services and visiting parishioners in their homes. Our outreach extends beyond the church walls, as we bring the Eucharist to the residents of Callin Court Methodist Home and Belong, an intergenerational care village in Chester. Additionally, we have strong historical ties with the nearby Grosvenor Park Church of England Academy, just a few hundred yards from St. John's.

Like many communities, we have faced challenges in the wake of the pandemic, with some parishioners not yet returning to regular worship and an ageing congregation. Our connection with Grosvenor Park Academy has also weakened in the past year, and we are eager to restore and strengthen this vital relationship.

We see ourselves as a parish on the path to renewal and are searching for a rector who is not only well-organized and an excellent communicator but also has the vision and energy to help us grow our congregation. While we honour our traditions, we are open to exploring more flexible approaches to worship if they will help us achieve our goals.

We take heart from the many prayers left and candles lit in our Lady Chapel, a clear sign of our enduring place and responsibility within the broader community. Beyond our services, we are keen to establish stronger ties with the local business community, broadening our outreach and impact.

If you are someone who can inspire, lead with compassion, and help us navigate this exciting period of regeneration, we would love to welcome you to our parish family.



Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.

Jeremiah 3:15

Our Finance

We have recently conducted a comprehensive review of our finances to ensure the long-term viability of our parish and to meet our financial obligations. While our accounts are healthy, our plans for future activities are focused on improving our standing.

The St John's Project, which includes a shop and café in the south aisle, plays a crucial role in supporting our parish. Run entirely by dedicated volunteers, the café offers drinks, cakes, and other refreshments to visitors while also providing information about the church through a team of knowledgeable guides. The income generated by the St John's Project makes a significant contribution toward our costs, and it is essential to the future of St John's Church.

To enhance the appeal of the St John's Project, we are in the process of upgrading the servery's appearance and diversifying the range of products and food we offer, making it more attractive to our visitors.

Our heritage initiatives, including talks and other events, are also organized through the St John's Project. We are currently planning to curate a permanent public display of the sculpted stones that are presently scattered in the north aisle.

For any future incumbent, involvement in the ongoing development of the St John's Project would be both beneficial and rewarding, as it is integral to the future of our parish.



Our People

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) team plays a vital role in the life of the church, ensuring it runs smoothly and fulfills its mission.

As the church's governing body, the PCC manages finances, maintains the building, and makes decisions on key issues. Their careful stewardship ensures that the church remains a welcoming place of worship for all.

The team also supports the rector and congregation, fostering community engagement and spiritual growth. By addressing both practical and pastoral needs, the PCC helps sustain the church's ministry, ensuring it thrives and continues to serve future generations of parishioners in the Chester Area.



What We are looking for in a Rector

As we seek a new rector, we are looking for a compassionate and dynamic leader to guide our parish through a time of renewal and growth while honouring our rich traditions. We would love our new rector to bring the following qualities and skills:

1. **Spiritual Leadership:** We seek a rector who can inspire and deepen our faith through thoughtful preaching, meaningful worship, and pastoral care.
2. **Christian Faith:** We are seeking someone who can encourage the congregation to live out their Christian faith in daily life, Mon to Sat, and not only on a Sunday.
3. **Vision for Growth:** We are looking for a leader with a clear vision for expanding our congregation, particularly by re-engaging with those who have not returned to regular worship post-pandemic and by attracting new members.
4. **Commitment to Tradition and Openness to Innovation:** While we value our broad Catholic tradition, we are open to exploring new and flexible approaches to worship and ministry that resonate with today's world. We hope our rector will balance respect for our liturgical heritage with a willingness to embrace fresh ideas.
5. **Community Engagement:** Our parish is deeply connected to the wider community, and we seek a rector who is passionate about strengthening these ties. This includes involvement in the St. John's Project, building relationships with local businesses, and supporting our heritage and outreach initiatives.
6. **Support for Music and the Arts:** Music is a key aspect of our identity at St. John's, and we would like our rector to share in our enthusiasm for this tradition.
7. **Organisational Skills:** Effective leadership requires strong organisational and administrative skills. We seek a rector who can manage daily parish responsibilities, work collaboratively with our ministry team, PCC, and volunteers, and ensure wise use of resources to secure a sustainable future for St. John's.
8. **Pastoral Care:** We seek a rector who is approachable, empathetic, and committed to providing compassionate pastoral care. This includes visiting parishioners, supporting those in need, and being present in times of joy and sorrow.
9. This role involves providing leadership on safeguarding, encouraging everyone to promote a safer church, and ensuring the protection of vulnerable community members. In collaboration with the PCC, it includes overseeing compliance with the House of Bishops' Safeguarding Guidance and Code of Safeguarding Practice.

In summary, we are looking for a rector who will lead us with faith, vision, and compassion, helping us to grow as a vibrant, welcoming, and thriving parish community.

If you have a heart for ministry, a love for people, and a passion for enriching both our spiritual & community life, we would be delighted to welcome you to St. John's.



Outreach

At St. John's, outreach is at the heart of our Church. We strive to serve the wider community by providing a welcoming space for worship, reflection, and support. Our outreach efforts extend beyond our church walls, as we actively engage with local organizations and institutions to make a positive impact.

A key focus of our outreach is our partnership with Grosvenor Park Church of England Academy. We believe that by nurturing our connection with the school, we can help shape the spiritual and moral development of the next generation.

We also celebrate Eucharist at Callin Court and Belong, whose residents are unable to attend church in person.

Music

Music at St. John's Church: A Rich Tradition of Sound and Spirit. We have a small and enthusiastic robed choir who sing two services on Sunday and on other feast days.

Music plays a vital and cherished role in the life of St. John's Church, enhancing our worship and connecting us with the broader community. At the heart of our musical tradition is the renowned "Coronation Organ," an exceptional instrument that has been a centerpiece of our services and events, filling our historic space with its majestic sound.

Throughout the summer, we host our popular Wednesday@One concert series, which offers a diverse range of musical performances in a relaxed, lunchtime setting.

In addition to these regular events, we proudly present three major concerts each year featuring a full orchestra. These events are a testament to our commitment to high-quality music and our desire to share this with our congregation and the community at large.

What We Offer

At St. John's, we are excited to welcome our new rector with open arms and a genuine sense of community. You will find a warm and supportive parish eager to embrace you as our new leader.

We offer a parish rectory in the sought-after area of Abbots Park, Chester. This is in the process of being acquired but will be available for our new incumbent. The images on this page show the rectory.

We are offering a 50% stipend, working Sundays and 3.5 days ministry.

You'll also have the support of a team, ready to help you settle in and feel at home in both the parish and the wider community. We are here to assist you every step of the way as you begin your new journey with us.