

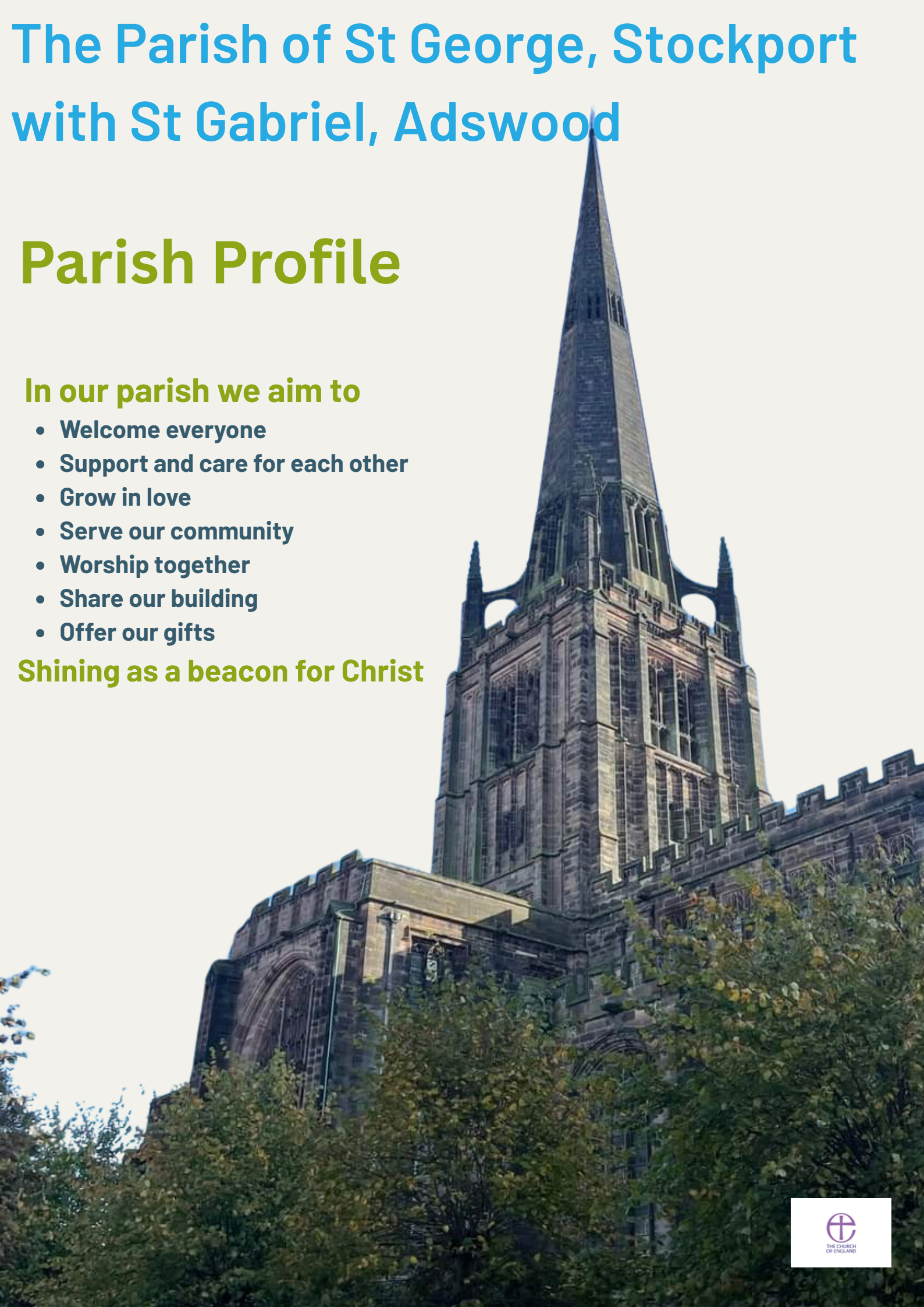
The Parish of St George, Stockport with St Gabriel, Adswood

Parish Profile

In our parish we aim to

- Welcome everyone
- Support and care for each other
- Grow in love
- Serve our community
- Worship together
- Share our building
- Offer our gifts

Shining as a beacon for Christ



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We pray for a vicar who will

- Have an ambitious vision to lead a Major Church at the heart of a large, active and diverse parish.
- Be inspired to explore and have experience of using creative approaches to teaching and to nurture our faith journey.
- Be called to help us to grow our welcome and experience of mission to reach across communities, build on links with other faith groups, and be active in the Deanery.
- Have experience of and enthusiasm for working with children and families to support the spiritual development of our school and encourage younger adults to participate more fully in the life of our church.
- Support our strong music tradition, currently choral in focus and encourage us as we seek to expand our music provision.
- Nurture our ambitions to improve our facilities and guide us as we seek to become a greener, more welcoming, accessible and inclusive church.
- Encourage us in enhancing our outreach through social media.



Parish Location

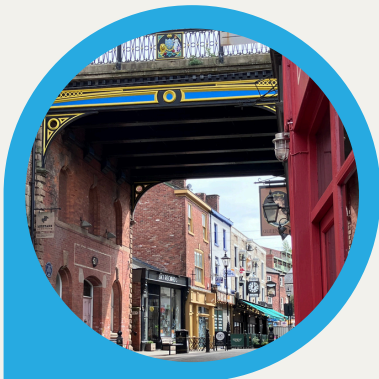
Stockport

- Historic market town eight miles south of Manchester, with excellent transport links via bus, train and road networks. The market charter was granted in 1260 and the town's growth was mainly due to the hat making industry and cotton mills of the Industrial Revolution.
- Home to the source of the Mersey, Stockport County FC, an Edwardian Town Hall nicknamed 'The Wedding Cake' and the iconic railway viaduct - the largest brick built structure in Europe, now straddling the M60 as well as the river.
- Bustling town centre and a range of leisure and cultural attractions including the War Memorial Art Gallery, Elizabethan Staircase House, Art Deco Plaza Theatre and Cinema with Bramhall Hall and park nearby at the edge of our own parish.
- The town bridges the south of Greater Manchester, The Peak District and the Cheshire countryside.



The Parish of St George with St Gabriel

- Large and diverse; the centre of the town is urban with other districts leafy and suburban and with some pockets of open land.
- Housing stock is mainly Victorian and Edwardian but also a full range of buildings from 1930s to the present.
- Small areas of deprivation mainly in the Adswold area adjacent to St Gabriel's church, with approximately 15% of the population living in social housing.
- Population: 23,500, covering all age groups and includes people working in professional, executive and manual jobs with some unemployment.
- We are an urban church and assist in the support and integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the local area and businesses.
- There has been a recent increase in younger members which should continue to be enhanced, and many who attend church come from a wide area of South Manchester.



- 5 Residential care homes and 1 nursing home
- Schools: 5 Primary, 1 High school, 1 College
- 2 Independent schools
- General Hospital 1.5miles away, just outside the parish



Our Churches

St George's, Heaviley

St George's is a Major Church, and has a prominent position on the A6, one mile south of the town Centre. It is Grade I listed, consecrated in 1897 with a spire rising to 236 feet.

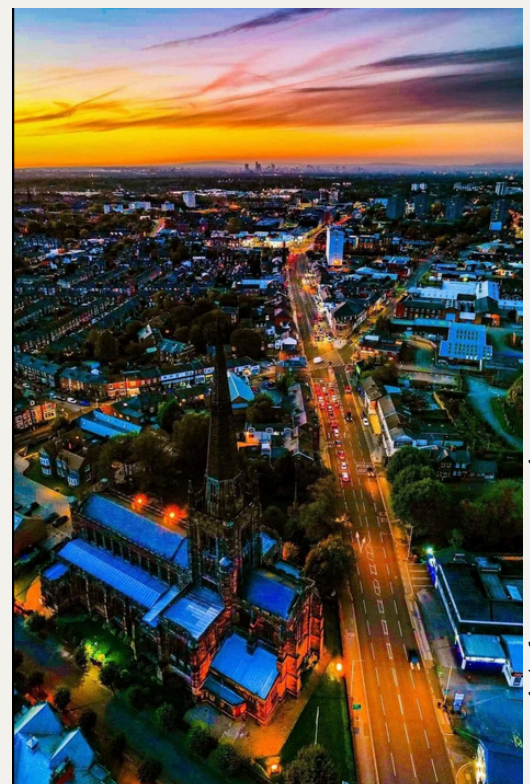
We have an open central tradition, we welcome women priests and are accommodating of a wide range of theological perspectives. Our main Sunday service uses Common Worship, but our early morning communion, evensong and mid-week communion all use BCP. We generally use the Common Praise hymn book complemented by a selection of modern hymns, usually taken from Sing Praise. Praise and Play sessions run weekly in term time.

In recent times our Director of Music has been rebuilding our strong musical tradition and we have the largest parish church choir in the Chester Diocese including a growing number of junior choristers.

Since the Covid restrictions of 2020 we have been live-streaming all main services plus weekday Morning Prayer with the help of lay volunteers. In addition we have offered Children's Storytime and, until the departure of the incumbent, a monthly Messy Church Bake Off via social media.

Each year we hold a number of special services, for our own congregation, the wider community or for particular groups or organisations, including:

- Annual Animal Blessing Service.
- Advent Carol Service, with the church being transformed from darkness into light, marking the time of year when we begin to look forward to Christmas.
- A traditional Nine Lessons and Carols service is held on the Sunday before Christmas and three Christingle services on Christmas Eve have around 600 attendees.
- Host and/or act as venue for multiple carol services by local schools and other organisations such as Stepping Hill Hospital and Stockport Deanery Mothers' Union.
- Annual St George's Day Parade Service for Scouting organisations across Stockport, attended by 600-700 people.



Our Churches

St Gabriel's, Adswood

St Gabriel's is a mission church built in 1936. The area has high levels of deprivation with mainly former council housing.

The regular 'little flock' at St Gabriel's had dwindled even further and since the Covid pandemic we only hold services four times a year for Palm Sunday, Pentecost, Harvest and an Advent Carol service.

However the church is currently used by a Pentecostal church group offering services in English and Malayalam every Saturday and Sunday morning. It is also part of the Churches Together group of churches in Adswood which includes St Ambrose Catholic and Davenport Methodist Churches.

St Gabriel's is a flexible space offering a friendly, accessible worship space or community hall layout with kitchen, meeting space, storage room and a lovely garden.

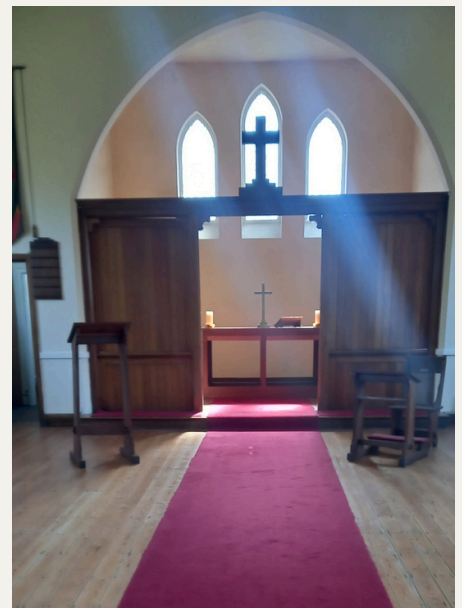
There is also a small group of enthusiastic and committed volunteers organised by a skilled and passionate member of the community, undertaking maintenance work and gardening with a view to improving the building's potential. Some small awards have been successful and further grant funding is being sought.

Parish Rooms

St George's has two parish rooms within the school building linked by a kitchen and toilets, which are in regular use during the day by Praise & Play, Sunday Clubs, Mothers' Union and our Pre-school. In the evenings we welcome Stockport Photographic Society, a T'ai Chi group as well as our Rainbows and Brownies.

Private bookings vary in frequency but there are often two birthday parties a month.

The main room is also used for church social and fundraising events, such as for Burns night, quizzes and beetle drives.



Our Mission / Ministries



Mothers Union – a thriving Mothers Union group of about 30 members meets each month in the Parish Room. Each month we have a speaker at the meetings and share tea and cake which makes for a good fellowship group. We also have special meetings for specific fundraising projects and the group also knits bears for the Praise and Play group to distribute to the children.

Social Events – have sometimes helped to raise money for specific activities and at other times have been purely social occasions as fellowship and to address isolation and help people of different age groups and background get to know one another. Events have included a Beetle Drive, a Burns Night Meal and a Persian Evening with food, music and dancing. Last year we also organised a trip to Llandudno for members of the congregation.



Coffee Time & Parish Lunch – Our main opportunity for fellowship follows the 10:15 Sunday service at the back of church where many of the congregation stay for a drink and a chat. We have some tables and chairs plus space to mingle and we have a selection of jigsaws which have proved to be great for building inter-generational relationships. We also have a monthly Parish Lunch open to all at a local Pub/Carvery. We meet for a chat and to eat together building a group fellowship.

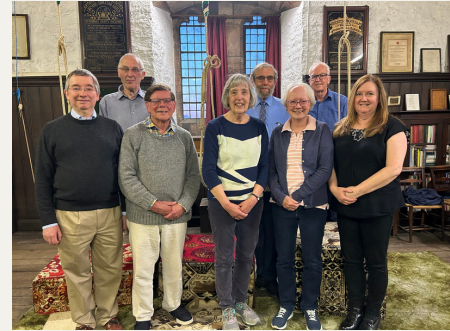


Warm Spaces – We have a Warm Spaces Group that runs each Wednesday after our morning service from October to March. We share soup and bread which gives us time to chat to each other. This has been enjoyed not only by the usual congregation but by others who have seen our posters and have come to join us.

Safeguarding – We take safeguarding very seriously at St George's. We have a designated Safeguarding Officer and follow the Church of England national Safeguarding Policy, and we also have a Children's Advocate.

Our Mission / Ministries

Grapevine - Our award-winning parish magazine is one of the main ways we communicate and is a real tool for mission. Advertising from our local business community allows us to produce a 24-page full-colour magazine ten times a year. Copies are sold in church and are given to visitors. Older issues are distributed to care settings visited by the pastoral workers and posted on the Parish website which has extended our reach even more widely.



Cursillo - is a monthly group which meets in different places to chat together and pray. Meeting together as Cursillo offers us a method of enriching and deepening our relationship with Christ, in turn helping us serve God through prayer, study and action.



Website, social media and live streaming - our website features useful information about our churches, what's going on and contacts. Our Facebook page features a range of posts about church services and activities. We currently use Facebook Live for live streaming although this is under review. We have found that people interact with us in different and unexpected ways via these channels and we have been encouraged to find that our services are viewed from both near and far. Older people who aren't able to get to as many services as they did have been able to remain part of our congregation.



Bells - We have a ring of 10 bells and a team of dedicated ringers who practise on Monday evenings and meet afterwards in a local hostelry. As not all are members of the congregation this has allowed us to build relationships with the local community and enthusiasts. We try to offer tours of the bell tower at open days and festivals. As people are often fascinated by the bells the sessions are always full. Our set of 49 handbells was restored following a programme of fundraising involving young and old and we are currently working to raise funds for a roof to protect the bells in the tower. Our handbell group attracted people from a range of backgrounds and a spread of ages.



Our People

Associate Priest: **Rev Dr Jenny McKay** works as a veterinary pathologist and is Minister in Secular Employment at St George's. Her Facebook page @thereverendvet has 13k followers. Her main interests are incorporating social media into mission and ministry, reaching out to those exploring faith, inclusivity and building inter-faith alliances.

Curate in training: **Rev Jane Crook** a third year curate whose husband is also a curate in a neighbouring parish. We are also supported by **Rev Hugh Griffiths**, a retired priest with permission to officiate.

Readers are **Rita Waters** who was born in and currently lives in Adswold, has been connected with St George's since the 90s although she has served in other churches in the deanery and **Dr Alan Brown** also from Stockport, who has joined the congregation more recently.

The ministry team is supported by a part-time parish secretary who works nine hours a week in the Parish office.

Churchwardens are **Hazel Jenkins** and **Dr Andrew Regan** who is also PCC Treasurer. **Sue Burt** and **John Hardy** are our deputy churchwardens.

James Hibbert is our Director of Music. He is supported by Br. Roger Briscoe, a former Director of Music.

Sue Cordingley is a licensed pastoral worker and our safeguarding co-ordinator. We have a second pastoral worker, **Andrea Millington**.

Kim Regan is one of our team of Morning Prayer leaders.

Lois Kelly has been serving as PCC secretary and is part of the bell ringing team.

Louise Clark leads the Sunday Clubs team and is our children's advocate.

These are just some of the St George's team; we are blessed with many committed and enterprising church members and friends from the catering team, magazine committee and the linen guild to the vergers, the garden gnomes and members of the congregation who join in on Big Clean days or sign up to cover the welcome desk at events.

Many of us do undertake several roles and some of us are getting on in years and as such are hoping younger members of our church community can be encouraged to take over some areas.



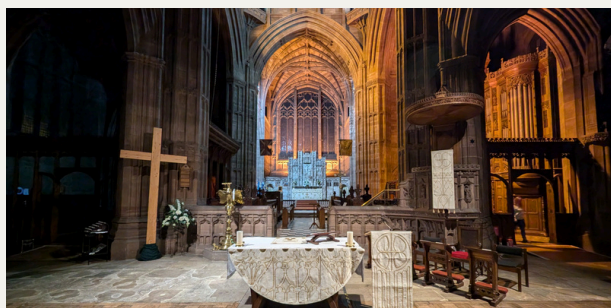
Our Worship

Time	Service	Typical attendance	
Sunday 8am	Holy Communion (BCP)	12	
Sunday 10:15am	Parish Communion (CW) with Sunday Clubs	100 (excludes live-stream views)	
Sunday 4pm	Choral Evensong (BCP), monthly	35 (excludes views)	
Weekdays M, W, F	Morning Prayer (Wed in Church & online)	10 (excludes views)	
Wednesday 10am	Holy Communion (BCP)	20	
During 2024			
Baptisms	38	Funerals in church	8
Confirmations	9	Funerals taken at the crematorium	5
Weddings	6	Praise and play average attendees	10C 12A

We use a mixture of Common Worship and Book of Common Prayer, we attract attendees from outside of the parish to our choral evensong and have extended our reach since introducing live streaming during the Covid crisis, particularly to morning prayer. We have a programme of alternative formats at our regular services, and we currently hold Café Church services once a month.

We are looking at ways of widening our appeal by re-introducing some things we have had in the past, such as an annual Sunday Clubs summer festival, a singing group, Taize without communion, a music group, handbell ringing and monthly all-age worship during the main Sunday Service.

We are working towards a church where everyone is welcome, accepted and affirmed in Christ. We cherish and value the LGBTQIA+ members of our church and celebrate the gifts that each brings as a fellow Christian.



Special Events

Our annual Christmas Tree Festival organised by a committee sees the church open for five days in the run up to Advent Sunday. It is decorated with up to 80 Christmas Trees, and welcomes several thousand visitors, many of whom experience church for the first time, some returning after a long gap and others who cherish the opportunity to come in to see their local church in such a warm and magical setting.

The Lord's My Shepherd Festival celebrated the 125th Anniversary of the church was organised by a group from the congregation. The interior of church was decorated with over 150 sheep made by local school children, community groups and parishioners. A programme of services, activities and events were held to celebrate and we commissioned a commemorative St George's Gin to help raise funds for church.

Our participation in the annual Heritage Weekend has seen the church open with tours of the bell tower, organ concerts, displays of plans, drawings and parish magazines from the archives and handbell demonstrations. As part of the 100th anniversary of WW1 we held an art exhibition commemorating those named on our war memorial and recreated a hospital ward as it would have been in our parish rooms.

A programme of Lent talks on a chosen annual theme featuring guest and in-house speakers takes place for five weeks during Lent over a simple shared breakfast. They are organised by a member of the congregation and the lay ministry team.

Monthly meditation sessions take place in the chapel after the 10.15 service.

We organise an annual Memorial Service (Festival of Light) for All Souls, and host a Baby Memorial service for Stepping Hill Hospital.

Members of the congregation and choir take part in carol singing in our community and enjoy a well-earned supper afterwards.

We also held celebration events for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the King's coronation.

Concerts and organ recitals are held regularly, performed by guests, organists on tour, those wishing to play our amazing Rushworth and Dreaper organ and our own team.



Baptisms Weddings Funerals

Baptisms are offered on Sundays after the 10:15 service, and are also sometimes integrated into the Parish Communion if requested by the family.

A portable font is used which helps to create an intimate atmosphere and keeps all the proceedings at the front of church. We also offer baptism for older people again either as private service or during regular worship. Certificates and baptism candles are presented to all those we welcome into God's family.

St George's is a popular church for wedding services among those who attended our church school as children, in addition to more regular members of the congregation. We have also conducted marriages for people who needed a larger venue and those who attend a more informal style of church who either don't have regular premises or whose space is not licensed to conduct marriages. St George's also has a choir, bells and the option to live stream weddings.

We have been honoured to host funerals not only for members of our own congregation and those who had lived in the parish, but from the wider Stockport area where there has been the need for a large and/or more civic setting. We are able to offer facilities such as the choir, a large format screen and live streaming for funerals if required.



Children and Families

Praise and Play: Tuesday mornings 10-11.30am in term time for under 5s in the Parish Room. Parents, carers and children enjoy a Bible story with a themed craft/activity, free play, singing, refreshments and finishing with a prayer.

Sunday Club: Three groups - Infants (up to age 5), Juniors (5-9) and Seniors (10+). In term time the children in Church attend from the first hymn until Communion. The Junior Choir attend after the Gloria having a shorter session. There is a Bible story and discussion with a related activity. In the holidays there are colouring/activity sheets to complete. Recently the children have made Christmas decorations for a tree that was displayed at Lyme Park NT community Christmas tree trail. Babies and toddlers use the children's area at the back of Church which has a supply of cushions, toys and books, and plenty of seating for parents.



Junior Choir: In recent years we have rebuilt the Junior Choir, which sings for Sunday services alongside the adults of the Church Choir. There are currently 22 members, who rehearse on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, as well as having termly social outings, such as bowling, trampolining, and a meal at a local restaurant for the children and their families.

Communion Course: Recently there has been a short course with a certificate for children attending regularly to receive communion before confirmation.

Messy Church: There is a Messy Church for children two or three times a year. This is open to the school and wider community. There are lots of "messy" crafts, a story, games, singing and refreshments some of which are made by the children themselves. Leading on from this we now do a Messy Church for adults in the evening in Advent and Holy Week.



Prayer Bears: Knitted by the congregation these were initially for children in the children's area to hold in the quieter parts of the service to distract them. Now also given as a gift at the Baptism services and taken to the care homes that are visited by our pastoral workers.

Nature Church: This is an idea that we would like to develop with the children at Praise and Play and Sunday Club. We would like the finance to bring in a youth worker and hope that our new incumbent will lead this forward.

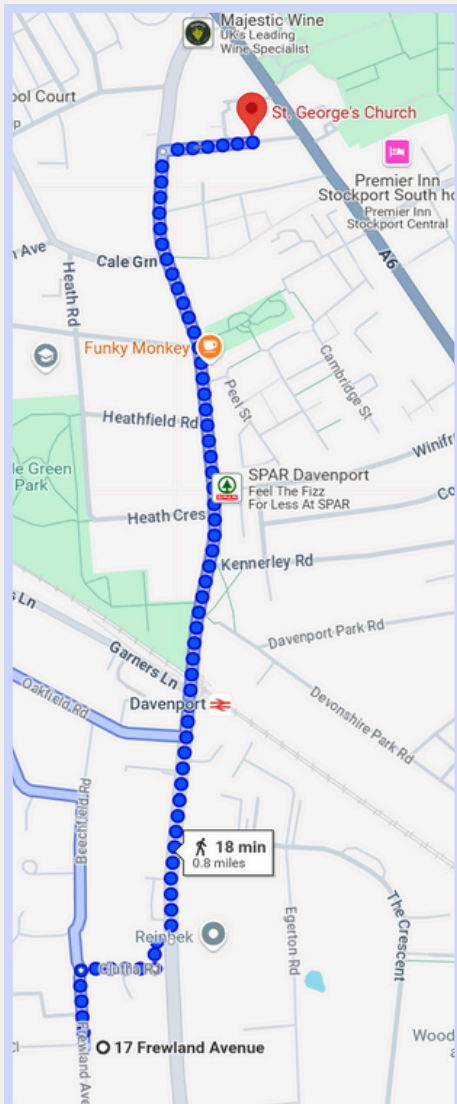


Where you'll live

The vicarage is a spacious and comfortable detached house which was purchased by the diocese 12 years ago.

It has four bedrooms, living room, study, conservatory/dining room and kitchen.

The vicarage is less than one mile from St George's Church and it is an 18-minute walk (if you can resist stopping at the Funky Monkey cafe for refreshments).



Mixed housing in the parish



Music in Worship

The music of St George's, Stockport reflects our rich and diverse pattern of worship, ranging from our all-age robed SATB choir to the contemporary Singing Group. Regardless of the style, we aim to find times of tranquility, excitement and strength through the music in our services. The Church is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music.

The principal instrument used in worship is our large three-manual pipe organ. In addition, there is a smaller chamber organ which is used occasionally for services in the Lady Chapel. St George's has a Bechstein grand piano which is often used for more contemporary services and concerts. There are also a number of upright pianos and electronic organs/keyboards in regular use for services and concerts across our buildings.

St George's Choir

St George's Choir sings at our main 10.15am Parish Communion Service each Sunday, for BCP Choral Evensong at 4.00pm on the last Sunday of each month, and at other special Services and Festivals throughout the year.

There are currently 50 full or part-time members of the choir, including 22 children. St George's Choir sings an amazing repertoire spanning approximately 500 years of sacred composition - ranging from early plainsong through to contemporary arrangements of worship songs.

The Choir regularly undertakes tours to cathedrals and other Major Churches across England. Recent cathedral tours have included trips to St Asaph, Worcester, Lichfield, Sheffield, Manchester and Blackburn cathedrals.



Music education is a fundamental element of St George's Choir. We support the learning of choristers using the RSCM Voice for Life awards scheme, and we offer a Choral & Organ Scholarship scheme to 16-25 year olds, supported by the John Pilling Trust.

Music in Worship

The Singing Group

The Singing Group has recently restarted singing together after a break of around five years. The Singing Group consists of adult members of the congregation who enjoy leading music in church in a more informal style. The Singing Group provides music at our Café Church Services, and is often joined by other instrumentalists from the congregation to lead the music at our Taizé Services.

We have a creative and eclectic approach to repertoire, spanning older spirituals/gospel songs as well as modern genres.



The Director of Music is responsible for the organisation and leadership of both groups and he is perfectly at home working with the two groups to enhance and develop the varying styles of music used in worship. In addition, there are a number of talented organists and pianists within the wider congregation who support the Director of Music as and when required.

The most important role of both groups is to lead the congregation in spiritual songs which draw us closer to God and deepen our love for Christ.



Our Church School

St George's C of E Primary School has 332 Children on the roll from reception to year 6. Currently 28 of these children are housed in a local hotel for asylum seeker families. 31% of the children attract pupil premium funding. The school motto is 'Respect for all, ambitious in aspiration, bold in action' and their chosen text is 'with God all things are possible' (Matthew 19:26); both are 'golden threads' encompassing all that they do. The headteacher, Mrs Grindrod leads by example, living out her Christian faith in her service to the school.

Four members of the congregation are foundation governors of the school including the current chair of governors. The incumbent is expected to be a school governor and the most recent vicar was passionate about strengthening links between the church, the school, its children and families. The two remaining governors are parents who are members of other churches.

Links with the children from the school include weekly worship in church and other acts of worship within school which the clergy are sometimes involved in. This helps to encourage the children in their faith journey. There is a worship team of children, under the supervision of the deputy head teacher and lead on RE in school, who are developing the school collective worship.

The school has their own noticeboard in church which they decorate with themes from their RE lessons. Every year they have a tree in our Christmas Tree Festival which is hung with decorations made by the children and there are special services in church during the year, e.g. at Easter and festivals.

Some of the children are members of the church choir, as is the deputy headteacher.

The school has a Centre of Excellence award for Inclusion, an RE Gold quality mark and is a School Of Sanctuary.

The school occupies three buildings, two of which are Victorian and the third is a later addition. There are three playgrounds with some large planters which have introduced some greenery.

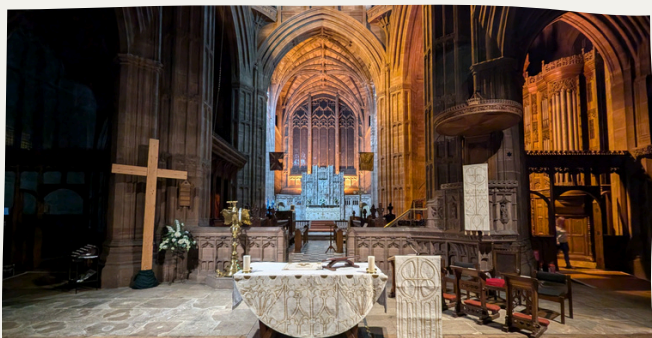


Finances

- Our finances are currently sound, with a total income in 2024 of £226k, which gave us a net surplus of £48k.
- Voluntary income (excluding legacies and grants) was £100k (44% of the total).
- We meet our Parish Share contribution (£75k) to the diocese in full, every year.
- Legacies contributed £33k to our income in 2024.
- The Fearn Trust makes a significant grant (~£20k) to the PCC every year, covering our substantial insurance costs.
- Hire of St George's and St Gabriel's Churches and the Parish Rooms contributed £36k to income last year.
- Our very popular annual Christmas Tree Festival raised over £8k.
- The PCC owns a house for a curate, which is currently let, generating about £14k per year in rent.



- Our very large church building has high energy costs (gas heating plus electricity) which were £25k last year.
- We would like to investigate installation of solar panels to reduce our energy costs and improve our carbon footprint.
- We have significant maintenance costs with such a substantial building.
- Some of the repair work identified in the quinquennial report is in progress (e.g. the replacement of the internal roof over the bells), whilst other work awaits allocation of the necessary finance.
- The roof needs some slates replacing and some of the sandstone parapets are in need of attention.
- Our Fabric Fund has been growing recently, and now stands at over £200k.
- Our voluntary giving is at the same level as six years ago, and needs to be increased to keep up with inflation and increases in expenditure.



Opportunities

- We are a Major Church and a Grade-I listed building with a large capacity. We are a member of the Major Churches Network, which provides support, advocacy, and training for these churches.
- We host several large services (600-700 people) per year for external organisations, so we have the space to grow congregations at our regular Sunday services.
- There is scope to increase the number of large services held at St George's each year.
- The recent growth of the junior choir is helping us to extend our children's work and attract families and younger people to regular attendance.
- We would like to be able to increase the use of both St George's and St Gabriel's Churches for community-based events.
- We would like to reorder the west end of the church to include a servery for refreshments and also toilet facilities, which would provide a more welcoming environment.
- Growing our congregation substantially would improve succession to leadership roles, expand membership of our church groups and provide the opportunity to increase our regular giving.
- We will build on our growing diversity, by ensuring that we welcome and nurture people of all backgrounds, providing opportunities to learn from one another and explore ways to grow in faith.
- We have the potential to strengthen our biblically-based teaching and discipleship through house groups, bible study groups and other teaching events.



**Are you the person to help us
shine as a beacon for Christ?**

Appendix 1

Members of the congregation wish list for a new vicar

Open to possibilities

Comfortable with choral tradition

Embrace different and modern types of services

Relates to people

Someone with a heart for sharing Christian love in action through serving the vulnerable in our community, particularly the asylum seeker families attending our school and our Persian brothers and sisters who worship at St George's.

Welcoming to all and able to connect to different generations, particularly the children of the church school who otherwise might not hear about Jesus and God's love for them.

Encouraging of new and younger members

Prepared to wait, listen and be surprised

Able to recruit and marshal volunteers

Good communicator and team player

Willing to explore more modern music

Middle of the way churchmanship

An advocate for churches together and reaching out to other Christians in our community to work together.

Willing to engage with all the different forms of church music, traditional and modern.