

A Seaside Parish

2022

ST MARY'S
WHITLEY BAY



stMary
THE VIRGIN
MONKSEATON

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Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to look at our Parish Profile.

It has been written by:

Liz Hayes (Lay-chair, St Mary's PCC)

Sue Johnson (Churchwarden)

David Tompkins (Churchwarden)

St Mary's Monkseaton is a church where welcoming and generosity are paramount.

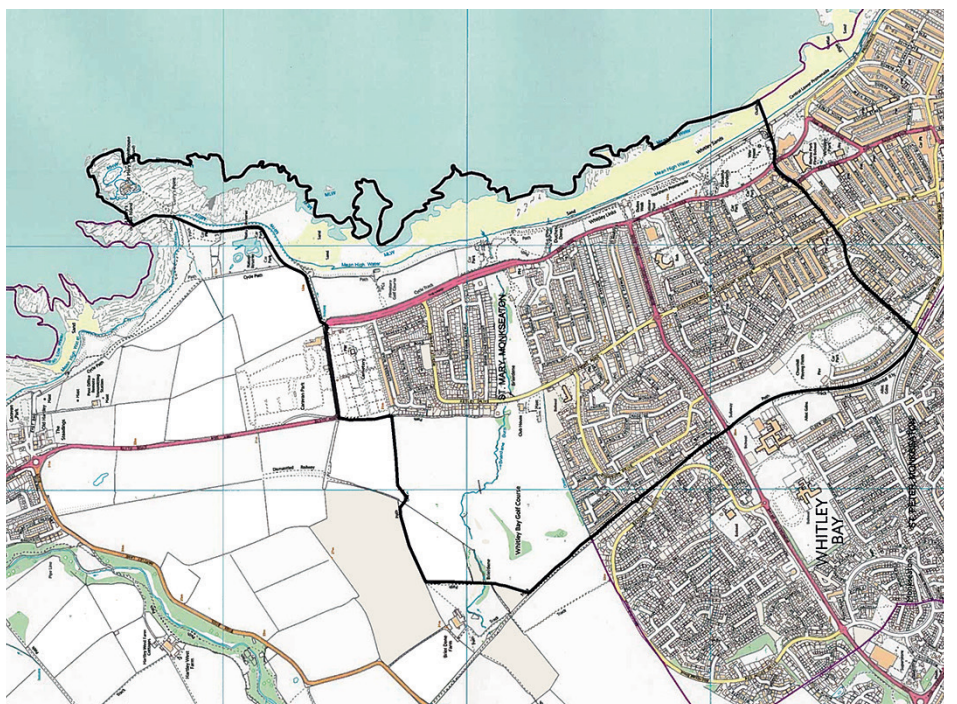
This is our third profile in 8 years. The first was due to a planned retirement, the second ill health and the third because our last incumbent is now the Archdeacon of Northumberland. So, we are looking for a vicar who is going to stay the distance and lead us forward in these unsettling times.

St Mary's is a large, stable and relatively wealthy community on the north east coast of England. We have a knowledgeable, inclusive and active - but traditional - congregation, including several lay Canons.

Our church is a beautiful basilica style building, and we are about to start a significant funded grounds redevelopment.

As a church we have survived Covid well. We've live-streamed our services, adapted to Zoom, appointed music leaders and just about maintained our income streams.

We hope the Profile piques your interest, and please contact any of us by phone or email for more information. Contact details are at the end of the Profile.





Whitley Bay

OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY



Whitley Bay is a small town on the north east coast of England, ten miles from Newcastle and approximately one hundred and twenty miles from Edinburgh. It is bounded by the wonderful coastline of the North Sea and Tynemouth is three miles south. It is a seaside, commuter and retirement town, providing excellent links to Newcastle, Tyneside and further both within UK and internationally. The town has just completed a £36 million regeneration programme with extensive work to the sea front and surrounding area. In the past it was a popular holiday resort for people from Scotland and the north east and the new facilities have significantly helped to attract tourists, especially as we are a gateway to exploring both the beautiful North Tyneside and Northumberland coastline and the historic county of Northumbria. By visiting these websites you will find lots of local information about the area.

www.visitnorthtyneside.com
www.visitnorthumberland.com

The Parish of St. Mary Monkseaton is sited towards the north end of Whitley Bay. It is predominantly residential; there is no industry in the parish, although there

are a number of shops, a care home and leisure facilities. These include Whitley Lodge Shopping Centre, Eastbourne House Retirement Home, Waves Leisure Centre, Whitley Bay Golf Club, Churchill Playing Fields with its athletic facilities and the iconic St Mary's Island just off the north east coastline, but still within the Parish Boundary! We are also very proud of 'Spanish City' - a dining and leisure centre in Whitley Bay. Erected as a smaller version of Blackpool's Pleasure Beach, it opened in 1910 as a concert hall, restaurant, roof garden and tearoom. A ballroom was added in 1920 and later a permanent funfair and in recent years it has undergone an extensive refurbishment programme to return it to its former glory.

Whitley Bay operates a three-tier schooling system, comprising first (ages 5-9), middle (9-13) and high schools (13-18). St. Mary's parish is in the catchment area for several excellent schools. Two first schools are within the parish boundaries, with a high school, middle school and further first schools just outside the parish perimeter. Three of the schools achieved 'Outstanding' at their last Ofsted inspections, with a fourth obtaining 'Good'.



The population of the parish is around 8,500 and statistically it is the third safest place to live and work in the North East.

Information collated from the census in 2011, indicated the largest age group is 45-59 year old, (23%), followed by 30-44, (18%). The ethnicity of the parish is 97.2% white British. The vast majority of residents are 'owner occupiers', with a high proportion of those employed within professional and managerial occupations. 70% of the parish consider themselves Christian but, as with national trends, do not all attend church. At St. Mary's, the largest age group of the congregation members are the 'over sixties'; however there is a wide variety of ages and a number of new young families have joined us in recent years. The demography of the parish is slowly shifting and as homes become available, they are often taken up by younger families.

Further details are to be found on the Parish website: www.stmarysmonkseaton.org.uk

There are two other large Anglican parishes in Whitley Bay, and there is a Diocesan strategy which is looking at how parishes can work together. We are already looking at schools ministry where catchment areas cross parish borders.





St Mary's is an inclusive church and welcomes everyone who comes through the doors. We follow a liberal moderate catholic tradition and have always been a training parish.

The majority of our community is over sixty, but with a good number of younger individuals, couples and families who have a strong connection to St Mary's. Many of the younger church members have come to us relatively recently.

A recent initiative has been the introduction of a Toddler Group. Between 20-30 children and babies under the age of 3, together with their parents/grandparents/ carers meet weekly in term time for play/ socialising and support. This has been very successful and has provided an excellent outreach opportunity which we are aiming to build on.

Several members of our parish are involved with the wider church, both regionally and nationally. These include several Canons at the cathedral, and a member of the General Synod.

Other members of the congregation represent St Mary's in non-church community groups, including Whitley Lodge Community Spirit, 'Walking With', provision of summer lunches in the absence of school meals (alongside other churches)

and Rotary. Each Christmas we organise community carols at Whitley Lodge shopping centre. This means we are a knowledgeable and fairly vocal community, always willing to work with an incumbent but also aware of what works at our church, and what might not. And we would really benefit from an inspirational motivator to push us forward and make use of our skills.

The following services are held: Sunday: Said Communion at 08.00 and Sung Eucharist at 10.00. Wednesdays: Said Communion at 10.30. Morning Prayer on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Other services are held throughout the year to celebrate the Christian festivals. We have a Christingle service, a hugely popular crib service and Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Lent groups meet weekly in the build-up to Easter, and Holy Week is marked with daily services. We also mark Epiphany, Ascension Day, and our Patronal Festival - to name a few. Bible group and prayer cells also take place.

Our services are accessible for all ages, and we encourage all people to participate as fully as they are able. Our worship is largely sacramental; we like to sing, we enjoy marking the church seasons, and we enjoy the richness of the Christian tradition in an inclusive, friendly way.

As you will see from the Parish Dashboard (at the end of the Profile), the numbers of the worshipping community at St Mary's have been very healthy, but recently our electoral roll has shrunk significantly. As with pretty much every other organisation of any type, Covid and lockdown have made a huge difference to numbers. We are presently seeing up to ten people at 08.00 and about sixty at the 10.00 service. Numbers over Christmas run into the 100s and Easter is always well attended.

St Mary's is a relatively wealthy parish, and makes a substantial parish share payment - in excess of £60,000 in 2020. National Church of England figures show us to rank 12,224 out of 12,338 Parishes, where 1 is the most deprived. We have closely monitored budgets overseen by our Treasurer working with three budget holders and reporting to the PCC monthly. We maintain cash reserves of £30,000 and have funds set aside for Quinquennial work and a substantial grounds redevelopment project we are currently undertaking.

We receive additional income from both hall and Church hire, although Covid affected hire income for a while. Most parishioners contribute financially by standing order and this has benefitted us greatly. More information is in the financial dashboard in the appendices.



Over the last 18 months circumstances led the PCC to consider the provision of services in other formats. As a result, we now live stream our 10.00 service on Sundays and this has been viewed by many people locally, nationally and even internationally.

We also took the opportunity to update our website, set up an online church and hall diary and an online staff and team rota for services.

We have a paid administrator and our office is open Monday - Friday, 09.30 to 12.30.

Music is an important part of worship at St Mary's. We recently appointed a paid musical lead (a joint husband and wife team) who are very successfully building on the existing music provision. We have a 'classical and modern' concert series every year. This includes regular concerts with a paying audience as well as free afternoon performances. St Mary's is popular with musicians because of its acoustics, as well as an enthusiastic, knowledgeable audience.

In November 2021 the PCC agreed to fund a new sound system for church.

St Mary's has recently appointed an environmental champion, and are now working towards our silver award for Eco-Church.





Our Current Team

AND HOW WE WORK AT OUR CHURCH



St. Mary's has a strong tradition where the staff team and the congregation work together in partnership to achieve God's mission in our church.

Over the past ten years or so our three most recent incumbents have put their own stamp on this process and developed their own models of working, which demonstrates we are open to new ideas and flexible in our ways of working.

Currently, as expressed in our Mission Action Plan (MAP), all our work is based upon three key words.

<p>Believing We're here because of God, brought together by his love</p>	<p>Acting Creating space for all to grow</p>	<p>Connecting Looking outwards, being part of God's world</p>
<p>Key Work Prayer and Worship Nurture and Growth</p>	<p>Key Work Welcoming and Caring Building and Resources</p>	<p>Key Work Communication Engagement and Partnership</p>

During the recent Covid-19 pandemic, church activity and development have been very severely curtailed and, whilst this structure is effective, as a parish we need to revisit our MAP and update/rewrite it to reflect post pandemic life at St. Mary's.

Flowing from the MAP are 6 working groups who lead and develop what we offer at St Mary's. Each month our PCC monitors and evaluates the progress in these areas through reports and discussions.

Group One – Service Planning Group who oversee and guide the regular pattern of worship on Sundays, weekdays and festivals. The whole community is involved with worship as we all have the opportunity to grow in faith, deepen our relationship with God, grow in confidence as leaders and the ability to share our faith. St Mary's is blessed with many Christians who contribute to the worshipping life of our church and this includes singing, flower arranging, leading intercessions, reading at services and, prior to Covid, helping as sacristans and chalice administrators. The majority of our congregation participate in liturgy in some way.

Group Two – Building and Resources Group who lead on the management of our buildings and plant. As explained elsewhere, we are incredibly fortunate to enjoy a wonderful updated church building as six years ago we completed a total refurbishment programme costing around £500,000. Both the church and local community use our church hall on a very regular basis and this causes the normal 'wear and tear'. We have exciting plans to redevelop our grounds and a faculty to complete this work has recently been granted. Additionally, this group oversees day to day issues for all the plant and there is always something requiring attention!

Group Three – Justice and Peace Group is responsible for our links with Christian Aid, our local Food Bank, Churches Acting Together (coast group community) and many other charitable organisations with whom we are linked. They facilitate Sunday guest preachers, organise events such as 'The Big Brekkie' and offer recommendations to guide our charitable giving.

Group Four – Welcoming, Integrating and Caring Group who work extremely hard to create an environment where newcomers are welcomed, encouraged and nurtured into the worshipping community of St. Mary's. The team provide a visual welcome to our services and visitors always applaud the reception they receive at our church. This 'welcome' is a real strength and the group is always seeking new ways to engage with people.

Group Five – Finance Group who work very closely with our treasurer and bookkeeper to monitor the use of our monetary resources; create budgets and reports for PCC.

Group Six – Social Butterfly Group, a team of congregation members who organise social activities for us to enjoy. This has been severely reduced in recent times but they are experts at overseeing parish BBQs, ceilidhs and helping with our annual autumn fayre.

In addition to these groups our church is very active in numerous ways. We offer Holy Communion to our parishioners, opportunities to deepen our faith through Advent and Lent groups and have recently reinstated 'Junior Church' each Sunday morning where we offer a varied programme to our youngsters. We have two national leaders of Godly Play.

Recently we secured the services of a husband and wife musical team and they have resurrected our church choir and 'Young Notes' - a group of youngsters who enjoy making music together. We are very fortunate to have a new organ (2019), members of our congregation who are proficient at playing this instrument and other musicians who play for services on an occasional basis.

A small group including our curate lead assemblies at several local schools and as part of our outreach work we welcome hundreds of local schoolchildren to our church each year, as curriculum support for their R.E. work.

Although we do not have a formal visiting team, several congregation members work with our staff team to support people in difficult and other times. Aware that our congregation does contain a significant proportion of older people, a Spirituality and Ageing initiative is ready to be launched. Beryl Austoni, one of our congregation, has recently been commissioned as an Anna Chaplain. The purpose is to help our senior members to learn more about God as well as dealing with the day-to-day challenges of growing older. There is also a small team of congregation members who support families seeking baptism at our church.

Our church is incredibly fortunate to have the services of a paid administrator (15 hours per week) who works in our church office attending to numerous enquiries, email correspondence and service preparation. The office is generally acknowledged as a key part of the hub for our church information and activities.

St. Mary's has one Mothers Union group who meet each month. A local branch of Women's Institute also meet regularly in our church.

St Mary's enjoys links with many uniformed organisations who meet in our hall each week night during term time. The hall is booked out to many local community groups and the income generated from this is around £10,000 per annum.

We enjoy a very visible presence in the local community and organise an annual fayre which realises around £4000/£5000. We are developing the role of Christians in the community, by working closely with a local shopping mall, Whitley Lodge Community Spirit (<https://m.facebook.com/whitleylodgecs>) where we are trying to ensure that we are active and visible in the community of local businesses, shopkeepers and residents.

Currently our staff team is made up of the following people:

Associate Priest – Rev Clare Connors (new working agreement being negotiated)

Curate – Rev Benjamin Jarvis (seconded to Newcastle Cathedral from May – August 2022)

Licensed Reader – Mrs Nicola Denyer

Reader in Training – Mrs Margaret Evans

We also have several retired clergy:

Rev Peter Dunlop / Rev Eric Lewis / Rev Canon Eileen Noble

Apart from the retired clergy the other members of the staff team meet regularly with a particular focus on pastoral work, in addition to the day-to-day life of our church.

Our Standing Committee comprises the staff team, the two Legal Churchwardens, Lay Chair of PCC, Treasurer and PCC Secretary and they meet monthly to prepare the PCC agenda and deal with any urgent business.



Our New Vicar

SO WHAT IS
ST MARY'S
LOOKING FOR IN
A NEW VICAR?



We are a caring community and essentially are looking to appoint a 'good shepherd' who will care for us as much as we will care for them; someone who will lead us into 'pastures new' and inspire us to grow and find fresh expressions for our faith whilst maintaining our Anglican traditions.

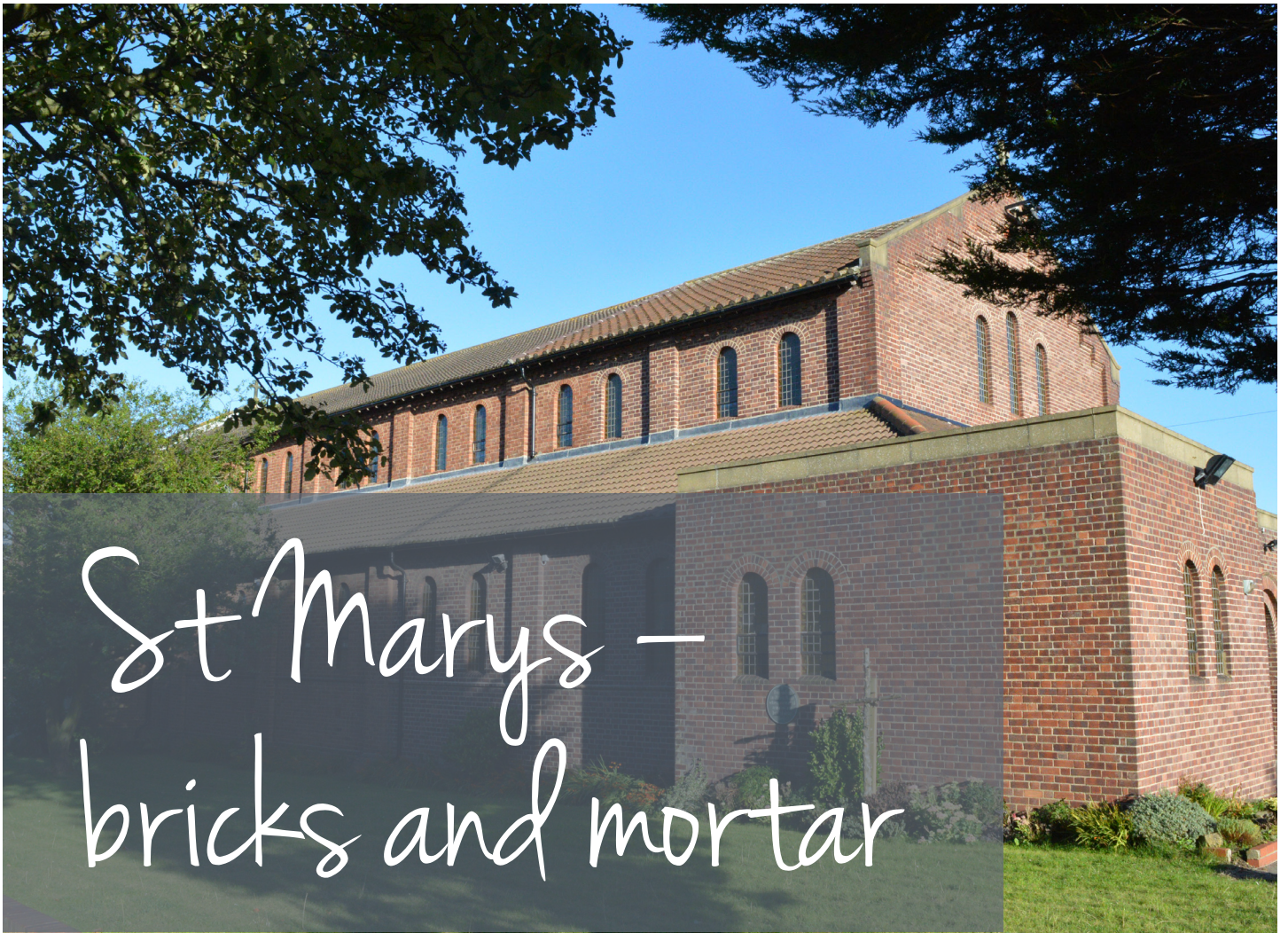
We have a good number of people who are familiar with lay ministry giving whoever we appoint scope to prioritise on strategic issues like our Diocesan vision: 'growing church and bringing hope - next steps' and exploring ways of effectively sharing the Good News.

More specifically we are looking for someone who is:

- a compassionate people's person who gives priority to pastoral care
- an approachable all-round communicator with good listening skills
- pro-active with positive leadership skills
- able to inject new ideas and translate them not only into a clear vision for the future but into action
- willing to delegate and work collaboratively using the community's existing gifts and skills
- committed to develop St Mary's as a community of faith, grace, love and peace and stay long enough to nurture this growth
- dedicated to leading us into ways of engaging with the wider community especially families and young people
- experienced so we can continue to grow as a training church for lay and ordained ministries
- liberal in outlook and firmly founded in scripture
- enthusiastic in exploring diverse patterns of worship
- committed to increasing the size of our worshipping congregation
- keen to explore the spiritual needs and experiences of those outside the church who don't see the church as meeting those needs.







The Church Building

The present basilica style building was originally constructed in 1931 and enlarged in 1963. The following link gives a comprehensive history of the building:
www.stmarysm Monkseaton.org.uk/stmarys90

By the early 2000's it was clear that the building was slowly becoming out of date; we needed to change to match the liturgical development of the church as well as updating the lighting, electrics, heating and other facilities, such as the kitchen.

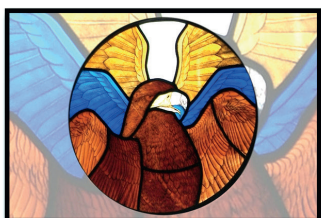
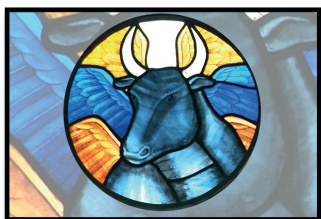
Following a long and successful fundraising drive, the work was completed in 2015.

The work was funded by donations, the sale of the curate's house and many successful grant applications.

Following the work, we now have a beautiful, fit for purpose building. We have a state-of-the-art lighting system, an efficient heating system, good kitchen and toilet facilities and are about to improve the sound system.

The church is regularly hired out for appropriate events, and has an excellent reputation locally as a concert venue.

It is in a good state of repair.



St Mary
The Virgin
MONKSEATON



The Church Hall

The hall is situated alongside, but detached from, the main church building. It was built in 1957. It is used most evenings by the uniformed groups, and at other times is hired privately. Users include keep fit groups and craft groups, among others, and this provides a good income stream for the church. It is in a reasonably good state of repair.

The Church Grounds

At the time of writing this profile, the grounds are about to be redeveloped. Newly landscaped gardens will offer a very welcoming impression to passers-by and visitors alike, communicating immediately and visually the welcome that awaits people when they join us for worship or other activities. Plans and drawings of this proposal are available on request and we are excited about the potential of this new development.

A working group is in place and work on improvements has already started.

We have a new car park (for about 16 vehicles), and a faculty has recently been approved so we can commence a large programme of improvements. The work should be underway by the time our new incumbent is in place.

Work has been funded by a generous legacy and, again, successful grant applications.

The Vicarage

The vicarage is a large, early twentieth century five bedroomed semi-detached property approximately 400m from the church. It is situated on a very pleasant road and backs onto the local playing fields. It is in the catchment area of several excellent schools.

It is a very nice family home in a good state of repair.

The Buildings and Resources Group (BaRG)

The church and hall are maintained by the BaRG, led by Canon Roger Windass, a chartered surveyor who also works for the diocese. We set money aside monthly in the budget to fund necessary work.



Appendices



Thank you for taking the time to read this profile.

If you believe that God might be calling you to this dynamic 'seaside parish', then we would love to hear from you.

Please be assured of our prayers as you seek to discern where God is calling you.

APPENDICES

2020 Accounts and financial dashboard
Parish dashboard
Diocesan self review document
Statistical return
Mission Action Plan
Map of parish
Basic ethnicity/deprivation data

For more information, please don't hesitate to contact any of the following:

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