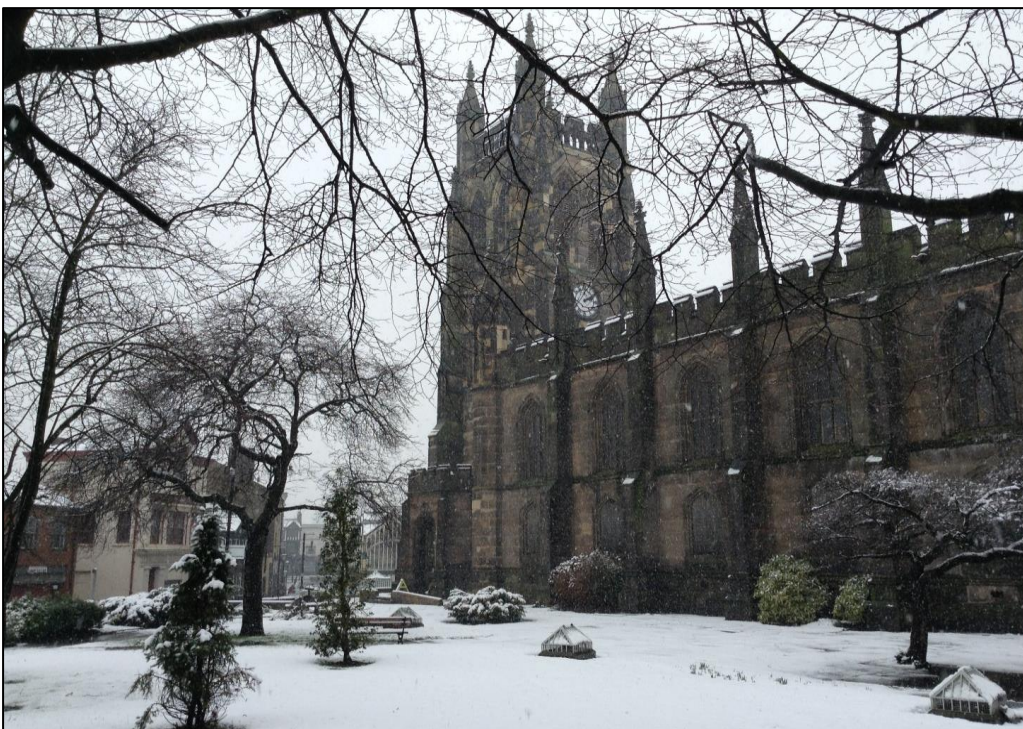


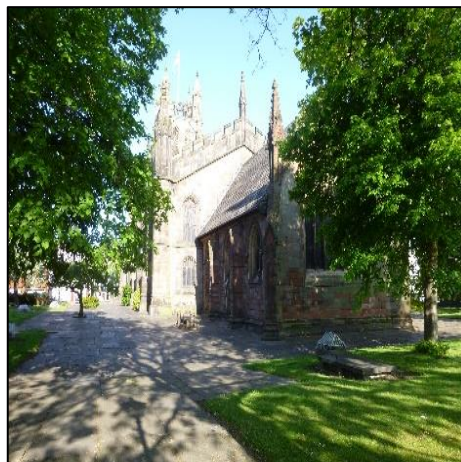
Stockport Parish Church

St Mary's in the Marketplace



Welcome to Stockport Parish Church St Mary's in the Marketplace

St Mary's Church, is the town's oldest place of worship in Stockport and at one time was the centre of a large ecclesiastical parish covering Bramhall, Bredbury, Brinnington, Disley, Dukinfield, Hyde, Marple, Norbury, Offerton, Romiley, Stockport Etchells, Torkington and Werneth. However, as chapels, churches and new areas emerged the parish of Stockport St Mary effectively “shrank”, now covering a much smaller area and over the decades with population demographic shifts, the demolition of local housing etc. the congregation decreased too.



St Mary's is heritage rich (with a beautiful Grade 1 listed building, a local landmark of great importance within the town) but is “cash” poor, being financially unsustainable in the long term and unable to continue to stand alone in 21st Century Stockport. St Mary's has been unable to meet its financial obligations to the Diocese for payment of its Parish Share for many years.



St Mary's is now looking to move forward, to start a new chapter in its ministry and mission, reviewing the boundaries, the needs of the people of Stockport and therefore preparing for the next 100 years and beyond.

Stockport is an exciting place to live, with plans from the local council looking carefully at redevelopment of the town centre, both promoting businesses and the provision of additional housing in the area. There are already excellent transport links (Manchester Airport is minutes away and there are fast rail links into Manchester across the north of England and into London. The M60 which runs through the parish gives access to the motorway network) and the town offers a wide range of cultural and leisure activities.

After a great deal of discussion with the Bishop of Stockport, Archdeacon of Macclesfield and with other representatives from the Diocese (also taking into consideration vacancies arising at St Albans/St Thomas' and more recently St Luke's Brinnington the time is right to look towards a different, more modern, mission driven and sustainable approach, a “parish” for the 21st Century challenges.

The Plan...

The draft scheme is for a new parish of “Stockport with Brinnington” that would enable the Benefices and parishes of Stockport St Mary, Stockport St Thomas, and Brinnington St Luke to become a single parish. The plan would be for St Mary’s to be the parish church with St Luke’s Parish Centre and St Thomas’ Church to be Parish Centres of worship. There would be joint patronage between the Bishop of Chester and the Master and Fellows of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

We are looking for an early appointment, to take the reins and be involved from the very start of this new exciting future.

Background Information:

St Mary's Church is located in Churchgate, Stockport overlooking the market place, and Stockport Market Hall. The church is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade I listed building. It is an active Anglican parish church in the diocese of Chester, under the archdeaconry of Macclesfield and the deanery of Stockport.



Parts of the church date to the early 14th century, a church having stood on this site for over 700 years, before which a Cross would undoubtedly have been erected somewhere nearby to bring the people to prayer.

St Mary’s was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, but for many generations the church came to be known as “the Old Church” and simply as “the Parish Church”. It was in reality the only

church for miles around. Today we are known as St Mary’s in the Marketplace, where the church has stood since time immemorial, as a focus for community life and Christian worship.

The Church building has seen many changes, during its history and it continues to change in order to meet the needs and aspirations of today’s society. Not only it is an iconic building on the townscape of Stockport, but the oldest building in the district. Extraordinarily and thankfully this Parish Church is still in use for the purpose for which it was built many centuries ago.

Securing the future

Much work has been undertaken in recent years to secure the future of the building, not only with regard to essential restoration and conservation but to make St Mary's "fit for purpose" not only for worship but to play an important role in the community. St Mary's is now a multi-functional venue, allowing for traditional worship in our ancient chancel, to more modern worship in the nave, and (following the removal of the pews, creation of a semi-professional kitchen and provision of new toilets), is more than capable of adapting for concerts, fashion shows, exhibitions, banqueting and a host of other activities.



St Mary's is unique in many ways, part of "Stockport Old Town" with a historical past, the oldest Parish Church in the Borough of Stockport, yet forward looking, eager to step into the next hundred years to continue to *"take St Mary's into the community and bring the community into St Mary's"*.

For anyone with an interest in campanology, St Mary's has a ring of ten bells. Seven of these were cast in 1817 and the others in 1897. Although we have no resident ringers at this time St Mary's welcomes many visiting teams during the year.

Church Services

Services are held each Sunday at 10.30am. Normally the first and third Sunday is Holy Communion with Morning Prayer on the second and fourth. Our service tradition is classified as "central" with the use of eucharist vestments, coloured stoles, scarf and hood as appropriate. Baptisms and other services by arrangement.

Sunday afternoon worship (in partnership with Zeal Church) @ 3.30pm this being a "fresh expressions" initiative - subject to review.

Services are held each Tuesday at 10.00am (Holy Communion) and 12.15pm (Lunch-time service).



The Parish

For the purposes of completing the Parish Fact Sheet, the parish is described as being “Inner Urban” the population being “static rising” and “settled” with a mixed population predominantly white British but with some immigrant/asylum seekers attending church but living outside the parish. There is an issue of homelessness in the area, drug addiction/abuse with regular rough sleepers outside church in the porch or on the grounds. The



Wellspring is a local charity located near St Mary's and able to assist the homeless. Support is also available from Stockport Homes and Greater Manchester Police.

St Mary's has a closed churchyard, the grounds surrounding the church being maintained by Stockport Metropolitan Council.

There is no church school in the area, the parish church school having closed (sold and demolished) several years ago, the only “state” school in the parish being Vernon Park School, local authority owned although connected to St Mary's, attending for services (Easter, Harvest and Christmas) and the Rector invited to attend school assembly as well as stand as a Governor.

The present electoral roll stands at 64, however in reality the average Sunday morning congregation (Holy Communion or Morning Prayer) is around 24 – Tuesday Holy Communion around 11 and the lunch-time Tuesday service around 45. 24 individuals are registered on the Planned Giving scheme – either using weekly envelopes or paying directly into the bank. The average weekly gift per regular giver being approximately £12.00.

There were 7 baptisms held during 2017, 2 funeral services held in church (another at the local crematorium), no weddings or services of prayer and dedication.

With regard to special services, St Mary's hosted the Civic Service in June 2017 as it does most years and a full programme of services/concerts and events were held throughout the year, and in particular as part of the Christmas Programme.

In addition to regular worship, St Mary's offers a monthly (first Thursday of the month) Prayer meeting for those wishing to attend and weekly (except for the first Thursday of the month) Bible Study. No home groups are operational at the present time. An Alpha course (in part)

was held during 2017 along with a drop-in group on a pilot basis on a Friday morning – held in partnership with Rev 320 – a Christian Resource Centre located in Stockport.

Various social activities are held during the year and a weekly “Craft n Chat” session held each Thursday.

St Mary’s has no paid employees and has just one licenced Reader. Services are presently being covered mainly by visiting clergy with a great deal of support being given from St Cuthbert’s, Cheadle. For some time now there has been no resident organist (there is a guest organist used for special services only) and it is many years since St Mary’s had a robed choir. We do have a modern PA/music and loop system.

St Mary’s is fully disabled friendly, access is easy and toilets are disabled friendly.

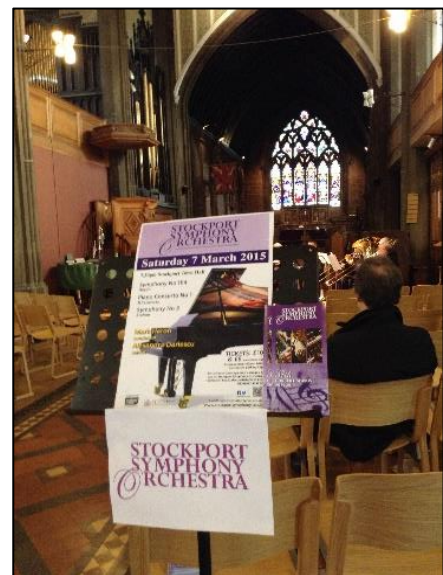
Links with the local community

St Mary’s has developed many links within the community over the years and enjoys a special relationship with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (especially with the Town Hall (Democratic Services) Stockport Market Hall/Staircase House & Stockport Story) as well as having connections with the Stockport Market Traders Association, and individual stall holders. St Mary’s also enjoys a long-standing association with the Lieutenancy of Greater Manchester and the office of the High Sheriff. Joint working relationships exist with members of the



Stockport Chamber of Commerce and Industry as well

within the business community generally; Stockport Central Churches; Rev 320; various Charitable organisations, the Town Centre Management Forum; Stockport Heritage and Conservation Forum; and Stockport Rotary. St Mary’s has been able to host services, concerts, conferences, exhibitions and other events. Regular visitors have been The Wellspring, Beechwood Cancer Care Centre, The Maia Singers; Stockport Youth Choir; Royal Northern College of Music; Manchester Bach Choir; Voskresenije; Stockport Music Service; Affinity Show Choir, Hazel Grove Brass Band; Stockport Operatic Society; Stockport Youth Orchestra;



Werneth Concert Band; Offerton Methodist Choir; Stockport Ex-Services Association; MENCAP (Stockport); Age UK (Stockport); Shopmobility (Stockport); Contact the Elderly; Banks Lane Junior School; Great Moor Infants School; Vernon Park School (who bring their Easter and Harvest School Assemblies to St Marys as well as their annual Christmas Carol Service); Warren Wood Primary School; Romiley Primary School; Mersey Vale Primary School & Didsbury Road Primary School and many more. St Mary's continues to forge links within the community and promote joint working initiatives.

In order to introduce a second "Sunday Congregation" to St Mary's, pilot sessions and discussions are ongoing with the Zeal Church who have been holding services (in partnership with St Mary's) since November 2017. This is effectively a "church plant" in its early stages of development in Stockport Old Town.



The "Civic Church"



St Mary's is the "civic church" and will host major services throughout the year as well as on special occasions, with a regular guest list of VIPs including the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, the High Sheriff and of course the Worshipful the Mayor of Stockport and other civic dignitaries. The new Rector would be expected to develop the links with Civic Society in order to support the economic regeneration efforts in the town and in turn to receive support in the regeneration of faith in the community. There are many links that can be exploited imaginatively by the right person.

Nave Café.



The Nave Café is managed by the Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Parish Church and run in partnership with Pure Innovations, Stockport a charity supporting people with a disability (or other barriers to work such as mental health problems or long-term health conditions) to get paid work, learn new skills and get involved in community activities. They also support young people with disabilities to become more independent by using public transport and doing work experience.

A "service level agreement" exists between St Mary's and Pure Innovations where Pure Innovations run the café Tuesday, Thursday and Friday with St Mary's offering a training opportunity in a safe environment. Café trainees are supported by a member of staff from Pure Innovations, who assist with day to day running of our kitchen and café area(s). At other times the Nave Café is operated by church volunteers and with support from members of Stockport Rotary. No payment is made to Pure Innovations, this being a goodwill agreement "bringing the community into St Mary's, and St Mary's offering support to the community". All proceeds from café sales are retained for the ministry and mission of St Mary's in the Marketplace.



Stockport Heritage Trust



Stockport Heritage Trust (SHT) was formed in 1986 and presently comprises of a "Heritage Centre" located within St Mary's. Two rooms are constantly in use (including a shop area) with shared use of the choir vestry for exhibitions etc.

Having the Trust located within the Church benefits both organisations, bringing people into the building (to visit the Centre) that may not otherwise come in and supporting St Mary's in other ways, including the preparation of Guide Books/Leaflets, undertaking Church tours and being an additional "volunteer support". There is no legal agreement in place with regard to accommodation, although a reasonable sum is paid to St Mary's by Stockport Heritage Trust for use of the premises.

Volunteers of the Trust also undertake walks and talks, for example the “Old Town Walk” – an in depth look into the old historic heart of Stockport with reference to its history and buildings, or the Blue Plaque Trail, Market Place Walk, Old Food and Drink Trail etc. What better place to be based then within this beautiful Grade 1 listed historic church.



Restoration and Conservation

Architect: John Prichard - Lloyd Evans Prichard
 Quantity Surveyor: Alison Kendal - Sumner Smith Ltd
 St Mary’s Project Group Rector:
 Project Director: Rev Canon John Briggs
 Administrator: Sue Heap
 Treasurer: Isobel Clarkson



St Mary’s is a Grade 1 listed building and therefore of national importance. Various phases of work have been completed in recent years, however there is a long way to go. The last Phase to be completed (Phase 6) unfortunately suffered the loss of two main contractors, both of whom found themselves in Administration. The retention sum for “Phase 6” remains held in church accounts pending settlement with the Receivers.

The project team for a number of reasons decided to “take a break” from undertaking fund raising/further works during 2016 and 2017, but continues to determine priorities for future work taking into consideration outstanding items from the Quinquennial Report (2013)

and reports received from Ecclesiastical Insurance (2014) the latter due to be reviewed during March 2018 and following discussions with the Church Commissioners. A full electrical inspection has also been commissioned.

Regular contact is maintained with the five churches to which the Rector of Stockport is

Patron: All Saints, Marple
 St John, Dukinfield
 St Thomas, High Lane
 St George, Hyde,
 St Chad, Romiley

St Mary's with St Andrew's

Although still licensed for worship, St Andrew's has not been used for CofE worship as part of the parish for some time, the failing numbers for church attendance leading to it being used now as "St Andrew's Community Hall". There is no separate "Electoral Roll" or separate statistics or accounts.



It is however a valuable asset to the parish and an equally valuable source of income, in many ways supporting the "ministry and mission" of St Mary's.



Located on Hall Street, there is a private car park at the rear and direct access to St Mary's Rectory. It is a relatively modern building (in need of some refurbishment), opened in 1977 and consisting of small hall, large hall, toilets, store area(s), kitchen and office space (presently used as our Parish Office). Outside areas are laid to grass with some paved area at the front. It is ideally suited for "Mum and Tots" style groups during the day, and other activities unsuitable for St Mary's. Regular users include the Manchester Bach Choir, Stockport Operatic Society, Stockport RC Drift Club, Slimming World and the Stockport Evangelical Church. Other users include Stockport Children's Services (when required), Pure Insight, Stockport Field Club (Annual General Meeting) Tai-Chi classes and



Stockport Council (for Polling Station use and training). One-off meetings, parties, and short-term lets can normally be accommodated.

St Andrews has the potential for greater development and growth, greater usage, able to work hand in hand with St Mary's working within the community of Stockport. However, the work required to maintain the building and manage the bookings is considerable and so there is a review taking place as to whether the building should be sold or let permanently. Unlike St Mary's it is located in a highly populated area of houses, flats and housing association property, with easy access and in a safe environment.

St Mary's Rectory

24 Gorsey Mount Street SK1 4DU



The proposal for the new parish is that the Rector would be resident at St Mary's Rectory (Associate Vicar at St Luke's Vicarage). Located off Hall Street/Webb Lane, (behind St Andrew's) St Mary's Rectory is a four-bedroom detached house set in its own grounds and within easy walking distance of St Mary's*. It has an attached garage, car port and driveway.



Gas central heating, double glazed doors/windows. Kitchen, utility room, two reception rooms and office. Downstairs toilet. In addition to the four bedrooms on the first floor, family bathroom, toilet and separate shower room.

NB: Parking at St Mary's church can be difficult as there is no private church parking or reserved space on the council owned pay and display car park on land next to the church.

Administrative Arrangements:

Contact us at:

St Mary's with St Andrew's Parish Office

St Andrew's Community Church

Hall Street, Stockport, SK1 4DA

Telephone: 0161 429 6564

Administrator: Sue Heap

Mobile: 07421 000123

Temporary postal address: 127 Shearwater Road, Offerton, Stockport, SK2 5UZ

e-mail: st.marysstockport@gmail.com

Facebook: Stockport Parish Church – St Mary's

www.stmarysinthemarketplace.com

The Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Stockport 2017

Churchwardens

Adam Pinder & Sue Heap

Secretary: Catriona Smith

Co-opted Members: 2017

Margaret Forster - Electoral Roll Officer

Carol Taylor - Safeguarding Co-ordinator

Rev Canon John Briggs – Project Director

By invitation – representative(s) from the Zeal Church

Treasurer: Role presently being undertaken jointly by Churchwardens

Elected Members (for a period of three years from 2015)

David Andrews

Isobel Clarkson

Ann West

Elected Members (for a period of three years from 2016)

Patricia Birch

Tony Marsh

Elected Member (for a period of three years from 2017)

Catriona Smith

Churchwarden Emeritus: Frank Hamnett

Deanery Synod Representatives: Adam Pinder / Rita Waters

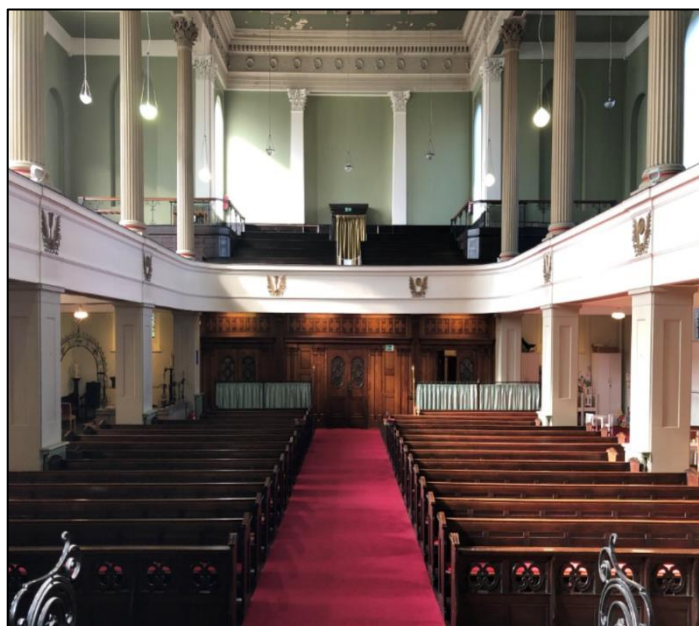
St Thomas' Church Stockport



Welcome to St. Thomas' Church, Stockport.

The building and facilities

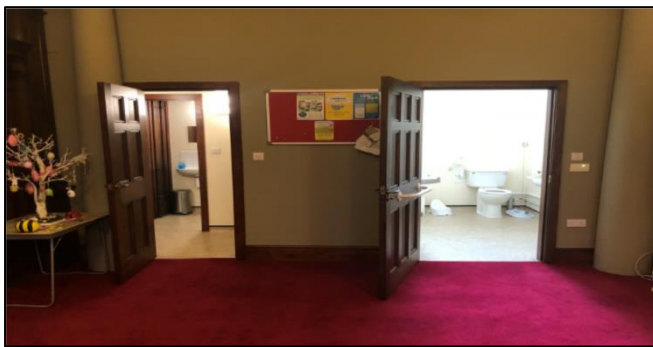
St. Thomas is a "Waterloo" Church, built in 1825 to commemorate the battle of that name. Originally the Parish of St Thomas's incorporated most of the south area of Stockport, but gradually, the parish area has been reduced in size as newer churches have been built to accommodate shifting population to new housing developments. The current parish area covers about 3500 people in a relatively deprived area. This is significantly lower than the number that the church was originally built to serve. The current reasonably accessible seating is some 800. The parish area is split by the main A6 road through the centre of Stockport resulting in those on the opposite side of the road considering other Stockport churches as their parish church. For the last 5 years the church was in a united benefice with St Alban's, Offerton; this has recently been dissolved as part of the wider plans for the Stockport central ministry. The church is a grade one listed building and as such requires significant effort to maintain it in good repair. The church community together with





appointed architects have developed a phased approach to restoration. With several of these phases completed the next more ambitious phase will be the repair of the external stone work for which detailed plans have been developed but no funding stream been identified. The building is currently listed as a building at risk. The church has previously been successful in receiving grants to complete earlier works. An appeal fund has been established to

contribute towards the major building activities. Although the outside of the building needs urgent work, the inside is in very good order with most of the interior having recently been painted. In 2016 the kitchen facilities in the vestry were improved to enable the serving of hot drinks and light refreshments.



In 2014 an ambitious project was launched to finally install washroom and baby-changing facilities by using space at the west end. The opportunity was taken to install an external ramp and to enlarge the welcome area. These facilities make the church much more usable both for the congregation and for the wider community

and provided the catalyst for establishment of weekly praise and play sessions. This was made possible by creating a significantly enlarged children's work area when the washroom facilities were installed.



In addition to a beautiful and historic building, the church is also blessed with a wonderful pipe organ built in 1834 by Renn of Manchester. Whilst this instrument is still at the heart of regular worship and other musical events it, like the building, requires major restoration to ensure it will be able to continue to produce beautiful sounds into the

future.

The acoustics in the building are superb, leading to its use as a rehearsal space, and for many professional recording sessions.

Whilst the church does not currently schedule a specific teaching time on Sunday for children, a well-equipped and carpeted space is available with soft toys, books and materials for parents and carers to use with their children during the service times.



As with any large space, heating is a major problem the opportunity has recently been taken to install a modern internet-based heating controller and thermostat to control more accurately the temperature and operating hours. This has already been effective in reducing costs and ensuring the building is at an acceptable temperature for worship and activity times. The church building has been used by many different organisations, many focussed on the music and taking advantage of the great acoustic properties of the building. Several have held concerts and performances in the building. The church is regularly used for professional recordings. In addition to these musical events, the church has also been used by small local groups.

Key events and activities from the life and history of the church have collected by our archivist and these are regularly brought to life during the year in the form of colourful visual displays linking us to worshippers and the local community throughout the years. In addition our children's worker regularly posts material produced by the children from the church school.

The church has a closed graveyard, maintained by the local authority on a regular basis.

Worship patterns and church organisation



The church's tradition could best be described as modern catholic, with appropriate use of vestments and stoles. Incense is used occasionally. The church has an extensive collection of vestments and has recently been gifted a reconditioned Monstrance, used for processions on Maundy Thursday and Corpus Christi and for adoration of the blessed sacrament where we come closer to the presence of God.

We aim to maintain a high standard of worship and music through which we worship God. The Sunday morning service is a Sung Eucharist from Common Worship. The monthly Sung Evensong is held using the Book of Common prayer. Major services are accompanied by a robed choir led by our Choirmaster and Organist. Music is mainly from Common Praise, supplemented by additional material when required. We have an extraordinarily successful choir for the size of the church. We sing Hymns and Psalms at most services and use our own musical setting of the Eucharist. We take pride in our worship to God as we give gratitude for all the blessings we receive and prepare to do his work.



The musical year culminates in our annual service of Nine Lessons and Carols, when the choir is swelled by visiting members singing a range of material. This event regularly includes modern pieces, some written especially for us, which ensures the event though traditional in nature is fresh and new each year as we pass from the observance of Advent to the celebration of Jesus's birth at Christmas.



We operate a choral scholarship scheme where young people are funded to sing with our adult choir and learn to worship God through music. They are trained to enable them to play a full role in the church worship.



We celebrate the main festivals throughout the year and are refreshed and invigorated by God's presence as the seasons change; our worship regularly reflects the changing seasons using additional content mainly drawn from 'times and seasons'. We pay close attention to the major festivals and act out the events of Holy week culminating in the celebration of the Easter

Vigil to bring us closer to the sacrifice of our Lord at this very spiritual time.

The church benefits from a modern and very effective sound system including an inductive hearing loop. There are 2 radio microphones plus other fixed microphones for use by the celebrant and other key participants. We have recently introduced an improved lighting system to brighten the worship and performance areas of the church.

In previous years we held lunchtime services on Wednesdays in Lent and were successful in attracting a wide range of speakers. Until very recently we held a regular midweek communion service where it was possible to spend time in prayer and contemplation in a quieter setting than the Sunday Eucharist; this is something we would hope to reinstate.



Parish family and the community



Church business is conducted through a standing committee and PCC who meet regularly throughout the year.

The parish no longer has a Rectory as this was released to the Diocese and sold by them at the start of the joint benefice arrangements with St Alban's. We do have a two bedroom curate's house purchased by the PCC and currently occupied by a long-standing tenant, bringing income to help run the church affairs.

The funds provided to the parish (£10,000) together with a grant from the Diocese were used to fund a Community Development Worker (CDW). This has now grown into the 'Spaces for Hope' initiative which is well respected across the

Deanery and Diocese.

The church has a very small but willing band of helpers who serve God in this place in a number of ways. In addition to greeting people and making them welcome, they make and serve the refreshments after the service, read the lessons, lead the intercessions, organise and support visiting clergy and author/produce the weekly service sheets. The church is normally open for visitors on Friday morning where a small team are busy cleaning the church, preparing the flowers, cleaning the brasses, carrying out routine and essential maintenance on the building and preparing the church for Sunday worship.



The church has a very strong prayer-based thanksgiving culture, where everyone is asked to consider their response to the graces given to them by Our Lord, which results in significant sacrificial giving. However, in gratitude for all that God provides to us we also ensure that we consider the needs of others. On average the parish donates annually around £1,300 to good causes, of which at least £600 comes directly from PCC funds. We support both UK and overseas charities.



The church community aims to engage fully in all Diocesan initiatives, and fully took on board the Diocesan Growth Action Plan (GAP) initiative resulting in several improvements in the parish. Involvement in this activity helped us to understand our role in bringing the story of Jesus and his message to the people of Stockport and to those with whom we individually come into contact on a daily basis.

Within the parish boundary there are other Christian Churches, and other faiths' places of worship, including Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Baptist, Jehovah's Witnesses and Quakers.

Over the years we have held special events, including more recently an Easter Egg festival and a Parish barbeque and Jigsaw festival. In addition to raising funds these events provide a connection to those in the parish, and an opportunity for us to discuss God's love for us. We have previously held monthly bingo sessions in the school, mainly attended by those resident in our high-rise blocks.



One of the problems of the parish is the loneliness of the older people living in the Tower blocks, who often feel fearful of leaving their flats to attend events particularly at night.

The church maintains strong links to our church school, and the pupils hold most of their main performances in the church, attended by their parents and guardians.

The church maintains good relationships with the local policing team and councillors who were very supportive when we experienced a prolonged period of anti-social behaviour and graffiti in the Spring of 2017.

The church has on many occasions tried to connect with the authorities at Stockport College, whose main campus is within its parish boundaries. However, at present there is no effective working relationship between the two organisations.

The Church School



The school is a Voluntary Controlled day school for children from 3 - 11 years. There are approximately 200 children on roll and expanding. It serves a mixed community with an element of significant social and economic deprivation and has high levels of pupil mobility. St. Thomas's is the oldest free

school in Stockport. The original Victorian 2 storey school, built in 1837, was replaced by the present, modern purpose-built building in 1967, and now includes the 'Kenrick Library', which was opened by Reverend Kenneth Kenrick on Wednesday 24th October 2012 to celebrate the 175th Anniversary of St. Thomas's C of E Primary School.

At St Thomas', education is about children experiencing the joys of discovery, solving problems, being creative in writing, art and music, developing their self-confidence as learners, and maturing socially and emotionally in a safe, secure environment, with an ethos based firmly on British, Christian values.



The school's aims are based on Christian values that are understood and respected by pupils and adults and underpin the school's management of behaviour and attendance.

The school has created a safe-haven for the pupils in this community, resulting in all feeling valued and nurtured. A Christian ethos is central to the high-quality relationships that permeate the whole school community.

Pupils have a very well-developed concept of diversity and difference rooted in Christian values of tolerance and respect. They are able confidently to articulate their views on faith.



Until the vacancy, the clergy were regular visitors to the school and significantly enhanced the Christian instinctiveness. The previous incumbent advanced partnerships with the church which provided a good foundation for the school to build on. The school now has many activities planned with other visitors to sustain good links with the church. A very successful and established link has been forged by the enthusiasm of Marie, our Children and Families worker.

School life includes many visits to Church; this deepens the children's understanding of the Anglican faith and allows opportunities for parents to join in with these, and the celebrations that make up the Church year.

Children's work

St. Thomas's employs a part-time Children and Families Worker (8hrs per week, term-time). There is a well-established baby and toddler group which meets each Tuesday morning in the children's corner of church, during term time. The group attracts 12-20 children with their parents or carers. Families attending live locally. We provide toys to play with, a Bible craft, a healthy snack for the children and tea or coffee for adults. The session finishes with a story, singing and prayer. The children and carers enjoy creating displays for the notice boards, and each year do a sponsored charity toddle.



The Children and Families worker has forged close links with St. Thomas's Primary school, visiting weekly for a Christian lunch club with some of the older children, and for stories, singing and prayer with the nursery class. A fortnightly whole school assembly is also provided by the Children and Families worker, and it is hoped that our new incumbent will be able to take assembly in the alternate weeks.



Additionally, the Children and Families worker liaises with school to provide extra lessons in church, when required - for example, during festival times or around Christian marriage. Every year we try to invite the whole school into church for either an Easter Experience or a Christmas Experience. The school also uses the Church building for Easter and Christmas services.

The Future

Although St Thomas's has always met its financial obligations and continues to pay the requested Parish Share in full, it will be difficult to move forward on our own, and we are happy to be part of wider plans for re-organization.

The New Plan

The draft scheme is for a new parish of "Stockport with Brinnington" which would enable the Benefices and Parishes of Stockport St Mary, Stockport St Thomas, and Brinnington St Luke to become a single parish. The plan would be for St Mary's to be the parish church, with St Luke's Parish Centre and St Thomas's Church to be Parish Centres of worship. There would be joint patronage between the Bishop of Chester and the Master and Fellows of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. More details will emerge as discussions continue, approvals are given and the new parish established.

With our sister churches, we are looking for an early appointment - for someone to be actively involved right from the start of this new era. We realize that we may necessarily have to compromise to reach a unified vision of the future with our new partner churches but hope that we may find someone to respect our traditions, lead us in our style of worship to God, and point us in new and necessary directions where required.

Facts and Figures

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Population | 3500 |
| Churches in current parish | 1 |
| Electoral roll | 64 (8 resident in the parish) |
| Usual Sunday Attendance | Morning Eucharist 32 Evensong 7 |
| Other activities | Praise and play on Tuesday |
| Previous incumbent | Rev A. Lythall |
| Assistant Staff | No Readers 2 licensed Eucharistic Assistants 2 Churchwardens 9 PCC members Children and Family Worker (Part time) |
| Church School | St Thomas opposite the Church |
| Finance | 34 on regular giving scheme Parish share paid in full Current deficit due to investment in future plans General Account end of 2017- £22744 Appeal Fund - £12920 |

St Luke the Evangelist Brinnington with Portwood

Loving God, Following Jesus, Serving all, Renewing Lives



As the people of St. Luke's, Brinnington, we desire to be faithful in prayer, worship and service so that we might grow in our own faith, so new people of all ages and backgrounds might come to faith, and so that our community might be changed for good.

We want all this to be sustainable, and we now think that God is calling us to do this in relationship with St. Mary's and St. Thomas'. We have complementary strengths and can support one another where we are weak. We have an ideal opportunity to explore this as all the parishes concerned are currently vacant. We believe that together we can be a centre for enabling the flourishing of all our churches and schools, across the deanery and beyond, and that we can make a vital contribution to the Church of England's engagement and transformation in the town and borough

The Parish



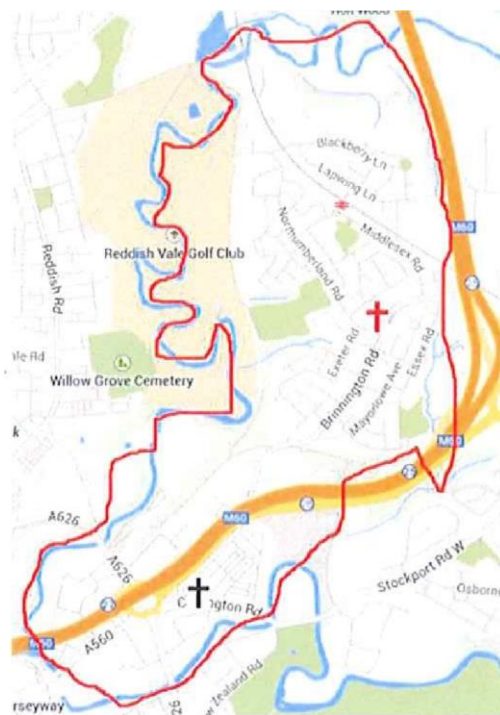
Brinnington is the north eastern suburb of the large urban area of Stockport.

St. Luke's was originally founded out of the parish of St. Paul's Portwood, which was near to Stockport town centre. St. Paul's opened in 1851 when Portwood consisted mainly of terraced housing for the workers at the cotton mills that were springing up

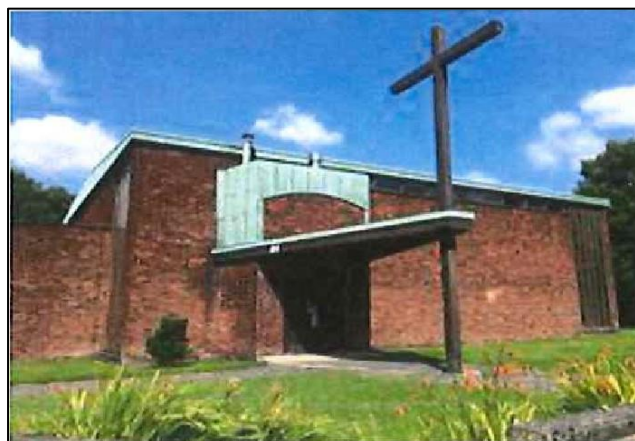
along the banks of the rivers Tame and Goyt. The population later expanded into Lower Brinnington. The parish boundary was equivalent to that of the old manor of Brinnington. The higher ground in Brinnington was sparsely populated farmland.

In 1950, when Stockport Council began building the modern housing estate in Brinnington, it became apparent that there was a need for a church. On the 5th September 1954 the people of St Paul's launched a mission in the 'Black Hut', a temporary community centre. On Sundays St. Paul's shared the Black Hut with missions from the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches.

The scheme was a success. St. Luke's was born, a new parish was created (separate from St. Paul's), a vicar was appointed, and the church followed. The now recently sold building was consecrated on 30th May 1965.



On the map the location of St. Paul's church is indicated by the black cross, and St. Luke's church by the red cross.



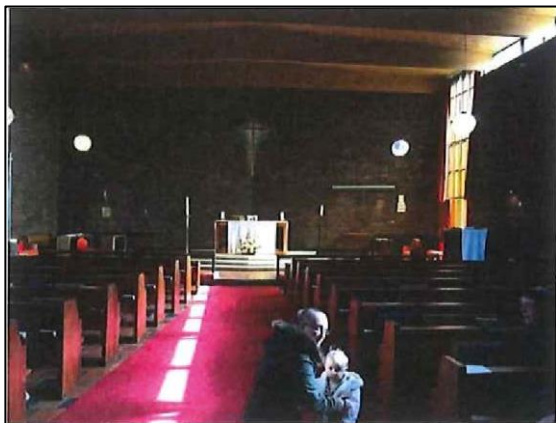
Unable to survive the decline in its congregation and its fabric, St. Paul's church closed in 1971, and St Luke's

parish was extended. St Luke's effectively became the successor of the former church and parish.

In 1991-2 the church hall was renovated, enlarged, and then reopened as St. Luke's Parish Centre.



St. Luke's church has continued over the years but sadly congregation numbers have dwindled and it became a struggle to maintain the two buildings.



In 2015 the decision was made to sell the site on which the large, cold and leaky church stands to release capital to develop a new worship centre within and attached to the Parish Centre. A temporary chapel was created and licensed and the congregation began using it for worship on 1st October 2017. We now await the release of the funds that will enable us to begin the task of development.

The Church believes that there is a future for ministry and mission in Brinnington and Portwood and every effort will be made to continue to be a living presence in the area.



The Parish

Stockport Borough Council view Brinnington as a priority area for investment and regeneration. Whilst along with other partners they are working to improve the area (including a new state of the art Leisure Centre and many new housing developments), there has long been a sense of under-investment and a feeling that Brinnington has been forgotten.

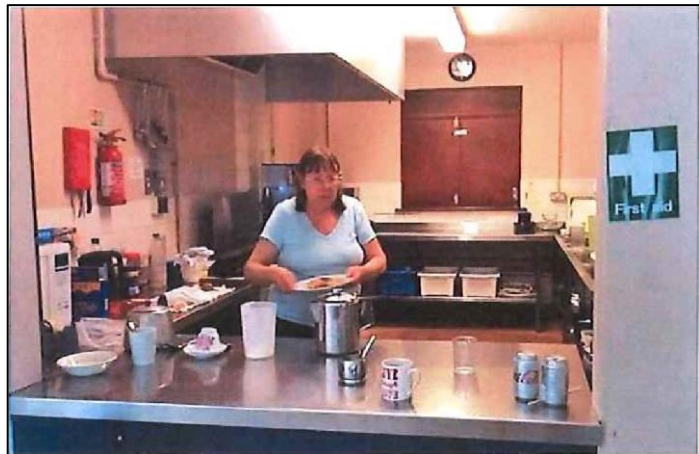
Using the 2015 Indices of Deprivation, the parish is amongst the most deprived in the country being ranked 62nd out of 12,599 (where 1 is the most deprived parish).

It is ranked 62nd for child poverty and 38th for working age poverty. It is within the highest 4% for pensioner poverty. It is amongst parishes with the lowest life expectancy in the diocese. 43% of the population of the parish have no qualifications. 54% of the housing stock is social housing with a proportion of the remainder bought under the right to buy scheme. 44% of households with dependent children are lone parents. 41% are single person households.

<http://www2.cuf.org.uk/parish/590353#data>

Church and Community

Our Parish Centre continues its vital outreach to the community of Brinnington. It is run by our part-time Centre Manager, Linda Mather and regular activities still include a toddler group, Brownies and Guides and our own drop in café with stalls of used items that runs each Wednesday and Thursday morning.



However, our difficulty accessing grant funding has led to a curtailment of what we once undertook.

Services

Every Sunday 10am Common Worship Eucharist.
We have up to six children and 25 adults.
Three of our adults are in their thirties.
Then we jump to the sixties, eighties and nineties.



Numbers may be small but there is no lack of enthusiasm to develop children's work both from the children and a dedicated group of adults.

Pictured are some of our young people wearing their prize-winning Easter bonnets for the Archdeacon's visit.

Schools

There are three primary schools in the parish, St. Paul's being our church school. The Christian ethos is a very important aspect of school life and we have a good relationship with them.

<http://www.st-pauls.stockport.sch.uk/>



Special Events



Being a small church with few resources, we are not able to run many special events and services, but we enjoyed our visit from Bishop Libby to celebrate fifty years of St. Luke's, and we enthusiastically undertake our Summer and Christmas fairs.

The Team - Who's who

Reader— Brenda Baxendale (pictured)

Warden — Paul Heard (pictured)

Treasurer — Gillian Clough

Acolyte — Pat Ashworth

Links with other Churches

We are looking forward to developing our relationships with St. Mary's and St. Thomas' as the new parish takes shape. Whilst this is a time of uncertainty, we believe it to be the best way forward to sustain ministry to the area.



On the estate there two other churches, St. Bernadette's Roman Catholic Church and the Lighthouse (an Independent Evangelical Christian Church and affiliated to the Church Planting Initiative). Relationships are good and further collaborative work might well be possible in future.

Issues and Challenges

We have several priorities for the coming years:

- to explore what the future of St. Luke's is going to be;
- to think about how we can grow the church;
- to encourage change with a congregation that likes things the way they are;
- to cover our bills — our giving does not cover our costs;
- to develop our new worship centre.

Vicarage



The vicarage is a pleasant purpose built light four bedroomed house with a garage. It is located next door to the Church Hall in the centre of the community.

In the past there have been issues with people using the vicarage and church grounds as a shortcut, but now measures have been put in place to stop this. The Diocese of Chester have built in a number of security measures.

Who are we looking for

We are praying for someone who will help us to rethink our ministry to the parish. Someone who understands how proud the people of Brinnington are of the place they live.

Contacts

<https://www.facebook.com/stlukesbrinnington/>

<http://www.stlukesbrinnington.co.uk/>

Parish Representatives

- Jennifer Goulden:- 42 Cornwall Crescent, Brinnington, Stockport. 0161 4305218
- Paul Heard:- 31 Newlyn Drive, Bredbury, Stockport. - 07968 976 813

Facts and Figures at a glance

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| Population | 8133 |
| Number of CofE Churches in parish | 1 |
| Electoral Roll | 38 (23 resident in the parish) |
| Usual Sunday Attendance | Adults 24, Children 5 |
| Last incumbent | Rev A Williams |
| Reader | Brenda Baxendale |
| Other assistance | 5 church members are licensed to assist with Holy Communion 9 members of the PCC |
| Schools | 3 Primary schools one of which is a Church School. |
| Finance | 2017 Accounts General Account £14169 Building Fund £827 Mission Fund £538 |