

Diocese of Newcastle

PARISH PROFILE
GOSFORTH PARISH CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS



Gosforth
Parish Church
of St Nicholas





OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**Gosforth Parish Church will be known for Christian Hospitality
through service to the community,
valuing all and using the gifts of a growing church family.**

***Jesus said “I came that they should have life in abundance”
(John 10:10)***

THE PARISH OF GOSFORTH ST NICHOLAS

The parish of Gosforth St Nicholas has 9,000 residents.

Gosforth benefits from a busy, but sociable, High Street which forms the western boundary to the parish. We have supermarkets, coffee shops, restaurants and pubs which enable us to have a very public presence. Elsewhere in the parish there are more pubs, restaurants, cafes and many other community hubs which offer the opportunity to further links with our church. And Gosforth Central Park with its children's play area is within the parish.

We can genuinely describe ourselves as a multi ethnic community, with no noticeable racial issues. Our residents are a mixture of owner occupied - higher middle income bracket housing and low-end tenanted properties – a mixture of social housing and privately owned.

We have a fair number of students and the university family accommodation is situated near the church. In short, we hope we are all things, to all people.

Gosforth is a neighbouring suburb to Newcastle upon Tyne city centre with excellent transport links to the airport, coast and city centre and we adjoin

the Town Moor with over four hundred acres of open green space.



We have a mix of independent and state schools – locally we have a three tier system with the middle tier in the parish. Archbishop Runcie first school is a church school with joint influence from St Nicholas and neighbouring parish, All Saints, and we endeavour to offer support in all regards.

Many of our aged population is housed in residential care homes and independently owned high-end sheltered accommodation.

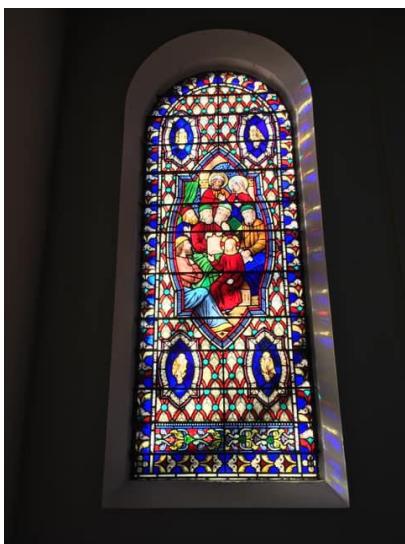
Metro HQ is situated opposite the church, and the 'shed' where all trains are based, along with the maintenance team, are also based in the parish.

Whilst we have our share of the universally recognised social issues, they are less of an issue here than in many other parishes.



OUR CHURCH & GROUNDS

It is thought that the earliest church on the site dated back to around 800AD and the current structure was last extended in about 1913.



The pews accommodate 260 comfortably and the chancel has choir stalls for 28 and two priest's stalls. The Lady Chapel accommodates twelve for small services and is a valued additional communion point. There is an ample vestry with ante-room along with a choir vestry. There are two toilet facilities. We have regularly maintained gas central heating and a lighting system that was installed nine years ago.



The churchyard extends to about five acres and in addition to maximising for our own use we try to encourage community use of the space, and for public outreach. It is a closed churchyard with nearly 1000 burials dating



back to the early 1700s. The area immediately surrounding the church building is maintained by church volunteers. The local authority has a responsibility for the grounds but their involvement is limited by their fiscal budget. We have a dedicated garden of remembrance with reflective space for prayer.

We have registered to be an Eco Church (August 2021) and are in the process of applying for our Bronze Award. Initial environmental improvements have included: installing bird boxes in the grounds, a community leaf tidy-up, engaging with toilet twinning and addressing our carbon footprint. Moving forward, we will work towards gaining our Silver Award - wider community engagement is a key factor in this.

THE VICARAGE

The vicarage is a detached property set in mature gardens at 17 Rectory Road. There is garaging for one car, and a short drive which offers off street parking for a further vehicle. Upstairs there are five double bedrooms and a family bathroom with separate WC. Downstairs benefits from a large sitting room with French windows leading to the private rear garden. There is also a study, a dining room and a cloakroom/WC facility. Additionally, there is a utility room (with back door to rear yard area and garage) and decent sized pantry. The kitchen and adjoining kitchen room have been modernized.

There is ample, non-restrictive parking outside the property and there are excellent metro and bus links nearby. The High Street is about seven minutes walk, and the church about two minutes walk away.

FINANCES

Our finances are sound. We meet our Parish Share obligation (£80k in 2021) and give additional help in this regard where we can. We are fortunate that in addition to parish giving we benefit from the income from the church hall letting fees, and from that of our two church houses which are rented out and looked after by a local letting agent.

All reasonable clergy expenses are taken care of by the parish, along with the phone/wifi and Council Tax for the vicarage.

THE CHURCH HALL

The main church hall is of a traditional structure with a stage and an upper storage room. The hall annex is a more modern addition. There is a well appointed kitchen situated between the two. We have recently changed our policy for hall letting which now has commercial lettings in the hall to bring in funds and the hall annexe is available for missional church activities to serve the community. The facility benefits from a new suite of toilets - and public liability issues, along with health and safety, are regularly reviewed.



CURRENT PATTERNS OF WORSHIP

We have a modern approach to liberal anglo-catholic worship where everyone is welcome, no exceptions. Worship is central to our church life. Pre-pandemic our pattern of services in church was as follows:

Sunday:

8am Eucharist: Holy Communion Order 2 (Traditional Language)

10am Parish Eucharist: Common Worship

6pm Evening Worship (alternating BCP choral evensong, Taize type meditative worship and said BCP evening prayer)

Weekdays:

Monday to Thursday Morning prayer: Common Worship

Tuesday 7pm Evening prayer followed by Eucharist: Common Worship

Thursday 10am BCP Parish Eucharist

Monthly: Abbeyfield Residential Home Eucharist: locally adapted

Currently we have services on Sundays and Thursdays at 10am as well as an evening service on the first Sunday of the month. However, we make use of Zoom in the services so that the congregations can join in from home or wherever they are in the world. This is interactive with readers, intercessors and those leading an Act of Spiritual Reception able to lead those parts of the service on Zoom. A group also leads morning prayer in church and on Zoom, Mon – Wed each week and there is a weekly Zoom service of Compline on a Wednesday evening.

We value the use of church vestments which are used on a weekly basis and a particularly strong choral tradition which plays a huge part in the pattern of services and feast days throughout the church year. We welcome baptisms, both within/without regular scheduled services and groups from the wider parish are welcomed for services, including school carol, term end etc services. We will always consider any service requests.

THE CHANCEL TEAM



We are a most fortunate parish ... we have two Readers: Olwyn Black & Cecilia Pacitti and Nick Beale is in training.

We also have a lay team of lesson readers, intercessors, deacons, sub-deacons, taperers, crucifer and those who lead morning/evening prayer. This enables us to try to provide much support to our Incumbent for workspace and holidays etc. Home/hospital visits are made by a mix of available Clergy, Lay Readers, Pastoral team and church members.

We value the work of retired priests in the parish.



THE LAITY



A team of four churchwardens (along with previous served churchwardens emeritus) try to carry the burden of much of the 'humdrum' of parish life – managing the church hall and church houses, church grounds maintenance, church rotas, parish finances and the garden of remembrance.

Dedicated members of the congregation offer invaluable service to traditional parish life: flowers, coffee rotas, church cleaning (our fabulous holy dusters), sidespeople and leading lent/advent study groups.

We have reached out to a wider church and are keen to involve a lay ministry and have a wonderful lay pastoral team with direct names

for contact, prayer and visits.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Whilst we are very happy with our current provision we feel that there is more to be done with outreach to the children of the parish – a challenge ahead.

Sunday School currently takes place weekly between the gradual hymn and the peace in one of the vestries. We have also had dedicated children's events throughout the year including a Pentecost teddy bear's picnic and occasional messy church.



THE WIDER CHURCH (LOCALLY!)

We are a key participant in the annual Service of Remembrance (Civic) in Gosforth Central Park and the Christians Together in Gosforth Good Friday public act of witness in the square at Trinity Church on the High Street.

We have active involvement with Newcastle Central Deanery and try to help with providing priest and organist cover to other churches in need. In recent years this parish has facilitated the Deanery Christmas lunch. Our Readers help other churches and are involved with 'The Reader' magazine and enjoy an active association with the Lindisfarne College of Theology.

We only have one other church in the parish (St Charles RC) and our relationship with Fr Bill is good. We also enjoy informal and far reaching associations with the other churches/faiths in neighbouring parishes. Our choir have been active in providing carol singing for local venues during Advent 2021.



SAFEGUARDING

We have reached Level 3 on the Parish Data Dashboard for Safeguarding; our Safeguarding Officer ensures this remains an important area for us and develops training sessions as required.

MUSIC AT ST NICHOLAS

We are delighted that we can maintain a strong musical tradition at St Nicholas led by a team of committed and experienced musicians and Phil Mills, our organist.



The Choir meet once a month for rehearsal and lead the music during our services. They sing mostly relaxed and contemplative style pieces in unison or harmony, especially in the "Hail Gladdening Light" evensong. In 2000 a new 2 manual, tracker-action pipe organ was designed and built

specifically to suit the building and was installed by Nicholsons of Worcester. This has proved to be a great resource, both in its liturgical use and its use for teaching. We have a full time organist supported by a small group of able volunteers to provide cover where necessary. In technical terms the organ has 29 stops comprise 1,744 pipes. It is unusual in that the stops are laid out in horizontal tiers, as is more common in France. The crisp mechanical action and warm tone make it an ideal instrument to accompany the congregation and choir, and also puts it in demand for teaching and rehearsal. Organists from Hexham Abbey and Newcastle Cathedral have used it for teaching, and concert organist James Parsons (an internationally critically acclaimed organist) teaches regularly on it.



In addition to the musical content of our regular services, various other musical events have been organised in recent years such as dramatic productions, pantomimes, concerts and carol singing.

SOCIAL LIFE



We are justifiably proud of our social life at Gosforth St Nicholas ... no-one needs to be lonely or excluded as all events are subsidised where possible and as necessary (and not from parish funds).

We again enjoy sharing coffee/chat after Sunday and Thursday Eucharist services, however the monthly Thursday lunch club, a monthly Monday Moot get-together to put the world to rights, have yet to resume after their Covid break.



Other social events in normal times include half a dozen or more parish lunches in the church hall throughout the year, a parish Christmas Party and wine & cake after parish Eucharist for significant birthdays and anniversaries.

In addition, we regularly venture out of the parish with our trips to the Theatre Royal in town and we have a very popular wine club which is patronised by wider members of the parish.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We have worked on a Mission Action Plan for 2021 – 2026 and we recognise that our new vicar will help us to build on this.

Aim	Objectives
1. To offer high standards of worship	<i>To ensure engaging worship</i> <i>To make use of technology so that services are as accessible as possible.</i> <i>To ensure high standards of music to enhance worship</i>
2. To encourage service to the community using the assets of the hall and churchyard	<i>To use the hall annex for outreach activities</i> <i>To ensure good facilities are maintained and offered</i> <i>To partner with local GPs to offer support for patients</i> <i>To maintain generous work for others</i> <i>Main hall for commercial bookings (flexibility)</i>
3. To value the growing church family – all ages	<i>Offer good pastoral work</i> <i>Grow Sunday School</i> <i>Offer times for bible study and discussion</i> <i>Offer refreshments and conversation after services</i> <i>Connect with a social calendar following the liturgical year</i>
4. To be generous givers	<i>To contribute to the Common fund with generosity</i> <i>Increase fee income and collections at occasional offices</i>
5. To care for the environment through green decisions	<i>Carbon footprint reduction</i> <i>Reduce plastic use</i> <i>Maintain recycling</i>
6. To ensure excellent safeguarding procedures	<i>Everyone will know how to promote a safer church, including hall activities</i>

IS THIS YOU???

If you can tick these boxes you might just be what we at Gosforth St Nicholas are hoping for ... *prayerful, visionary, energetic, sense of humour, kind, compassionate, ordinary, theologian, open, accepting, non-judgemental, sense of tradition, sociable, fun-loving, encouraging, liberal anglo-catholic theology, strong support for our musical tradition, flexible, keen to develop and involve lay ministry – and everyone welcome, no exceptions* - someone who is willing to adapt to us - as we will to you.

We know we are asking for a lot, but we think we have a lot to offer.

WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

... that you have taken the time to read this, and even if we are 'not for you' please hold the folk of the parish of Gosforth St Nicholas in your prayers x