The Parish of St Paul’s Church

Alverthorpe.

Wakefield.

West Yorkshire.

Our Mission Statement

Our purpose as a Church is to share the love of God,

And to live as followers of Jesus, the crucified and

Risen Lord.
St Paul’s Church is prominently situated, less than 2 miles from the centre of Wakefield, convenient for the M1 and M62 motorways, but abuts the open countryside of Alverthorpe Meadows. The vicarage is adjacent to the church, and on the other side is St Paul’s Church Aided school. There are local shops and a regular bus service nearby.

For the past 10 years we have been associated with St Michael’s, Westgate End, a little over a mile away, sharing a Priest-in-Charge, and also have links with St Anne’s in Wrenthorpe.

Following recent reorganisation we are no longer working with St Michael’s, and look forward to closer collaboration with St Anne’s, St Peter’s, Stanley and St Mary Magdalene’s, Outwood.

The church building has a single wide roof span over the main worship area with excellent acoustics, and concerts are often held there. Many in the community have long family ties with the Church, and while over the years the congregation numbers have declined at regular services, there is good support for parade services, baptisms and special festival services. A recent act of vandalism provoked widespread outrage in the community with many messages of support and financial assistance from many who are not part of the regular congregation.

We seek a priest who will lead us to capitalise on this goodwill, in order to make our Lord Jesus better known to our neighbours.

The Church is in good condition, we are getting there; little by little we are building on the wonderful work by all those who have gone before us. Recent major works completed include:

- New Church roof
- New sound system
- New carpets
- New Church kitchen
- Modern child and disabled toilets
- Erection of anti-vandal window screens.
- New AV multi-screen system (2017)
- East room completely modernized, mini kitchen, heating, lighting and floor covering.
- Pulpit paintings professionally restored.

The Church bells are an unusual feature, being a Carillon of 13 bells, cast by Taylor’s of Loughborough, believed to be the second largest of its type in England. These have recently (2006) been repaired by the manufacturers and are subject to an ongoing maintenance plan, finances permitting. Modification is being considered to move the ringing platform to a lower level or having the stairs brought up to the latest standards.
The vicarage, built in 1962, is a large four bedroom detached house in good condition. It has a good sized garden with large garage. The vicarage is a short distance from the Church (approx. 100 yards).

**Parish Worship**

Worship at St Paul’s was described in our last vacancy as “at the middle to high end of Anglican tradition”. New members and visitors arrive at St Paul’s without preconceptions of the type of liturgy to expect. The P.C.C. and congregation desire a mixture of styles with the hub being prayer coupled with participation, reverence and joy. Services are held at 9.30 am on each Sunday. On average the weekly number of communicants for the past twelve months was 25. However, attendance does increase during monthly baptisms, and parade services which our young people’s uniformed groups attend and participate. We look for leadership to amend the format of these services to be more comprehensible to visitors and our young members. Wednesday mornings at 11.00 we hold our mid-week Holy Communion service. On Sunday evening we hold a short service of meditation and reflection. At present, our Funky Faith Group currently meet on a Monday afternoon during school term time in St Paul’s. The ages range from 3 -8, and we have approx. 18 people attending, following safeguarding protocol we have two leaders who have been DBS checked, all children attending will have an adult with them. Messy Church is held once a month during term time.

We have two other services which we hold each year, All Souls for the bereaved families and their friends, along with our traditional Christingle on Christmas Eve, when the children perform the nativity for us, at times more than 400 children and adults in Church. Currently we have six lay assistants who assist with the chalice each Sunday, along with a group of lay assistants (in teams of two) to take home communion to the sick and elderly of the Parish.

We have a maintained organ which we use every week.

A full set of vestments is available for use. The Church has an Aumbry, which is used.

During the last ten years, we have enjoyed various styles of worship. Baptisms are currently held on the first Sunday of the month. Uniform parade on the second Sunday, these two services are geared to a congregation who may be non-regular Church goers. The parade service is organised around the cubs/scouts brownies and guides with the children taking a leading part, with readings, prayers and choosing the hymns.
A subcommittee of the P.C.C. (worship committee) meet to help plan special occasion services and assist in choosing the hymns.
Our new incumbent will have the scope and support of P.C.C. to develop Common Worship in the coming months.

Children in St Paul’s

All the children regardless of age are encouraged to develop with support their own relationship and friendship with God and Jesus. This is done very closely through the Scriptures and prayer. We try to endeavour to follow the Church calendar and themes closely. There are very strong links with our school, other local schools and the community; this is evident at our Good Friday workshops and Christingle service.

In the past quite a few of our members have gone through confirmation and continue their witness within everyday life.
We are hoping that we can continue to grow and nurture these children with the help, encouragement and support of our new incumbent.

Uniformed groups
Our uniformed groups of boys, cubs to scouts and girls brownies to guides, meet each week during term time in the school. Our uniformed leaders are members of the Church family. The explorer group meet each week in Church.

St Paul’s school choir periodically join us for Sunday worship. The school also hold their own services several times a year.
A message from the head teacher of St Paul’s school

At St Paul’s CE (VA) school we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which allows all our children to achieve their full potential, intellectually, socially and spiritually. We would like our children to have an understanding of the Christian faith. We believe there should be a strong partnership between parents, school, St Paul’s Church and the community to help develop the children’s understanding of the wider community. In order to help our children fully develop we believe we should foster good links and relationships within and beyond the school community. St Paul’s Church is a wonderful opportunity for our children to broaden their education and gain a deeper understanding of the Christian faith.

St Paul’s Church community support us in many ways. They appoint governors to assist with the leadership and the management of the school. The Christian ethos underpins all our decisions and St Paul’s Church community help us to make the right decisions to take our school forward. They support us by leading weekly worship with Family worship once a month. St Paul’s Church community support us in a practical way by helping at our annual School carnival. The links between the school and St Paul’s Church enable our children to have a richer and broader curriculum.

Anyone wishing to learn more about our school can visit our website: www.st-pauls.wakefield.sch.uk

The school was opened in 1974

The School’s Mission Statement.

St Paul’s school strives to provide an environment which creates the opportunity for each member of its school community to grow in the love of God and in their love of each other. Our Christian foundation influences the life of our school which is reflected in our respect for self, for others and for the world. By following the example of Jesus, we hope to make our school a place where God’s love is demonstrated and where everyone is valued as a unique individual, with unlimited potential, created and loved by God.

A high priority is given to spiritual growth which is developed through the partnership of the school and St Paul’s Church. Opportunities are created for parents, governors, church members and the wider community to be involved in the work of the school. Our children are helped in their understanding of the Christian faith through Collective Worship and Religious Education. With Jesus as a role model, we hope that they will become caring, responsible, open-minded and valued members of the community.
Areas for development

- We look forward to working as a United Benefice and enhancing the mission and ministry of the Church in this part of Wakefield.
- To develop a service structure that reaches all ages and spiritual needs, especially visitors and children.
- To expand the work of Funky Faith, especially with their links with St Paul’s school.
- We look to build on links with other local organisations as a form of outreach.
- To develop the prayer life of the Church outside Sunday worship.
- To increase the income of the Church to fully meet its planned expenditure.
- To plan to expand our home communion visits, maintain regular contact with the ill and infirm members of our Church family and look to the wider Parish for any help they may require.
History of St Paul’s

The Church foundation stone was laid in March 1823 and opened 1st July 1825 and the Church is now 192 years old. Our Church was one of the “Million” Churches built as a result of the Government donating £1 million following the Napoleonic Wars. Alverthorpe was chosen to receive a new Church because of its expected expansion by the building of new mills and factories during the industrial revolution and was part of a township known as Alverthorpe cum Thornes which did have an established Church building. The new Church (St Paul’s) was sited on top of a hill from which it could be seen by most of its new parish which included Wrenthorpe even though in an adjacent township. The new mills and factories were not of sufficient number to employ the number of people to warrant the size of the new Church, which was and is difficult to access for many of its parishioners, perched on top of a steep hill.

Wakefield Parish became Wakefield Cathedral in 1888 which meant Wakefield became a Cathedral City and the township of Alverthorpe cum Thornes seems to have been merged into the new City.

New Churches and Parishes divided the original St Paul’s parish.

- The Government unexpectedly received war loan repayment from Austria and gave further money to the Church Building Fund which enabled the building of St James, Thornes.
- Parishioners meeting in rooms on Westgate Common because St Paul’s was too cold in the winter became a steering committee for St Michael's, Westgate Common.
- St Anne’s, Wrenthorpe was built – St Paul’s curate became its first vicar.
- St George’s, Lupset was built following the building of a large council estate.

St Paul’s cream coloured sandstone over almost two centuries has been covered with a layer of grey black pollution partially cleansed by acid rain and boiler fumes although the latter has left some erosion in its wake. The building has not been regarded as having any special merit and is presently listed as Grade 2 by English Heritage and Grade C by Wakefield MDC. Nevertheless it is a building approaching 200 years old, has been featured as the most landlocked church in the country and is a visually prominent landmark in the surrounding district.

Present Parish

The geographical position of Alverthorpe, within the City of Wakefield, but near to the M1/M62 commuter routes to Leeds and beyond, has brought significant change to the parish within the last 20 years, Old and new industries exist side by side, and the housing stock has been considerably added to. The population of the parish has risen from 4500 to over 6500 in 20 years. Further housing infill is in progress. There are approximately 2600 homes in the parish of which about one third are council owned. Most of the new private housing is owned by young families. A large number of elderly and disabled people currently reside within the parish boundary.

St Paul’s is the main centre for worship within the Parish, the only other denominational building being a United Reformed Church with whom links could be strengthened.
Outreach

In the last year there were 22 Baptisms

There were 23 Funerals,

This year there were 4 Weddings.
The P.C.C. has unanimously agreed to the principle of remarriage in Church.

A paid verger assists in arrangements for weddings and funerals.

The Mothers Union at St. Paul’s unfortunately has recently had to fold, however, several of our ladies do attend the meetings at the Cathedral.

Communion is taken to four of our elderly and housebound community

Friends of St. Paul’s Communion service, with lunch and entertainment is organized on a regular basis for friends of St Paul’s. These friends are made up of the elderly, infirm or people we wish to say thank you to for supporting their Church now and in the past.
Social events have been one of our jewels, with regular concerts organized, along with quiz nights, beetle drives etc., several of our concerts have been very well supported by the community, with the Prom. Nights been very well received. On one very special evening, fifty or so ladies from the White Rose Barber Shop Choir, all in wonderful harlequin long dress (who sang like angels and in fact had just won the European Championship the previous month), entertained us.
We have also held an art weekend, when the community could come along and perform to their hearts delight. We had: Dancing troupes, trumpet players, organ/piano players, story tellers, painters, sculptors and many more.

Regular garden parties have been well supported in the past, with the usual array of stalls. Prizes to be won and games to be played.
We support the school carnival each year along with their Christmas fayre.

This sign shows the way to our last Parish weekend away in Cumbria, one of several wonderful weekends we have enjoyed.