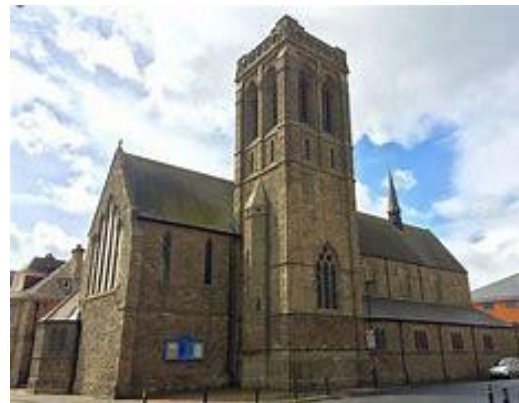


PARISH PROFILE FOR THE PARISH OF
WALLSEND ST PETER AND ST LUKE



St Peter's



St Luke's

In common with most parishes, St Peter and St Luke are grappling with the challenges of the modern world and technology. Equally the pace of life and often financial pressures place demands on busy family life. In common with many congregations, we want to expand the numbers of families and young people in our churches. In order, for our churches to become sustainable, worshipping communities, that effectively take mission into the local area we need to look at ourselves and identify what we do well, and what we are not achieving and why. We need to listen to God, celebrate what is good and play our part in enriching communities. Our parish has have seen considerable change over the last twenty years, with the settled and stable character of the population having given way to a greater element of transience, and a demography which is more cosmopolitan. The dominance of heavy industry on the river is now just a memory. We must explore the changing patterns of ministry, as well as the integration of digital technology into our mission. We therefore would welcome the leadership, inspiration of a priest to enable and encourage us on this journey.

OUR HISTORY AND TRADITION

However, we cannot ignore where we have come from and we hope to integrate the best from our past into our future.

ST PETERS

The souls of Wallsend were ministered to and from an early stage by monks crossing the Tyne from St Pauls' Jarrow, one half of the Benedictine monastery at Monkwearmouth – Jarrow Abbey. There were initially no regular services in Holy Cross Church, built in around 1150 – it was for private prayer, Christenings and Weddings. But in time a pattern of regular worship was formed, especially after the monasteries were destroyed in the mid -16th century and Wallsend was given a priest of its own.

In the latter part of the 18th century the parish council agreed that a new church needed to be constructed, since Holy Cross Church had fallen into disrepair. With the only local church both roofless and unusable, services were instead being conducted in the local schoolroom. Progress however was slow, with disagreements between Church and local property owners as to who should finance the construction stalling the project until 1804. The matter was eventually resolved by a solicitor who suggested the money could be raised by means of a tontine. This unusual solution proved popular and ensured the necessary funds became available.

No work was undertaken however until 1806, when it was realised that the schoolroom being used for public worship was neither consecrated nor licensed – meaning that, marriages were not legal, the offspring of the unions illegitimate and the perpetual curate subject to serious legal penalties. A Bill was passed in the House of Commons in August 1807 in order to legitimise the marriages and their offspring, and to authorise the construction of a new church. The foundation stone of what would be a “Georgian ‘preaching box’” was laid in November 1807 by the Bishop of Exeter, and the burial ground was consecrated in 1809. Major alterations were made in 1892 to give the church its current form.



The Chancel and East window of St Peter's

In the early years of Fr Armstrong's incumbency (1830-1871) the thinking of the Oxford Movement began to shape the life of the church, albeit strongly resisted initially by some parishioners. He was accused of having 'an exaggerated idea of the priesthood' and 'more zeal for ceremony than for vital religion'—both common accusations against clergy who accepted Tractarian thinking. But his determination over forty years laid the foundations on which his successors would build. The church maintains the tradition of Anglo-Catholicism today. Some of his more eccentric traits remain unique to him: like the practice of insisting on burying prominent Non-Conformists in the dark!

ST LUKES

St Luke's is a short walk from the Roman fort (Segedunum) which guarded the east end of Hadrian's Wall. Given the fascination among soldiers of the Roman army for mystery religions and cults, it is likely that there have been Christians present in Wallsend at various times since the Roman occupation began here in AD81.

The parish of St Peter Wallsend was divided in 1887, with the western portion becoming the new parish of St Luke, complete with a new church.

The foundation stone was laid in 1885, and the building was consecrated in 1887, although construction was not completed until 1906.

One of the principal donors to the building was George B. Hunter, then managing partner of the Swan Hunter shipbuilding company. The long association between the church and the company the church saw St Luke's nicknamed the 'Shipyard Church'.



The Chancel and East window of St Luke's

The church was founded in the Anglo- Catholic mould, following the tradition of St Peter's. In less than 20 years it had acquired a certain notoriety: Fr William O'Brady Jones' practices were listed in evidence given to the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline in 1904. But after his departure in 1908, with the then Bishop of Newcastle being unsympathetic to Anglo- Catholics, a Low Churchman was appointed, and that was the case for next 50 years.

OUR WORSHIP

We have a long tradition of dignified worship but would welcome a broadening of liturgical provision. We aim for a liturgy which combines dignity and accessibility.

Ceremonial is attentive but not fussy, aiming to preserve its purpose of helping the congregation to see past the here and now to the presence of God who is always and everywhere.

Service music is drawn from the riches of the Church of England's tradition. Hymns are mostly selected from the New English Hymnal (1989), providing words and music of good theological, literary, and musical quality. We also have Celebrational Hymnal but that has not been used for some years.

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The current pattern of worship on a Sunday is:

9.30am Sung Mass at Luke's – attendance 25 –35 using incense

11.00am Said Mass with hymns at St Peter's – attendance 10-20 – using incense

At various times in the year, there is joint Mass, and the time of the service, is at the time that church normally has its service.

The current pattern of worship mid - week is:

10.30am - St Luke's Wednesday – attendance 10 - 15

9.30am St Peter's Thursday – attendance - 5-10 – On a monthly basis during term time the children from the school, attend mass so enhances the numbers by 100. The children also serve at Mass on a rota basis. This has rarely happened during the vacancy.

A Walsingham Mass is held on the second Saturday of each month at 10.30am

During Holy Week there is a daily mass, and the usual Easter ceremonies are listed as under:

Holy Saturday at St Peter's – Vigil and first Mass of Easter

Easter Day at St Luke's – Joint Mass

At Christmas there is normally a Christingle on Christmas Eve at 4.00pm at St Peter's. Midnight Mass is held at St Luke's at 8.00pm and St Peter's Mass at 11.00am.

During the last incumbency, there was a Mass on all days except a Friday.

OUR NEW PRIEST

We are looking for a priest full time who will:

- Help us draw together the strands of our journey so far and from this, chart a hopeful course into the future.
- Grow and enable mission and ministry within the community.
- Who is able to create a way forward from a diversity of opinion.
- Have an outgoing personality and can relate easily to a wide range of people.
- Have a deep commitment to pastoral care.
- Have a vision for mission and outreach.
- Be a visible, compassionate, and sensitive presence in the community.
- Be an effective leader, willing to listen, encourage, motivate, and grow the gifts and skills of parishioners in contributing to church life, and who will enjoy relating to the communities which comprise our parish.
- Develop and deepen the faith of the congregations so that they may help make the church more accessible to the community.
- Will be someone, who enjoys working with schools and so to, treasure, maintain and build on links with St Peter's Church of England Primary School, so encouraging children and their families to join in our worship, and also explore working with the other schools in the parish.
- Willing to maintain our traditions.
- Respect the views of some members of the congregation who have different views.

In short, our ideal priest would be someone through whom God's love for all shines through, has a good sense of humour, warmth and compassion, would be a good listener, an intelligent leader, encouraging and working with us to grow spiritually and numerically.

BUILDINGS

Both churches had quinquennials in 2022 and nothing major was reported, there is an ongoing programme dealing with other matters mentioned.

It was by the 1980s that St Peter's (Grade 2*) that the Victorian chancel had serious structural problems, and questions were raised about the feasibility of making the necessary repairs. At one point the church was threatened with closure. But during the tenure of Fr Alan Clements substantial grants were secured from English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund. These enabled the chancel to be given robust foundations and all the repairs to be done. The scheme enabled the chancel to become a church hall, the Lady Chapel into a sacristy, and the vestries

into a kitchen and cloakrooms. The Harrison and Harrison organ was moved into the West gallery.

St Peter's has a spectacular collection of stained-glass windows. Five of them were made by members of the Tower of Glass Movement based in Dublin in the early 20th century, with four by Michael Healey and one by Ethel Rhind (her only surviving window in England). The nave was further enhanced by the replacement of the last plain glass with a new work by Thomas Denny in 2017.

Inside St Luke's (Grade 2) the church's most striking feature is the magnificent east window. It portrays the Crucifixion and was unveiled in 1922 as a memorial to the men of the parish who died on active service during the First World War. Designed by Wilhelmina Geddes, it was described by Nikolaus Pevsner as of 'quite exceptionally high quality' and is regarded as one of her finest works. Miss Geddes herself regarded it as her greatest achievement.

In 2008 the old church halls at St Luke's were demolished, a small hall was built, and the rear of the church made into meeting rooms, the remaining land was sold to Sheltered Housing Trust. There was a shortfall on the new build and alterations, and the PCC obtained an interest free loan, the repayments initially were £1K per month, but are now £100.00, which at present is met by rental income. There is still an outstanding liability of 83K.

THE PARISH

The population of the parish is 9,000. It ranks as the 543 poorest parish out of 12,239 where I is the most deprived. As regards child poverty it is 489, working age poverty 494, and pensioner poverty 911. The parish was created by the uniting of two parishes (an uneasy marriage at the time) in 2002. Although Wallsend is strictly speaking a town, it is one in the Borough of North Tyneside, and so there no longer much sense of the kind of civic relationship with the Church found in many English towns. The only civic responsibility is the annual Remembrance Service and Parade.

As previously mentioned, St Peter's was threatened with closure some 20 years ago, and a sense of vulnerability remains. In the late 1990's St Luke's was caught up in extremely polarised arguments over the ordination of women to the priesthood, the culmination of which was the exodus of about half of its congregation. Like St Peter's the wounds are still obvious. Despite all the problems the people are deeply faithful, as well as wholehearted in their commitment to practical engagement. Their genuine care for and love of their clergy is something they make obvious.

Wallsend has many facilities, library, swimming pool, leisure facilities etc. It has many shops where everything possible could be purchased. We have an excellent rail line into Newcastle and the coast, with two stations in the parish (Hadrian Road near St Peter's and Wallsend near St Luke's where the signage is in English and Latin!) with a service every 15 minutes, there is also a bus station. Road links are good, a few miles east of the parish is the A19 which links the A1.

SCHOOLS

St Peter's Church of England Primary School has undergone some major changes over the past three years; having had a huge turn-over of staff as well as governors and school leaders, while in a "Requires Improvement." OFSTED judgement. The former incumbent very quickly became Chair of Governors and worked very hard to bring about some stability. The school, backed by governors and Diocese will go into the NEAT Academy in January 2025. To assist this the Governors voted to stand down to allow the DofE to appoint an Interim Executive Board to manage the school smoothly into the Academy. During this time huge inroads have been made to embed the Christian ethos throughout the school, including the children attending a regular School Mass in Church as well as a weekly Assembly (which was taken by the Incumbent).

There are other primary schools:

- Richardson Dees
- Carville
- Western

When children leave primary education, they go to Burnside Business and Enterprise College, which is opposite St Peter's.

THE RECTORY

The Rectory on Park Road is the designated benefice house, this was previously the vicarage of St Luke's.



The benefice house comprises of lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, study, cloakroom on the ground floor, and four bedrooms with a family bathroom on the upper. Also, there is a garage, and a garden of manageable size. See further pictures as an appendix.

CHURCH FINANCES

Both churches finances are a lot healthier, than previous due to legacies received. People at both churches giving is via standing order, and cash on the plate. At St Luke's weekly and monthly envelopes are still used. Both churches have increased their parish share offer, each year for the last three.

OTHER INFORMATION

The right of presentation to the benefice has been suspended.

Ecumenical Relationships – the parish is a member of Wallsend Churches Working Together.

Members support Christian Aid participating in activities in May each year.

The parish has passed resolutions relating to the Ordination of women, and we have the Episcopal oversight from the Bishop of Beverley.

Electoral Roll – 70 - Resident 33 Non - Resident 37

Christenings 21, Funerals 7, Weddings 2, based on 2024 year.

Each church has readers, one intercessor per month, cleaners, flower arrangers, sacristans, servers.

Two treasurers, as each church maintains its own finances, but there is joint PCC account, where a monthly contribution is deposited, for Rectory rates/water, expenses of office, and honoraria.

The music of St Luke's is of a high standard, for that of a parish church. The organist has been in post for many years. St Peter's does not have an organist at present.

St Peter's meeting room is used for social functions, and weekly Zumba Class.

St Luke's halls are used by Mother's Union, Yoga, History Society, Community Choir Luncheon Club, Shooting Stars Nursery, and Mums Space. in the last year.

Walsingham Pilgrimage is annually in June, with other parishes from the Newcastle Diocese.

PCC meets on alternate months. Both churches also have a church committee (which is mainly PCC members who meet as and when required to deal with general house -keeping matters).



Approved by the PCC in November 2024.

Further photographs of the benefice house.

