

The Parish Church of St Margaret of Antioch, Toxteth

# Parish Profile



Diocese of  
Liverpool

# **Priest in Charge of St Margaret's in conjunction with Rector of St Luke in the City**

Welcome to our parish Profile. In it we set out:

- **The priest in charge we seek**
- **A description of the Parish and its context**
- **A description of the Church Building**
- **Our congregation and our worshipping Life**
- **Our strengths (and weaknesses!)**
- **Our Missional hopes**
- **Other processes in our Deanery and the Diocese of Liverpool**



## **The Priest in Charge we seek:**

The PCC and Wardens are seeking an energetic and courageous priest who is up for the opportunities and challenges of an unusual and inclusive inner-city ministry.

The first challenge is our large, beautiful, mid-Victorian church building, looked after faithfully by a committed congregation. The Church is Grade 2\* listed and is in good heart following recent reordering.

The second challenge is for us to re-learn, post covid, how to be more missional. Thus a key characteristic that we hope for is a Priest in Charge who is Missional in intent,

and would help us respond accordingly. We know that the appointee will be busy across four churches, so we are realistic about the energy that the Priest in Charge can offer St Margaret's. We desire a person who is visionary and strategic in thinking, but we do not ask for perfection!

A third challenge is that we hope for a Priest in Charge who is flexible and broad enough in approach to support a tradition that is best described as Liberal Catholic. We have a liturgical worship that reflects an incarnational spirituality, a high value of sacraments, Eucharistic worship, and pastoral involvement in the community.

The opportunities include the help of four retired priests with PTO who have been looking after the Eucharistic worship, alongside an exceptional Reader who also works for the Diocese in an important role as Director of the Good Funeral Company [GFC], and who is currently pursuing ordination training with a view to becoming a SSM Associate Priest with us. Though our PTOs are not in the springtime of their lives, they are willing and able. A longer-term opportunity might be some sharing of clergy with St Luke in the City and their clergy, with the added benefit of sharing and valuing differing traditions across the four churches and learning from each other.

A second opportunity is that St Margaret's PCC has unanimously passed a resolution in favour of the use of Prayers of Love and Faith and would welcome the supervision of a priest-in-charge in the formation of policy and practice in that missional opportunity. Along with St Bride's and St Dunstan's within the St Luke in the City team, we are a member of Inclusive Church.

A third opportunity arises in helping us re-establish weekday activities such as Morning Prayer, a midweek Eucharist, courses, catechesis etc that lapsed during the pandemic. We would also like to be able to offer a greater online presence such as a return to live streaming our services and a greater social media presence.

Further opportunities would arise in Missional Projects. St Margarets has already sponsored a missional project in Hope Community Garden, which has an important ministry to vulnerable adults. Our partner in this is an ecological organisation called B4Biodiversity. We would hope our Priest in Charge would help develop this type of outreach. Additionally, we have recently re-introduced post-pandemic, fellowship bring-and-share meals after church three or four times a year.

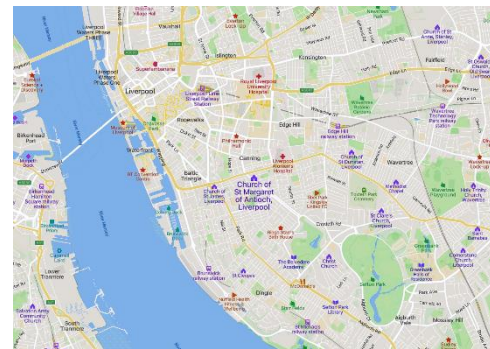
## The Parish and its Context

It would be hard to find a more diverse and fascinating setting for St Margaret's and its parish. The population of the parish is in large part people of Muslim faith, Afro-Caribbean, or West-African ethnicity, together with a significant number of



refugees. Across the road is St Nicholas, a large Greek Orthodox Church; the Kuumba Imani Centre, and Mary Seacole House, a charity dedicated to the needs of ethnic minority people. Nearly next door is Liverpool's largest Synagogue. In the other direction lies a probation hostel.

Around the corner is Liverpool's largest Mosque. Ecumenical and Interfaith relationships are excellent. A member of our congregation is the Anglican Ecumenical Advisor to the Liverpool Archdiocesan Synodical Council. There is an inner-city interfaith group currently chaired by the Rector of Liverpool Parish Church.



Housing is mixed, with some large Georgian and older terraces repurposed as places of multiple occupancy. There is also some newer housing as well as traditional terraced homes some of which have been the subject of award winning redevelopment. Owner occupancy is low, but community support for one another is strong.



The people we are called to serve are not in the main well-off.

Many are unemployed, and we come across many refugees and asylum seekers who are housed in the area. Many of these are dependent on the local foodbanks. Two of us help out in the Micah Liverpool foodbank operating out of St Bride's church. We have many students, some from overseas, due to the proximity of three of the city's four major universities.

Because St Margaret's has a distinctive liturgical tradition within the diocese, it attracts worshippers from elsewhere in the city. However, most of the congregation live within walking distance. The result is a diverse, warm, and friendly community across all age groups, nationalities, sexualities and gender. We would not expect our new shared priest to do everything, but to encourage us to offer pastoral support to each other and the wider community.



## Description of the Church Building

The Church dates from 1869, the gift of Robert Horsfall, and was designed by G. E. Street in the Decorated Neo Gothic style. It has some very fine stained glass, and benefits from Greco-Roman style frescos of the Stations of the Cross on the walls. The church benefits from a fine acoustic, a new organ, and a gifted organist.



The church has the capacity to host with ease the very large funerals as are traditional in the parish. It has been used

regularly to host concerts and as a rehearsal space for the Liverpool Passion Plays. To the side of the church is the Jesus Chapel, with a fine reredos. This is used for small midweek Eucharists, Morning Prayer, and is also available for hire. Following the sale of the vicarage, a new Sacristy and Parish Office have been integrated into the Church as innovative pods. There are also newly built accessible toilets and a small kitchen, but no hall. However, having recently removed the pews, the church is now quite a flexible space, and we are working to encourage more bookings.



Recently the Diocese sold off the attached Vicarage. That is now apartments for students and young professionals. We have a good relationship with them.



As with all buildings this age, there are ongoing fabrics needs. However, the building is sound and the PCC has good reserves available to deal with building issues for the present, due to the sale of the parish school a few years ago.

## Our Congregation and its Worshipping Life

St Margaret's strives to reach out and welcome all with the love of Christ for all his people. We are a church of Liberal Catholic tradition, supporters of Open Table and members of Inclusive Church. The PCC unanimously agreed to adopt the use of Prayers of Love and Faith and look forward to being able to offer them under the direction of a future Priest in Charge.

Our worship is Eucharistic with incense. We try not to be pompous, but to worship with informality and humour. The Sunday Eucharist is the centre of our life as a community. The priest-in-charge needs to be supportive in this, as are our retired PTOs.



We fully observe major festivals during the Christian Year, and in particular Holy Week and the Triduum services of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday night (the Easter Vigil). A previous



Bishop of Liverpool described St Margaret's as 'quirky'! We take that as a compliment, but it implies perhaps that an applicant needs a sense of



humour!

Our congregation varies from week to week. We have people who come in from the suburbs, others who are local to the parish. We have international students and their families some of whom do not speak much English. We welcome and support refugees. We have a handful of children who come each week, but we wish for more

In summary, we have a very diverse congregation. Some people are fixtures, others are transient as you might expect in the inner city. In 2023 we averaged 23 adults and four children each Sunday. We are very encouraged that most



Sundays there is at least one new face in the congregation, and we try to visit with them and follow up.

### Our Strengths and Weaknesses

Our **finances** are strong in the short to medium term. Parish share is paid up to date. In the longer term, stewardship work will need to be undertaken to balance our budget so that we are less dependent on reserves.

Though our **numbers** could be bigger, there being few young families, there are a number highly **committed** people who willingly bring their varied gifts and who work very hard and multi-task.

Our **building** is of an age where there are ongoing fabric needs which are being addressed as required. To date there is money to do this.

Our **sacramental, eucharistic** tradition is a great strength to our congregation. A regular mid-week Eucharist is an aim. However, there is a lack of **short evening courses, confirmation classes** etc. This needs to be addressed.

**Hope Garden** encourages outreach and obeys the Second Commandment. We pray that Hope Garden will grow and develop, as it reaches people with real needs of various kinds.

### **Our Missional Hopes**

We now have a new Area Dean who is sympathetic to and supportive of St Margaret's, and along with a Priest in Charge we hope for a more positive and confident missional approach.

- **Hope Community Garden** in partnership with B4Biodiversity
- Possible expansion of **Hope Community Garden** to become a horticultural therapy project helping people with their physical and mental wellbeing.

- Greater and more focused support for **Refugees and New Communities**
- Outreach to **local schools**. Some excellent seed work was undertaken by our former curate Revd Bingo Allison during the pandemic, and we would wish to develop that work further. Our Reader has been welcoming parties of schoolchildren on visits and working with our young people.
- Continued partnership with the **Good Funeral Company**, a Diocesan initiative led by our Reader. It was founded to compete with secular funeral celebrants. The **GFC** uses St Margaret's whenever a larger venue is required.

## **The Broader Context**

The Diocese of Liverpool is involved in a process called 'Fit for Mission' which at our Deanery level is about a much larger Deanery sized Parish with central administration to ease the compliance burden on the local churches.

Literature on Fit for Mission is available from the Diocesan website

<https://www.liverpool.anglican.org/fitformission>

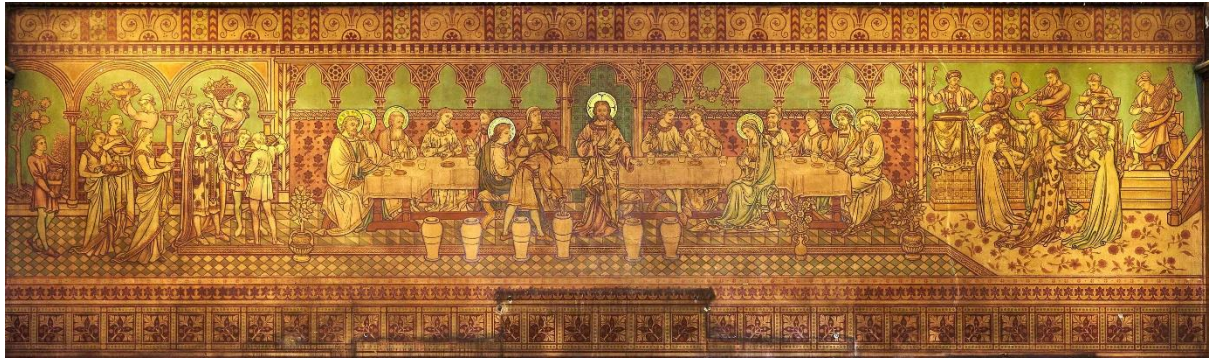
At the time of writing, Toxteth and Wavertree Deanery is looking at this.

Candidates would need to update themselves on where our Deanery stands on this prior to interview.

## **Finally:**

We would love to have a priest-in-charge who gave a portion of their time to St Margaret's alongside St Luke in the City. We seek someone with an open, tolerant, and generous heart who, as we believe Christ does, values and loves all people in all their diversity and who would respect the Eucharistic heart that beats so powerfully at St Margaret's. Not a saint, or an archangel, but someone who loves all people as God does, and would encourage us to do likewise.





If you would like to arrange a visit to look around, please contact one of our churchwardens:

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