
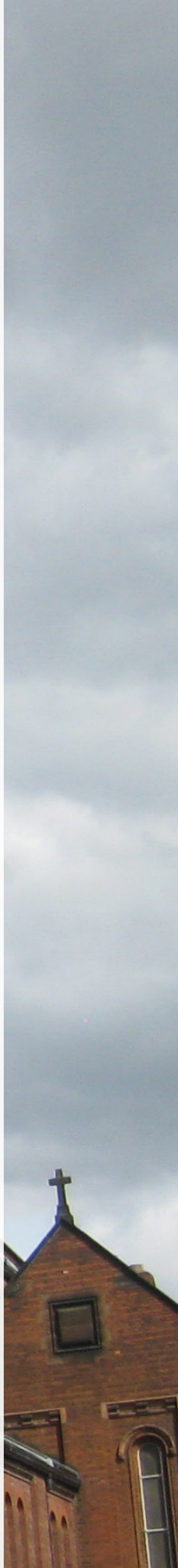




— 2024 —
S^t Aidan's
— Leeds —

PARISH AND
CHURCH BROCHURE

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Leeds





Welcome to St Aidan's

WE ARE OPEN AS A BUSY COMMUNITY, THROUGHOUT THE WEEK, WITH THE PARISH MASS ON SUNDAYS AT THE HEART OF OUR LIFE.

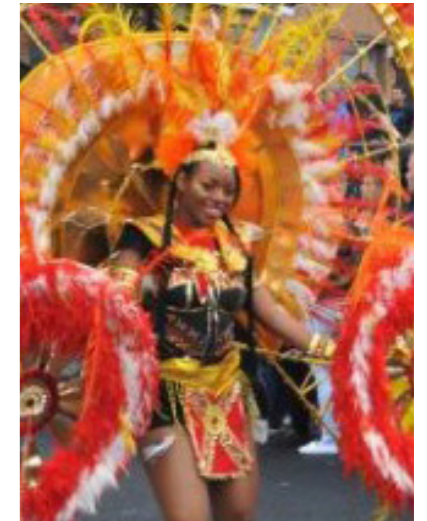
We were established as a distinct church community in the 19th century, as Leeds expanded greatly as a city. We are a notable Christian presence in a challenging multi-ethnic and multi-religious area of Leeds. Our inclusive welcome and our social engagement are appreciated and well supported by the local community, and we, in turn, appreciate the encouragement and practical assistance given to us by our neighbours in ways that cross boundaries of religion and ethnicity. St Aidan's is a place where the whole community comes when it wants to celebrate, remember, hope and mourn.

We look to the future, as well as celebrating our rich past and present. We are looking to grow further in spiritual commitment to Christ, in service to the community, in partnership with diverse partners, in

numbers at worship and in service. We believe that the challenges and opportunities our parish and church offers, make St Aidan's a very special place to worship and serve. That is why we are here, and why we hope you may want to consider coming to share in our life as our parish priest.

For many years, our aim has been "to be a worshipping, serving, sacrificing community, following the example of Jesus Christ". We hope you will want to join us and to lead us in fulfilling this aim in the years ahead.





Our Parish

OUR PARISH IS A BUSY, VIBRANT, DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF AROUND 17,000 PEOPLE.

The demographic makeup of Harehills, of which our parish is a part, is as follows: 16% white, 9% mixed, 43% Asian, and 22% black, 10% Gypsy Roma Traveller. The population of Harehills has a higher than average percentage of Asians compared with the UK. It also has a higher percentage of people identifying themselves as black compared to the UK average.

Most of the housing in the parish is Victorian back-to-back terraces.



The vicarage is a more modern building



There are several churches of other denominations in the parish, and several mosques, with whom we have good links. HOPE, a Filipino church, meets in our parish hall each Sunday.

There are many schools, nursing homes, and St James', the largest teaching hospital in Europe, just outside our parish. There is just one school within the parish: Bankside Primary. We enjoy good relationships with Bankside and other nearby schools. There are many small businesses, shops, food outlets and garages in the community, plus a large Tesco, Wickes and Sports Direct.

We look forward to strengthening these links, relationships and partnerships in the future.

Nearby is the wide open space of Roundhay Park: 700 acres of rolling parkland with lakes, woodlands, formal gardens, cafes, sports pitches, playgrounds, and the Tropical World visitor attraction. Also nearby is Leeds' vibrant city centre.

Harehills accommodates significant diversity, including people in substantial need. Some families are large. Many people do have not English as their first

language. Some people are here, sometimes transiently, as refugees and asylum seekers. Some of our community have substance misuse issues, and mental health needs are above average. The level of children within the locality with complex special needs is above the national average. These are linked to the nature of fragile social lifestyles and opportunities. The play and learning opportunities for babies, pre-school children and young mothers are very limited in the area. Employment opportunities are limited, mainly being retail and catering outlets, which tend to be run by specific families, and there is a much higher than average proportion of women who do not work. Many men work shift hours, mostly in catering and taxi-work. This is a challenging area for those who live here, and those who worship, work and serve here. It is also a very rich and rewarding area for those who value and celebrate diversity and inclusion. There is a strong sense of community which is present throughout the year, with key moments of public expression, such as the annual West Indian Carnival, which parades past St Aidan's. When there is a Caribbean funeral at St Aidan's, attendance is often significant (500+).



Our Church

THE PARISH MASS ON SUNDAY IS AT THE CENTRE OF OUR WORSHIPPING LIFE.

We are confidently catholic in tradition. We use Common Worship as our sole rite. The president at mass wears a chasuble. The Sunday parish mass is usually sung. Incense is the norm. We have long welcomed the ministry of women as deacon, priest and bishop. We currently have a self-supporting priest curate, and a priest with PTO, who have had a long association with St Aidan's. The robed choir usually (no choir in August) sings an anthem. The church has a Director of Music and is affiliated to the RSCM. We provide a junior church on those occasions when children are present - regrettably not as often as used to be the case, which we would like to address.

The Holy Triduum, culminating in the first mass of Easter, is important to our annual cycle of prayer and worship, with washing of hands instead of feet, veneration of the cross, singing of the exsultet etc..

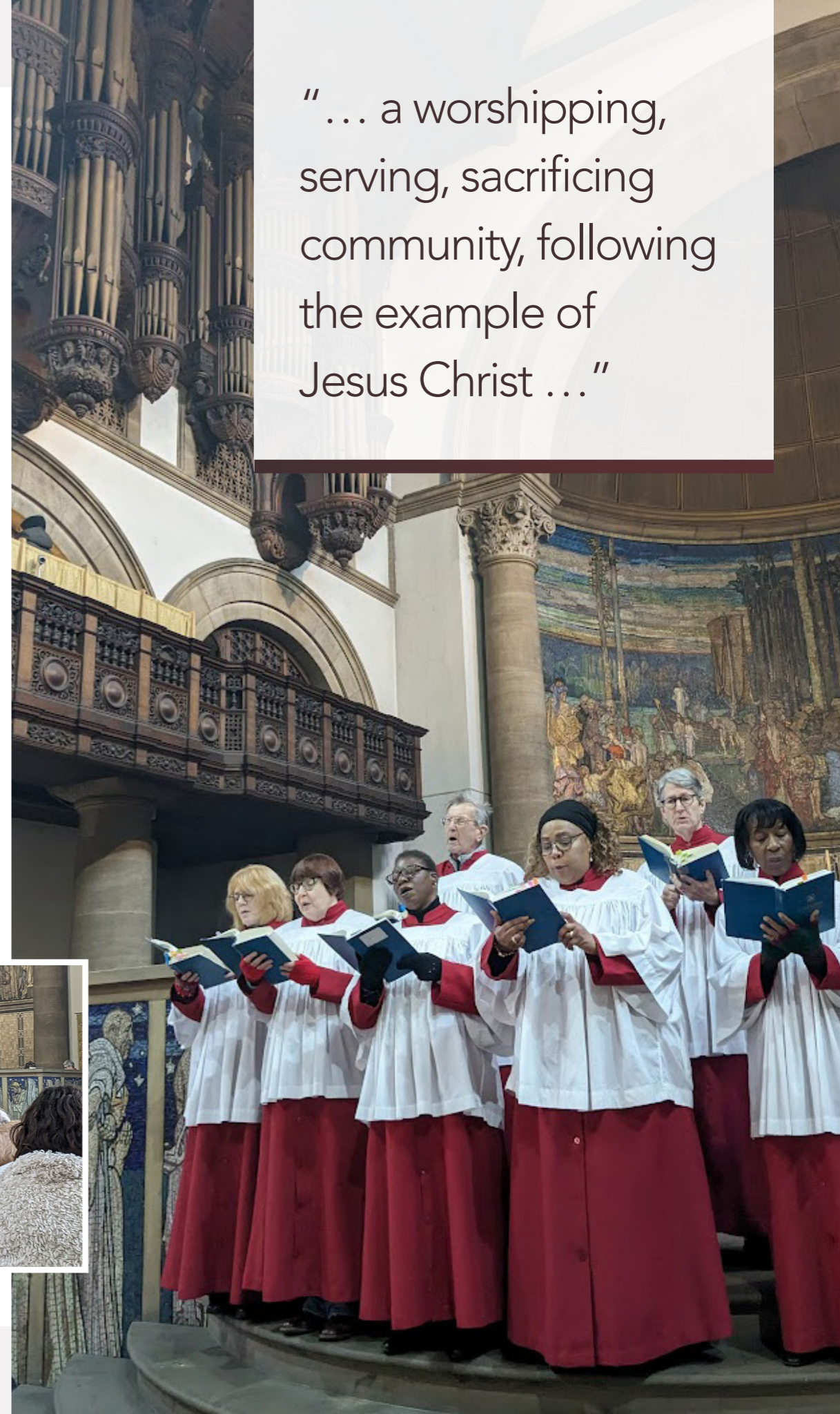
We celebrate baptism within and outside the parish mass. A healing mass has been a regular part of our worship (every 3 months or so), and has been much valued - we would like to restore this. Oils blessed

by our bishop are used at baptism and confirmation and other key occasions.

The Sunday readings and gospel have been read in more than one language over the years, depending on who is attending. At present, members of our community give the first reading and/or gospel in Farsi, as well as in English. We have a New Christian Nurture Group which meets after mass, for prayer and teaching, in English and translated into Farsi.



"... a worshipping, serving, sacrificing community, following the example of Jesus Christ ..."





We have celebrated a daily mass in the past, but this has reduced over the years, and maintaining midweek mass was significantly impacted during Covid. We would like to work with our new parish priest to find ways of renewing worship through the week.

We provide Lent and Advent Study Groups. We have baptism and confirmation preparation programmes. We have few other formal arrangements outside the parish mass for deepening Christian formation. We would welcome the guidance and direction of our new parish priest in addressing this.

Shortly before Covid we had around 90 communicants, mainly adults, but a few young people too, at parish mass. Covid

impacted upon us hard. We are now around 50 communicants, sometimes including young people. We remain diverse in our worship: Caribbean (more female than male), Iranian (more male than female, broadly of working age), Zimbabwean, White British. Those who see themselves as part of the regular worshipping community number is in excess of 150. We are employed, unemployed, retired, semi-retired, seeking leave to remain. We would love to grow our numbers at Sunday mass again, and think that there are opportunities for this under the leadership of our new parish priest, building on our partnerships, increasing our community visibility and profile, strengthening our confidence, and focussing our priorities.



People

OUR SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY, AND SUPPORTING SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY BY OTHERS, THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS, IS CENTRAL TO OUR AIM.

St Aidan's FoodShare was set up 15 years ago and is a non-means-tested and self-referral service, which operates on Saturday mornings between 10.30am and 12 noon, with one paid worker and 20 committed volunteers.

Delivering the FoodShare attracts support from all the diverse communities of Harehills, including the predominantly local Muslim community. Local Muslim councillors have visited, Muslim volunteers help out, and local shopkeepers have provided supplies.

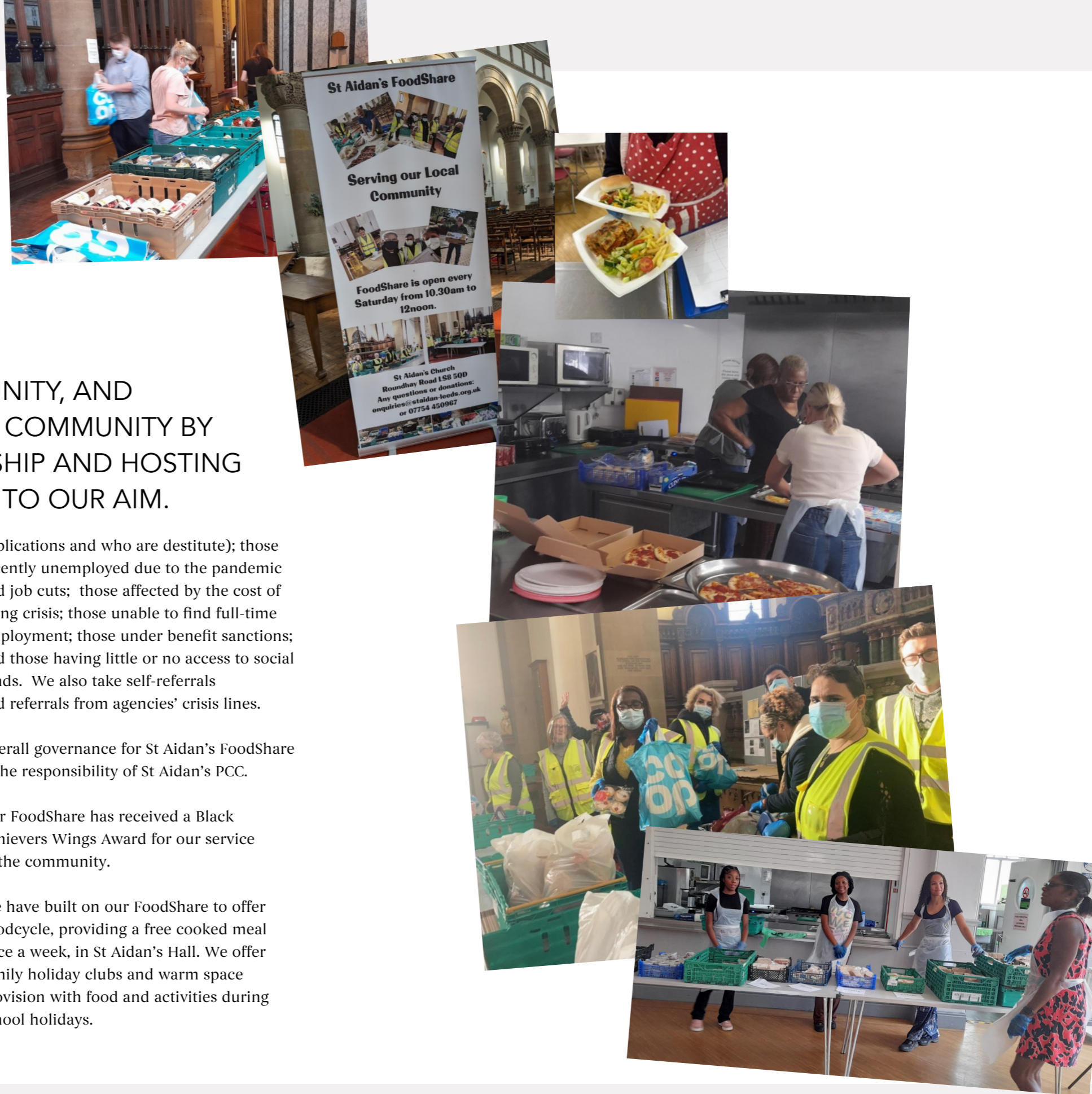
Over the past four years we have seen weekly attendees triple to over 100 individuals collecting food to feed around 300-400 people each week. Those accessing the FoodShare include large families, couples and individuals; refugees and asylum seekers (especially those with failed

applications and who are destitute); those recently unemployed due to the pandemic and job cuts; those affected by the cost of living crisis; those unable to find full-time employment; those under benefit sanctions; and those having little or no access to social funds. We also take self-referrals and referrals from agencies' crisis lines.

Overall governance for St Aidan's FoodShare is the responsibility of St Aidan's PCC.

Our FoodShare has received a Black Achievers Wings Award for our service to the community.

We have built on our FoodShare to offer Foodcycle, providing a free cooked meal once a week, in St Aidan's Hall. We offer family holiday clubs and warm space provision with food and activities during school holidays.



WE HOST A NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS AND INITIATIVES IN OUR BUILDINGS:



PAFRAS
(Positive Action For Refugees and Asylum Seekers) – based at St Aidan’s Hall.

HELP
(Harehills English Language Project)
– based at St Aidan’s Hall



IntoUniversity
(local learning centre where young people are inspired to achieve)
– based at St Aidan’s Hall.

Outreach groups, based at St Aidan’s Hall
Roma outreach group
Farsi speaker wellbeing group
Romanian youth group
Senegalese community group
Sudanese women’s group



ST AIDAN’S HAS LAY PEOPLE WITH SIGNIFICANT SKILLS, EXPERTISE, EXPERIENCE, GAINED AND DELIVERED IN SECULAR LIFE, WHO ARE INSTRUMENTAL TO THE WORK, MISSION AND WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

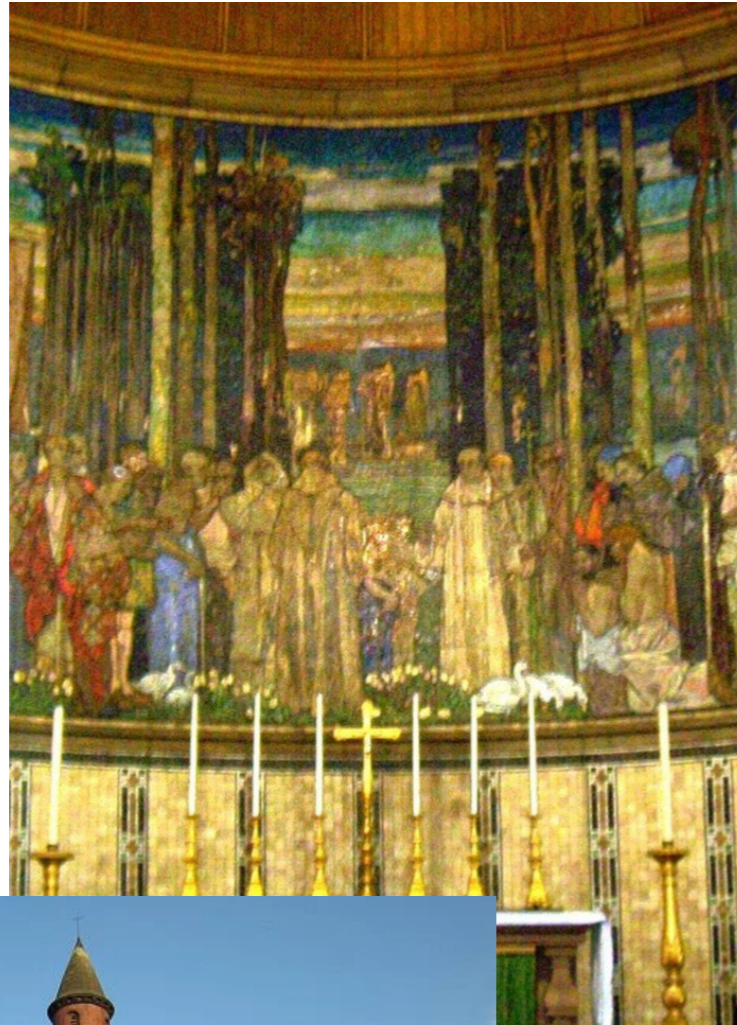
We have a strong PCC standing committee, who focus on strategic direction, finance, HR, estate and activities. In addition, we have members of the PCC and other members of the congregation and choir who have a long held commitment and understanding of the church. We benefit from a paid highly competent and committed Parish Administrator, Buildings Caretaker, FoodShare Coordinator and Director of Music. We see our worship and service as co-dependent. We have a long and strong commitment to social mission. We are a diverse community that draws people from the local area and beyond. The cultural and linguistic diversity of the congregation, which we value, does, in all truth, make the work of developing lay leadership more challenging. It is an issue that St Aidan’s relies upon a number of people who “commute” into the parish. We look forward to our new parish priest helping to support, deepen and broaden the development of lay leadership at St Aidan’s.

Diversity and inclusion are “in our DNA”, as we hope we have strongly indicated across our parish profile and brochure. In the light of that, we would value the leadership of our new Incumbent in understanding and implementing the best way forward for our community and congregation as the

Church of England works its way through the LLF debate and outcomes. We believe that the congregation and PCC warmly accept and welcome people in same sex relationships and would hope that, whilst remaining sensitive to any more cautious or conservative voices and opinions, this is a position our new parish priest would support and encourage.

We would welcome strategic and practical encouragement and guidance in the development of our diverse communities to play a full part within the community of St Aidan’s (for example, young people and families, also older members of the community, attenders of social initiatives such as PAFRAS and FoodShare). We are eager to build leadership, understanding and confidence.

We are keen to build on local social capital, rather than simply “go it alone”. We have invested over many years in good relationships within the local community and across the city, with secular organisations, other churches, other faith traditions. We look forward to developing these partnerships further and deeper.



Buildings

ST AIDAN'S CHURCH IS A GRADE 2* BUILDING.

We have long participated in the annual Heritage Open days. The sense of space, of prayer offered and made valid, the magnificent Brangwyn mosaics presenting scenes from the life of St Aidan, take visitors' breath away, and inspire those who occasionally or regularly use the church for worship.

As well as the internationally renowned Brangwyn mosaics, the largest in northern Europe, St Aidan's is privileged to host a Binns organ, acknowledged as one of the finest in the city. A detailed restoration programme will shortly be considered by the PCC.

The Parish Hall adjoins the Church, and hosts a number of initiatives in service of the local community.

Our newly appointed (2023) Inspecting Architect has a track record of working with churches on major restoration projects, including with churches in areas within West Yorkshire that are very similar to our parish. Our architect writes: "The church of St Aidan is a significant listed building

within the community of Harehills and provides a large congregational space for community events in a densely populated area in Leeds." Developing the fabric and structure of the church to support the social mission, Christian ministry and community outreach of St Aidan's is a key priority for the PCC. Our architect's Quinquennial Report, received in January 2024, identifies that major works are required, which the PCC recognises as needing to be addressed.

Our hope is that, with appropriate adaptations, we will be able to use the church and hall to greater effect, both in developing our own worshipping congregation through teaching, confidence-building and developing community, and also as a means of being more open to the wider community, thus fostering richer and more complex connections with the neighbourhood around us.

The house proposed is within easy access of the parish. It is also just ten minutes' walk from Chapel Allerton, recently listed as one of the best places to live in the UK.

Finances

WE MAINTAIN CAREFUL CONTROL OF OUR FINANCES.

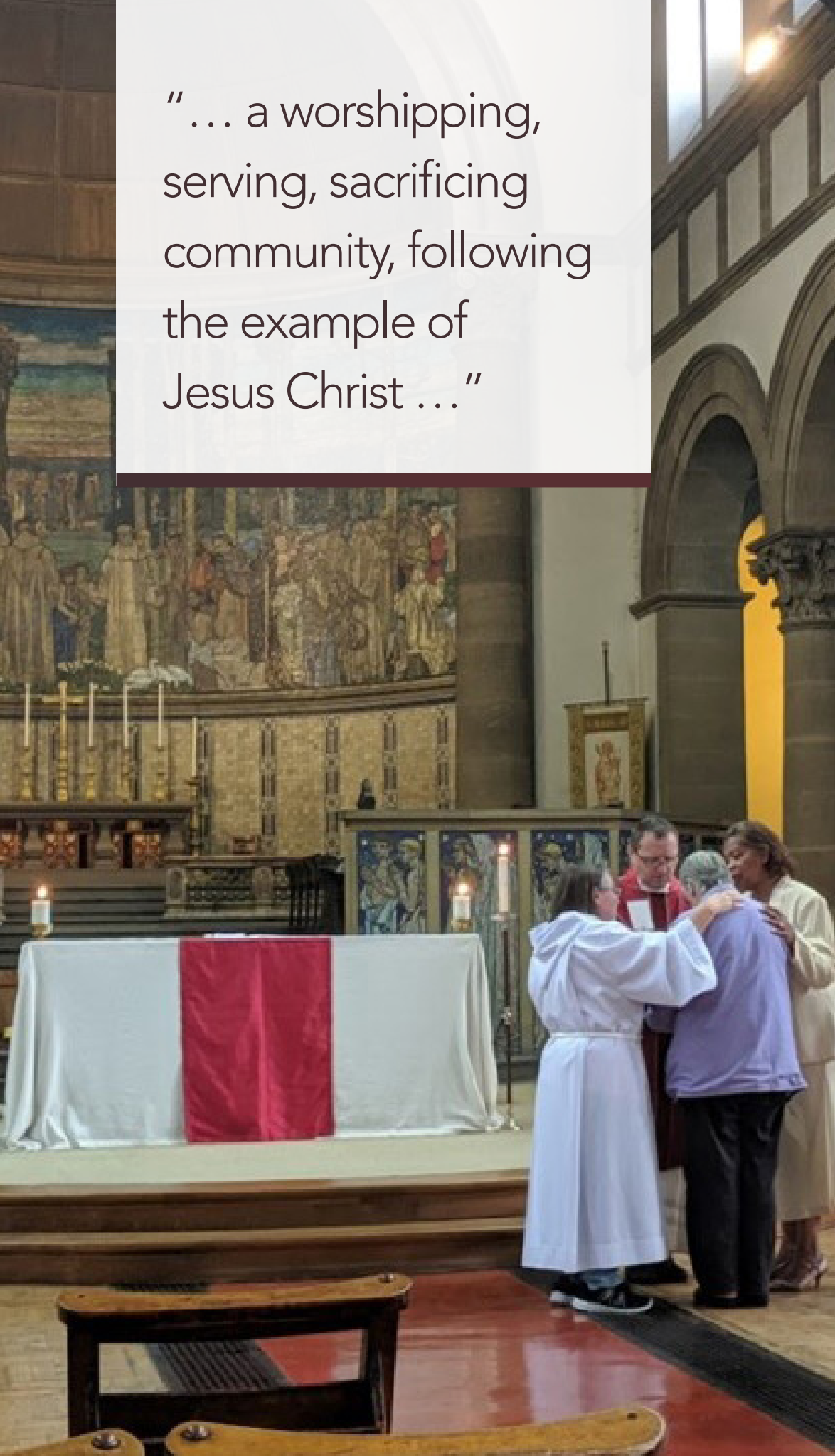
We always pay our parish diocesan share in full which, although not easy for us, is important to us as members of the wider Anglican church in the Diocese of Leeds.

We depend upon the giving of those who attend for worship, regularly and occasionally - about a third of our unrestricted income. Our budget includes income from rent and leases generated through the community hall, for parties, community events and celebrations, as well as the regular rent from IntoUniversity, and a telecom mast sited on church property - over half of our unrestricted income. Unrestricted income in 2022 was just over £90,000.

Our last Stewardship Campaign was in 2017. The make-up of the congregation has changed significantly since then, especially after Covid. We would welcome the initiative of our new parish priest in leading the deepening and broadening of the stewardship of our money, time and talents, as well as in securing our income from our parish hall.

The work to develop the fund-raising and grant applications, for maintaining and developing the fabric of the church, is led by the PCC's Standing Committee. The Standing Committee includes a group of knowledgeable and capable parishioners, several of whom have direct experience of, and expertise in, fundraising, working with support from Diocesan Buildings and Fundraising Officers, and other professional colleagues.

We reimburse clergy expenses in full.



“... a worshipping,
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The priest we are seeking

THE PARISH OF ST AIDAN'S PROVIDES, ON THE ONE HAND, SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES (SUCH AS ITS INNER CITY LOCATION AND LOCAL FAITH PROFILE) AND, ON THE OTHER, THE EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITIES THAT THESE CHALLENGES PRESENT.

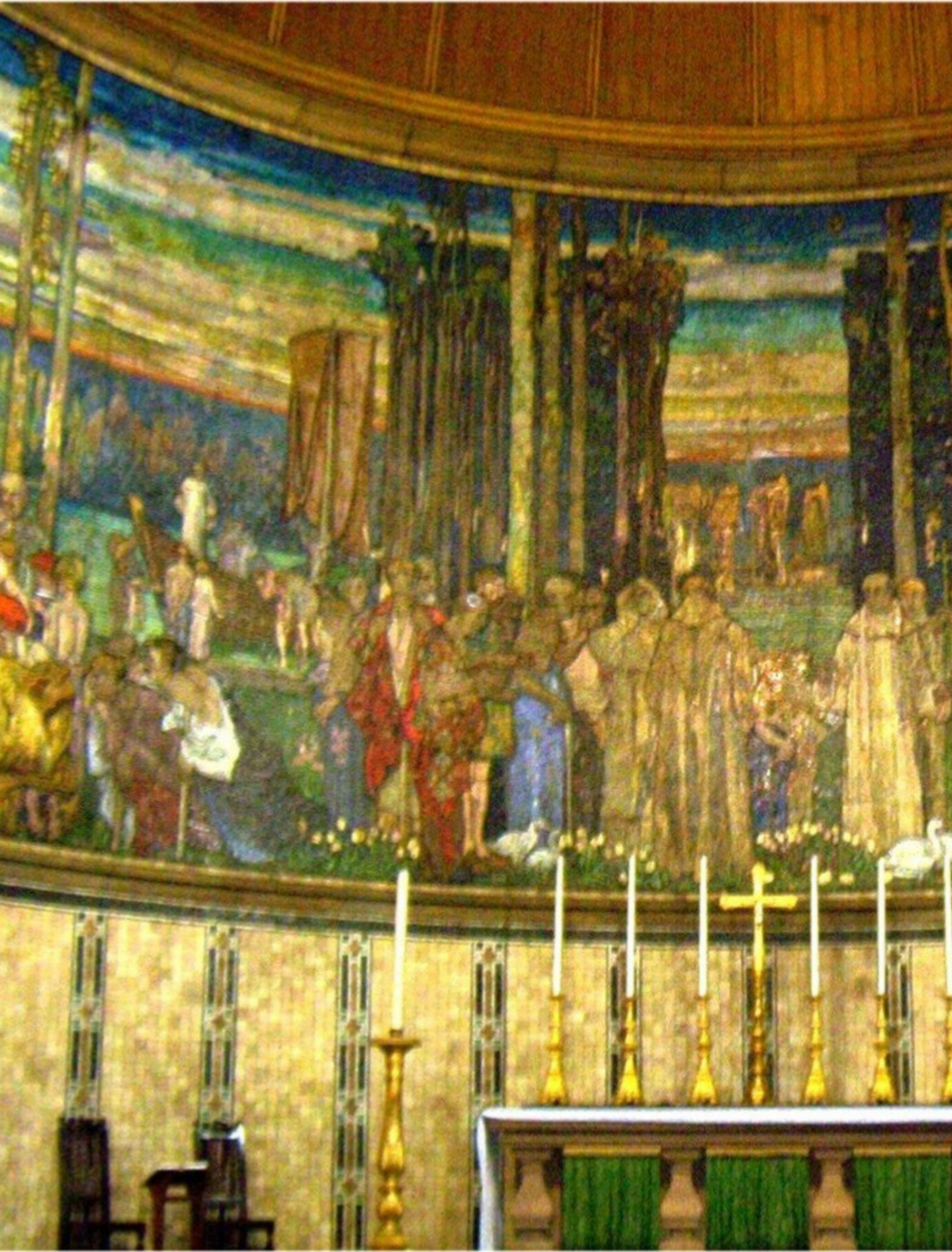
We would welcome someone who will be attracted and excited by this mix, and who will take inspiration from the deep tradition we enjoy, our diversity, inclusivity, commitment and hope.

We believe that we are seeking someone who will embrace all that St Aidan's represents, in its cultural heritage, liturgical worship and service, with joy and respect.

We would like you to work with us to:

- 1. Grow our racially and culturally diverse church, in discipleship, faith and numbers.**
- 2. Celebrate and develop our reputation and practice of welcome and inclusion, for people and communities of different traditions, faiths, ethnicities, sexual orientation, and all ages.**
- 3. Provide project leadership for developing our beautiful church as a place of worship and a space for community learning, cohesion and growth.**
- 4. Be an advocate for social justice; a model of warmth, kindness and care for a community that is looking for love and leadership.**

We know that being the parish priest of St Aidan's is not for everyone. But for the right person, we believe that this is a wonderful place and community within which to worship and serve, in faithful and sacrificial discipleship of Jesus Christ. We hope to explore this further with you, through prayerful consideration and discernment.



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Location only - not for post

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 THE CHURCH
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Diocese of Leeds