



A CHURCH FOR ALL  
IN BENWELL & SCOTSWOOD

PARISH PROFILE

[benwellscotswood.com](http://benwellscotswood.com)

  @benwellscotswood

# OUR MISSION

We believe that Jesus calls us to keep two commandments – to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

We hope that this love informs everything we do.

## ONE CHURCH FOUR LOCATIONS

**St John the Baptist Benwell Village**

Ferguson Lane, NE15 7PL

**The Venerable Bede West Road**

West Road, NE15 6RS



**St Margaret of Antioch Scotswood**

Heighley Street, NE15 6AR

**St James Benwell**

Benwell Lane, NE15 6RS

# INTRODUCTION

We are an exciting, large, and diverse parish in the urban West-end of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Our four churches make up a genuinely inclusive and authentic community who work tirelessly to share the love of Jesus Christ in Benwell and Scotswood. We collaborate with many partner organisations to care for the community, whatever their background or belief. It is a place where ministry makes a real difference to people's lives each and every day.

The parish began in the 1830s and in 1985 St James, St John, and the Venerable Bede came together to form the Benwell Team. St Margaret's Scotswood then joined in 2015 to create Benwell and Scotswood Team Parish.

We are one of the most culturally and ethnically diverse parishes in the Diocese. We have seen significant growth and change in recent years, with many people of all backgrounds joining the worshipping community. We proudly welcome and offer pastoral support to asylum seekers and refugees and this is reflected in the Sunday 'Hub' service (Parish Eucharist) which is always translated into Farsi with the help of dedicated volunteers.

Our buildings are in use almost every day with hundreds of people coming through our doors. Over the years we have initiated several local projects, and now work closely with them as partner organisations. In particular, we are the home of Newcastle Foodbank; started by the congregation of the Venerable Bede it is now the UK's largest foodbank and operates in two of our churches several days a week.

St James is the home of the Something Wonderful project which aims to strengthen the local community and tackle poverty and isolation with a whole range of activities, including a burgeoning art club, gardening, pay-what-you-feel meals, and asylum support. We also host the foodbank's 'Pathways' project with multi-agency sessions to help people out of chronic poverty. The Something Wonderful team are also fundraising to renovate the large grade II listed building, replace the heating system, and secure its future for the community.

Although the parish is amongst the most deprived 1% in the country, we don't want to be pitied or saved; rather we want the people of Benwell and Scotswood to have the chance flourish as the wonderful, strong, and beautiful community we know it to be.

“This Parish knows how to love. Its sense of being and service is tied to the service it gives to the community”

(Member of the congregation)



# THE DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE



We are **seeking** through being open to God's transforming love; **sharing** through being generous with God's transforming gifts; and we are **sending** through being engaged in God's transforming work in the world.

(Diocese of Newcastle values)

Framed by the Rivers Tyne and Tweed the Diocese of Newcastle is the Church of England's most northerly diocese. This Diocese in the 'land of the Northern Saints' was formed in 1882 and comprises 169 parishes across 2,110 square miles. The Diocese covers the local authorities of Northumberland, Newcastle, North Tyneside and also small parts of County Durham and Cumbria. The 12 deaneries within 2 archdeaconries serve a population of about 800,000 people across a variety of communities ranging from sparse rural to large inner-city areas of deprivation.

Our parish is in the Northumberland Archdeaconry in the primarily urban south-east of the Diocese. And we are in the Newcastle West Deanery, which covers the west end of the city and stretches from Elswick to the suburbs of Ponteland. Licensed clergy regularly meet as the Deanery Chapter to support and pray for each other.

Our deanery synod meets 3 times a year. Our clergy have also been part of the Deanery Development Group which has been looking at a mission plan to present to the Diocesan Synod.



The Right Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley began serving as Bishop of Newcastle in April 2023.



The Right Revd Mark Wroe was consecrated as Bishop of Berwick in January 2021

## DIOCESAN CONTACTS

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## HELLO FROM THE TEAM VICAR



Benwell and Scotswood has so much going on, but it is also a fun place to work! The greatest privilege about being here is that you can see God at work and your ministry can make a difference each and every day. And, as a team parish, you don't have to work alone- there is a wonderful team of dedicated people here.

If you join the team, I'd be delighted to work with you as the new Team Rector. I am passionate about what I do and I enjoy working with others and would want to work with you to help you pursue your passions and vision for the parish.

I originally came here as curate in 2018, I never intended to stay after my curacy, but when the time came, I loved it so much I applied to stay. There is so much energy, excitement and opportunity to be creative and make a difference.

My role, along with the usual jobs of priestly ministry, is to be adaptable to the mission of God across all the churches. That currently means my role description focuses on work with asylum seekers and refugees, pastoral care of those living in poverty, and the redevelopment of St James' building to better serve the local community.

If you have any questions about the parish or the team, then I would be happy to chat! Just send me an email at [revd@chrisminchin.com](mailto:revd@chrisminchin.com)

The Revd Chris Minchin  
Team Vicar for Mission

# THE MINISTRY TEAM

The last Team Rector retired in 2024. And in 2023 the Team Vicar of the Venerable Bede moved to a new post. The Revd Chris Minchin, who first came to the parish as Curate in 2018, has become Team Vicar for Mission.

In 2023 six people trained for Authorised Lay Ministry in worship and pastoral care, they are now exercising their calling in various ways visiting care homes and hospitals, and leading evening worship and music.

A House for Duty post has been available since 2015. There is scope for developing further non-stipendiary ministry as the parish scheme allows for up to four Team Vicars who may be allocated either to a district church or a particular ministry. The latest Deanery Development Plan has also proposed the possibility of a half-time Children and Family Missioner in the parish.

## CLERGY

Team Vicar for Mission (full-time stipendiary)

**The Revd Chris Minchin**

Retired Clergy with PTO:

**The Revd Anne Marr**

## LAY MINISTERS

Licensed Reader

**Kathleen Germain**

Anna Chaplain

**Shirley Irving**

Authorised Lay Ministers - Worship

**Grace Thomson, Timothy Ohanaka, Chris Libby**

Authorised Lay Ministers - Pastoral Care

**Carol Davison, Christopher Foskett, Shirley Irving**

## VOCATIONS

Many vocations have been encouraged and developed here, both lay and ordained. Currently 3 members of the congregation are in initial conversations exploring a potential call to ordination. Two of the congregation were ordained deacon 2024. Claire Lewis, former churchwarden at St Margaret's, has moved with her husband and children to become curate at St Mary's Monkseaton and Abigail Harris, who first joined us on a Ministry Experience Scheme, is now Curate at Hexham Abbey.

In recent years, we have also been enriched by ordinands on placement from Cranmer Hall, from Autumn to Easter.

“Thank you to everyone who believed in me when I was very unsure about taking the step.”

(Grace Thomson, Worship ALM)



Some of our team at the Lay Ministry celebration, Sept 2023



The Easter Vigil at St John's

## WORSHIP

### NUMBER OF WORSHIPPERS

We have a transitional community and Sunday attendance fluctuates. In 2023 our numbers looked like this:

#### ACROSS THE PARISH:

Usual Sunday – 144  
 Adults – 127  
 Children – 17  
 Worshipping community – 189  
 0-17 congregation – 35  
 18-69 congregation – 106  
 70+ congregation – 48  
 Joiners – 67  
 Leavers – 28

#### IN EACH CHURCH:

St James / Ven Bede (Parish eucharist) - 50-100  
 St John's – 15-25  
 St Margaret's – 6-15  
 Ven Bede weekday – 6-15

Our worship is often described as 'authentic' and 'full of heart', though it is not slick. We work hard to make sure each service is inclusive of, and truly shaped by, the people of the parish. We are delighted that in recent years we have seen significant growth so that our congregations now look more like the parish around us.

We have a larger worshipping community, but many have transitional and vulnerable lives, so attendance can vary week on week. our Parish Eucharist is translated into Farsi every week, with the liturgy on a projector screen and live translation of the sermon. The parish also bravely and creatively adapted to the pandemic, which has led to positive change and renewal. A new pattern of worship has formed that allows for flexibility and less reliance on visiting clergy.

### LIFE EVENTS IN 2023

1 wedding  
 +  
 1 blessing

10  
 funerals

32  
 children  
 + 6 adults  
 baptised

14  
 confirmed



## THE WEEKLY PATTERN

### SUNDAY:

9.30am St John's Holy Communion

9.45am St Margaret's Holy Communion (1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays)

I Iam Hub Service (Parish Eucharist) with Farsi Translation

4pm St Margaret's evening worship (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays)

### TUESDAY:

4.30pm Bible study with Farsi translation (Fresh Expression) at St James

### THURSDAY:

10.30am Venerable Bede Holy Communion

## LITURGY DETAILS

Our worship is primarily sacramental and liberal catholic in tradition, but with openness and willingness to adapt and experiment. Chasubles and cassock-albs are worn, at the Parish Eucharist there are usually 3 servers (Crucifer and acolytes) of a wide range of ages and backgrounds, at the other churches there is usually one server. All eucharistic services use Common Worship Order 1 with Prayer E as the norm. Major feasts and holy days are kept and Holy Week services and the Easter Vigil are deeply valued and the liturgies followed.

### DAILY PRAYER

The Team Vicar currently says the daily office in church at the following times. These times can be adapted to suit:

- Tuesday, 9.30am at St Margaret's
- Wednesday, 5pm at St John's
- Thursday, 9.30am at Venerable Bede

### MUSIC

Music is a variety of traditional and contemporary. A music group has formed who currently play about once a month and for special occasions. Two congregation members regularly play the organ or piano in all our churches.

At the Parish Eucharist we use the setting of the Mass of St Thomas (Thorne). St John's and St Margaret's often use pre-recorded tracks. St John's also have a ukulele group. In the past there have been choirs, both robed and not.

### HOLY WEEK & EASTER

We journey through Holy Week and Easter together and rotate the liturgies round the four churches. This has become a truly special time for us. The pattern usually looks something like this:

- Palm Sunday eucharist with procession outside and dramatic passion.
- Maundy Thursday eucharist with foot washing and the Watch until midnight.
- Good Friday liturgy with Veneration of the Cross. Preceded by Stations of the Cross.
- Holy Saturday night – the Easter Liturgy, vigil and eucharist, with adult baptisms.
- Easter Sunday – morning Hub service.

### ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

The pattern usually looks something like this:

- Community event followed by carols at St James
- Traditional carol service at St John's
- Christmas Eve Crib service at St Margaret's
- Midnight mass at St James or Ven Bede
- Christmas morning at Venerable Bede

### OTHER KEY EVENTS

- Candlemas - families of those who have been christened in our churches are invited to this service once a year.
- All Souls' - families of those whose funerals we have taken are invited to this service every year.



# GROWING IN FAITH

We offer a range of spaces for people to encounter Jesus and grow in faith and there have been a range of prayer and discussion groups. In Lent 2024 we created a weekly 'Exploring Faith' group. This was open to all, with about 20 people attending, some new to church and others not. The Team Vicar runs baptism or confirmation preparation about twice a year. We have many adult baptisms and confirmations every year. In recent years we ordinarily baptise adults at the Easter Vigil and host a confirmation at another point in the year. There have usually been 15-20 candidates each year for confirmation.



## CHILDREN & YOUTH

The parish does not struggle to connect with children, young people, and families. But we struggle to recruit volunteers to maintain this ministry. With our links to partner organisations and with so many schools in the area, we see there is huge opportunity and potential.

We have in the recent past had a Junior Church, but ordinarily our churches have a supervised children's table with activities based on the Sunday readings. We have child focused talks and activities on special occasions.

Schools often visit for trips, assemblies, Christmas services and more. There has previously been a group who went to schools with 'Open the Book', assisted by a former School outreach worker at Cornerstone. Until the pandemic there was a small weekly youth group at St Margaret's and a monthly Messy Church at St James. There is a resource room at the Venerable Bede with extensive materials, books, and equipment for Children's work.

For several years St Margaret's have held a week-long Summer holiday club using Scripture Union materials. This has had 20 to 40 children attending. This summer we organised a day trip to the coast with a small group.

## ASYLUM SEEKERS & REFUGEES

As a diverse area with much of the city's housing for Asylum Seekers and refugees, the church has gone through much change and come to embrace our new community.

The Team Vicar offers pastoral support to those arriving with significant trauma and writes many letters of support to the Home Office, as well as liaising with the Local Authority, Safeguarding, and housing providers.

Although, by nature, this is a transitional group, more and more refugees are choosing to remain in Benwell and build their lives here because of the church community and it is bringing life back to our churches.

At the heart of this is the weekly Bible Study with Farsi translation, which has grown into a Fresh Expression of church. Although it is translated into Farsi, it is open to everyone and has become a place for people to encounter Jesus, develop faith, and be led to baptism and confirmation.

"I love this parish because they are kind people, and despite the distance from my home, I come to them because of love and attachment, and I feel like I am going to my family's house"

(Member of the congregation)

## OUTREACH & MISSION

Parish  
population  
22568

207th most  
deprived out  
of 12,239  
parishes.

Indices of  
multiple  
deprivation  
\*bottom 1%

\* LSOAs in the parish include rankings of 137, 553, 649, 681

The Parish is very active with mission and outreach and, engaging directly with hundreds of people in a diverse area every week. There is a significant poverty and health and social issues as well as extensive housing for asylum seekers. But the church engages positively with all these issues, we work with many partners and our community relations are strong.

The parish is full of life with 12 schools (with a range of primary, secondary, faith based, and SEN), there are many community buildings, charities, youth projects and businesses ranging in type from the traditional industries along the Tyne to new Asian restaurants and shops.

There are many places of worship representing many different religions, but churches are well supported with 41% of people identifying as Christian. There are strong communities of Iranian, Kurdish, West African, Roma/Eastern-European, Indian, Bangladeshi, Ethiopian and Eritrean and others. In addition to the projects listed below we also have strong links with many other organisations including Search older people's service, Changing Lives, West End Refugee Service (WERS), the Riverside Community Health Project, Patchwork Youth Project, Transforming Communities Together Tyne to Tweed, Empowering People in Communities (EPIC).



# OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

## NEWCASTLE FOODBANK

Newcastle Foodbank is one of our closest partners. It was formed by the congregation as the Venerable Bede Foodbank and is now one of the UK's largest and busiest foodbanks. The last Vicar of the Venerable Bede was the Chair of Trustees and the Bishop of Newcastle has recently been appointed as Patron.

The foodbank operates from the Venerable Bede (for food parcels and welfare support) and St James (for welfare support), as well as across many other centres in the city. The Venerable Bede are currently in negotiations with the Foodbank to lease the hall to them long-term; the intention is to install a kitchenette in the church to enable this to be hired also.

The **Pathways Out of Hunger project** is a project of the Foodbank that works with multiple organisations to offer welfare advice and support to hundreds of people every week. It makes an incredible long-term difference to the lives of those at risk of poverty. It operates from St James and Venerable Bede. Volunteers and organisations help with debt and benefits, safeguarding/social care, housing, mental health, immigration and asylum, doctor appointments and health checks, education, food vouchers and more. Through a holistic service and working with a variety of organisations, we provide clients with support on any issues they may be experiencing with the aim of alleviating them out of food poverty.



The Pathways Project was the subject of a documentary 'Fighting the Cost of Living Crisis' shown on BBC 2, featuring our churches, congregation, and volunteers.

## SOMETHING WONDERFUL

Something Wonderful is a project based at St James Church Benwell that aims to strengthen the local community, whatever their background or belief. We have named it 'Something Wonderful' as we want to do just that – continue to be a place run by and for the community where you can encounter/eat/learn/create/do/be something wonderful.

Currently, St James is open almost every weekday with hundreds of people coming through the doors. We work with many community partners and organisations to provide activities for anyone who may be isolated and vulnerable. This includes families in food poverty, asylum-seekers, those with poor mental health, the elderly, disabled, and others.



Something Wonderful Art Club

Just some of our activities include:

- Pathways welfare support hub
- Pay-what-you-feel café
- Art club
- Creative writing group
- Gardening and local history group
- Interfaith and intercultural events
- Tours, talks and exhibitions.

We also hold many incredible events including Benstock Music Festival, Art auctions, Interfaith Community Iftars, Christmas dinners, exhibitions

### THE BUILDING

St James is a historic and beautiful landmark at the heart of a community which has known much change. We want to open up, restore, and honour this sacred heritage space to keep it as a resource for the community.

However, this grade II listed building is also in a poor state of repair. Only one third of the building is usable, the roof leaks, the heating system is broken, the lights don't work.

But, we have an aim for St James' to be less burdensome and more environmentally friendly. We want to secure its future for a diverse urban community, as a place that belongs to them and is part of their story.

### ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Petra Ondrova (known professionally as Artep Avordno) is a multi-disciplinary artist. Initially she joined us to help with our 'rubbish nativity' - a life-sized nativity scene made out of litter collected from the area that made the news locally and nationally. She now has a studio in St James' and has been funded to establish our art club, which runs twice a week which has grown incredibly and brings joy, colour, healing, and friendship to people of all ages and backgrounds. We are now applying for grants to make ensure this work is sustained for the long term.



Benstock Music Festival



## CORNERSTONE

Cornerstone is a community centre with a Community Café, Community Pantry, Emergency Foodbank and Shop. They work across all aspect of the community including adults with learning disabilities, children, and the elderly. They focus on three main areas: 1. Healthy and Hearty Food 2. Education and Enrichment 3. Mental Health.

It was developed as a partnership between the local Church of England parishes and Methodist churches. The Rector has previously been chair of trustees.



## PENDOWER GOOD NEIGHBOUR PROJECT

The charity was created by members at St James to work with residents of Pendower Estate, to improve their quality of life and to make the estate a great place to live and bring up your family. They are based in a small neighbourhood centre on the estate. They offer activities for children, a pantry, lunch clubs, community events, and work in partnership with residents and agencies to improve environmental conditions. Members of the congregation and the Team Vicar are trustees.



## NORTH BENWELL YOUTH PROJECT

NBYP was a project created by the Venerable Bede. The vision is for the young people of North Benwell to have the same opportunities and start in life as any others in Newcastle. They have built a particularly strong relationship with the Roma community over the years. Their activities include detached youth work, sports sessions, group work sessions, one-to-one support, holiday programmes. They are often the first port of call for many young people in need of support. Members of the congregation are trustees.



## ST JAMES' HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENT GROUP

This is an independent voluntary organisation set up in 2010 to support the restoration and improvement of St James' Church building and churchyard.

They organise exhibitions and tours at St James and around the city. They have published an impressive range of literature on local history, which is available in the church. Currently the Team Vicar for Mission is honorary chair of trustees, in the past it has always been the Rector.



## MOTHERS' UNION

The Benwell Scotswood Team have a thriving Mothers' Union branch. Mothers' Union is an international Christian organisation, supporting families and communities. Members campaign to bring about change for family life, women's and girl's rights, and raise money to support community projects. They meet twice a month for a home group and a 'coffee, cake and craft' group followed by morning prayer. In the Summer of 2024 St James' also hosted the MU Diocesan festival.

# THE CHURCHES

## ST JAMES' BENWELL



St James was built in 1833, it was designed by John Dobson and is the final resting place of many of the eminent people of the time including Richard Grainger and John Buddle.

The I Am 'Hub Service' (parish eucharist) meets at St James in warmer months and Venerable Bede in the colder months. The intention is that this will be permanently based at St James once a renovation project is complete. This service is always conducted in Farsi translation with a projector screen showing the liturgy in Farsi and a live translation of the sermon every week. We ordinarily have three servers (2 acolytes and a crucifer).

Congregation numbers can fluctuate but many new people attend. The congregation is usually majority not white, but still with a significant amount of white working-class British with a sense of history of the area. The biggest groups are Iranian asylum seekers, who have converted from Islam, and West African families, but there are many more groups represented including: international students, those with learning difficulties and other disabilities, and there are many who have struggled with mental health and addictions. The congregation is therefore relatively young and male compared to other churches. There are currently about 12 children regularly coming, but real potential to grow this further. There is real life and excitement with this congregation and potential to stabilise and grow it.

St James is in the early stages of a renovation project and it is likely to be significant. Currently led by the Team Vicar, the Rector would be welcome to help shape the project.

There is a closed churchyard at St James which is the responsibility of the local council, but day-to-day gardening has been delegated to St James Heritage and Environment Group (an independent charity which the Rector has been chair of in the past).



# THE VENERABLE BEDE, WEST ROAD

Churchwarden: Kath McIntyre

The Venerable Bede has a prominent position on the thriving West Road, connecting it to the rest of the city. The church is home to the Foodbank and the hall is busy with hundreds using the service every week.

The 'hub service' (Parish Eucharist) takes place here during winter. There is a weekday eucharist at 10.30am on Thursdays which has developed a small, faithful congregation. The service happens at the same time as the Foodbank is in the church hall and we hope to make this service more accessible to them.

The Venerable Bede is a stylish 1930s building in good condition. The separate hall has several rooms, stage, kitchen, and newly installed toilets. We are currently in negotiations with the Foodbank to lease the hall to them long-term. The intention is to install a kitchenette in the church and to improve the toilet facilities, both of which would then allow the church to be hired by external groups.



## ST MARGARET OF ANTIOCH, SCOTSWOOD



Churchwardens: Brenda McCutcheon and Grace Thomson

St Margaret's was built in 1915 to minister to the people of Scotswood. It is a much-loved building and has a memorial to the Montague Pit disaster, and will hold the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary memorial service for the incident in March 2025.

There is a strong Scotswood identity, but the demolition of much of the area has had a severe impact on the community. Since a member of the congregation was recently ordained and their family have moved on, the work with children and young people has not been sustained. The construction of the Rise development may have a big impact on the area and present significant opportunities for growth and engagement.

The services are peaceful and intimate, which has been helped by Grace, our recently authorised Lay Minister. We hope to develop consistency and grow this congregation.

St Margaret's have an alternating pattern of morning and evening worship at 9.45am and 4pm. There is a small core group of dedicated members mostly over the age of 50 who have spent much of their lives in Scotswood. There have been young families involved very recently and there has been significant work done with children and youth here.

St Margaret's had their building re-ordered about 20 years ago and now leases offices under license to Changing Lives upstairs and rooms downstairs to Scotswood Village nursery.



# ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, BENWELL VILLAGE

Churchwarden: Shirley Irving

St John's is actually the oldest church in the parish, being built as a mission church and Sunday school by St John's the Baptist Grainger Street in the 1820s. In the 1950s the present multi-functional building was built.

St John's deeply value their Sunday worship happening every week and have dedicated members who keep this running very smoothly and create a truly welcoming atmosphere. They have adjusted to an earlier service and have welcomed new members through their social activities.

The congregation are mostly from the west end and are mostly retired, though there are some younger people. There is one family with three children and often grandchildren attend.

St John's have a very active social life together and this has brought in new people through their dance classes, ukulele group (who often visit local care homes), and their socials are renowned! They are also very active with their fundraising through fayres and other occasions.



# GOVERNANCE

## ADMINISTRATION

The Parish Secretary also volunteers as the church administrator to help keep everything running smoothly. This includes handling baptism enquiries, church hall bookings, and monitoring the church email address.

### Communications:

- We are in the process of setting up the parish phone number to redirect to the administrator.
- We use the 'iKnow Church' platform for life events.
- We have a church website hosted on Wix.
- We use Google Workspace for handling emails and contacts.
- Currently the Team Vicar updates the website and sends the weekly e-newsletter.



## FINANCE

The Parish Treasurer has helped us get a better grip on understanding our finances across the team as he acts as treasurer to St James, Ven Bede, and St Margaret's. St John's have their own treasurer.

Contactless giving devices are now installed at St James and the Venerable Bede.

### Parish share:

- 2023: £18,000 paid in full.
- Current year (2024): £19,000 (on track to pay in full)

### Stewardship:

We recently signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme. A stewardship campaign ran in the parish throughout September 2024. We do not have the statistics for this yet, but signs are hopeful. In 2023,

- we had 42 planned givers and more unplanned givers.
- The voluntary receipts were £28,200.
- Average weekly giving of those aged 16 years and older who give is estimated at £9.
- Approximately 50% Gift Aided.

### Legacies:

There is potential to use these legacies to grow and sustain our ministry if we used wisely:

- The Venerable Bede was left a legacy by Gladys Plewes. This is held by the Diocesan Society and is used for mission across the whole Parish. The bequest stood at a total of £147,000 at the end of 2023.
- St James was also left the Scott Legacy for music across the whole parish, held by the Diocesan Society. This stood at a total of £22,200 at the end of 2023.

## PCC

The PCC has in recent years tried to streamline governance to be more manageable. The Rector is chair of the PCC, and the Team Vicar is Vice Chair.

**Benwell and Scotswood Team Parish is a registered charity (number 1205934)**

**126 Electoral Roll members.**

## MEETINGS

**1 Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

**4 PCC meetings per year.**

**4 Standing Committee meetings (2 weeks prior to PCC)**

**DCCs:** At the APCM in 2023 it was agreed the 'District Church Council' of each church would only meet annually and comprise the bare minimum of members. This is apart from St John's, who still value this space for discussion and meet 4 times a year.

## ASYLUM & REFUGEE REPS

We feel it is vitally important all parts of our community are represented in our governance. However, the PCC came across several barriers to asylum seekers and refugees joining the PCC at trustees. Therefore, in 2024, we created two new officer positions for Asylum and Refugee representatives. They partake fully in PCC discussions, their views are taken seriously and recorded. But they are not voting members, so do not have to fulfil the usual requirements to join the PCC.

## SUB-COMMITTEES

Currently there is a sub-committee for stewardship and finance, and a steering committee for the Something Wonderful project.

## POLICIES

The PCC have done a lot of work trying to get all our necessary policies in place to keep the community safe and value all people. We would like to keep developing these to be simpler and easily understandable so that they are not just tick-box exercises, but so all members of the community can live them out. If you would like to see the policies, please contact the Secretary.

**The PCC agree to follow this code of conduct:**

- Be prayerful - if we do this with God, we cannot go wrong.
- Be selfless – we are here to serve each other, the parish, the whole church, and God above our own interests.
- Be flexible and open to change and new ideas.
- Be open, honest and direct.
- Be respectful and courteous – listen before disagreeing, assume positive intentions from others, and respect differences.
- Be focused - stay on topic, do not go over things covered by other committees, do not engage in side-line conversations, and do not interrupt.
- Be constructive – offer solutions not problems.
- Be part of a team - try to reach a consensus and accept a majority decision as the will of the Council, even if we personally disagree.



# OUR NEW TEAM RECTOR

We asked the congregation what qualities they would like to see in our new Team Rector. The key qualities that emerged are somebody who will love the people of the parish, listen to them, and celebrate them for who they are in all their diversity. They also want somebody who can ‘steer the ship’ of a parish with so much going on, to ensure that it is well organised so the inclusive and loving nature of the parish continues.

“Treat all equally – especially those in hard times”

“We need direction and organisation. The wonderful people are carrying on doing good work, but we lack a captain to bring us together”

“Kind and close to God” (Junior Church member)

“I want the new vicar to be nice and helpful and caring and loving” (Junior Church member)

## KEY AREAS FOR MISSION

We currently see the key areas of mission in the parish as:

- Asylum/immigration and diversity.
- Tackling poverty and strengthening and celebrating the local community.
- Children and Youth.



## AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

We were asked to identify some areas we would like to grow and develop as a parish, and we hope the new Rector may help us with some of these:

- Children and Youth – we do not struggle to reach children and young people, but we struggle to sustain this ministry. The links with our partner organisations of NBYP, Pendower, and Cornerstone, along with a nursery in St Margaret’s, and the many local schools, means that there is huge potential. But we need to develop volunteers and a vision for this.
- Music – the quality of our music is variable and needs improvement. A worship band plays sometimes, there are two pianists/organists, and we use pre-recorded music. Many of the congregation do not have any background in Christian music, whether traditional or contemporary. We would love our music to genuinely express what is in the hearts of the congregations. But it will need a leader with musical skill.
- Finance – we have a better grasp on our finances than ever before. Our congregation is growing but many cannot afford to give financially. Bills are high and we are reliant on grants and hall bookings.
- Foodbank – the former Vicar of the Venerable Bede was the Chair of Trustees. There is need to re-establish formal links with this for it to continue as the Venerable Bede Foodbank.
- Team work – with four churches and so many projects it is important to bring together all the various elements of our ministry and have an eye on governance and structures to steer the ship into an exciting new future.



## THE RECTORY

There are four vicarages in the parish. 56 Dunholme Road, NE4 6XE, is currently the Rectory, though there may be flexibility if one of the other houses better suited the candidate. These are located on Lynnwood Avenue (large semi-detached, arts and crafts style with smaller rear garden) and Heighley Street (large detached house opposite St Margaret's) and are currently rented to tenants. The vicarage on Bentinck Road (modern detached house) is currently occupied by the Team Vicar.

The Rectory is an impressive, large, detached, 5-bedroom house on a quiet residential street in the Grainger Park area. It is close to the thriving West Road, with many supermarkets, cafes, and takeaways, and is very well-served by buses for easy links into the city centre and beyond.

The house is double fronted and mostly art deco in style. The rooms are very spacious and light, with a mixture of stripped wooden floorboards and carpet.

There are 3 reception rooms, kitchen, large utility, downstairs toilet. Upstairs are 4 large bedrooms, one small bedroom, bathroom with a shower over the bath, and a separate toilet. There is an impressively sized rear garden with a summer house and outbuilding, and a good-sized front garden.

Work is currently being carried out on the roof, which will be completed before the next Rector arrives. Please note images were taken of the Rectory while cleaning, maintenance, and repairs were happening.





St James' Benwell  
St John's Benwell Village  
St Margaret's Scotswood  
Venerable Bede West Road



[benwellscotswood.com](http://benwellscotswood.com)

  @benwellscotswood