

# St Paul's Newsome, Armitage Bridge and Netherton



We are a welcoming church that, in Christ's name, offers love and support to our community and encourages people on their faith journey.

We are looking for a Priest in Charge who will help us tell, teach, tend, transform and treasure.

## Tell - Evangelism

Services are held every week at St Paul's at 10 a.m. This is a combination of communion services and lay-led worship. We also worship with our local Methodist neighbours.

An enthusiastic worship team leads our lay-led services once a month. This service is enhanced by the music group. This is an opportunity to lead songs and introduce new songs to the congregation. The group has, over the years, encouraged musicians and children from the Church's Junior School to attend church. All abilities are encouraged, and music parts are arranged accordingly by the group coordinator. The team is always open to new ideas and would like to be supported in developing their skills and talents and growing the group.

Within our Sunday worship, intercessions are normally lay-led, causing us to pause and think about peace, justice, healing, creation, and the environment, holding these before God. Our worship is also enhanced with the skilful playing of our beautiful sounding organ and piano.

Other opportunities to worship are also offered. We have Morning Prayer on a Wednesday morning at 9.15 am led by attendees. On Thursday at 5:20pm during BST there is Christian meditation, 30 minutes of quiet contemplation.

As with all aspects of life, the effect of COVID-19 is still felt. Previously, we had parish quiet days, weekend retreats, and parish weekends. These events are missed as they deepened our connections, and we would like our future Priest in Charge to support us in reestablishing them.

We have a tradition of house groups, Lent and Advent study groups.

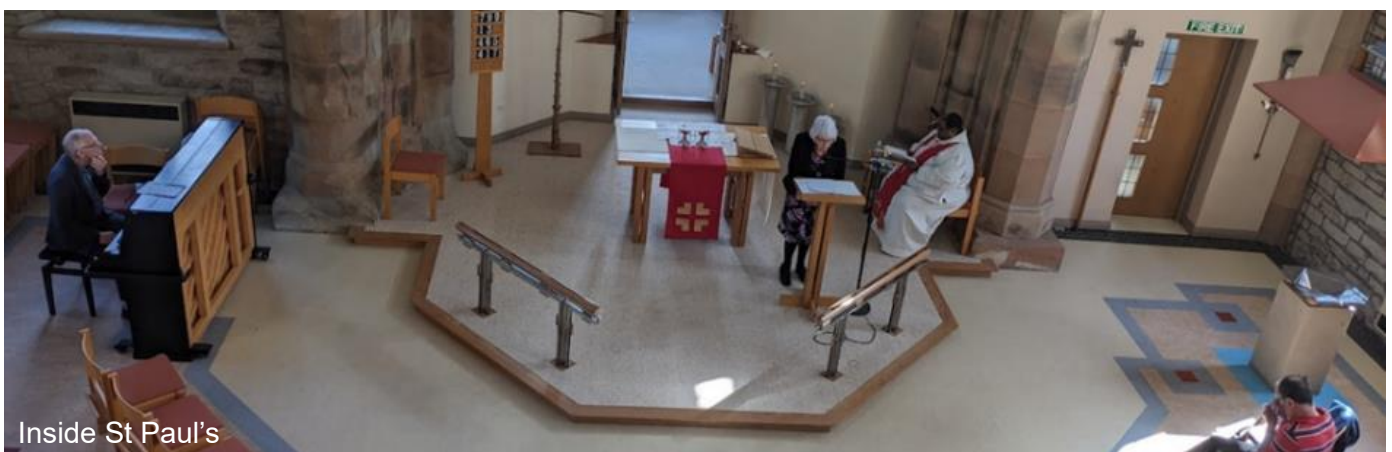
We traditionally have a complete programme of daily services during Holy Week, involving meditations, Stations of the Cross, the Maundy Thursday Eucharist, and the Vigil before the Cross on Good Friday.

Our clergy offer the ministry of Spiritual Direction across the Diocese.

Recognising the vital importance of spiritual nurture and growth in achieving our mission, we are always open to developing this ministry in new and different ways.

Our amazingly talented and knowledgeable bell ringers ring good news. The Bell Tower has a ring of 6 bells rung for regular church services, national events, weddings, and funerals, as requested. The weekly practice night is well attended, supporting and advancing bell handling and methods for other ringers from local towers. Our ringers celebrate through their ringing but also visit other towers to hone their skills, as well as hold social events.

Another way that our faith is told is through the Focus magazine. This is a monthly magazine of the Emmanuel Benefice, Berry Brow Methodist Church, and Netherton Methodist Church. This is available as a paper copy or online. The Clergy and Retired Clergy contribute to this as well as



regular contributions from the bell ringers. Other contributions also come from special events such as coffee mornings at the school, Christian Aid events, and special one-off events. People can also find out about us through A Church Near You, our website as well as through Facebook.



## Teach – Preaching and working with young people

### Junior Church

Junior Church is held on the fourth Sunday of the month. It is an opportunity for the congregation's younger members to learn about faith in an age-appropriate manner. At the end of the service, they share with the rest of the congregation what they have done and learned. On other Sundays, activity bags are provided. At lay-led services, the congregation offers a supervised table activity. We would like to expand this area of our ministry to see a new generation get the opportunity to come to faith.

Every year, Easter and Christmas Craft workshops are held for the younger members of the congregation and the wider community. Seeing the church full of life with children and adults participating is a pleasure. The activities are followed by a small service explaining the meaning of the two festivals. Encouraging this spiritual growth in our youngest members and their families is also seen in their active part in Harvest, Christingle, and Nativity Services.

We are fortunate to have in our possession a range of wonderful Godly Play materials designed specifically to support the presentation of stories from the Bible. Godly Play allows children to encounter and engage with Bible stories creatively and imaginatively. Their spirituality and faith can grow in the safe, sacred space provided. An adaptation from the Godly Play's The Children's Liturgy for Christmas Eve is incorporated in the Nativity.

Including our younger members is also seen in our regular social gatherings, such as the recent pizza evening and the annual family picnic, where the young and the young at heart gather in our local park to eat and play games.

We want our future Priest in Charge to help us grow our Junior Church in faith and numbers, spread good news, and encourage those who attend community events to come into the church building when we have regular worship.

Our clergy take their preaching seriously and write thoughtfully in our informative monthly magazine Focus. Courses used in Lent and Advent have been selected by the clergy team, often following topical themes, such as "Saying Yes to Life" by Ruth Valerio, a course about sustainable living, delivered on Zoom during lockdown. We would expect our new Priest in Charge to stretch, challenge and inspire the congregation and support us in making it a more regular opportunity.

### South Crosland C Of E Junior School

**Christain** teaching is also essential with the link to our Church School. We have excellent links with South Crosland Church of England (Aided) Junior School. Despite the Interregnum, regular assemblies are conducted by the retired clergy and school hold at least one service a term in church. Several church members serve on the Governing Body, and other church members assist with reading in school and school visits. The Priest in Charge is expected to become a foundation governor of the school. Some previous incumbents have taken on the role of Chair of Governors.



The teaching and learning at the Junior school are underpinned by a Christian ethos and the four core values: friendship, forgiveness, honesty and respect. The children raise money for charities during Lent and collect gifts to be distributed to those living alone at Christmas. They make regular collections for the foodbank and are involved with Santa's Seniors. This involves sourcing and wrapping presents for older members of the community. Despite Holy Trinity in South Crosland closing, the school is in our parish. This strong connection is important to both the school and the congregation, and we would want our new Priest in Charge to continue with this.





Easter Craft

## Tend – Pastoral work, including healing.

Pastoral care is carried out on an informal basis. We maintain contact with the housebound and residential care homes and parishioners we are asked to visit and pray for. Our retired clergy team administers Holy Communion at home.

We have a small but dedicated team of ministers and lay people trained (Acorn course) in delivering the Healing Ministry. Prayer ministry for Healing has been offered at our churches during the distribution of Communion at some of our joint services. The congregations also share in this ministry through personal private prayer.

Tending to the community we are part of is important to our ministry. We help fund a community worker who, along with the other churches in our Benefice and our Methodist neighbours, enables us to help support our local community. We have taken part in The Bread and Butter Thing and a Warm Welcome. The Warm Welcome has seen us providing a space for the more vulnerable in our community to meet up, have a hot meal of homemade soup and companionship with others. The decision has been made that, although hopefully the weather is turning to warmer times, we will continue to offer a warm space to those who need it once a month over the summer. We also have a film café with our Methodist neighbours, again allowing for friendship, fellowship and hopefully faith to grow.

To support us with our outreach, we are part of the Together Shop. This is a second-hand shop that is based in Newsome. As well as being a permanent feature of the village, it regularly holds pop up shops in the local Scout Headquarters. At the Together Shop we aim to benefit the local community by selling good quality used clothes and other items at very affordable prices, and our environment, by recycling and reusing as much as possible. If we have more than we need for our shop then we also try to benefit others by supplying washed toys etc to the T4U Christmas Shoebox Appeal and offering surplus goods to refugee organisations and underfunded schools.

However, another vitally important benefit of The Bread and Butter Thing, The Together Shop, Warm Spaces and The Gardening Team (to mention a few) is that these all provide an opportunity for people both inside our regular congregation and volunteers from the local community to work together, bringing fellowship and purpose to many people's lives.

Our amazing retired priests and lay workers encourage and support all of this. We want to see this pastoral work for our community and its members continue. Although we pray that the need for some of this is not there, we want to continue to show the love of God to our neighbours and would want the new Priest in Charge to support us with this.





Pop Up Shop



Pop Up Shop



Pop Up Shop



## Fellowship

One of our most successful fellowship, outreach and fundraising events is our monthly Saturday coffee mornings held in the Junior School. These have been running since 2007. The school was chosen as a venue because it is nearer to the main centre of population than the church is. The school are extremely supportive of this event, providing amenities and storage for our provisions. Some staff attend the event and encourage families to do so. The very popular event is further enhanced by a cake stall and a small “pop up shop” of goods from our Newsome community shop. Other groups occasionally enrich the event. The Friends of Dean Wood have held displays. In March the local knit and natter group donated knitted toys complete with mini-Easter eggs for sale. The monies raised go to a charity each month as selected by the attendees. The school have generously offered to deal with the takings and donations. We are all truly blessed by our strong links with school.

Our women’s society, due to dwindling numbers has, joined with the Netherton Methodists “First Wednesday” group. The group gives another opportunity to socialise in the afternoon and have enjoyed entertaining and informative speakers each month.

As a fundraiser and highly enjoyable social, we organise regular monthly quizzes on Sunday afternoons from September to April. During the COVID lockdown the quizzes took place via Zoom and attracted participants who weren’t church goers. Each of these groups serve to nurture fellowship and outreach.



## **Transform – Justice and peace.**

### **Compassion**

Dafne is our Compassion child who lives in Brazil. She is 14 and at school. We have a collection box in each of our churches, and through our sponsorship, we support her. We regularly contact Dafne by letter, including letters from the children at Junior Church and cards for special occasions such as birthdays and Christmas.

### **Sokorabola**

As part of our mission and ministry, St. Paul's maintains a link with a church in the diocese of Rorya in Tanzania. The church we link with is in a small village called Sokorabola. We get an update on their news and building projects from time to time. We love hearing their news and learning how they are developing their community.

Over the years, St Paul's has sent funds to Sokorabola to help fund various projects, such as building a permanent vicarage, a church house, and a Church nursery school. They have completed most of these projects, although there is still a lot of work to finish.

In September 2023, we were privileged to receive a visit from the new Bishop of Rorya. We gave the Bishop a tour of our Church, the bell ringers let him have a go at ringing the bells, and we told him about our Church's work. He updated us on all the work he and his wife have been doing in the parishes he looks after. He told us about Sokorabola and the challenges he has faced growing the church since he entered the position in 2021. After the update, we treated him to a traditional English afternoon tea; we took him to see some of our wonderful local sites, including Beaumont Park and Castle Hill.

The Bishop left us with a beautiful gift, which now sits on our altar. It is a cloth banner with the words Hakuna Matata meaning "no worries" in Swahili. Since the Bishop's visit, we have enjoyed further news from Sokorabola, and we are looking forward to sharing all their news with our new Priest in Charge.

### **Local work**

Justice and Peace is not only an international outreach. Every year we look at who we give our charitable giving to as a PCC. In particular, we support 'The Welcome Centre - Food Bank and More', through Harvest giving and financial support by members of the congregation. They help local families and individuals in crisis with food, toiletries, and other essential items. They also provide advice, guidance, and support to address underlying issues. This sense of justice is also seen in our work previously mentioned with The Bread and Butter Thing and Warm spaces. We got involved through the group of churches led by the Methodists at Berry Brow which is the base and the hub is organised by our Churches Together Community Worker.

Other charities that we have regularly supported include Christian Aid (holding a Big Breakfast type event), Christians Against Poverty and the Church Army. As a congregation we contribute practically and financially to Teams 4U, who lovingly prepare shoeboxes that head to Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Bosnia and Romania. T4U work with organisations like the Red Cross to help find children that are most in need.



## Treasure – Environment

St Paul's Church registered for the A Rocha project EcoChurch in 2020. It quickly achieved the Bronze award, followed in June 2023 by the Silver Award, one of only eight churches in the Huddersfield Episcopal Area to achieve that level at the time of writing. Bronze reflected existing attitudes and practices in the church - a beautiful, thoughtfully reordered building (mentioned in Richard Giles' book "Repitching the Tent" 1996) - the churchyard, carefully maintained front and back and a congregation, mostly living locally, open to a variety of worship and ecumenical links through our LEP with the Methodists.

Silver meant significant change and growth. A Lent course, 2 Cafe Church events, a congregational survey and several years later our score on the Lifestyle section of the Eco Church questionnaire moved from Bronze to Gold. The same happened with the Worship and Teaching section. The gardeners did sterling work on the back of the church, with a mowing regime that allowed invertebrates to pollinate and wild plants to set seed. The River Holme bank now includes sections, which instead of walls, are log piles acting as homes for wild creatures and contributing to flood resilience - leaky dams. An enjoyable litter pick by about 20 church people, local councillors and friends, young and old, filled as many large sacks, nearly half of which was washed and recycled!

We hope our new Priest in Charge will use their years here to help us complete the Eco Church journey to Gold award and help us take the Leeds Diocese "6 Steps to Net Zero Carbon" journey alongside it. This is a mission - it will fulfil the 4th and primarily the 5th of the 5 Marks of Mission: To seek to transform unjust structures of society, challenge violence of every kind, and pursue peace and reconciliation: To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

This treasuring also reaches beyond the church grounds. We have held a well dressing service for two years now in Armitage Bridge. The well is dressed and a powerful, thought-provoking prayer of thanksgiving for the precious gift of water, emphasising how important it is for all creation and life is given.



Well dressing



River Holme



Recycling from the litter pick



Results of litter picking



Gardening

## The Church

While the congregation tries to tell, teach, tend, transform, and treasure, we are lucky to have an amazing building and grounds to do this in and from.

St Paul's is the Parish Church of Newsome, Armitage Bridge and Netherton. It stands in a loop of the River Holme in the middle of a large traditional churchyard.

It is a grade II listed building, consecrated in 1848. It sits at the edge of the Armitage Bridge village, which is located 3 miles (4.8 km) south of Huddersfield in the beautiful Holme Valley.

Our able and enthusiastic Church Wardens and a team of volunteers maintain the churchyard and its adjacent drive. An attractive arched entrance to the Church path takes you past our Commonwealth War Graves. Many people walk through the church grounds to enjoy the surroundings. The churchyard is a beautiful place to sit and contemplate, to enjoy the daffodils in spring, the wild flowers and pollinators in summer, the colours of autumn and the frosty grave stones in winter. It offers various flora and fauna, encouraging wildlife and birds. Being adjacent to the river, this also provides a place of tranquillity. As part of the church's environmental commitment, the churchyard is managed in such a way as to encourage biodiversity.

Our congregation spans all generations, with young and old sharing in our worship. It has a modern loop system for people who are hard of hearing and a seating capacity of around 150.

Our church is an attractive mixture of old and new, reconstructed following a significant fire in 1987. With plenty of natural light, the traditional interior now houses a more modern and versatile space for worship and related activities and a flexible meeting space for hire. There is good access for those less able, and we have a fully equipped kitchen and bathroom facilities, including baby changing facilities. We have plenty of parking, making the use of our facilities easy for all. Our church is easily accessed by pedestrians across our historic river bridge.

Because we have such a fantastic inside space, many community members use our Church to practice their talents and enjoy social fellowship. We host an annual Art Exhibition. We provide an excellent venue for Choral societies to practice, and National music exams are held here. The multifunctional aspect of our church not only brings more people into our inspiring space, but also provides us with a valuable source of income. In contrast, the church is regularly used for meditation and occasionally for quiet days, when reflection is possible in a calm and relaxing environment.

The community which we serve is diverse with a vast array of different housing. We aim to provide a welcoming, special place of worship to all and hope to support a new Priest in Charge in this mission.

We are a new enlarged Parish which now includes worshippers from recently closed church buildings. Our fellowship is strong and we want our new Priest in Charge to be sensitive to our different backgrounds in bringing us together in faith and worship.



Music group with helpers  
Photo by Rena Souten



Inside St Paul's