

CHRIST CHURCH CONSETT



“A Beacon on the Hill”

**We are an open, welcoming and growing family of all ages
doing our best to love and work with each other
and our community as we journey together with Jesus**

CHRIST CHURCH CONSETT OVERVIEW

The parish church of Consett has been a proud local landmark for almost 160 years. The foundation stone for the church was laid on 7th September 1864. There was a time capsule laid beneath the foundation stone in which were placed: a piece of iron, a piece of coal, coins of the realm, a programme of the day's proceedings, copies of all the local newspapers, the names of the building committee as well as a prayer book and bible. The consecration of the church took place on 15th November 1866. There has been one addition to the church since its opening. In the 1890's it was decided that Consett should have a clock, and this was supplied and fitted by the famous Wm Potts and Sons of Leeds.

A former steel-making town, Consett sits above the Derwent Valley near to the boundary between County Durham and Northumberland. At 900ft above sea-level, it is one of the highest towns in England. This makes Consett typically at least 2 °C colder than nearby cities such as Durham and Newcastle, and more prone to frost, ice and snow in the winter months.

Since the closure of the steelworks in 1980, the town has gone through a period of regeneration with Project Genesis, and a number of new housing estates have sprung up around the area.

As a town centre church, we are at the heart of the community. Our congregation is welcoming and hospitable, and we love to host community events such as the annual Remembrance Sunday service and parade, and to welcome members of the wider community into the church for special events such as our very popular Christmas Tree Festival.

We follow a prayerful and traditional Anglican worship pattern, but do embrace more contemporary forms of worship on occasion. Our vision for the future with a new incumbent at the helm, is to grow the church both in numbers and in faith and to attract a more diverse age-range to join in the life of our church.

Our church buildings present some challenges, but we are committed to maintaining and developing them for use by the wider community as well as our own church members.



FUTURE INCUMBENT

This is an exciting opportunity for someone who is seeking a new challenge. Not only will the person appointed be Priest-in-Charge of Christ Church, Consett, they will also become Team Rector of the newly formed Derwent Valley Team Ministry as this emerges in the next year.

Archdeacon of Durham writes:

After a thorough process, Lanchester Deanery decided that the western part of the deanery should be formed into a team, centred on the town of Consett. The new team will comprise the Team Rector plus two Team Vicars, and the pastoral scheme allows flexibility in the assignment of responsibilities within the team. So, clergy could be given a geographical area and particular churches to care for, or responsibilities could be allocated according to the skill set of the clergy appointed and the local community needs, or it could be a combination of the two.

For 2025 and part of 2026, this role will be Priest in Charge of Christ Church, Consett, and this will give the successful candidate chance to 'land well' and get to know the community, town and church members. The new pastoral scheme will come into force during 2026.

One Team Vicar role will be ready for appointment straight after the appointment of the Team Rector, and the other Team Vicar role will be appointed in 2026.

The new Benefice of Derwent Valley comprises the parishes of Benfieldside, Castleside, Consett, Ebchester, Leadgate and Medomsley. The Rector will be involved in the development and implementation of the new pastoral scheme as well as the appointment process for the two Team Vicars.

We are looking for someone who is:

- A priest of deep faith and prayerfulness.
- An accomplished preacher and teacher who can nurture our congregation and lead us in spiritual growth.
- Mission focused, seeking to develop new and innovative ways to be Church in the future as our identity changes and grows.
- Respectful of our current traditions and patterns of worship, while also being willing to explore new patterns of worship to help us to engage with children, teenagers and young adults and create opportunities to enable us to 'grow younger'.
- A good communicator and listener who will develop and encourage the gifts of others, and who will encourage and develop lay ministry within the Parish.
- Outgoing and able to engage with all sectors of the local community.
- Committed to pastoral care in the Parish.
- Willing to engage in our church and social activities and be proactive in our efforts to raise funding for major repairs and developments.
- Able to help us to grow and develop our links with local schools and youth organisations.
- Sincere, discreet, approachable and enthusiastic.
- Capable of leading us into the next phase of our spiritual lives with imagination, vision and humour.

OUR PARISH

Surrounded by beautiful countryside, Consett is located in the north-west of County Durham. Proud of its steelmaking heritage, the town has gone through a period of regeneration since the closure of the steel works 45 years ago. Within easy commuting distance of Durham and Newcastle, the new estates which have sprung up around the town have provided housing for city workers and families who enjoy the outdoor life. The town is a popular place for cyclists and walkers who can enjoy the 12-mile Derwent Walk from Consett to Swalwell. This follows the route of the Derwent Valley Railway which once carried iron ore and passengers from Consett Iron Company to Newcastle and offers some lovely scenery on the way. The Derwent Reservoir is nearby, with spectacular views and walks suitable for all abilities.

The parish church of Consett lies in the very centre of the town and is an impressive building which can be viewed from some distance.



The growing population of around 17,000, is served by a retail park at the edge of town and several new supermarkets have been built in recent years. There is also a Leisure Centre which includes a swimming pool. The town is well served by a good public transport system with buses being available to most of the local towns and villages. The nearest rail transport is from either Durham or Newcastle.

The town has two Local Authority infant and junior schools, plus a Roman Catholic infant and junior school. In 2015 the new purpose-built Consett Academy opened, and the Roman Catholic Senior School is located about 5 miles away in Lanchester. Derwentside Further Education College is situated near to the Church and the retail park.

The town is well supplied with medical centres and dental practices. The nearest hospital with full Accident and Emergency facilities is the University Hospital of North Durham, although other major hospitals are located within 20 miles. The nearby Shotley Bridge Community Hospital provides urgent care as well as a range of clinics. Plans have recently been announced to relocate this local hospital to Consett itself, on a site near to one of the new housing estates. While one of the fastest expanding local economies in the area, there are still some experiencing income and employment deprivation which also impacts heavily on some children.



OUR WORSHIP

We have two regular services each week:

Sunday	9.45 am	Parish Eucharist
Wednesday	9.30 am	Holy Communion

Around 45 people normally attend the Sunday services, and up to 30 on a Wednesday. Refreshments are served after both services. We are delighted that congregation numbers have remained steady during the vacancy, and we have also welcomed some new people to our services during this time.

We have a rota of people who read the lesson and do intercessions and also serve at Communion. Three of our members completed the Deanery “Wings for Worship” course and, as well as doing Morning Prayer services, can offer Communion by Extension. These lay-led services have been very well received by the congregation.

Messy Church takes place on the second Sunday of the month at 3 pm.

We hold the Annual Remembrance Day Service at our church which is very well attended by the British Legion, uniformed organisations, local councillors and others. The parade to the town’s War Memorial starts from outside the church. We also have a small memorial at the side of the church and a service is held there every year to launch the British Legion’s Poppy Appeal.



Our Christmas Eve Christingle Service is very well supported by the local community, and in 2024 this was a lay-led service.

We have the flexibility to use a Nave Altar or the original High Altar for worship.



Occasional Offices

During 2024 the following services were held:

Baptisms	-	20
Funerals	-	17
Weddings	-	1

Baptisms are usually held on the first Sunday of the month.

Mountsett Crematorium is about 15 minutes drive from Consett. Blackhill and Moorside Cemeteries are about a mile away.

OUR PEOPLE

There are 82 people on our electoral roll. Our regular congregation is predominantly an ageing one. We have a reputation for being a very welcoming church and newcomers are encouraged to stay after the service for coffee and a chat.

PCC members work well together as a team. There is an experienced Church Warden and a long serving Treasurer. A new PCC Secretary was appointed in 2024.

There are two Deanery Synod representatives, one of whom is the Deanery Synod Secretary.

There are a number of committed volunteers who do the church cleaning, arrange flowers, serve refreshments after the services, and who help at our monthly Coffee Mornings.

Music is central to our worship and we have a small, but dedicated, choir and an excellent organist and choirmaster.



ENERGISING GROWTH

Being a town centre church, we take every opportunity to engage with the local community. Our monthly Coffee Mornings are very popular with people who do not usually come to church. After our Wednesday service we have “Cuppa and Chat” in the church hall, which is open to anyone to attend.

There has been a Mothers’ Union branch at Christ Church for 127 years. Currently there are 44 members and meetings take place on the first Wednesday of the month. Non-members are welcomed and encouraged to attend to enjoy the friendship and fellowship on offer.

Families are welcomed into the church for our monthly Messy Church, which is lay-led. A Baby and Toddler Group is held in the Church Hall once a week on a Monday afternoon.

Services are held monthly in two of our local Care Homes (Brockwell Court and Greenways Court). These services are lay-led. At Christmas, we held a special service at Brockwell Court with readings and carols, which was attended by some members of our congregation. Home communions are also offered.

Meeting every two weeks, the *For the Journey Group* is a Bible study/discussion group open to anyone who wishes to join including church members and members of the community. A wide range of topics is covered in an open friendly atmosphere, using a variety of course material to open up discussion. Those attending seek to learn more about God and faith and to explore how these impact our lives and the lives of others in the world today. This group is lay-led.

Prayer ministry is offered every Sunday at the end of the service. Those offering this ministry are experienced in praying for the needs of others and offer a confidential service.

Christmas Tree Festival

For the last three years we have held a very successful Christmas Tree Festival in church, which is run by a team of enthusiastic volunteers. The aim of the Festival was to open up the doors of the Church and invite the whole community in for a time of wonder, light and joy. 2024 saw huge crowds coming along, and a one-way system was in operation to ensure that everyone had a warm and safe welcome to the church. The programme during the Festival included performances from local choirs and community groups. The cast of the pantomime being held in the town's Empire Theatre, came to judge the Christmas trees.



2,500 people visited the church during the four days of the Festival, including some separate visits from schools, care homes and a day centre. The money raised was shared between the Consett Foodbank (Food-4-U) and the church. The Festival ended with a lively Community Carol Service which was very well received and was lay-led.

ENGAGING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Messy Church

Our popular Messy Church is held monthly in the Church and the Church Hall. It is lay-led and is run by a dedicated team of volunteers who offer crafts and activities for children and their families.

Following a short service in church, food is offered to children and grown-ups alike. Around 30 children attend, together with parents and carers.



Parents and Babies/Toddlers Group

The group meets in the Church Hall every Monday afternoon during term-time. Children get the opportunity to play with all the toys and to interact with each other. Snack time is particularly popular, and is followed with songs on the mat before tidying up. Up to 30 babies and toddlers attend and the Christmas party is a highlight in the calendar.

Open the Book

Some church members are part of an ecumenical team who visit two schools each month during term times. They involve children who take a role in presenting the story and others participate from the floor.



Air Cadet Sunday

For many years the local Air Cadet Squadron has come to the church to celebrate Air Cadet Sunday. Cadets are aged from 12 to 19, and always enjoy their visit to Christ Church. This year was a special celebration, as the new Squadron standard was dedicated during the service.

School Visits

Local school groups like to visit the church. A group of primary school students came recently to help them to identify symbols. We are always delighted to welcome schools into church, and in the past we have held school Carol Services and Harvest Festival Services.

CHALLENGING POVERTY

CHARITY SUPPORT

Food-4-U

The congregation is very generous in its support for our local foodbank, *Food-4-U*. Donations are collected in church throughout the year. We also donate goods and money given at our Harvest Festival Service and on other occasions. The Christmas Tree Festival was able to donate £1,600 to *Food-4-U* in 2024.

Toy Service

We hold an annual Toy Service on the first Sunday of Advent, when gifts of toys are donated to support the Salvation Army Toy Appeal.

Mothers' Union Charities

With the support of the whole congregation, Mothers' Union fund raise for various charities such as "Make a Mother's Day", "Away from it All", and "Summer of Hope". They are also instrumental in organising an annual Macmillan Coffee Morning. They also supply the University Hospital of Durham with emergency toiletry bags (510 were given last year) as well as supporting the Woman's Refuge and women in Low Newton Prison with toiletries etc.

Other Charities

We also support the Children's Society, Christian Aid, and the Royal British Legion. The launch of the Poppy Appeal in Consett takes place at our church each year.

CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION

The church does not have a graveyard, but it has a small area of shrubs and a lawn. The garden is well maintained. All garden waste, and other waste as appropriate, is recycled.

We use LED lights and our energy provider uses electricity from renewable sources.

The gutters are cleaned out on a regular basis.

Net Zero is a standing item on our PCC Agenda.

ECUMENICAL LINKS

We have strong links with our ecumenical friends in the parish. On Good Friday Consett Churches Together come together for a joint open-air service of witness. The Salvation Army band plays and members of each of the churches do readings and participate in the service.

At Christmas, we all come together for a Carolcade around the town, stopping at each of the churches along the way to sing carols and finishing with hot drinks and mince pies at the final stop.

Representatives from Christ Church are involved in the planning and presentation of the annual World Day of Prayer service, hosting the day in rotation with the other four churches in the town.

FINANCES

The PCC recognise the importance of paying our parish share, and we have paid it in full over the last few years. In 2024 we paid £45,203. The congregation are on the whole generous, but we are having to dig into our reserves to maintain the day-to-day running costs of the church. We are faced with major expenditure for building repairs and cannot sustain a sinking fund long-term. However, we received a generous legacy last year and have been able to set aside £80,000 towards the cost of building repairs.

We are fortunate to have a mobile phone mast in the church tower, and this provides valuable and regular income for the church.

Our regular fund-raising activities are an important source of income and our monthly Coffee Mornings are very well supported.

OUR CHURCH

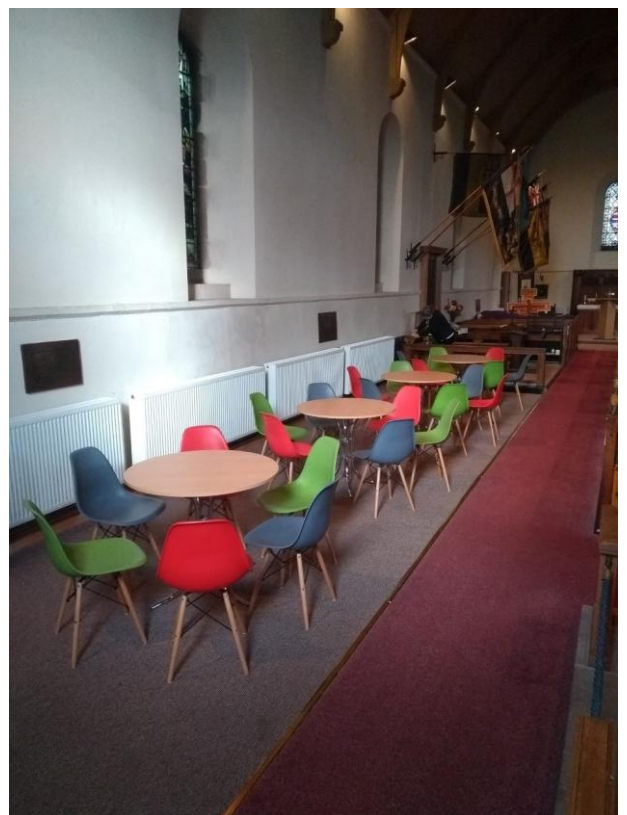
Serving the people of Consett, Delves Lane, Crookhall, Knitsley, Templetown, Villa Real and Blackhill, Christ Church has been in the heart of the community since 1866. The church clock, which

was fitted in the 1890s, was supplied by the famous Wm Potts and Sons of Leeds. In 2024 the clock underwent extensive repairs at a cost of almost £20,000. This money was largely raised through the efforts of the local community who regard the clock as an important local landmark.

It is important to us that the church is a warm and welcoming environment, and when our current heating system was installed we took the opportunity to open up an area at the back of the church by removing some of the pews and creating a relaxing space where we can serve coffee after services and which we also use for meetings. At the same time, we created a platform across the width of the church, which is a great space to use for a variety of events.

The church building does have its challenges. We are facing major repairs to the church tower and other issues raised in the last Quinquennial Inspection Report which we are actively trying to address.

The tower houses an eight-bell ringing change, but we do not have a regular bell ringing team based at the Church.





OUR CHURCH HALL

We are fortunate to have a church hall which is adjacent to the church. It was built around the year 1900 and was originally a school. The hall has a kitchen, central heating and a disabled toilet/baby changing area. There is disabled access to both the church and the hall. During last summer we had some work done on the hall, including plastering, pointing and repainting most of the interior.



The hall is hired out to community groups including the Brownies, Little Movers (classes for babies and young children), and a School Crochet Club. It is also used for our own activities such as our Baby and Toddler Group, Mothers' Union meetings, our monthly Coffee Mornings and other social events.

Open the Book rehearsals take place in the hall, and it is a very popular venue for children's birthday parties. Messy Church activities and the meal also take place in the hall.





THE VICARAGE

A Vicarage has recently been purchased in one of the newer estates about half a mile from the church. It is a detached family home situated on the edge of this popular modern development close to Consett town centre.



THE FUTURE

Our vision is to grow in numbers and in faith in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are excited to:

- ❑ Further develop our links with the wider community and develop opportunities to open up the church for more community events, as well as taking the church out into the town.
- ❑ Continue to support and grow members of the congregation who lead and participate in our worship and encourage new lay ministries.
- ❑ Engage fully with the Deanery, looking to new opportunities with the development of the Derwent Valley Team Ministry
- ❑ Further develop our pastoral care within the community and explore ways of providing bereavement support.
- ❑ Strengthen our links with local schools and encourage them to visit and to hold services in the church.
- ❑ Grow as Christians through Bible study, prayer groups and reflection on mission.
- ❑ Engage with people of all ages, particularly children, teenagers and young adults, developing realistic opportunities to encourage new worshipping Christians.
- ❑ Create a Community Garden in the land between the church and the church hall. The PCC came up with this idea some time ago, and would love this dream to become a reality.



CHRIST CHURCH CONSETT

A BEACON ON THE HILL FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

