

Living churches at the heart of their communities....

**Parish Profile**

**and**

**Person Specification**

**for the Benefice of Durham, St Giles,**

**St Mary the Virgin, Sherburn Village**

**and**

**St Cuthbert’s, Shadforth**

**25th January 2023**

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|  | **Our Diocesan Vision (an Introduction from Bishop Paul)**  At the end of 2019 we gathered representatives from every parish for the Waymark Conference, to pray, talk, share stories and reflect on how we might best respond to God’s call to us to be His Church.  We reflected on our learning from our previous vision and priorities.  We agreed to maintain our Vision:  **‘From the Tyne to the Tees and the Dales to the Sea, blessing our communities in Jesus’ name for the transformation of all’**  Through prayer, conversation and sharing our stories we began to discern maintaining, but sharpening, our three priorities. Through the voice of our children and young people we discerned that we should add a fourth, Caring for God’s Creation. Together we sensed this is God’s call on us.  The result is our missional strategy which we describe as **Renewing Pilgrimage** – an opportunity and invitation for each of our parishes to step out in faith together, responding practically to the call to **Challenge Poverty, Energise** **Growth, Care for God’s Creation** and **Engage with Children, Youth and Young Adults.**  In this we are called to fruitfulness.  In making this a reality it will look different in every community. In some places it will come about in collaboration with others. Nobody is expected to do everything immediately or alone, but we are all invited and expected to find ways to respond relevantly.  In praying for a new Priest in Charge for this benefice, we are looking for someone excited by, and wanting to be part of, this vision – able to lead into the next phase of mission and ready to respond to God.  The Waymark Prayer sums up this hope –  **Loving God, guiding the people of Durham Diocese**  **faithfully through the years:**  **We thank you for saints who have marked our path,**  **young and old, known and unknown,**  **from all places and in all walks of life.**  **Help us to find your way in our generation: transformed by your truth, sharing your life, blessing our communities.**  **Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen**  We look forward to meeting together and sharing in this with you.  In Christ,  +Paul **Bishop of Durham03** |
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| **1.** | **Overview** |
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| **1.1** | **Vision Statement**  We are living and welcoming churches at the heart of our communities; we seek to grow in fellowship through services, prayer and community events and by engaging with all ages within our parishes. |
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| **1.2** | **Parish Setting and Description**  St Cuthbert’s, St Mary’s and St Giles’ churches make up one benefice. Revd Anthony Bash has recently been licenced as an associate priest for the benefice. There is also a much-appreciated group of retired clergy who support us in vacancy. Rowena Ashworth is our Lay Pastoral Minister. See Section 8 for website details to see more information. |
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| **1.2.1** | ***Durham, St Giles*** –consecrated in 1112 and Grade I listed, it lies to the east of Durham City, with easy access to all amenities. The population is approximately 6,000, of which one third are students. There is a variety of social housing, private estates, purpose-built student accommodation, a Women’s Refuge, accommodation for the homeless and part of the parish is the College of St Hild and St Bede, which is part of the university. The housing reflects the social economic status of the parish – parts are designated urban priority areas with many deprived families and individuals and drug and alcohol dependency. There are also many elderly people, alongside more affluent households.  There are four primary schools - Gilesgate, St Hild's (C of E), Laurel Avenue and St Joseph’s (RC). Three other churches lie within the parish – St Joseph's RC, Durham City Baptist Church and The Lighthouse Church (independent). Two GP surgeries - Claypath Medical Centre and Sunderland Road Medical Centre. There are also four well used community centres/hubs. The Electoral Roll figure is 79. Sunday morning attendance is around 35 plus 3 children and up to 3 on Zoom. Sunday Evening Prayer is attended by 6 or more people. Wednesday morning HC is 20. |
| **1.2.2** | ***St. Mary’s, Sherburn Village*** and St. Cuthbert’s in Shadforth form one parish, with one PCC although administration and finances are maintained separately. St Mary’s was consecrated in 1872.  Sherburn is largely a commuter village, 3 miles east of Durham City and has a population of c.3,600. It is well served with retail units, pubs and a working men’s club, a small care home, community centre and sports centre and primary school. The village has mixed housing of both private and local authority/housing association; a large proportion of Sherburn Village remains social housing. The village has expanded over the last twenty years and is currently building up to a hundred new dwellings. New housing estates have altered the overall social classification of the parish, however there still remains some pockets of social deprivation. The current average Sunday attendance is 28 adults with 2 children; midweek average of 12; The Electoral Roll is 36. |
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| **1.2.3** | ***St Cuthbert’s*** – consecrated in 1839, it is a Grade II listed early Victorian church in an attractive rural setting. The population across the three villages is c.1,200 and is located 4 miles east of Durham City in the village of Shadforth. The church covers three small, quite different village communities of Shadforth, Sherburn Hill, and Ludworth. It has a predominantly mature congregation with attendance numbers in decline. The church holds well attended social events which both help support church finances and form outreach to the local communities. There is no school in Shadforth and the one at Sherburn Hill closed recently. There is a primary school in Ludworth. The Electoral Roll is 44. Sunday attendance averages 12-15. |
| **2.** | **Working Together**  Since the Priest vacancy and pandemic, the three churches have grown closer and more responsive to any challenges that have arisen. Sharing one Office Administrator based at St Giles’ has provided good oversight, communications and centralised processes. All six churchwardens meet regularly with the Administrator and supporting clergy to agree a 6-month roster for clergy support, to highlight any issues, agree on dates for combined services and to support each other with social events.  The Parish Magazine “Crosstalk” is evidence of our three churches working together. It keeps the residents of the benefice informed of news, events and activities. |
| **3.** | **Recent History and Events**  St Giles’ celebrated its 900th anniversary in 2012 and the next QI is due in February 2023. St Giles’ has also benefitted from an updated kitchen refurbishment and vestry sink and a new IT facility to better enable online services being available through Zoom.  St Mary’s has celebrated its 150th anniversary since consecration in 2022 and is currently undergoing internal works to repair the Lady Chapel Floor and stonework and plaster works in the Sanctuary and Narthex.  St Cuthbert’s heating was recently upgraded; pews were replaced with comfortable movable and stackable chairs; the font was moved, floors levelled and re-carpeted.  Because there is no church hall, a “servery” was added with alterations to the kitchen and an additional toilet. |
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| **4.** | **Diocesan Priorities** |
| **4.1** | **St Giles**  ***Energising Growth*** – we are actively increasing wider community events aimed at local people to be both socially beneficial and relatively cost neutral. The hope is that more people can see what we have to offer in terms of worship and community with the church being a great hub for community events. We also provide pastoral care through our Lay team. We are looking to our new incumbent to help with this as well as to try and reach out to people who are not an active part of the congregation but who still require spiritual support. |
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|  | ***Engaging with Children and 18–25-year-olds -****t*he pandemic negatively affected children’s groups. The previously well attended “4-for-All” had been a popular service of worship and was actively enjoyed by many younger and older people, but has since closed. The Sunday School has also diminished but still continues, albeit with three children during the first part of the main service.  There is also a mother and toddler group, called “Little Lights”, which runs two mornings per week in the church, with numbers up to 20.  The 4th Gilesgate Scouting Groups have returned to St Giles Church Hall along with Explorers and Beavers, actively taking part in four services per year, for example, Remembrance Sunday and Founder’s Day. We need to grow this relationship involving younger people and now that is has been positively re-established, we want the new incumbent to build on this.  In December 2022, a small group of people from the three churches performed ‘Open the Book' at St Hild’s School. We are hoping to rebuild a closer link with the school. |
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|  | ***Caring for God’s Creation* –** St Giles has three churchyards - the Ancient, surrounding the church (maintained in whole by the local authority), the 1870 (Holy Well Field) east of the church, and the 1927. The Ancient is officially closed; the other two remain open although no new burial plots are left and are partly maintained. Fortunately, we have maintenance support to maintain them which enables local people to enjoy the peace and tranquillity; and we have a group of volunteers from the church and wider community who help keep the grounds attractive, as well as it providing a community event. |
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|  | ***Challenging Poverty* -** Regular weekly contributions to food banks; supporting Warm Spaces initiative in the church hall and donations to agreed charities, like Water Aid. Good responses to appeals for Syrian refugees and the Ukrainian crisis. The church welcomed Syrian refugees who were to be housed in the parish to help improve language skills, offer educational support to teenagers and advice on paperwork and job applications. A broth and soup lunch, once per month, was halted by lockdown. It is hoped that this can be resumed in spring of this year. All social events are made as accessible as possible to everyone: prices kept to a minimum or donations only. The church has supported Narcotics Anonymous and an LGBT group. |
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| **4.2** | **St Mary’s and St Cuthbert’s**  ***Energising Growth* -** we work towards increased numbers through worship, fellowship and other community activities. We work closely with our sister churches to develop Lay members so that we can increase and improve our capacity to provide more pastoral care and support especially to our community and in particular, to the housebound and lonely. |
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|  | ***Engaging with Children and 18–25-year-olds* -** due to personnel changes in the congregation and the pandemic, work to attract younger people and their families has been difficult. We hope to work with our new Priest in Charge towards improving our engagement with local schools for visits, services and mutual interaction. |
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|  | ***Caring for God’s Creation* -** we recycle waste as much as possible. We are looking at ways to reduce our carbon footprint in line with the 2030 net zero target. This includes office supplies and heating costs where possible.  We areworking with volunteers to improve and maintain the church exterior and cemetery grounds, recycling internal and external waste. Planting shrubs and bulbs on the church drive to enhance the environment and improve the wildlife habitat. In St Cuthbert’s for example, we share composting with the Parish council in the churchyard. |
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|  | ***Challenging Poverty* –** on goingregular weekly contributions to food banks, supporting Warm Spaces in the Community Centre; regularly donate to charities as agreed at PCC. Offer help and support through fund raising. |
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| **5.** | **Details of Ministry and Mission, Finance, Buildings and Governance** |
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| **5.1** | **Ministry** |
|  | What currently happens in our Churches and in the Community:  St Cuthbert’s Sunday worship at 09.00  St Mary’s Sunday worship at 09.30  St Giles’ Sunday worship at 11.00  Patronal services and all Lent, Easter, Advent and Christmas services. Occasional Service of the Word - Lay lead, plus a mid-week service every Wednesday at St Giles at 10.00 and monthly 10.00 service on a Thursday at St Mary’s.  Mother’s Union meets monthly at both parishes.  Benefice Bereavement Group meets weekly at St Giles.  “Little Lights” toddlers group meets twice a week at St Giles.  Sunday service demographic is that well over 50% are retired and we are acutely aware that we need to attract younger families into our churches to ensure our future growth and community engagement. |
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| **5.2** | **Mission** |
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|  | Mission is vitally important. Our previous incumbent left with an incomplete Mission Plan and this needs to be started up again, completed and acted upon by all stakeholders in the churches. While elements may vary, given the profiles and needs of our three individual churches, a new overall Mission Plan should nonetheless reflect one direction led by the new priest.  However, we like to think we are happy churches, friendly and all feel part of a family. An important word for us is ‘welcome’. We want to share God’s welcome to the people of our communities. We do this primarily by making “traditional church” inclusive with worship, buildings and services hospitable to all. We actively want to connect with our communities in mission, especially with social events both in church and in the local community.  We promote church services, activities and community events on our church website pages, Crosstalk magazine and Facebook. We hold regular, well attended social events throughout the year including coffee mornings, summer and Christmas fairs, coach day trips, past pilgrim trips, concerts, Harvest Suppers, flower festivals, photographic exhibitions, afternoon tea celebrations plus group meetings such as Knit and Natter every two weeks with all events supported by a strong team of loyal long-standing volunteers. Foodbanks and help to the more needy in the community are key to our thinking.  We want to explore new ways to encourage and satisfy all the needs of the local community to be a part of our Christian family in the Benefice, reaching out to as many people as possible plus seek and develop new ways to help increase numbers in our congregations, encouraging growth. |
| **5.3** | **Finance** |
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|  | In 2022, St Mary’s paid parish share of £6,000. It is currently unable to pay the full parish share due to financial constraints. St Mary’s faces a major financial challenge ahead in regard to the repair and upkeep of the building to ensure it is fit for purpose and development of lay capacity to manage them. The current state of the bell tower and roof will require external funding and grants - continuing to work on raising funds through social community events and stewardship and increased giving.  St Mary’s currently has 31 planned givers in the congregation. |
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|  | In 2022 St Cuthbert’s also paid a much-reduced Parish Share at £6,000. This has become increasingly more difficult due to increases in insurance premiums, utilities and the rising cost of living. Income has diminished over a period of time mainly due to a decline in attendance since the pandemic and the loss of several members of the congregation. It was necessary to transfer funds from the holding account to cover running costs. Appeals have been made to the congregation to both increase giving and support the church social activities, but this is made difficult owing to local issues, where other village events are at odds with those organised by the church. |
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|  | St Giles’ is in the fortunate position of being supported by a Trust Fund so is financially more stable. In addition to usual fund raising and conventional income streams, it was able to pay the full Parish Share of £27,000 in 2022 and will meet its obligations in 2023. |
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| **5.4** | **Buildings** |
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|  | See previous parts of the document for other building information and Section 7 regarding the vicarage. |
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| **5.5** | **Governance** |
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|  | Our PCCs are a good reflection of church profile and membership with a good age range and experience. We work collaboratively with each other - our Treasurers, Deanery teams and our wider local congregation volunteer teams. This includes supporting clergy. As a PCC, we comply with Diocesan safeguarding practices and have safeguarding on the agenda of every PCC and APCM meeting. We have a separate Safeguarding officer at the three churches and planned safeguarding training days for all PCC members and volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults. We fully understand our responsibilities as PCC leaders and look forward to a new Priest in Charge who can lead us more strategically (and hands on) in terms of mission and outreach. |
| **5.5** | **Other Issues** |
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|  | St Giles - there are occasional rough sleepers in the church grounds. Food, drinks, and clothing have been supplied by the church, as well as advice on shelters. Drug-users also occasionally gather around the backdoor of the church and the outer door of the vestry. The local council have supplied gloves and a sharps box for the discarded needles. Car parking can also be issue. |
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| **5.6** | **Current Patterns of Service** |
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|  | See 5.2 Mission. They have not been changed since the last incumbent was in situ. |
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| **5.7** | **Occasional Offices 2022** |
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|  | Managed in the main by a team of very supportive retired clergy, vergers, organists and support from some of the congregation. |
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|  | ***Baptisms 2022***  St Mary’s - 21  St Cuthbert’s - 3  St Giles’ - 24 |
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|  | ***Weddings 2022***  St Mary’s - 1  St Cuthbert’s - 0  St Giles’ - 2 |
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|  | ***Funerals 2022***  St Mary’s - 13  St Cuthbert’s - 2  St Giles’ – 12  Crematorium Only - 10 |
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| **6.** | **Additional Roles** |
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|  | The new incumbent is likely to be asked to be a governor for St Hild’s school, and will be a trustee on the Trust for St Giles and its subsidiary, the Education Trust. Each PCC has two lay members of the Deanery Synod in addition to the incumbent. Our Ecumenical links will need reviving somewhat. |
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| **7.** | **Housing**  The vicarage is located next to St Giles Church, in Gilesgate, Durham. It is a relatively modern vicarage, with a large garden.  We do not have photographs of the interior of the property as it is currently occupied. We suggest contacting James Alderton, Head of Property and Facilities at Cuthbert House because that department is currently administering the lease of the vicarage and may have further information.  St Giles’ vicarage: |
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| **8.** | **Additional Information** |
|  | For further information and pictures of our churches, please go the following websites:  Web and Social Media Links:  [St Giles Church Durham (stgilesdurham.org.uk)](http://stgilesdurham.org.uk/)  [St Mary's Church, Sherburn (sherburnchurch.org.uk)](http://sherburnchurch.org.uk/)  [St Cuthbert's Church, Shadforth (shadforthchurch.org.uk)](http://shadforthchurch.org.uk/)  <https://www.facebook.com/StGilesDurham>  <https://www.facebook.com/sherburnchurch>  [http://www.countydurhamfamilies.info/kb5/durham/fsd/event.page?id=0WVnZR9I5pU&](https://emea01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.countydurhamfamilies.info%2Fkb5%2Fdurham%2Ffsd%2Fevent.page%3Fid%3D0WVnZR9I5pU%26&data=05%7C01%7C%7Ccffb82c63bb64578267308dafade9e4d%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638098131283166040%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=eUSQQ4xTyrn%2BK5uVmkrPHKfXSkeWNhRuK%2BwQbfCXlC8%3D&reserved=0) |
|  | **A personal note from Mrs Alex Ryder, Headteacher, St Hild's College CE (Aided) Primary School:**  “A very warm welcome to St Hild’s College CE Aided Primary School, a loving, family school based in the parish. Our school vision reflects a passionate commitment to learning and recognition of the uniqueness of individual learners and that we can all 'Shine Bright'. It is driven by our desire to offer the best possible education for our pupils in partnership with parents and the local community.  We look forward to welcoming a new priest to our St Hild's family who can work with us to support our wonderful pupils, staff and families. We look forward to meeting you.” |
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| **9.** | **Person Specification** |
| **9.1**  **9.2**  **9.3**  **9.4**  **9.5**  **9.6**  **9.7**  **9.8**  **9.9**  **9.10**  **9.11** | **We would like our new Priest:**  To be focused on traditional Sacramental ministry in all three churches and to be flexible enough to cater for different church traditions and worship styles and work with us to facilitate and continue to encourage a close working Benefice.  To have varied parochial and pastoral experience, with exceptional organisational and communication skills. We have a varied demographic in our benefice as highlighted in section 1.2 from areas of urban priority to relative affluence. We need someone flexible and driven enough to engage with all aspects of society and make a difference.  We want the new priest to help us share our Christian faith and nurture discipleship and help new people come to faith. We want them to be openly available for this engagement and have experience of doing this already and enable us collectively to grow.  To work with us to focus on Mission in our communities: to be visible by introducing themselves locally, shopkeepers, businesses, pubs, social clubs, care homes, schools - reaching out to as many as possible to help spread the Faith and encourage new members to join our congregations, services and events.  To ensure a high standard of worship whilst being a visionary and strategic thinker who will help us move forward; to work with us to create a new Mission Plan and work with the Diocesan priorities especially in the more deprived areas of the Benefice.  To ensure Safeguarding is at the heart of our ministry.  To encourage and develop Lay led ministry, readers and intercessors in our churches and create a sustainable future for the church, working with local schools and outreach within the local community.  We are looking for someone with an outwardly looking, proactive approach to help church and faith growth so we look forward to working with our priest to explore new ways of Mission to bring more people into church, exploring different forms of worship and services.  To actively lead and encourage the environmental net zero footprint and 2030 challenge.  To take time to get to know each of our churches and congregations and families, and for us to get to know our new Priest.  To guide us on and to move forward. |