



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Minster Profile



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Welcome



The Bridges Shopping Centre

Sunderland Minster is a church set in the heart of the City of Sunderland in the Wearmouth Deanery within the Diocese of Durham. We seek to be 'open to God and open to all' as we worship God, serve our city in the name of Jesus Christ while being open to where the spirit is leading us.

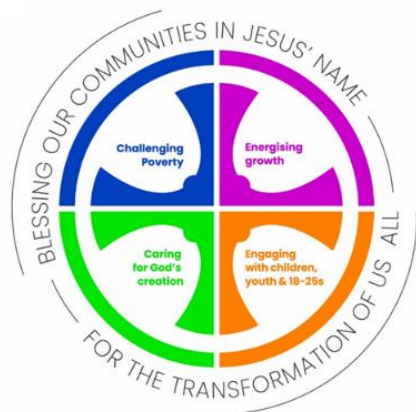
We have both formal and informal worship, are home to a huge range of activities and have significant partnerships with Sunderland City Council, the Mayor of Sunderland, the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear and the University of Sunderland. The Minster Church of St Michael and all Angels and St Benedict Biscop, Sunderland has significant historical foundations, but we are also looking ahead to develop our mission, our ministry and witness in joyful anticipation of where God will lead us.

We are committed to the four diocesan priorities of Challenging Poverty, Energising Growth, Caring for God's Creation and Engaging with Children, Youth and Young Adults and want to continue to grow through them. As we continue the journey on which Christ has called us, we are looking for a new Canon Provost to walk that journey with us in leadership, discernment, and witness. We pray that you will read and discern whether God might be calling you to walk that next part of our journey with us.



The City Crest from the East Window

Our Vision



Sunderland Minster has a unique vocation within the city as its' minster church and with that comes a unique opportunity to witness in the name of Jesus Christ and the potential to build on being the spiritual and missional heart of our city.

Our vision is to be 'open to God and open to all' and through our diocesan priorities we as Sunderland Minster seek to further this vision.

Challenging Poverty

Our vision is to continue and grow our work of challenging poverty through prayer, action and partnership following the example and teaching of Christ while acknowledging the many kinds of poverty within our city.

Energising Growth

We have a vision to grow in strength and number and diversity as the people of Jesus Christ in this place to serve our city, proclaim the gospel and be the church we are called to be.

Caring for God's Creation

At the Minster we believe that the whole of creation belongs to God and our vision is to continue to develop our love and care for the world God has entrusted to us.

Engaging with children, youth & 18-25s

We have a vision that includes all ages and know that we need to continue to develop our work with and ministry to children, young people and young adults.



Our New Provost



We are seeking a new Provost who will share our vision and who has the ambition and strategy to inspire us into the church we are called to be.

We seek a new Provost who IS:

- An innovative leader who through encouragement, motivation and nurture will enable us all through collaboration to fulfil our aspirations to serve God, each other, and the city.
- A compassionate and inclusive leader, empathetic to a diversity of experience and views who can serve our city with all its diversity and challenge.
- A missional leader who has a heart for reaching out into our City in Jesus name and a desire to nurture new Christians.



We seek a new Provost who CAN:

- Lead worship, preach and teach to inspire us to a deeper discipleship relationship with Christ.
- Lead our team of lay and ordained people as we seek to grow in mission and ministry taking the good news of Christ into the city.
- Lead and grow our ministry to the wider City of Sunderland its businesses, institutions, and organisations.



We seek a new Provost who WILL:

- Lead and enhance the worship ministry of the Minster, open to our different worship traditions while leading and encouraging innovative styles of worship as we grow.
- Lead and oversee the development of the Minster Church, its finances, structures volunteers and staffing with the support of the Diocese subject to an upcoming bid to the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board.
- Lead and grow our work to the vulnerable as we support those in most need in our city with humility and compassion.
- Be an Honorary Canon of Durham Cathedral

We seek a Provost who can EXPECT:

- A willing and helpful church family who will pray for you, walk the journey with you and work with you.
- A caring and supportive staff team who will show care, understanding and co-operation.
- Support from the Deanery and the wider Diocese.
- A willingness to partner with the minster from the city's major stakeholders and institutions.
- A beautiful and diverse city with breathtaking beaches, brilliant leisure opportunities and wonderful people and communities.



The City of Sunderland



The City of Sunderland has a population of over 270,000 and spans a large area stretching both north and south of the River Wear and includes the heart of Sunderland city centre, the port of Sunderland and former shipbuilding and colliery communities. The city also includes areas of urban regeneration as well as significant new growth and housing development.



At the forefront of the regeneration of the city centre is the Riverside Sunderland development which will reinvent the city's historic heart as an extraordinary place to live, provide a new and dynamic business location and add to the city centre as a place of culture and leisure. Riverside will create 1000 sustainable new homes, 1 million square feet of modern business space as well as green spaces.



The city holds football at its heart and is home to the historic Sunderland Association Football Club with state-of-the-art facilities at the Stadium of Light and now the Beacon of Light which provides community and sporting opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Sunderland is a city by the sea with the stunning beaches of Seaburn and Roker which provide significant leisure opportunities for the local population and people across the North East.



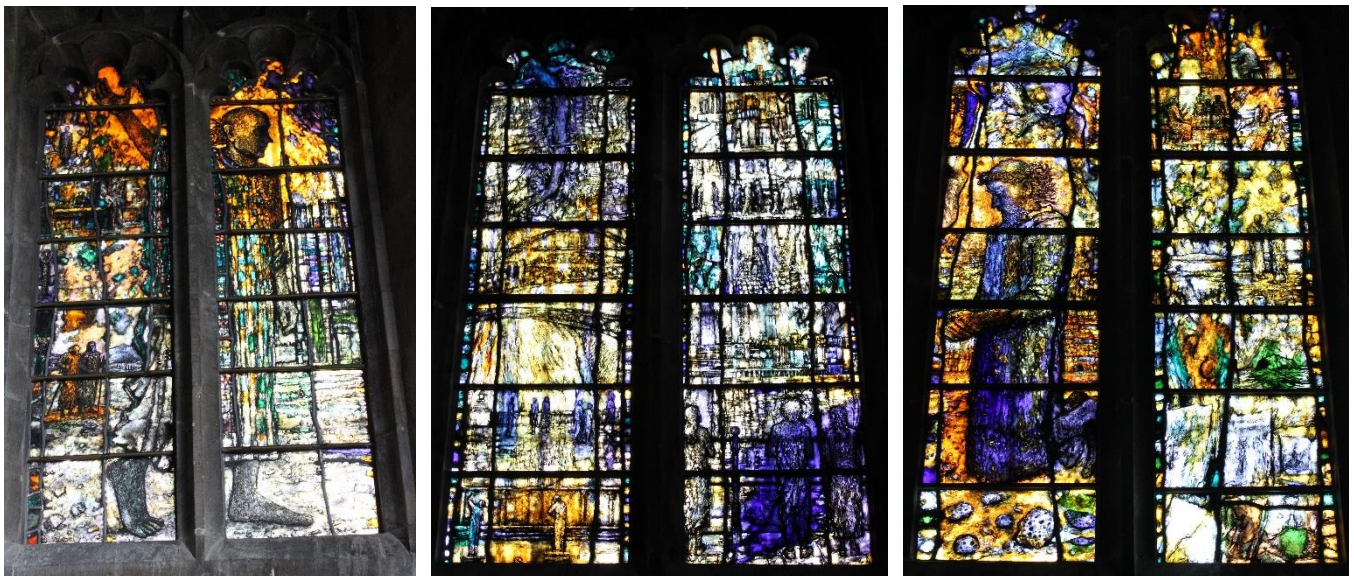
The population of the city is broad and multicultural bringing a rich diversity and vibrancy, it is home to the University of Sunderland with its 27,500 students that come from the local communities, the wider country together with a large number of international students. The University brings life and diversity to the city and a huge opportunity for learning.



The city of Sunderland was shortlisted in 2021 in its bid as a 'city of culture', in the words of the City Bid

“The birthplace of the Venerable Bede, Sunderland has been a city of culture for 1,400 years. Centuries before shipbuilding, centuries before coal, culture and learning was at the heart of Sunderland’s identity. There is always something to see and do in Sunderland. Discover a wide range of events and festivals perfect for anyone from families to students, many of which are free! The arts and culture scene in Sunderland has provided the city’s creative heartbeat for generations and we are showing no signs of changing!”

The windows of the Bede chapel in Sunderland Minster were commissioned to represent the city’s historic spirituality and its modern culture helping us to hold our city in prayer.



The first depicts the life and ministry of St Bede, the third the life and ministry of Benedict Biscop with the centre window depicting the city itself.

The city has a huge amount to offer and has incredible opportunities for the church’s mission, ministry, and witness.

The Minster Church



A church dedicated to St Michael has stood on this site for over a thousand years. For most of that time it has been known as 'Bishopwearmouth Parish Church.' In 1998 following the grant of city status to Sunderland the church was redesignated as 'Sunderland Minster', one of the first minster churches in England since the reformation. In May 2007 the church adopted Benedict Biscop as Sunderland's patron saint and was redesignated as an extra parochial place with Benedict Biscop's name in its title. In 2018 Sunderland Minster became a parish church once again and work is ongoing to define its parish boundaries.

Sunderland Minster is a member of the Major Churches Network and as such is recognised as a historically significant church building with a large scale of both opportunities and challenges. This membership provides both support and opportunities for the new Canon Provost in the leadership of the Minster. The Minster church is part of the Minster Quarter, the cultural district of the city named after it, the quarter includes the historic Sunderland Empire Theatre and other modern facilities. The Minster is highly regarded as a partner by the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, the Mayor of Sunderland, Sunderland City Council and the University of Sunderland. These significant civic connections are a huge opportunity for the church in the city.





The Bede Chapel is set aside for quiet prayer and used for midweek services. The reserved sacrament is kept there, and candles may be lit at the chapel entrance. Many occasional visitors use this space on a weekly basis.

The Minster has a Café space that seats 60 with a fully fitted catering kitchen, it has operated under various lease agreements and is used by the church for events and occasions. The

minster has an upper lounge and adjacent room that was formally an IT suite which is ripe for a new use.

There is an upstairs office, a sacristy, large choir vestry with servery as well as significant undercroft storage.

In the south transept the Minster has its own Yurt used for quiet and reflective prayer services. The monthly Taizé service is held here, and it is used by visiting school groups.

The bell tower has a 10 circle ring of bells which were recently fully restored, unfortunately there is no bell team at present.



Clergy Team

The Minster Church is supported by a small team of clergy who work with the Canon Provost, these currently include the ordained Anglican Chaplain of the University of Sunderland who is licensed to Sunderland Minster, a non-stipendiary priest who is currently chaplain to the Bridges Shopping Centre and retired colleagues with PTO.

The Minster has been a place of clergy training and development and we would be keen to appoint a provost who can not only lead the team but take on the role of Training Incumbent.

Who We Are



The worshipping community of Sunderland Minster is eclectic, drawing people from all over the city and beyond. The Minster operates throughout the week and seeks to serve the community in worship, mission and partnership with many organisations throughout the city.

Worship at the Minster on a regular basis looks like this:

Sundays at 9:45am

Sung Eucharist

Sundays at 11:30am

Feast Service

Sunday Evenings

Taizé (1st Sunday) at 6pm

Open Table (2nd Sunday) at 6pm

Evensong (3rd Sunday) at 4:30pm

Thursday at 12:15

Midweek Communion



What We Do Now



Energising Growth

We have a vision to grow in strength and number and diversity as the people of Jesus Christ in this place to serve our city, proclaim the gospel and be the church we are called to be.



Choral Worship

The Minster has a small but effective choir whose role is to enhance the worship of the church. The choir leads singing in the sung eucharist and choral evensong as well as carol services and other special services as required.



Feast

Feast is an all age worship service seeking to reach those who are unchurched, de-churched or simply do not find formal church easily accessible to themselves or their families. We also respond to the different needs of those whose first language is not English (refugees). Feast is held later on in the day to help those with children. It uses a 'dialogical' approach to allow questions and revelations to come naturally to those who come. It gives a variety of responses to the Gospel story, from stillness to crafts.

Taizé

The Minster seeks to offer worship in a variety of styles, and finds Taizé worship (chants and periods of silence) as a way of supporting those who find a more contemplative approach helpful in their spiritual journey and walk with Jesus. We meet monthly in the Yurt or the Bede Chapel.

Inclusive Church

We have been a member of Inclusive Church since 2019. IC seeks to support churches, and individuals, in exploring ways to become more inclusive in the areas of disability, ethnicity, gender, mental health, poverty, and sexuality. The Minster, as a city centre church is particularly suited to exploring out workings of ministry in all of these areas. We work with city agencies to try support people who come to us because of our location with concerns in any of these areas.





Open Table

The Minster is also affiliated to the national organisation Open Table and holds a monthly inclusive service for LGBTQIA folk and their families and allies. This has been much appreciated. Word is spreading that the Minster is a safe place. Sunderland Minster has had a stall at the local Pride since 2016 (excepting lockdown) and promotes an active Christian presence on the Pride parade.

Visitor Ministry

The Minster is a welcoming place for visitors who come for many reasons; Those who wish to find information on various interests; those tracing their family heritage; for teaching children /school groups, both primary & secondary, about churches, their history, Christian ritual & belief; hosting visiting Bell Ringing teams; providing talks and tours for community groups as well as being open for casual visitors to drop in. We are open at present 10am - 2pm Mon.-Fri. but we would like to increase these hours.

We support and have extended opening during National Heritage Open Days and in support of local events with the addition of being a venue for Local Art Groups, students from the University of Sunderland. The minster is host to installations from nationally and world class artists.

We are host to various musical events and are in embryonic discussions with an international events company that hold bespoke events across cathedrals and heritage buildings throughout the world.



We pray that our New Provost will help us find new ways to grow in presence and in number, in depth of spirituality and in love for our lord Jesus Christ as we share that love with the city.



Challenging Poverty

Our vision is to continue and grow our work of challenging poverty through prayer, action and partnership following the example and teaching of Christ while acknowledging the many kinds of poverty within our city.

Welcoming those Seeking Asylum

For several years a significant portion of our congregation has been made up of asylum seekers, latterly mostly from Iran. We support them as much as we can in collaboration with other agencies and advocating for them when their claims are heard by writing letters or attending appeals.

Food Bank Support

Sunderland Minster is a drop off point for the Food Bank network and supports those in need in the city centre.



We pray that our New Provost will help us find new ways and a new energy to reach out to those who are marginalised in our city so that they too may know the love of Jesus Christ in word and action.

Engaging with children, youth & 18-25s

We have a vision that includes all ages and know that we need to continue to develop our work with and ministry to children, young people and young adults.



Student Ministry

Sunderland is a University City with over 20,000 students. We seek to serve that student community, and link with the chaplaincy provision of the Diocese. The Chaplain of the University is an integral part of the clergy team at of the Minster. He or She runs services and events at the Minster that are likely to attract students into the life of the Minster.

We pray that our New Provost will inspire us to find new ways together of engaging with the younger people of our city and making them feel that this is their Minster.



Caring for God's Creation

At the Minster we believe that the whole of creation belongs to God and our vision is to continue to develop our love and care for the world God has entrusted to us.

Sunderland Minster Eco Church

The climate crisis is a daily reality for the planet and its people. Eco Church covers several different areas in the life of our church and its community: Worship and Teaching; Buildings; Land; Community and Global; Lifestyle (eco sustainability) and Children and Youth. We have agreed to support ideas from the group and the congregation in these areas and look forward to developing them in the future as we apply for accreditation.

We pray that our New Provost will encourage us in this work and support the Minster in working towards the Church of England's net-zero target as we love the world God gave us together.

Our Context & Challenges



Sunderland Minster has been at the heart of the city for 25 years, our context is changing rapidly as the city is being transformed. Much of the transformation is here in the city centre just around us and we are keen to be part of something new and exciting here in Sunderland.

We believe the Minster has a vital part to play in the future of our City and our City Centre, our enthusiasm for this is supported by the Mayor and Chief Executive of Sunderland City Council, The University Vice Chancellor and the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear.



There is significant support from the Diocese and Deanery for the work here in Sunderland Minster and we are exploring the future together, we are looking for our new Canon Provost to come and not only join that conversation but lead us into the next stages of our discernment as Sunderland Minster.



We believe these are the challenges that lie ahead:

While our building is sound, we need help to grow our finances.

While our activities are varied, we need help to be more open and welcoming.

While we are involved in many aspects of church and city life we need help to think strategically.

While we have been a Minster church for 25 years, we need help to adapt to the current needs of our city to reach out to it in Jesus' name.

Is God calling you to take the next steps of our journey with us?

The Rectory



The Rectory, 21 Thornhill Terrace

The rectory is situated on the highly regarded Thornhill Terrace in Sunderland City Centre and is only a few minutes walk to the Minster.

The house is a three-story mid terrace Victorian Townhouse, it has 2 large reception rooms and 4 bedrooms. The house has a lawned front garden with yard and a garage to the rear.

It is close to all the amenities of the city centre, local schools, and transport routes.





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