



PARISH PROFILE 2026

ST STEPHEN'S SOUTH SHIELDS



DIOCESE
OF DURHAM

Our Diocesan Vision - An introduction from Bishop Sarah

This is an exciting time to be exploring joining the Diocesan family in Durham Diocese. We are on the cusp of a fresh chapter in our mission and ministry together. We are currently discerning with the National Church who will be the next Bishop of Durham, called to lead as we seek to make real our vision for the transformation we so desire across our Diocese. We are deeply encouraged by the award last year of significant national funding, demonstrating real confidence in our vision.

Our diocesan strategy for transformation and missional growth ('Called to Fruitfulness') is an opportunity and invitation for each of our parishes to step out in faith together, responding practically to our priorities to **Energise Growth, Engage with Children, Youth and Young Adults, Challenge Poverty, and Care for God's Creation**. 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.

At St Stephen's, this feels particularly relevant. The church sense the importance of **Energising Growth** – both growing in depth as disciples but also reaching out to their community with the love of God in Christ. Tied in with this is the felt need to **Engage with Children and Young People**. St Stephen's have a desire to see more children and young people join their community and meet Jesus for the first time. Being in a relatively deprived area and committed to being an environmentally friendly church, St Stephen's are acutely aware of the importance of **Challenging Poverty and Caring for God's Creation**.

In praying for a new Priest for St Stephen's, we pray for someone to be excited by this vision for the future and hear God calling them to join in with what he is doing here.

Together we pray hopefully

*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,

+Sarah
Bishop of Jarrow
Acting Bishop of Durham





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INTRODUCTION

WITH GOD, NO CHURCH IS ORDINARY

This is an exciting, one church post in the lively northern town of South Shields in the Diocese of Durham.

Across the Diocese there is a hope to see transformation and missional growth as we seek to **Energise Growth, Engage with Children, Youth, and Young Adults, Challenge Poverty, and Care for God's Creation**, and we want to see this happen in South Shields too.

Here at St. Stephen's **we have a desire to be a church that creates disciples who share the love of God in Jesus Christ with our parish.** We have an active and colourful community and we would love to see people in our parish encounter God and join in with what he's doing amongst us.

We are searching for an enthusiastic and energetic new Priest-in-Charge who loves Scripture, will encourage us to grow as disciples, and help us as we seek to **reach out to young people** and families in our community.

Could you be the person to lead us into this new chapter of our church's life?





“ WE WERE MADE SO WELCOME AT ALL THE GROUPS AND SOCIALS WHEN WE RECENTLY MOVED TO THE AREA ”



WORSHIP

The **10am Holy Communion service on Sundays** is at the heart of our worship at St Stephen's. We have refreshments both before and after the service which is informal, making use of Common Worship. Music is provided by a CD accompaniment and hymnbook. We are hoping to install a screen in the future and **would like the new priest-in-charge to help us explore new ways of worship. We run a small Sunday school for children**, which has Bible stories, songs, and arts and crafts.

On average, we have around 40-50 people joining us on any given Sunday, with around 60 people in our worshipping community. **Our congregation has nearly doubled in size since pre-Covid** and we are praying that the Lord will continue adding to these numbers.

Prayer is a regular feature of our worshipping life together. We host a monthly evening prayer meeting on the 1st Sunday of the month as well as a weekly Zoom prayer meeting on Wednesdays, which we are open to making an in person service. We also have an annual week of prayer where **we are really attentive in seeking God.**

On top of our weekly rhythm of worship, **we celebrate special seasonal services** including Holy Week and Christmas, with our Christingle and All Age festival services being well attended and widely enjoyed.

40-50

USUAL SUNDAY
ATTENDANCE





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THE SUNDAY
SERVICE IS A
GREAT START
TO THE DAY
AND FOCUSES
MY TIME WITH
JESUS

”



MISSION, DISCIPLESHIP, AND COMMUNITY

OUR AIM IS TO GROW OUR CHURCH SO MORE OF OUR COMMUNITY WILL KNOW THE LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST

There is a real commitment to faith in our congregation and a desire to hear what Scripture says. We have a study group that meets semi-regularly across the year and this is a valuable way of helping our church read and understand the Bible together. The group is well-attended, with attendance in double figures.

Informal pastoral visits are an important part of our care towards one another and are something we do when need arises in our community.

One thing we would love to see more of in the future is becoming a church of disciples who go out and make more disciples. **Not only do we want to grow deeper in faith, we want to grow in number, and grow younger too.** Though this is our heart, we will need the help, support, and enthusiasm of a new priest-in-charge to lead us into this,

Last year we were awarded Eco Church Bronze status and we continue to work towards making St Stephen's a more environmentally friendly church as we aim for the Eco Church Silver award.

There is an opportunity to grow men's ministry and outreach in the parish. It would be wonderful for our church to be a place where intergenerational relationships flourish, not only in our church, but between the men in our church and our community too.



MISSION, DISCIPLESHIP, AND COMMUNITY

St Stephen's is well-connected with our local community.

We have a good relationship with Hadrian's Primary School, and one of our churchwardens sits on the board of governors. Despite the good relationship at the organisational level, we don't currently do work with the children at the school - though this is something we are keen to explore.

In addition to this, we also have a good relationship with the Ocean Road Community Centre, and **we have excellent ecumenical links** with The People's Mission - an FIEC church within our parish boundary.

Another way we stay connected with the local area is through our parish magazine, which has a readership of around 100 people.

We support a number of national charities, including the British Legion, Children's Society, and, with our seafaring heritage, the RNLI. Further from home, we support the Lert Sa Wat Child Development Project in Thailand, who aim to give Thai children the chance to escape poverty. It was a real highlight to visit the project several years ago, alongside other churches in the North East, and help refurbish their playground equipment.



MISSION, DISCIPLESHIP, AND COMMUNITY

We have a thriving community life here at St Stephen's **with a range of well-attended groups and regular socials.**

We run weekly coffee mornings, Friday socials, a May Day fayre, a summer BBQ, afternoon teas, and a Burns' Night Supper and ceilidh. **The regularity and diversity of our social events ensures there's always variety of things going on** and we hope to include more younger people going forwards.

Outside of these social events, **we have several community groups.** We run a weekly pensioner's club on Thursday afternoons which is a warm space where you will be met with friendly faces, hot drinks, and great company. If that wasn't enough, we also have a **weekly parent and toddler group**, and are also home to the delightful South Tyneside Pipe and Drum band.

These vibrant groups and socials are the lifeblood of our community, providing us with great opportunities not only to build up our community life but also make friends and connections with the people who live in and around our parish.





THE BUILDINGS

The Church

St. Stephen's is a Grade II listed building consecrated in 1846. It's known locally as the Pilot's Church as historically, it's been the place of worship for port pilots, tugboat men, and other river workers.

The building was converted in 1977 into a **highly flexible, dual-purpose building**. The nave and chancel are divided by an ornate timber and glass screen with **moveable timber screens which divide the building in two**. The conversion also saw **the installation of a lounge and kitchen**.

The conversion has greatly increased the use and utility of the space and it is hired out to all manner of groups from Art Venturers to children's dance classes, and Zumba throughout the week.

The church houses a stunning lightbox, created using windows from our now closed sister church, St Aidan's, and a Harrison-Harrison organ.

Our building is lovingly looked after by members of the congregation **and, on the whole, in good condition**. However, there is some outstanding work on a few of the windows and a recent storm blew off some of the roof tiles.



THE BUILDINGS

The land surrounding the church was open for internments until the late 1950's. It was closed due to bomb damage the headstones sustained during the Second World War. There is still a Remembrance Garden, war memorial, and several Commonwealth War Graves in our grounds

The Vicarage

Naturally, this post comes with suitable housing provided for you. An appropriate property will be purchased for this role, please discuss your requirements with the Archdeacon of Sunderland and we will try our best to facilitate them.

HELP AND SUPPORT

We are blessed with a committed congregation who are happy to help in the life of our church.

We have **longstanding and dedicated PCC members**, with all of our roles being filled. In addition, there is a small music tech team who help make our Sunday services run smoothly, a lay reader, and a supportive retired member of the clergy,

At its best, church ministry is incredibly rewarding but we are aware it comes with its challenges. **We want our new priest-in-charge to feel loved and supported** and we are committed to helping you take appropriate time off each week and throughout the year. We also recognise that our faith flourishes when our priest-in-charge is able to spend time in prayer, study, and retreat, and we will try our best to help you do this. Naturally, we are committed to paying all reasonable expenses incurred in your service here.



Meet the PCC

Left to Right:

Liz Stephenson (Churchwarden), Roz Byers, Anne Edwards (Churchwarden and Treasurer), Eric Edwards, Jacqueline Coing, Glenda Middleton, Mel Johnson, Peter Cross, Joan Craig (PCC Chair), Joan Stephenson (Church Secretary)

FINANCES

£35K

AVERAGE INCOME

£28K

AVERAGE
EXPENDITURE

On the most part, **church finances at St Stephen's are pretty stable** and we are not furiously scrabbling around to make ends meet.

Our average income is slightly more than our expenditure but, as we have some roof repairs coming up for the building we are putting aside savings for this.

Currently one of our churchwardens is acting as treasurer, but discussions around finance happen every PCC meeting and decisions are made collaboratively.

Across the PCC, **we have experience in successfully applying for grant funding**, having received it multiple times in the past.

We've struggled to meet our parish share of late but meeting it in full is something we are hoping to do in the coming years.

THE PARISH

South Shields is a vibrant coastal town in the North East of England. Lying on the south bank of the mouth of the River Tyne, where it meets the North Sea, the town is located 7.5 miles to the east of Newcastle, 7.5 miles north east of Gateshead, and 6.5 miles north of Sunderland. South Shields is moderately sized with **a population of around 75,000 people**. Despite its size, it still **has a communal and neighbourly feel to it**.

The town is well-connected with **Metro rail links to Gateshead, Newcastle, and Newcastle airport, with onward national rail services to London and Edinburgh**. It also lies within **easy reach of the A19 and A1** so North Yorkshire and Northumberland are also in striking distance.

South Shields has a history that dates back to the Stone Age, in addition to Roman, Saxon, and Viking influences. Several hundred metres from St Stephen's and in the middle of a housing estate lies Arbeia, a partially reconstructed Roman fort (with an attached museum). This Roman heritage is reflected in many of the road names in the parish, and the name of the adjacent Hadrian's Primary School.

The town expanded extensively during the Industrial Revolution, becoming a hub of manufacturing, coal mining and shipbuilding. As with many towns in the UK, the coal and shipbuilding industries gradually closed, and though there is still an active passenger and freight port, **South Shields continues to feel the economic effects of the loss of these industries**. The parish of St Stephen's itself has an **IMD ranking of 590 (out of 12178)**, placing it in the top 5% most deprived parishes in the country.



THE PARISH

South Shields is seeing an ever increasing role for leisure and tourism. The town is **blessed with beautiful beaches**, which are a popular surfing location. In addition to the beaches, there are excellent walking and cycling routes, outstanding leisure complexes, a sea front amusement park, superb restaurants, and the Customs House theatre.

The town centre is currently undergoing a £20m, 10 year regeneration plan, led by the South Tyneside Council, **which has breathed new life into this vibrant community.**

The population of South Shields is predominantly white British and, being home to one of the largest Bangladeshi communities in the North East, is **a welcoming, multicultural community.**

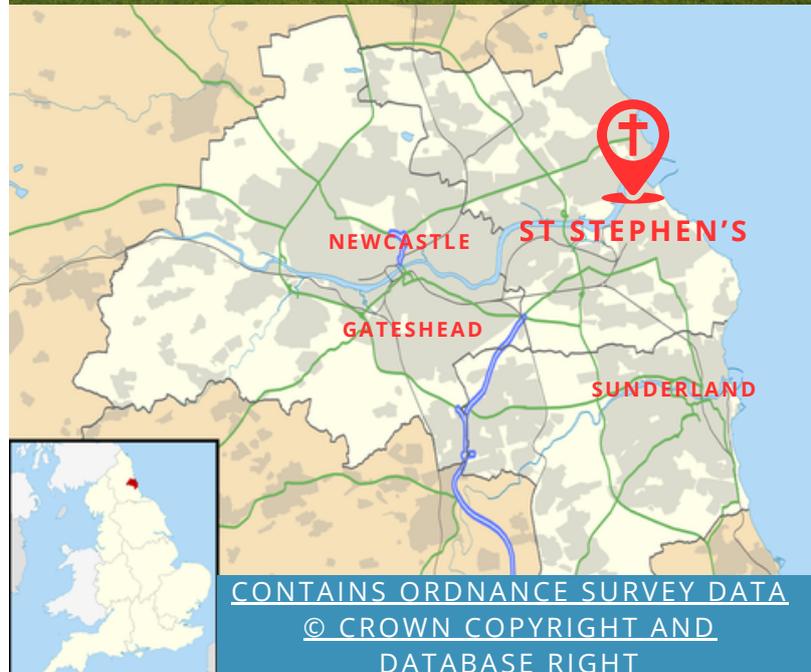
Aside from Hadrian's Primary School, the parish is also home to Marine Park Primary. **The schools are** respectively **rated 'good' and 'outstanding' by Ofsted.**

St Stephen's Church is located in the west side of the parish, a stone's throw away from the River Tyne. The People's Mission is the only other church within the parish, and the parish is also home to two mosques.

South Shields is a hidden gem of England and a fantastic place to call home.



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WE HOPE TO BE
A GROWING
CHURCH WHO
SHARE THE
GOOD NEWS OF
JESUS

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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Looking towards the future, we will need some help negotiating the challenges we face. Nevertheless, we are hopeful about the opportunities in front of us.

Challenges

Like many churches, we have a committed but ageing congregation, and children and young people are underrepresented in our congregation.

Opportunities

There are several new-build housing estates within the parish and the people of South Shields have a warm attitude to faith.

There is a real desire to see growth in our church, both growth in depth as we deepen discipleship and growth in number. We are committed to working with the new priest-in-charge to work for this.

Our building is in a good location and in a good state of repair.

We have good ecumenical links with People's Mission Church and we work together to support one another.

Our Eco Church status may appeal to younger generations.

ABOUT WHO WE NEED

COULD THIS
BE YOU?

Essentials

- Believes in the supreme authority of Scripture and is committed to keep Scripture central to the teaching and practice of the church.
- Accessible and inspiring preacher who encourages and challenges us to live out our faith.
- Active and faith-filled leadership.
- Collaborative and open to new ideas, bringing enthusiasm and energy to our church life.
- An empathetic pastoral worker, who is a good listener with a good sense of humour.
- Willingness to work with local churches and participate in community life.
- Has a missional heart and a desire to see people come to know the love of God in Jesus Christ.
- Passionate about children's work and relates well to young people and families.
- Deep love of God.

Desirables

- Someone who is able to hold the classic and the contemporary together, respectful of traditions but willing to explore new ways of worship.
- Imaginative and out of the box thinker.
- Hospitable in a neighbourly culture,



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WILL YOU HELP
US MAKE THE
LOVE OF GOD IN
JESUS CHRIST
KNOWN IN OUR
COMMUNITY?

”



WHO TO CONTACT

To enquire about this post, please get in contact with

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DETAILS



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