

The Parishes of St Thomas Bradley and St Hilda Fixby and Cowcliffe



Equipping people to
walk with Jesus

BRADLEY
St Thomas



St Hilda  Cowcliffe

To be a confident and
caring church community



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Our future priorities

Our New Vicar

Our benefice of two parishes has two churches who share a passion for the word of God but also celebrates the uniqueness of each church. This provides both a challenge and opportunity in breadth and diversity of worship. St Thomas has a vibrant and growing congregation that embraces the different cultural backgrounds of our community. We are a Church Society partner who support the vision to reform and renew the church of England in biblical faith. St Hilda's is a well-maintained beautiful building with a healthy music ministry and fantastic community outreach. Our congregations have worked together to develop a shared understanding of the hopes and aspirations of our new vicar. We are looking for someone who can lead us faithfully on our spiritual journeys with the ability to continue to grow our communities.

If you are:

At ease with a variety of worship styles and enjoy both the traditional and the modern.

Emotionally intelligent and able to recognise when people are struggling and need your support.

A good shepherd who can reach into the darkness and share the word of the Lord to uplift the spirit of the disheartened.

A fisher of people able to draw them close to the word of the Lord.

Someone who can juggle, balancing the needs of two uniquely different settings. You will need good organisational skills and be able to multitask.

Courageous in the fruit of the spirit yet recognise your own limitations and the need for God's grace.

If you can:

Lead services from Evensong to WOW (intergenerational worship) and everything in between – or be willing to learn and develop these skills. Bring a joy and passion for worship.

Continue to grow our churches and build on the firm foundations that have been established.

Work collaboratively with the congregations to guide us with care and empathy.

Enable us to reach further into our communities and connect with new people.

Encourage and support us to grow and further develop our youth programmes.

What can we do for you?

Support you in both parishes with two experienced and dedicated teams of people that make the churches welcoming and safe environments for worship.

Provide a congregation who are “bible hungry”

and ready for

spiritual growth through your faithful teaching of scripture.

Provide a well-positioned substantial 4-bedroom vicarage on the site of St Thomas with a beautiful garden.



St Thomas' Bradley

About the Parish

Bradley is a suburban district of Huddersfield in West Yorkshire with a population of c. 6,610 (2021 census). The Parish is the parish of Bradley: St Thomas. It is situated 3.5 miles north-east of the town centre between the M62 (junction 25 is 1 mile away) and the A62, 12 miles from Leeds, 15 miles from Manchester, and 13 miles from the M1 (junction 38).

The old/original village has increased in size significantly in the last 50 - 60 years and now includes a large council estate as well as three large private residential developments, alongside older housing in the original village.

From the mid 1970's St Thomas' has welcomed a rich Caribbean Community from the Windrush Generation which brought its culture and heritage. Families from around the community settled and became a part of St Thomas'. Their children went to Sunday Groups, and many of these have grown to become active members within the St Thomas' family. We now see their childrens children coming along regularly too, which is indeed a great blessing.

A new residential area is being built on the border of our two parishes, behind the local farm shop. There are three residential developments for the elderly or those requiring supported living, and a home for young people with extra needs

The area is served by St Thomas CE Primary, and a Catholic secondary school is also located on the edge of the parish. An early years provision operates in the church hall. There are also Seventh Day Adventist and Methodist churches represented in Bradley. Local shops are located around the parish and include a newsagent, post office, pharmacy, bakery, Morrisons fuel station and "Tesco Express", along with take-away food outlets.

There are a number of public footpaths and cycle tracks in and around Bradley, including along the canal and riverbanks; four parks/children's play areas, football pitches and a local cricket team are also located in

the parish. There is one public house, a number of cafes and tea rooms, and an 18 hole municipal Golf Course with driving range. Local industry is mainly located along the A62 and comprises a mix of businesses, major car dealerships and 2 large distribution centres. The parish also has an office park (off the A6107) housing a number of small-medium size businesses.



Bradley Parish

Connecting with others

St Thomas' and St Hilda's are part of the Huddersfield Deanery which meets for Synod meetings with the neighbouring deaneries Almondbury and Kirkburton. Both Churches have a full complement of Deanery Synod reps and meetings are often useful and engaging.

The Huddersfield Clergy chapter meets regularly with the venue varying from parish to parish. Our clergy attended these meetings regularly and found them to be a place of support and fellowship. In addition to this, our clergy also met once monthly with Church leaders from across Huddersfield and across denominations for a prayer lunch at the Elim Church.

The Parish and its People

Administration

Our church building includes the Parish Office, which is manned 3 mornings a week by our employed Parish Worker. Our PCC treasury team works in there one morning a week, to ensure our financial affairs are in good order.

We employ a cleaner 3 hours a week.

A local gardening company maintain the graveyard, but our congregation maintain the grounds immediately surrounding our church building.

The Staff Team

We currently have one Retired Priest, one Lay Reader and one Lay Worship Leader within our congregations. We also have a talented Lay Worship team who lead our monthly WOW services. All our staff team are happy to work in both churches.

Terry Swinhoe



I am a retired minister with PTO in the diocese. I retired in 2014. My wife Elaine and I both knew of St Thomas', Bradley and so on my retirement we were very happy to move into the parish and join the church. I was a teacher for 12 years before ordination in 1984. My wife was a teacher too. We both have plenty of involvement at church. It's a great privilege to have the permission to continue to minister and help in worship and I'm very grateful for the involvement I've been allowed to have at St Thomas'. We also run a 'house group' at our home and are volunteers in a couple of community projects.

David Hewitt

I'm David and known as Dave H by the church family.

I work 4 mornings a week. I do many and various jobs around the church.

I'm also a licensed reader, with PTO, who conducts worship and on occasions conducts funerals in church and at the local crematorium.

I particularly enjoy being a member of the outreach team, and working with our tech (sound, vision and livestream) team.



Ruth Coates

I joined our congregation from being a Guide Leader in 1990. I completed the year-long Growing Leaders Course along with others in church and subsequently took on leadership roles in varying areas. I completed diocesan training as Lay Worship Leader in 2022 and now lead 1 or 2 services a month alongside the vicar, and some of our outreach event services. I work as part of the safeguarding team, baptism team and outreach team and would love to be involved in helping lead a much-needed Growing Leaders Course.



WOW Team

Our WOW team, those who specialise in intergenerational worship, encourages children, young people and adults to take part and engage, making WOW truly intergenerational.



Patterns of Worship

St Thomas has a regular pattern of services throughout the month:

11am Sunday worship (live and livestreamed)

1st Sunday	Morning Worship multigenerational
2nd Sunday	Holy Communion with YB's and Superstars
3rd Sunday	Wow Service – multigenerational worship
4th Sunday	Morning Worship with YB's and Superstars
5th Sunday	Joint Holy Communion service with St Hilda's

Our previous vicar has led Sunday early evening worship once a month firstly OPEN and more recently Bible 101. Bible 101 is about learning how to read the Bible together. There are different ways to read Hebrew narrative, poetry, wisdom, prophecy etc. It gives people the tools to do this and then we have a go studying a couple of passages. This has been a well-received time of deeper teaching and is something we would like to restart with a new vicar.

Superstars, YB's and Friday Youth

Superstars

Superstars is our Sunday group for pre-school up to high school age group. Children come in with parents until they are confident, and they can return into church if they wish. We are currently using the Biggest Story material which follows the bible chronologically and use video, discussion, activities and craft to support understanding. We have a holy space in the room to encourage the understanding that the space is their own church. We tend to return into the main worship area, where children can choose to come forward to display or speak about activities with the rest of church family. We have seen our children grow in confidence, happy to speak, be part of other services and then move into YBs during their final year at primary school, again when the time is right for the individual.

Our numbers can vary from 3 or 4 up to 16ish and this can sometimes be a challenge, but what an excellent challenge to have!

YB's

Our young people are being encouraged and guided by our dedicated team of youth leaders. Through reflective bible study and teaching twice monthly on a Sunday morning they are growing in faith and developing their ability to express their understanding of scripture. A recent reflection on Psalm 23 saw the group produce their own version which they shared with congregation.

The Lord is my Saviour, Leader, Father, Friend, Redeemer.
You have given me all I need, my needs are met.
You lead me to a place of rest, bed, luxury, safety, peace of mind.
You lead me to fresh water, peaceful, relaxing, refreshment,
washing, reborn.
You give me resilience, power to be brave, confidence.
You lead me in the path to tell others about you (not like mum's satnav)
Even though I walk through dark times you are the light of the world, you are my friend.
You are in charge, you guide me.
You show me you love me by feeding me with your spirit, you give me happiness and energy.
You pour the holy spirit on my head.
Your love is overflowing, more than enough.
You are always with me when I make mistakes, wherever I go, whomever I am with.
I will be faithful to you forever, confirmed.
I have a higher power that will take care of me.

Once a month the group have the opportunity to come together socially to play sports and games. This is strengthening their relationships and encouraging fellowship.

Other midweek worship and groups

Midweek, St Thomas' hold café church monthly, 7 house groups, prayer evenings, morning prayer (by zoom) 4 times a week which includes prayer for our mission partners. It has been said by the community that St Thomas' is a praying church! We see this as a vital part of our ministry.

Annually we hold Holy Week reflections and services, followed by our



Easter Light service and outreach event on Easter Saturday. Easter Sunday is celebrated at dawn outside one of our parishioner's homes, before our main worship at 11 am in church. Not Forgotten, our service to remember those we have loved and lost, is led in November by our lay team.

Our annual outreach events all include a simple act of worship.

Worship at Bradley Court and Sycamore Park

The St Thomas' team lead a short act of worship in Bradley Court, Hampton House, Sycamore Park and Brooklands at special times in the year.

Bradley Court is a Methodist Homes Association in conjunction with Kirklees Black Elders Association residential home in which many of the residents have a Christian background. We currently lead a Holy Communion service once a month and a service at Christmas and on Good Friday. Sycamore Park is a care home with a large number of residents with dementia. We lead a monthly service there which includes singing traditional hymns and including a dementia friendly Bible story and prayers.

Music

Music at St Thomas is an eclectic mix of Worship Lyric Videos, our resident pianist, and our Gospel Choir which is in its infancy. This variety suits our mixed congregation and service pattern well.

Volunteers

Most of our congregation volunteer in some way within all areas of church life.

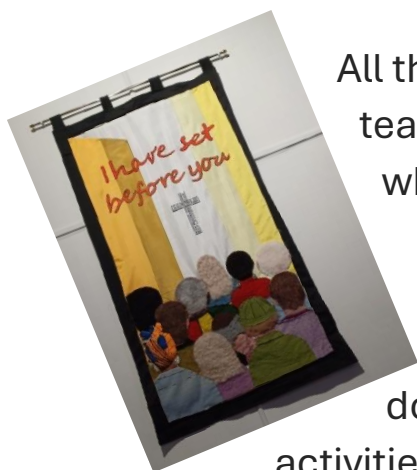
St Thomas' have a full complement of PCC members including 2 wardens and diocesan synod reps. Lay led worship is held on the 3rd Sunday of each month and throughout the summer. A rota for reading is highly populated hence readers need only read once every 6 months. Those interceding are fewer in number however the people who lead this ministry have a great gift. Our sound desk and live streaming have capable volunteers, and there is always a backup team available. Prayer ministry is offered at all services.

We have a healthy children and young people's team for Sundays and midweek. Our Little Toms Group is well staffed.

Wednesday Together goes from strength to strength.

The community is well served with an active team of volunteers working at The Bread and Butter Thing, St Hilda's lunch club, our outreach events and school volunteers.

Occasionally our banner making team work together to make stunning banners for the front of church.



All this is overseen by the safeguarding team, who provide regular supervision where needed.

The number and experience of our volunteers means that our vicar does not have to be heavily involved with all

activities, however it is expected that they would take a keen interest in all aspects of church life, particularly those in which we are looking to encourage growth.



The Parish and its Community

Occasional Offices

Baptisms

On average, we have between ten and fifteen candidates for baptism each year. We offer both infant baptism using our font, and believers' baptism, where our portable baptismal pool may be used. All our baptisms take place within our Sunday worship as we feel it is important that candidates are welcomed into God's family by God's family. We expect baptism families to attend at least one intergenerational service prior to a baptism and at both the initial home visit and after one of these services we offer short sessions of preparation for candidates, parents, and godparents.

Weddings

We have had just one wedding at St Thomas' in 2025.

Funerals

In an average year, we may have around twelve funerals, about ten of which will be at the local crematorium and perhaps two in Church. We have a well looked after open Churchyard on the site of the former St Thomas' Church, roughly half a mile away. About one burial a year takes place here.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is very much part of the fabric of St Thomas' Bradley. We have a core group of around 10 pastoral care leaders who, with the clergy, visit people in home or at hospital, and who are available for prayer ministry during or after Sunday services. There is also a vibrant culture of caring and praying for one another and much of our pastoral care and prayer ministry happens outside the activity of our Pastoral Care team.

Church Weekend Away

Every 2 or 3 years our church enjoys a weekend away together. This encourages friendships to be built and a deeper time of teaching and learning. Pastoral care plays a big part in this. We have a weekend away booked at Scargill House (for 60 participants) with a savings scheme in place, for autumn 2026.

Regular Activities

Wednesday Together



Wednesdays Together, based in Bradley, is a growing group of adults who meet for fun and fellowship. They have a regular pattern for their fellowship:

- 1st Wednesday: Crafting with Jane
- 2nd Wednesday: Speaker or activity
- 3rd Wednesday: Soup Wednesday
- 4th Wednesday: Learn something new
- 5th Wednesday: TBC

Little Toms

Little Tom's our toddler group with children from birth to 4 years sees our little ones along with their carers enjoying playing, singing, crafting and listening to stories together. The children really do appreciate having the space to run around in a safe space.



Christmas Shoe Box Appeal for children overseas

This is well supported each year by members of the congregation.

Mission and Evangelism

School

We have a very close and fruitful relationship with our local Church school. Our former vicar and curate led an act of Christian collective worship on a weekly basis and the students walk the short distance to Church for services at Harvest, Christmas, Easter and St Thomas' Day in July. During the vacancy, members of the Church will ensure that these services continue and will provide every child with a Church-led act of collective worship in school every half-term.

Members of our church volunteer regularly with one of our Mission Partners: 'Hand to Mouth'. They accompany children round prayer journeys, to enable them to understand instructions, and give them a personal insight into what it means to be a Christian. Mission in action! With the support of the schools' senior leaders, we advertise our six annual community events through the school newsletters and texts to families. This endorsement from the school has hugely increased our attendances at this event.

We also have a strong Church contingent on the school governing body, including the current Chair. The vicar of St Thomas' Bradley, when in post, is an ex-officio member of governing body.

Bread and Butter Thing

Volunteers get together in a neighbouring parish with members of the community to help with the food club 'The Bread and Butter Thing' each Friday. This has led to non-Christians asking for prayer and linking with our church at other outreach events and occasional services.

Social Events

Gospel Evenings and Quiz Nights are amongst many of the great ways we get to meet our community, and we try to include one or two of these more social events annually to encourage people into our building in a welcoming and friendly way.

St Thomas Weekend

Each year this is celebrated in a different way. We always include the wider community and aim to go out into the community sharing the word of God and the love of Jesus.

Hope Huddersfield

St Thomas have a loose connection with Hope Huddersfield, and this is something we could possibly build on.

Robert John Whitehead Alms-houses

The vicar of St Thomas' Bradley is an ex officio trustee of the Robert John Whitehead Alms-houses, eight cottages within the parish boundary. The constitution of the Alms-houses contains the proviso that the vicar is an ex-officio trustee. Our previous vicar was the chair, and other trustees are drawn from the congregation and people associated with the church. This involves 3 or 4 short meetings each year.

The Parish and its Buildings

The Church of St Thomas' Bradley is a modern, versatile, building comprising a main worship space with moveable chairs that seats a maximum of 200 people; a large hall; a small kitchen, and dining room; three 'classrooms' in which our young people, children, toddlers, and third-age groups meet; three restrooms (male/female and accessible); a church office and a multi-functional prayer room / creche space.



Our church hall is rented out throughout the week by a pre-school group.

The church was built in 1974 after the congregation left the former Victorian church a half mile away. That building is now owned by a gym club although the Churchyard around it remains our responsibility. The current Church has recently undergone significant building work to extend its life and improve its appearance. Part of this included the addition on glass doors to make our entrance more welcoming, and an illuminated cross-shaped window on the gable end which looks beautiful in the evening.

Our Church is well equipped with wireless internet throughout, a recently upgraded sound and vision desk, high resolution projectors, and cameras, mics, and software that enable services to be livestreamed.

Facts, Figures and Finances

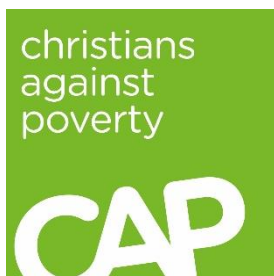
St Thomas' pays it's Parish Share monthly and in full. We also tithe our giving annually to several charity and Mission Partners. Each year our congregation are encouraged to review their giving by clergy or the Parish Giving Officer. In 2021 we successfully raised enough money to refurbish the exterior of the church, and we are currently aiming to do similar for the roof on our hall.

Electoral Roll

The figures given for our annual return are slightly lower than the norm due to our electoral roll officer moving away. We currently have 96 on the electoral roll, but this is increasing weekly.

Charitable Giving

Our tithe in 2025 was shared between Hand to Mouth, Jonathan and Saule Rodgers in Central Asia, Bible Society, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Open Doors, Milan & Shusma, Mothers Union, CAP, Good News For Everyone (Gideons) and Christmas books for school. We also hold occasional events to raise money for other charities.



Our future priorities

St Thomas' future priorities are grounded in our vision and mission:
Equipping people to walk with Jesus.

- Discipleship moving forward, to include the whole church, through the growth of house groups and further teaching enabling them to become confident in sharing the good news of Jesus. Strengthening the things we are good at, and improving the things we are not so good at.
- Teaching, recognising and exploring the use of spiritual gifts, and services specifically for healing and wholeness.
- Looking at how our building is used, and to explore if we are using it to the best of its potential.

Prayer for the Vacancy

Loving God, we give you thanks for our church family here at St Thomas' Bradley and St Hilda's Cowcliffe and Fixby. Send your Holy Spirit amongst us at this time of uncertainty and change during the vacancy. Give us wisdom as we prepare to appoint a new vicar. May we be faithful in prayer for this process, as we seek to find the next person called to lead us. Be with that person now preparing them for this place, that they would be able to lead us into greater knowledge and love of you, so that together we may discover our way for the future and see your Kingdom grow here in Bradley. Amen

St Hilda’s Cowcliffe and Fixby

About the Parish

The Parish of St Francis, Fixby and St Hilda, Cowcliffe is situated about three miles north of Huddersfield town centre, to the west of Bradford Road and adjacent to the Parish of St Thomas, Bradley. Since the closure of St Francis’ Church, the PCC has applied for a faculty to change the name of the parish to St Hilda, Fixby and Cowcliffe.

According to the 2021 census, the locality of Fixby and Cowcliffe has a population of approximately 3,973. The area is mainly residential, with an interesting mix of housing, ranging from an exclusive, gated housing complex to Victorian back-to-back terrace houses, but most properties were built post World War II. The majority of homes are owner-occupied and a large proportion of the population are retired. There are also a good many people who belong to other faiths. Currently, a new housing development of approximately 200 new homes (about 100 completed) is in progress in Fixby, close to the M62. There is also an area in Cowcliffe, close to St Hilda’s, that has been earmarked for housing development.



Kirklees Draft Local Development Plan



Parish Boundaries

Education is provided by Fixby Primary School and Cowcliffe Pre-School, along with Fixby House Nursery and FixBees Day Care (Pre-School). Our clergy have maintained links with this multi-cultural primary school, visiting about twice a term.

Fixby Hall and the prestigious Huddersfield Golf Club are situated within the parish. There are also pleasant areas of accessible woodland in amongst the residential areas. The Kirklees Way runs across the parish. Walking along this route offers a fine view over Huddersfield, adjacent to fields and stabling for 9 horses, followed by a trek across the golf course.

There is a Community Park in Cowcliffe, with children's playground, sporting facilities, woodland walks, flower and shrub areas and vegetable plots and fruit trees for communal use. This is also the home for 'Party in the Park', a major community event with a wide range of activities, food, craft stalls and live music.



The 101st Rainbows, Brownies and Guides meet at St Hilda's Church and there is a Scout Hall, further down Netheroyd Hill Road, belonging to the 15th Huddersfield Scouts, providing for Beavers, Cubs and Scouts.



There are two pubs or pub/restaurants in the parish, the Four Sons in Fixby and the Shepherds Arms in Cowcliffe, plus a newly opened Indian restaurant, Zaiqa on Bradford Road. There is also the very popular Cowcliffe Sports and Social Club, which offers Crown Green bowling and a variety of events such as music, quizzes, 'CowFest', a music festival, and a Christmas Fair.

There is a useful convenience store in Fixby and an ASDA superstore on the opposite side of Bradford Road. In addition, there are 17 small businesses, many of them run from private homes.

The Jasna Gora Residential (Care) Home is located on Fixby Road, not far from the Huddersfield Crematorium.

Administration

All administrative tasks at St Hilda's are carried out by volunteers.

Volunteers

Between them, the two Churchwardens, Joyce and Rita, the Treasurer, Noelle, and Social Secretary, Dorothy, cover a multitude of duties such as: preparation of all services, including compilation of the PowerPoint slides and the order of service; reading the Bible lessons and preparing intercessions, welcoming new members of the congregation, acting as Sacristan; providing mostly live music, but sometimes disks or Worship Lyric videos; production and distribution of the weekly newsletters



and rotas; advertising services and events via posters, leaflets and Facebook; negotiating Church hire contracts; organizing group activities and events; cleaning, building maintenance, controlling the church heating,

flower arranging, organizing and providing teams for the weekly Luncheon Club; administration of Stitch & Chat and Book Club; the usual Church Warden, PCC Secretary, Safeguarding Officer, Treasurer, Health & Safety, GDPR, Electoral Roll Officer, Lay Chair, Social Secretary duties.



Another volunteer, Pam Hillas leads our 'Time for God' service, a monthly half-hour meditational period of

music, readings and prayers.

Ian Wild looks after our garden, carries out minor repairs in church, and is responsible for electrical safety.



During the interregnum, the lay team will be organizing the non-communion services. Our other volunteers are Jennifer, who assists with Holy

Communion, Sue with flower-arranging, Judith with planting the tubs and troughs, Colin, Jennifer, Diana, Pat and Jane with events catering.

Patterns of Worship

1 st Sunday	5.00 pm	Usually Evensong, but may vary with Songs of Praise, Advent Service etc.
2 nd Sunday	9.45 am	Holy Communion
3 rd Sunday	9.45 am	Holy Communion
4 th Sunday	9.45 am	Holy Communion
5 th Sunday	11.00 am	Joint Holy Communion Service at St Thomas, Bradley
2 nd Wednesday	7.00 pm	‘Time for God’

For many years, we provided Reflective services during Holy Week, but this year these were transferred to St Thomas, Bradley. However, we still did the ‘Walk of Witness’ around the parish, carrying the wooden cross, before a service of the ‘Last Hour of the Cross’.

The best attended service of the year is the Christingle at 4.00 pm on Christmas Eve. Many of the local residents attend this popular service, whether or not they have children. They seem to regard it as the start of their Christmas. Sadly, we rarely see them the rest of the year.

Music

Our resident musician is Joyce Wild, but when she is away, we use discs from our library of Worship music or, when available, Worship Lyric videos.

The Parish and its Community

Occasional Offices

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

We had two baptisms at St Hilda's in 2024, one adult and one child. There were no weddings or funerals at the church, but our clergy officiated at three services at the crematorium.



Pastoral Care

We are a small church community and arrange amongst ourselves to visit, telephone and pray for the sick and suffering in our congregation. We also have a prayer tree in our entrance foyer, so that requests for prayers left there may be included in our intercessions.

Regular Activities

Luncheon Club

This club started as a Church/Community project over thirty years ago. Originally, we had four teams, one run by St Hilda's, one from St Francis, one from Cowcliffe Methodist Church and one community-based team. We are now reduced to three teams, one from St Thomas, Bradley and two from St Hilda's. Even so, we still manage to provide a quality two-course meal, plus tea or coffee, for 45 weeks of the year. Members pay £6 per week. This is an essential service for single, retired folk, or for couples, where one of them has health problems. For some members it is the only hot meal they get in a week. For others, it is a chance to relieve the loneliness of being at home on their own. In December, they receive a free Christmas meal and a chance to sing Christmas Carols along with the teams of cooks and drivers. Free transport



is provided by the Access Bus and a team of volunteer drivers recruited from the community.

‘Stitch & Chat’



This group that meets twice a month on the first and third Tuesday afternoons. Members work on a variety of projects; some are church related such as altar linen, clergy stoles and banners; while other projects include knitting and crochet, often for charity schemes like the Rotary Shoe Box scheme and ‘Teddies for Tragedies’. Other members work on personal quilting or dressmaking projects. There is plenty of ‘chat’ accompanied by tea or coffee and biscuits.



Ladies’ Dining Group



An opportunity for women to meet and socialize at a variety of local restaurants. They meet at 7.00 pm on the first Tuesday evening of the month at a venue chosen on the previous outing.

Book Club

This group, currently all women, meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month (except December) at 2.00pm. They take it in turns to choose a book and lead a discussion on its merits, or otherwise. By September 2025, they will have read 150 books!



Coffee Mornings

A popular Saturday morning get-together, on the first weekend of the month, offers an opportunity to meet and socialize – and buy some cake or birthday cards. This event is attended by local residents, our friends from the now closed Methodist Church and members of our own congregation.

Cowcliffe Community Singers



This year is the 10th anniversary of the formation of Cowcliffe Community Singers. Started on the premiss that singing is good for your well-being, there are no auditions for this group of singers. Just come along and join in the fun.

They sing a wide variety of material under the leadership of their musical director, June Asquith, sometimes accompanied by the Marshall Arts Band.



The Singers usually perform two fund-raising concerts a year and sing at St Hilda's carol service, 'Carols by Candlelight'. The group also sings carols at the local pub, the Shepherds Arms, and at Cowcliffe Sports and Social Club.

Visits are also made to three Huddersfield care homes, where they sing carols or popular songs according to the season.

Fixby Gardening Club

The gardening club transferred here from St Francis' Church after its closure. They meet on the second Thursday of each month between September and May, excluding December and January. They have membership of up to 90 people. The club has visiting speakers, plant displays and outings to gardens. In December members enjoy a Christmas dinner at another venue.

101st Huddersfield Rainbows, Brownies and Guides

This group of young people use the church premises every Tuesday during term time between the hours of 6.00 pm and 9.00 pm for a range of activities. Last year, for example, they contributed to our Harvest and Remembrance Day services with their art and craft work. They also produced marmalade to sell towards church funds. We display their work on noticeboards in church and the meeting room.



Other Users Hiring the Church Premises

Slimming World use the Meeting Room on Monday evening between 5.00 and 7.00 pm. Italian classes take place on Monday and Thursday mornings. From September they will also be using the meeting/dining room on Monday afternoons. Horton Housing STARS use the room once a month on Thursday from 1.30 to 2.30 pm for their men's group.

Welcome Centre and Rotary Shoe Box Appeal

Our congregation has supported these two appeals for many years, regularly donating food items and money to the Huddersfield Welcome Centre and filling shoe boxes for delivery to Eastern Europe.

Recycling

Joyce is our recycling expert. In addition to the items recycled by Kirklees, Joyce collects plastic milk bottle tops for Yorkshire Cancer Care, stamps for the hospice, Christmas and Birthday cards, which are remade and sold to support the Welcome Centre and T4U Christmas boxes for the Ukraine. Spectacles are recycled via Rotary and wool is reused to make Teddies for CART Africa. Clean foil, silver paper and any metal objects are sold to the scrap metal merchant at Slaithwaite in aid of church funds.

In addition, the uniformed groups recycle ink-jet and laser printer cartridges.

Mission and Evangelism

School and Young People

Our clergy visit the local state primary school in Fixby about twice a term. We liaise with the leaders of the 101st Huddersfield Rainbows, Brownies and Guides to let them know of any special services with which they might like to be involved.

Social Events

We generally host two concerts a year, monthly coffee mornings, occasional quizzes and film nights to encourage our community into the building. We advertise our events via posters, Facebook and the Cowcliffe and Fixby Community website. We have previously hosted Christmas Tree and Flower Festivals to entice the local community into our church. We also serve refreshments and run a cake stall at community events such as the Christmas Fair at the Cowcliffe Sports and Social Club and at Party in the Park. We always take along our St Hilda's Church banner. Sometimes we have provided children's activities at Party in the Park, depending on how many volunteers we have available, and a member of our clergy has circulated amongst the throng of visitors.

Website

We also have our own website displaying service times, details of events, information and photographs about our church.

<https://theparishofsthildafixbyandcowcliffe.com/>

Prayer Card Visiting

This is something we used to do regularly before Covid-19. During the summer months, we would deliver prayer cards to selected streets in the locality and collect them in a few days later. These prayers would then be included in our intercessions. We are hoping to repeat this exercise on the new housing estate this summer, to ensure the new occupants become aware of their local church.

Welcome Card

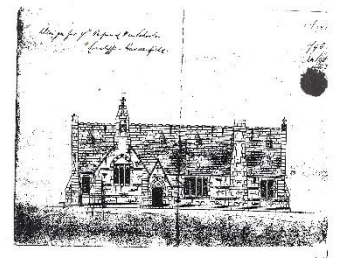
We are currently updating our Welcome Card, which gives details of our church services, along with information about other groups and services in the community. This is delivered to homes that have recently changed hands. Last Autumn, flyers about St Hilda's Church were delivered to those homes already occupied on the new housing estate.

The Parish and its Buildings

There has been a church presence in Cowcliffe since 1850. Initially, this was in the form of a church school



in a temporary building, overseen by the Vicar of Christ Church, Woodhouse. On 12th November,



1850 a Trust Deed was signed for a new church school and Sunday school, to be built with money and land bequeathed by the late Sir John Ramsden, to educate the 'poor' and 'labouring classes' of the area. The school building was designed by W H Crossland, a famous Victorian architect, when he was still a pupil architect. The school was completed in 1855 and officially opened in March 1856. Initially, services were held on an occasional basis, alongside the Sunday School, but from 1868 weekly Sunday services were held. Eventually the building became



known as Cowcliffe Mission Church. The school closed in 1947 and this was when the church discovered that it did not actually own the land and building. The congregation raised sufficient funds to buy the property and it was eventually dedicated to St Hilda of Whitby on 17th September 1953. Extensions have been added over the years, the most recent being the new disabled access foyer and toilets, completed in 2014. There is no consecrated churchyard at St Hilda's, the school playground having been converted into garden and asphaltic yard. The triple-glazed, stained-glass window in the chancel was designed by Holmfirth artist, Celia Kilner, from an initial idea by one of the children, Sarah Glover, to replace the original transfer-printed window.

Our church is taking part in the Heritage Open Days this September, the theme for which is architecture. As well as displays of material about the church and Cowcliffe, there will be a small exhibition on mining by another local resident, and we are also hoping to have some heritage crafts on display. Our catering team will be providing refreshments.



Facts, Figures and Finances

St Hilda's currently pays its Parish Share in full. The majority of our congregation contribute via Standing Order or Bank Transfer and much of this is gift-aided. The community has been very generous when we have needed funding for major projects.

Electoral Roll

A new electoral roll was undertaken this year. At the time of closing on 24th March 2025 the number on the roll was 27, of which 23 live within the parish and 4 live outside the parish. Most of the people previously on the St Francis, Fixby roll now worship in other parishes. St Hilda's have gained one person from the St Francis' roll and have one new member of the congregation.

Charitable Giving

At St Hilda's the year's charitable giving is decided at the December PCC meeting and is usually divided between local, national, international and religious charities. In 2024, we gave £850 to the following organizations: £250 to Open Doors; £250 to Christian Poverty; £350 to Nepal.

A further £122 was collected at the Christingle service for the Church of England's Children's Society.

In earlier years, we have donated to charities such as Platform 1, Christian Aid, the Bible Society, Water Aid, Toilet Twinning, the local hospices, etc.

Our future priorities

- Growing the congregation;
- Attracting younger members
 - a) into church
 - b) into positions of responsibility;
- Pastoral care - the church has an aging congregation.