UNITED BENEFICE OF BATLEY



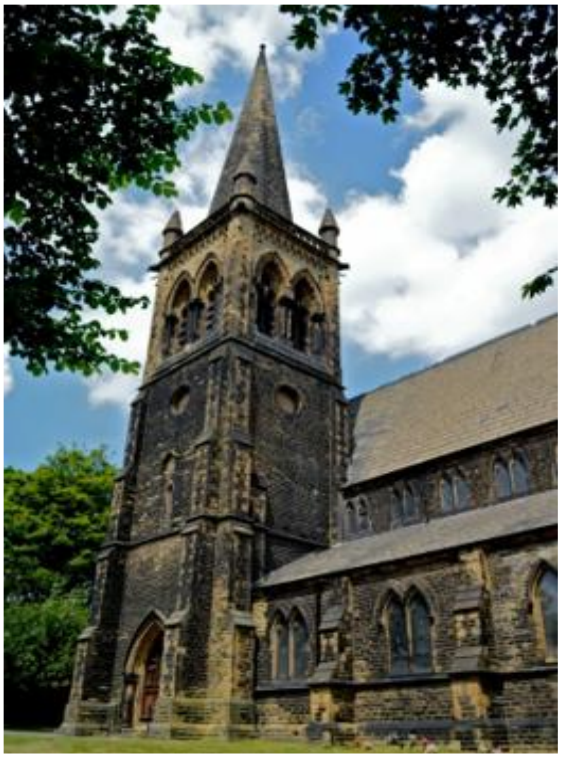






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INTRODUCTION

Context

The United Benefice of Batley serves a population of 22,000 people. Batley is a medium-sized post-industrial town in West Yorkshire. Mentioned in the Doomsday Book has having 'a priest and a church', Batley developed rapidly in the 1800's as a centre of the textile trade and was particularly known for the manufacture of mungo and shoddy, which was first invented here. Our four parishes serve several distinct communities. All Saints is the ancient medieval parish and serves the centre of Batley. St Thomas' serves the former well-to-do neighbourhood of Upper Batley, as well as Soothill. St Andrew's serves the community of Purlwell and Mount Pleasant, which has been a centre of new migration to Batley since the mid-19th century, and is now the centre of Batley's Asian community. Finally, St Paul's serves the village of Hanging Heaton, which adjoins Batley and Dewsbury.

Batley is a multicultural community and the majority of residents of the town itself are of Indian and Pakistani heritage, principally from Gujarat and Punjab. Immigration to Batley began with Irish migration in the Victorian era and the area still has a large Roman Catholic population. Batley has had a substantial Asian population since the 1970s, and many Asian families have called the town home for three or four generations. The principal religions are Christianity and Islam, though many white British people would describe themselves as being of no religion. Good relationships have developed between the benefice churches and the Muslim communities.

Batley has a busy centre with many shops, takeaways and restaurants, as well as a Tesco Extra in the centre of town. The memorial gardens, Wilton Park and All Saints' closed churchyard, now a garden of rest, all provide green space, which means we're blessed with a number of places to walk and for recreation. The parishes of the United Benefice include twelve primary schools, three secondary school and one independent Islamic school. This includes three church primary schools: Batley Parish CE Primary Academy, Hanging Heaton CE J&I School and Bywell CE Junior School. The benefice's churches have good relations with all three schools and previous priests have served on all three governing bodies. In addition, collective worship or teaching has been offered by clergy and lay ministers from the benefice to nearly every school in our parishes in recent years.

Batley is served by a good motorway network in all directions via the M1 and M62 and rail links provide services to London in 2 hours and Manchester, via Huddersfield, in around an hour – the Transpennine Upgrade will significantly improve these latter journeys once completed. In addition, there are three airports all within 1½ hours of the town.

Note: see appendices for local area maps

Recent History

The United Benefice of Batley was officially formed in 2016, after the appointment of a new priest in charge for the four churches in 2014. Previously, All Saints' Batley and St Andrew's Purlwell had been a single benefice since the 1990s, while St Paul's and St Thomas' shared a single incumbent from 2009.

In the last three years under our last priest a vision-building process called 'Hopes and Dreams' was then begun, following the model of the Methodist Church's *Our Church's Future Story*. While this is still ongoing, several key priorities have emerged from the process:

- Greater engagement with the community through using our buildings and other spaces
- Building financial sustainability for the future, both in terms of regular giving and grant funding for specific projects
- Developing new forms of worship to engage with families and younger people, to complement, rather than replace, our principal Sunday services

All four parishes have agreed to affiliate themselves to Inclusive Church and are supportive of Prayers of Love and Faith being used in their buildings. All our churches are supportive of Fair Trade

Batley Benefice Council (the Joint Council)

In October 2025 a new benefice council was formed with equal representation from each of the 4 benefice churches. The strategic purpose of the council is to *set the team's 'direction of travel'* and meets 4 times per year.

The Council is composed of: clergy licensed to the team, licensed lay ministers, churchwardens and a representative elected by the APCM of each church.

Powers: making decisions which are best made at benefice level, rather than in individual parishes; the benefice's pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical mission (c.f. s.2(a) PCC (Powers) Measure 1956)

Chair: The Incumbent

Areas of responsibility:

Overall strategy for the Benefice

Social events

Setting joint benefice policies

Ensuring that PCCs are financially viable and that the parish share is paid

Employment of staff and appointment of volunteers working across the benefice

Reports to: the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and the PCCs. Minutes of the meetings go to the PCCs as well as to the Council members

PCCs*…direct each church's maintenance and financial stability* and meets 4 times a year

Composed of: members chosen under the PCC (Powers) Measure

Powers: the maintenance of church buildings, financial powers, fundraising and elements of mission delegated by the Benefice Council

Areas of responsibility:

The repair and maintenance of church buildings

Safeguarding

Fundraising, preparing an annual budget and payment of the parish share

Social events within a particular church

Employment (where applicable)

Reports to: the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Ministry Team*…organises worship and pastoral care across the benefice*

Composed of: all licensed lay and ordained ministers

Powers: conducting and organising all aspects of worship and pastoral care

Areas of responsibility:

Pastoral care of people and congregations, including visiting the sick and housebound

Planning worship for seasons of the church's year

Christian Education for Adults, including courses

Conducting occasional offices

Pastoral Care, including coordination of the Pastoral Care Team

Reports to: the incumbent as supervisor and/or to the Ministerial Development Review Process; ministers are accountable to the Diocesan Bishop under Canon.

Incumbent*…exercise leadership across the benefice*

Composed of: the priest in charge, or vicar

Powers: as authorised under licence or by canon

Areas of responsibility:

Overall leadership for the team

Organising and directing church music

Pastoral care of people and congregations

Booking occasional offices and parish administration

Organising the rota of worship services

Reports to: the Ministerial Development Review Process and to their Diocesan Bishop under Canon.

FUTURE PRIEST

The qualities listed below as being desired in a future priest are the result of consultation and with our four congregations. Essential characteristics are underlined.



THE BENEFICE

Worship and Mission

The Batley Benefice's ministry is currently supported by visiting clergy and lay people, which includes two licensed lay ministers.

We have four separate PCCs to oversee the mission and finances of the church in each parish.

A pastoral care group was formed in 2023 to support and oversee our ministry to those who are unable to attend church, are ill or are struggling in other ways. The group consists of representatives from all 4 churches and meets once per quarter. Everyone who is unable to get to church is offered home communion about once a month.

The Benefice Together group – originally a zoom group during lockdown in 2020 as a means of holding the Benefice together and support its members in living out their faith in difficult circumstances – continues to meet in person for an hour every month with the same aim.

A group of around a dozen people from all four churches support the Benefice Messy Church events which are held at St Thomas'. Messy Church welcomes children and their families, many of whom are not regular church attendees, and focuses on Christian festivals as well as the four seasons.



Messy Church in Advent

'Destination 211' bus ministry was introduced during 2025 in conjunction with the Dewsbury Team Ministry. A double decker bus was brought to St Paul's car park on a weekly basis and children from the local area were invited to come along and join in with faith-based activities similar to those at Messy Church. Funding issues have currently paused this initiative but there are hopes that it may start again later in 2026.

Faith Based charitable involvement

Locally:
Members of the congregation across the Benefice support the Children Society through collection boxes and Christingle services.

Organised with other churches in the town, occasional ecumenical services are organised, including a Good Friday service and an annual afternoon service which has rotated around the various denominational churches.

Members of our churches hold a Benefice collection for Christian Aid annually at Tesco in Batley. In 2026 this raised over £500.

Internationally:
The Anglican churches in Batley are linked with churches in Nyamongo in Tarime Diocese in northern Tanzania. It is an opportunity to stand shoulder to shoulder with an Anglican church in a very different culture. The link is nurtured through correspondence and visits to and from Tanzania. We have helped with the provision of water, health and primary education. Currently members of the church are, through regular donations and collections at special services, supporting building of a new church, porridge and education fund (nursery and primary).

Ad hoc support is also given to the Church Mission Society and our representative in Taiwan, Catherine Lee.

Involvement in Batley Community

Church members are involved in many charitable and community groups which work for the benefit of the town.

Endorsed by the churches, "**Batley Drop-In"** was formed in 2010 to provide food, help and support to addicts and socially isolated people. Weekly sessions take place at Central Methodist Church. Volunteers come from all churches and none. Donations of food and drink are made by local businesses as well as members of the various churches. Finance comes through grants, donations and fundraising efforts.

The Batley Foodbank and the Drop-in are also supported by the Batley Benefice by regular collections of tinned goods and healthcare products.

Along with the local Muslim community, we organise a 'Roses for Peace' day each year. The roses are prepared at St Thomas' church, and both communities then distribute them at our local Tesco store.

SERVICE PATTERNS

Our current service pattern is as follows:

Sundays

	St Andrew's	St Thomas'	All Saints	St Paul's
Week 1	9-30am HC	9-30am MP	11am MP/All Age	11am HC
Week 2	*No service*	9-30am HC	11am HC	*No service*
Week 3	9-30am HC	9-30am MP	11am MP	11am HC
Week 4	*No service*	9-30am HC	11am HC	*No service*
Week 5	9-30am HC	9-30am MP	11am MP	11am MP

HC = Holy Communion MP = Morning Prayer

Weekdays services (currently suspended)

- Monday-Friday 8:45am Mattins (All Saints)
- Wednesday 9:45am Holy Communion (St Thomas')
- Thursday 9:45am Holy Communion (St Paul's)

Café Church currently takes place at All Saints' and St Thomas' once per quarter.

Joint services take place in each of our churches once per year to celebrate the Patronal Festivals and more recently a joint service has been held for Pentecost, rotating round the four churches

At least one service is held on each day of Holy Week which includes a Maundy Thursday Liturgy and Liturgy of the Passion on Good Friday

Other special services take place from time to time, such as two parish memorial services and Holy Communion for Principal Holy Days, such as the Ascension, Epiphany and Annunciation, as well as ad hoc services for community groups.

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OUR CHURCHES: ALL SAINTS

Mission statement

The aim of All Saints Church is to be Christ-centred, relevant, outward-looking and welcoming to people of all ages and beliefs.

Our History

All Saints is the historic parish church of Batley and the site is mentioned in the Domesday book. The present – Grade 1 listed – building is a major reconstruction from 1485 incorporating an existing 13th century church and altered in various ways over the years including the building of a vestry on the north side in 1965.





The latest important development was the reordering of the church in 2010, including the removal of the pipe organ and the installation of an electronic one thus enabling us to use the space freed up to install a bigger kitchen. This was followed by a modernisation of the vestry including a toilet extension and a Community Room. The heating system was substantially renewed in 2023.

Our Church Worship

All Saints worship ethos is to truly accommodate all.

Our services range from Holy Communion to morning prayer and cafe church. Children are an important part of our church and we hold all age services which allow young people to play an active role. **Our church year is punctuated with special family orientated services** such as the Sunday school book presentation, the blessing of school / work bags, Mothering Sunday and Harvest Festival.

Our normal monthly worship pattern is:

- 1st Morning Prayer/ Café Church/ Family Service
- 2nd & 4th Holy Communion
- 3rd & 5th Morning Prayer

We have a rich tradition of choral music in our services. **In 2024 we recruited a new organist and choir master.** Now a small choir sings at all services. A larger benefice choir has been formed and sings at benefice festivals. This has allowed us to offer in the last year

two choral evensongs and significantly enriched festive services. **The provision of Music to enhance our services continues to be one of our key priorities.**





Our Sunday school meets twice each month. Between 6-10 children attend and bring much joy sharing their learning and craft. **Supporting our young people to develop their faith is also one of our key priorities**
All Saints is the Batley Civic Church and **we host special services for the wider community** including a Batley Retail & Businesses' Carol service, Batley Old Girls Carol service and RAFA occasional services.

Our Church Building
Our **church building is the only mediaeval structure in Batley.** It is beautiful and of significant historical importance. However, it is an ongoing challenge to maintain.
Our quinquennial report details the large scale work required. A plan is in place and the first stage of the work is starting this year. We have been blessed with a significant donation which has allowed us to commence and we are actively seeking grant support.





The grounds are maintained by the local authority. A small team of volunteers meet weekly and have made a huge difference with maintenance and new planting. The grounds have a public thoroughfare with the public walking and/or sitting to rest. **Making our grounds an appealing and welcoming green haven is one of our priorities.**
In the tower **we have a peal of eight bells in good working order. A team of six ringers** practice on Friday evenings assisted by visiting ringers from other local towers, who also help

out for the Sunday Service and for special services and weddings. We often host visiting bell ringers.

Our Community

The re-ordering of church and vestry was undertaken to allow us to become more of a "church in the community". It has become a great facility for our existing church groups as well as meetings and social events. **One of our key priorities is community outreach and engagement.**

The Day School, across the road from Church is a single-form entry primary academy which was formerly an Aided School. The Vicar of Batley is a Governor ex-officio with other church members serving on the Governing Body.
The school serves the local community in an area of considerable socio-economic deprivation. Over half the children come from Asian heritage families.

The Vicar of Batley leads family school assemblies on a regular basis and the school holds services in church for Harvest and at the end of each term. Members of the church community are actively encouraged to be part of school life. The school also actively supports the church's events such as the Christmas tree and Angel festival. The church Governing Body was involved in the refocusing of the school values which are Hope, Love, Forgiveness, Trust, Respect and Community

We have been actively building relationships with other schools in the area, **as an example Park Road School key stage 1 joined our garden gang** to help litter pick, weed and plant a new flower bed.

The Community Room is used by the **Batley Community Choir** for its weekly rehearsals. The choir holds concerts at the benefice churches. In May 2026 All Saints was used for the filming of the choir by Yorkshire ITV as part of a remembrance for Jo Cox.







Our **Christmas Tree festival in** 2024 involved over 30 local businesses, schools and charity groups. Local councillors supported with the funds to provide children's activities and with open days and special services we saw approx 400 people visit the church.





The following year our **Festival of Angels** again involved numerous local organisations including schools, guides, brownies and scouts, friends of Batley library and the Batley history society, providing a multitude of beautiful community inspired angels.






Other activities have included organ recitals, musical concerts and crafting workshops. Our approach is these are for the wider community and free to all.





The Vicar of Batley presides over the annual **Remembrance service held at Batley.** The All Saints community room is used for refreshments after this public service.

Our Finances

We are a financially well managed and stable church, which pays our Parish Share. We have been fortunate in receiving legacy monies. These have allowed us to have a focus on our mission of offering community outreach and activities rather than the need to concentrate only on fundraising.

All Saints **benefits from the Dame Eleanor Asheton charitable trust** established in 1770. There are five trustees and the principle purpose of the trust is to support the Vicar of Batley. In the last three years the trust has supported the installation of a new heating system in church, the costs of the organist and repairs to the church organ.

Approximately 10% of our disposable income is distributed to charities both near and far. The Christmas collections go to the Children's Society and Christian Aid. Our harvest collection usually goes towards projects improving the life chances of those in our link parish in Tanzania.

Our Hopes for the Future

We have five key focus areas for our future

- Pastoral care for our church members and wider community
- Supporting our young people to develop their faith
- The provision of Music to enhance our services
- Active community outreach and engagement
- Making our grounds an appealing and welcoming green haven

Our numbers

The All Saints' Church community

Electoral role – 53 (3 resident, 50 non-resident)

Average attendance at services (see statistics for mission 2025)

Occasional Services 2025:

Funerals	4
Baptism	3
Weddings	0

OUR CHURCHES: ST ANDREW'S

Mission Statement: To serve God and the community, providing support and resources to all who need it.

The Local Area





So, where on earth is St Andrew's, Purlwell? Some will remember the Batley Variety Club, where many famous artists performed. It's no longer in operation but was one of the more notable landmarks within our parish boundary. Batley is now well known for biscuit production - Fox's Biscuits is still the largest employer in the town and it is also within our parish boundary. Batley Bulldogs Rugby League Club is across the road from the Church.



We enjoy very good relationships with the local Mosque and formed a unique partnership in 1995 to secure funding from City Challenge to refurbish the Hall and welfare buildings of the Mount Pleasant Islamic Trust.



Representatives from the Mosque attend special Church services and their involvement helps us to appreciate that "we have more in common than that which divides us". (Taken from the maiden speech of the late Jo Cox, MP for Batley and Spen). One of our parishioners is the secretary for the North Kirklees Interfaith Group.

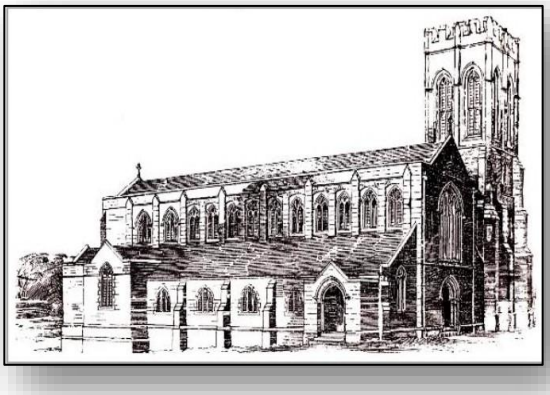
There are three schools within the parish (Purlwell, Hyrstmount and Field Lane) covering the infant and junior age range. The intake is almost 100% Muslim but the children visit the church every year and enjoy listening to stories about our history and our faith. We also have strong links with Batley Parish C of E VA School which is in the Benefice and one of our PCC members was a Foundation Governor there for over 40 years. 7th Batley Scouts are affiliated to the Church – the beavers, cubs and scouts are always present at the Remembrance Sunday service.

History



What's the Church like? St Andrew's was built in 1910 and we were delighted when the then Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, accepted our invitation to preach and preside at our Centenary service.

A number of special events took place during the centenary year. Our Retired Priest at the time, the late Rev Brian Geeson, wrote the history of the church. The books were sold to raise funds.



The grounds on which the church stand were bought from Batley Corporation at the cost of 2 shillings per square yard. The Architect was asked to design a church to seat 600 people with the building work to cost no more than £7,000. A century later this seems optimistic: then it seemed realistic.
The original designs included a tower but insufficient funding meant this part would never be constructed.

Worship

Every Sunday we celebrate Holy Communion at 9.30am using Common Worship with Catholic tradition. The Vicar wears vestments. During the interregnum, we celebrate Holy Communion every other week. Two parishioners are licensed to administer communion to the sick and housebound. There are a number of volunteers who read the lessons and prepare intercessions on a rostered basis.

We have a robed choir who lead the singing using Hymns Old and New. An anthem is sung during the distribution of communion every week and we are very lucky to have a talented organist who plays our digital keyboard. If our organist is unavailable, we sing to "No Organist, No Problem".









The Church



St Andrew's is a family church and although the congregation is small, it is full of willing volunteers who have numerous skills. The Deanery Synod Lay Chair, treasurer and secretary worship at St Andrew's. The same two individuals are members of Diocesan Synod. One of our churchwardens was a General Synod laity representative for over 50 years – an opportunity to offer support and guidance to a new Incumbent. Our Treasurer is a Treasurer Ambassador for the Diocese.

The PCC voted in favour of women priests and we welcomed Rev Shirley Goldthorpe as deaconess in 1980. The PCC were also in favour of the ordination of female bishops.





In structure, the Church hasn't changed much in the last 100 years. The Church boasts a Kempe window, through which the glistening spring sunshine illuminates the altar and chancel. There is a full loop system too. We are currently awaiting production of the most recent quinquennial report.

The Lady Chapel was fully refurbished in 2008 but we are so fortunate to have a group of talented volunteers who keep up to date with all cleaning and maintenance to ensure that the Church, hall and grounds are "well cared for". Collectively known as the Monday Gang, they deal with any task with the enthusiasm of a teenager and the experience of a pensioner. Their skill and ability save the Church thousands of pounds each year.



The size of the building makes it difficult to heat efficiently. The most recent emissions per square metre rating is an impressive A but the emissions per person hour rating is G.

The greatest challenge for St Andrew's is the attraction of young people and newcomers – due wholly to the location and growing numbers of Muslims in the immediate vicinity. No members of the electoral roll are resident within the parish. Many church members have strong ties to Purlwell from previous generations even though they now live some distance away.

The Community

Following a major refurbishment of the adjacent hall in 1995, it has been well used by regular groups. The local Gilbert and Sullivan Society have rehearsed in the hall for over 40 years, a local Taekwondo class meet weekly and a yoga teacher offers classes to a mixed local group.



The Mount Pleasant Social Club are the longest serving group – a combination of church members and those with no connection to the church meet every week and enjoy entertainment, bingo and a good chat. They hold several trips each year and invite church members to participate.



With a licensed bar, we are able to host functions, and the kitchen affords some of the best facilities in the area. Local authority officials are most complimentary when they carry out inspections and the hygiene score on the door has been a consistent 5. The hall is offered for hire in the community and numerous weddings and parties have been hosted over the years. The hall has a full loop system, a piano, a large stage and disabled toilet facilities.

Parish lunches are served to reach out to those who may not always have the opportunity to eat out with friends. We host an annual race night – a great fundraising event – as the bookmaker (in this case the Church) always wins!

Prior to 2020, the magazine was printed and circulated every other month. During lockdown, we moved into the digital age with an online monthly version which is now circulated across the Benefice – and beyond.

Finance

In addition to the fundraising listed above, the annual Christmas Fayre is held in November. Money is generated from the event but it is an opportunity to hand over funds which have been raised by other smaller activities run throughout the year, often in parishioners' homes.

It is the PCC's policy to pay the Parish Share as a priority – and we pay in full by October each year. There was a shortfall in payment in 2020 due to the pandemic but, other than that, we have always paid in full.

We are keen to support local charities. In addition to benefice fundraising, we also support two hospices and a local school for physically and mentally disabled children in Kirklees. We were the first church in the former Diocese of Wakefield to form a link with Nyamongo, Tanzania and we felt honoured when they dedicated their church to St Andrew as thanks for the support they had received from us.

forget me not children's hospice

Hollybank
Quality of life, for life

THE KIRKWOOD SUPPORT LIFE

Numbers

Electoral roll (APCM March 2026) – 26
Resident in parish – 0
Resident out of parish – 26

Worshipping Community – 12

Baptisms and confirmations – 4 in 2023
Weddings – most recent was 2012
Funerals – 1 during 2025



OUR CHURCHES: ST PAUL'S

LOCAL AREA AND PARISH

The parish of Hanging Heaton lies between Dewsbury and Batley in West Yorkshire. The cities of Bradford, Leeds, Wakefield and Huddersfield are all within a 10 mile radius therefore giving easy access to shopping and various other interests. The beautiful Yorkshire countryside can be reached within 20 minutes.

It is a suburban parish with an industrial estate, which is situated on the boundary of the parish. This has been built over the last five years.

The parish has a population of 8,611

Schools

There are five schools within the parish. Mill Lane, Hanging Heaton Infants and Junior, Bywell Junior, Shaw Cross Infants, Manorcroft Academy. Hanging Heaton and Bywell are church schools. The incumbent was on the board of governors with both the church schools and had strong links with Shaw Cross. Schools enjoy regular services in church



THE CHURCH AND OTHER CHURCH BUILDINGS

The History of the Church and Parish

Hanging Heaton is mentioned in the Domesday Book under the name of 'Etun'. The prefix 'Hanging' refers to a steep hillside hanging above lower ground. Heaton means 'High Farm':- thus Hanging Heaton was a lonely hillside farmstead. The church did not appear until the nineteenth century and was one of the so-called 'million churches' built to celebrate the victory of the Duke of Wellington at the battle of Waterloo in 1815.

The church was built in the Gothic style of stone excavated from the immediate areas.

The Vicar of Dewsbury laid the foundation stone on August 7th 1823, when a huge gathering marched up from Dewsbury to the site, and the new church was finally dedicated by the Archbishop of York two and a half years later on 20th December 1825.

The church was built at a cost of £4,811.





A sound system has been installed into the church which incorporates a loop system.

The church has a fully maintained security system.

The Church Hall



We are proud of our church hall which is a great asset to our parish. The old part of the hall was built 110 years ago and acted as a school room for the young church. This part of the building is brick built with a pitched blue slate roof.

A large extension was built some years later and this provided the hall with multi room facilities. The main area is 6 metres high and large enough for dancing, keep fit etc. It also has a large, raised stage which over the years allowed the church to produce plays,

pantomimes, gang shows etc. Double doors from the main area lead into another large room 10 metres square with a bar area at one end. This room is normally used for funeral teas, children's parties and church meetings.

The church hall has a car park which can accommodate up to 50 vehicles.

The hall extension is also brick built with a pitched felt roof to the main hall and flat felt roofs to the bar room and dressing room areas.

A large well equipped kitchen with new catering range and extractor hood also allows meals to be provided for church functions and the luncheon club.

On his last visit to our church the Archdeacon said in his opinion the church hall provided some of the best facilities of any church hall he had visited in the Leeds Diocese.

The hall is well maintained and has a part-time caretaker. 14 years ago we spent £28,000 providing new ladies, disabled and gents' toilets, which were essential to meet current legislation.

The hall is mainly self-financing with the wide variety of users paying rent for use of the facilities.

The running of the hall is carried out by a subcommittee of the PCC and they attend to minor problems and repairs. The chairperson reports to the PCC at meetings, and all major decisions are taken at this meeting. Our hall is used for local and general elections as a polling station, and we have a close relationship with some local councillors.

You will see from the list of users that our hall is used by the general public for 50% of the time and provides a major facility for the people of Hanging Heaton and beyond.

The Church Yard

The church yard is still open for both burials and cremated remains. It is maintained by both volunteers and the Community Payback team, contracting out small amounts of maintenance each year.

An older part of the church yard has been landscaped to ease maintenance.

CHURCH SERVICES

Worship

We consider ourselves to be a warm and welcoming congregation. Our average Sunday attendance is around 25 people and the average number of communicants is 22.

Sunday worship:

11.00 am Sung Parish Communion

Baptisms Baptisms are normally held during the Sunday Parish Communion, but some are held on Sunday afternoon if previously arranged with the vicar.

The Celebrant at Holy Communion has the option to wear vestments as there is a full set of each colour, including a High White set.

The tradition of the church should be considered as ‘middle of the road’ Anglican.

The music, is a mixture of traditional and modern tunes.

CONGREGATION

The congregation is made up of mostly elderly people.

There are currently 31 names on the Electoral Roll of which 8 live outside the parish.

CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

PCC - The PCC consists of 10 people.

Uniformed Organisations
Within our parish we have Rainbow, Brownie packs and a Guide unit which meet weekly.

Other Organisations
A Monday club meets once a week. This is for anyone over 55 and has various activities.

Community Links
A Luncheon Club is held alternate Tuesdays

Slimming Group hold a meeting every Saturday morning

A Keep fit class and Tai Chi Class, takes place every Wednesday morning.

A Rock choir meets every week

There is a Community Centre at one end of the parish on a major council estate which contains quite a large number of flats.

Other denominations nearby:
Mount Tabor Church

MINISTRIES

There is a duty rota for members of the congregation to assist as Sides people, and preparing and serving post service refreshments.

There is a Parish Clerk who does all the book work for weddings and funerals and co-ordinates with the funeral directors regarding funerals and ashes and prepares for these services.

FINANCES

Occasional fund raising and social events take place during the year.

At the end of each year, it is decided how much to send to several charities.

The expenses incurred by the vicar are met in full.

The parish has its own printer in the church hall.

NOW AND THE FUTURE

Through leadership and encouragement we feel that we could:

- Further develop our outreach to young people
- Develop and deepen our relationships with each other
- Build up our pastoral care programme to include all our parish, old and young

OUR CHURCHES: ST THOMAS'

Your God - Your Church - Your Family

St Thomas' Batley serves Upper Batley, just north of the town centre. Originally built as a large, grand and well-fitted church for the well-to-do residents of that area, it has been redeveloped as a flexible space for both worship, community groups and events.

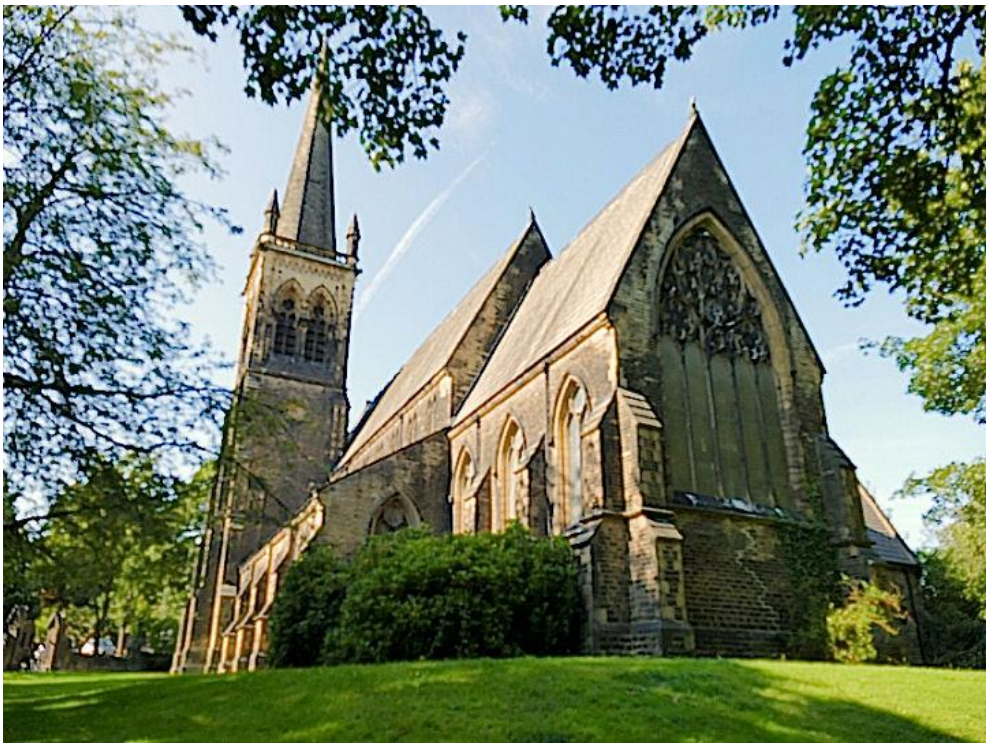
History & Architecture

Growth of the Town of Batley

Upper Batley in the 1700's would have taken the form of small cottages, with the exception of Batley Hall. The situation began to change with the invention of Shoddy by a Batley man around 1813. Shoddy, a form of cloth made from recycling rags, laid the foundations of prosperity. As Batley gained wealth, Upper Batley began to develop with larger Victorian houses. In keeping with their values and in response to the need for additional places of worship in the town the local wealthy business people invested in the church of St Thomas at Grosvenor Road. Several wealthier residents also helped fund the construction of a school and a hospital. Upper Batley is now a conservation area which importantly still includes the school, a former hospital and St Thomas Church.

Design and Features

The church, which is now a Grade II listed building, was designed by Architect Walter Hanstock, by this time a resident of Batley, and was completed in 1868. Designed in a



Gothic Revival Style the tower of the church is surmounted by a tall spire which is a landmark for many miles around and dominates the landscape of Upper Batley. Inside, the most spectacular feature is the stained-glass window at the east end of the church; this was given by Mr Hanstock's business partner Michael Sheard and his wife Anne in memory of their daughter Gertrude who had died in 1867 at the age of 7. This and the other stained-glass windows along with the font, lectern and pulpit, were gifts from local men, many of whom had made their fortune when Batley was eminent as the "Shoddy Capital" of the world. The Conacher Pipe Organ which was installed in 1878, rebuilt in 1919 and converted to 'solid state' in 2014 remains central to our worship.



Later Additions

The current high altar which was installed in 1954 is a fine example of oak furniture by Robert Thompson, Mouseman® of Kilburn, whilst the high altar rails were crafted by Martin Dutton 'Lizardman' from Huby, nr. York and were installed in 1957.

More Recent Additions & Alterations

The nave altar and altar rails, which were installed in 1975, were crafted by a local carpenter out of oak rescued from a church demolition in Huddersfield. The lights in the choir stalls were added in 1983.

In 2001, our Mission Church of St. Luke's in Soothill closed its doors for the last time but several artefacts were saved and subsequently incorporated into St Thomas'. These items include the altar and wooden reredos which are situated on the south side of the building. This section of the church is considered to be 'St Luke's Chapel' and is used from time to time for services, including the midweek service

During 2005 the interior of the building was reordered; the pews were removed and replaced with chairs to create more flexibility; a meeting room/kitchenette was created in the north west corner and an office was created in the south west corner which was originally the main entrance to the building, although this has since been converted in to our Prayer Room; the west door became the main entrance and a new internal porch was added. Disabled access was installed to the west door and toilet facilities suitable for all were incorporated on the south side.

With the exclusion of the above and works of repair, in particular major repairs to the tower and spire in 2012, redecoration and improvements to heating and lighting, the church, particularly its structure, remains as it was in 1868.

The most recent quinquennial inspection took place in 2024 which highlighted, amongst other things, the need to repoint to spire inside and out. Quotes were obtained which estimated costs to be around £150,000, therefore substantial grants would be needed to complete the work. The south slope roof is also suffering nail rot and will need to be stripped and re-slated in the near future. Other essential works have largely been completed.



The interior of St Thomas'



Our 150th Anniversary celebrations in 2015

Finances

Church finances are currently ‘complicated’ by the costs associated with the preparation for the sale of the church hall, see below. Architect and other professional fees are using up a lot of our ‘spare’ reserves resulting in a much-reduced payment of the Parish Share. Once the hall has been disposed of, we should be in a position to resume normal payments.

The Church Hall

The Church Hall was built in the late 1800’s of mainly stone similar to that of the Church. The Hall is within the curtilage of the Church and within the conservation area and it has its own land registry number. There is some dispute as to whether it will be considered, by association, to be a Grade 2 listed building.

Sadly, the hall is in such a dilapidated condition that it is no longer in use. It has been estimated that a full refurbishment, to include disabled access and facilities, is likely to cost in the region of £350,000 and although some grants may be available this option could well prove to be cost prohibitive. As the church building now houses all our services and activities, it was agreed that the hall is more of a drain than a benefit.

Therefore, the PCC has approved the sale of the building and surrounding land once we have secured ‘change of use’ to residential from the local authority. Work is ongoing to obtain the necessary surveys and reports as directed by the LA, prior to obtaining approval from the Diocese.

The Grounds

The church grounds are fairly extensive, but manageable. St Thomas’ doesn’t have its own graveyard, but it does have an area of consecrated ground reserved for the interment of ashes.

The lawns are looked after by church members and volunteers but occasionally we also engage the services of local companies to carry out larger tasks. The Cubs and Scouts help to clear overgrown areas once or twice a year.

As we are in a conservation area, most of the trees within the grounds have had Tree Preservation Orders placed on them restricting our ability to trim these back as we might wish. When necessary, we engage a qualified arborist to do the work.

The Vicarage

The vicarage is a modern 4 bedroomed property (mid 1980’s) situated relatively close to the church. Most recently, this building has served as the home of our Associate Priest and is in reasonably good condition.

Our Numbers

Electoral role – 34 (12 resident, 22 non-resident)

Average attendance at Sunday services – 22

Occasional Offices 2025:
Funerals 1
Baptism 6
Weddings 1

Services & Events

Our principal service is a 9:30am service of Holy Communion that is, from time to time, replaced with a service of Morning Prayer. Café Church was introduced here in 2022 in order to improve our outreach to children, young people and families, and currently takes place on a quarterly basis. A midweek service is held on Wednesdays at 9.45am.

Other special services include our 'Special Lives' service to remember the departed, which usually takes place at the end of November, our Christingle service and our Patronal Service, which is celebrated on the Sunday nearest St Thomas' day with the congregations of all four of our benefice churches.

Our regular events in church include the Monday Afternoon Club for knitting, nattering and cups of tea, as well as our Friday Prayer Group.



Our Special Lives Service



Christingle Service

Scouts & Guides

St Thomas' is home to thriving Scouts and Guides units, which includes all sections and are often fully subscribed. We value the participation of both groups in our worship life from time to time and have good relations with them. The last incumbent has attended Scout Trustee meetings regularly.

Some highlights from recent years…



The Great Batley Bake Off

We hold a garden party every year for St Thomas' Day, which is well supported by community groups and our uniformed organisations.

We hosted the Great Batley Bake-Off, which made great use of our flexible space.

As part of our 150th celebrations in 2018, we held a Flower Festival, which brought many people into our building, and every year we open up our building for Yorkshire Churches Open Day.

We have hosted a Christian and Muslim group to prepare 'Roses for Peace' to distribute in Batley's Tesco Extra, as part of an initiative of North Kirklees Interfaith Council.



The Flower Festival 2018



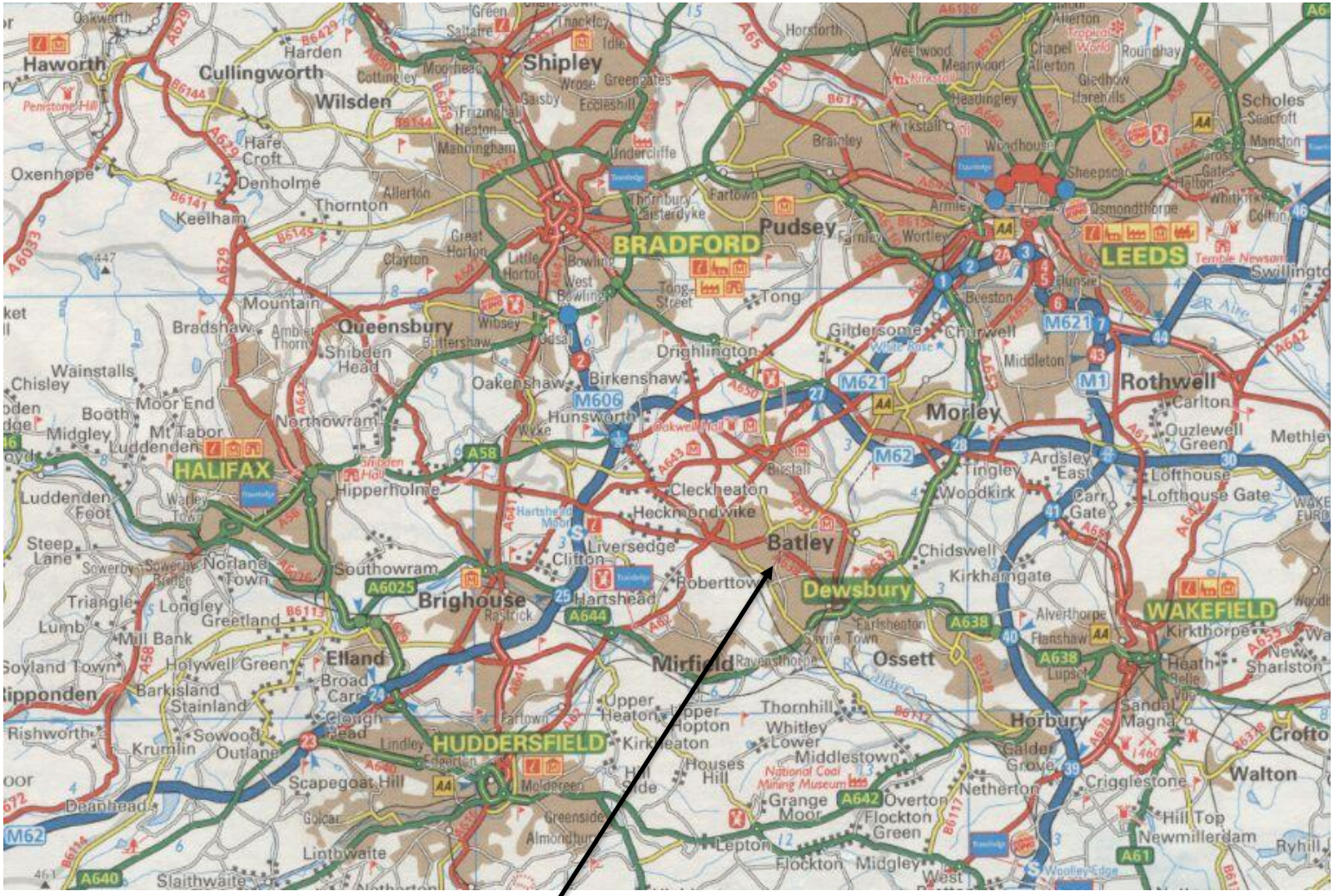
Our Garden Party



Preparing 'Roses for Peace'

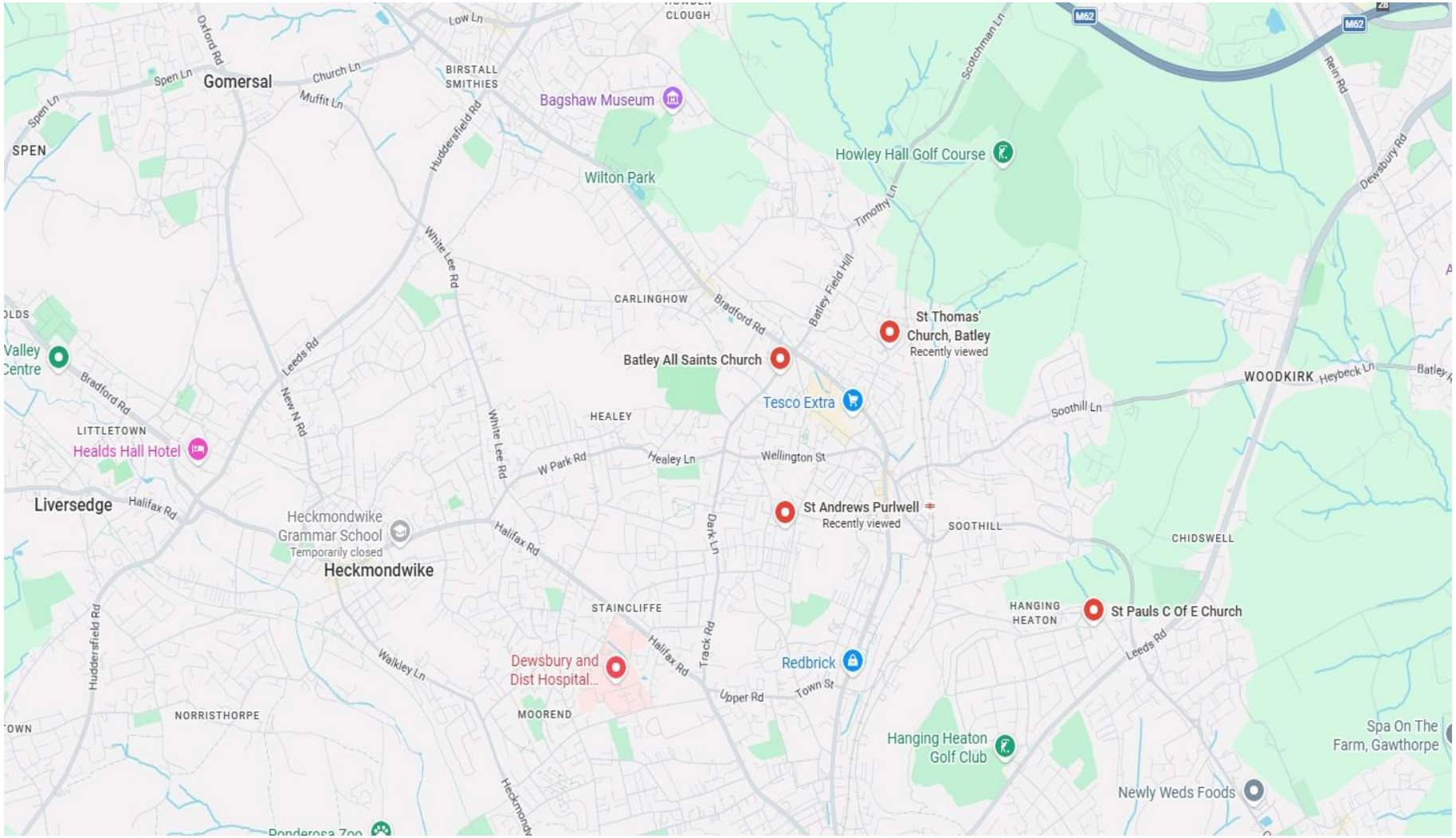
APPENDIX 1

The location of Batley within West Yorkshire



APPENDIX 2

Area map showing the locations of each of our four churches in and around Batley, the Town Centre being adjacent to the Tesco Extra store



Imagery ©2026, Map data ©2026 Google

United Benefice of Batley

BEHOLD, HOW GOOD AND JOYFUL A THING IT IS:
BRETHREN, TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY!