



To love as  
Jesus loves.

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Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to download and read our Parish Profile. Your interest is sincerely appreciated and marks the possibility of a new chapter in the life of our parish. We are proud of the communities to which we belong and value the opportunity to share something of who we are, our calling, and our life together.

Through this profile, we invite you to discover the story of our parish and to gain a sense of life within it. Our hope is that these pages convey something of how it feels to belong to St. James and St. John's, rather than simply offering a description of the parish.

We are also mindful that, whilst this represents an exciting opportunity for us, it is likely to be the same for you, within the context of your own circumstances and calling. For that reason, while this profile seeks to tell the story of our churches, we have also aimed to ensure that it is practical and informative.

In recent years, our vicars have come from a variety of traditions, ranging from charismatic evangelical to Anglo-Catholic, each brought something distinctive to our worship and life together. Our next Vicar may likewise differ in theology, tradition, or worship style from what we have previously known. What matters most to us is faithfulness to biblical values and a shared commitment to traditional Anglican orthodoxy. Above all, it is important that you share our love for Jesus and our vision to love others as He loves us.

Our parish logo reflects our identity and values. It reminds us that, while we continue to change and

acknowledge our imperfections, Jesus Christ remains at the centre – unchanging and holding us together. The colours of the logo are taken from a stained-glass window in one of our church buildings, which depicts the disciples James and John alongside Jesus, one clothed in red and the other in blue.

As no one enjoys a lengthy introduction, we shall leave it there. May God bless you as you read on; we hope that what you find here will encourage you to explore further.

God Bless

St James & John PCC

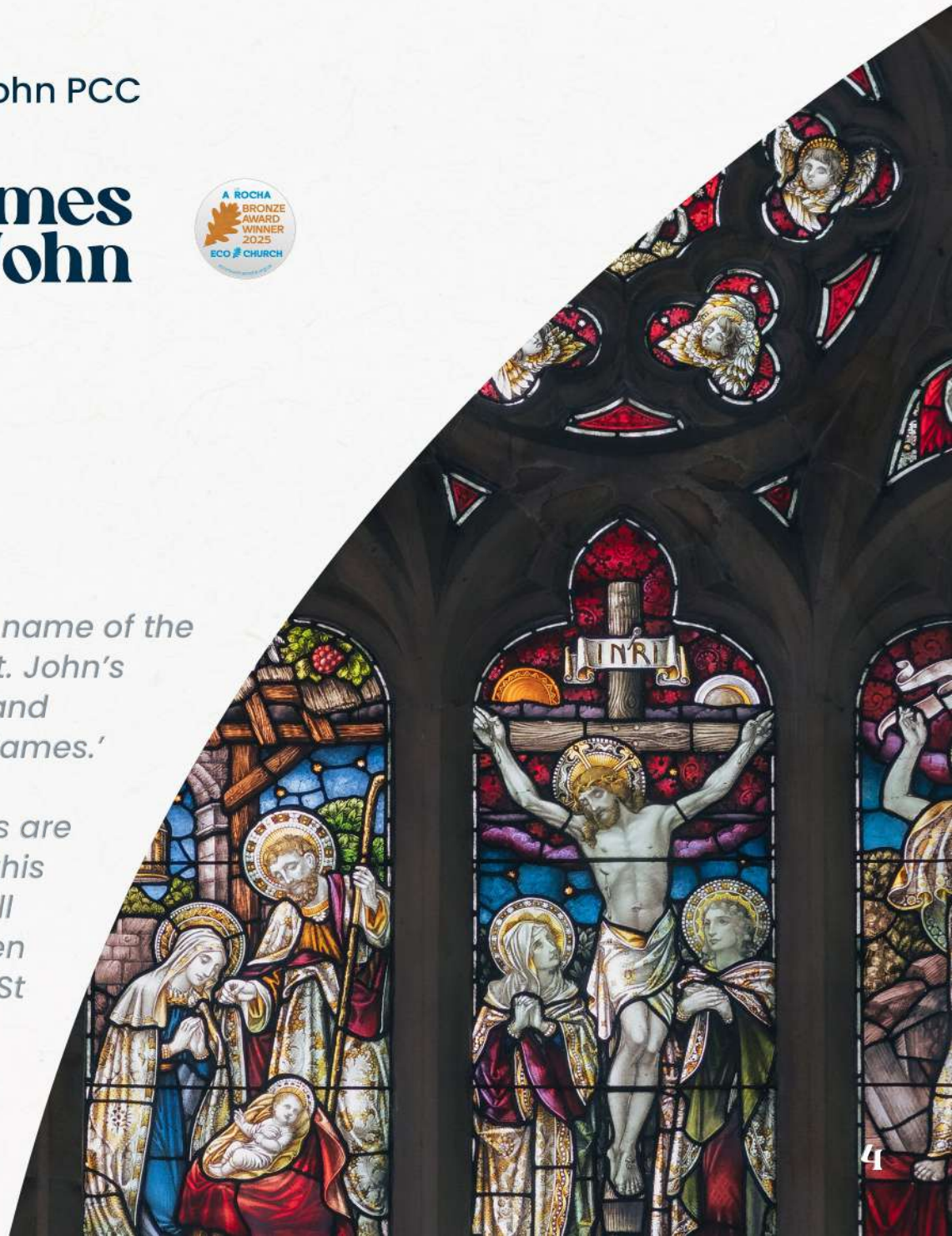


**st James  
& John**



*n.b. The formal name of the parish is 'Ellel St. John's the Evangelist and Shireshead St James.'*

*No stock photos are used in any of this Parish Profile. All photos are taken from the life of St James and John.*



# WHO WE ARE



We are a recently amalgamated parish, four miles south of Lancaster and 15 miles north of Preston, comprising two church buildings within a single parish: St. James, Shireshead and St. John's, Ellel.

Together, these churches serve two geographically close but distinct villages, Forton and Galgate, united by a shared commitment to love as Jesus loves, expressed through discipleship, community, and a missional approach to parish life. The city of Lancaster has just been named in the Sunday Times Best Places to Live 2026. The judges praised the city's thriving live music scene, food culture and its access to the great outdoors!

The churches, 3 miles apart, are linked by the A6. The journey time is less than 10 minutes. Between the churches is junction 33 of the M6, which gives access to Manchester, Liverpool and Keswick in about an hour. Lancaster is on the West Coast rail line, about half-way between London (2.5 hours) and Glasgow (2 hours). Morecambe to Preston and Morecambe to Blackpool buses run through Lancaster and both villages.

Our services on a Sunday are at 9:30am at St. James' and 11:00am at St. John's. We currently have a joint service, alternating between the churches, on any 5th Sunday of the month, and other special occasions. On a typical Sunday there are about 70 adults and 15 children at church. There are 106 members on the electoral roll. Typical numbers of occasional offices each year are 17 baptisms, 1 wedding, and 15 funerals. There are more details about the two churches later.



- △ Lancaster - 5 mins
- △ Lake District - 30 mins



St John's Church



St John's Primary School



Vicarage

Galgate

A6

M6 - Junction

# "ONE OF THE BEST PLACES TO LIVE IN THE UK 2026" - THE SUNDAY TIMES



St James' Church



Forton Primary School

Forton

- ▽ Preston - 30 Mins
- ▽ Manchester - 1 Hr

Over the past decade, the parish has experienced steady growth across both congregations. We are an active and creative parish, seeking to be an effective Christian presence in Forton and Galgate while remaining faithful to the teaching of Jesus Christ and our Anglican heritage. New housing estates in both villages present a challenge to us as well as opportunities.

Hospitality and resourcefulness are central to our identity. We are well rooted in our local communities and regularly seek opportunities to engage beyond our church buildings. This includes open-air services, community carol singing, participation in village events, and welcoming the local schools, nursery, and university groups into our churches. Our worship is broadly traditional in style, characterised by warmth, joy, and an openness to creativity.

We often say that our churches are amongst the few remaining places where genuine intergenerational interaction takes place. In a society that can sometimes feel polarised, we provide a space that unites. Children, parents, grandparents, students, and retirees sit side by side. The diversity of our congregations and our villages is not an abstract value but a lived reality, celebrated at every Sunday service, festival, and social event.

We also value and support our local businesses and entrepreneurs. In recent years, we have collaborated with a local brewer to host three beer and music festivals, and we make a conscious effort to use local suppliers wherever possible.





Championing local enterprise is part of our commitment to being at the heart of village life. An example of this is our War on Waste outreach, which rescues and redistributes surplus food on three distribution days each week.

The churches play an active role in the lives of many in our villages, particularly through our Church of England Primary School in Galgate, through the many groups and events organised by the churches and through the occasional offices of baptisms, weddings, and funerals. People see the churches as welcoming and safe spaces where they can engage with the big questions of life and feel genuinely connected to the life of the parish.



OUR VISION IS SIMPLE

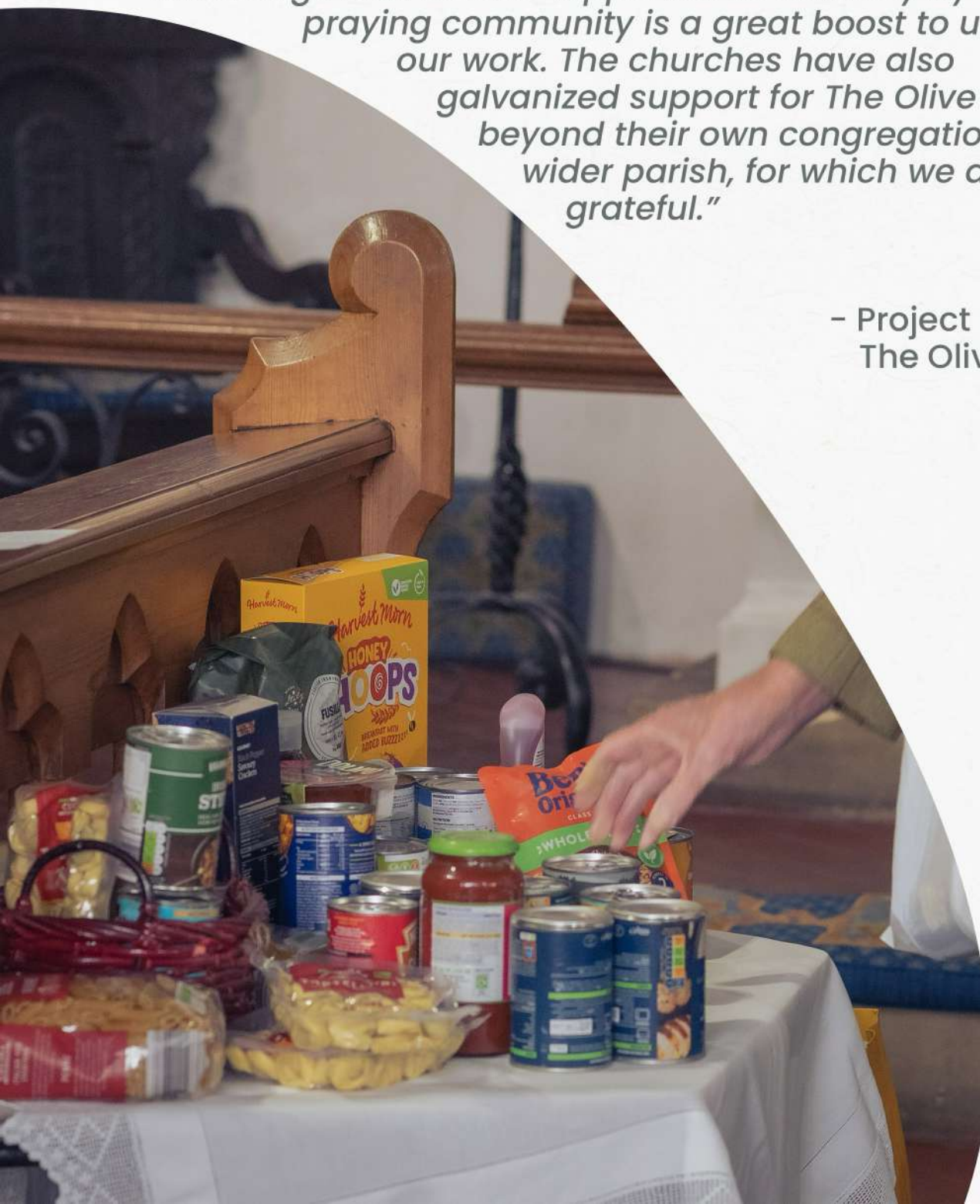


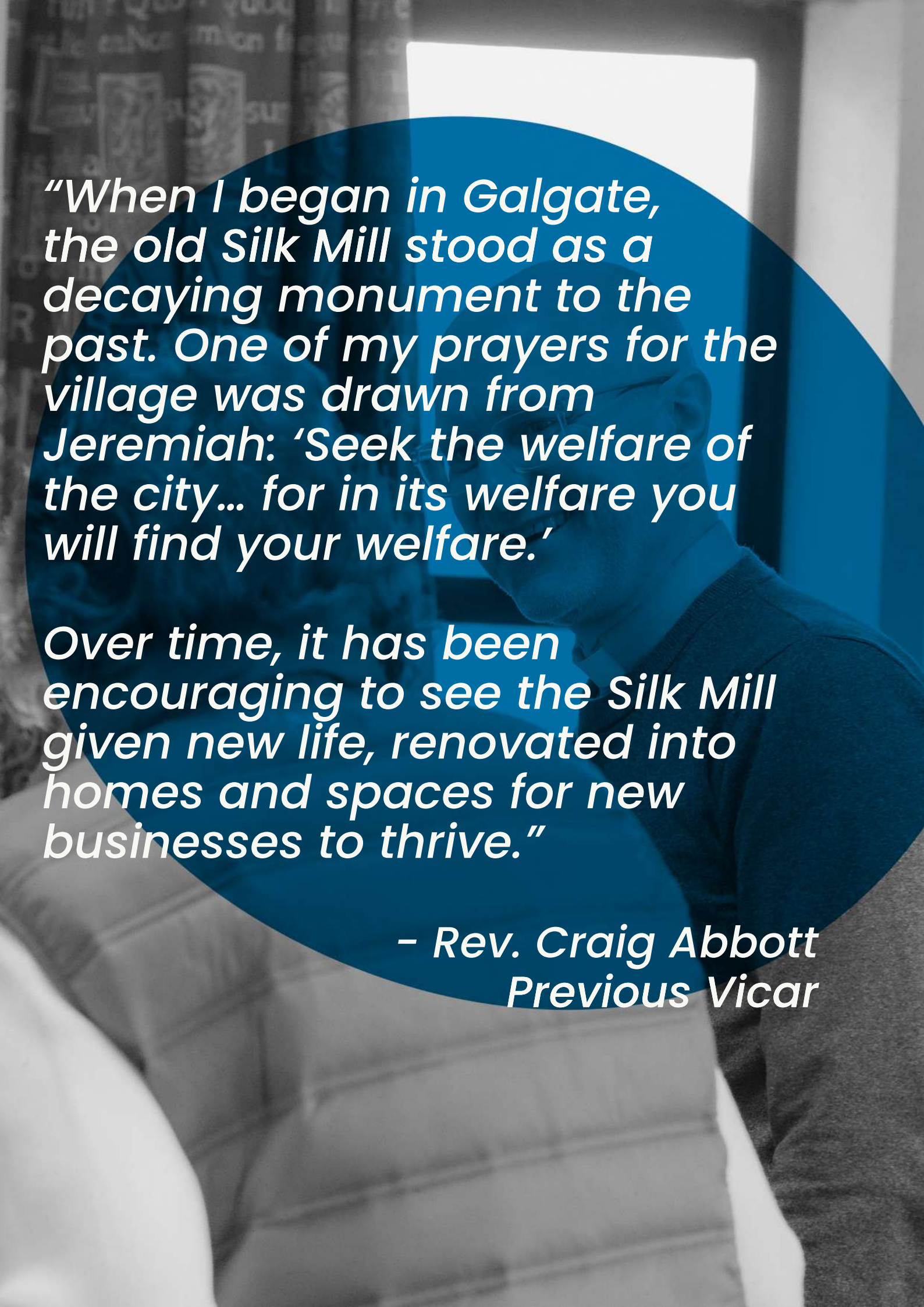
**To Love as  
Jesus Loves**

Our vision is simple: to love as Jesus loves. In practice, this means encountering Jesus Christ through worship and learning together – both in our congregations and small groups – what it means to live lives shaped by his love. Loving as Jesus loves naturally leads us beyond the walls of our churches, as we seek to share the love of Christ with others through both practical service and proclamation. We are very supportive of a Christian food bank, The Olive Branch, in Lancaster.

*“The ongoing support from St. John's and St. James' is invaluable to The Olive Branch. As well as the sustained provision of financial and food donations over the years, the knowledge that we are supported so faithfully by a praying community is a great boost to us and our work. The churches have also galvanized support for The Olive Branch beyond their own congregations, in the wider parish, for which we are very grateful.”*

– Project Manager,  
The Olive Branch





*“When I began in Galgate, the old Silk Mill stood as a decaying monument to the past. One of my prayers for the village was drawn from Jeremiah: ‘Seek the welfare of the city... for in its welfare you will find your welfare.’*

*Over time, it has been encouraging to see the Silk Mill given new life, renovated into homes and spaces for new businesses to thrive.”*

*– Rev. Craig Abbott  
Previous Vicar*

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue denim jacket over a striped shirt and blue jeans, stands at an altar in a church. She is holding a red microphone and speaking. To her right, a priest in white vestments is partially visible. In the background, there is an altar with a white cloth, candles, and a cross. A young girl in the foreground is holding up a drawing of a sun with the words "My mom died" written on it. The text "WHO IS GOD CALLING?" is overlaid in large white letters, with a glowing blue circle around the word "GOD".

**WHO IS GOD  
CALLING?**



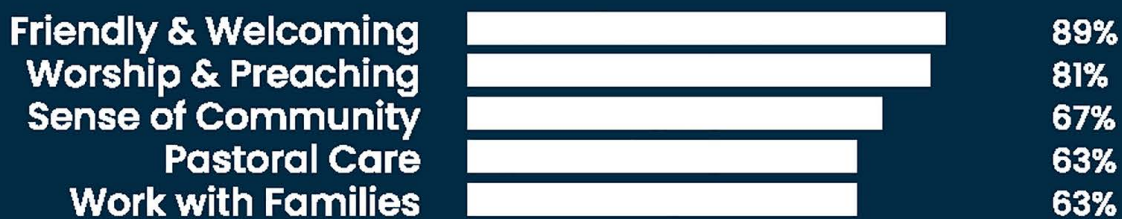
We seek a vicar who  
will lead us **BOLDLY** in  
God's mission.

Our two church congregations have been considering the kind of vicar who will lead our parish going forward, continuing the process of bringing the two churches closer together. We seek a vicar who will lead us boldly in God's mission: reaching new people with the good news of Jesus, nurturing faith, and inspiring our whole parish family to grow as disciples who joyfully share God's love in Galgate and Forton, but, overall, one whose life and ministry are rooted in a deep love for Jesus. We are committed to ensuring that all feel welcomed, valued and able to belong.

There has been much prayer and reflection, including surveying the views of the congregations by means of a questionnaire. We trust that God is already preparing someone with the gifts, character and calling to serve here.

So, we asked the congregation...

## What do you value most about Church?



## What should be the priority for the next Vicar?



## What do you desire most in a new Vicar?



# We believe God is calling someone who is:

## **SPIRITUALLY GROUNDED, PRAYERFUL AND COMPASSIONATE**

A leader with a deep love of God and a reliance on the Holy Spirit, rooted in scripture and the historical Anglican tradition, while open to creative and informal expressions of worship that engage people of all ages and backgrounds.

## **AN INSPIRING AND COLLABORATIVE LEADER**

With good leadership skills, able to work effectively with existing lay leaders, encourage collaboration, and discern and nurture those whom God may be calling into ministry.

## **APPROACHABLE, PASTORAL AND GOOD-HUMOURED**

Present, visible and engaged in the life of the churches and wider communities: someone who will thrive in our creative, welcoming environment, sharing our belief that while we don't take ourselves too seriously, we take what we do seriously. In responses to a questionnaire there was evidence of a need for pastoral care.

## **A CLEAR COMMUNICATOR**

Confident and engaging in both spoken and written communication, able to share the gospel clearly, bringing people to know Jesus Christ personally and helping develop and grow our faith individually and as a parish community.

## **MISSION MINDED AND INNOVATIVE**

Bringing energy, vision, imagination and entrepreneurial flair to sustain and grow the parish in new and faithful ways. We would value the development of small groups, such as home groups, that would deepen the spiritual life of our people.



# COMMITTED TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

With experience of working with children and young people in formal or informal settings, alongside a strong commitment to pastoral care across the whole parish, with the ability to grow and develop our ministry and involvement with the village schools; working with the headteachers, staff, governors and volunteers. Encouraging the members of our youth club to feel involved in the churches is a particular challenge.

## AN ENABLING AND ENCOURAGING ORGANISER

A thoughtful listener and effective organiser, providing enabling leadership for the PCC, and empowering others to develop their gifts and serve the life and mission of the parish.

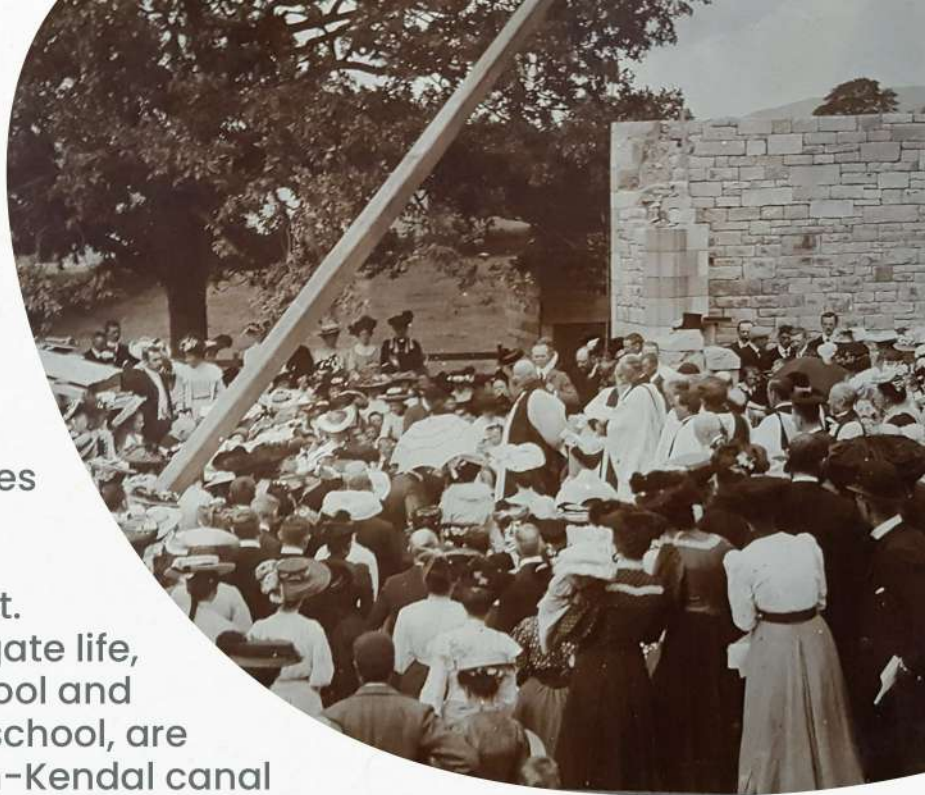




**A BIT MORE  
DETAIL**

## St John's Ellel

Galgate is a picturesque, vibrant community. People love its proximity to Lancaster, while still being able to be part of village life. The school gate is a daily meeting point, and new families find their way through newsletters, the school app, village events and networks. St. John's sits at the heart of Galgate life, in walking distance to the school and local shops. Shops, pubs, the school, are within easy reach. The Preston-Kendal canal goes through the village, and there are good bus links to Lancaster.



St. John's Church, Ellel was consecrated in September 1907 and superseded a church in the present graveyard. There is evidence of a church presence in the village going back to 1153. These days, members of St. John's Church are active in the community, taking a lead in many religious festivals and village activities, and continue to strengthen its links with local families and the wider community.

As part of the joint parish, St. John's continues to serve the local community with confidence and hope as we seek our next vicar. We are pleased to be able to offer:

- **Church building:** In good order, having recently had new heating installed and the south wall repointed. The requirements of the last quinquennial have been met. A new projector was recently installed, allowing the service to be available on a drop-down screen.
- **Clergy and Lay Leadership:** Two churchwardens, an LLM, ALM and an occasional preacher, who support across both churches.
- **Congregational Involvement:** Volunteers support intercessions, reading, cleaning, and coffee rotas.





- **Worship and music:** Music is an integral part of worship and parish events, led by a musician, who plays several instruments, including guitar and piano. A pipe organ is regularly serviced and played.

- **Congregation:** A lively and welcoming community, drawn from a wide range of ages and backgrounds, well integrated within the local area.

- **Safeguarding:** Responsibilities met with diligence and care.

- **Children and youth:** A Sunday school, on the first two Sundays in the month and Messy Church on the third, supported by an experienced team, “Jelly Tots” for young children and parents on Wednesday mornings, and a weekly youth club.

- **Adult groups and fellowship:** Coffee and Chat once a month, and weekly involvement in Warm Spaces in the village.

- **Churchyard:** Situated near the church in Chapel Lane, cared for by church members and villagers. This is an open churchyard; with the attendant challenges they present.



## St James' Shireshead

Forton is a growing village and civil parish in the Wyre district of Lancashire, situated near the Forest of Bowland. The village benefits from good transport links, with easy access to the A6 and the M6. Forton has a community primary school, a United Reformed church, a thriving cricket club, bowling green, successful uniformed organisations meeting hut and plans for a new village hall to replace the old school building currently used as the village hall. Sadly, the Methodist church has recently closed its doors and the small number of its community moved to Dolphinholme Chapel.



St. James Shireshead was consecrated on 17th September 1889, superseding the old church of St. Paul's Shireshead, for which there are records of incumbents going back to 1646. Fifteen incumbents later, and now part of a joint parish, we seek our next vicar with confidence and hope. Our members continue to be active in the community, taking a lead in many village civic and religious festivals and continue to strengthen our links with local families and the wider community.

We are pleased to be able to offer:

- **Church building:** In good order, having undergone a Quinquennial Inspection in 2022, with all major required repairs completed and fully funded.
- **Ancillary spaces:** Well-maintained facilities in addition to the main church and vestry, including a meeting room with kitchen, office, Sunday school room, resources room, and accessible toilet.





- **Audio/visual:** in the church there is a computer linked to the screen with full audio facilities
- **Accessibility:** ramp, hearing loop, disabled toilet and baby changing facilities
- **Safeguarding:** Responsibilities met with diligence and care.
- **Clergy and lay leadership:** Two churchwardens, an ALM, and an occasional preacher, who support across both churches.

• **Congregational involvement:** A dedicated team supporting intercessions, reading, cleaning, and coffee rotas, alongside flower arrangers.

• **Worship and music:** Music is an integral part of worship and parish events, led by our organist and augmented choir.

• **Congregation:** A lively and welcoming community, drawn from a wide range of ages and backgrounds, well integrated within the local area.

• **Children and youth:** A weekly Sunday school, supported by an experienced team, and a monthly youth club.

• **Adult groups and fellowship:** Monthly – Mother’s Union, ‘Ladies Link’ group and Men’s Breakfast, Over 50’s Lunch and Tuesday Brunch.

• **Churchyard:** Situated in a particularly fine setting at the redundant church of St. Paul’s, cared for by a dedicated maintenance team. The open churchyard is used twice a year for Easter morning dawn service and a Songs of Praise.



# The Vicarage

20 Highland Brow  
Galgate, Lancaster  
LA2 0NB

The vicarage is a practical, four-bedroom detached house in the heart of Galgate, within a ten-minute walk of St. John's. It has a study, a private, enclosed, garden, and a recently renovated kitchen and an outbuilding, making it family-friendly, pet-friendly and ideal for hospitality. Its central location in Galgate means the vicar is right in the middle of village life, next to the doctors' surgery and pharmacy.

As can be seen in what follows, there are excellent primary schools in the villages. Secondary education in the area is of a high standard at Ripley St. Thomas Church of England Academy and two grammar schools in Lancaster. And there are two universities in Lancaster, one partially in the parish.



## Schools

### Ellel St John's Church of England Primary School

Ellel St. John's Church of England Primary School is a thriving, nurturing school at the heart of the Galgate community, encouraging children to "let their light shine" through a strong Christian ethos and a commitment to academic, social and spiritual growth. In close partnership with St. John's Church, the school benefits from regular collective worship, shared festivals, pastoral support and active church involvement in governance and spiritual life. Children engage in worship, community events and initiatives such as Messy Church, strengthening bonds between families, staff and the wider church. Together, the church and school share a joyful mission to nurture faith, character and confidence, supporting young people to flourish and shine within a caring Christian community.



### Forton Primary School

Forton School is a small but growing village school committed to enabling every child to "shine" by nurturing character, curiosity, compassion and confidence within a caring and inclusive community. As the school becomes more diverse, it values and warmly invites deeper partnerships with local churches, including St. James' Church and United Reformed Church, whose involvement—such as Open the Book assemblies—enriches pupils' spiritual development. Rooted in a vision that every child is valued and capable of flourishing, the school promotes kindness, reflection, collective worship and a broad RE curriculum that fosters respect for different faiths and cultures. It asks St. James' to consider the possibility of foundation governance and leadership in worship, to strengthen its Christian ethos, pastoral care and community connections, helping every child grow and thrive.

# Finances

When the two churches merged to form the new joint parish, the finances were also merged so that we only had one set of accounts and one set of bank accounts (main and savings).

As the analysis below shows, there has been a steady increase in receipts which included support both from the congregation, grants and reserves to help fund major improvements including the new heating system at St. John's and wall repairs and pointing at St. James. It can be seen that there has been an increasing reliance on hosting events to generate income, though they also have the outcome of raising the churches' profile in the villages.

If you take out the major building schemes, expenditure remains steady with the main portion being the parish share which has been met each year even though it includes support from the Diocese.

Each church has several protected funds held in our bank account, but the largest is the St. James' building fund. St. John's has reserves held in shares at the Diocese, again most of it is protected for St. John's church building.

Receipts				Payments			
	2023	2024	2025		2023	2024	2025
<b>Giving</b>	£67,192	£72,425	£73,882	<b>Mission</b>	£11,185	£12,341	£9,678
				<b>Buildings</b>	£29,841	£15,031	£91,397
<b>Events</b>	£16,407	£36,714	£40,862	<b>Events</b>	£1,608	£1,750	£2,617
				<b>Funds</b>	£6,781	£29,036	£6,145
<b>Other</b>	£15,668	£17,178	£46,267	<b>Parish Share</b>	£70,792	£80,058	£81,417
				<b>Other</b>	£0	-£1,845	-£319
<b>Total</b>	£99,267	£126,317	£161,011	<b>Total</b>	£120,207	£136,371	£190,935





# LETTER FROM THE BISHOPS

Thank you for showing an interest in a post in the Diocese of Blackburn.

Our Diocese is passionate about the renewal of Parish life. We have a profound belief in the power of the Gospel to transform lives and communities and expresses a firm commitment to maintaining clergy numbers and investing in the mission of the local church. We therefore seek clergy with a personal faith fiery enough to make new disciples for Christ, with a sincere commitment to the Parish as the heart of the church's mission and with the resilience and courage to bring growth and renewal to local churches. We don't want superheroes. Rather we are seeking authentic, prayerful priests of all traditions who share our passion for confident proclamation and generous service.



What's more, you would be coming to the Diocese at a fascinating time of our Centenary in 2026, themed "All for Jesus". We are in the midst of a major process of listening to God and listening to our County as we discern where God is calling us next, a process that will result in a new strategic vision that will last until 2033, the 2000th anniversary of the Resurrection.

We have also recently been successful in obtaining a grant of £25.5m from the Diocesan Investment Programme run by the national church. This will enable us to:

- Offer a transformed pattern of ongoing training and support to clergy, including sabbatical leave as an expectation for all rather than a treat for the few
- Deploy 30 'Ignite' youth and children's workers to parishes around the Diocese

- Invest in urban areas through expanding the M:Power course for urban leaders, employing 18 Urban Pioneers and re-imagining Christian life in areas of particular challenge.
- Expand our Diocesan Renewal Programme which has led to an average of 6% growth in RWA in participating parishes.

We are a Diocese that is united in defying the declinist mindset that has taken hold of so much of Western European Christianity. Through a firm belief in the power of Jesus Christ to change lives combined with strong pastoral ministry and imaginative developments such as new local congregations, we are seeing growth in churches of all traditions. Strong relationships with our amazing family of 191 schools (95% of whom benefit from practising Christian Headteachers) provide another springboard for mission.

As a Diocese we do all we can to love and treasure our clergy. Our programme of Annual Conversations means that every licensed priest has a 90 minute conversation with a Bishop or an Archdeacon every year about their vocation, wellbeing and spiritual life.

God bless.

The Bishop of Blackburn, The Rt Revd Philip North  
 The Bishop of Lancaster, The Rt Revd Dr Jill Duff  
 The Bishop of Burnley, The Rt Revd Dr Joe Kennedy





GOD BLESS.

St. John's Ellel  
Chapel Lane  
Galgate, LA2 0PW

St. James' Shireshead  
Whinney Brow Lane  
Forton, PR3 0AE



**stJames  
&John**

**THE  
DIOCESE  
OF  
BLACKBURN**  
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE



**THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND**