



BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM
The Rt Revd Dr Michael Volland

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Words of Welcome to Church of England, Birmingham

Thank you for showing an interest in a post within this Diocese.

This is an exciting time for Church of England Birmingham, as we seek to share the good news of Jesus in the West Midlands and pursue our vision of a *Transforming Church* in order to see *growing churches at the heart of each community*.



To give some context to our city and region, Birmingham is the UK's second city, is super-diverse, and has the youngest urban population in one of the most lively, diverse and creative city regions. As a diocese, Church of England Birmingham (CofEB) was founded in 1905, is geographically small but densely populated, covering an area of nearly 300 square miles and includes parishes in Birmingham and parts of Solihull, Sandwell, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, and often to people's surprise, our rural parish communities make up 15% of our family.

Birmingham is the 'poorest' CofE diocese (based on IMD rankings) but also one of the most generous (based on giving as % of income). We are recognised for being innovative, making good use of scarce resources, which resonates with the character of Birmingham being known as the 'city of a thousand trades'.

Churches in our Diocese embrace a wide spectrum of traditions from evangelical and Catholic, liberal to conservative and choral to charismatic in their outlook on mission and ministry. I am committed to ensuring that all can find a home, and flourish alongside lay and ordained colleagues within Church of England Birmingham.

Finally, thank you for showing interest in this post, and I hope the profile provides all the information you need. Be assured of my prayers as you discern whether this might be the role and region to which God is calling you. Please pray for Church of England Birmingham as we seek to witness to Christ and see lives, families and communities transformed by the power of the Spirit and to the glory of God.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt Revd Dr Michael Volland
Bishop of Birmingham



The Diocese of Birmingham

PARISH INFORMATION AND PROFILE

The benefice of:

SHIRLEY



1. OUR NEXT VICAR

Shirley Parish is seeking not just a leader, but a companion in faith — someone who brings wisdom, warmth, and a willingness to grow alongside the community. The emphasis from our congregations on humour, openness, and collaboration speaks volumes about our culture. We are ready for someone who will honour our variety of worship while helping us to step boldly into the future and continue to grow our congregations and pastoral care.

Shirley Parish offers a new vicar a deeply rooted, spiritually vibrant, and practically equipped community. It's a place of warmth, openness, and shared purpose — with strong pastoral teams, engaged volunteers, thriving children's ministries, and a clear commitment to growth, inclusion, and sustainability. We need someone who will lead, guide and inspire the team. We hope that they will be willing to encourage us by example and will motivate both us and the congregations, thus enabling the churches to grow as we seek God's will for our Parish.

We need a leader who will direct and enhance the work begun, someone who can visualise the potential here and be a part of it.

Although we currently have a large number of volunteers many of them are aging and there are a significant number of the congregations who have little involvement outside services: we would like everyone to be part of the community rather than just a 'customer'. We depend on many individuals who make things happen in the Parish and we need to ensure that we are succession planning for the future.

Since our return from lockdown the Parish has attracted a number of new members, and we would like to ensure that we are adequately helping them to develop their faith and become more involved in Parish life.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Parish of Shirley stretches from the Birmingham border to Friar's Gate and Tidbury Green. It is home to over 37,000 people. We worship at two churches - St James the Great, Church Road, Shirley, Solihull B90 2AX and St John the Divine, 176 Tilehouse Lane, Tidbury Green, Shirley, Solihull B90 1PW - each with its own loyal congregations - but we act together to share God's love with those who live and work in the parish (and beyond).

Our intention is to "know Christ", through worship and developing our own relationships with God; and to "make Christ known", through our invitation and welcome, our words and our actions.

Our Sunday Worship from St James Church is livestreamed, so those who cannot attend in person can still participate. We have a wide range of activities for children and their families; and our weekly "Places of Welcome" Café is providing a place for people to enjoy hot drinks and cake, to reconnect with old friends and to make new ones.

We are engaging with the broader Shirley community through our activities with schools and other community events; through expanding our local community links; and through our social media presence. We wish to continue to develop our involvement with schools including assemblies and school visits. We pray and work closely with the other churches in Shirley and we hope that our new Vicar will continue, and build on, these links.

3. BASIC INFORMATION AND STATISTICS

The full name of benefice is Shirley (St James the Great and St John the Divine) and the post that is vacant is Vicar.

The Name and address of patron is -

The Bishop of Birmingham, Bishop's Croft, Old Church Road, Harborne, Birmingham
B17 0BG

The Incumbent of the Benefice of Solihull in the Diocese of Birmingham

The Chairman of the Patronage Board of the Society for the Maintenance of Faith
20 Ogleforth, York YO17RG

Our Archdeacon is the Venerable Jenny Tomlinson and our Area Dean is the Reverend Mark Bennett.

The address of the Vicarage is 2 Bishopton Close, Shirley, Solihull B90 4AH and it is a purpose built, detached, six bedroom property with a study/meeting room/ cloakroom downstairs which are accessed from the front door. It is a ten minute walk / three minute drive to St James Church and close to local supermarkets and schools.



We currently have 165 on our electoral roll and the average weekly attendance year on year, over the last 3 years, is 109. The average weekly attendance of children and young people under 16 is 6.

In the last twelve months, these are our numbers of: -

- a. those baptized: 33
- b. those confirmed: 6
- c. marriages: 4
- d. funerals: 32
- e. Christmas communicants (all services): 87
- f. Easter communicants (all services): 141
- g. last October survey: Attendees (including children) 464, Communicants 444

St James Church began as a Chapel of Ease to the Parish Church of Solihull in 1831, became a Parish Church in 1843 and was extended to its present shape and size in 1882. It's approximate seating capacity is 250. The last Quinquennial inspection was done in March 2022 and the priority work has been completed.

St John the Divine Church was dedicated in May 1925 and has an approximate seating capacity of 30. The last Quinquennial inspection was done in November 2023 and the priority work has been completed.

St James Church and Church House are fully accessible and have disabled facilities, St John's Church is accessed by steps which are prohibitive to some. Church House is opposite St James Church and houses the Church Hall, kitchen, toilets and the Parish Office. It is used by outside hirers as well as by church groups.

The Parish produces a weekly notice sheet and email and a monthly parish magazine. Our website address is <https://www.shirleyparishb90.co.uk> and our Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/AdventureinFaithB90>

Our Parish Wardens are Linda Pitt and Gill Hanton and there are two deputy wardens who oversee much of the everyday maintenance work.

4. LOCAL COMMUNITY

The main A34 Stratford Road is effectively the local “High Street” and runs through the middle of the Parish.

Housing is largely owner occupied terraced or semi-detached. There are many 2 or 3 generation families in the Parish. Shirley is seen as an attractive place to live, and many young couples look to set up home here close to their parents and grandparents.

Population is mainly white British but with a growing professional Asian population.

There are a number of large GP surgeries in the Parish. Hospital care is provided by Solihull, Heartlands, Good Hope and Queen Elizabeth hospitals.

Welcome Café

As soon as we could after the Covid lockdowns we opened our weekly Welcome Café – officially a ‘place of welcome’. It is overseen by one of our Readers and a rota of volunteers serve and make drinks and cakes. Tea/coffee/hot chocolate are available and a selection of (usually) homemade cakes. The Café has developed into a place where different congregations mix as do people on the periphery of church life, and those who drop in occasionally. Our local special school sometimes brings a group of older students to encourage their social skills and a local care home brings a group of their residents.

5. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WORK

As a parish we are blessed to have sixteen schools and a number of day nurseries. For over twenty years we have organised schools events at Christmas and Easter. We invite all schools with year 1 children to bring them to our ‘Journey to the Stable’ and those with year 5 children to our ‘Easter Journey’. Our aim is to tell the biblical version of these two festival stories. It is not unusual for us to see 700 children at Christmas and, although the take up is less at Easter, about 400 children then.

We also take ‘Open the Book’ storytelling currently to two schools. Widney Junior where we see year 3 and Tudor Grange Primary Academy St James where we see Key Stage 1. In addition, at St James we take collective worship regularly, hold a weekly ‘Bible Art’ session, and the whole school come into St James Church every half term. Other schools use the church for Harvest or carol services, and we respond to ad-hoc requests.

Recently we have invigorated our relationship with the local secondary school and as a result we have presented sessions on Holy Week and Easter to all their year 7 children, and to the year 10 GCSE religious studies students. Our curates were invited to hold a session with this group on the subject of same-sex marriage. We have also had groups from the GCSE Child Development class help us during the Journey to the Stable.

There is a weekly toddler group on Fridays during term time from which we encourage families to come to our Messy Church. Messy Church is held monthly on a Saturday morning and attended by up to 50 children and a similar number of adults. During the 10.30am Sunday service at St James Church children are invited to Kids Church in Church House for the central part of the service. On one Sunday of the month we remain together for ‘Worship for Everyone’.

St John’s Church fosters links with the nursery that has premises in their grounds with termly seasonal sessions with the older children.

6. OUTREACH

Occasional Offices

The Parish plays a consistent and visible role in the life events of the local community through baptisms, funerals, and weddings. There is a strong pattern of families and individuals choosing our churches for these key moments. Baptisms are particularly popular and well-attended and the Parish has a reputation locally for welcoming families at the start of their faith journeys.

Remembrance

The Parish leads an annual memorial service, usually with one of the local funeral directors, to commemorate those who have died. Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day observances are organised in partnership with the Royal British Legion and serve as a public expression of gratitude and respect for those who served. Over 1000 people attended in 2025.

Ecumenical Partnership and Community Presence

The Parish is an active partner in Shirley Churches Together, collaborating with Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist and Free Churches to co-ordinate shared worship, prayer and civic witness. Regular ecumenical activities include a Good Friday Walk of Witness, service of Christian Unity, Christmas carol events, and shared prayer meetings for ministers, and is part of the weekly service rota for 'Solihull Village', an over-55s residential community, offering worship and pastoral company to residents.

Pastoral Outreach

In addition to our annual memorial service, we have also begun to hold an annual service marking Baby Loss Awareness Week, providing a sensitive space for remembrance and support for bereaved families.

This pastoral outreach extends into homes and care-home ministry provided through clergy and readers who support people at times of need.

7. MINISTRY TO THE ELDERLY

Shirley Parish has been blessed with many Residential, Retirement and Nursing Homes, offering different facilities for the diverse needs of our community.

At present we are privileged to be able to lead a Holy Communion service to five of these homes on a monthly basis.

These services are enjoyed and lead mostly by our team of Lay Readers (currently three) and are very much appreciated by the various congregations of all denominations.

For those people who cannot manage to travel to church, and we are pleased to offer a Home Communion once a month.

There is also a quarterly Eucharist in St James Church for our 'Home Communion Community' where our pastoral group enable those who cannot easily get to Church, to come for a service of sacramental worship, with refreshments afterwards.

We welcome these opportunities to serve our elderly brothers and sisters in Christ and learn much from them.

8. WORSHIP AND WORSHIPPERS

Our parish is served by two active churches, St James and St John, each offering distinctive acts of worship that together shape a varied and welcoming spiritual life. The range of services balance tradition with contemporary, providing regular opportunities for sacramental worship, quieter reflective space, and accessible all-age gatherings.

Eucharistic Worship and Services of the Word

Eucharistic worship is central across the parish. A twice-monthly parish Eucharist service brings both congregations together at St James for a shared act of worship. St John holds two Sunday morning services a month alternating between Eucharist and Morning Worship to maintain a steady rhythm of sacramental and word-based worship. St James also offers a weekly Thursday Eucharist that provides a midweek moment of Communion, prayer and preaching.

In addition, there is a monthly Morning Worship service of the Word at St James which offers thoughtful scripture-based reflection and prayer.

Quiet and Reflective Options

For those seeking silence and stillness, we offer a quiet, said 8am Sunday service twice a month. One evening a month is our reflective service in the Celtic tradition where simplicity and space for personal response are emphasised.

Prayer Chapel

St James Church remains open each day between 10am and 4pm for private prayer in the prayer chapel. This daily access provides a quiet place for individual reflection, short prayers, and pastoral presence within the church building.

The combination of daily open church, varied patterns of worship, and family-focused activities aims to meet the needs of a diverse church and parish community while maintaining a clear and steady rhythm of parish life.

In addition, the ministry team and others meet weekly for a prayer meeting using Zoom, this is currently on Monday evenings, incorporating Compline.

We are blessed to have students from Birmingham Conservatoire playing the organ at St James Church for some services, and also leading occasional choirs, and use CDs or a laptop for others. Robes are generally worn for Communion Services, but not for Morning Worship or Worship 4 Everyone services. We also have an organist at St John's Church.

For further illustration, our service patterns for November and December 2025 are included in Appendix 1, the services held during Holy Week and on Easter Sunday 2025 are included in Appendix 2.

9. CHURCH-BASED ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS

We have three Home Groups, one meets weekly during the day and two meet once a month in the evening, led by the clergy/readers.

During Lent we have a series of Lent Conversations, generally based on the C of E material.

We have a branch of Mothers' Union which meets once a month and we also have a Book Club which meets monthly. Both these groups write reports for the Parish Magazine.

A Nordic (or not) walking group meets monthly for exercise, fellowship and coffee.

We have churchyard working group which meets on a Wednesday morning (the churchyard is closed for burials but open for the interment of ashes).

A ploughman's lunch is held fortnightly in Church House.

Our team of bell-ringers practice on a Thursday evening and ring before the 10.30am service on Sundays.

There is a monthly coffee morning held at St John's Church.

The Friends of St James were formed over forty years ago by the then vicar Reverend Warwick Whelan. They aim to provide extra funds for the fabric of St James Church building and Church House.

It is a registered charity and the committee is mindful to ensure that their fund-raising events are within the charity rules. Fund-raising events, such as meals, Bric a Brac and book sales, cakes, 100 club, aim to be inclusive to all, and the committee are grateful for the loyal and continual support that they receive.

10. SAFEGUARDING

Shirley Parish takes Safeguarding very seriously. We believe that everyone who comes to our churches deserves to feel included and very importantly, safe.

Safeguarding is managed by a team of three people, a Safeguarding Coordinator, Safeguarding Administrator and the incumbent (the Church Wardens during the interregnum).

We also feel it is important for all members of our congregations to be aware of Safeguarding which we aim to do through Safeguarding Sundays and the provision of informative leaflets.

The Diocese Dashboard report shows the Parish consistently achieves greater than 90% at meeting the mandatory Safeguarding requirements, variances are due to timings of training and PCC approval of reports.

11. ECO CHURCH

Shirley Parish Joined the Ecochurch movement in 2019 and gained the Silver award in 2023.

We use Fairtrade products for all our hospitality and cleaning.

There are wild areas and bird feeders in our churchyards and we support the charity 'Tanzania Delicious Cashews'.

We are working to achieve net zero carbon emissions across all our buildings and towards a Gold award with action across worship, buildings, land, community and global outreach, individual lifestyle; the interest and involvement of our congregations is increasing slowly. We hope that our new Vicar will be fully supportive of these initiatives and encourage them to become a way of life for all in our community.

12. PROJECTS

In recent years, we have undertaken a number of projects to upgrade and equip our buildings. This would not have been possible without the generosity of individuals, groups (especially the Friends of St James) and grant-giving Trusts and organisations, together with commitment (and funds) from the PCC.

2022

Installation of a projector, screens and streaming equipment in St James Church.

Church House: upgrade of electrical systems, LED lighting, replacement of obsolete gas boiler with electric heating panels, emergency lighting, insulation and decoration.

Community defibrillator installed outside Church House.

2023

Repair of St James church tower clock (early electromechanical clock 1948)

2024

Upgrade of St James church lighting to LEDs.

New trip-free path laid at St John's Church and decorated inside and out ready for the Centenary Celebrations in May 2025.

2025

Installation of a toilet and cupboard kitchenette in St James Church.

Reordering of the entrance lobby

Replacement of obsolete gas boilers in St James Church with electric heating chandeliers and some infrared panels. We have been chosen as a Demonstrator Parish, developing and monitoring the project in partnership with the Diocese and the national Demonstrator team and sharing our experiences with other churches.

We also have a significant quote for the work that will be needed on the organ in due course.

13. FINANCE, STEWARDSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

We have a Parish Office in Church House, run by our paid Parish Administration Manager who works five mornings a week. The following committees meet quarterly, and report to / get agreement from the PCC where necessary – Eco Group, Buildings and Finance, Ministry Mission and Pastoral, Events. The dates for these meetings are set at the beginning of the year. The Eco Committee is chaired by one of our deputy wardens, the Events Committee is chaired by one of our Parish Wardens, the other committees and the PCC are chaired by the clergy.

Our PCC is made up of two Parish Wardens, three Deanery Synod representatives and twelve representatives from our various congregations. The secretary and treasurer are elected from these representatives and have served for a number of years.

Giving over the last five years has been broadly flat - where people have left, this has been made up by new people and increased giving from others. We encourage people to use the Parish Giving Scheme whenever possible. We've seen less unrestricted donations, possibly due to all the projects we have funded. The fund raising by the Friends of St James is not included in the PCC finances.

Before 2025, there was a minimum and maximum ask for the Parish Share.

We paid above the minimum to 2024, 2024 we paid the minimum and 2025 we paid less than the ask. In 2025 the ask was £85,081 which was over £30k higher than the 2024 minimum ask It would have been unrealistic to expect our parish to pay the additional amount, given our finances.

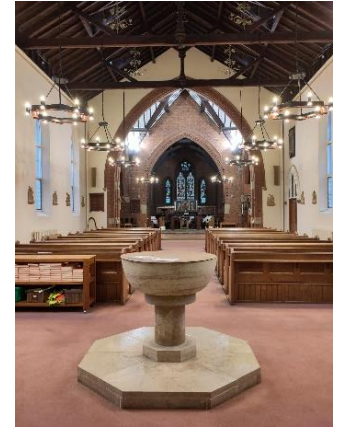
We've actually run at a deficit over the last few years, and we've contributed as much as we could afford.

The vicar's expenses of office were met in full last year.

Most of our charity support goes direct from donors to the organisations, e.g. Sparkhill Foodbank, Narthex, ADAVU, Royal British Legion etc.

Our toilets are twinned.

Our Christmas Tree Festival supports a chosen charity – Open Doors in 2025.



Appendix 1

Services in November and December 2025

Date	Time	Service	Venue
Sunday 2nd All Saints	10.30am	Parish Communion with Bishop Esther	St James Church
	3.30pm	Reflective Worship	St James Church
Thursday 6th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 9th Remembrance Sunday	8am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	9am	Holy Communion	St John's Church
	9.30am	Morning Worship	St James Church
Thursday 13th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Saturday 15th	10am	Messy Church	St James Church
Sunday 16th Safeguarding Sunday	10.30am	Parish Communion	St James Church
Thursday 20th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 23rd	8am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	9am	Morning Worship	St John's Church
	10.30am	Worship 4 Everyone	St James Church
Thursday 27th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 30th Advent Sunday	10.30am	Parish Communion	St James Church

Date	Time	Service	Venue
Wednesday 3rd	2pm	MU Advent Service	St James Church
Thursday 4th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	6.30pm	Memorial Service	St James Church
Sunday 7th	10.30am	Parish Communion	St James Church
	3.30pm	Reflective Worship	St James Church
Thursday 11th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 14th	8am	Holy Communion	St James Church
	9am	Holy Communion	St John's Church
	10.30am	Morning Worship	St James Church
	6.30pm	Carol Service	St James Church
Thursday 18th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Saturday 20th	10am	Messy Church	St James Church
Sunday 21st	10.30	Parish Communion	St James Church
Wednesday 24th	4pm	Crib Service	St James Church
	11pm	Parish Communion	St James Church
Thursday 25th	10.30am	Parish Communion	St James Church
Sunday 28th	9am	Patronal Service	St John's Church
	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church

Appendix 2

Services for Holy Week and Easter 2025

Date	Time	Service	Venue
Thursday 3rd	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 6th	10.30am 6pm	Parish Communion Reflective Worship	St James Church St James Church
Thursday 10th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 13th Palm Sunday	8am 9am 10.30am 10.30am	Holy Communion Holy Communion Morning Worship Holy Communion	St James Church St John's Church St James Church Christ the King Church
Monday 14th	7.30pm	Compline	St James Church
Tuesday 15th	7.30pm	Stations of the Cross	St James Church
Wednesday 16th	2pm 7.30pm	Holy Communion Reflective Worship	St James Church St James Church
Thursday 17th Maunder Thursday	7.30pm	Holy Communion (no morning service)	St James Church
Friday 18th Good Friday	10.30am 1pm 7.30pm	Shirley Churches Together Walk of Witness At the cross Taizé Service	Our Lady of the Wayside B90 4AY St James Church St James Church
Saturday 19th	10am	Messy Church	St James Church
Sunday 20th Easter Sunday	6am 8am 9am 10.30am 10.30am	Sunrise Service Holy Communion Holy Communion Holy Communion Holy Communion	St John's Garden St James Church St John's Church St James Church Christ the King Church
Thursday 24th	10.30am	Holy Communion	St James Church
Sunday 27th	8am 9am 10.30am 10.30am	Holy Communion Holy Communion Worship 4 Everyone Holy Communion	St James Church St John's Church St James Church Christ the King Church

(worship at Christ the King Church ceased August 2025)

Tudor Grange Primary Academy St James is a parish church school with a long and valued history. For many years, it served pupils in Key Stage 2 before joining the Tudor Grange Academies Trust, when it expanded to include Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The school is led by Headteacher Gail Duxbury, with Sarah Deakin as Executive Principal across the Trust's primary schools.

The school currently educates 241 pupils from Nursery to Year 6 and offers wrap-around care to support families.

St James enjoys a strong and active relationship with the parish church. Pupils attend a church service at the end of each half term, while clergy lead collective worship in school. Church members also support the school through *Open the Book* sessions and by running a lunchtime Bible-based art and craft club. Both the incumbent and one lay minister serve as foundation governors. In Year 5, pupils may volunteer for the Chaplaincy Team, contributing to worship both in school and within the church community.

The school's values of **love, faith and courage** are rooted in 1 Corinthians 16:13–14

"Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. Do everything in love."

Our vision is to provide an inclusive, happy and safe environment that welcomes pupils of all faiths and none. Diversity of belief and practice is respected and valued within a distinctly Christian ethos.

Recent inspections reflect this positive culture. During the Ofsted inspection in March 2024, inspectors noted: *"Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are happy and feel safe. This is because they know that staff care about them and want them to do well."*

At the SIAMS inspection in May 2024, the inspector commented:

"Pupils talk passionately about the life of their school. They are rightly proud of their school and their success. Both pupils and adults are treated well. As a result, people flourish."

Perhaps the school–church relationship is best captured by one pupil who said, *"Our school has its own church!"*

At St James, our church is very much at the heart of our community. The strong relationship between our wonderful school and St James church continues to grow and flourish. We are consistently working to establish new ways in which we can support one another to deliver the very best experiences for our children.



Love, Faith, Courage

Part of Tudor Grange Academies Trust



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Tudor Grange Academies Trust
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