



# York City Centre Churches Parish Profile

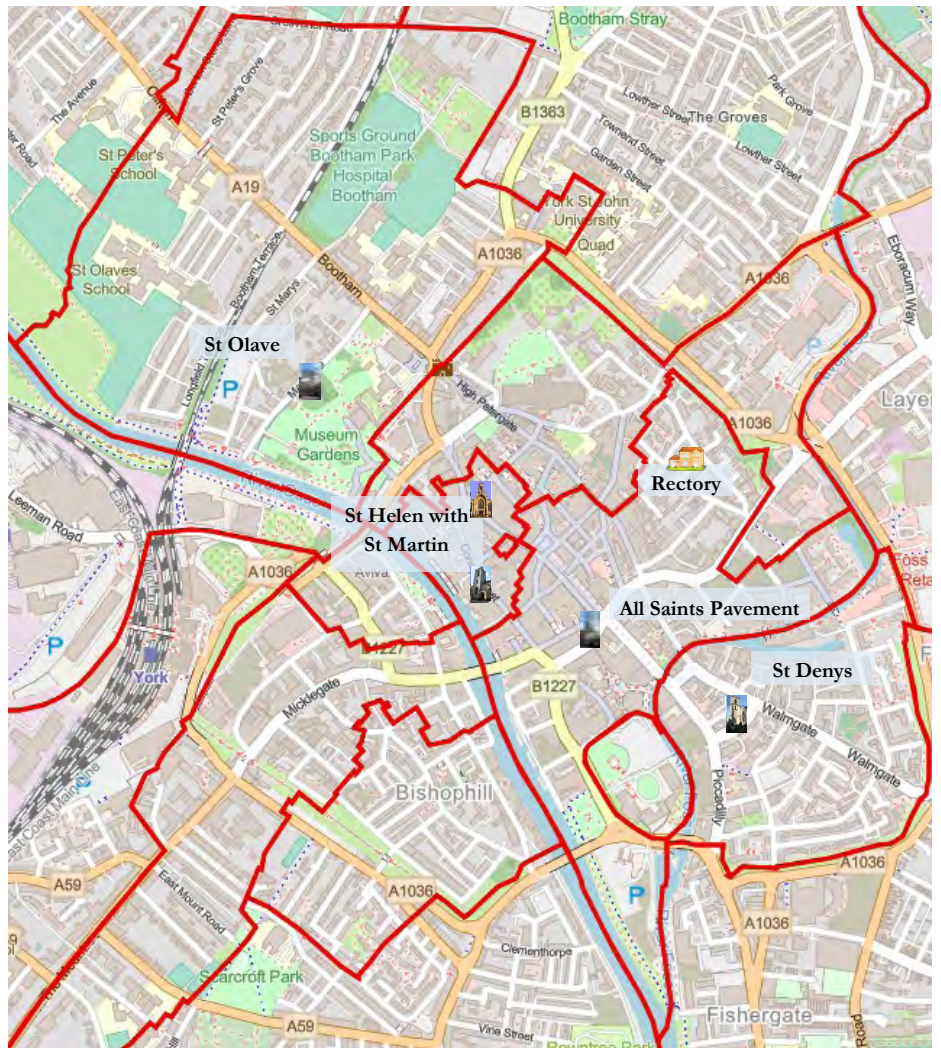


# Welcome

The York City Centre Churches comprise five churches across four parishes, serving the very heart of the City of York. Our congregations are a vibrant and varied mix of local residents, students and visitors, and each church plays a distinctive and complementary role in sharing the gospel of Christ within our city.

We are committed both to sustaining and celebrating our rich and wide-ranging traditions, and to developing new ways of engaging with the people of York today. We are seeking to work with you to help grow and develop

our churches, to reach a new generation of worshippers, and to engage the many who have yet to encounter the Christian faith.



# York

*at the heart of God's own County*

York is an historic and distinctive city, with roots stretching back to Roman times and a remarkable legacy of mediaeval architecture, including the world-famous Minster, the city walls and the Shambles.

Alongside its heritage, York enjoys a lively and diverse cultural life, with a wide range of museums, galleries, theatres and festivals taking place throughout the year. From historic collections to contemporary exhibitions and performances, the city offers rich and varied opportunities for cultural engagement. There is a strong sense of community, and residents take pride in both the city's identity and its traditions.

York regularly ranks highly in national quality-of-life surveys. Although compact in scale, it offers an attractive blend of historic streets, generous green spaces and riverside walks along the River Ouse. The surrounding countryside, including the Dales, the Moors and the coast, is all within easy reach.

Education is a notable strength of the city, with well-regarded schools and further and higher education institutions. The presence of two universities contributes to a lively, creative and intellectually stimulating atmosphere.

Centrally located within the UK, York is well connected by both rail and road. Its main railway station is a key hub, providing direct and convenient links to major cities across the country and beyond.



# Our New Rector



We are seeking a prayerful, inclusive and pastoral rector who will work in partnership with our parishes to share the good news of Jesus Christ in the heart of York.

The new Rector will be approachable, hospitable and visible across our churches and communities, building strong and trusting relationships with people of all ages and backgrounds.

They will lead worship in a thoughtful and dignified manner, cherishing the traditions of our churches while helping us to grow closer to God and to one another.

They will be an engaging and inspiring preacher, able to recognise and nurture the gifts of others among both clergy and laity, and to encourage and support their vocations.

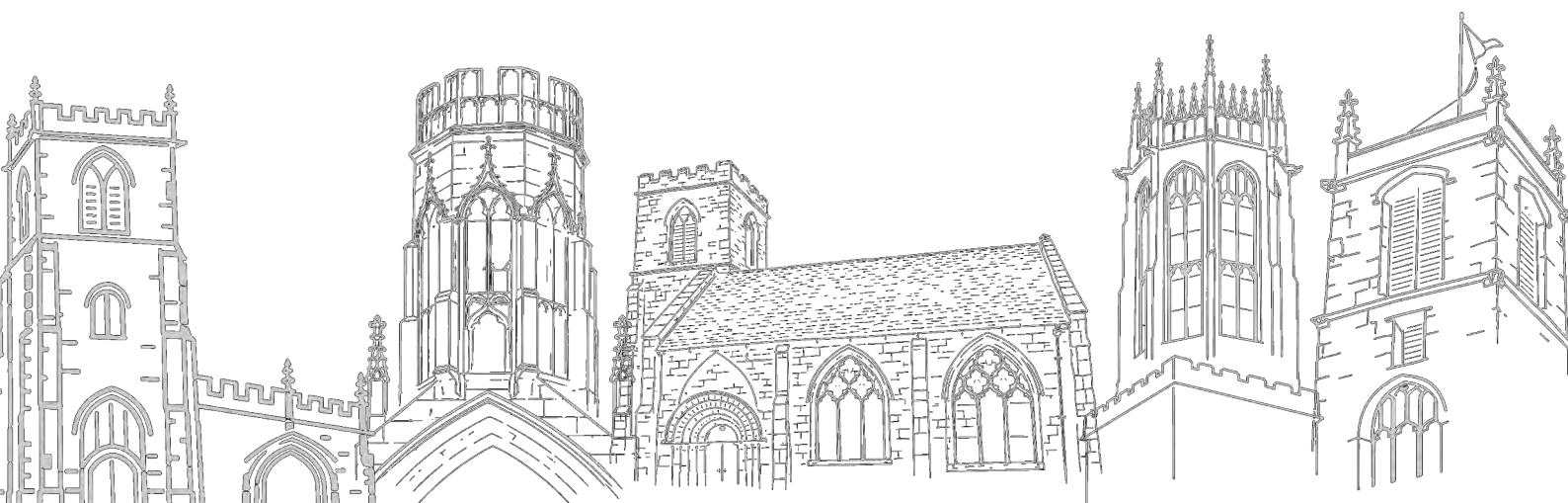
They will value and respect the experience and expertise of our PCCs, offering support and guidance, while also providing appropriate challenge and leadership.

They will represent our parishes confidently within the wider life of the City of York, taking an active role in the life of the city, while remaining present, accessible and pastorally available within our church communities.

## **How will we support you**

You would not be undertaking this ministry alone. We have a dedicated team of Lay Ministers and retired clergy as well as an Assistant Curate and a part time Parish Administrator with hours to support the incumbent. Each church is supported by a committed and enthusiastic team of PCC members, churchwardens, buildings officers, musicians and volunteers, all of whom are ready and willing to work and worship alongside you to enable our churches to flourish.

We are generous in our time, hospitality and finances and pay expenses in full.



# Person Specification

## 1. Faith and Calling

Criteria	E/D	Assessed By
Ordained priest in the Church of England (or in full communion)	Essential	Application
Clear sense of vocation to parish ministry in an urban context	Essential	Application & Interview
Commitment to the mission of the Church of England	Essential	Application & Interview
Personal rule of life rooted in prayer and sacramental worship	Essential	Interview

## 2. Spiritual and Liturgical Leadership

Criteria	E/D	Assessed By
Engaging and theologically grounded preacher	Essential	Application & Interview
Confident leadership of Common Worship and Book of Common Prayer services	Essential	Application and references
Ability to lead across our varied Anglican traditions	Essential	Interview
Appreciation of church music and choral tradition	Desirable	Interview



### 3. Pastoral and Missional Leadership

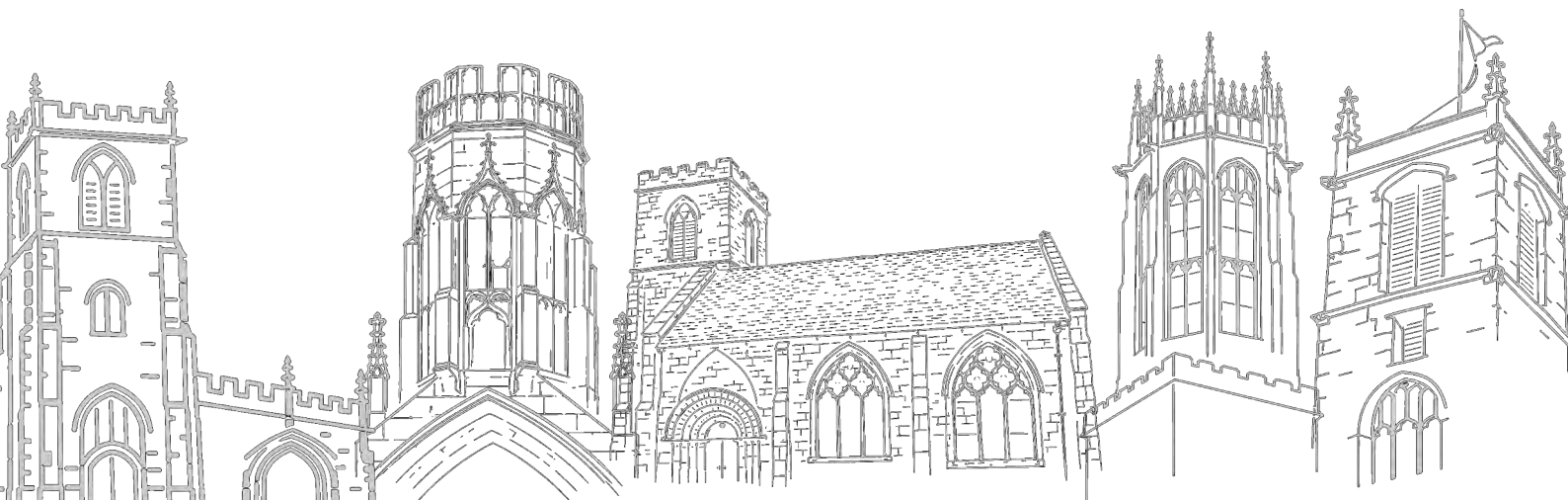
Criteria	E/D	Assessed By
Warm, inclusive and pastorally attentive	Essential	Interview & References
Commitment to safeguarding	Essential	Application & Interview
Vision for church growth and discipleship	Essential	Application & Interview
Ability to engage young people, students, city-centre workers and visitors	Desirable	Interview
Experience in socially diverse contexts	Desirable	Application

### 4. Collaborative and Strategic Leadership

Criteria	E/D	Assessed By
Collaborative leadership with PCCs, staff and volunteers	Essential	Application & Interview
Ability to nurture and encourage lay gifts	Essential	Interview
Strategic thinking and organisational oversight	Essential	Application & Interview
Experience of a multi-church group	Desirable	Application

### 5. Practical and Contextual Skills

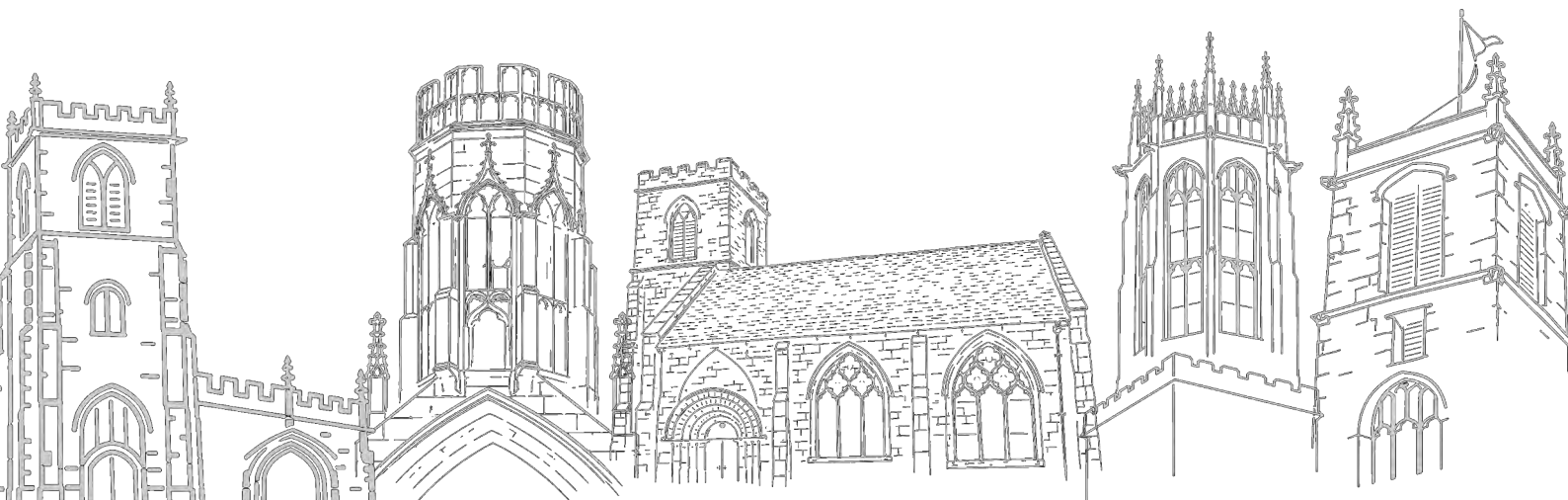
Criteria	E/D	Assessed By
Be visible across multiple worshipping communities	Essential	Application & Interview
Experience of parish finance and stewardship	Desirable	Application & Interview
Experience of working with listed buildings	Desirable	Application
Confidence in civic engagement and public representation	Desirable	Interview



# Our Worship

Each church in the group maintains traditional Anglican worship but in its own unique way. The table below shows our usual pattern of services and more details can be found in the individual church pages.

<b>All Saints Pavement</b> (BCP)	<b>St Denys</b> (CW)	<b>St Helen</b> (CW)	<b>St Martin</b> (CW)	<b>St Olave</b> (CW)
<b>Sunday</b> 9am Morning Prayer or Holy Communion 10:30am Sung Eucharist or Mattins 6:30pm Evensong	<b>Sunday</b> 10am Holy Communion <i>With signing for the deaf on 1st Sunday of the month.</i>  <b>Monthly</b> Iona Inspired Service	<b>Saturday</b> Noon Eucharist	<b>Wednesday</b> 12:15pm Eucharist	<b>Friday</b> 11:30am Eucharist  <b>Sunday</b> 8:30am Eucharist 10:30am Sung Eucharist
<i>Midweek festivals are shared between the churches.</i>				



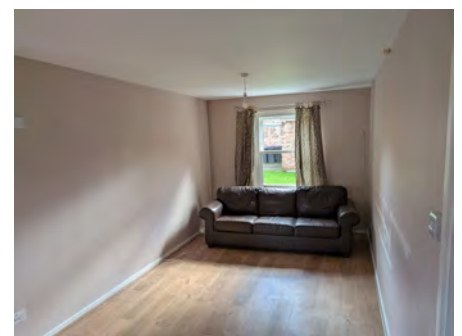
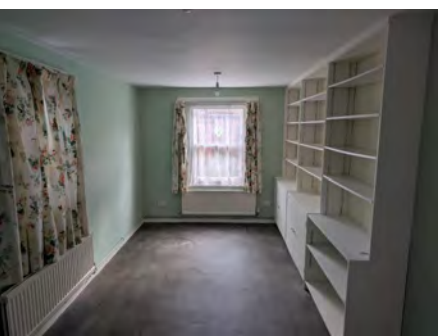
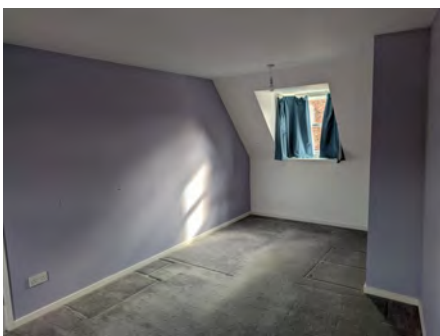
# Your new home

The Rectory at 52 St Andrewgate was built in 1958 and occupies a prime position in the historic heart of York, at the junction of St Andrewgate and Aldwark, adjacent to the mediaeval Merchant Taylors' Hall and the City Walls. It is only a few minutes' walk from the city centre and is within very easy walking distance of all five churches in the City Centre Group.

The house is arranged over three floors. On the ground floor there is an entrance hall, kitchen, dining room, study and cloakroom, with access to the garden from both the entrance hall and the kitchen. The first floor comprises a large sitting room, a principal bedroom and a bathroom. The second floor provides three further bedrooms and a shower room.

The property is protected by an intruder alarm and has gas central heating.

Outside, there is a secluded garden, mainly laid to lawn with flower beds on either side. A double garage with roller doors is provided, and lockable gates and a boundary wall secure the garden and garage from the street.



# All Saints Pavement



All Saints Pavement is situated in the heart of York at the busy junction of Piccadilly, Coppergate, High Ousegate, Parliament Street and Pavement.

We use the Book of Common Prayer for all of our services and our liturgy is best described as traditional, dignified and inclusive. We view our use of the Prayer Book as a key asset in our efforts to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

As a church in the city centre, our congregation is made up of those who travel specially for our style of worship and visitors to York. We are also the Regimental Church of the Royal Dragoon Guards and the Guild Church of York. This means many people consider us their church even if they are not able to attend regularly.



## Worship

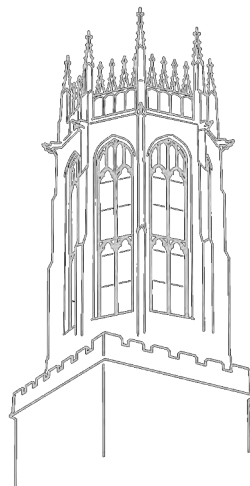
We meet for worship three times each Sunday. The early morning service is attended by a regular congregation of between 6 to 12 who value a short, said start to a Sunday.

Our 10:30 service has a small but dedicated congregation of around 20. On around 15 Sundays a year this service is attended by the one of the Guilds of York and Ex Service Associations which boost the congregation significantly. There is a significant challenge for the new Rector to help regrow this service.

Evensong is our biggest success of recent years. It has grown from a congregation in single figures to a strong worshipping community of over 30 people with a large number of younger people. We believe the growth is due to a number of factors: consistent attendance by the licensed and retired clergy giving the congregation a sense of stability, excellent preaching in our regular sermon series and hospitality after the services. This includes Pizza and Prosecco on feast days such as Easter and our latest piece of outreach, Cream Teavensong! Both the 10:30 service and Evensong are supported by our choir.

For more information about our music, choir and services, including some recordings of services, please see our website.

As well as Sunday services, we share feast days with the group and host three Carol Services for the organisations linked to the church.





## The Church and Parish

The church dates from the 14th century although it is known that a place of worship has been on the site for considerably longer than the present building. The church is Listed Grade 1 and is known locally for its magnificent lantern tower. It contains many treasures including a Viking grave cover, a fine 17th century pulpit, Kempe windows and a much-acclaimed modern stained glass window (2015) dedicated to those who died in the Afghan conflict. Being in the City Centre the resident population within the Parish is relatively small, probably not much more than around 1700 people. Much of the housing consists either of flats or town houses, some belonging to housing associations and the rest privately owned and occupied or privately rented. A large new development of private housing is being built in Hungate which lies within the Parish. There is also some new student accommodation within the Parish.



## People

We have a committed PCC and a full complement of churchwardens, one of whom is an Authorised Lay Minister and is due to be licensed as a Licensed Lay Minister (Reader) in September. We have numerous volunteers who open and close church, help with flowers, cleaning, odd jobs and welcoming visitors.



## Finances

All Saints Pavement has a committed group of congregation members who provide approximately 12% of the Church's annual income by way of Gift Aided planned giving. Approximately 11% of its income comes from cash collections at Sunday services, and 15% from cash and electronic donations from visitors to the Church when it is open on other days of the week. Each year, approximately 9% of income is obtained via Gift Aid claims. The Church receives almost no income from Life Events, but a further 29% is provided by Rents and other fees connected with ecclesiastical city centre property from which the Church benefits (redundant church halls, churchyards etc). Interest on deposited funds provides 24% of the total annual income.

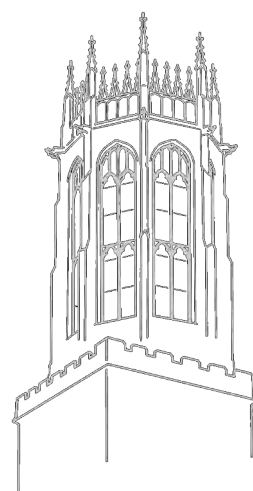


The Feoffees of All Saints Pavement, who are the trustees of The Parish Estate (non-ecclesiastical property), support the church through payment of its annual insurance premium, as well as supporting the expenses of the Churchwardens, and providing funding for other specific projects.

## The Future

The church is in a good state physically, financially and spiritually! However, we have an aging congregation at 10:30 and this service needs work to revitalise it on weeks we do not have a visiting organisation. Our Evensong congregation is growing and we want to keep this momentum.

We would like to engage more with our parish, including the businesses and residences and continue to be able to promote the gospel to the people of York.



# St Denys

St Denys is notable for two qualities: a no-questions-asked welcome to all, and its own internal diversity. Although some of the congregation live within the parish, others are drawn from further afield by the church's friendly atmosphere, and perhaps by its traditional but fairly informal middle-of-the-road style of worship. The core congregation of around 15 plus occasional students and others spans all ages from the 20s to the 90s, and also a wide demographic; it has been said that its ethos resembles that of a village church. We are anxious to increase numbers, particularly in the younger age range.

During 2024-5 the congregation was swelled by a shifting population of asylum-seekers from Iran, housed in a hotel just outside the parish.

We have for many years offered a fully signed service for the deaf and hard of hearing on the first Sunday of every month – the only church in the deanery to do so. An informal Iona-inspired service for the City Centre Churches group is held monthly in the church hall.

Our community events – including free lectures on subjects of local interest, concerts and popular organ recitals – draw in visitors from throughout the city and are regarded as an important contribution to our outreach and mission, and fundraising.

Since 2021 our church hall has been used as a Warm Space, thanks to the initiative of our Lay Minister, Jose Knowles. This included free hot meals, art and craft activities, and tea-and-chat sessions. These activities are largely in abeyance, but we are very keen to resume this community support. In the meantime we are supporting Lived Insights, a York-based research and advocacy organisation, who run a weekly drop-in café and a community engagement session in the hall.

## The Parish

The parish is among the most diverse and rapidly changing areas within the city walls. Never among the most prosperous or up-market parts of the city centre, from the mid-19th



century Walmgate was extensively settled by Irish immigrants. During the last fifteen years the area's character has changed at an accelerating pace.

The southern end of the parish, nearest Walmgate Bar, remains essentially a working-class and residential area with a relatively settled population and considerable social problems, including high levels of crime and child poverty. But the central and northern ends, nearest the city centre, are increasingly being gentrified, with a number of hotels, up-market housing developments and small specialist restaurants and bars. Several new student accommodation residences offer a good opportunity to widen our mission.

### **The Church Building**

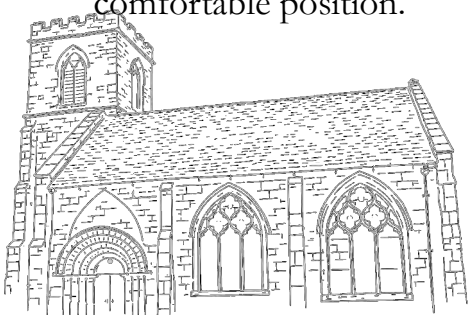
St Denys is a (now) small Grade 1 listed church with a long and complex history. The greatest glory of the building is the array of mediaeval stained glass which is exceptional even by York standards, and attracts visitors specifically to view it. The condition of the church building is probably now better than it has been for several centuries.

Projects currently in hand include the restoration of the Victorian tiled reredos and the stabilisation of a painted 1914-18 war memorial. This year we also hope to install more efficient heating and lighting systems. The congregation is very deeply attached to its church building, believing it to possess an especially strong atmosphere of warmth and peace – qualities also noted in our visitors book.

Our modest timber church hall is crucial to our mission. It has recently been re-decorated, and includes a mini-kitchen and toilet facilities. As the only available public space in Walmgate, it is also let (often at reduced rates or free of charge) to local organisations such as the Walmgate Residents' Association and the police.

### **Finances**

In overall financial terms, St Denys's is probably the poorest of the city centre parishes. However, the recent generous legacy shared between the City Centre Churches has put us in a much more financially comfortable position.



# St Helen & St Martin

In contrast to the other churches in the group, St Helen and St Martin are in the city centre's main shopping area and therefore have virtually no local residents. However, we have a dedicated team of 20 people on our electoral roll who work hard to provide a Christian presence in the heart of the city.

So as not to compete with the other three churches for Sunday worship, weekly Eucharist is held at midday on Saturdays at St Helen and at 12.15pm on Wednesdays at St Martin. Both services are followed by refreshments and fellowship. Attendance is remarkably stable with 7-10 at St Martin and 16-25 at St Helen. Services at St Helen are supported by four choral scholars recruited from the University of York and funded by a local charitable trust.

St Helen also hosts two services annually for York in Recovery. At Christmas we host a shoppers' carol service and a Christmas Eve crib service, both well supported by local families and visitors. During the summer we run a series of very well attended concerts and organ recitals organised by us or as part of local music festivals.

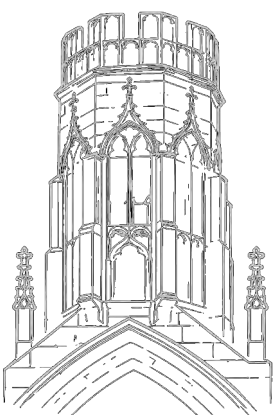
St Helen faces the Mansion House on St Helen's Square, one of York's principal squares. St Martin is on the city's main shopping street close to St Helen.

Both churches are in good repair. St Helen dates from 1235 with gothic style modifications in 1858. The church was closed in 2008 but reopened in 2012 after renovations. It has a pew capacity of about 130 and, with no steps, has easy disabled access. The church has a fine pipe organ designed by Francis Jackson in 1959 and is in excellent condition. The bellcote contains two 400-year-old bells which have recently been rehung and equipped for automatic ringing by Whitechapel.

St Martin was bombed in 1942 and virtually destroyed. The relatively undamaged south aisle was renovated in 1968 and dedicated as a chapel to peace and reconciliation. It became a member of the Community of the Cross of Nails in 2012. It has a pew capacity of 40 but also has an annexe housing a meeting room and office.

Offerings from services do not cover parish expenditure, but these are augmented by tourist and visitor donations, concert donations, and the sale of charity Christmas cards at St Martin. With significant support from our feoffees, our finances are stable.

Despite the challenge of York Minster nearby, we have kept going and achieved modest growth through recent difficult years. Now we need an incumbent to inspire us to make full use of our resources for the benefit of all those we seek to welcome and serve.



# St Olave



## The congregation and parish

St Olave's is a congregation of people aspiring to work out how to live as Christians in the 21st century. We are an eclectic, inclusive community, ranging from young children to nonagenarians, gathered from the city and surrounding area. We strive to be a welcoming and accepting, learning and healing community as we walk with God, acknowledging that we are people with widely differing gifts and needs.

St Olave's is known for its sacramental tradition. The liturgy is enriched by music, prayer and preaching, and is formal but flexible, inviting a sense of God's presence. Lay involvement is important to us.

The 10.30 Sung Eucharist each Sunday is at the heart of St Olave's life, recently attracting a weekly congregation of 100-115. All main services are now live-streamed and we draw a significant following online. We use the Common Worship Orders of Service and Common Praise for hymns. Zoom is used for Wednesday evening Compline.

## Communications

We have a part-time administrator who circulates a parish newsletter each Friday. This includes a weekly reflection by a variety of contributors. The website is also a valuable source of information and describes in detail the life and interests of St Olave's.

Besides a weekly Bible study group on Zoom, there are groups in Advent and Lent. Some members also access other City Centre Churches' series of themed talks or sermons, or different expressions of worship, such as Iona services.

An emerging group of people in their 20s and 30s have recently been joining us, some with limited prior experience of Christianity and churchgoing. They are keen to play a part in the development of the church, and we are keen to encourage them to explore and share their experience of God.

As a 'gathered' church, creating opportunities for friendship and fellowship are important. Events including lunches, talks, walks, outings or entertainment are sometimes for fund raising, but others are purely for social connection. We support charities, both





local and further afield, through Christmas and Harvest collections and the occasional sale of home-produce. The PCC is discussing how we can further develop and engage with this interest in outward giving.

A recent survey of the congregation indicated that we should review our welcome of newcomers, encourage families, and develop a strong system of pastoral care; challenges we hope to respond to going forward.

Our church building is open every day ensuring that this sacred space is available to all. Many tourists come in to look or to stay a while. We hope to invite these 'pilgrims' to explore their experience, encountering something of God's peace through the building.

Our parish comprises around one thousand properties, many of which are divided into flats, and includes independently owned shops, hotels and guest houses. There are also offices and private schools, among some larger family houses. We are keen to find ways of extending our engagement with our parish community and we welcome further ideas and opportunities to do so.

### **Music**

Music is at the heart of the worship at St Olave's and the high standard of singing is led by a mixed robed choir of all ages, directed by a professionally qualified Director and Assistant Director of Music. They draw on a wide repertoire from plainsong and polyphony to 21st century works.

### **Children and young people**

We have a children's corner where young children can play during services near their parents or guardians, and a group for children of primary school age who meet during the 10.30 service twice a month. This group is currently small, yet valued, and we are keen to see it thrive.

There has been an increase in secondary school age young people recently and some of them were confirmed last year. They are encouraged to get involved, for example by joining the choir or serving team, helping to serve coffee, or being a part of the reading rota.





Our Parish Safeguarding Officer ensures that all appropriate checks and training are up to date, and diocesan policies are adhered to, both for our younger members and vulnerable adults.

### **Bells and bell ringers**

We have an historic ring of six bells and a small band of ringers who ring for occasional Sunday services, weddings and special occasions, with help from other ringers in the city when necessary.

### **The building**

Parts of the church are 950 years old and it is Grade 1 listed. It includes an ancient walled churchyard which is ecologically important and we have recently achieved the A Rocha UK Silver Award. The St Giles room at the west end of the church, used for small meetings, is shortly to undergo an essential roof replacement and refurbishment.

Though the church requires continual high spending on its fabric, general care and maintenance, it is financially viable due to generous bequests. In line with the diocesan requirement to attain carbon-neutral status by 2030, we are looking at the possibility of installing solar panels on the south-facing roof, and shall be exploring new lighting and heating potential following this.



# Find out more

You can find out a lot more about our churches on our webpages.

City Centre Group

[www.yorkcitycentrechurches.co.uk](http://www.yorkcitycentrechurches.co.uk)

All Saints Pavement

[www.allsaintspavement.co.uk](http://www.allsaintspavement.co.uk)

St Denys

[www.yorkcitycentrechurches.co.uk/st-denys](http://www.yorkcitycentrechurches.co.uk/st-denys)

St Helen and St Martin

[www.sthelenwithstmartinyork.org.uk](http://www.sthelenwithstmartinyork.org.uk)

St Olave

[www.stolaveschurch.org.uk](http://www.stolaveschurch.org.uk)

