



**St.Martin's Church**  
**Byker**



# **PARISH PROFILE 2022**

serving the community of Byker through worship, prayer and community outreach.



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## **ST MARTIN'S CHURCH**

The St Martin's centre building was opened July 2006. The original St Martin's building had for many years been a strong centre for the community and the P.C.C.were keen to continue this. The building had become quite dilapidated and was no longer fit for the purpose the Church wished it to fulfil. So after a consultation process involving the community and other partners it was decided to design a new centre.

At this time the Sure Start government initiative was looking for a centre in the area and they became a key partner in the development. Thus, the previous building dating from 1933 was demolished to make way for the new Church and Community centre complex. There was strong ongoing commitment from the worshipping community during the transition, whilst worshipping at the local school. They maintained strong links with the various groups who had used the previous building.

The new centre is built of steel brick glass and wood.The building is multi-purpose and has a dedicated chapel area. The main area can be used as individual spaces or one large area of two or three rooms. There is a welcoming reception area with a lounge. The main building has a well-equipped catering kitchen. There is a large room on the first floor with three offices. There are toilets upstairs accessible by a lift and at ground level there is some storage. There is an outside storage area and a patio and grassed area. Integral to the building is St Martin's Centre Partnership nursery. This has separate secure access but forms a key partner within the centre.

There is no churchyard as such and no burial ground.



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# THE CHURCH & ST. MARTIN'S CENTRE PARTNERSHIP

Working in partnership with St Martin's Church, St Martin's Centre works with local people of all ages to help them live happy, healthy and safe lives.

The charity offers a wide range of activities and a packed timetable of services including a volunteer and training programme, families and children's project, activities for older people, and a café offering fresh, affordable food.

We have a 63 place nursery onsite offering high quality childcare to children aged 2yrs- 4yrs. Graded by Ofsted as 'Good' with 'Outstanding' features the nursery aims to give the best start to all who attend.

As well as the different projects, St Martin's Centre also supports those in need of emergency support in the way of food parcels using a 'shopping list' for essential supplies including toiletries and household items. A befriending service is also available, offering weekly 'check in' calls and door-step visits for face-to-face interaction for the most vulnerable or isolated.

Although ultimate responsibility for maintenance etc lies with the PCC, this is delegated to the St Martin's Centre partnership of which the church is a key member.





## **THE CHURCH & ST. MARTIN'S CENTRE PARTNERSHIP**

The dedicated chapel becomes the sanctuary for worship on a Sunday opening onto the larger rooms for the congregation. The chapel is separated from the community areas through the week by an etched glass screen which keeps visible the specially designed stained-glass window and retains the identity of the building as a place of worship as well as a centre for other activities.

The window itself was designed with strong community involvement to depict the parish and community such as its physical attributes and its industry.

The Church operates a 'Money Advice' service for the community

Each day the whole building is in use by a wide variety of community groups, mother and toddler, the twins group, Children and Adult mental health service, children's dance, drop in sessions, conferences.



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# PATTERNS OF WORSHIP

- 8.45am Morning Prayer Common Worship Daily Prayer (temporarily suspended)
- 9.30 Sunday Family Communion Common Worship order One Sung with Hymns Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New. Mass setting written by a member of the congregation.
- Sunday School
- 6pm Evening prayer during special seasons.
- 12pm Baptisms (most weeks)
- 9.15am Holy Eucharist Wednesday Said Common Worship Order One (temporarily suspended)

### Church Tradition

St Martin's is family orientated whilst retaining a sense of tradition. Vestments are used and festivals are kept. The tradition of good music is very important to the church.

In the last 20 years, three Priests have become Canons of Newcastle Cathedral, while one went on to be Archdeacon of Lindisfarne.

St. Martin's welcomes trainees and Curates and has an excellent reputation in supporting them. During the tenure of the last incumbent three Curates completed their training and moved on to their own parishes.

### Ecumenical Relationships

Some Lent courses are ecumenical. The meetings are every three months and the parish supports the Walk of Witness on Good Friday which starts at St Martin's.

The Evangelical church in the parish is very much independent of the mainstream churches in the area but the pandemic has prevented any joint initiative.



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## CHURCH ACTIVITIES

- Regular groups for Bible study/other study/prayer.
- Advent study groups and Lent Group are held.
- Children & Youth Work is mainly carried out by MINE Youth.
- There is a Sunday School and Brownies and Guides groups met until their 60 year celebration until closed by local Girl Guiding who were unable to attract a leader (when the leader, a member of St. Martin's, retired).

### Clubs/Societies

- The Tea Club held Tuesday at 2pm is an important part of the church's ministry to the isolated or vulnerable and has been in constant running for 52 years.
- Support of home and overseas missions The parish regularly supports Christian Aid appeals and the harvest offering goes to the Peoples Kitchen, which is a local homeless organisation and the local Food Bank.

### Social work/Caring for others

- Tea Club (see above)
- The Local Ministry Group supports sick visiting. In general, this work is supported by and through the work of St Martin's Centre Partnership
- Also important to the church are the Summer Fayre and St Martin's tide Fayre shared with St Martin's Centre Partnership.
- Twinkle Tots one Saturday a month, for under school age children.



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## CHURCH CHOIR

A significant feature of St. Martin's is music for which the church is widely recognised, with the choir practicing three or four times a month, under the guidance of our Director of Music, Andrew Ridgwick who also composed the music for our Sunday Eucharist service.

The choir has sung in a number of venues (they are pictured above at Beamish Living Museum) and sing at a number of church celebrations and at all joint MINE services.





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## MINISTRY

- The Local Ministry group (LMG) was formed 2001 and commissioned 2004. This built on the work of the Pastoral Auxiliary group which formed many years ago, there are 6 members. Their main responsibilities are for supporting the general ministry of individuals but has also developed a role in baptism visiting and home communions although this was mainly undertaken by the priest in charge and curates.
- The previous Licensed Reader served St Martin's for 42 years until ill health prevented this, with the current Reader presently serving his 6th year.
- Lay people are involved in Reading lessons and leading Intercessions. They also administer communion and take communion to the house bound. Before the pandemic, members of the congregation would serve at the Eucharist.
- Pastoral work (e.g. baptism preparation/visiting, home communion, visiting housebound or in hospital, other).
- Home communion is taken to the sheltered housing schemes and three individual homes.
- There is an envelope scheme with two Gift Aid contributors.
- In the past two years the share has been paid in full and there is a commitment to do so in the future.
- The incumbent's expenses are paid when requested.



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# THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

The largest proportion of the congregation ranges in age from 50yrs-80yrs old. There is a Sunday School of between 3-10 children regularly whose age ranges from 1 yr old up to 10yrs old. They are predominantly brought to church by their grandparents although there are some young families also. There are a number of BAME families who worship here regularly. Their children are part of Sunday school. 40% of the regular congregation live outside the parish.

### Statistics

- Population :4,936 (2011 Census)
- Electoral Roll 40 (23 Resident and 17 non resident)
- Average Sunday Communicants :25
- Average Sunday attendance :25 adults 7-10 children
- Average baptisms per annum :37 for 2007
- Average Confirmations per annum :6
- Average weddings per annum :2
- Average funerals per annum :59 (2007) 6 in Church
- Average house communions for the sick or housebound : 10 monthly 4.
- The numbers quoted were somewhat suppressed during the pandemic but are recovering steadily.



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## THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Byker is predominantly a mixture of social housing built in the 1930's and 1960's. It also includes a number of private terraced Tyneside flats from early 1900's. There are some 1940's prefab houses which have been modernised. The social housing has been modernised in the last ten years and this is still ongoing.

The parish is classed as UPA and is an area of high multiple deprivation. There is a population of 4,727 according to the last census.

Within the parish there are two sheltered housing flats complexes, one sheltered housing bungalow complex, 2 residential care homes, one primary school, local shops including a post office. There is also one public house, dentist, optician, and a Council run nursery.

The population contains many single parent families. There is high unemployment and worklessness. The age range of the population is varied. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the racial diversity of the area with asylum seekers and refugees as well as immigrants from the Chinese, Philippine, Polish and African populations.





## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

### **Schools**

Regular assemblies were taken by previous Priest in Charge. He was also governor of nearby church school and secondary school. During the building of St Martin's Centre the church worshiped in the local primary school

### **Other institutions**

There has been strong involvement in local Old People's Homes.

The main involvement in the local community is supported through the work of MINE and the St. Martin's Partnership. The previous Priest in Charge was chair of the local Asylum Seekers support group. He was a community representative on the regeneration groups and was heavily involved in the work of the Community Development Alliance from its inception.





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## NEIGHBOURING PARISHES

This parish is part of the UMTF which was a deanery initiative, indeed it was a foundation parish for UMTF with the appointment of the previous Priest in Charge from which the project grew to fruition. St Martin's continues to participate with the deanery in its plans for development of relationships between the parishes.

M.I.N.E. (Mission Initiative Newcastle East) with former members of UMTF (as envisaged by the new Pastoral Measure) with the four neighbouring parishes of UMTF, has received the Bishop's formal seal and licence.

The other parishes in the deanery have been very supportive of the remodelling of the building and also in supporting the work of MINE.

MINE is now made up of five churches, with the most recent joining member being Christ Church Walker (a neighbouring parish)



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## THE PARISH AND THE FUTURE

Our priorities at the moment are, Outreach, Group Building, Pastoral Care, Welcoming, New ways of worship, LMG communication with congregation and Learning.

The parish also works to a Mission Action Plan. The PCC were keen to see the admission of Children to Communion as part of its ongoing welcome of families and this has been ratified. (suspended during pandemic)

We would hope the new Priest in charge would continue the practice of training new Curates and also for students interested in urban ministry.

The Sunday eucharist service is now live streamed and downloaded onto the St.Martin's web site, thanks to the technical knowledge of our Director of Music, who also organises our now monthly (weekly during periods when churches were closed during the pandemic) magazine 'Yours and MINE'. The magazine helps us maintain contact with the five churches of MINE.

The PCC would like to see more men in the regular worshipping congregation. Along with this they would like to continue to encourage young families to join which includes young fathers. There needs to be greater connections with Centre users. A reliable and greater income is also important.



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# THE PARISH PRIEST WE WANT

The new priest in charge must show a strong commitment to UMTF (MINE) and St Martin's Centre Partnership. A commitment to developing work with children and young families is expected. It is hoped they will be an engaging preacher. Someone with enthusiasm energy is needed as is an ability to work collaboratively and to share ministry with the well established Local Ministry Group.

### IN SHORT

- Have a vision for the future
- Enthusiastic and pro active
- Have a young outlook and with energy and enthusiasm
- Act with integrity
- Be empathetic with the community and area
- Have a broad experience of life
- Be able to work alongside the congregation and be part of our team
- Take an active role and leadership for both St Martin's Church and St. Martin's Centre





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### PARSONAGE

The vicarage is a family house with four bedrooms built in the 1930's. There is a study, large kitchen, sitting room and dining room. Upstairs there is a bathroom with bath and shower and cloakroom downstairs. Secluded garden which backs onto the St Martin's Centre and a garage to the other side. The vicarage has central heating with a new boiler, and new fire in living room. It is also double glazed.