

DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

PATRONAGE (BENEFICES) MEASURE 1986

Parish of...Walker Christ Church

Statement prepared by the P.C.C. describing the conditions, needs and traditions of the parish

1. Statistics

Population	:	approximately 12,000
Electoral Roll	:	27
Average Sunday Communicants	:	30
Average Sunday attendance	:	32
Average baptisms per annum	:	25
Average Confirmations per annum	:	0
Average weddings per annum	:	4
Average funerals per annum	:	2
Average house communions for the sick or housebound	:	no longer undertaken
:	:	

2. The Church Community

Please give details of the congregation e.g. any predominant age/social groups, what proportion live outside the parish.

The Church has an ageing congregation which has reduced in recent years. Approximately 20% of the congregation live outside of the parish boundaries. Attendance by young people and children has also decreased.

The PCC are seeking a new incumbent who will be able to offer practical solutions to address these issues and continue to build our good links with the local community.

3. The Local Community

Please describe the size and physical features of the parish, the industry, the principal institutions, all schools, and the general category (e.g. UPA inner city, UPA housing estate, urban, suburban, market town, commuter village, village/rural). Also details of any predominant age and/or social groups, the ethnic mix, and any special social problems, e.g. unemployment, etc)

Walker Christ Church (Generally known as Walker Parish Church), is an Anglican urban church located in the heart of the parish of Walker in the east end of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne. The parish boundaries cover much of the electoral wards of Walker and Walkergate. Much of the area has seen a great deal of deprivation over the years, however, in recent years the area

has seen a significant amount of re-development in modern new housing. This development work is still continuing.

The Church is set on the edge of the scenic Walker Park and is located within the boundaries of Walker Churchyard, which dates back to the mid-19th century and was, at one time, reputed to be the largest churchyard in Europe. The main Church building dates back to 1848 and contains many of its original features. The Church was built through the generosity of local industrial families, such as those involved in heavy engineering and shipbuilding in the area. Many of the artefacts and features of the Church bear testament to the names and generosity of those families. The Church buildings are now 170 years old and need an ongoing amount of regular maintenance and loving care.

When the Church was built in 1848, the main industries and employment in the area were involved with mining, shipbuilding and heavy engineering. Those industries have now generally disappeared and have been replaced by offshore technology industries along the riverside and a mix of small industrial, commercial and retail outlets across the parish.

Much of the housing in the area is a mix of private and council dwellings, mostly built between the wars. However, in recent times, the Council has cleared away some of the older housing and replaced these with new housing developments. Close to the Church two high-rise tower blocks have recently been demolished and a new housing development of around 50 houses is planned in the near future.

There are no particular ethnic issues in the area, over 80% of the population is white. However, unemployment is higher than UK average and the area remains as one of the most deprived areas nationally.

There are a number of schools in the area and the church has good links with many of these, especially schools in the NEAT Academy Trust (which is a CofE Trust). Members of the PCC sit on the governing boards of some of these schools.

4. Schools

Please describe involvement of the parish in them (Governors, leading assemblies etc.)

The Church has built strong links with many of the local schools. The incumbent priest will hold an ex-officio position on the governing body of the local C of E Primary Academy School (Central Walker C of E Primary School) and members of the PCC sit on the governing bodies of some of the other schools in the local Multi-Academy Trust (NEAT), which is a CofE sponsored Trust. Children from the local schools (particularly Central Walker School) visit the Church for services at Christmas and Easter and at the end of the school year.

The following two quotes are from the senior leaders of the NEAT Multi-Academy Trust and the Co-Headteachers of Central Walker CE Primary School (part of NEAT). They illustrate how much the NEAT Academy Trust values its links with the church....

“We are very proud of the relationship we have developed with Father Phil and the wider church community. We have benefited greatly from Phil's hands -on approach to working

with us, not just as a governor at two of our schools, but as a wider strategic partner of our trust.

As a mixed MAT, we are very proud of our values, which very much align to the church values and vision and live and breath these in all we do. It is essential for us that the successful applicant has not just an understanding but a belief that the continued relationship between the church and our schools and MAT is integral to the success of the role- we believe it is!"

Debi Bailey – Director of School Improvement

Steve Haigh – CEO,

NEAT Mixed Multi-Academy Trust

"We really appreciate the close relationship between our school and the church and see the vicar as an important part of our community. Their support with collective worship and helping children explore Christian values - makes a real difference - especially as many of our pupils wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to learn about Christianity in a meaningful way. Working together to nurture our shared Christian vision is deeply valued and integral to the life of the school."

Dawn Day & Faye Kerr

Co-Headteachers (Central Walker CE Primary Academy School)

5. Other Institutions

Please describe involvement of the parish in them (Industry, Old People's Homes, Hostels, Civic life etc)

Very occasional links with local care homes in the area. In 2025, a number of members from a local care home came for a service in church. No care home visiting at present, but one of the local MINE Clergy is supporting links and visits to care homes in the area. Two local care homes, (Ella MaCambridge and Garden Lodge care homes, currently overseen by other members of the MINE Clergy). Ella McCambridge has requested visits and Service / Communion to be organised when new incumbent arrives.

This is an area for potential development for the new incumbent, as there are a number of care homes in the area.

6. Church Buildings

Please give details of the churches and licensed places of worship.

Walker Parish Church is a beautiful Victorian style Church building, originally built in 1848. The building is in a reasonably good condition for its age, although the roof has required some repair in recent years. Some plaster-work has also needed attention due to problems with dampness.

Many of the original features of the Church were paid for through the generosity of the local industrial families. Sadly, the magnificent Foster and Andrews Organ was damaged by water and its internal mechanisms had to be removed. Today, we use a modern hi-fi audio system and computer to provide music, and services are supported via two projectors and screens to run PowerPoint presentations for the services.

The original oak-screen, choir stalls and mosaic floor still remain in the Chancel. The main body of the Church was re-ordered around the year 1998, with new carpeting and light oak chairs replacing the original pews. The original High Altar remains, but a modern moveable Nave Altar is used for general services.

Please give details of church halls and any other ancillary buildings (and an indication of the level of their use).

A Church Hall built in the mid-1980's is attached to the Church and provides a community facility. The Hall is also used for occasional functions and is available for bookings by the community. There is also a small kitchen and coffee bar, and an office. The Church Hall has been used by a variety of regular users over the years, however, there are few users at the moment. The Hall roof, whilst still serviceable, is in a deteriorating condition. The architect has produced draft plans for the re-building of the Hall as a community facility which will include flats/apartments, which could bring in additional revenue. It is hoped that this can be achieved in line with the re-building of new housing in the local area and early discussions on the matter have already taken place with the Local Council. **This proposed initiative could present an exciting opportunity for the new incumbent.**

Is there a churchyard to maintain and who is responsible for its maintenance?

The adjacent Churchyard was at one time reputed to be the largest in Europe and was listed in the Guinness Book of Records. The Churchyard is closed to new burials, but occasional burials of cremation ashes are permitted in a garden of remembrance area behind the Church building. The Churchyard contains a number of monuments to local sporting heroes and industrial disasters. The Churchyard also contains a number of war graves from both world wars, which are maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The Churchyard itself is maintained by the Local Authority (currently limited to grass-cutting only).

7. Patterns of Worship

Sunday services with times and form of service used.

Sunday Worship

Sunday 9.30am Eucharist Service

Weekdays

Thursday 9.30am Eucharist Service

Other Services

Baptisms Baptism services are held regularly, at least 25 per year. Baptism Services are usually held, as required, after the Sunday Eucharist service, with additional services held upon request.

Funerals and Weddings Held upon request. Currently 4 weddings planned in next 12 months.

8. Church Tradition

Please describe the tradition of your church

Traditional Church of England Eucharistic services with vestments and music appropriate to the season. Traditional celebrations for key seasonal services involving the diocese, local schools and the community.

9. Church Activities

Regular groups for Bible study/other study/prayer

Ecumenical Lent and Advent groups held in conjunction with the MINE group of churches.

Children & Youth Work/Sunday School/Uniformed organisations

A Sunday School has until recently been in regular operation, supported by a rota of volunteers. All Sunday School volunteers have undertaken appropriate safeguarding checks and training.

Clubs/Societies

None at present

Support of home and overseas missions

We support an overseas mission in the Holy Land = PCDC.

Social work/Caring for others

Members of congregation visit sick parishioners and inform Churchwarden / vicar if home/hospital visit needed or home communion

Faith Sharing events or programmes

In 2025, a joint summer event was held in nearby Walker Park organised by the local Roman Catholic church. The event included most of the churches and religious groups in the area. However, no arrangements have yet been made to repeat the event in 2026.

Parochial charities

Regular giving to a small number of charities such as, The People's Kitchen and PCDC

Any other

None

10. Staff

Assistant Curate/Deacon/Non-stipendiary ministers/Readers/Retired Clergy

We have no paid staff, or assistant clergy.

However we do have a retired Vicar, Andrew Elder, who supports our services.

11. Lay Participation

Administrants at Communion/Intercessors/Lesson Readers etc.

a) worship (e.g. Lesson reader, intercessions, administration of communion, serving, other)

All carried out via rota of volunteers, who are keen to support their roles.

b) administration (e.g. pew sheet or magazine production, secretarial assistance, registers, other)

No paid administrative help – all carried out voluntarily by Churchwarden and PCC secretary during the vacancy.

No magazine at present. This was previously produced through MINE

Pew sheets are provided for the Sunday Service and include reading sheets from Redemptorist

c) pastoral work (e.g. baptism preparation/visiting, home communion, visiting housebound or in hospital, other)

Our Churchwarden contacts and meets baptism families before baptism services.

12. Relationships with neighbouring parishes

The Church is a member of the Mission Initiative Newcastle East (MINE) Group of Churches, which cover a large part of the east end of the city. MINE includes the following churches:

Walker Parish Church

St Martin's

St Michael's

St Silas'

St Oswald's

St Anthony of Egypt

MINE holds regular joint services between its churches along with other events and 'away

13. Ecumenical Relationships

None at present

14. Finance

Have you had a parish funding campaign? When? Are there any major debts? Is the Parish Share paid regularly and in full? Do members covenant their offerings? Is there an envelope scheme? Give details of expenses paid to the incumbent, and state whether this covers them in full. Please attached a copy of the latest statement of accounts.

No recent parish funding campaigns

Gift aid re-claimed annually

We use a mix of regular standing orders and an envelope scheme for regular giving.

The Parish Share has been paid in full every year, except last year (2025) when we had to hold some money back for repairs and maintenance.

We have no major debts

Incidental expenses for small purchases etc. are repaid in full to the incumbent.

15. The Parish and the future

What plans does the P.C.C. have for deepening the spiritual life of the members of the congregation, and engagement in outreach to those who do not attend church?

The PCC continues to look at these issues. This is a priority area for development by the new incumbent but also needs to be addressed through shared work with the MINE group of churches.

How does the parish understand the view taken by the rural deanery concerning the future pattern of pastoral care in the parish and neighbouring parishes, and what impact does this have on ministerial deployment (stipendiary ministry, non-stipendiary ministry and local ordained ministry) in the parish?

Two members of the PCC currently sit on the Deanery Synod panel.

What is lacking which needs to be pursued in the next 5 years?

1. We need to find innovative ways of raising significant funds to maintain and develop the church buildings. Particular short-term challenges include the provision of a new heating system and new lights. In the medium to longer-term, the church hall needs to be developed into a community-based parish centre.

2, Raising the profile of the church in the local community.

3. Supporting the Pride in Place project – see brochure in appendix,

4. Recruitment of new and active members of the congregation, who will be able and willing to support the activities of the church, including supporting rotas for intercessions, chalice, cleaning etc.

5, Recruitment of new members who can, in time take over some of the senior duties, such as churchwarden, treasurer etc.

6, Continuing the good work of developing strong links with the local schools and care homes.

16. Parsonage

Age, number of bedrooms, heating, garden etc. Any comments?

A Vicarage Building is available and is located about 10 minutes' walk from the Church.
(Address: 105 Middle Street, Walker, NE6 4DB).

The building is a good residence, about 50 years old, comprising:

Ground Floor: A Kitchen with Utility room, a Lounge, a Dining room and a Study

First Floor: 4 x bedrooms, 2 x w.c. Bathroom/Shower

Externally: a detached garage and gardens front and rear
Double glazing and gas central heating.

Overall, the property is in a good state of repair.

17. The new incumbent

In the light of the factors set out above, what are the qualities and attributes the P.C.C. would wish to see in the new incumbent?

We are looking for someone:

- With a passion for leading ministry both inside and outside the church
- Who can build on further community initiatives
- Who is pastorally aware
- Who will be able to inspire and lead us in worship both pastorally and spiritually.
- A good communicator
- Friendly, approachable and committed to relaxed forms of service to reflect the needs and culture of the local community
- Able to develop ways of bringing in new members into the congregation and to develop links with young people and families in the area.
- A priest that will lead us by example and inspire in us with enthusiasm for witness and mission.
- A priest who will teach and preach the Christian faith and help us to serve God with joy and courage.
- Able to take forward the ideas and initiatives expressed in this document, especially in working with the local schools, the Deanery and the MINE Group of Churches.

NOTES

1. The P.C.C. Secretary should convene a meeting of the full P.C.C. within 4 weeks of receiving notice of the vacancy. This meeting (or meetings) **shall not** be attended by the outgoing incumbent, his wife, the presenting patron, or any representative of the presenting patron.
2. The statement to be prepared is a public document and must be owned by the P.C.C. though it may delegate the detailed preparation to specified persons in the light of discussions in the P.C.C.
3. The headings given in this document are only a guide and the P.C.C. should consider any other matters relevant to the local situation.
4. The prepared statement is to be sent to the presenting patron and the Bishop within the 4 weeks period.
5. Before the meeting of the P.C.C. is summoned for this purpose the bishop, or his appointed representative, will meet with the Churchwardens and Secretary of the P.C.C. to discuss the procedures which will lead to the appointment of the new incumbent.