St Bride's

Creative / Progressive / Inclusive

PARISH PROFILE





ST BRIDES ETHOS, IDENTITY & PARTNERSHIPS

Our church is **LQBTQIA+ affirming** and one of our most flourishing and significant areas of ministry is Open Table, Liverpool. Open Table is a congregation of St Bride's specifically for those who identify as LGBTQIA+ and are Christian or are interested in the Christian faith. It has grown significantly over the last 18 years and has developed a national network of congregations.

We encourage questioning at St Bride's and are home to Liverpool's Progressive Christian Network. We have recently developed a relationship with the Student Christian Movement who will be hosting events with us.

St Bride's cares deeply about **justice in all its froms** and so we partner with Micah Liverpool who use our building for the weekly Foodbank as well as storage and other events. St Bride's also hosts the British Red Cross who run a drop-in once a week and starting in Autumn 2026 we are launching Recovery Church in partnership with the Methodist Church.

CONGREGATION & WORSHIP STYLE

St Bride's church provides a home for those who are **theologically progressive**. This identity is expressed through our worship which offers the freedom to experiment and question. We have a monthly pattern of Sunday worship three of which of our services are rooted in the Eucharist. This pattern also includes bible exploration through discussion, an Agape Breakfast service and a Holy Communion shared informally around the table.

We have a pianist who plays twice monthly with us enabling us to have songs accompanied. We also listen to music through the sound system and at times sing acapella.

The Sunday morning congregation is gathered and transient but there is a committed core of regulars ranging from young adults to those of older generations and all ages in-between. We are comprised of a wide range of people from students, those seeking asylum and retirees to working professionals.



OUR BUILDING

St Bride's is a listed building in the classical style & very much a part of the Georgian townscape, with its own grounds but no churchyard. The fixed pews have been removed and a multi-functional, accessible space created for worship and social action projects with charity sector partners. This flexible space has also enabled us to increase our regular rental income. Since opening in 1829 the building has required frequent and costly repair, and it is now on the English Heritage 'At Risk' register. We will need grant funding in excess of £1M within the next three years to secure a sustainable future for the building.

In the last year, with assistance of our administrator, St Bride's has developed its rental potential to not only ensure the church's financial sustainability (for day-to-day, non-capital project costs) but to cement it locally as a place that is for the community. We have increased our music and arts hires and we are becoming a recognised home for live music, performance and a filming production location in the city, building a programme of events that brings new people into the building and strengthens our contribution to the local cultural life. This in turn creates opportunities for people to encounter the church in unexpected ways.

HOPE PARISH & THE DEANERY

Following consultation and the Church Commissioners decision, it is hoped that in early 2027 St Bride's will legally become part of Hope Parish Liverpool. It is currently part of St Luke in the City Team Parish which would cease to be if the new Parish comes into effect. St Luke's includes St Michael in the City and St Dunstan's Church which would also become members of Hope Parish Liverpool. Hope Parish would also include St Bridget's on Lawrence Road, St Cleopas in the Dingle, St Margaret of Antioch, Christ Church Toxteth Park and St Bede's & St Clements Toxteth.

LOCAL AREA

St Brides is situated in the Georgian Quarter of Liverpool within the Canning ward. Around 9,350 people live in the ward, although its population is wide-ranging: alongside established residents are large numbers of students and young adults, reflecting the local higher education institutions of the University of Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores University and Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. Further along Percy street is Birley court, an initial accommodation centre for Asylum seekers which is home to around 200 people.

The area is ethnically and religiously diverse, and includes a mixture of established housing, newer developments and purpose-built student accommodation. Our local area is also much more than a residential community. Hope Street and the surrounding Georgian streets form one of Liverpool's most distinctive cultural quarters. Within a short walk are the Everyman Theatre, Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool's Anglican and Metropolitan Cathedrals, independent restaurants, pubs and hotels, as well as a wide range of creative, professional and community organisations. Rodney Street has a long-established professional and medical presence, alongside offices and independent businesses.

OPEN TABLE

Website Facebook Instagram

Open Table Liverpool is a ministry of the PCC of St Luke-in-the-City and is led by Warren Bohan our Local Missional Leader alongside a team of committed volunteers. Our goal is to celebrate faith amongst LGBTQIA+ Christians, and assist folk in integrating their spiritual and sexual and/or gender identities where these have been in direct conflict. We welcome and affirm family members, friends and anyone who wants to belong in an accepting, loving community. To create this sacred space, with a real sense of God's presence where all can 'come as you are', we carefully choose liturgical resources that affirm our identity as children of God.

Following St Bride's relaunch in November 2007 with a vision for a 'creative, progressive, inclusive' community, Open Table (OT) began in July 2008 as a Fresh Expression of this vision. It started as a monthly service, usually a Eucharist, aiming to create a safe, sacred space with a warm and affirming welcome for people who are LGBTQIA+, a community often not been well served by mainstream church. In the 2021 Census 10.5% of residents in the Chinatown, St James & Georgian Quarter identified as LGB+, significantly higher than neighbouring areas.

At a meeting to plan the first services, a member asked: 'Will it be "open table"?' Sadly, this is because LGBTQIA+ Christians have often either felt or been intentionally excluded from the Eucharist. We felt this was at the heart of why this community was needed. We began with a mix of Anglicans, Roman Catholics, URC and Methodist folk, and we remain an ecumenical partnership. For a more detailed history click here.

OT in Liverpool has grown from a gathering of around half a dozen in 2008 to regularly drawing up to 50 people each month. Since 2015, other OT gatherings have emerged forming a separate charity known as the Open Table Network, of which Liverpool is a member. At the time of writing, there are 37 other active OT gatherings across England and Wales. Each is independent, but the network offers peer support, encouragement and learning from the Liverpool experience.

We now have two services a month on the first and third Sunday. The third Sunday continues as a Eucharist with a different priest or minister leading the service. With the consent of PCC, Team Rector and the Bishop we make regular use of Canon B38 provisions to allow ecumenical partners to preside which has included Baptist, URC, Methodist, Catholic and Lutheran ministers. Annually we also host the Parish Carol Service with the Liverpool Rainbow Chorus performing alongside our talented music group. We have also jointly held services with the St Bride's congregation including Glitter Ash Wednesday, contributing lecturers for the Public Theology Lecture Series, coordinating Christian's at Pride group marching in Liverpool's Pride festival, partnering with the Cathedral to host a Pride service as well as offering Lent Courses and Quiet days with a focus on Queer Theology. While we run a separate stewardship campaign, all funds are managed by the PCC Treasurer in the Parish bank account and Open Table makes a regular financial contribution to the Parish general fund.



Open Table Liverpool is a wonderful community of people and how grown to the point it can no longer be run by volunteers alone. A new parish priest with pastoral and priestly oversight will be a deeply valued addition to the dedicated team to take this ministry into the next phase. We are excited about the future! For more details download our Welcome Pack here and listen to our Podcast here

Christ Church

Toxteth Park

absolutely. everyone. welcome.

PARISH PROFILE







INTRODUCTION

Christ Church Toxteth Park (CCTP) was consecrated by the then Bishop of Chester in 1871. CCTP is both a church community and a linked community of local people, it is a building and a parish, geographically south of Liverpool city centre. Our parish includes Lark Lane, well known for bars, restaurants and quirky shops. The Lane leads directly to Sefton Park, one of the best green spaces in the city. Sefton Park has Green Flag status and houses the beautiful Palm House.

CCTP is currently in a joint benefice and share a clergy person with St Michael in the Hamlet, this relationship will cease as the new parish of Hope Liverpool is legally established. We are in the political ward of Sefton Park; our local councillor Katie Jarman, is a member of the Green Party, she occasionally volunteers at Pantry*.

Parish Data. Source Church Urban Fund

The population of Christ Church Toxteth Park parish is around 5386. It ranks 646 out of 12154, where 1 is the most deprived parish. This means that the parish is among the most deprived in the country.

Child Poverty 48%
Pensioner Poverty 45%
Working age poverty 30%
Life expectancy (boys) 76yrs
Life expectancy (girls) 79yrs
No qualifications 14%
Social housing 27%
Lone parenthood 3%
People living on their own 59%
Older population 14%



PROFILE

CCTP is part of the Diocese of Liverpool (Church of England), and the wider Hope Parish Liverpool. We are a Jesus-centred, fully inclusive Gold Eco church in South Liverpool, close to the city centre. There is a regular service each Sunday morning at 10:30am, which usually lasts about an hour, with a diverse, eclectic attendance averaging 28 adults and 4 children per week. Our monthly programme includes a regular service of Holy Communion.

Our worship style is a mixture of the traditional and the contemporary, services are relaxed and friendly. We have strong lay leadership alongside our vicar who leads communion twice a month. A quarterly service rota ensures a smooth process each week. Each service includes hymns and songs old and new, readings and prayer from congregants, reflection from a member of the leadership team, and a chance to sit quietly, just to be. The beautiful notes of Guitar and viola lead our singing, and our voices enthusiastically praise our triune Creator God.

"We believe in inclusive Church – a church which does not discriminate, on any level, on grounds of economic power, gender, mental health, physical ability, race or sexuality. We believe in Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ."

SAFEGUARDING

Christ Church Toxteth Park takes its duty and obligation to protect all extremely seriously. We have adopted the national Church of England's robust procedures and guidelines. Our safeguarding officer ensures church leaders and congregation are kept up to date with training and compliance; she links with the diocesan safeguarding officers.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

Children of church families meet most weeks for craft, baking, bible reading and discussion.

PRAYER

Prayer is a golden thread that flows through our church community. We have a small, faithful prayer group who meet weekly online.

CHRIST CHURCH LOCAL PANTRY*

Meets every Tuesday, 1 till 3pm entirely run by church and local volunteers, with a regular attendance averaging 50 members a week. We offer free café, CAB, clothes and book swap. Some of the best refreshments in the area. A variety of teas, fresh coffee and homemade cake. We are linked to a network of sustainable food projects across the city.

BUILDING

Our large Victorian building was consecrated by the Bishop of Chester in 1871; we have an ongoing battle to keep the building warm and dry. Architecturally it has been described as "Quirky with touches of roguery" which we think could describe the congregation too.



LAND

Christ Church does not have a churchyard. Over 20 years ago we dug up the tarmac around the church to create Gardens. Maintenance is led by knowledgeable and practiced gardeners - planting & fruit production. We work with compost UK on a community composting programme for food waste and most recently have introduced compost bins for garden waste.