

The Parish Brochure for the  
Benefice of Lofthouse,  
Methley with Mickletown,  
Oulton with Woodlesford,  
and Rothwell.



This Team Ministry across four churches  
was created in 2015 in the Diocese of Leeds.

With their Team Rector Revd Canon Mark Umpleby (appointed in 2023) the churches have been growing closer to work as a team, with the right balance of collaboration and independence.

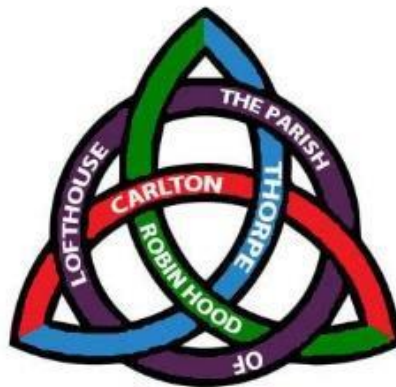
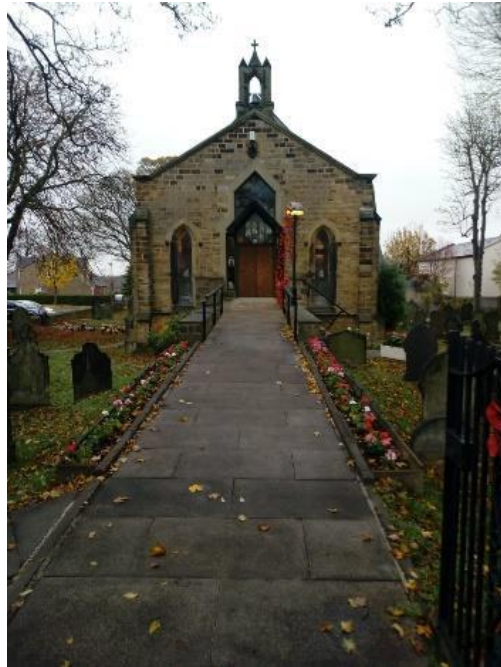
The benefice consists of four parishes, each with one church, spread across a wide area to the south east of Leeds.

The benefice has joint services – two Sunday and two midweek specials; benefice team meetings of clergy and laity; benefice working groups; benefice meetings of those in similar roles; a benefice joint choir for special occasions; joint benefice Lent and Advent groups - and much more.

In this brochure you will find details of all the four parishes.

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- Page 9 – Parish of Methley with Mickletown
- Page 15 – Parish of Oulton with Woodlesford
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**Parish of Christ Church Lofthouse,  
Carlton, Thorpe & Robin Hood**



**“Working to encourage transformation  
individually, locally and globally through a growing  
awareness of God's love and grace”**

## The area and communities we serve



Four distinct villages between Leeds and Wakefield - Lofthouse, Carlton, Robin Hood and Thorpe - make up the parish, with the church building in Lofthouse. This is a former mining area but now largely relies on farming and small businesses. It is popular with commuters working in Leeds and Wakefield because of the easy access to the A61 and the M1 and M62 motorways. Housing is mainly owner-occupied.

## The people of the church, its worship and activities



Christ Church is an established faith-filled Christian Community and lay workers play a very important part in the life of the church. They are involved in providing support and leadership in our bi-monthly Lay Led services together with Messy Tots, TLC Community Café and also G2H our bereavement support group.

There is an established pattern of worship:

A new pattern of worship began at the beginning of 2025.

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month : Parish Eucharist 9.30am

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday : Grace Space – Service of the Word 9.30am

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday : Parish Eucharist 9.30am

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday : All Together Now! Intergenerational Worship 9.30am

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday : Parish Eucharist 9.30am

We welcome all who are baptised to take Holy Communion.



### ***Fundraising and social events***

Together with our regular giving the TLC café, Christmas Fare, twice yearly Fashion Shows occasional other events plus Hall Hire, all help to contribute towards our Parish Share.

Unfortunately due to rising costs and essential church repairs we have been unable to pay our Share in full for the past couple of years.



## The resources, including finance and buildings

The Church building dates to 1840. In 1992 a major re-ordering project raised part of the church floor, removing a flight of stone steps to give level access throughout the church. This created an enlarged hall space below, complete with toilet facilities and a kitchen.



Before re-ordering



After re-ordering

These facilities are used almost daily by our TLC Community Café, Foodbank, Church Stall plus Art and Craft Exhibitions. Messy Tots, Indoor Curling, and other social events are also held in the Church Hall. Other activities include Children's Parties, Brownies, Guides and use as a Polling Station are links to the community and a source of rental income.



Pre- Covid, we were fortunate to benefit from the work of a Community Pay Back Team to maintain our churchyard. We offered them a Christian welcome and refreshments after Sunday Services.

Towards the end of last year we managed to secure their help once again for which we are extremely grateful. They now mostly look after our off site churchyard and return to the church hall for their breaks. They also now bring their own refreshments.

We are privileged to have the grave and headstone of PC Edward Atkinson, the first constable of the West Riding in our churchyard and, in a previous incumbency, there was an annual Police service held at Christ Church, attended by civic dignitaries.



## The future mission opportunities and challenges

We launched our TLC Café in November 2021 and it has proven to be an enormous success and is our main source of mission work. The café enables us to engage with the wider community drawing people in for refreshments and chats. The warm welcome extended to all our visitors frequently involves a conversation about church.

As a result, a good number ask if they can be shown the worship space, which is above the café. This can take the form of an accompanied visit and also allow time for a quiet reflection or lighting of a candle. Conversations about faith occur naturally and are encouraging thoughts about mission and challenges. We strive to let everyone know that access to church is available at anytime whenever the TLC Café is open.



Christ Church invites and welcomes all who come to enquire, participate in social activities or join in worship, by creating a warm and friendly environment.

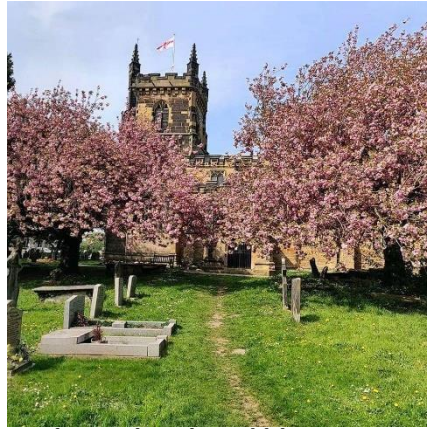
This is shown in the way people enjoy various activities and sometimes move from one aspect of church life into other areas, feeling comfortable and secure in how much or how little they wish to participate.

Several people who have attended G2H (Bereavement Café) have gone on to join the Curling Café, help with activities, help in the Café and also now attend our Sunday worship.





## **The Parish Brochure of St. Oswald's, Methley with Mickletown**



**Photo Church and blossom**



**Photo The Warden Team Photo**



***Photo Full house at Christingle***

### **Introduction**

***Under the Lordship of Christ, through the quality of our worship and our outreach work, we seek to make God's love known in our community.***

We are an inclusive Church, seeking to welcome new friends into our historic church building and to share our beautiful "God's Acre" with all who pass by. Care for our environment and action to reduce our carbon footprint has been recognised with the EchoChurch Silver Award.

Outreach to families is through our thriving Messy Church and Brownies and Rainbows, held in our modern church hall.

Now, as we seek our new Team Vicar, we pray that we will again be led to a candidate well equipped to ***draw clergy and laity even closer in teamwork and in mission.***

## **About us**

### Our parish and its history

Methley with Mickletown brings together two distinct village centres. Methley itself is ***rich in heritage*** as the home of the Waterton and Savile families whose seat, Methley Hall, was demolished in the 1960's. Their ***Grade 1 listed church*** remains in the centre of the farmland which gives this part of the village a rural character. A Conservation Area, comprising Church, Cricket Field, and pub, "old Methley" is especially attractive.

In the nineteenth century mining changed the character of the area. A mile away from the church, Mickletown grew up around Savile Pit, creating a sprawling village along the course of the River Aire. Here is our Main Street with Primary School, Health Centre, Post Office, Chapel, Church Hall and shops. Nearby former open cast mines are now an RSPB reserve, ***a haven for wildlife, walkers and cyclists.***

Motorways and urban regeneration have turned Methley into a dormitory village *with three recent developments of owner occupied houses. The proximity to the cities of Leeds and Wakefield and to the intersection of the M1 and M62 makes it for convenient for commuting, the more desirable for its rural setting.* Whether mining stock or incomers. ***Whatever our background, we all love to live in our village.***

### Our congregation

St. Oswald's Church is a ***resilient fellowship*** which has shown ***its readiness to accept change.*** We are a small and loyal congregation who provide a warm welcome to all who join us at our services. However, as the congregation ages, we have a limited number of volunteers. Our enthusiasm is not always matched by the lay hours needed for new projects and outreach, though we have many dedicated volunteers and continue to welcome new people to our congregation.

### Our services

We worship in the church on Sunday mornings at 11.00. The first Sunday in the month is an All Age service. The second and fourth Sundays are Sung Eucharists (Said or Sung), with the third Sunday a Service of the Word. We hold a midweek Eucharist in our Parish Hall for those who are unable to attend Sunday worship *or who prefer a less formal setting.*

We hold Messy Church once a month in the Hall, ***an outreach success*** which has grown steadily over five years. Baptisms are popular at St. Oswald's, often booked a full year ahead, and weddings are popular in our historic building and its delightful setting.

The largest attendance in the year comes for ***the hugely popular Christingle services*** attended by some 420 people. Talents and resources from both congregations are shared in this wonderful act of family worship

### Our style of worship

Worship at St. Oswald's can best be described as "**Central Church**". Our Eucharistic services are more traditional, whereas our monthly All Age Worship is participatory and visual, led from the screen. *Music plays an important role in our worship. We have a small choir to lead worship and are seeking a new organist and we also use modern technologies to accompany our singing.*

***We welcome new and diverse forms of worship, notably through the Live Streaming of all our Sunday worship. This maintained contact with our congregation and parishioners during Lockdowns and continues to attract worshippers at home and in their own time.***

## Mission and Outreach

### Our vision statement

*Under the Lordship of Christ, through the quality of our worship and our outreach work, we seek to make God's love known in our community.*

### Our mission priorities

To show Jesus working and walking in our community – through our words and actions.

To worship together joyously and wholeheartedly.

To offer all talents and efforts up to God's work.

***As an Inclusive Church to understand and welcome all people and not to judge*** – and to continue our work to make our ancient building more accessible to all.

### Our outreach

Our church reaches out to the community by:-

*Use of Social Media by Live Streaming our worship and by spreading Christian news of all kinds via our Facebook page, a Church Near You and on to the wider Methley Community Facebook page.*

Visiting the sick in their homes or in residential homes and administering the Sacraments

Holding weekly Coffee Mornings in support of local and national charities

Our support of Christian Aid Week, *of the Children's Society and our donations to charities in this country and overseas*

Leadership and support of Brownies and Rainbows

Visible involvement in community events under the Churches Together banner.

***Widening use of our historic building*** for Open Days, School Visits, concerts and other community events. *In our Reordering proposal due for DAC approval this year we aim to welcome and reach our community more effectively through practical improvements to our building.*

***Developing inclusivity*** as a Visible Congregation *and as a registered Inclusive Church*

## Buildings

### The Church of St. Oswald

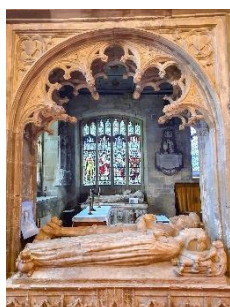


***Photo by night***



***Photo from fields***

There has been a church on this site since Saxon times and its foundations survive. The present building dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the 15th century, ***the splendid Waterton chapel*** was added. Two magnificent alabaster monuments link with the Wars of the Roses. The Savile family tomb commemorates distinguished members of the courts of Elizabeth I and James I. The same family, as Earls of Mexborough, have owned the land of Methley to the present day and are commemorated with more ***fine sculpture, which influenced the young Henry Moore***. *The national significance of these memorials has been recognised in C.M.Newham's recently published "Country Church Monuments".*

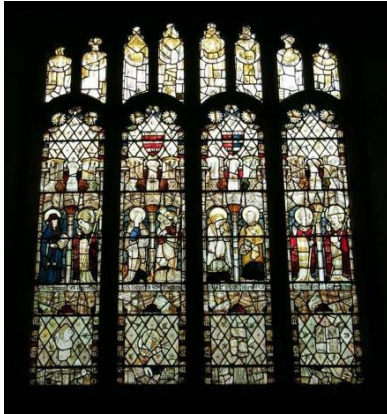


***Photo The Welles Monument***



***Photo The Savile Monument***

The chapel features our only Medieval stained glass, but all the other windows are of fine Victorian and Edwardian glass.



***Photo Stained glass***

The extensive churchyard is maintained by voluntary efforts and includes a recognised Quiet Garden. *The space around the Garden is now developed as the setting for burials and for cremated remains. The EcoChurch Group have focussed on the potential of God's Acre for wildlife and flora conservation. Open space in the churchyard is being selectively mown and managed.*

*Voluntary activity in the churchyard forms a part of our outreach as we get to know people who wish to help, those who visit family graves, walkers, cyclists and passersby.*

*The Silver Award as an Eco Church from A Rocha is largely the result of this work.*



***Photo The churchyard***



### **St. Margaret's Hall**

In 2011 a Parish Hall was built in Mickletown on the site of the former church of St Margaret. Its amenities are ideal for weekday services, Messy Church, Brownies/Rainbows, coffee mornings, dance classes and private parties. We have recently installed solar panels to the roof of the hall.



### **The Parish Centre and House**

This was formerly the Church of England Infants school. Since 2004 it has been a major source of income, as it is let to a day nursery company.

For more information and photos of St. Oswald's and Methley in Mickletown please visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/st.oswalds.methley/>

and

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/3260>

and

Twitter: [@StoswaldsMethley](#)

and

Instagram: [@methleyparishchurch](#)

## **The Parish Brochure of St John the Evangelist, Oulton with Woodlesford**

Our church building was suddenly forced to close in November 2014 after a major lead theft caused extensive flooding and severe internal damage. In the midst of this upheaval, we were blessed to have our adaptable Parish Hall, which has faithfully served as our place of worship ever since. Since 2019, we have been able to return to St John's for occasional services, and a small weekly Morning or Evening Prayer service now takes place in the church building.

As we explored and shaped plans for the building's future, our congregation grew stronger and more united, forging deeper relationships both within the church and with the wider community. From 2016 to 2018, a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund's GPOW scheme enabled vital repairs to the central roof and rainwater systems. As the building began to dry out, we looked ahead with hope to the next phases of restoration and renewal.

In 2019, an incredible effort from people across our villages allowed us to remove damaged plasterwork and carry out an extensive clean-up. That Christmas, we celebrated our first service in the church for five years — a joyous carol service that welcomed over 300 people and marked a turning point in our journey. This moment became a launchpad for renewed mission and community outreach, as we began developing new grant proposals for a reordering scheme to transform St John's into a multi-purpose, community-centered space.

However, 2020 brought fresh challenges, including a boiler breakdown and the profound impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Along with rapidly rising costs and increased competition for funding, these factors led us to prayerfully reconsider the future of our buildings in Oulton and Woodlesford. In 2025, the PCC hosted a community consultation and, following careful discernment, made the difficult decision to ask the Diocese of Leeds to begin the formal closure process for St John's Church building. Nevertheless, weekly Morning or Evening Prayer continues there, led by our dedicated Lay Worship Leader, Stuart Ward.

Woodlesford Parish Hall remains our primary place of worship and community life, continuing to serve the Parish of Oulton and Woodlesford with warmth and flexibility.

### **Community and Context**

Our parish, home to over 8,000 residents and growing, includes the vibrant villages of Oulton and Woodlesford—now thriving commuter communities with excellent transport links to Leeds, Wakefield, and beyond. The area is predominantly made up of owner-occupied homes, alongside some social housing, and new developments such as the canal-side site in Woodlesford. We are blessed with two primary schools—Oulton and Woodlesford—and Oulton Academy, our local secondary school. We have historically enjoyed strong links with Oulton Primary, where our Team Vicar once served as a school governor.

St John's Church, a Grade II\* listed building, stands proudly within the parkland of Oulton Hall, now a hotel and golf course. Designed in 1829 by the renowned Thomas Rickman, the church

was described in 1831 as “one of the most chaste and elegant churches of pointed architecture to be met with in the Kingdom.” It is one of the finest early examples of the Gothic Revival style. Its spire remains a familiar landmark across our village.

For over 190 years, St John’s has been a sacred place where people have gathered in times of sorrow and celebration. Generations of local families are laid to rest in its churchyard, and the church continues to hold deep personal meaning for many in our community. We are grateful for the support of the groundskeepers from Oulton Hall Hotel, who generously help us care for the open areas of the churchyard. In 2022, we partnered with local volunteers from CROWN (Carlton, Rothwell, Oulton and Woodlesford Neighbourhood volunteers) to reclaim and maintain the grounds, which had become overgrown during the pandemic. We also benefit from the regular help of teams from the Community Payback Scheme, whose efforts are making a real difference.

### **Worship and Vision**

Our worship tradition is rooted in the Central Anglican tradition, with the Eucharist at the heart of our life together. We remain open and welcoming to other forms of worship and, before the pandemic, regularly held All-Age Worship and informal Café Church services. While we are not currently members of Inclusive Church, we value openness and inclusivity and would be glad to explore this more formally in the future. Accessibility is a priority for us, and a key part of our discernment regarding the future of St John’s as a space for all.

With the closure of both local Methodist chapels in recent years, we are now the only Christian worshipping community in Oulton and Woodlesford. Our average congregation numbers are 22 on Sundays and 13 on Thursdays. Though small in number, our congregation is faithful, committed, and spiritually vibrant. Most of our regular worshippers are over the age of 68, and like many churches, our volunteer base was affected by the Covid lockdowns. This, combined with changing demographics, meant we have not yet resumed our Café Church, though we remain open to creative new approaches.

The PCC continues to explore fresh opportunities for worship and outreach while honouring our liturgical roots. We regularly run discipleship courses in collaboration with the wider benefice, nurturing faith and fellowship across our parish family.

### **Looking Ahead**

Yes, we face challenges—but we also celebrate the journey we’ve travelled and trust that God is leading us into a future filled with hope. Together, we remain committed to serving our community, worshipping faithfully, and discerning where God is calling us next.





























## The Parish Brochure of **HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, ROTHWELL**

*“We are a loving, welcoming, inclusive and serving church family for everyone, in the name of Jesus.”*

Holy Trinity is one of the churches in the United Benefice of Lofthouse, Methley with Mickletown, Oulton with Woodlesford and Rothwell. The Grade II listed building stands on a small hill just behind the main street making it a highly visible and welcoming Christian presence in the heart of Rothwell.

Rothwell is a thriving community with a good range of national and independent retailers, wine bars and restaurants. There are some excellent schools, doctors and dentists and superb facilities for recreation including the local library, a large, beautiful park and a nearby Sports Centre with a swimming pool and gym.

There are some 23,000 residents in Rothwell and while many work in retail and service industries, administrative, managerial and professional jobs, there are pockets of urban deprivation with an increasing number residents reliant on state benefits.

We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint and we hope the new team vicar will share our values and help us progress with this.



## Who we are ...

**Our Church Wardens** are Virginia Lynch and Mark Wilkinson who are assisted by 8 deputy church wardens. Our Parish Administrator is Susan Franks and the PCC Secretary is Ian Land. The PCC members are committed and hard-working, taking responsibility for sub-committees such as, 'Mission and Liturgy', 'Finance', Fabric and Fund-Raising. Keith Lynch is our Disability Representative, Debbie Mann is our Parish Safeguarding Officer, John Normington is our Environmental Officer, our Deanery Synod Representatives are Norma Barrett, Abhijit David, and Ian Land and Richard Mayers is our Director of Music.

## What we do ...

**Our style of worship** is Central to Anglo-Catholic. However, we recognise the need to make our worship accessible and engaging to all, so that we can all worship God and proclaim our faith by serving God in the community.

At present, as we regrow our congregation after Covid and while we are in interregnum, there is one service each Sunday at 9.30 am but to try and satisfy all members of the congregation, we have different styles of service each week:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday – Service of the Word in Church and Jigsaw in Parish Centre.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday – Parish Eucharist
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – All Age Service - Intergenerational Worship
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday – Parish Eucharist
- 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday – Parish Eucharist

\*The service - JIGSAW - in the Parish Centre caters especially for the young (and young at heart) and is energetic and interactive with more modern hymns and lots of percussion instruments!

At all services, members of the congregation take turns to read lessons and lead intercessions. Full vestments and incense are used on several occasions during the year

Attendance at the major Festivals is larger than average. On Easter Sunday we may see approximately 100 people at the service – although that may have something to do with the Easter Bonnet parade and the Easter Egg Hunt.

Also well attended are the traditional Christmas services – the Carol Service, accompanied by the Rothwell Temperance Band, the Crib Service, with a congregation of over 400 and Midnight Mass with approximately 80 - 90 communicants.



Crib Service

Harvest festival is a particularly well-loved service where local people join the regular congregation in bringing gifts of food. Over the past few years, the traditional gifts of fresh produce have been replaced by tins of food for the local food bank

One year, the food gifts were disguised as 'animals'. We had enough for a whole Noah's Ark!



Our Remembrance Day Service involves the Royal British Legion and is well attended by the whole community. Worship in Church is followed by a parade to the War Memorial with local uniformed groups, councillors and the Rothwell Temperance Band.

Our differing worship formats maintain a balance between worship with a modern, 'popular' style and services which respect the traditions and values which are important to the loyal congregation. However, this is all '*within our comfort zone*' and we are developing a strategy which will put God's purpose for the future of Rothwell at the heart of everything we do.

## How we do it ...

***Our congregation may be ageing but we are still energetic.*** When it matters most, we work well as a team and, through prayer and perseverance, can achieve great things

We are involved in many activities which attract and engage members of the local community. We see ourselves a welcoming church that offers much throughout the year. A variety of weekly and monthly groups aim to offer something for everyone. During Parish Eucharists we offer a Sunday School, using materials linked to the Lectionary.



Messy Café takes place on the last Saturday of each month

Many families in Rothwell still seek Baptism, so we offer visits from the baptism team. Parents are invited to attend preparation classes and to attend church.

For older children our main initiative is the Girls Friendly Society. This very popular group is run by members of the church and is involved in Fundraising events and major Festivals

*GFS girls operating the 'Gingham Café' at the Autumn Fair.*





Members of the church are involved with Holy Trinity Rothwell C of E Primary Academy. The school use the church regularly for services and education purposes and the church presents each child with a Bible when they leave the school in Year 6.

Outreach opportunities include:

We recognise that outreach to younger people and families is one of our challenges.



*Rothwell Beer Festival in association with Rothwell Lions.*

*Enjoying the Church grounds over a pint or two!*



*Churches Together 'Take Over' Day Rothwell Park Run*

*Members of the congregation are never too old (or young) to help in the Festival kitchen.*



Ecumenical Good Friday Service



*Plants, buns and the raffle*

*The Spud n' Pud Lunch*



*The Autumn Fair*



*The Fish n' Chip Supper and Quiz Night*

The Fund Raising Committee work tirelessly to enable us to pay our Parish Share each year – more volunteers are needed.

## Where we do it ....

**Many of our events** are held in our Parish Centre, situated within the churchyard. It has a large kitchen, a fully stocked bar, a large hall with a stage, toilets, an upstairs meeting room and the Parish office which serves the whole Team.

The Centre building is hired by local businesses, groups, charities and local families for parties and celebrations, thus providing valuable income for the church. However, its facilities now need updating.



The Church itself is a very beautiful Grade II listed building and so requires special care. Our Fabric Committee has prioritised the many findings of the Quinquennial Report and is acting upon its recommendations.

The tower houses a ring of eight bells which are rung regularly on Sundays and for weddings. Its 'flagpole' is a telecommunications mast and another important source of income.

Impressive as the outside of the church is, the interior is breath-taking. The pews and the poppy heads, the most notable feature, were the work of Edmund Bates of Leeds, and his nineteen-year-old assistant, Charles Gibson, the son of the Parish Clerk of Rothwell.

At the rear of the church we have a dedicated 'Heritage Area' where some stones thought to be of Saxon origin, an ancient coat and a copy of the Rothwell Charter granted in 1251 by Henry III are on display.

The 'Open Church Group' ensure that regularly people can visit the church and spend time in spiritual reflection. We participate in National Heritage Weekend and 'Treasures of Leeds' which attracts visitors from all over the county and beyond.



*Our display area*



*Visitors on 'Heritage Day'*



*The Altar and Reredos*



*The font with the sheep  
which are presented to  
all newly baptised children*

*The Nave roof*



*The Creation Window*



In 2022 a project completed an install of an accessible WC, tea bar and to make a large informal meeting space.

*The magnificent organ*



Strengths	Weaknesses
Friendly, especially our welcoming team. Committed, loyal and caring parishioners	Declining/static congregation numbers Elderly but able congregation
Strong culture of volunteering both in and out of Church: GFS - Messy Café Numerous social and purely fund-raising events Beer Festival	Small congregation means a smaller pool of volunteers to take from
Variety of services  Popularity of services for major Festivals.	House groups needed Integrating Messy Café congregation into main Sunday services.  Outreach to younger people i.e.. 16 - 45
Location - landmark of church  Heritage: Open Church Group  We are currently re-ordering the church to provide an accessible WC & tea bar and an enlarged meeting area in the North Aisle.	Grade II listed Building which incurs the expense expected of a building of this age.  More volunteers needed.
Monthly Magazine	More contributors and distributors needed.
Popular for weddings and baptisms	Keeping couples and new families 'after the event'.
Good music with a small choir and permanent organist who is our Director of Music.	Choristers of all ages and voices needed
Parish Hall with good facilities and wide usage from Community.	Style of building (late 70's) needs updating. Increasing maintenance costs.
Parking	Shared with local pub so sometimes full.
Fundraising activities: Easter and Christmas Raffles, Autumn Fayre, 100 Club, Coffee mornings, Concerts, Quiz nights, Theme nights, Beer Festival Rental income	Pool of volunteers reducing through age.
Income from Trust Fund and Property bequeathed to church some time ago.	Conditions of Trust limit what money can be spent on Re-ordering project underway - yes. New Hymn Books – No. So extra fund-raising needed