

St John's Church Whorlton Parish Brochure



January 2026

Welcome to the diocese of Newcastle!

Thank you so much for your interest in this role, and I hope you enjoy reading the information contained in this brochure and will find it helpful for your discernment. These are exciting and challenging times in the Diocese of Newcastle. Exciting because we are at an early stage of a new season, challenging because like many dioceses we face conversations about our future and how best we use and deploy our resources. Our Deanery Development work has engaged every parish and benefice in renewed conversations about mission and ministry, and we are in a process of entering a new phase in that work, mapping out our renewed strategy and vision. Our outward facing values of 'seeking, sharing, sending' stem from a commitment to be a Church turning outwards in mission and ministry, and younger and more diverse by: **SEEKING** through being open to God's transforming love; **SHARING** through being generous with God's transforming gifts; **SENDING** through being engaged in God's transforming work in the world. I am looking for clergy who are excited about the opportunities and challenges we face, who are happy to work collaboratively and imaginatively with colleagues, and who can inspire communities to roll up their sleeves and get stuck into God's mission, by affirming, enabling, and encouraging lay and clergy together. As your Bishop, I am committed to your wellbeing and development, and I would love to explore with you whether God may be calling you to this role.



The Rt Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley
Bishop of Newcastle

The Diocese of Newcastle is the Church of England's most northerly diocese. This Diocese in the 'land of the Northern Saints' was formed in 1882 and comprises **169** parishes across **2,110** square miles. The Diocese covers the local authorities of Northumberland, Newcastle, North Tyneside and also small parts of County Durham and Cumbria. The **12** deaneries within **2** archdeaconries serve a population of about **831,600** people across a variety of communities ranging from sparse rural to large inner-city areas of deprivation.



Our church in a 'nutshell'

Are you looking for a happy and healthy, well supported parish with lots of new housing and plenty of potential for growth, in a lovely area to live, with great transport links - Newcastle city centre easily accessible, but also with Northumberland on the doorstep, plus the A1M and airport nearby? If so, then St John's Church, Whorlton might be the place for you!

Our dedicated laity comprises: two committed churchwardens (plus emeritus support); outstanding Treasurer; PCC Secretary; Social Committee Chair (cake-maker extraordinaire); a retired priest and Lay Eucharistic Assistants.

Our church has a unique design which is well maintained and houses a Harrison and Harrison organ. We have recently obtained a Bronze Eco Church Award. We have ecumenical friendships with our local churches. We have supportive civic leaders from local independent councillors.

We have a range of outstanding fundraising events, lots of baptisms, good links with local schools and we are well supported at Christmas. We also hold a monthly Messy Church in our church hall.

We have an excellent church hall which is used by the community for all sorts of activities. Slimming World have been with us for many years.

We have a leafy vicarage adjacent to the church as well as our local Jingling Gate pub.

Historically, Whorlton was perceived as something of a 'country church', serving the 'Village' (Westerhope), right out on the very edge of the city. New estates grew up, and most recently, major developments right on our doorstep!

Prompted by this, we've been thinking very seriously about who we are and what we stand for. In these discussions, 'conversation, not conversion' - providing Christian company (open to all) - emerged as a touchstone. All are welcome to our worship: weekly, monthly, occasional/seasonal attenders, those new to faith or exploring anew. We've also decided to focus upon hospitality, music, and the environment.

If labels help, St John's is roughly 'middle of the road', attempting a mixture of friendliness and formality.

The Parish of St John's Whorlton

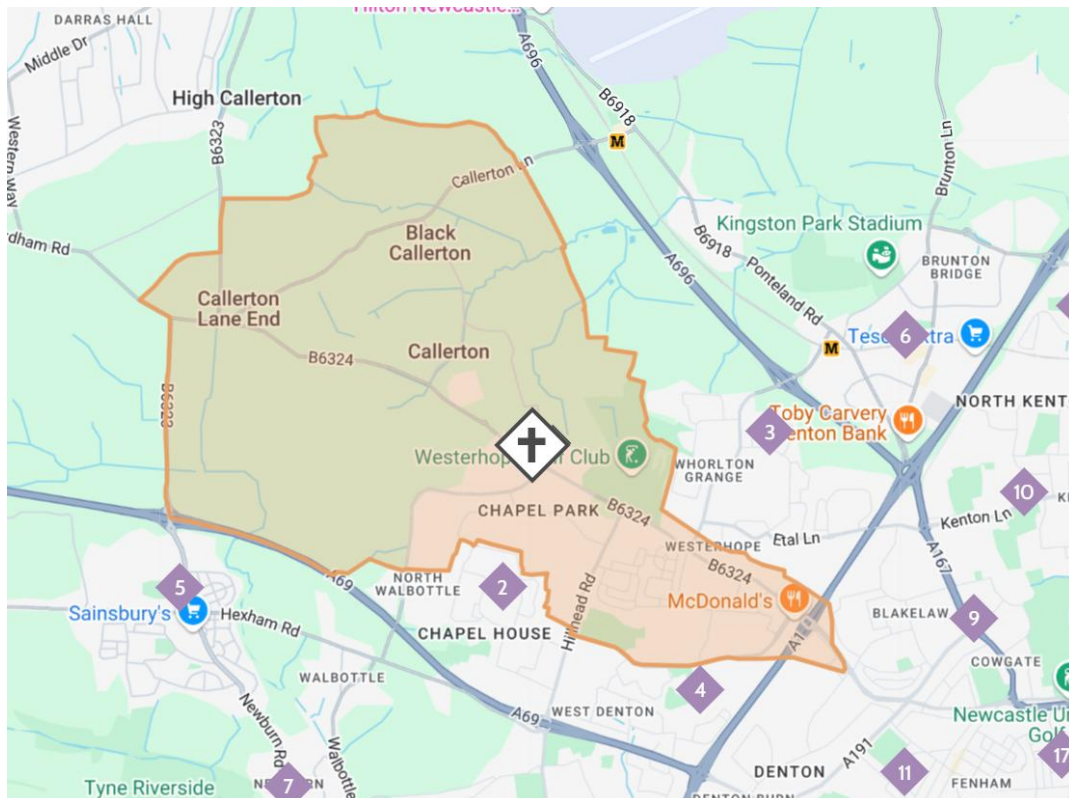
St John's is the parish church for the community of Whorlton and Westerhope, which means we are here to serve God and every member of our local community.

We aim to provide a lot more than just Sunday worship, but it is our worship that sustains us in all our other work. We wish to grow spiritually and we wish to grow numerically. We try to enable people to live out their faith through regular services, activities and events for

- worship and prayer
- learning and developing knowledge about the gospel
- pastoral care for those living in the parish
- mission and outreach work

We strive to provide an environment that is welcoming, respectful and a safe place for all. We also aim to respect and protect all personal information we record in the course of normal church activities.

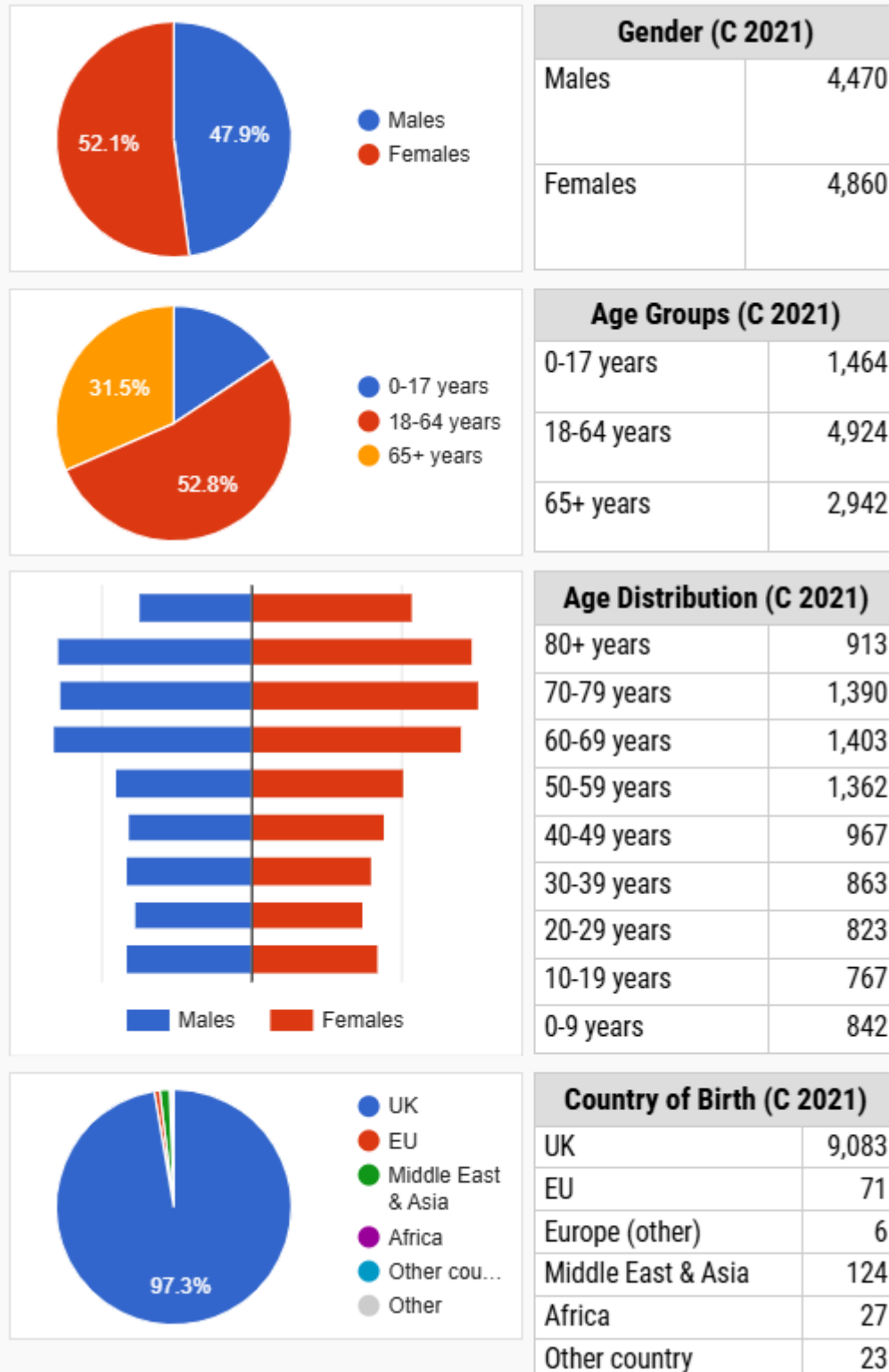
St John's Church is situated on Stamfordham Road, Westerhope, Newcastle upon Tyne, on the B6324 some four miles west of the City. It is part of the Diocese of Newcastle within the Church of England.



Our demographics

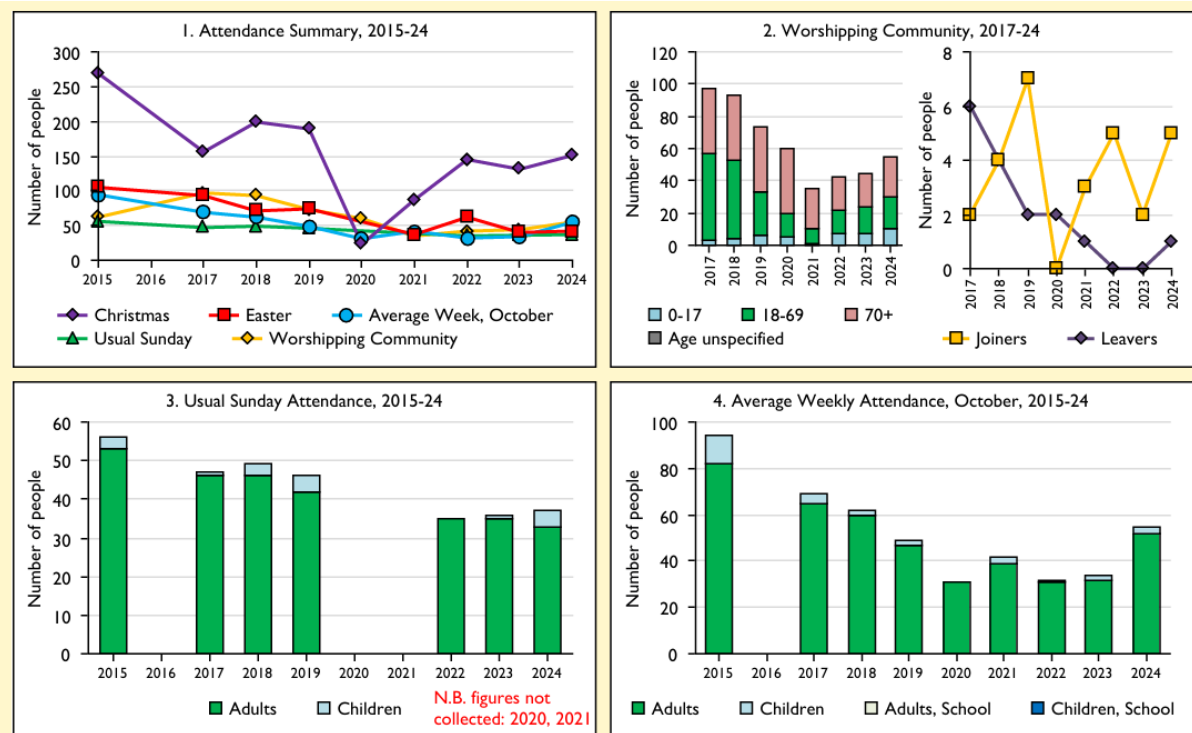
The 2021 Census stated the population of the Chapel Ward of Newcastle was 9,331, see below. This covers the main area of our Parish.

Further information about the population structure:



Our statistics for Mission

Below is a summary from our 2024 statistics



There are currently 63 names on the role of whom 19 are not resident in the parish.

Our past and present (1866 +)

St. John's was built in 1866 in the Parish of Newburn, initially as a "chapel of ease" to serve a congregation of 200 before eventually becoming a parish in its own right. The building, although not listed, has a unique design reflecting its evolutionary history. The first design consisted of a nave and a chancel with a rounded apse built in plain stone and a bell tower with a visible single bell. Most of the expense of building was borne by Messrs. Spencers of Newburn Steelworks and in 1908 the Spencer family added an organ chamber to the North side. This chamber is now a chapel. In 1911 an ambitious programme to completely rebuild the church started. The East end of the church was demolished and a new, much taller, sanctuary was built, with vestries and a new organ chamber. The original plan was to rebuild the nave and add side aisles, but with the onset of WW1 and a lack of funds the scheme was abandoned. Hence the building we have now is more modest than envisaged.

When you directly enter the church from the main door, beyond the font, Westerhope's only war memorials for WW1 and WW2 are situated. They form the focal point to our Remembrance Day service. Look upwards and you will see the fully exposed roof leg scissor trusses and openness of the nave roof. Your eye will then be drawn to the chancel and its magnificent stained-glass window which was installed in 1999. The inspirational design by Duncan Storr of Darlington reflects the earthly elements of earth, wind and fire and fills the east end of the building with streams of tinted light.

We are privileged to have a Harrison and Harrison organ, which has been recently refurbished. Our single bell is used to commemorate national events, for example the coronation of King Charles III and the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

Our future changing community

At its inception St John's was surrounded by a farming community. The private residential housing estates of Chapel Park, built in the 1970's and St John's in the 1980's which are adjacent to the site are now being complemented by further housing developments. Construction of 2,000 new homes within a 1-mile radius have been completed within the last two years. Three retail units are currently being constructed opposite the church hall. There is a proposal to build a new school at Callerton, some 200 metres away from the church. We have seen new residents join our congregation, new faces at our services and fairs and increased hall bookings.



Our worship and prayer

We have a set programme of worship and prayer

Sunday services

- Holy Communion – every Sunday at 8.30 a.m. for 45 mins (average 3 - 5 attendees)
- Holy Communion – every Sunday at 10 a.m. for 1 hour (average 25 attendees)

Morning Prayer (Zoom)

- every Friday at 9.30 a.m. for 30 mins

Easter Week Services

- Good Friday – 9.30 am ‘Walk of Witness’ between St John’s and Westerhope Methodist Church

All Souls Service

- 2 November – 6.30 pm - giving thanks for those who have shared our lives in the past and acknowledging our ongoing sense of loss and sadness.

Christmas Services

- Carols by Candlelight (with refreshments) – occurring on 14 Dec 2025, 6:30 p.m. for 1 hour
- Christmas Eve Services – Family service at 5.00 pm and Midnight mass at 11.30 p.m.

We are fortunate to have the Rev’d Bob, who holds the Bishop’s Permission to Officiate. Rev’d Bob presides and preaches one Sunday a month.



Our teaching

Preaching

We are happy to participate in a 'pulpit swap' for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We swapped preachers with Westerhope Methodist Church.

Bible Study (Zoom)

The Book Club is on Fridays on Zoom from 10 am (after the 9:30 online Morning Prayer), and lasts for around 45 minutes. During Lent, the group in 2025 switched to a Jane Austen-themed lent book.

Confirmation Preparation

We have held confirmations in 2021, 2024 and 2025. In June 2024 we were joined by Bishop Mark Wroe, the Bishop of Berwick, for a confirmation service, with three confirmands from St John's, and one additional candidate joining us from St George's, Jesmond.



Tea@3 with mini-Messy Church

This group meets on the first Sunday of the month, and has seen encouraging growth with attendees coming to Sunday services and being baptized.

Local Schools

We welcome our local schools. Each December we welcome Westerhope Primary School for their packed Christmas performances with their parents. We also welcomed Year 3 from Knop Law Primary into church during May as part of local history week.

Our pastoral care

We have a Pastoral Care Team, who look out for members of the congregation and those more vulnerable members of the extended community, and any in particular need. A mailing list is used to keep those online informed and supported. A monthly newsletter is circulated both electrically and by post.

We hold a service of Holy Communion at Whorlton Grange.

We have a Facebook page which keeps the community updated with news from the church.

The WhatsApp group 'St John's Chat' was set up during Covid. It's still used on a daily basis and has been a way to keep everyone in touch with each other. Members provide news, motivational quotes and pictures.

We also have

- The Ladies' Group, which meets 1st Tuesday of the month in the Chapel Park except January and August.
- Men's Breakfast, which meets on the first Saturday of the month at 10am at Dobbie's Garden Centre for an hour.
- Mothers' Union, which meets on the first Monday of the month at 2 pm in the church hall, but not in August. There is a varied programme of speakers, services and conversation, with refreshments.



Our occasional offices

We were able to support our community in the usual way by celebrating and thanking God for numerous baptisms, weddings, as well as walking alongside those bereaved in our funeral ministry.

Baptisms (lots)

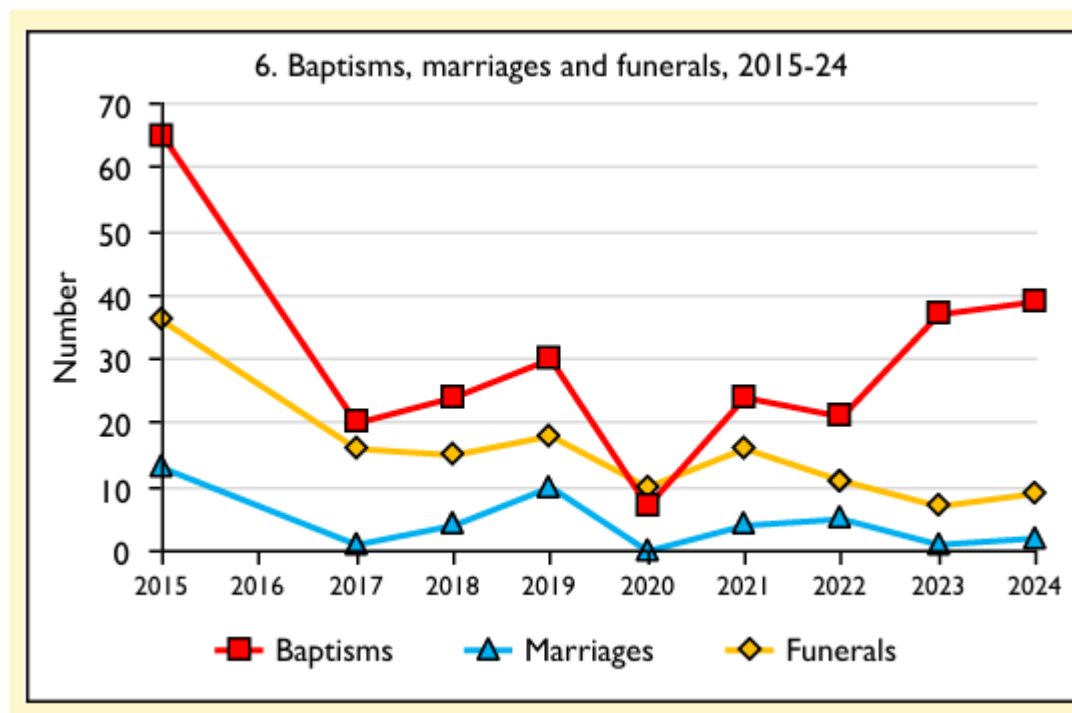
We conduct around 25 baptisms per year and are usually arranged on a Sunday. We generally take bookings for 12 noon on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month (and it may be that the service is shared with one additional family. The service begins usually takes about 20-25 minutes.

Weddings

We had five weddings booked for 2025. Wedding are usually arranged on a Saturday.

Funerals

We conduct around five funerals per year at the church as well as about five services per year at the West Road Crematorium.



Our music and more music...

Our Mission Action Plan, undertaken in 2023 concluded we should establish children and family - friendly 'come and sing' - type events, with mix of sacred and secular music, hopefully springboarding to future choir membership.

Choir

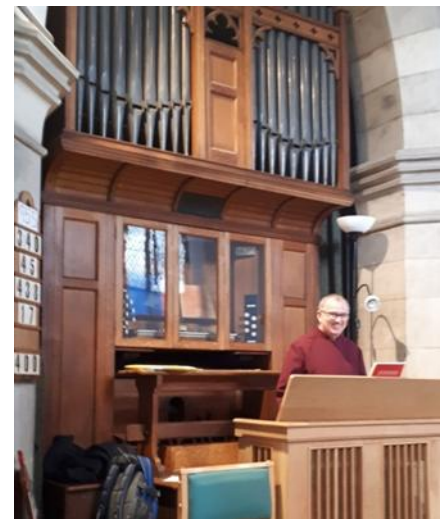
We have seven regular members of the choir. They practice on a fortnightly basis. They are an integral part to our 10.00 am weekly service, the Carols by Candlelight service and the Big Sing.



Organists

We have THREE organists! Our regulars – Tim with David playing on the second Sunday of the month. Maggie is now playing regularly.

We are truly blessed to have this musical talent in our church.



Big Sing

We have three Big Sings annually in our church hall where our organists encourage our congregation as well as our community to sing a variety of songs. This attracts approximately 50 persons.

Our stewardship and sustainability

Fabric and Maintenance

We have an established annual budget for the maintenance of our church, our church hall and the church grounds and this is approved by our Architect.

Our Quinquennial was undertaken in September 2025 and we have recently completed all recommended works from our 2020 Quinquennial. The significant works undertaken in the last 5 years include

- Repair of roof and guttering over our organ chamber
- Full refurbishment of our organ
- Repair of our west bellcote and east cross
- Repointing of external walls where required
- Redecoration of damaged internal walls



This has incurred some £75,000 of architect's fees and construction costs. This was funded by a mixture of grants, legacy funding and fundraising from our congregation and local community.

The 2025 Quinquennial has recommended a project to replace the uneven flooring at the entrance of the church nave. The other works are routine maintenance.

During 2025, we arranged a Just Giving page to raise funds for the installation of an AEDS defibrillator. This was installed In December 2025.



Like all churches we benefit greatly from capable office holders and volunteers.

Office holders

- Two Church Wardens – Martin Stait and Lesley Tait
- Treasurer – Janice Stait
- Secretary – Tim Care
- Safeguarding Officer – TBA

Volunteers

- Verger (TBA)
- Organists (x3)
- Choir
- Church Hall Manager (TBA)
- Flower Team
- Church Cleaning Team
- Social Team
- Garden Maintenance Team
- Web / IT communications Team

Our mission action plan

Our plan was reviewed and renewed in 2023. We decided to consolidate what we do well and focus on the following areas going forwards: music, social events and hospitality; and the environment.

1. Music

We have established children and family-friendly 'come and sing'- type events, with mix of sacred and secular music; hopefully springboard to future choir membership. These have taken place at Christmas, Easter and summer – now known as the 'Big Sing'. They have been well attended with those from our own church and those coming from other churches in the locality.



2. Hospitality & Fundraising Social Event

We have continued with an annual programme of fundraising social events; and aim some of programme at the wider/fringe supporters, who might occasionally attend services and publicise so local residents aware of what's on. The events in 2025/26 were as follows

- Spring Fayre – 17 May 2025, 2 p.m. for 2 hours
- Afternoon Tea – 12 Jul 2025, 2 p.m. for 2 hours
- Tynemouth Walking Tour – 21 Jun 2025, 1 p.m. for 3 hours
- Big Summer Sing – 16 Aug 2025, 2 p.m. for 2 hours
- Greek Night – 13 Sep 2025, 2 p.m. for 2 hours
- Harvest Lunch – 5 Oct 2025, noon for 1 hour
- Christmas Fayre – 22 Nov 2025, 2 p.m. for 2 hours
- Big Christmas Sing – 29 Nov 2025, 2 p.m. for 2 hours
- Big Easter Sing – 11 Apr 2026, 2 p.m. for 2 hours



3. Environment

Thirdly we have updated our 2019 previous energy audit pre-pandemic. We have recently conducted a trial of a Teracycle drop-off point in place in our car park. The printed labels on each of the four blue bins give details of what can be deposited, e.g. washing liquid containers, cheese wrappers, biscuit packets, and Pringles tubes!

We are working towards CofE Net Carbon Zero target; all of our energy is green. We have compost bins, council blue and brown recycling bins, bird boxes.



Our grounds, churchyard and memorial garden

The grounds around the church are well cared for and consist of grass verges, herbaceous borders, hawthorn hedging and holly trees. A small centenary garden was established in 2011 and is marked by a sandstone plaque. We have a gravel car park.

We have a closed churchyard, situated over a side road adjacent to the church. It is more than a century old and dates back to the early days of Westerhope. Many of the people buried there were involved in the development of the village. A site burial map with a complete list of those interred can be viewed at the church on request. It is maintained by Newcastle City Council.

Our Memorial Garden lies in the west corner of the churchyard where parishioners can have ashes interred. No individual memorials of any sort are allowed here but the names of those laid to rest can be entered in a Book of Remembrance at any time after the funeral. Families quite frequently lay bunches of flowers on the grassy area of the Memorial Garden, where the ashes of their loved ones have been buried. We are also happy for families to leave a plant or small shrub where we can plant it in a suitable part of the adjoining soil where it will be a longer-lasting tribute that can be shared by all visitors to the garden.



Our hall

St John's Church Community Hall is extremely well used. It is a great place to have a party or other functions. It also acts as a polling station. It is a good size and shape with a spacious, well-equipped kitchen and is heated by radiators. There are double doors out onto a patio leading to a large play area with well-kept grass.

All sorts of functions are held in addition to the regular weekly events listed below.

The hall has benefitted from grant funding over the last twenty years which has helped to make it an attractive space.



The current regular usage is set out below.

Monday The Mothers' Union - 1st Monday in the month 2 - 4 pm

Wednesday Slimming World - 9 am

Thursday Slimming World - 5 pm and 6.30 pm

Friday Slimming World – 7.30 am and 9 am
Dandelion Girls Group - 4.30 pm - 5:30 pm

Saturday Children and Dads' Group ("Saturdads") - 10 am to 12 noon on the 1st Saturday of the month.

Our finances

Our annual financial objective is to breakeven on our General Fund, that means that regular income covers our regular expenditure. In this way we are operating in a sustainable way and living within our means. We have more or less achieved this in the past four years. We also aim to keep the recommended three months' coverage of payments in our General Fund.

Stewardship (and gift aid) is an important part of our income and accounts for approximately 53% of our receipts. We have a total of 45 households/individuals who are regular donors. Of those, 5 donate via our envelop collection, 25 donate via standing order and 15 via the Parish Giving Scheme. We do benefit from gift aid, and we are able to claim gift aid on 35 regular donors. We also take advantage of the small gift aid donation scheme.

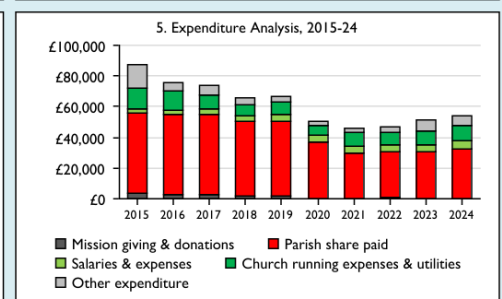
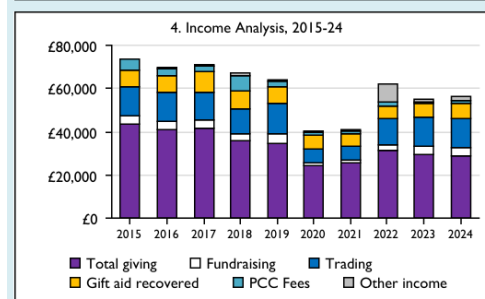
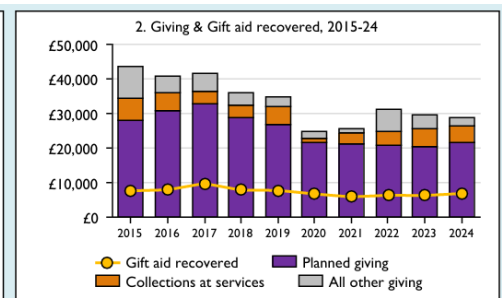
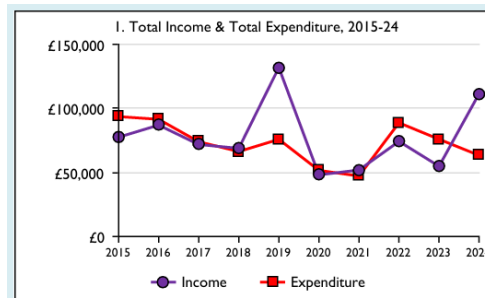
Cash, Sumup contactless, text collections from services and one-off donations generate 9%. However we are very much reliant on receipts from the rental of our church hall and other fund raising activities which together accounts for 36% of receipts. Our current Parish Share, is £31,920.

Over the last three years we have undertaken much needed repairs to the organ, the organ chamber, bellcote, repointing of church stonework, roof repairs and redecoration. The total capital expenditure amounted to £72,300. This has been financed by grants £19,700, insurance claim £7,500, use of a legacy £40,435 and the balance from fundraising.

We have a variety of small restricted funds. In recent years we have received two substantial legacies. Our monetary funds are approximately £90,000.

St John's pays the usual clergy expenses and in-line with the Church of England guidelines the duties which relate to Parish, Diocese and the wider Church of England mission. Travel costs are reimbursed at the defined Diocesan rate. As a resident incumbent in the vicarage, you would also be entitled to Council Tax, water charges, mobile and broadband, paid out of our operating budget.

There is a well-established Finance Team consisting of a Treasurer and Church Wardens. The Treasurer has been in post for 20 years, completing the annual reports and accounts, parish returns for the Diocese, Gift Aid claims, as well as setting and monitoring the budget, and providing bi-monthly PCC reports.



Your vicarage, an island of green in suburbia!

The vicarage is a 4 bedroom family home close to the church and hall.

It features EV charging point and security (cameras and doorbell).

It has a garden both at the front and the rear of the house and is suitable for accommodating families.

Newcastle and Northumberland are both easily accessible by bus as well as car. Newcastle International Airport is less than 3 miles away as well as the excellent train links to Edinburgh, London and the remainder of the country.



Our Priest we hope for...

- Teacher of faith
- Leader
- Imaginative approach to engaging with new estates
- Musical
- Background in fundraising
- Management of volunteers
- Digital (YouTube/Zoom/Facebook)
- Children and Young People - grow Messy Church
- Proficient administrator
- Good communicator (admin/parish as well as preaching)
- Ecumenical, deanery and civic links
- Help the church work towards net zero climate change

