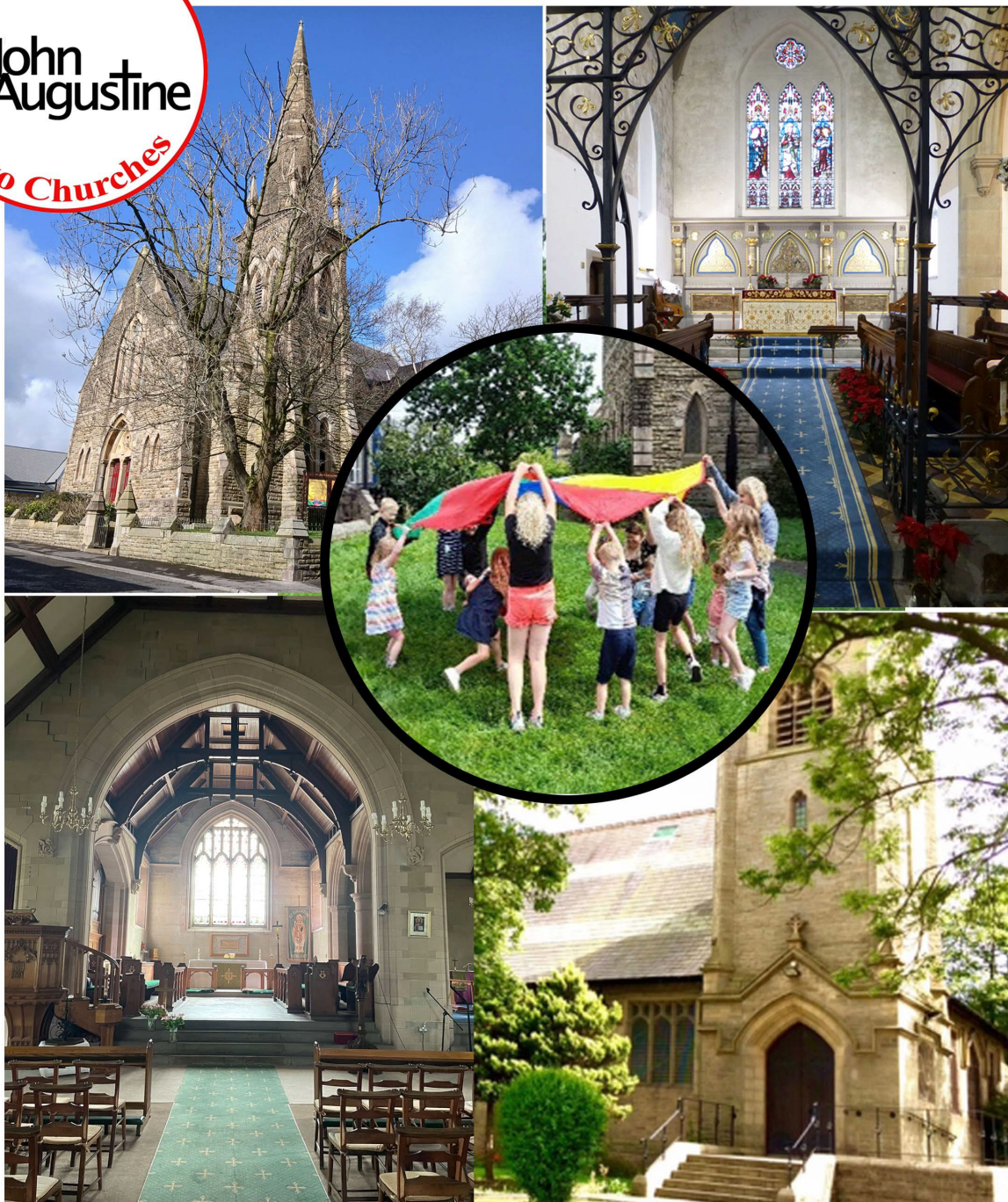


Accrington St. John with Huncoat St. Augustine Parish Profile



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1. Letter from the Bishop

Thank you for showing an interest in a post in the Diocese of Blackburn.

Our Diocese is passionate about the renewal of Parish life. We have a profound belief in the power of the Gospel to transform lives and communities and expresses a firm commitment to maintaining clergy numbers and investing in the mission of the local church. We therefore seek clergy with a personal faith fiery enough to make new disciples for Christ, with a sincere commitment to the Parish as the heart of the church's mission and with the resilience and courage to bring growth and renewal to local churches. We don't want superheroes. Rather we are seeking authentic, prayerful priests of all traditions who share our passion for confident proclamation and generous service.

What's more, you would be coming to the Diocese at a fascinating time of our Centenary in 2026 themed "All for Jesus". We are in the midst of a major process of listening to God and listening to our County as we discern where God is calling us next, a process that will result in a new strategic vision that will last until 2033, the 2000th anniversary of the Resurrection.

We have also recently been successful in obtaining a grant of £25.5m from the Diocesan Investment Programme run by the national church. This will enable us to:

- Offer a transformed pattern of ongoing training and support to clergy, including sabbatical leave as an expectation for all rather than a treat for the few
- Deploy 30 'Ignite' youth and children's workers to parishes around the Diocese
- Invest in urban areas through expanding the M:Power course for urban leaders, employing 18 Urban Pioneers and re-imagining Christian life in areas of particular challenge.
- Expand our Diocesan Renewal Programme which has led to an average of 6% growth in RWA in participating parishes.

We are a Diocese that is united in defying the declinist mindset that has taken hold of so much of Western European Christianity. Through a firm belief in the power of Jesus Christ to change lives combined with strong pastoral ministry and imaginative developments such as new local congregations, we are seeing growth in churches of all traditions. Strong relationships with our amazing family of 191 schools (95% of whom benefit from practising Christian Headteachers) provide another springboard for mission.

As a Diocese we do all we can to love and treasure our clergy. Our programme of Annual Conversations means that every licensed priest has a 90 minute conversation with a Bishop or an Archdeacon every year about their vocation, wellbeing and spiritual life.



*The Bishop of Blackburn
The Rt Revd Philip North*



*The Bishop of Lancaster
The Rt Revd Dr Jill Duff*



*The Bishop of Burnley
The Rt Revd Dr Joe Kennedy*

We have appointed an Assistant Archdeacon to advise on clergy wellbeing and we work hard to create networks that enable clergy to belong and find mutual support.

Those in their first incumbency are offered especially focused support. This includes participation in a two year Start of Ministry course, advice and care from a mentor and the oversight of our two outstanding Start of Ministry officers.

Lancashire has been described as “The World in One Diocese” and we can offer a vast diversity of parishes. We serve the most deprived communities in the United Kingdom on the Fylde coast and in East Lancashire as well as remote countryside. We are not immune from the particular challenges to ministry provided by an increasingly secular culture and a divided Church. But what brings us together is a profound and shared love of Jesus Christ and a passionate desire that all should know him, and in knowing him find life.

We really hope you enjoy reading this profile and that it provides all the information you need. If this particular post does not feel quite right, please do get in touch about other parishes in the Diocese that are vacant.

Most importantly of all, please be assured of our prayers as you discern the will of God for the next stage in your ministry.

2. Vision 2026 and Beyond

Vision 2026 had an agenda for growth agreed by the Blackburn Diocesan Synod in 2015. It challenged our parishes to be healthy churches that transformed their communities as we looked ahead to our diocesan centenary in 2026. It also laid out four ways in which this overarching goal could be achieved: Making Disciples, Being Witnesses, Growing Leaders and Prioritising Children and Young People.

In the Diocese of Blackburn we are inspired by confidence in the Gospel and are ambitious in our desire to make new disciples for Jesus Christ. We are committed to mutual flourishing, to maintaining clergy numbers and to investing in training for new curates.

In the last year, the Diocese has embarked on a major programme of listening to God and our communities as we discern when he is leading us next.

Our Centenary Prayer is:

**Heavenly Father, in our Centenary year
we rededicate ourselves and our Diocese to you.
Send the Holy Spirit to give us confidence in our witness,
generosity in our service, and love for our neighbours,
that your Church may be renewed and many come home to you,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

You can find out more about our Centenary year by visiting our website:

[All for Jesus: Centenary of Blackburn Diocese in 2026 | The Diocese of Blackburn](#)

3. Clergy Care and Wellbeing

- Clergy are invited to participate in an 8 year annual programme to keep ministry fresh and vital. This includes periods of sabbatical and regular retreats.
- We offer an Annual Conversation in which every licensed priest spends 90 mins with a Bishop or Archdeacon discussing ministry and wellbeing.
- Ongoing theological training and teaching is offered through our partnership with Emmanuel Theological College. Clergy receive free access to a theological library of 22,000 books and regular seminars.
- Annual Diocesan Clergy Study Days and an occasional clergy conference seek to provide opportunities both to keep ministry fresh and to build relationships with colleagues.
- We offer first incumbents a mentor and participation in our Start of Ministry Programme.
- All clergy are entitled to an uninterrupted rest period of 24 hours in each period of seven days and one additional rest period of 24 hours in each month, and in the remaining weeks of the month to take a rest day and a light day.
- We offer a Clergy Assistance Programme. More information about this can be found on our [website](#)
- We have a great property department, who will do their best to ensure your house works for you and your family and is well maintained.
- We have a beautiful diocesan retreat house in the grounds of a ruined Cistercian abbey, where clergy are welcome to have personal reading days for a modest charge (you can book in for lunch or bring your own).
- We encourage all parishes in vacancy to consider how they will 'pastor' and support their new priest. The diocese has an anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy.
- If you are looking for a spiritual director or a mentor we have an excellent Warden of Spiritual Direction and networks of people with whom we can put you in touch.
- We are always looking for ways for clergy to mix apart from work – including reading weeks, regular hospitality, a cricket team and a clergy walking group. Further suggestions are welcome.
- We offer free counselling to clergy and their families through the [Inter Diocesan Counselling Service](#) and our own Diocesan counsellor.
- Clergy Wellbeing is overseen by the Assistant Archdeacon for Clergy Wellbeing, Canon Neil Kelley. In addition our Dean of Women's Ministry, the Revd Lucie Lunn, offers support and care to female clergy in the Diocese.



Whalley Abbey Centre for Christian Discipleship and Prayer

Parish Information

4. Parish Context

Our parish is located in the Borough of Hyndburn. This is a diverse and historically rich area with a strong sense of identity and community pride. However, like many post-industrial towns in the Northwest, it also faces a number of social and economic challenges.

Population and Age

The population of the parish is 9,603, the largest majority age bracket being 45-69 (31%), followed by 30-44 (19.3%), 5-19 (19.1%), 70+ (12.4%), 20-29 (12.3%), 0-4 (5.8%)

Deprivation Ranking

The parish has a deprivation ranking of 755 (1 = most deprived & 12,134 = least deprived)

Ethnicity and Religion

The highest ethnicity of the parish identifies as 88.6% White and 9.3% Asian. 49.1% identify as Christian and 9.3% as Muslim with 35.6% reporting as having no religion.

Opportunities and Challenges

- **Economic hardship:** Parts of the parish fall within areas of significant deprivation, with high levels of unemployment and financial insecurity affecting many households.
- **Health and wellbeing:** There are concerns around mental health, isolation (particularly among older residents), and access to support services.
- **Generational disengagement:** While we have links with schools and some family groups, there is a noticeable gap in engagement with teenagers and young adults.
- **Digital divide:** Although we are developing our digital outreach, not all members of the community are online or confident with technology, which can limit communication and inclusion.

Under-Represented Groups

- **Young adults and teenagers:** Although there are small signs of growth there is currently limited engagement with this age group in the life of our churches.
- **Working-age adults:** Many in this group are not actively involved in church life, possibly due to working patterns and family commitments.

5. What is the PCC's Vision for the Future?

The PCC is currently on a journey of renewing its local vision alongside the emerging work of the **H4A – Hope for Accrington** - initiative (see +Joe's introductory note 2) and the forthcoming **Diocesan Vision 2033 – Joyful Followers of Jesus**.

Our most recent vision statement enshrines our hope that by 2030 we will continue to be:

“A church family in Accrington and Huncoat of all ages and backgrounds, joyfully worshipping and serving God in the Way of Jesus, empowered by the Spirit.”

This vision is built around the following key priorities:

1. **Heartfelt Worship** – Developing appealing, meaningful, inclusive, Spirit-led worship that draws people closer to God: supported by a parallel growth in opportunities for deepening engagement with prayer and scripture through a regular programme of informal and accessible gatherings.
2. **Serving our Neighbours** – Displaying words and deeds which at all times and in all places demonstrate our Christian values of loving God and neighbour. Providing a friendly face, a listening ear and a non-judgemental helping hand.
3. **Engaging with Families, Children and Young People** – Developing activities which are attractive to all ages in partnership with local church and community schools.
4. **Community Support** – Donating to charities such as the local Foodbank, and the Bishop's Harvest appeal. Sensitively signposting people to appropriate help and providing a prayerful presence for all.
5. **Safeguarding** – Ensuring our churches are safe places by following Diocesan guidelines, safely recruiting, training and supporting volunteers.
6. **Developing our Digital Presence** – Supporting our newly appointed Media and Communications Officer, in conjunction with the Parish Communications Team (including Incumbent and PSO), to develop attractive, accessible, appropriately regulated and regularly updated ACNY and Facebook information & events publicity.
7. **Recognising, Affirming & Encouraging Strengths and Gifts** – Developing every-member discipleship with an emphasis on teams to support the congregation on our journey of faith.

6. Worship, Prayer, Discipleship and Faith Formation

Sunday

We have a desire to grow together in faith through a mixed economy of traditional and creative eucharistic and non-eucharistic worship, which is accessible and meaningful for all.

Sung Eucharist (NB currently no regular organist or choir at either church)

9.30 at St John's **Week 2 & 4**

10.30 at St. Augustine's **Week 1 & 3**

Morning Praise (Service of the Word)

9.30 at St John's **Week 1 & 3**

10.30am at St Augustine's **Week 2 & 4**



5th Sunday of the month is a joint service alternating between both churches.

Regular Sunday attendance at each church averages around c20 adults and c4 children.

Midweek

- **Morning Prayer**

Monday - St. John's at 9.30

Tuesday - St. Augustine's at 9.30.

- **Holy Communion**

Wednesday - St John's at 10.30am

Thursday - St Augustine's at 9.30am



- Average weekday attendance at **St Augustine's** is 4 for **Morning Prayer** and 6 for **Holy Communion**.
- Average weekday attendance at **St. John's** averages 3 for **Morning Prayer** and 18 at **Holy Communion** with numbers often augmented by residents and carers from the nearby **Pennine View Care Home**.
- St John with St Augustine Primary School - **Whole-School Collective Worship at St John's Church**

Every Wednesday during term-time at 9.10am. Worship is led alternately by a member of staff and incumbent, often planned and in partnership with the **KS2 Faith Force!** Families are encouraged to attend, and refreshments are offered after the service.

Theological Tradition

Currently, in both churches, vestments – including chasuble - are worn; the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. Common Worship is used as the primary resource for liturgy.

The tradition is flexible along the Central/Liberal Catholic spectrum, with a warm inclusivity, affirming the ordained ministry of women.

Seasonal and Special Services

Alongside the annual cycle of major feasts and festivals special services focus on a mixture of local celebrations and commemorations e.g. the **Accrington Pals Memorial Service** in February each year, plus services based around a wide range of focussed themes e.g. **Bible Sunday, Safeguarding Sunday, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** etc.

Resources for Worship

Both churches have recently installed Wi-Fi and are exploring/experimenting with a whole range of resources for audio-visual and music presentation to enable increased accessibility and participation. There are willing teams of volunteers across both churches serving as lectors, intercessors, servers, stewards etc.

Prayer

In the variety of services/events during the week and in our Sunday worship we are exploring ways to deepen the prayer life of our parish. There is a team of intercessors at both churches and young people are encouraged to offer their prayers at Sunday all-age Morning Praise services and Wednesday's WoW! Parish Youth Group. Pre-school children are gently introduced to prayer at the close of Monday's Stay and Play session. On our weekly pew sheet are the names of people who have asked for prayers because of sickness or difficult life circumstances. We remember baptism anniversaries in our prayers and give thanks for the lives of those who have died and gone before us.

Discipleship and Faith Formation

We are keen to grow in our knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures and what it means to follow Jesus in our everyday life. We encourage people to explore the Christian faith through Bible Study, prayer and fellowship.

- Seasonal studies in small groups have, in recent years, followed courses developed by the Diocese. These have been presented in three different venues at different times of the week to make them accessible for everyone. Some have been led by the incumbent and others by the LLM.
- We are encouraged by a steady flow of candidates for Baptism and Confirmation

7. Groups for Children and Young People

Junior Church at St. John's

Junior Church takes place within the south-aisle and runs alongside the 9.30am service.

The children start at the front of church until the welcome and lighting of the Mission candles are lit, then they start their session of readings, story and crafts themed on the liturgy of the day. There is opportunity then at the end of the service before the final blessing to regroup at the front of church and show and discuss what they have been working on.

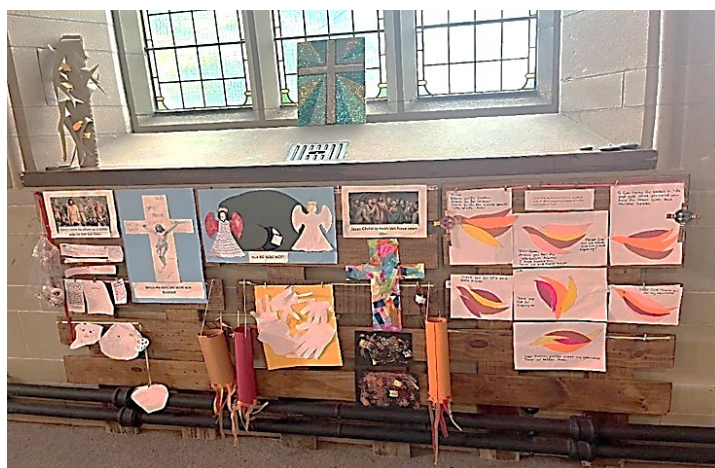
This year has seen a steady number of children attending Junior Church; numbers ranging from 3-7 children each week and age range from 4-16 years.

Resources used for planning the sessions are sourced from the Blackburn Diocese hub, **"Weekly @"** and more recently we have subscribed to using **Roots**, a magazine-style resource that follows the lectionary, and has ideas for intergenerational services as well as children's resources.

Once a month, Junior Church leads the All-Age **Morning Praise** service. Planned by the Junior Church leader, involvement on the day includes older children reading the lesson and prayers.

Last Christmas the children took part in a **Scratch Nativity** that the congregation had to participate in along with the younger children dressing up and the older ones doing the narrating.

Sunday School at St. Augustine's



Sunday School takes place at the back of the main body of the church during the 10.30 service. Teaching and activities are based on the liturgy of the day. Children enjoy coming to the front at the end of the service to show the congregation what they have done.

Between 2 and 8 children attend Sunday School. Their ages range from 3 to 13.

The sessions are planned using **'Weekly @'** - a resource on the Diocese of Blackburn website - and more recently **'Roots'**, both of which follow the lectionary and marry together the themes explored by the children in Sunday school and the adults in the main service as well as giving suggestions for **All-Age Morning Praise** services which the Sunday School helps lead once a month.

Even though there is a wide age-range attending Sunday School the children have become quite a close-knit group of friends. They show cooperation and patience with each other and have some great responses to tasks and activities!

Messy Church

Messy Church, mostly held at St. John's, follows seasonal themes and takes place six times a year in the school holidays and is for children of all ages. Incorporating worship songs, stories, crafts, games - and ending with a simple shared lunch - the sessions are facilitated by our Junior Church leader, incumbent, and a small team of helpers.



Numbers can vary anywhere between 6 up to 25 children. We usually cater for around 40, inclusive of parents/carers and helpers.

Utilising the **Messy Sessions** magazine and the **BRF Ministries** website, activities are adapted for the relevant age-range of children attending. Food activities are popular!

Fruitful-on-the-Street



Every Monday morning in term-time from 8.30am, come rain or shine, a small group from St. John's set up a hot-drinks station and fruit stall on the corner of the street adjacent to the school gates, offering refreshments and snacks to parents and children as they come to school. This has proved to be a successful way of building closer relationships with children and parents/carers, also giving the

opportunity to invite parents to join us for a simple breakfast which we serve in the vestry from 9.00am. It also allows us to promote any upcoming events in church that may be of interest, such as **Messy Church** and our recent joint school/church **Summer Fair & Family Fun Day**. A number of baptism requests have come through this ministry of hospitality and welcome.

We now have a small core of parents that join us for breakfast on a regular basis and who are gradually getting more actively involved with church-based events.

Members of the congregation attending the Monday service of **Morning Prayer** also join us for breakfast and participate in the general chat and banter. From time-to-time informal prayers are held around the breakfast table bringing the intentions of those gathered to God.

Stay and Play Toddler Group at St. Augustine's

Monday morning **Stay & Play** continues to flourish as a valued ministry within the life of the church. We are thankful for its ongoing success and for the welcoming, inclusive environment it provides to all who attend.

The group is attended by a diverse mix of parents, grandparents, and carers, reflecting a strong sense of community and mutual support. On average, around 10 children attend each session with their caregivers, and we are pleased that this number allows scope for the group to grow further while still maintaining its

warm and personal atmosphere. It is particularly encouraging to see meaningful connections forming across generations, with friendships developing naturally within a spirit of kindness and care.

Our weekly gatherings offer a safe and nurturing space for young children to play and learn, while adults benefit from companionship and conversation. The group also serves as an important point of contact with the wider community, offering hospitality and a gentle expression of the church's presence and values through play and prayer. As one caregiver shared, "I like the familiarity and friendliness. My granddaughter likes to come, she has made friends and loves the session at the end with Father Paul" (Pete, 'Grandpa').

The group is faithfully run by Alison, Lily, Linda and Jen, whose commitment, care, and enthusiasm make this ministry possible. Their dedication ensures that each session is welcoming, well-organised, and supportive for all who attend, and their contribution is greatly appreciated.

This contact with the wider community gives us an opportunity to encourage adults and caregivers to join other activities taking place in church and to join us in worship on other occasions.



WOW! Worship on Wednesday - Parish Youth Group

WOW! is open to all young people from across the parish and takes place at St. Augustine's on Wednesday evenings from 6.00pm. Originally aimed specifically at primary-aged children and their parents/carers, the group has now morphed (along with its original name, **Praise and Play**) into a Parish Youth Group - incorporating some of its original members who have progressed to Secondary School - for children from KS2 upwards.

Currently led by the incumbent and LLM the worship-theme for the evening is usually based on the lectionary readings from the previous Sunday. Beginning informally with traditional games - drafts, Jenga, snakes-and-ladders, pool, cards (to name but a few!) – these are followed by activities exploring the lectionary-based theme. These activities are usually followed by a food-based activity planned, resourced and led by parents on a rota basis, which, set-aside for consumption towards the close of the evening, is followed by a short act

of worship. Using a newly revised format this is mostly led by the young people who, eager to be involved, share their prayers for the needs of the world with confidence and sensitivity. Final refreshments, usually coordinated by parents, is a wonderful time for children and adults to interact as a mutually supportive community.

WOW! is healthily populated by, among others, children attending the local **Huncoat Community Primary School** with which St Augustine's has a strong link. A number of Confirmation candidates have been nurtured through the ministry of WOW!

Last Christmas both the young people and their parents performed a Nativity Play. Many friends and relatives of the families attended providing a welcome opportunity to catch up with members of the community.

Church Schools and Educational Links

St. John with St. Augustine CofE Primary School (VA) is adjacent to St John's Church and serves the whole parish. The incumbent is an ex-officio member of the Governing body. The previous incumbent served as Chair of Governors. Our recent Interim Vicar served for a short time as the RE Curriculum Governor working closely with the school RE Curriculum Coordinator and the KS2 Faith Force. He also delivered curriculum-based sessions both in school and church.

Huncoat CP School primarily serves the village of Huncoat.

Classes regularly visit St Augustine's church to explore RE curriculum-based themes. These are currently led and coordinated by the Parish LLM. There is currently no representation on the school Governing Body.

We have links with St. Christopher's CoE High School, where in the past, incumbents have served as chaplains. This connection provided a valuable bridge for young people and offered opportunities for pastoral support and spiritual development within the secondary school community.

Primary Schools in the Parish

- Huncoat Community Primary School
- St John with St Augustine C of E VA Primary School
- Accrington Peel Park Community Primary School

Secondary Schools (not in the parish)

- St Christopher's Church of England High School with sixth form.
- Accrington Academy with sixth form
- The Hollins High School

Further/Higher Education (not in the parish)

- Accrington and Rossendale College – A-levels, vocational courses, and adult learning;
- Burnley College – A larger college with excellent academic and technical programmes;
- University of Lancashire (Ulan) – Preston Campus, Blackburn Campus and Burnley Campus (Offering a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, these campuses are within easy reach and provide excellent opportunities for higher education and professional development.)

8. Lay Leadership and Participation

Lay Ministers

Currently we have...

- a Licensed Lay Minister (**LLM**) who, alongside currently serving as caretaker **PSO**, plays an active role in leading worship, supporting pastoral care, and nurturing the spiritual life of the parish.
- two Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs) who are involved in preparing and contributing to worship, sick-visiting, Home Communion, Nursing Home Communion & Informal Worship, Baptism coordination.

We encourage every-member-ministry and endeavour to find an opportunity for people to serve in any capacity that suits their gifts, at the time when they feel ready to contribute.

Mothers' Union



Our Mothers' Union has been long established within the parish, having been founded in 1948. This year we have the privilege of celebrating the 150th National Anniversary of the Mothers' Union with commemorative services held at St. Paul's Cathedral in June and at Blackburn Cathedral in August.

We currently have 19 members within our parish who meet once a month at St. John's Church.

We have a varied programme of events and speakers and enjoy a meal out at Christmas and during the summer.

We are fully committed to supporting the MU "Rise Up" campaign against domestic violence, for which we have received a Bronze Award.

We continue to raise funds for the MU Caravan which offers families in need the opportunity to take a break. We provide toiletry bags for the local hospital for those admitted in an emergency and we have supported our local Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Domestic Abuse Team with the provision of gifts at Christmas for the children of victim support families within the community to give to their mothers.

We continue to support MU projects and activities through our prayers and fundraising and in a bid to encourage new members and promote the work of the MU. We open some of our meetings to non-members.

Community and Fellowship Events

Some of our recent and upcoming events include:

- Café Concert – ***Younger than Springtime*** - Soprano and Organist/Pianist - St. John's 2nd May
- ***3rd Anniversary of King Charles' Coronation*** - Service & Celebration Lunch - St. John's 6th May
- ***Pentecost Songs of Praise*** with Blackburn Citadel Salvation Army Band – St. Augustine's 24th May
- Café Concert – ***Folk and Traditional Music*** - St. Augustine's 13th June
- ***Last Night of the Proms*** - East Lancs Concert Band – St. Augustine's 4th July
- Joint ***Summer Fair & Family Fun Day*** at St John's Church and School - 11th July
- St. Augustine's ***Patronal Festival & Mission Weekend*** 28th - 30th August
- ***Harvest Community Ceilidh*** – St. Augustine's - 10th October
- ***Seasonal Candlelit Folk/Traditional Music*** – St. Augustine's – 4th December
- ***Church, School & Community Carol Service*** - East Lancs Concert Band– St. John's – 17th December

9. Buildings and Finance

The parish is fortunate to have two beautiful and historically significant church buildings.

We have recently been pro-active in developing a comprehensive vision for the reordering of both churches - partly as a response to the **Hope for Accrington** initiative - in order to make them better fit-for-purpose as worship spaces and community hubs. With the active support of the diocesan **Buildings Team** and **Community Grants Officer** we hope that some of this vision can be realised.

St. Augustine's Church



St. Augustine's church is Grade 2 listed and the only place-of-worship in the village of Huncoat. Situated approximately one and a half miles from the centre of Accrington, Huncoat is home to a number of historically significant landmarks dating back to the Domesday Book.

The village has several distinct areas

- a former council estate of semi-detached homes, and more recently built low-rise flats near the church
- older traditional terraced housing and a fairly new estate of detached houses (including the vicarage) in the village

- A further area of 2,000 houses to be called **Huncoat Garden Village** is planned with land purchased and road plans set out. This will join Huncoat village and extend to the nearby motorway junction.
- Although not universally welcomed as a planned development it will provide the church with opportunity for further mission and outreach.

The church building lends itself to community events with flexible seating, basic kitchen area and disabled toilet. Although an external ramp provides good access there are, however, internal areas where accessibility is more limited. Occasionally used as a Polling Station, the church also regularly hosts the **Stay and Play Toddler Group**, **WoW! Parish Youth Group**, as well as concerts and special events. The **Lady Chapel** is used for smaller services.

Generally speaking, the church and external grounds - which includes a **Garden of Remembrance** along the south side of the church, adjacent to Mapleford Nursing Home (on the site of the original church hall) - are well maintained. The most recent **QI report** identified some areas of concern, some of which have been addressed, namely, window grills, outside security lighting and new thermostats. Some roof repairs still need to be undertaken (highlighted by a recent drone survey), plus repointing, emergency lighting and exit-signage. The boiler - though regularly serviced - is 40 years old and will need replacing at some point in the near future. Building problems which have been reported in the past - such as movement in the walls - are not currently causing concern. Last time this movement was measured only one of the 5 tabs had moved and that by less than 1 millimetre. This was not deemed to be of significance. The single church bell/bell housing has recently been safety checked and is now in regular use.

St John's Church is a large, balconied, Grade II listed building built between 1864 and 1870. Incorporating a more newly built chapel dedicated to the Accrington Pals, St John's



is a prominent and much-loved local landmark offering a spacious and welcoming environment for worship, community events and outreach.

In recent years the south aisle was reordered to create an open space that is regularly used for social and community use, the area being adjacent to the kitchen. The church is surrounded by grassed areas on all sides, is adjacent to the church primary school and can be accessed easily

via a side gate. The grounds of both school and church proved a successful asset at our joint **Summer Fair & Family Fun Day** held in July 2026.

There is a small **Garden of Remembrance** for the burial of ashes on the north side of the church.

Disabled access is via the back of church through the vestry. There are a number of barriers to free access within the building which need addressing.

Recent reports and surveys have revealed an outbreak of dry rot on the west wall below the gallery, but thankfully a further high-level survey on the interior roof space has confirmed that there is no evidence of dry rot in the roof timbers and that the outbreak is isolated to the area of the original outbreak.

Although regularly used for community events – including the vestry as local Polling Station - the church is in need of further reordering to make more flexible and usable spaces for community use and would benefit from a kitchen refit and redecoration.

General maintenance of the roof, lightning conductor, boiler, PAT testing, electrics, fire extinguishers, and organ are all undertaken annually.

More major works as suggested by the Quinquennial Report - such as repair work to the spire – are subject to successful grant applications. In the meantime, drone checks will show if there is any further deterioration of the mortar or opening of the joints.

Recent safety checks of the Bell and bell housing revealed significant issues necessitating restricting and securing access to the bell tower.

The Accrington Pals' Memorial Chapel

The chapel is a memorial to the men of the 11th (Service) Battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment, which was raised in 1914 in Accrington and the surrounding districts, and known as the Accrington Pals'. They trained in the town until 21st February 1915 when a farewell, valedictory service was held in St. John's. On the 1st July 1916 at the First Battle of the Somme 230 Pals were killed and 350 wounded in a space of 20 minutes having a huge impact on local families and the town.



The idea for the chapel came as a result of the research and book of the Pals by Bill Turner in collaboration with a former incumbent, The Revd Canon Dennis Crook, as he realised that there was no single memorial to the Accrington Pals'. As the Pals' used the church for their valedictory service it seemed appropriate that such a chapel should be located at St. John's. The chapel was dedicated on the 23rd February 1992 and every year since a service has been held on the Sunday nearest to the 21st February in honour of the Pals'. This is attended by service organisations and civic dignitaries from across Lancashire and beyond.

The chapel houses artefacts/memorabilia relating to the Pals', including the drum which was used to recruit men, and which accompanied them to Wales, Egypt and France.

Situated in the north transept under the organ pipework the chapel seats up to 34 people and is used on a regular basis for our midweek services. It provides an area within the church of great dignity, serenity and beauty.

As an historic/civic/spiritual resource the chapel is a place of pilgrimage, prayer and cultural capital, attracting visitors from far and wide.

Finance

Although each church has its own accounts, the Parish share is calculated on a Parish basis as one figure which we then split between the two churches as we feel each can pay.

Our full Parish Share for 2026 was **£62,389**, but as we are classed as a “Lower Income Community” we received a grant which is used to offset the total due, leaving us with 12 monthly instalments of £2,987 to pay.

Unfortunately, our income has in recent times reduced by approximately £10,000 as a parish and we find we are having to use our reserves to cover all maintenance costs.

Renegotiation of our Parish Share in 2024 and 2025 meant that we were able to meet our reduced assessment without falling into arrears. Once, again this year we have had to apply for a reduction in our Parish Share for 2026. Although we haven’t been granted the full amount we asked for, it is comparable to the reduction we received over the past two years which reduces the monthly payments. We are endeavouring to meet the reduced share. If we continue to pay at the current rate, we will have paid our parish share in full by the end of the year.

Recent social and hospitality events, although not specifically set up as fundraisers, have more than covered our expenses and given us a small additional income.

At St. John’s we hold two accounts, one general and one fundraising account that historically we have used for building repairs, general maintenance having been paid from the general account.

'We are part of the **Parish Giving Scheme** and have a number of regular givers who support the ministry of the church. We offer various ways to contribute financially through the PGS, standing orders, weekly envelopes, loose plate and the card machine (at St John's only). We are also exploring the introduction of **QR Code** as an additional option.

At St Augustine's we are looking towards having a card machine which we hope will increase giving at baptisms, weddings and other planned social events.

Our main monthly expenses are the parish share, insurance and the cost of gas for heating the church, plus all the other normal household expenses.

As a parish we haven't tithed any of our income over the past year but have held collections for **Christian Aid** and the **Sudan Appeal**. We support the local Food Bank with regular donations from the congregation. Additionally, we have a standing commitment to give a percentage of the annual **Gift Aid** return to selected charities.

We hold regular meetings to discuss our finances and report back to the PCC. We do take our financial position seriously and try hard to maintain good governance, whilst looking at ways to increase our income.

10. Vicarage

The vicarage is located in Huncoat, which is a quiet village on the edge of Accrington. It sits within a modern family estate, offering a peaceful and attractive setting for clergy and their families. The property is a detached four-bedroom house with a double garage. There are two en-suite shower rooms plus one family bathroom. Downstairs comprises a lounge, large kitchen, utility room, large conservatory currently being used as a dining room, toilet and



two further small rooms that can be used for study purposes. There is a large garden to the rear of the property and a small, paved garden area at the front, adjacent to the drive.

The vicarage is:

- A 5–10-minute walk from St Augustine's Church;
- A 7-minute drive from St John's Church;
- Surrounded by beautiful countryside and nature walks - ideal for relaxation and reflection;
- Close to a local park which is perfect for families and community engagement;
- Within a 1-minute walk of Huncoat railway station - offering easy links to Preston, Manchester, Leeds, Blackpool and York;
- Conveniently located near the M65 motorway - providing excellent road access to the wider region.

This combination of rural charm and strong transport links makes the vicarage an ideal base for ministry and family life.

Local Amenities

Huncoat offers a friendly village atmosphere with:

- A fish and chip shop;
- A pharmacy;
- A 24-hour petrol station and garage, providing fuel and basic supplies;
- Two pubs offering food and live entertainment, serving as popular social hubs for the community;
- Green spaces and walking routes;

- Quick access to Accrington and Burnley town centres for supermarkets, shops, and leisure facilities.

11. Who is God calling?

We are prayerfully seeking someone who will lead with warmth, vision, and a pastoral heart for people. The person God is calling to our parish will be someone who:

- is outgoing, enthusiastic, servant-hearted, and brings a good sense of humour to ministry;
- has a warm, engaging personality and is approachable;
- is a natural communicator who can connect with people of all ages and backgrounds;
- will work collaboratively with others to grow the churches in faith, number, and outreach; and
- is organised and forward-thinking and able to oversee and support the practical aspects of parish life with confidence and care.

Essential Attributes:

- A strong and compassionate leader who can inspire and guide others;
- Someone who is open to creative ways of generating support for our mission and ministry (including events and initiatives that bring people together);
- A person who is committed to community involvement and is visible in the life of the parish;
- A team player who values lay leadership and works well with volunteers and staff;
- A person of deep faith and prayer, rooted in the Gospel and open to the work of the Holy Spirit.
- A leader committed to building a Safer Church in partnership with the PSO and Diocesan Safeguarding Team
- A leader engaged with deanery and diocesan structures and partnerships; proactive in drawing on the resources and support offered centrally; excited about potential for new ways of working through the *Hope for Accrington* initiative.

Desirable Attributes:

- A passion for inclusive worship and accessible teaching;
- Confidence in using digital tools and social media for outreach and communication;
- A desire and ability to build on existing school and community links;

- Someone who enjoys hospitality and fellowship and will see our churches as places where relationships are nurtured and lives transformed.