

# DISLEY<sup>+</sup> PARISH

DIOCESE OF CHESTER

**St Mary the  
Virgin,  
Disley**



**St John the  
Divine  
Furness Vale**

## Parish Profile

# Welcome to our Parish Profile.

We have tried to be informative and to be honest!

We are not a dream parish, made up of vibrant disciples.

We are just 'normal', but we do aspire to be closer to the ideal!

## SHARING CHRIST WITH OTHERS



### Summary

The Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Disley with St John the Divine, Furness Vale is a semi-rural community on the fringe of the Peak District.

Its tradition is 'Open' Evangelical.

We seek an "outward-looking", bold, "people-person" who is grounded in prayer.

We wish to prosper our ecumenical links locally.

We invest in Young Families work by employing a Children and Families worker.

We offer:

- 2 churches in good condition
- A good Vicarage
- Congregations which include a good proportion of "disciples".

## **Aspirations for our new Vicar**

We have considered the list of qualities we want in our new Vicar, and have been tempted to make a list which the Archangel Gabriel might fit!

However, following consultation with our PCC and congregation, we would like to appoint someone who is:

1. An outward-looking person, keen to be involved in the community and to bring more people to know Christ, at whatever level is appropriate for them at the time.
2. A person who is not afraid to try new approaches to contact more people and/or deepen our faith. We recognise that some of these initiatives will not succeed, but we will try to be supportive and realistic.  
[Note our employment of a Children and Families Worker.]
3. A "people person". Having a good balance of tolerance, compassion, enthusiasm and a recognition of their own vulnerability and fallibility.
4. A prayerful and Spirit-filled person, with a pastoral heart.

### **Additional qualities which we would value are:**

5. For their own sanity, a sense of humour!
6. Good biblical knowledge.
7. Good communication skills.
8. A willingness to work with our fellow Christians in the Disley Churches Together Team and more widely.
9. An enthusiasm for the use of music in worship.

## The Parish:

### Geography



Disley is a large, semi-rural village with 6 working farms (both sheep and cattle) and 3 livery stables. The area is popular with tourists, particularly walkers and cyclists. There are several holiday cottages and guest houses in Disley.

All residential areas are only ten minutes walk from the countryside.

The majority of the built-up area is at or above the 600 ft. contour and is predominantly residential in character.



Firth) in the TV adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.

The eastern end abuts the High Peak,

The Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Disley, with St John the Divine, Furness Vale, is spread along the A6, a major arterial road and strategic route. It is situated on the southern flank of the Goyt valley and includes the whole of Lyme Park and surrounding lands, up to Lyme Handley and Pott Shrigley Parish boundary.



The western end of Disley abuts the south-eastern fringe of Stockport. At this point is the large National Trust property Lyme Park, location for the "wet shirt" event of Mr Darcy (Colin



with Kinder Scout and the start of the Pennine Way just a few miles away.

The church of St John the Divine, Furness Vale is in High Peak, Derbyshire, while St Mary the Virgin, Disley is in the County of East Cheshire. Both are in the Diocese of Chester.

The populations of the two parts of the parish are approximately 1500 and 4300. Economically, there is a large range of circumstances among the population, from decidedly well-off (properties in 7 figures) to economically challenged.

The overwhelming majority of the population is white and (nominally) Christian.

There are 3 "Good" Primary Schools in the Parish, including Disley, Newtown and Furness Vale. Our Children and Families worker is involved, to varying degrees, with all the schools.

There are two private Day Nursery Schools, and a committee-run Pre School is based on the Disley Primary School site. We also have a



Pastoral link with The High Peak School, a residential and day special school.

Secondary education is at Poynton High School for Disley pupils and at New Mills or Chapel-en-le-Frith for Furness Vale pupils. School buses take Disley pupils to the High School.

There is a wide selection of Independent schools within travelling distance.

The Parish has a significant percentage of elderly residents.

Disley village has many active groups ranging from Mother and Toddler groups through a local History Society, Arts, Bowls and WI, to Exercise classes, Probus and a Footpath Society (to name but a few). The local Horticultural Society organises a popular 'Show' annually which is held at the village Sports Club. There is a popular 18 hole Golf Club.

The facilities in Disley include: a High Street with a Co-op Supermarket (long opening hours), baker, butcher, pharmacy, Post Office, newsagent and a part-time bank. A variety of other retail businesses, Estate Agents, restaurants, take-aways and public houses are also centred on the High Street.

There is a Doctors' surgery, two dental practices, a physiotherapy practice and Podiatry practice.



There is a library and a busy Community Centre with a car park.

Public transport includes buses, mostly connecting to Stockport and to Buxton. A rail station is served by trains between Manchester and Buxton and a Trans-Pennine line leading to Sheffield can be

accessed at nearby New Mills or via Stockport. Trains between Manchester and London Euston call at Stockport and Macclesfield. There is a Community Bus, organised through the Parish Council.

The Peak Forest Canal runs through the Parish. There is easy access to Manchester airport by bus or car

Furness Vale is a small, semi-rural village, with varied social mix. It is significantly linear, built mostly on the south side of the A6. The village more naturally "faces" Whaley Bridge than Disley.



There is a Village School, Nursery and Community Centre and History Group, plus two village pubs.

## **Religious life of the community**

In addition to the Parish, there are three other Christian institutions in Disley: Baptist and Methodist churches and a long-established Quaker Meeting. RC Mass is celebrated by invitation at the Methodist Church.

Baptist church membership is quite good, but the Methodist and Anglican membership is mostly rather aged. The Quaker Meeting is alive, but also

rather aged, despite drawing from as far away as Buxton.



Disley Churches Together is supported by Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and RC churches and is really active and important. A number of joint projects operate, including a range of children's

work and the annual Mission week for the students of the Capernwray Bible College.

We have also held joint Alpha Courses and volunteers are regularly involved in 'Open the Book'.

There are no non-Christian places of worship and St John's is the only church in Furness Vale.

We support four charities and have an active Mission Committee which holds fundraising events and invites guest speakers to services. Our charities are: Tearfund, Church Pastoral Aid Society, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Church Mission Society, The Oasis Centre, Manchester and Chester ABC link with the diocese of Aru in DR Congo.

**tearfund**



**CHRISTIAN  
SOLIDARITY  
WORLDWIDE**  
VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

**CHURCH  
MISSION  
SOCIETY**



**the oasiscentre**  
caring for our community

## **Religious culture of the parish**

The culture of the churches is 'open' evangelical.

Service pattern: predominantly Eucharistic

### ***Sunday:***

08:00 BCP Holy Communion (when the main service is Morning Prayer)

09:30 at St John's

09:30 Family Service at St Mary's (see below)

11:00 at St Mary's

### ***Thursday***

10:30 (BCP) Holy Communion at St Mary's.

Our 9:30 service at St Mary's is a non-Eucharistic family service, led by our Children and Families worker with the help of a lay youth team. This is a recent addition which we are hoping will grow in congregational numbers as word spreads and young families take a more active part. Much thought and effort is being applied to develop this as a vibrant, fun service for all ages, but particularly for children and young families.

Messy Church is held at the Community Centre once a month and is well-attended but has not yet transferred to attendance at more formal services, other than Mothering Sunday, Harvest, Christingle and Crib Services. We are keen to see these aspects of church life develop and grow, with the active participation of our new incumbent.



Last year there were 23 Baptisms at St Mary's and 1 at St John's

9 Weddings at St Mary's and 1 at St John's

14 funerals at St Mary's, 1 at St John's and 3 at the Crematorium

Also, 1 baby blessing, 1 Confirmation and 1 marriage blessing at St Mary's.

Baptisms usually follow the late morning service and are very busy, well-attended events on which we would like to capitalise as part of our drive to grow and reach out to the community.

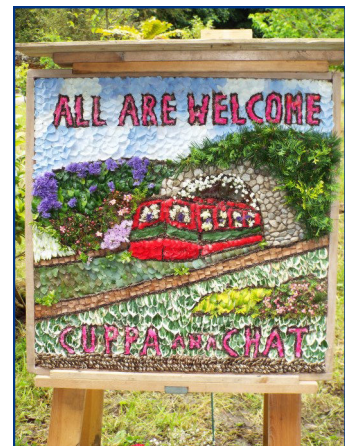
## **Events**

There are the usual seasonal events, including a walk of witness on Good Friday (Churches Together), Harvest Festival, Remembrance Service, which starts at the village war memorial then continues at the church and is supported by the Scouts, Guides and Parish Council. Carol and Toy services at Christmas plus several Christingle services including: in church, at the schools and in the Nursing homes. A Crib Service is held on Christmas Eve and a Nativity Service is held in the barn of a local farm. The Parish Council holds a Civic Sunday event which begins with a church service and is attended by local group representatives, our MP and local dignitaries. These services are usually well supported by the wider community.



For the last two years our Children and Families worker has jointly organised a Holiday Club with the Baptist Minister, which has been a great success. One volunteer said, "What better place could there be than serving God, working with children who are so especially in His heart?.....One word - wonderful!"

Less usual is the annual "Well Dressing" in June, located in the church garden, opened by Lord Newton (our Patron), with a Blessing of the Well service on Sunday afternoon and is well-attended by visitors from varying distances.



A long table lunch is provided monthly at the Community Centre in Disley and in the church hall at St John's. These lunches are run by church volunteers and are well-attended, mostly by the elderly of each village, who really appreciate the chance to get together for lunch and a chat.

The whole village comes together on the first Friday of December for the annual 'Tree Lighting' event, organised by the Parish Council and supported by local shops and traders. This is enormously popular and very well-attended, with many residents stating that they would like more, similar events throughout the year. Currently, the church participates in the carol singing on the village green, alongside St Mary's Junior Singers, the Community choir and Disley School choir. We have an opportunity to develop this and become more involved.

## **Our Church Buildings**

### **St Mary's**

St Mary's is on the hill overlooking the centre of Disley village and can be seen, lit up, from the main A6. There is a steepish, cobbled path from the Lych Gate (Grade 2 listed) in the centre of the village and a longer car access to the car park via Red Lane.

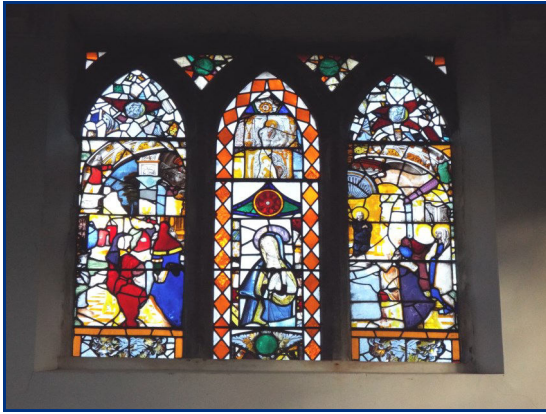


The Vicarage is located on a quiet country lane close to the church.

It was built in 1992 and is a delightful 5 bedroom house with a manageable garden and double garage. The Vicar's study is accessible without the

need to enter the family part of the house.

The church building is Grade 2\* listed, dates from 1524 and is of conventional form with side-aisles and galleries.



We have recently restored the beautiful stained glass windows. There is bell tower with a peal of 6 bells and a small, but enthusiastic band of bell-ringers. The church has Victorian furnishings (pews) and a carved stone pulpit with marble columns.

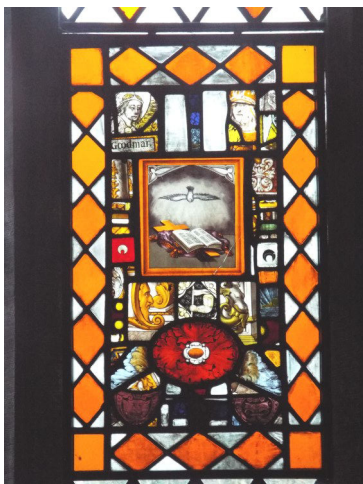
There is a listed, Renn organ, which is one of only 8 surviving, and which allows us to attract excellent visiting organists for Sunday services, weddings and special events. There is also a chancel step electronic piano. A digital projector and screen allow service content to be displayed (Power-point). Sound re-enforcement and a mixing desk are also installed.



The narthex provides a simple servery, meeting and fellowship space and two toilets (one disabled). The Vestry has been refurbished and is used for both Sunday and weekday activities (esp. children).

St Mary's has extensive graveyards divided into four fields with arrangements for internment of ashes and some graves which can be 'recycled'. The graveyard also contains 6 war graves from WW1 and 3 from WW2 as well as the Legh family tombs.

The church has recently had major works to restore the side aisle roofs and stained glass windows.



Inevitably, the latest quinquennial identified a number of defects, but there are few which are strictly urgent, even if they are desirable. Since the sale of the Schoolrooms, (see later under Finance) some improvements are being discussed, these include: lighting, especially the chancel, heating and internal re-ordering.

## **Social Activity**

Coffee is served after services and we use many occasions as an excuse to hold a "bring and share" lunch.

There are three home fellowship/Bible study groups.

A new group has been established with the title 'Grumpy Old Men'. This is for men both inside and outside the church family. The group meets on the first Friday of each month and is an opportunity for men to engage in conversation and fellowship in convivial surroundings.

The Knit & Natter group meet monthly and provide Prayer blankets for every child who is Baptised as well as festive knits and knitting for Stepping Hill Hospital.

St Mary's Tots is a busy toddler group in Disley Community Centre.

St Mary's Junior Singers is a thriving youth choir which meets each week.

'Lighthouse' is a developing children's group run by our Children and Families worker. There is also a newly-established Mums' group.

Coffee Mornings are held several times a year in the Community Centre and are well supported by the village.

## **St John's**

St John's church is located on the A6 in Furness Vale. It is a large Victorian stone-built structure with an open plan and a raised Sanctuary. It has a good pipe organ and is furnished with chairs.



Under the worship space is a large hall with a stage and a kitchen (in need of improvement) which is popular as a community venue for Mums and Tots and a monthly lunch (both Church-driven), The Girls Friendly Society, Alcoholics Anonymous, a brass band, and a Country Dance group.

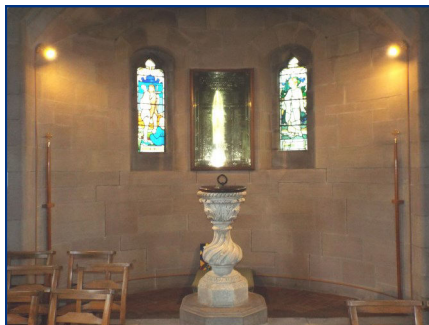
In addition, a monthly, child-friendly service (Puppets and Praise) is being developed, as an alternative to the usual 9:30 ceremony. This is instead of Messy Church, which has been running for a number of years on a Saturday. It is being led by the Lay Reader. The young family members and talented parishioners have assumed responsibility for the puppet presentations and a craft table, there is an average attendance of 12+.

We provide daytime Christingle Services for Newtown and Furness Vale Schools plus Bridgemont and Furness Vale Nursery Schools and our Tots Group.

The Church is always full for the Christmas Eve Carol Service at 18:30. The Village turns out in significant numbers for special services such as the Church's Centenary Celebration.

In addition to the Sunday Service there is a regular Fellowship Group and Prayer Meeting. Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals take place at the Church on a regular but infrequent basis.

It would be fair to say that St John's feels the need for nurture and growth more urgently than St Mary's, largely due to the small congregation.



## **Lay support**



A Children and Families Worker has been in post since 2016. We have recently increased her hours to 37.5 hours per week and have extended her contract until March 2020. She is a great asset and is having a positive effect within the Parish. Inevitably, she puts in far more time than her contract states.

St Mary's has three Licensed Pastoral Workers. St John's has three Readers, two of whom are not currently active for health reasons.

A member of the congregation at St John's is chaplain to the canal-boat community. Please note that John Owens (Reader) will leave with his wife, our current Vicar (see current factsheet).

## **Finance**

We have recently been obliged to sell our remaining asset, a two-storey church hall in the village centre (The Schoolrooms). There is on-going discussion about how best to spend this money in our bid to grow our church and bring more people to Christ.

Income from giving is insufficient to cover outgoings, though a recent giving initiative has narrowed the gap somewhat. St John's show a small surplus of income over expenditure, though it is also fair to point out that St John's contribution to the Parish share is less than proportionate to their ASA.

## **Administrative burdens**

At present, the vicar prepares a PowerPoint presentation for the Sunday Service.

Weekly notice sheets are produced by our volunteer Parish Administrator, who also minutes PCC and Executive committee meetings alongside other necessary secretarial requirements.

Our Bi-monthly 'In Touch' magazine is also published by a volunteer.

We do not have any paid administrative help.