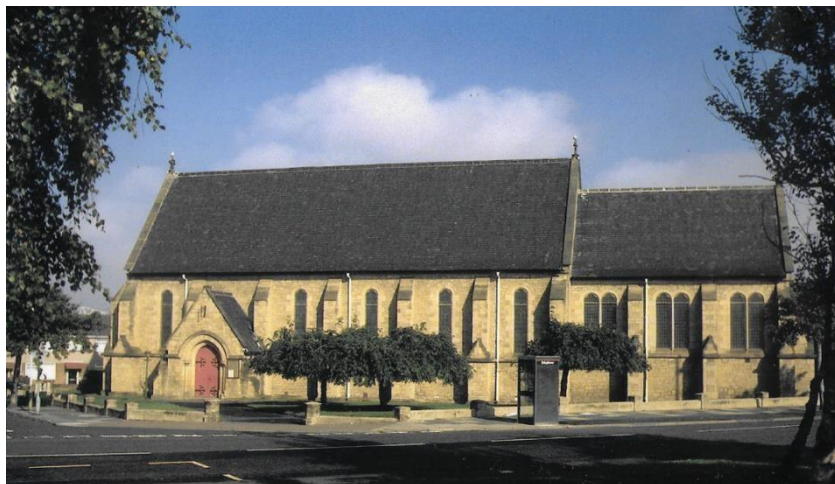


The Parish of St Cuthbert & St Oswald, Hebburn
Parish Profile, Spring 2024



Blessing our communities in Jesus name for the transformation of all..

Welcome to the Parish!

We are looking forward to welcoming and supporting a new priest who will work with us in aiming to fulfil the Diocesan priorities of ***Energising Growth, Caring for God's Creation, Engaging with Children, Youth, Young Adults*** and ***Challenging Poverty*** and to realise our local sense of God's call to 'to share God's love through active mission with young and old'.

We are hoping to find someone who can nurture and encourage our church in mission, who will help us to develop our existing links with local schools and help us to both renew and strengthen our commitment to the young, to families, indeed to people of all ages.

We are looking and praying for a mission priest who will help us to build on our existing ecumenical links and extend our work in this community in social action, community engagement, prayer and evangelism.

We look forward to meeting you and working together to make the love of Christ known to everyone in our parish.



Our Diocesan Vision - An introduction from Bishop Sarah

This is an exciting time to be exploring joining the Diocesan family in Durham Diocese. We are on the cusp of a fresh chapter in our mission and ministry together. We are currently discerning with the National Church who will be the next Bishop of Durham, called to lead as we seek to make real our vision for the transformation we so desire across our Diocese. We are deeply encouraged by the award this year of significant national funding, demonstrating real confidence in our vision. *You can read the [Diocesan Statement of Needs here...](#)*

Our strategy for transformation and missional growth ('Called to Fruitfulness') is an opportunity and invitation for each of our parishes to step out in faith together, responding practically to our priorities to **Challenge Poverty, Energise Growth, Care for God's Creation** and **Engage with Children, Youth and Young Adults**. Making this a reality it will look different in every community. In some places it will come about in collaboration with others. Nobody is expected to do everything immediately or alone, but we are all invited and expected to find ways to respond relevantly.

In Hebburn this feels particularly relevant. We sense the importance of **Energising Growth** – in discipleship and in the number of people served by and engaging in the life of our churches. We also sense the importance of **Challenging Poverty, Engaging with Children and Young People** and **Caring for God's Creation** in an area with lots of families, with some significant pockets of poverty, and with deeply rooted communities that still look to, and are open to, the local church.

In praying for a new Priest for St Cuthbert's and St Oswald's we are looking for someone excited by and wanting to be part of this vision and new future. Together we pray hopefully

Loving God, guiding the people of Durham Diocese faithfully through the years:

*We thank you for saints who have marked our path,
young and old, known and unknown, from all places and in all walks of life.*

Help us to find your way in our generation:

transformed by your truth, sharing your life, blessing our communities.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen

We look forward to meeting together and sharing in this with you.

In Christ,

+Sarah
Bishop of Jarrow
Acting Bishop of Durham



St Oswald's and St Cuthbert's Hebburn - Our Context.

Situated close to the banks of the world famous River Tyne, both St Oswald's and St Cuthbert's have deep roots in a community that was historically at the forefront of the industrial revolution.

Today, as the heavy industries of coal mining and ship building have faded, our region is undergoing significant change, with ongoing regeneration over recent years introducing new employment opportunities and the fabric of the parish changing as new social and private housing emerges in an area earmarked for further house building and development.

Smaller industrial units have replaced the former collieries and shipyards as the whole town of Hebburn undergoes a programme transformation including a new library, leisure, sports and retail facilities.

A short drive or ride by bus or metro lie the cities of Newcastle and Sunderland, both significant regional centres, home to three internationally recognised Universities, the Metro Centre, top tier football teams and cultural resources that include the Sage, the Baltic Art Museum and Sunderland Glass centre.

Still battling deprivation, South Tyneside is an area in transition. Major business including Nissan and an emerging clean-energy sector provide new opportunities for employment, but poverty remains a challenge with South Tyneside ranking in 26th place in the National Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2019.

With a deep Christian heritage that tracks back directly to the ministry of Bede, Hild, Aidan and Cuthbert, our Parish and Diocese remain committed to serving the people of this community with the good news of Jesus, committed to Blessing our communities in Jesus' name for the transformation of all.

As you read this introduction to our parish we are praying that you will hear the call of God and join us in God's mission to this special place.

Our Churches

St Cuthbert's and St Oswald's churches straddle the two adjacent communities of Jarrow and Hebburn.

Serving Hebburn, St Cuthbert's lies close to Hebburn's shopping centre, with its own metro station, medical centre, a number of schools, serving a growing population.

Situated just over a mile away, St Oswald's Church is closer to Jarrow (famous as the home of the Venerable Bede and the Jarrow Crusade) and is linked to St Oswald's C of E Aided Primary School (next door to the Church) which offers a natural point of community engagement and mission.

Our Buildings

The PCC is responsible for the upkeep of three buildings: both churches and St Oswald's church hall.

St Cuthbert's was built in 1875, walls being constructed of coursed sandstone. The steeply pitched roofs over the Nave, Chancel and Organ chamber are covered with Welsh slates, as is the slightly lower roof over the vestry.

It is in reasonably good condition, though the most recent Quinquennial report did highlight several issues which need attention. Fortunately, the majority of these are not urgent and the most pressing are being addressed.

The interior features a long Nave with three stained glass windows to the rear and at the front a step up to Chancel containing choir stalls and High Altar. Behind the organ is the vestry and a small passageway leading off to a toilet and a small scullery.



The church stands in a small, grassed church yard with a vicarage on an adjacent plot. The vicarage is currently rented out by the diocese and is not the financial responsibility of the PCC.

Originally built as a Sunday School, the church hall, (now known as the Hedley Community Hall) was renovated 13 years ago by the PCC to provide a new entrance, modern toilet facilities, kitchen and office accommodation. Well used by groups of all ages (and some private functions) the hall is now financially independent of the church with members from the PCC acting as Managing Trustees, and provides a valued resource for serving our community.



St. Oswald's church was completed in 1883, situated in an area once known as Hebburn Colliery, and was the home of the local colliery until 1932; the name stuck until more recent times when new developments have largely eradicated the evidence of the former industry.

It is a brick building with stone dressings, in the Gothic style with three aisles. The roof is tiled and has a small spire tower at the chancel end of the building.



In need of some repairs, some remedial has already been undertaken to repair the Spire, (following storm damage) and to lower the roof; a small grant towards the roof repair cost was awarded by the National Churches Trust and the Durham Diocese Church Building Fund. Internally there has been some plasterwork repairs due to damage by water leaking in from the roof.

Inside, the church benefits from one priest vestry and one choir vestry, a series of stained-glass windows and having pews which are not fixed in position which can be moved to provide a flexible space for hosting different events. Recently updated, toilets and kitchen facilities are available in the church hall (immediately adjacent to the church).

St Oswald's also has a Vicarage located next to the church, in its own grounds, which is presently used by the Diocese to house a Curate.



Regular lettings cover the costs of the hall, which is used daily by a children's breakfast and after school club and two evenings a week, for band rehearsals, in addition to other monthly events run by the Off Key Band and Art Adventures in addition to church events (including parties, tea/coffee and biscuits after Sunday worship and other social events, particularly those hosted by the parish Partnership for Missional Church team).



The School

Next to the church on a separate site is St Oswald's C of E Voluntary Aided Primary school with whom the church has long standing and close links. Previous incumbents have been ex-officio members of the school Board of Governors.

Schools' engagement is an important element of our Diocesan vision and strategy, which includes support for any church wanting to develop schools' ministry and mission. A team of enthusiastic specialist advisors based at Cuthbert House are available to help any incumbent or PCC looking to develop schools, children or youth ministry.



Our Services

Throughout present vacancy we have been served faithfully by a number of retired clergy, clergy from neighbouring parishes, along with our own ordinand (John Fay). When no priest has been available one of the churchwardens leads us in a Service of the Word.

Our congregation are supportive and keen to engage with regularly reading lessons, leading prayers of intercession and assisting with communion. Music is provided by our organist, with baptisms held during Sunday Eucharists. As new building progresses in the surrounding area we are hopeful of extending this and building on these connections to develop a Children's ministry.

In addition to weekly Sunday Eucharists (which alternate between St Cuthbert's and St Oswald's) we have continued to celebrate each of the major festivals during the vacancy and host a Christmas Eve service in St Oswald's and Christmas morning service in St Cuthbert's.

Our church worship is traditional and centred around the Eucharist with vestments worn for all liturgical services. Based on Common Worship we have printed service booklets for each season and for baptisms.

As well as baptisms, weddings and funerals, our PMC regularly provide Home Communion to the house bound in our area to those who request it. They also provide communion at a local care home and have encouraged and shared services held by the adjacent primary school.

Our People

We have currently 63 members on our electoral roll; 10 PCC members including 2 churchwardens; a team of 4 who still continue the work begun on the PMC journey and one representative on the Deanery Synod.

Most of our people attend worship at both churches with a few unable to do so on account of transport or mobility issues.



Ecumenical

St Oswald's and St Cuthbert's are actively involved in the local Churches Together group which includes 3 Anglican, 2 Catholic, 1 Independent Methodist and 1 Methodist church. From March to December, the first Sunday of the month sees a joint service at 5:30pm rotated across the 8 churches. Joint services are also held before Christmas and on Good Friday, both in the local shopping centre and an additional one held jointly during the summer.

Charities & Mission

In spite of the financial impact of the pandemic we continue to support several charities including Samaritans Purse (Shoebox appeal), the Children's Society and a local charity ('Happy at Home').

Our PMC team have held a few concerts involving a local band as part of their mission, inviting vulnerable and isolated people from the local community. They have also been involved in an initiative to help the homeless in South Tyneside by filling bags, made at a local prison from recycled prison uniforms, with toiletries, hats, gloves, socks etc.

A small team provide a communion service in a local care home once a month and attend services in the primary school. Last year we ran confirmation classes and confirmed four new communicants.

Our Finances

Whilst maintaining two church buildings is a challenge, St Oswald's and St Cuthbert's are able to draw on the support of a small recent legacy, fundraising and a body of regular givers (mostly by standing order,) a committed Treasurer, and a positive relationship with the Diocesan generous giving team who have provided advice, support and training. The PCC continues to monitor its accounts and processes carefully and has recently rationalised all its accounts into one account with Barclays for simplicity.

Recent (an imminent) building work includes -

- Pointing repairs to St Cuthbert's church (£5100) towards which we received a grant of £510 from the Diocese.
- £1170 for internal repairs at St Oswald's (following water damage) met by the parish.
- Repairs to St Oswald's roof and guttering have been completed. Covered in part by 2 grants

Currently we are not running a maintenance schedule or a reserves policy, but more reacting to situations as and when they arise.

St Oswald's and St Cuthbert's remain committed to paying Parish Share, albeit at a reduced rate of £8000 per annum (half of Guided Pledge).

A slowly dwindling, older congregation is a challenge for our finances. We have recently taken the advice of Paul Childs (Parish Giving Advisor) and now have a digital card reader, since it appears fewer and fewer people carry cash, particularly those attending baptisms. We have it on a 6-month trial period to see if money raised in this way outweighs the costs involved.

Our Vicar

With our small (but dedicated!) PCC and modest congregation, our congregations remain committed to being a Christian presence in our communities and have continued to find creative ways to sustain worship and mission throughout the pandemic and a challenging vacancy. Engagement with the **Partnership for Missional church** steering team has been valuable in helping us understand our challenges and our community and helped us to refine our missional vision to:

'share God's love through active mission with young and old'.

The PCC have endorsed this and have some creative ideas about how this might be outworked:

- In the church school, with which we have maintained good links.
- By engaging with young families through baptism
- In partnership with local community groups and care homes
- With regard to the amount of new housing being built as an open invitation for mission.

We would welcome someone who has strong collaborative skills, vision and enthusiasm who could lead us forward in realising this.

We need guidance on how to best explore and develop our ideas and how to share our faith outside the context of church services and deepen our missional discipleship.

Hebburn is a growing town, with lots of new developments housing young families. We believe that with the right leadership and the power of hope and prayer that the Parish of St Cuthbert and St Oswald may share that growth.

Further information

Further information about our churches is available on our Facebook page, with details of services and contact numbers available on *A Church Near You*.

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/StCuthbertandStOswaldParishHebburn>
- St Oswald's: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/13703/>
- St Cuthbert's: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/13701/>

Enquiries about this post can be directed to the **Archdeacon of Sunderland**, The Ven. Bob Cooper at Archdeacon.of.Sunderland@durham.anglican.org

Information about our **Diocese** is available at <https://durhamdiocese.org/>