

Parish Profile

**Priest-in-Charge,
St Aidan and St Columba,
Hartlepool**

**within the Central Hartlepool
Group Ministry (CHGM)**



Our Diocesan Vision - an introduction from Bishop Paul

At the end of 2019 we gathered representatives from every parish, including St Aidan's and St Columba's, St Luke's, and All Saints, for ***The Waymark Conference***, to pray, talk, share stories and reflect on how we might best respond to God's call to us to be his Church. We reflected on our learning from our previous vision and priorities. We agreed to maintain our Vision:

***'From the Tyne to the Tees and the Dales to the Sea,
blessing our communities in Jesus' name for the transformation of us all.'***

Through prayer, conversation and sharing our stories we began to discern maintaining, but sharpening, our three priorities. Through the voice of our children and young people we discerned that we should add a fourth, Caring for God's Creation. This was in response to the question, *'How shall we focus our energies, prayers and resources over the next five years?'* Together we sensed this is **God's** call on us.



The result is our missional strategy which we describe as ***Renewing Pilgrimage*** – an opportunity and invitation for each of our parishes to step out in faith together, responding practically to the call to ***Challenge Poverty, Energise Growth, Care for God's Creation*** and ***Engage with Children, Youth and Young Adults***.

In 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 St Aidan's and St Columba's and the whole Central Hartlepool Group Ministry these priorities are clearly highly relevant:

Energising Growth: the churches of the group are all very active, but rely on the leadership and action of too small a pool of key congregation members – and we simply want others to come to see that the Good News of Jesus is good! Growth in discipleship is also important here, as everywhere in the diocese.

Challenging Poverty: the CHGM churches, and especially St Aidan's, serve in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the diocese. Initiatives like St Aidan's kitchen and the projects begun by the Community of Hope show the compassion and love of God's people for their community. They will value the encouragement of the new Priest-in-Charge in this work.

Engaging with Children and Young People is an urgent priority across the diocese. Work with schools as well as making families, children and young people welcome in church is of critical importance now

The needs for us be **Caring for God's Creation** is abundantly clear in the news day by day. Forest Church at St Aidan's is a hugely creative way of enabling people with a love and concern for creation connect with God – but there is more to do in this area in these as in all our parishes.

In praying for a new Priest for these St Aidan's and St Columba's and the Group we are looking for someone excited by and wanting to be part of this vision. The **Waymark Prayer** sums up this hope:

*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 you and sharing in this work with you.

In Christ,

+Paul

Bishop of Durham



Central Hartlepool Group

One Family, Three Parishes,
Growing the Kingdom.

The three parishes in the Central Hartlepool Group are All Saints Stranton, St Aidan and St Columba and St. Lukes. They are on a journey with God and with one another, 'Growing the Kingdom'.

United by their commitment to their local communities, with a strong calling to loving service, together they represent and celebrate the rich diversity of the Anglican Church in their prayer, worship and teaching. The three parishes are committed to forming one family and have a clear aim to strengthen relationships that are based on trust, respect and integrity.

The two stipendiary clergy in this informal group share overall responsibility equally and are supported by retired self-supporting clergy and lay readers. One post is filled by Revd John Bell who is licensed as Priest in Charge at All Saints Stranton and St Luke's but with a responsibility also for St. Aidan and St Columba within the group. The PCCs are clear that the two priests are of equal status, and they are each licenced appropriately to serve all three parishes. The informal Group Council, with representatives from each PCC (and chaired in rotation by a lay person) is a collaborative space where individual views are respected and decisions reached by consensus. There is no desire or urgency to introduce more formal structures, but every incentive to develop the Council as the basis of reaching a deepened and shared understanding of the parts that form the whole and a place where priorities, demands and resources can be negotiated and shared with respect and grace.

After a long period of conversation and consultation, the Group came together in 2020 and the clergy in post at that time worked together to establish new relationships, celebrate the diversity of the group and help to set the vision for the future. Hartlepool Communities of Hope was also formed in 2020, with the parishes as equal partners. The incumbent of St Aidan's and St Columba's left in the summer of 2021 and the incumbent of All Saints' Stranton and of St Luke's retired at the end of June 2022. The PCCs are strong, with appropriate officers, clarity about their governance role, 'good enough' finances (there are challenges)

and a clear appreciation of the needs, uses and challenges of their buildings. Each parish has an effective part time paid administrator and budgets support a priority for mission.

Many tasks are already delegated or shared and the PCCs are committed to further development of shared ministries. The PCCs have an increasingly realistic view of their leadership responsibilities, and recognise that the new priest will have an impossible task without their help, which will include realistic negotiation of priorities, require new ways of working, generosity of spirit, and grounding in prayer.

The PCCs are committed to the wellbeing of their clergy, including encouragement to take time for themselves and family needs, with proper holidays and days off. The new priest of St Aidan's and St Columba's will need skills of discernment to negotiate and determine priorities, and to encourage and resource the ministries of others. They will need to be sensitive and adaptable to leading and worshipping within different traditions, affirming, supporting, strengthening, and deepening mutual esteem across the group.

The Group of Parishes is host to the "Hartlepool Communities of Hope" project, one of several parish-based initiatives supported by the Diocese of Durham under the umbrella of "Growing Hope", and funded nationally by the Church Commissioners through an allocation of Strategic Development Fund (SDF) funding. The Hartlepool Project is underpinned by prayer, has its own "ring fenced" budget (2022 - £95,000) for staff and running costs, to support various project initiatives aimed at creating new and sustainable worshipping communities and addressing issues of poverty and deprivation in central Hartlepool. It is working with schools, families and children, the homeless, and local community groups. Its office base is in St Columba's Church. The two stipendiary clergy in the Group are members of the project's Steering Group, which also has representation from all three parishes.

The next five years (at least) will be a time of change for the parishes and their priests; exciting opportunities that require attention to the foundations of worship and mission, and the development of the leaders in every area. The parishes are excited by the possibilities and ready for the challenges.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

At Aidan's and Columba's and the group as a whole is seeking a priest in charge for a mainstream Anglican Church of the liberal catholic traditions We are praying that the successful candidate:

- is grounded in prayer, open to and comfortable with the breadth of Churchmanship across the group and within the parishes.
- is an energetic and motivational leader with a collaborative style who will drive forward the faith and multiple strands of mission, being supportive of the outreach of the churches within the group, the schools and the wider community.
- will be an effective preacher.
- will further the close relationships developed with the schools, engaging with families, children and young people, encouraging them to grow in faith.
- will encourage, inspire and stretch people to grow spiritually in an all-inclusive ministry to encourage and empower others to lead or take more active parts.
- is concerned for the care of the congregations of all ages and who will support and develop pastoral care within the group.
- has excellent communication skills, being easily approachable, patient and a good listener.
- is well organised and will work closely with the existing clergy, churchwardens, parish administrators and PCCs in all aspects of the group.
- is willing and able to support training of ordinands and curates within the Group parishes.

St Aidan and St Columba, Hartlepool, Parish Profile



Hartlepool

The coastal town of Hartlepool is situated in the North East of England, a fantastic area of outstanding beauty, friendly people and vibrant towns and cities.

The North East is blessed with the historic city of Durham and is also home to the exciting city of Newcastle.

For those who like adventure, nature and exercise we have the 100-acre Summerhill Country Park, RSPB Saltholme and the Cleveland Hills, and many other countryside, coastal walks and cycle ways await. With excellent road, rail and air transport links, Hartlepool is very easily accessible.

Hartlepool is a proud town steeped in history and maritime heritage with a rich mix of the very old and ultra-modern areas and facilities.



The Headland area sometimes known as ‘Old Hartlepool’ was the original settlement, the new town of West Hartlepool was built during the Victorian era and surrounded the existing small parishes. The two boroughs merged in 1967 and today Hartlepool provides an enriching experience of the founding town with many historic buildings and traditions.

Hartlepool offers something for all, from the 500-berth marina with shops restaurants and Farmers Markets, a multi-screen cinema to 4 municipal parks, 3 golf courses, an award-winning beach, good health facilities and hospital, leisure and shopping centre, supermarkets, art gallery, a National League football club, rugby grounds, and the Town Hall Theatre.

The town has five secondary schools, two of which are church schools and 31 primary schools, 10 of which are church schools (Anglican and RC). There is also the Cleveland College of Art (recently extended), the College of Further Education (in a new building) which is affiliated to the University of Teesside. The Sixth Form College has links to the University of Sunderland. Hartlepool is a unitary authority in the ceremonial County of Durham.

Many of the working population travel by car along the A19 to Tyneside and Teesside for work. In the town the main employers are the Borough Council, the brewery and the nuclear power station. There are areas of manufacturing to the east of the main A689 through route. There are good rail links to the north and south and a new transport exchange has recently been opened adjacent to the railway station.

Tourism is a significant and a growing part of the local economy. Hartlepool hosted the Tall Ships Race in 2010 and again in 2023. The award-winning National Museum of the Royal Navy visitor attraction with the mighty British fighting ship the HMS Trincomalee.

The population of Hartlepool is around 90,900. The town has a small ethnic minority population of around 2%. The largest non-Christian group in the town is Muslim who have 2 centres of worship. Hartlepool has always had a strong community spirit and is more akin to a large village way of life rather than a town and the Central Hartlepool Group of Parishes embody this individually and together.

The Parish of St Aidan and Columba

The parish consists of the Belle Vue area, Foggy Furze, Rift House Estate and Longhill Industrial Estate. There are three junior schools in the parish (St. Aidan's C of E Voluntary Aided School, Kingsley Primary and Rift House Primary schools). The population of the parish is 11,568 and is the 564 deprived parish in the country. There is a mixture of densely populated terraced housing and semi-detached and detached housing in both public and private ownership.

The area around St. Aidan's Church is known as the Belle Vue area. This is situated near the town centre of Hartlepool. There remains some high-density housing around the main through road and shopping area. In addition, there have been some houses demolished and replaced with modern houses known as the Lakes Estate. New houses continue to be built. Within the area there is a doctors' surgery with associated pharmacy, a large sports and social club and also Queens Meadow home for the elderly. Moving west through the Belle Vue area there are many privately owned properties giving way to more community housing. St Aidan's Church of England primary school is situated within this area for the children of Belle Vue. Longhill Industrial Estate at the east of the parish has small factory units.



The remaining part of the parish is the Rift House Estate which was mainly built after the Second World War, it is made up of housing to cater for different size of families. Over the last few years new housing estates have and are being built within the parish. The children of Rift House are educated at Rift House and Kingsley Primary Schools. Various Council bungalows are available for senior citizens mostly with warden-controlled security. A number of sheltered accommodation units are also available; there is Lindisfarne Home for the Elderly and near to St. Columba's Church is St Columba's Court and Laurel Gardens.

There is a large Recreation Ground for football and cricket in Kingsley Avenue. Brierton Sports Complex has the facilities for many indoor and outdoor sports hall, gym and 3G pitch. Summerhill Visitors Centre sits in the far north of the parish and offers activities such as boulder climbing, quad biking, country walks, orienteering, archery, equestrian galas and a new purpose-built BMX/cycle track. The 100-acre site is an open-access free attraction which boasts annual events programmes and archaeological surveys. It covers what was a Romano-British village known as Catcote village which was unearthed by Tees Archaeology. Also in the parish is Stranton Cemetery which is the town's main cemetery and houses the only the crematorium.

Our Buildings

The parish is responsible for three buildings: St Aidan's Church is a Victorian Grade II listed building. St Columba's Centre is a twelve years old modern multifunctional church and community building. We also have a rented unit used as a food store for the St Aidan's Kitchen.

St. Aidan's Church

St. Aidan's Church is a listed Grade II building with a recent purpose-built community kitchen which stands in a prominent position in Hartlepool on one of the town's busiest junctions. It is a red brick Victorian building, designed in the early English style and was dedicated in 1890. The tower with eight bells was dedicated in 1911. The bells are rung regularly. There is a clock in the tower that is seen by the council as important to the town of Hartlepool to the extent they financially support its maintenance.

The organ is in original condition and over 100 years old. It is a three manual Opus 311 instrument made by the firm Peter Conacher of Huddersfield built in 1890. In 2010 the organ was awarded a historic organ certificate at Grade II* by The National Pipe Organ Register. The organ is played at almost all services.

There is a particularly beautiful, striking reredos. The stained-glass windows date between 1897 and 2016 and are mainly dedicated to former clergy and parishioners, and are of various styles reflecting the dates they were installed. The church houses four Regimental Colours for local armed service units that are no longer in existence. The Church grounds are not extensive; streets closely border the north, east and west sides, with the former Vicarage and associated garden, which is now privately own, to the south side.



St Columba's

St Columba's is a multi-use space which can be used in various layouts; as all the church furniture is movable and storable, the whole space can also be left open. The building is situated on the Rift House Estate at the west end of our parish and was consecrated on the 14th June 2009. It is a dual-purpose building, tastefully furnished and set amongst a mixture of houses and bungalows both of private ownership and social housing. It is used as a place of worship, attended by a loyal congregation.

The building is also available to the general public to hire for functions, children's parties, meetings etc. and is used as a venue for town-wide and parish Lent and Advent courses, Deanery meetings, and as a local Polling Station when required. At present we have a baby and toddler group, a sewing group and a relaxation group using the building each week. Hartlepool's Communities of Hope rent the building as their office space and base.



Food Store

The food store was leased in February 2021 to accommodate the food required to supply St Aidan's Kitchen. The kitchen is supported by the community and the food store and St Aidan's are used as a drop off points for donations. The premises enable us to meet the hygiene required for food standards. The parish applies for a grant each year to enable us to employ a food store manager.

Churchmanship

We are an inclusive church with Mass being in the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England. Seasonal vestments are worn at all services and incense is used on major Holy Days. All major festivals are celebrated including Candlemas, All Souls, All Saints and Corpus Christi. A Remembrance Day and Memorial service for the bereaved is held once a year and a well-attended Christingle service is held at Christmas. There is a small group of servers who attend the Sunday Mass at St Aidan's and they also help during major festivals and Holy Days. In addition, there are sides people to assist at services and members of the congregation read the lessons and intercessions.

The times of our services are:

- Sunday 10.45 am Sung Mass in St Aidan's
- Tuesday 1.00 pm A Little bit of God Time which is led by Communities of Hope
- Thursday 9.15 am Mass in St Columba's
- Last Sunday of the month Forest Church at 3.00 pm (2.00 pm in the winter months) in St Aidan's School's nature garden

Attendance on average is 8 for midweek services to 35 for Sundays. All our services are live-streamed so we also have an online following. The organ is played at every Sunday and major feast day services and there is a small enthusiastic Choir.

We hold baptisms once a month. Our average number for the year can be up to 28 children and about 5 adults. We have up to 4 weddings each year and about 30 funerals. There are 58 people on the electoral roll.

Reader

The parish has a Reader Emeritus. She is a great support and help to the clergy of the group, congregations and the community. At present every Monday she goes into our school and helps with "Open the Book". She also helps in the school with school services and admission to Holy Communion and Confirmation classes. Once a month she preaches on a Sunday morning and also preaches at the other churches within the group. She takes home communion to the members of our congregation we are too ill to attend church and also goes into one of the care homes within the group to take communion and talk to the

residence. She has also taken service of the word or communion by extension when needed throughout the group. Baptisms preparation evening are taken by her and she also helps the priest at the baptism service.

Mission

In the Anglo-Catholic tradition, we seek to serve the poor and marginalised of society through continued prayer and worship at all our services, and mission is understood with the four diocesan priorities in mind. Our mission, outreach work and on-line presence has seen a growth in the congregation. Also new opportunities for fellowship, discipleship and worship have developed. We offer a range of regular opportunities for people wishing to explore their faith. As an Inclusive church we are always open and welcoming to all newcomers.



St Aidan's and St Columba's is committed to the alleviation of poverty. The main outreach in the community is the Thursday Kitchen which provides food and practical support for approximately 120 guests who use this service each week. In addition to providing food, we also provide emotional support and spiritual guidance. Likewise, many families access the kitchen, especially through school holidays. St Aidan's offers a home to the Communities of Hope Drop in Cafe in on a Friday morning.

Every year our congregation provide and support families in need at Christmas time by provision of gifts. We also extend this to seafarers away from their families at Christmas time. We challenge poverty internationally by our support with Fairtrade, Christian Aid and provision of clean water and sanitation through tap and toilet twinning.

We have excellent working relationship with St Aidan's school which leads to weekly opportunities to work directly with children through Open the book, Collective worship, Prayer spaces, Foundation governor involvement, Reading development volunteers. Each year group attends a mid-week service each half term and the whole school comes into church on Ash Wednesday, for an Easter Service, Christmas service and school nativity. Through this, some of the pupils, if they wish to do so, are admitted to Holy communion and Confirmation after training at school.

The church has supported St Aidan's school in becoming an International Cross of Nails school (ICON). The church also supports the pupils' parents which has resulted in many coming to church to receive Holy Baptism. St Columba's has been used for summer school as part of the local authority initiative to ensure children are fed during the holidays. As a parish we care for God's creation and we have recently installed a new more efficient heating system. We continue to look at other ways of reducing our carbon footprint and have an approach of reclaim, reuse and recycle.

Thursday Kitchen

Hartlepool has some of the poorest parishes in the Church of England. As one of the first borough councils to roll out the 'universal credit' system, the town has seen a new level of deprivation and increased need in recent months. Nationally there is an acknowledgement that there is often a lack of engagement by churches with those who are on the fringes of society - the poor, the unemployed, the homeless, those with addictions and battling with their mental health. Due to these issues, the PCC at St Aidan's Church agreed to open a weekly 'soup kitchen'. The intention was to serve hot food and drinks to anyone who wanted to come along, and to offer a bag of groceries and toiletries to every guest.

St Aidan's Kitchen opened on Thursday 31st August, 2017, and has opened every Thursday since. It has in the past also opened on Christmas Day. Throughout the Covid lockdown we provided food bags to the community on the waste ground near St Aidan's and when church could be open again, we gave the food bags out at the church door. In the first week, 15 guests were welcomed and fed.

This has increased, week-on-week, to the point where there are now always between 100 and 120 guests. Each week we see new guests coming, as well as 'regulars' returning week after week. We estimate that if all of our guests came at the same time, we would see upwards of 500 people at the Kitchen. Hot food is cooked in our church kitchen, which has a 5-star hygiene rating, and taken away.

Our aim is to be able to let all our guests stay in church as long as they wish and eat their hot food. Tinned, fresh and prepacked food and toiletries are donated by members of the community, the congregation, local schools, local supermarkets, food outlets and Collection points are in local shops. Many people also make donations of money. We also have a great working and friendship partnership with the town's Muslim community who cook and provide, each week, over one hundred rice or pasta meals. We currently estimate that we are giving away between £500 and £1000 worth of food and toiletries each week.

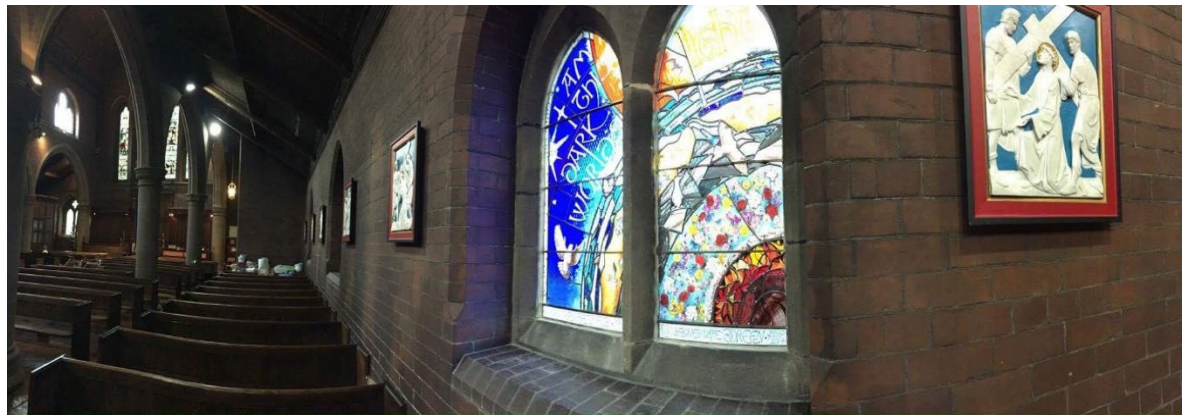
Some of the benefits of St Aidan's Kitchen have been identified as follows:

- Homeless people have been assisted to find and furnish their own homes and no longer sleep on the streets
- A sense of family, and a new community, is being built at the Kitchen
- People are fed who would otherwise be hungry
- Fundamental needs are being met – food, clothing, blankets, relationships
- Some of the original guests are now regular volunteers
- Members of the local community are fully integrated into helping to meet the needs of their neighbours



Forest Church

Those engaged in Forest Church are seeking to meet with God in and through their connection with the natural world. Forest Churches is a spiritual home for those outside the traditional church who relate better to outdoor spirituality than gatherings in a church building. Started in 2021 in St Aidan's School Nature Garden, it has now become a second congregation for the parish with attendance being approximately 30 every month. This family focused gathering is a mixed congregation of previously unchurched, those exploring initial faith and Christians across the town. The Church is run by a member of the congregation who has seen the members grow along with the enthusiasm for its great Bible-related activities, readings, singing and crafts, as well as the fire pit where marshmallows and other treats are warmed. =We aim to have a Communion service once a quarter.



Finance

The parish manages its finances responsibly, and although the climate is challenging, an experienced treasurer closely monitors the situation and advises the PCC effectively. Our priority is maintaining the life, body and work of the church through the running costs for the parish and diocesan Parish Share, and - through wise stewardship - we have been able to pay the amount we have undertaken to each year. As a parish we are generous givers to specific projects, such as raising £30,000 in a short space of time to fit a kitchen in St Aidan's. Over a period of four weeks, we raised over £600 for tap and toilet twinning. The PCC have sourced grants to support the food store and all monies donated to the kitchen are restricted. We have effective systems in place and most of the congregation are planned givers and Gift Aid their donations. The PCC are looking for ways to increase income by maximizing the use of St Columba's and through a possible stewardship campaign.

ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF HARTLEPOOL ST AIDAN AND ST COLUMBA

CHARITY NUMBER 1185257

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Trust funds £	2022 £	2021
<u>INCOMING RESOURCES</u>					
Voluntary Income	35422	16822	0	52244	54305
Activities for generating funds	915	117	0	1032	985
Income from investments	150	64	929	1143	223
Church Activities	7750	0	0	7750	5782
Other incoming resources	882	22586	0	23468	7088
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	45119	39589	929	85637	68383
<u>RESOURCES EXPENDED</u>					
Cost of generation voluntary income	0	0	0	0	20
Fund raising trading costs	0	0	0	0	0
Church activities	125886	292	0	126178	46870
Governance Costs	8255	5218	0	13473	11283
Other Expenses	514	4198	0	4712	26416
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED	134655	9708	0	144363	84589
NET INCOMING RESOURCES BEFORE OTHER RECOGNIZED GAINS AND LOSSES	-89536	29881	929	-58726	-16206
Gains on investment assets:					
on disposal	0	0	0	0	0
on revaluation					
	0	0	0	0	0
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS	-89536	29881	929	-58726	

Buildings

Our buildings are well maintained.

At St Aidan's we aim to improve facilities and prepare for multi-functional use, to increase community engagement and expand mission, particularly among children, youth and families. We have a new, up to date, modern and efficient heating system that has made our building a more welcoming, warm space to worship, pray and meet. We have removed the pews from the south aisle and now use that space for tables and chairs near our new, modern kitchen. In the kitchen we prepare a range of hot food for our Thursday Kitchen guests but also for our congregation and other members of the community who come into church. We have now removed the pews from our north aisle and are planning to create a suitable space for the families of our community. This gives us one space where people can relax, have a Bible study or book club, a second space suitable for Sunday school or where children can play, and a third space for prayer and reflection.

The parish administrator has use of the office located in St Aidan's.

At St Columba's we value the flexibility of our building as we try to maximize community engagement and try to grow a small congregation

Governance

We have a proactive and committed PCC and a congregation who are happy to take on leadership roles to support the priest and the life of the church. Approximately 50% of the congregation have some kind of role. There is a strong commitment to the life of the church and the use of rotas allows distribution of the work load.

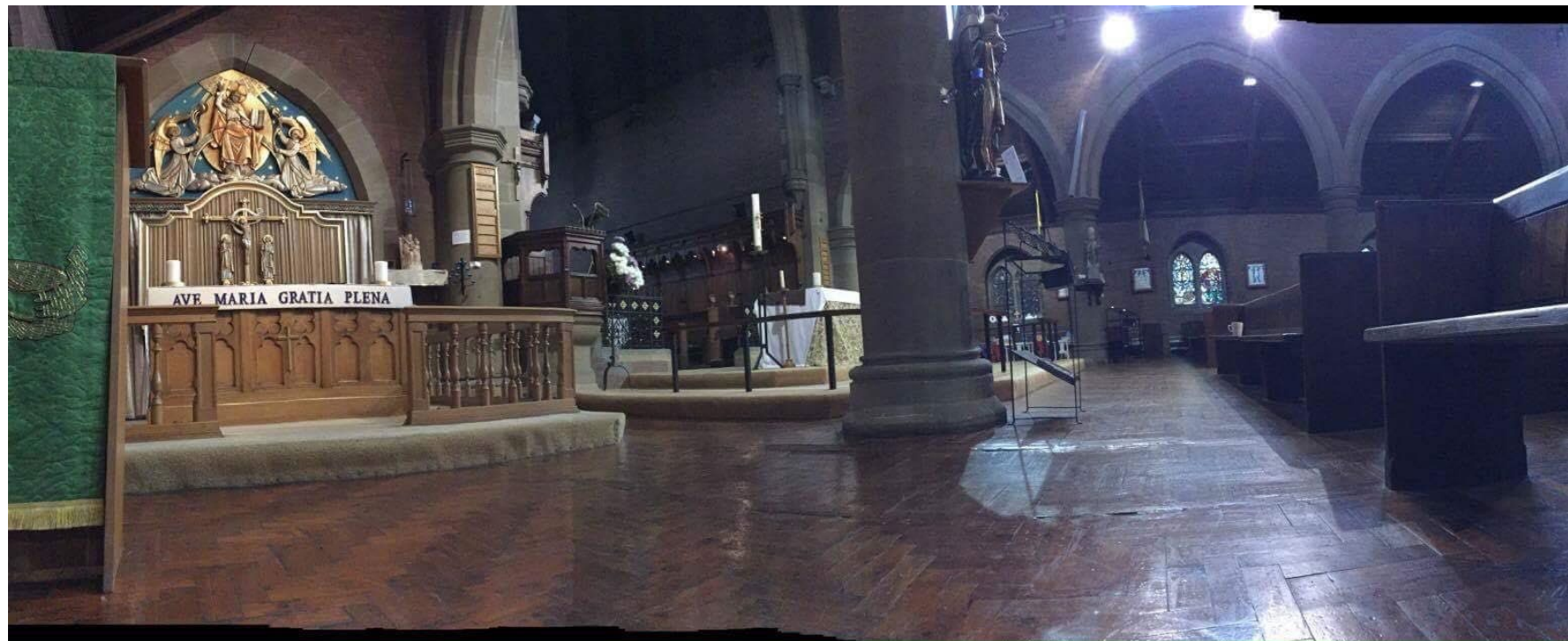
We have a full PCC, committed churchwardens and an experienced parish administrator. We are a warm, open, friendly, welcoming, inclusive church. Safeguarding is well established and embedded in the life of the church. It is addressed at every PCC meeting and everyone with relevant roles goes through safer recruitment and safeguarding training. Our safeguarding policy and information are publicly displayed. Details of named safeguarding contacts are publicly available online also.

We work well collaboratively with others. We are part of the Central Hartlepool Group Ministry (CHGM), a collaboration of three parishes, and work well together. The CHGM group host the SDF-funded Community of Hope project (see further below). We have a strong presence across the deanery via schools and outreach work.

Links with other denominations include Church of the Nazarene, New Life Pentecostal and Roman Catholics via St Aidan's Kitchen and collaborative online Morning Prayer. We also have links with other faith groups who support our community work, for example Nasir Mosque.

St. Aidan's Parish has existed for over 100 years. Occasional visitors tell us they feel that St. Aidan's Church is full of prayer and surprisingly beautiful on the inside. St Columba's church and Parish Centre. even though modern. has a friendly feel. As a parish we feel our weaknesses are that we are an ageing congregation and only a very small number of young people attend church on a regular basis.

Our strengths are that, though we are a small congregation, we are one family and can work and pull together very well. Numbers attending our services are consistent. Though we are two churches within one parish, we work as one. Our buildings are clean and friendly with a great spiritual atmosphere. The congregation is keen to be led in faith and work with a new incumbent to ensure a vibrant future for the parish.





PARISH PROFILE *St Luke's, Hartlepool*

In a largely residential parish, St Luke's draws together people of many different ages, backgrounds and Christian traditions. Over the years, the church has built a reputation as a friendly, welcoming community, open to all ages, and one that is forward- and outward-thinking.

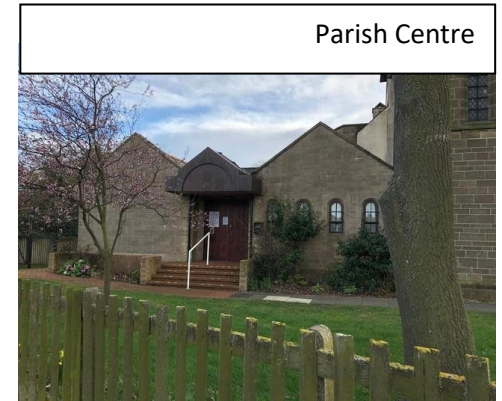
The Parish of St Luke's is fairly central to the town and has a wide range of housing and communities, from town houses, flats, and sheltered accommodation through to large executive homes. Also situated in the parish there are 4 Primary schools, 1 Secondary school, various local shopping facilities, a dentist, doctor, a recreation ground with football pitches and a cricket ground, all within a reasonable walking distance.

St Luke's has an excellent friendly community spirit amongst its congregation.

There are 66 people on the Electoral Roll and the Parish population is around 10,500. The parish supports the Communities of Hope project alongside St Aidan's and Stranton churches within the CHGM.

Buildings

St Luke's Church is situated on the corner of Hart Lane and Tunstall Avenue. The Church was consecrated in 1916. The buildings are generally in a good state of repair with the exception of the windows that require major attention (in hand). The adjoining Parish Centre was added in the 1950's and 90's and is well maintained. It comprises two meeting rooms, a Vestry, Kitchen, Administrator's Office, and toilet facilities.



The Vicarage is next to the main church building across a small off-road church car park. The building is an architectural-award-winning two storey detached 4 bedroom brick and tile constructed house, built in 1986, and maintained to high standards. With full central heating, the ground floor has an entrance hall with cloakroom, WC and office and a separate living area consisting of dining room, living room, kitchen and utility. On the first floor there are four double bedrooms (one en-suite) and a main bathroom. Two of the bedrooms have built in wardrobes and two large store rooms. There is an attached garage. To the rear there is a good sized garden area laid mainly to lawn, with well established small borders.



N.B. As St Aidan's no longer has a Vicarage, St Luke's Vicarage will be the home of the new incumbent of St Aidan's and Columba's.

Children and Young People

We have very few young families in our regular congregation. In the past we had groups for 3-11 year olds and teenagers meeting in the Parish Centre; this is an area we are eager to develop.

Mission and Fellowship

Our mission statement states that we aim to share Christ's love with all people through 'caring relationships'. We do this in many ways including: Little Angels (Carers and Toddlers); Mothers Union; 'Open Door' Soup Lunches and 'Cake n Cuppa' (not currently taking place- but could be resumed); Sewing Party; Coffee Mornings; Toys / gifts supporting local Refuge; Harvest time; Garden Party (annual); Hampers for local school families; we strongly support a number of charities; Refreshments in the Parish centre after most church services.

Style, tradition and theology.

We are of a broadly central Anglican tradition, which isn't always the most helpful description.

What we mean is that:

- We enjoy embracing the rich traditions of the church in a more relaxed and less formal way;
- We strive to make everyone feel welcome and included in our church at all times; and
- We are a missional church seeking to reach out into the community around us, actively engaging with our local schools, ensuring that anyone coming for baptism has a 'good experience' of church, seeking opportunities to witness our faith, and being a part of the social side of community life.
- We are a 'pilgrim people' and we are looking to the future with prayer and faith.



Worship

At present our pattern of worship is a single Eucharist Sunday service using Common Worship, and a Wednesday morning service using BCP. Services are supported by use of screens and a sound and hearing loop system.

We offer Home Communion for those who are unable to attend church. We have special services that reflect the annual church calendar such as the *St Luke's Tide (pastoral service); All Souls bereavement service; Remembrance Sunday; and of course Easter and Christmas.*

Other Information

Amongst the pews we have a large Children's Corner appropriately stocked.

Supporting the work of the church are a number of volunteers undertaking various roles including a group going into two primary schools with Open the Book.

We have a monthly magazine and weekly newsletter which are shared with our other Group members. There is also a church website, facebook page and a number of WhatsApp groups, including one for prayer requests.

St Luke's is a member of the Parish Giving Scheme.

Governance

St Luke's Church has an active PCC which is reflective of the congregation, assisting the work of our Priest in Charge, Revd John Bell, (appointed to the Group in Nov. 2022) and our two Church Wardens.

Members of St Luke's are open and friendly, and with the support of their experienced Parish Safeguarding Officer try to provide a safe and friendly place for everyone. The PCC has adopted the current Diocesan Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment policies and guidance with the result that the Parish is able to meet the criteria of the annual safeguarding assessment.

Looking to the future

Building on our connections through the schools, coffee mornings, Communities of Hope and the community at large, both in terms of pastoral care and reaching out with the Gospel, we'd like to encourage the growth of a younger element into our congregation, and build evangelism within the Parish; make Links with the Comprehensive school; make links into Throston Estate.

Mission Statement

St Luke's is a community whose purpose is to share Christ's love with all people through worship, learning, caring relationships and service to others.

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PARISH PROFILE: All Saints Stranton – Rooted in God’s love, growing together in Jesus, branching out in the power of the Holy Spirit



All Saints Stranton is a busy town church with a wide mission to people from a variety of backgrounds. We are of a lower Anglican tradition than our partners within the Group and would probably best describe ourselves as Open Evangelical in style, where opportunities for people to pray and speak through the outworking of the Holy Spirit are often encouraged.

Our Buildings

Stranton Church is a Grade II* listed building; parts date from Saxon times, mostly from the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, with 19th century additions of organ chamber, Vicar and Choir Vestries. The church is used for youth work, for English classes, bible studies and church social events, faith meals etc. and has a full working kitchen and toilets. The side chapel has been enclosed to make a meeting place, and is used by our Sunday Morning Children’s Group, and our Youth Fellowship. The Vicar’s Vestry has been converted to provide a servery and accessible toilet at the back of church, with the Choir Vestry being repurposed as the

Vicar’s Vestry and doubles as an additional meeting room for children’s activities. The church is generally in good condition with our 8 church bells recently having been refurbished. Work is currently underway to begin making some repairs to the bell tower itself. We have a restricted trust fund which aids costs of church fabric repair. The churchyard is closed and maintained by the local authority. There is shared parking to the rear of the church with wheelchair access to the church.

St Matthew’s Community Centre (St Matthew’s), a 5-10minute walk from the church, was built in the 1900s. Formerly our church hall, it is owned and overseen by the church.



Our Services

We maintain a four-congregation approach to worship, (with contact between congregations):

- 9am Said Holy Communion using CW Order 1 or BCP, occasionally hymns are incorporated into this service. This service is Streamed to our Facebook page.
- 11am Main Service cycling between Family Communion, Morning Worship, Holy Communion, and Lighthouse (All Age) Service. These services are less formal and incorporate a music group, sound system and screens. This service is occasionally streamed.
- 4pm Monthly Messy Church service (at St Matthew’s).
- Midweek BCP Holy Communion (at St Matthew's). This service is often streamed to our Facebook page.

Messy Church (held in St Matthew's) attracts a number of people who would not normally attend church, and is a key part of our outreach into the community.

Our average Sunday attendance has fluctuated in number in recent years, due to the pandemic and as the local demographics have changed, with a high proportion of people coming from more diverse backgrounds. We have recently seen a number of young families joining the church, and are actively looking for ways to encourage church growth.

The Church has a small Pastoral Care Team with lay involvement in visiting and administering home communion. There is an opportunity for this to be developed further, and we are currently looking to introduce a Bereavement Support Group, partnering with the other churches in the Group.

There are on average 25-30 baptisms, 10-12 weddings and 30-40 funerals annually.

Our Mission & Outreach

Mission is a priority of our church. We have adapted and changed our worship over the last few years, as the Central Hartlepool Group was formed, to be accessible and attractive to a variety of people and encourage newcomers with a warm welcome.

Outreach to the community is through our various groups, largely through the St Matthew's and community engagement through our links with Ward Jackson C of E Primary School. We have been able to contact more people and offer more mission focused outreach with the help of the Communities of Hope team. St Matthew's is a busy community hub run by a PCC subcommittee including members of the Burn Valley Residents Association. It is used for our monthly Messy Church (20-40 children with their families), a midweek service using the Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion (~10 people), and there is a monthly drop-in café (20-30 people). The rooms St Matthew's are also used by uniformed organisations engaged with the church and run by church members, Mothers' Union, badminton, and many other activities. It is also used for parish and community social events, including our annual Harvest Ceilidh, and two mother and toddler groups. During Winter 2022-23, we provided a warm space and soup lunch for those in our community struggling with rising costs and we are looking at ways to introduce this again in October.

Sunday Club 2-14 year olds (8-12 children) meets in church during the 11am service and the Youth Fellowship 11-18 year olds (4-8 young people) meets at 7pm each Sunday evening.

We support Christian Aid, Tear Fund and have links the Kilimatinde Trust along with two CMS partners. We are green energy users and use Fair Trade products in church.

Hartlepool Communities of Hope

Hartlepool Communities of Hope, operating from St Columba's Church, is enthusiastically supported across the Central Hartlepool Group, and is an important resource that all the Parishes would like to see continuing to flourish. The project is currently fully funded by the Strategic Development Fund through to the end of 2024, and is not dependent on financial commitment from any of the Group churches.

The Central Hartlepool Group is host to the project, which is one of several parish-based initiatives supported by the Diocese of Durham under the umbrella of "Growing Hope". The Hartlepool Project is underpinned by prayer, sponsored and supported by all three Central Group parishes through a joint Steering Committee. It has its own ring fenced budget for staff and running costs, to support various project initiatives, aimed at creating new and sustainable worshipping communities and addressing issues of poverty and deprivation in central Hartlepool. It is working with schools; families and children; the homeless, impoverished and those struggling with addiction; and other local community groups.

The original team was appointed in late 2020 and despite the difficulties of Covid lockdowns, it has made considerable headway in schools and community engagement. It has established a regular "Forest Church" at St Aidan's School (now run by St Aidan's Church), worked with primary schools using "Open the Book" and other materials, supported school visits to our churches, has developed outreach to asylum seekers and those living in great poverty, and made contact with many deprived families within the parishes, through activities such as 'Play and Praise' – a faith based toddler group. It has provided seasonal worship and celebration events across all three parishes, held an Alpha course, and established community craft and cafe groups. It has also attracted supplementary grants and donations mainly to assist in "Holiday Hunger" and outreach programmes for the most marginalised in our society, including the running of council-funded Holiday Clubs.

The project has recently undergone a significant period of challenge and change. The team is being renewed and re-formed with recruitment in hand for a new project lead and community evangelist to join the existing team. A key task of the new stipendiary priest will be to work alongside Revd John Bell to provide continued support for the visioning and growth of the project in 2023 and beyond. The project is currently staffed by a full time Children's and Family Worker and part time Community Support Worker, with the two vacancies (Project Lead and Community Evangelist) also being full time roles. The COH is receiving support from steering group members (undergoing their own changes in membership), along with a significant number of lay volunteers, and church members from across the Group.

For more information about "Growing hope" see: <http://www.stranton-church.org.uk/documents/growinghopedocument.pdf>

Also, for Communities of Hope Hartlepool see: <https://www.facebook.com/hartlepoolcoh/>