

The Riverside Parishes Profile



All Saints (Hurworth on Tees),
St. George & St. Laurence's (Middleton St. George),
All Saints (Girsby)
and St John the Baptist Church (Low Dinsdale)

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Our Diocesan Vision (an introduction from Bishop Paul)

At the end of 2019 we gathered representatives from every parish (including those in the Riverside Group) 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 the Riverside Group of Parishes 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 areas 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 these Parishes 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 together and sharing in this with you.

In Christ,
+Paul

Bishop of Durham



Joint Vision

“We are rooted in and motivated by our faith. We seek to share God’s love for all by reaching out to our communities through acts of generous and loving service to meet the spiritual and practical needs we encounter. Through this, both we and our communities will be transformed by the power of Christ”



Luke 13: 18-19

Then Jesus asked, ‘What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to?’¹⁹ It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches.’

The image of the tree captures our aspiration for the Riverside parishes to be rooted in Christ, being nourished and growing as disciples. It is a place of shelter for all, which bears fruits of the spirit. Changing by season, it is growing in size and influence in its environment or community.

Psalm 1: 1-3

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers.



Who we Are

The Riverside group of 4 parishes consists of:

- All Saints, Hurworth (ASH)
- St George and St Laurence's, Middleton St George (MSG)
- All Saints, Girsby
- St John the Baptist, Low Dinsdale

The Riverside grouping is relatively new, having been created at the appointment of the interim ministry in 2016, and it depends on strong lay participation.

The congregations of **ASH and MSG** regularly have 20-60 worshippers each on a weekly basis. The congregations of **Low Dinsdale and Girsby** are much smaller and regularly meet for worship once or twice per month.

These are growing and relatively prosperous communities, with professionals, families and retirees. In general the area suffers lower economic deprivation than the North East of England average but there are small pockets of poverty.

This joint overview section will focus on **ASH and MSG**, the larger congregations. Further details of Girsby and Low Dinsdale can be found later in the profile in the separate sections on each church.

ASH and MSG are two complementary and welcoming church communities, each with a desire to be inclusive and active in their communities. Both have faithful and prayerful congregations which are resilient and ready to embrace change. Although the churches have their own individual identities and missions, they are keen to move forward together into God's preferred and promised future.



MSG worships weekly in the local Church of England Academy school hall, whilst **ASH** and the others have their own church buildings. This means the **Riverside** has differing, but complementary, worship styles and settings. To the newcomer the Riverside offers a choice of evangelical or more traditional worship; a flexible modern space or beautiful and historic churches. Despite the apparent differences, there is a lot of commonality in the worship.



A partnership has been developing between the **Riverside** congregations over the last few years, which has led to a variety of shared experiences including joint services and Lent courses. **ASH** gives food collections to support the foodbank created by **MSG** in Nov 2020. There is a recognition that there are areas that still need to be explored and developed, and that we could better utilise our shared resources by working together.



We would like to build on the substantial work done by the last Ministry team (2017-2020) which has left a legacy of healthy, positive, forward-looking congregations, who are keen to grow. The congregations are already accustomed to sharing full time ministry and have demonstrated and developed their ability to be self-sufficient when required. This legacy has endured well during the recent vacancy.



Lay Involvement

There is a strong tradition of lay participation in the main congregations, which supports our ministry teams. As well as licensed readers at both ASH and MSG, there are also authorised lay preachers, an authorised pastoral assistant (APA), members of the congregations who lead services and some who provide singing and music support. Yet more church members participate in weekly bible readings, intercession prayers, children's church, occasional drama and puppetry. Children's church groups are also encouraged to participate in worship, often giving thought provoking feedback about what they have been learning in their groups.

As well as these direct worship activities, there are many more people involved in practical support which enables services to run smoothly and ensures a warm welcome before and after services.

Home groups meet across the Riverside parishes to study the bible and pray together.

With close links to village schools, especially the CofE academy in MSG, readers and foundation governors help our ministry teams in leading school assembly presentations.

Regular social events led by church members are a common feature of both ASH and MSG.



Community

We recognise that building strong relationships within our communities is vital for us to grow and thrive.

Surveys of church members in both ASH and MSG revealed an extensive network of links between church members and local community organisations and events. Many church members serve on the committees of other local community organisations and as Parish councillors.



The Riverside group is blessed with 3 schools in Hurworth and the CofE academy in MSG. The links to the academy school include formal positions for foundation governors which are appointed by the church. The main link to Hurworth Primary is the “Open The Book” initiative. Thus, there is a fantastic opportunity to engage with children and young families, to develop children’s ministry and promote the Gospel message, as both villages have thriving schools and yet relatively small numbers of village school children attend church.



Both communities of Hurworth and MSG are increasing in size with population and house numbers growing rapidly. This is bringing new families into the local parishes and schools, and there is an opportunity to provide a welcome and demonstrate Christ’s sacrificial love to new arrivals.



Newsletter and mail shots to share news and promote church services and events are made regularly to all homes, these being delivered by hand by a network of church members.

Feedback from the community suggests that there is still work to do to raise the profile of the churches, to show who (and whose) we are, and to demonstrate the relevance of the church and the Good News of Christ to people’s lives.



Where we want to be

The Riverside parishes wish to create more vibrant churches by ministering to, and growing, disciples, thus serving the flourishing communities around us. We wish to be outward facing, providing a welcome for all. Our vision is to be relevant, to identify and meet the spiritual needs of our communities in traditional and creative ways.

In summary we wish to develop a 21st century ministry, creating a living presence for Christ.

We seek to nurture and build our partnerships and relationships within our communities through our church members and links to existing community groups. We wish to serve others across a broad spectrum to highlight our Christian faith.

We seek to continue to manage our human and financial resources well in order to ensure a long-term future for all the parishes.

Moving into God's future we must consider creative Riverside group solutions to challenges and share resources to ensure we make the best use of what God has provided. Closer partnerships between ASH and MSG, a strategic view of the wider picture for the parishes and appropriate pooling of resources will support this objective.

Partnership building within the Riverside group is thus vital and has already begun. MSG and ASH are building up relationships and working together. However, this is a key area for development which, if handled well, would bring many benefits to all from shared learning and growth as disciples. In addition, it is key to ensuring we support each other, to avoid working individually and to promote one healthy "tree" - the Riverside group.



Location

The Riverside Group is made up of rural parishes that are located close to Darlington. There are excellent transport links by rail (main east coast line station at Darlington) and road (A19 and A1) to major cities (e.g Newcastle, Sunderland, York), with limited flights also available out of Teesside airport, which is within the MSG parish boundary.

The parishes are served well by highly performing local schools and public services.

The Riverside parishes are on the edge of stunning Teesdale, the North York Moors National Park and the Lake District National park is only an hour's drive away.

Accommodation is at the Rectory in MSG (further details below) and there is office space within ASH, with potential to develop a more permanent office base for the Riverside parishes.

The Rectory

8 Westacres, Middleton St George

The Rectory, a four-bedroom modern brick-built house, is set in a small close of 26 houses in Middleton St George. The house is less than half a mile from the village centre and even less to the academy (primary school age). The house is in very good order. The churches share the cost of providing broadband.



Profile of All Saints Hurworth (ASH)



All Saints, Hurworth

All Saints, Hurworth, Mission Statement

All Saints' Church is firmly rooted within the village of Hurworth. We are a faithful and prayerful community, sowing the seeds of, and nurturing, faith; growing God's Kingdom. We want to use our strengths to share our love of God and develop an inclusive church, outwardly focused, reflecting the spiritual needs of our neighbours – supported by our own Christian faith.

What our children say:

"I like it when the children get to come up to the front and join in leading the service"

"It's good at Christmas when we all think about who or what we want to pray for, and write it on a star and hang it on the tree"



All Saints Church, Hurworth



Mission

The majority of the congregation at ASH are actively involved in mission, with energy channelled both locally and globally.

Our international focus is on supporting our CMS Link Missionary in Taiwan, and working with “Link to Hope” to fill and send over 200 shoeboxes every year to some of the poorest parts of the world.

Locally, the list is extensive, but includes:

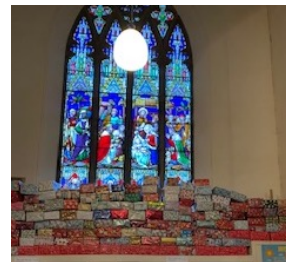
- a team that delivers an “Open the Book” assembly to 200 children in Hurworth Primary School every fortnight in term time
- hosting, with the support of DACYM (Darlington Area Churches’ Youth Ministry), a Youth Drop In every Friday night in term time for children in Year 7 and above, and a monthly Friday Night Hang Out for children in Primary School years 4, 5 and 6
- mobilising a large body of visible and crucial support for the Hurworth Country Fair each year
- delivering home communion
- producing and delivering monthly newsletters across the parish

Special outreach services, such as Christingle, attract large numbers of people, and we have an active baptism ministry which follows up with families for years after their first contact with us.

Our missional work is strongly aligned with the four diocesan priorities of Energising Growth, Caring for God’s Creation, Engaging with Children, Youth and Young Adults, and Challenging Poverty.



Friday Night Drop in Team



Christmas Shoebox Appeal



Growing and ministering

We are blessed with a highly effective and well-established lay ministry team, which complements the work of the clergy. We have an experienced Lay Reader and a gifted APA who leads a strong baptism ministry. In total, five members of the congregation have been trained, and authorised by the Bishop, to lead worship and to preach. One of these leaders is currently training to be a Licensed Lay Minister. New leadership has recently emerged for our children's church after the retirement of a very longstanding leader, and this ministry is growing and developing.

We run periodic home groups as well as Lent courses that are well attended and much valued, and we offer home communion through a team of trained and authorised volunteers. Annually, we hold a memorial service which is open to everyone, and personal invitations are sent to all of the families known to us who have been bereaved in the last year.

Worshipping at ASH

ASH is a traditional village church, lively and low Anglican in style, appreciative of open evangelical ministry from recent clergy. We use Common Worship liturgy at our main Sunday services (10:30am), and each month typically three of these involve choir and organ, whereas our monthly All Age Worship uses much more flexible liturgy, and music is usually led by our Music Group. We have a strong musical tradition.

Our Communion service is held at 10:30am on the first Sunday of every month; on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays there is a service of Holy Communion (currently lay led by extension) at 8am which follows the BCP liturgy. Our Lay Reader and APA are both licensed to administer communion by extension.

Frequent special occasion services offer missional opportunity and provide strong outreach into the community, especially Christingle (where church is always packed and extra seating brought in), Remembrance, Mothering Sunday and the major festivals of the church calendar. The collection from our Christingle service is donated to local youth charities every year.



Community Choir



Christingle Service



Active in our Community

Hurworth is a popular, well established and growing community with good schools and facilities, and as a church we have extensive links into the community, formally and informally. We hold two community fairs each year, in summer and autumn, as well as supporting the annual Country Fair at the village community centre. While the fairs may be refreshed and reinvented in the future, they provide valuable outreach through an established connection into the community and are a major fundraising opportunity. We also produce and deliver a newsletter to more than 1800 homes in the parish each month, which supports outreach. ASH has, for many years, collected food to take to the local foodbank; we are now supporting the foodbank run by MSG and our food collections go there.

We are especially keen to continue our ecumenical links with the local Methodist Chapel, through our “Churches Working Together in Hurworth” partnership.

Our People

A great many of our regular attenders are involved beyond Sunday worship. We are a very friendly and mutually supportive congregation, volunteering within church and community, and with an active social life, leading to strong fellowship. We have demonstrated a willingness to face difficulties, accept limitations and work with our strengths; we are developing, we work with challenges and we are resilient in the face of change.

Our key people include:

Wardens: Julia Clarke and 1 vacancy

Lay Reader: Paul Mallet

Authorised Pastoral Assistant: Jill Bramwell

PCC Lay Chair: Denis Pinnegar



Church Community Space



Sunday School



Community Choir



Our building

All Saints' Hurworth is a Grade II listed building, attractive and well maintained. It is heated by the only biomass church heating system in Durham Diocese, paid for through local fundraising of around £70,000. Our church is a somewhat flexible space: although still arranged with fixed pews for the most part, it also incorporates a spacious 2 storey church centre. It is a real joy to use this open space for fellowship and refreshments after worship; it is also used for meetings and for the youth Drop In and Hang Out, and has the potential for much greater community use in the future.

In 2019 we raised £30,000 in a matter of a few months, to meet the cost of roof repairs identified in our QI. This fundraising effort was completely lay-led and will secure a building in good working order for the future.



All Saints Church, Hurworth



Profile of St George and St Laurence's (MSG)



St Georges C of E Academy



St Georges Church, Low Middleton

St George and St Laurence's Church Mission Statement

With freedom to be creative, we seek to become ever more Christ-like,
taking his love and compassion out into the community
and living as ambassadors for his kingdom.

The Village

Middleton St George is a village that has grown rapidly since the mid-1990s, and which is continuing to grow now with many new housing developments having recently been approved for planning.

The original line of the Stockton to Darlington passed through the village, which is now served by Dinsdale railway station. Teesside International Airport (formerly RAF Middleton St George) is within the parish boundaries.

The village is served by three general shops, three barber/hairdressers, three pubs, two cafes, a hotel, two takeaways, a popular Indian restaurant, a veterinary surgery, a pet food shop, a doctors' surgery, a day nursery, a dental surgery, a chemist and a betting shop. There are two care homes and a retirement village along with Priory Hospital (a specialist inpatient service for adults with mental health needs) also in the village.

St George and St Laurence's Church is the only church community in this growing village.



Our buildings, and a little of our history



St Laurence's

St Laurence's Church building closed for public worship in 2008. In 2012, the building was sold and is now being developed into a single detached residence. The PCC has retained the churchyard and Garden of Remembrance which is open for the interment of ashes. The Garden of Remembrance is significant to the village, particularly given the loss of the church building for worship purposes some years ago. The churchyard also houses the village War Memorial (maintained by Parish Council not church). A community Act of Remembrance takes place there each year on Remembrance Sunday.



Sunday Morning Worship

St George's Academy

Following the closure of St Laurence's Church building, the congregation moved, on a temporary basis, to worship in St George's Church of England Academy. We have now made the Academy our permanent home. The School is a modern (2007) Church of England Academy for primary aged children. We have a small 'vestry' in the school which holds all that we need for our services. Whilst we have no involvement in the maintenance of the building itself we do consider it as 'church' when we use it. We pay monthly for its use.



St George's Church, Low Middleton

The Grade 2 listed medieval church of St George is now our only building. It stands in a peaceful, isolated location amongst fields, close to the south-west end of the runway of Teesside International Airport, some 2 km to the east of the present village of Middleton One Row. Vehicular access is difficult with little parking. It stands on what is thought to have been the site of a Saxon church, although what is seen now is generally dated 13th and 14th centuries, though much altered.

There are no facilities at St George's (ie no water, electricity, waste etc.) and so there is no regular pattern of worship there. The building is now mainly used for weddings, baptisms and funerals as well as occasional services. It is, however, well used with over 1,000 people having attended some form of service at St George's Church each year in recent times.

The churchyard and church are challenging and costly to maintain, but a working party has been established to care for St George's via a programme of planned essential maintenance activities.



St Georges, Low Middleton

A 'Church Without Walls'

As we have had no church base in the village for some years now, we have become adept at being a 'church without walls' i.e., being creative and flexible in our approach to being the church.

Our church office currently operates from our Church Administrator's home, and we use other community buildings for our events and meetings including the local Community Centre, Parish Council rooms, WI Hall, pubs, Sheltered Housing complex and, of course, the school. All of these provide good links with others in the community, and opportunities for outreach which we are keen to embrace.



Proposed New Church Centre

We have been blessed by one of our members who gave us a substantial gift for the purpose of creating a Church Centre within the village.

It is our aim to build a Church Centre which will be a base for our Parish administration to take place, for meetings and small events to be held, and which will also create a visible presence for us within our community, allowing us to be more accessible to all. We will, however, continue to worship in the school.

We are actively progressing agreement to build on Parish Council land, and our discussions are now approaching the stage of lease agreement and planning applications.

Worshipping at MSG

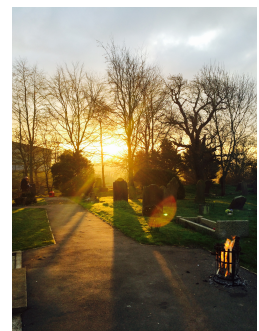
We are a group of ordinary people from all walks of life, joined together by a common belief in Jesus Christ, our love for Him and one another.

Our worship is upbeat, thoughtful, often creative and varied with services tending towards the informal. We worship weekly via Service of the Word, Holy Communion or Café church. Most members are involved in some way in our rota supporting services, which includes refreshments.

Whilst there has been some rationalisation of services outside of regular worship since the pandemic, much of what we are doing can be described as ‘consistent occasional services’ to which people from the community are invited. These include:

- Annual Memorial Services and Easter dawn services at St George’s
- Christingle and other services at the school
- Baptism welcoming services (following Baptisms held at St George’s)
- Remembrance Sunday and other commemorative services at the Village War Memorial
- Café Church
- Services at Middleton Hall Retirement Village

Easter Dawn Service



Leadership & Governance

Lay Ministry

We have a strong lay ministry team which includes a Reader and five trained lay worship leaders with Bishop's certificate. Our Reader is responsible for visiting baptism families and takes funerals when required. Churchwardens work extremely hard to invite local clergy to lead Holy Communion services. We are excellently supported by our Parish Administrator.

Due to the nature of our regular Sunday worship space, we have many members who are committed to setting up church every Sunday morning and ensuring our services run smoothly.



Home Group

Prayer ministry is offered by a prayer chain which is lay led, as are our weekly Home Group and monthly coffee shop ('Georgie's', which is held in the local community centre).



Georgies Cafe

In addition, many of our members are involved as volunteers with key community organisations and we recognise those roles as being a vital part of their Christian ministry.

We have a Ministry Structure in place. It is a good guide as to levels of involvement and some of it is translated into a rota for services. There is a core group of people who do a lot of things in our church, but there is also a very open, encouraging, and welcoming attitude to others to take on tasks/roles.



PCC

Our PCC is a good reflection of the diversity of church membership, but the composition of PCC is not fully reflective of the village demography. There is a healthy mix of people (skills, experience, views). PCC members have a good grasp of their responsibilities as Trustees.

After working with our previous clergy team on conflict management and personality profiling (through which we learned to appreciate the value of healthy conflict and how different personal styles affect communication), an agreed Code of Conduct was introduced to PCC which is referred to at all meetings. Regular reviews at the end of meetings are held to assess our performance in this area. Where conflict exists, it tends to be around the allocation of resources (both financial and personnel) and this is handled through discussion and a vote if necessary.

Prayer and bible study forms part of our PCC meetings.

Our Safeguarding Officer is very effective and has raised the profile of safeguarding across the church. Individual training has taken place and our policy is posted on notice boards in our places of worship. A report is made to PCC each month. Our aim to embed good practice is improving and we believe we demonstrate best practice in many areas.

Taking stock of our Financial Position

A high proportion of our church members are planned givers. We originally launched the PGS in 2019 and it is promoted regularly at services or via personal contact. During the pandemic more of the congregation set up direct debits and joined the PGS leading to an increase in planned giving that has continued. Giving is also supported weekly via traditional methods but also with a card reader. We meet our planned commitments without the need for fundraising events.

Accounts are prepared, and reviewed at PCC, monthly. We have embedded control systems and have good transparency as a result. An independent examiner reviews our accounts annually. PCC recently committed to preparing a budget to assist with planning expenditure, and this work has now been completed.

Our reserves consist of two restricted accounts for specific projects and one general fund which includes an allocation for Quinquennial costs (for St George's) as well as routine expenditure.

The principles of guided pledge are generally understood by PCC and we meet our parish share commitment in full by standing order every month. We do not currently discuss legacy giving as a congregation but we have benefitted in the past from several legacies.



Working with the Diocesan Priorities

Energising Growth

We recognise the value of developing disciples and, over the years, we have grown to appreciate the impact and influence that every member of our church family can have as they go about their daily lives within our community and beyond. Through the actions and activities of individual church members, we are able to engage with our community in myriad ways over and above our formal church activities.

Teaching and Sunday worship empowers and equips us to use our gifts in every part of our lives. Our Home Group provides a safe place to study, develop fellowship and confidence. Church members have attended Alpha courses provided by local churches such as St. Andrews, Haughton.

As our village continues to grow, there is significant potential for us to increase our reach and welcome new people to our church and community.



^Garden of Remembrance

Caring for God's Creation

When our own building was closed in 2008, we decided not to build a new church, but instead to build a relationship with the school by sharing premises, which in turn minimises our environmental impact. We take responsibility for caring for St. Laurence's churchyard and garden of remembrance, and the medieval church of St. George. We discourage the use of plastics and excessive paper used in services and other events. We will be actively promoting eco-friendly best practices in our new church centre build project. We would aspire to promote the use of fair-trade products where possible



Engaging with Children, Youth & Young adults

As a church worshipping in a CofE school, we are already planted in a favourable environment. Over the years, we have enjoyed strong relationships with the school via the governing body and lay ministry (although the leadership of both the school and the governing body has recently changed, which has naturally had an impact on our ongoing relationship as we form and build up new connections).

We visit all baptism families and ensure they are welcomed at a Sunday service if they have chosen to have a baptism at St. George's Church. A member of our congregation leads DACYM (Darlington Area Churches Youth Ministry) and we support their work financially.

There is significant potential for more engagement in this area, and some sadness in church at the current absence of children and young people on Sundays. We would dearly love to involve more families, children and young people in the life of our church.



Church Foodbank

Challenging Poverty

We launched a food bank in late 2020 at the height of the pandemic. The foodbank continues to meet the needs of many clients, all of whom are served with love and acceptance, and without judgement. The food bank's existence, and the demand for its services, has highlighted local poverty issues to members of our church and to the community. We have developed good relationships with three local supermarkets who provide us with donations and/or donation points. One of the local supermarkets has provided us with a storage facility free of charge which is now the base for all stocks and weekly deliveries to clients. We have links to CAP (Christians against Poverty) via St. Andrews, Haughton, and we refer foodbank clients to them where appropriate.

We aspire to provide friendship, support and connection to those suffering isolation or mental health issues but activity is currently limited to support for individuals via home group and the work of individual church members. We have held a dementia awareness service at church led by a member of church who works in this field.



Opportunities, Challenges & Issues

Demographics of Congregation

Whilst not unique to our church, we have observed that the age profile of our church is increasing and our congregation does not reflect the growing numbers of young professionals and families moving into our village. To sustain and develop church life there is a need to attract younger members and leaders.

St. Georges CofE School Relations

Following the recent appointments of a new Headteacher and Chair of Governors at the school, there is an opportunity to build and develop new relationships and fresh ways of working alongside one another.

Project Management (New Church Centre)

As plans for our new church centre progress, we will find that there will be a need to support the team tasked with leading this project on our behalf. The project is likely to divert time and resource from PCC and church members, and there will be a need to fundraise locally to ensure the project's success.

A Growing Village

House building is a major feature of our community, and it is predicted our village will have doubled in size by the end of all projects. The rapid expansion has led to a changing dynamic, some divisions, and a lack of community cohesion. There are opponents to further housing, and we must ensure the church communicates with new residents, offering a welcome and a village community to be part of. This is an opportunity to build unity in our village and encourage Christian values of love, acceptance, and empathy for others. We should be challenging hostility and modelling love and kindness. Promoting the relevance of church and our faith is a challenge, but one that we relish and embrace.



Profile of St John the Baptist Church, Low Dinsdale and All Saints, Girsby



St John the Baptist, Low Dinsdale



All Saints, Girsby

St John the Baptist, Low Dinsdale

Low Dinsdale is one of the smallest parishes in the County. A bridge to the North Yorkshire side of the river enables residents from Over Dinsdale to join the congregation.

Demographic changes in the parish present challenges for the future. We have made adjustments and additions in order to provide the possibility of increased and more diverse use. The beautiful location attracts residents who are not part of the farming community. St John's is no longer a family church. The small congregation of the church depends on support of the other Riverside parishes, but also complements them. Our survival assures us that God is at work.

Spirituality is personal and focused upon the ancient building. It is a special, warm and welcoming place with a long and interesting history. The building is much loved and gives a sense that God is close. It is in good condition, but its continuity depends upon three officers and our ability to raise finance to secure its medium and long-term future. We have plans as to how that may be done.

A Priest-in-Charge of the Riverside Parishes is needed to bring and embrace new ideas to attract more people, especially young people, because most of the present congregation may not be around in 10 years' time. There are 15 people on the electoral roll. The Parish share is met, but with increasing difficulty. St John's meets running costs including heat, repairs and insurance and clergy expenses. There are two services a month, one of which is lay-led.



All Saints, Girsby

All Saints, Girsby - a close community with an open door

We are a small, tightly knit group of traditional worshippers who enjoy fellowship and togetherness. Our building and worship are simple but both are marked by tranquillity and beauty. We value having traditional, low church worship but recognise we may be in something of a “time warp”.

Girsby is fairly remote; a tiny community. Our once a month Communion, with special services attracting a larger congregation, suits us well. We are committed to one another and to our church.

Our experience of God is of someone who keeps us together – a spiritual focus, a felt presence.

Our average age is older. We have no children (there are none in the parish). We would like to see other people coming in but we're not sure how to achieve this. We recognise we can be set in our ways and expect newcomers to fit in. Visitors are embraced and included. Our numbers have dwindled but we feel a responsibility to keep the church open as long as we are able. Increased attendance at Christmas and Harvest provokes questions about future possibilities. We realise that there is a big question mark over where we will be in ten years' time. The church pays its parish share and other expenses (including clergy expenses) in full.

The parish has a fascinating history. The ancient parish church of Sockburn dates back to the seventh century. An Archbishop of York was consecrated here probably because, in troubled times, the church's situation at the southern end of the Sockburn peninsula would have provided adequate defence. However, in the nineteenth century the church was burnt down by the local landowner who had another church built on his property but on the wrong side of the river. Hence the present building is not in the diocese of Durham.

Priorities for the new minister at Dinsdale and Girsby

We need support to provide:

- Spiritual guidance
- Attract and maintain a larger, younger group of participants
- Bring more visitors to the church especially for festivals which are our strength
- Energise and communicate with the people of the Parish



Person Specification

We seek a **bible-based leader** and **teacher** who can **equip** and **enable** us to fulfil our vision.

They should be **prayerful, forward thinking, energetic** and **compassionate**.

Bold, innovative and **confident** in their faith, they should be **inclusive, encouraging, motivational** and able to **bring out the best** in others.

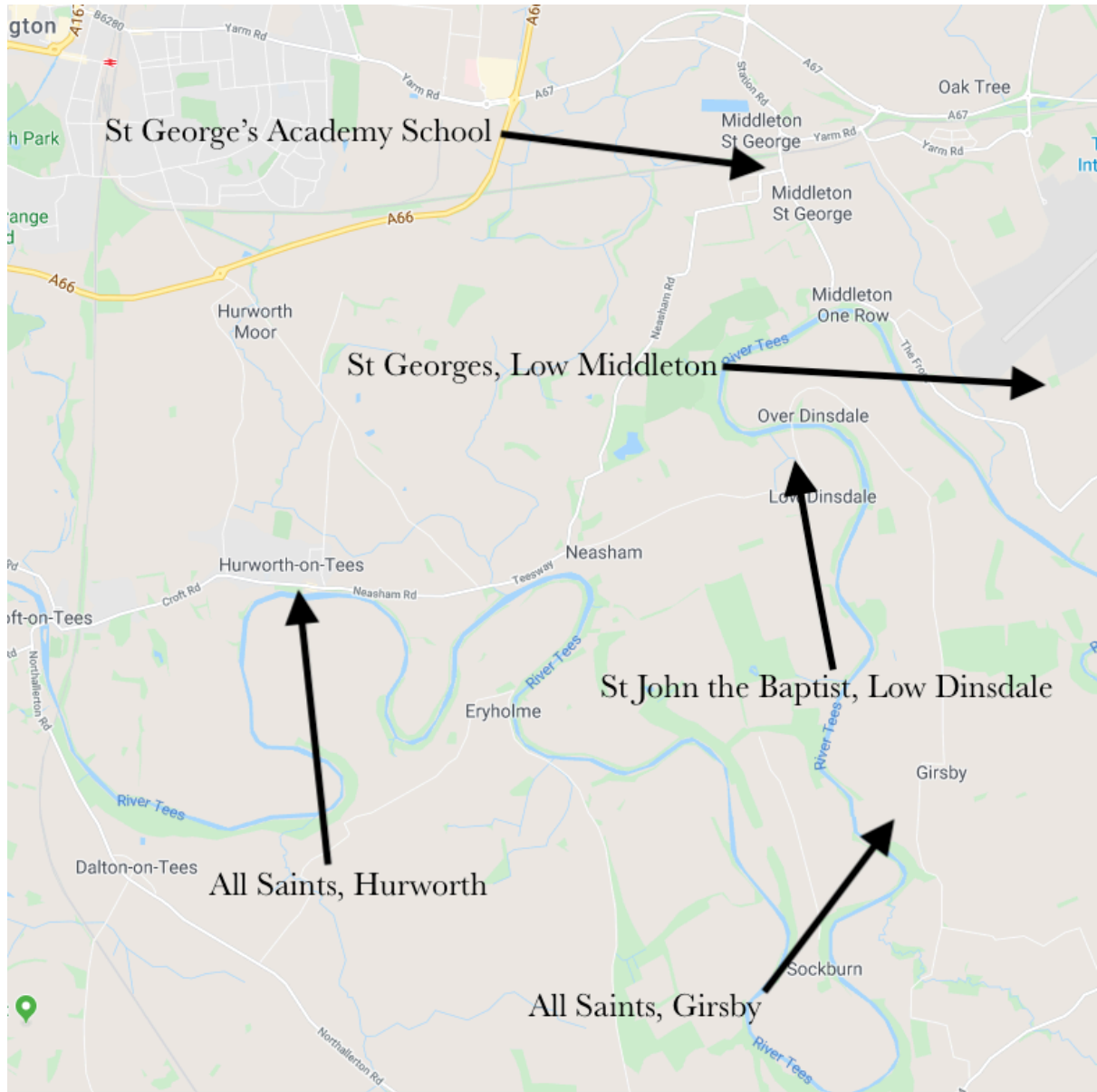
With **excellent leadership** and **interpersonal skills**, we seek a **good listener** who can **strategise** and help us translate our mission statements into positive action plans. This will be achieved by **speaking truth in love** and being **robust** in giving, and receiving, feedback.

We seek a candidate who can **shepherd, develop** and **teach** our lay leaders enabling them to **nurture others**.

We will support and uplift our leader in prayer and by our actions.



Church Locations



APPENDIX 1

All Saints Hurworth (ASH) in numbers

Finance Summary 2021

Total receipts:	£48,627 (cf £59,486 for the last pre COVID year)
	Inc - donations of £1,363
	RHI income £3,857
	Fetes and fundraising £5,846
Total Payments:	£46,624
	Inc - Parish Share £24,000 (100% of pledge)
	Church Running Ex £22,624

All these figures were lower than historical norms, due to the pandemic.

Population	3,640 (2011 census) 52% female, 48% male, 56.2% married couples (2011 Census) 64% age 16 - 64, 30% age 65+
Residences	1,850
Employment Mix	45.2% Professional, managerial, directors & senior officials (2011)
Schools	Hurworth Primary School - approx. 250 pupils Hurworth School (Secondary Academy) - approx. 650 pupils Priory Hurworth House School - (special needs day school)
Declared Beliefs	70.1% Christian, 20.75% no religion (2011 Census)
Electoral Roll	80 (April 22)

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

Typically, 12 of each per year, although numbers fluctuate.

PCC	9 elected, plus Churchwarden; Lay Reader and APA are ex officio members
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Services - Average number of attendees

Sunday - Holy Communion	8.00am	6/10
Sunday - Morning Worship Church available)	10.30am	40/60 (creche and children's)
Wednesday - Communion	10.00am	6/10 (monthly; weekly in Lent)
Thursday - Morning prayer	7.30am	4/6

Special Christmas Services - Average number of attendees

Christingle	300/350
Schools	200/300
Special Easter Services	80/100
Remembrance Sunday	100/120

Other church based activities include

PCC/SC meetings	
Lent Groups/House Groups	10/12 people
Ad hoc Meetings clergy/lay	
Choir Practice Friday evening weekly	8/15 choristers

Other regular outreach activities include: Average number of attendees

Open The Book: fortnightly in the Primary school,	200 children
Church Fellowship	Tues pm monthly 15/20
Friday Hangout	Fri pm/term time 20/30
Youth Drop In	Fri pm/term time 30/50
Rhapsody Community Choir	Wed pm weekly 30/50
Concerts and Social Events	circa 6pa 150/200

Parish Newsletter

16 pages A5 distributed to 1,850 homes/businesses 10 x pa
(supported by paid advertising)

APPENDIX 2

MSG in numbers

Finance Summary

Total receipts:	£48,668 (November 22)		
Total Payments	£44,159 (November 22)		
	Inc - Parish Share	£27,500	

Population	5,286		
	48.4% female, 51.2% male, 55% married couples (2021 Census)		
Residences	2,600 (+ projected new build)		
Employment Mix	49% Professional, managerial, directors & senior officials (2011)		
Schools	St George's Church of England Academy - 377 +36 nursery		
Declared Beliefs	65% Christian, 34% no religion - (2021 Census)		
Electoral Roll	59	(APCM 22)	
Baptisms	5	(2022)	ave. c.40 guests for those held at St George's
Weddings	4	(2022)	ave. c.60 guests for those held at St George's
Funerals	9	(2022)	ave. c.60 guests for those held at St George's
PCC	10	inc Lay Reader (1), Church Wardens (2) and Deanery Synod Reps (2)	

Services: Average number of attendees

Sunday - Morning Worship 10.00am 26/32 attendees, c

Special Services: Average number of attendees

Christingle	Not held 2022
Village Carol Service	85
Midnight Communion	12 (2021)
Easter Dawn Service with breakfast	20
Remembrance Sunday	100/120

Other church based activities include:

PCC/SC meetings	12/5 (10meetings pa)
House Groups	10
Lent course (held with ASH)	14
Advent course	12

Other regular outreach activities include: Average number of attendees

Georgie's Coffee Shop 2nd Saturday in the month 30+

Youth from MSG are encouraged to attend the Friday Hangout and Youth Drop In at Hurworth on Friday evenings during term time

MSG Church Website: www.stlmsg.org

Facebook page: @StLaurencesChurch