

DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

PATRONAGE (BENEFICES MEASURE) 1986

Parish of Newcastle S. John the Baptist

Statement prepared by the P.C.C. describing the church's ministry and mission within the parish.

1. The Parish and its Future

As a city centre church, S. John's can accommodate those who, for whatever reason, need some other place to worship than their parish church. It can offer a ministry of caring for the unemployed, for asylum seekers, for the destitute and for all in need of a listening ear.

As part of this mission, with the enthusiastic encouragement of the previous incumbent and a number of the congregation, S. John's has become a dues-paying member of Tyne and Wear Citizens, the North East chapter of Citizens UK. Tyne and Wear Citizens has a successful campaigning record on poverty, safety and mental health, and S. John's has been heavily involved in many of its events and initiatives. The benefits of membership are both internal and external. Internally, our involvement allows members of the congregation to find their voice; two members of the congregation have completed the Citizens UK's national training programme and are currently building an action team within S. John's. Externally, S. John's raises its public profile, builds networks with a diverse range of civil society action groups, and is articulating a mission as a city centre church orientated towards the common good.

The liturgy and music are attractive to many worshippers including the younger demographic. This is something we hope to build on in the future.

In Summer 2018 we held a very successful Vision Day, in which we looked at strengths, weaknesses, priorities and opportunities for the future, with an emphasis on growing the congregation. Our new incumbent will help us realise these ambitions.

2. The new Priest in Charge

To channel the energies of S. John's calls for a priest with both vision and a wide sympathy, able to embrace a congregation of disparate needs and ideals. An ability to think creatively is essential in helping S. John's to find an appropriate pattern of mission and ministry in the diocese, deanery and city centre. We look for a priest firmly based in the catholic tradition of the Church of England, who would sustain the liturgical and musical life of S. John's, and give firm support to the daily Mass. We would expect a good teacher and pastor who would nourish and deepen the spiritual life of the congregation.

3. The local community

The parish is a very compact area in the city centre, stretching from Blandford Street to Forth Street. It constitutes about half the area designated Graingertown, and contains relics of the medieval street pattern.

There is a high concentration of listed buildings, most of which no longer serve their original function, having been converted to bars, restaurants or dwellings. There has been a lot of building on the western side of the parish, where older buildings were demolished to make way for a new road. The church is surrounded on all sides by licensed premises and restaurants.

The revival of this part of the city has seen the growth of small businesses with which the church has established a rapport. Principal institutions include the Literary and Philosophical Society, the Assembly Rooms, Dance City, Newcastle Arts Centre, Tyne Theatre and Opera House and the Centre for Life. There are also a refugee centre, a food kitchen, a men's hostel, sheltered accommodation for young people at risk, Chinese sheltered accommodation and a number of hotels. The parish also includes the areas known respectively as Chinatown and the "Pink Triangle".

The North East Futures UTC has recently opened in the parish.

The majority of new dwellings are occupied by non-family units, mostly young people and students. In the last few years the rapid development of private purpose-built student accommodation has seen over 350 extra student beds added to the parish.

Communication with residents in the parish is in many cases prevented by the design of the buildings.

4. The Church Community

The congregation is eclectic, almost all living outside the parish, and some travelling a considerable distance to be at S. John's.

Members of the congregation are attracted to the traditions of S. John's, and there is a strong sense of community and loyalty. There is a wide range of opinion concerning the ordination of women. It has long been felt, however, that the views of all should be respected. S. John's is entirely supportive of the five Guiding Principles approved by the House of Bishops, with particular emphasis on mutual flourishing.

We are united in our belief that, as a city centre church, we are committed to be an open church. It is our understanding that this means that we should keep the church open daily for those who wish to use it for prayer or quietness, or who seek material or other help; also for visitors from the UK and abroad who are interested in the building and what it stands for. Equally, we believe we should be open to the needs of the world around us. So we value the daily Mass with intercessions for the city and the world.

5. Statistics

Population	2000
Electoral Roll	89
Average Sunday communicants	45
Average weekly communicants	25
Average Sunday attendance	50
Baptisms	2016:2 2017:1 2018:3
Weddings	2016:1 2017:1 2018:1
Funerals	2016: 3 2017:4 2018:3

The dashboard for S. John's can be seen on page 6.

6. Church buildings

Place of Worship: a Grade 1 listed medieval structure, standing at the intersection of two major routes through the city, and close to the Central Station. Following a successful Lottery funding application, a programme of renovation has recently taken place involving repairs to stonework and windows and a complete redecoration of the interior

Parish Centre: built in the 1950s, this has been modernised and comprises a main hall with stage, kitchen and WC facilities, choir vestry and practice room. The choir vestry is the only part of the building to which we have not been able to provide easy access for the disabled.

The hall is used extensively by a wide range of community groups, providing a much needed income. We use it ourselves for our weekly Saturday coffee morning, for coffee after Mass on Sundays and occasionally for a parish lunch.

Churchyard: this is closed and is now looked after by Newcastle City Council. Its grass, trees and shrubs, with seating, provide a green space in the city centre. Recent years have seen the planting of Spring bulbs and the establishment of a herb garden; we have beehives (Geordie Bees) on the roof of the hall.

7. Patterns of Worship

Sundays: Solemn Choral Mass is celebrated at 10.00am (Order 1 Traditional)
BCP Matins is said at 8.30am and Evensong at 3.30pm, with Choral Evensong once a month.

Weekdays: Mass is celebrated daily, at 12.10pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 10.30am on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and at 10.00 am on Saturdays.
The daily Mass is celebrated by a member of a team of mainly retired local clergy.

The Offices are BCP: Matins at 8.30am, Evensong on Mondays- Thursdays at 3.30pm

The Angelus is said three times daily.

Major Feast Days: Solemn Choral Mass is celebrated at 7.30pm.

8. Church Traditions

Catholic; traditional language and liturgy; vestments are worn and incense is used.

Mass is celebrated daily and the Sacrament of Reconciliation is available.

There is a strong emphasis on music, both choral and congregational.

There is permanent reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.

9. Church Activities

Regular groups: we run a Lent course, usually at lunchtime.

Children and Youth Work: Young organists are taught and practice facilities are available here. We have a well-established choral bursary scheme for young people and students.

Clubs/Societies: The Newcastle University Society of Change Ringers practises at S. John's. They ring regularly, sometimes with other visiting groups.

Support for missions: There is support for charitable endeavours throughout the year, and the congregation is generous in its support of ad hoc appeals.

Social Work: We maintain a daily presence in church, which offers a ministry to all comers, some of whom have a wide range of personal difficulties; these include homeless people and asylum seekers. The coffee morning every Saturday in the Parish Centre offers companionship as well as food and drink at easily affordable prices. The Compassionate Friends use the centre once a month as a drop-in and we host an annual service for bereaved parents.

Faith Sharing Events or Programmes: We keep the church open every day from 8.30am.

We take part in Heritage Open Days, when guided tours of the church are available.

We have a wide range of visitors throughout the year, and information leaflets are available in eight languages. As part of our Heritage Lottery grant, all our leaflets were reviewed and a new guide leaflet produced, as well as informative roller banners. We have leaflets available, in English, on various aspects of S. John's and past figures associated with the church.

The church is used for exhibitions and events, including the Late Shows and a Medieval Day; an art installation by Katia Kameli, "*Ritournelle*", and a sound installation by Chris Littlewood, "*Urban Resonances*" have both brought many visitors to church from beyond the regular congregation.

Our Blessing of the Crib and Pets service on Christmas Eve attracts a wide variety of people and pets, including many who don't necessarily attend church.

The parish website (www.stjohnthebaptistnewcastle.co.uk) and Facebook page (Church of St John the Baptist Newcastle) provide information about S. John's, about times of services and about special events taking place.

Parochial Charities: One of our Readers, Sheila Turnbull, is on the chaplaincy team at the People's Kitchen; this year they received the Harvest Festival collection. We also support Tyneside Changing Lives, the Joseph Cowen Centre, Shelter and CGL Harm Reduction Service.

Choir and Music:

S. John's has a competent choir, with a large repertoire of Mass settings and anthems, which supports the congregation on Sundays and Feast Days as well as singing Choral Evensong on a monthly basis. There are 8 Choral bursaries for 14-21-year-olds, which provide an excellent opportunity for young people to become involved in church life as well as enhancing the choir and improving their musicianship. The choir go on weekend trips to sing in cathedrals as well as singing in local churches for weddings and other celebrations.

We are fortunate to have a fine Harrison and Harrison organ and we have an Organ Scholarship: the Geoffrey Watson Organ Scholarship (set up in memory of a former Director of Music) is awarded annually to a suitable student, enabling them to have tuition and to learn the art of accompanying a service. It is externally funded by NOSET. A series of lunchtime concerts on the first Saturday of each month provides a healthy income to the music fund and the opportunity for local (and further afield!) musicians to perform. We also have occasional evening concerts to fundraise and to provide a venue for visiting performers.

Musica Johannis, an octet based at S. John's, is an accomplished chamber choir which gives concerts at S. John's and elsewhere, raising money for church funds and other worthy causes.

The church is a member of:

The Church Union

The Royal School of Church Music

The Northumbria Historic Churches Trust

Durham and Northumberland Association of Bell-ringers

Tyne and Wear Citizens.

We have a light burning in the Holy House in Walsingham.

Members of our congregation are involved in a variety of activities and institutions that interact with S. John's, including:

Geordie Bees, The Compassionate Friends, The Society of S. Wilfred and S. Hilda, The Society of Mary, the Friary at Alnmouth, Forward in Faith, the Literary and Philosophical Society, Mental Health Action Team, Newcastle City Council, the Guild of the Servants of the Sanctuary and various music groups.

10. Ministry

There are two licensed Readers: Derek Walton (PTO) and Sheila Turnbull.

In addition to the Readers, there are six members of the congregation licensed to administer Holy Communion.

Members of the congregation lead the intercessions and read the lessons every Sunday and Feast Day.

There is a team of altar servers, both men and women.

The Parochial Church Council meets regularly.

The Readers share in looking after home communicants, and are responsible for them during the interregnum.

The church, during hours of opening, is always staffed by volunteers, one or more, who offer a ministry of welcome to visitors.

11. Finance

In 2018 the total income amounted to approximately £68,000. The major items of income were:

Collections	£38,500 (85% by planned giving, 70% gift aided)
Fund-raising	£6000
Income from Parish Centre	£8670 (inc. costs)
Other	£1,300

The church has £278,000 in funds, some of which are designated for specific purposes, others for general use.

Parish Share of £45,000 was paid out of £56,000 asked. The incumbent's expenses, including council tax, water charges, telephone and travel expenses were paid in full.

12. Relationships with neighbouring parishes and other clergy.

These are good, and close at times. We have a rota of dedicated clergy who support our weekday Masses.

We maintain contacts with our neighbours and those further afield through Deanery Synod.

13. Ecumenical relationships

S. John's maintains a presence in Newcastle city Centre Churches Together. We have taken part in the week of prayer for Christian unity and in the pulpit exchange, and there are links with S. Mary's RC cathedral, including a joint Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. The icon of S. John the Baptist was given to us by S. Mary's after they had used S. John's for weekday Masses during a restoration.

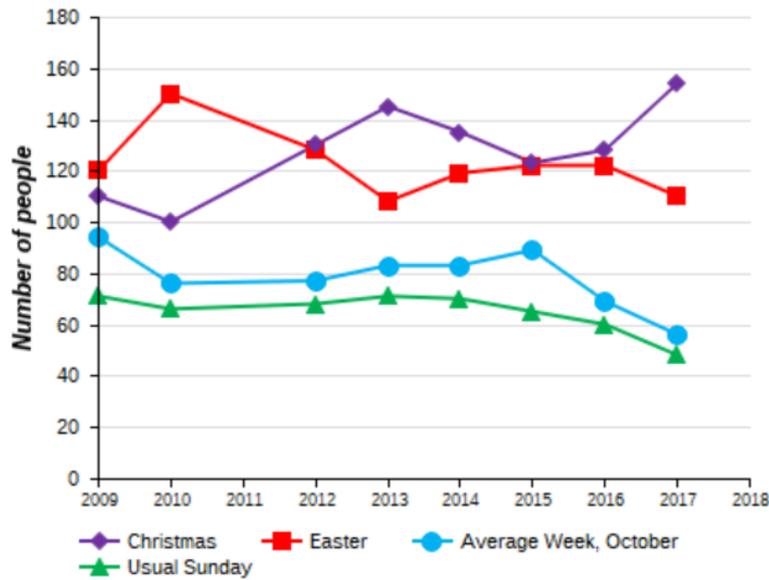
For the last four years, S. John's has been the host church for the Greek Orthodox church of S. Anthony the Great. They have become an integral part of our community, with a representative on the PCC.

14. Parsonage

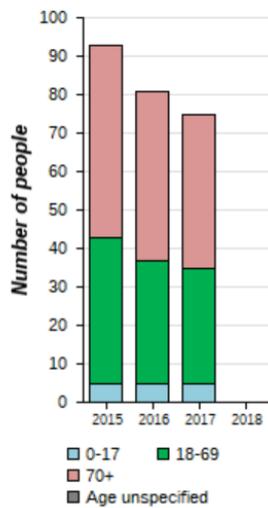
A semi-detached brick built property dating from between the wars, and situated in a highly desirable quiet residential part of Jesmond. There are four bedrooms, gas-fired central heating, a single garage, a small garden with paved drive at the front and a small enclosed paved garden at the rear. There are good schools in the area, and there is excellent access to a range of shops in Jesmond.

It is a five minute walk to the Metro station in Ilford Road, and a short journey to Central Station, just opposite the church.

. Attendance Summary, (2009-2018)



Worshipping Community,



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Christmas	110	100	-	130	145	135	123	128	154
Easter	120	150	-	128	108	119	122	122	110
Average Week, October	94	76	-	77	83	83	89	69	56
Usual Sunday	71	66	-	68	71	70	65	60	48