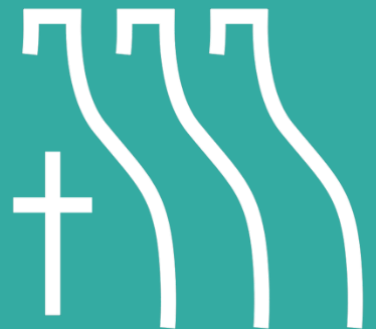


North Potteries Team Ministry



March 2022

Team Vicar Profile



Foreword by the Team Rector

Fr Andrew Swift



This is a very exciting time to minister in Stoke-on-Trent. In recent years the city has undergone real transformation as part of its bid to become City of Culture, whilst that bid was unsuccessful much of the work was continued.

Unfortunately the Covid-19 pandemic has taken its toll as it has everywhere; at the same time it has opened up fresh opportunities and new ways of thinking, working, and ministering.

The Anglo-Catholic tradition has, of course, a long history of engagement with social regeneration, outreach, and pastoral care; with the formation of the Team Ministry (under the care of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet) from three independent parishes we hope to reconnect with that important vision and mission. We firmly believe that together we are stronger, and we can achieve more. For us the pandemic has enabled the transition from three parishes to one Team to be a gradual one and though the Team was formed in the midst of the first lockdown in May 2020 we are continuing to explore what this new entity will actually mean. With so much change, and so many opportunities, this really is an exciting opportunity to get involved in shaping a truly missional community. Our parishes here have a long history of good pastoral ministry, we take seriously Jesus' example of being out and about in our communities speaking of God and the Kingdom.

Even in the midst of the pandemic we have seen glimpses of growth, new people, and deepened faith and it is hoped that the Team Vicar will share in driving that forward with loving enthusiasm. I hope the new Team Vicar will relish the opportunity to be part of something new and transformative. As I look to the future of the New Team, I see a time of flourishing; a time to take stock and treasure the deposit of faith, and a time to build on the deep and solid foundations laid by our predecessors over many years of faithful ministry. I also see a time of change a time to imagine afresh, to share ministry across the three communities in new ways; we are parishes which love to try things, we aren't afraid to fail sometimes but we pick ourselves up and try something else. Above all we enjoy celebrating and feasting as we seek to reflect the joy and feasting of Heaven and draw others in to God's love.

Here's Looking At You!

Our hope is that God is calling to us someone who has a heart for mission and an eagerness to be a pastor.

Personal specifications can be so broad they sound like the parish wouldn't settle for Jesus as their priest; at the heart of our person specification is the desire to find a priest who is real, a priest who is as in tune with himself as with God. A person who is aware of his limits but who can recognize and empower the gifts of others. We aren't perfect and we don't expect you to be either, but we pray you will want to walk in the Way with us.

Vision – the Team is still a new and exciting venture for us, we would love a priest of vision to work with the Team Rector to help build the Team, to develop and sense of unity, and to harness the potential of the combined ministries of S. Saviour's, S. Werburgh's, and Holy Trinity.

Insight – growth in teaching and understanding is at the forefront of our minds as we all seek to carry the Gospel to our communities. We need a priest who can speak to us with insight in equipping all of us, at home, in school, or at work to be evangelists and missionaries.

Challenge – we want to be challenged, we recognize that challenge is necessary for growth; don't be afraid to be rigorous in helping us to understand our traditions and building on those foundations that we might be revitalized for a new generation of ministry.

Nurture – sometimes we can lack confidence, we hope you will support and nurture us in our catholic faith. Help us to grow into the hub of catholic mission that we know we can and must be.

Co-operate – seems obvious of course but we hope you will want to work, gladly, with the Bishops of Ebbsfleet, Lichfield, and Stafford, as well as the Archdeacon of Stoke on Trent and the assistant clergy throughout the Team.

Missional – everyone says they want it but we really mean it, we seek a priest who will lead and inspire us in mission; who will reach out to the local community in all its forms and help us, by your example, to do the same.

Laugh – we love to enjoy our faith, so we hope you do too. We hope you will want to join us at social gatherings as well as lead us in worship, don't take yourself too seriously!

Of course, we know its not all about what you can do for us! We need you to know that we will love and care for you if you become our Team Vicar.

We want to make sure that you take good and proper care of yourself and so we pray that you will be rooted in Anglo-Catholic spirituality. It is a cliché to say we want a “man of prayer” after all we’d hope it goes without saying that a priest should be a person of prayer! What we hope is that prayer isn’t just something that you do on our behalf but is something that sustains and strengthens you; that your relationship with God is joyful and fulfilling.

We also want to make sure that you will look after yourself not just spiritually but physically too, we expect you to take care of your body because it is as important as your soul, so we pray you will be a priest who knows how to say “no” sometimes, that you will take you day of rest and not worry about us, that you will make full use of your holidays, and that if you have a family you give them the time, attention, and commitment that they deserve.

If you can cook that would be great (but by no means essential!) - we enjoy food and fellowship; and if you like to exercise, we’re fairly sure Fr Andrew can recommend a few gyms or you can do battle with him on the fencing piste!

We hope you will have a good sense of humour because we love to laugh, we believe that church, that faith, should be fun, that coming to church shouldn’t be a chore but a highlight of the week.

Practically you’ll find being IT literate a great help as the clergy often find themselves using Powerpoint in schools, or for the more informal services, and of course with the dreaded admin tasks that inevitably come.

Also having your own car or other means of transport (motorbikes have been known here!) would be a great advantage as there is a great deal of scattered pastoral work, and the Crematorium isn’t particularly close.

Here's Looking At Us!

OK so we've told you something of what we would hope from you but this is a two way street, it's time for us to make some commitments to you as well.

We promise to do everything we can to work with you. This has and continues to be a time of great change, in each of the three former parishes there had been long incumbencies and we may have got a bit set in our ways and we know that in order to push forward we need some fresh starts in places. We know that'll be a bumpy road and if we seem a bit reticent don't worry we'll get there, after all we have survived a plague!

We promise that we will pray with you and for you.

We promise that we will offer you whatever support we can.

We promise that we will respect your time off and holidays.

We promise to help you make your house a home, and to keep it that way, helping with decoration and minor repairs as you ask.

We promise to pay your expenses promptly and fully.

We promise to work with you to develop the Team and its cohesion.

Above all we promise to love you and your family as you become new members of ours.

Looking Back

Stoke on Trent is full of history, much of it complicated, and much of it confusing to those coming from outside and that of our parishes is no different, yet history is so important to us. If you come to us we will rejoice in telling you our stories as you become part of them.



Holy Trinity Parish was carved out of St John's Parish in the late 1840s. Services were held in a room in Nile Street until the building of Holy Trinity in 1850-1; the original church stood in the same street and was surrounded by dense housing. The cost was met in part by grants from the Incorporated Society, the Diocesan Church Extension Society, the Peel Memorial Fund, and by subscriptions.

The patronage of the living, a perpetual curacy at first and a vicarage from 1868, was vested in the Crown and the Bishop of Lichfield, who present alternately. The former church of Holy Trinity was built in the Gothic style to the designs of G. T. Robinson and consisted of a nave, chancel, aisles, and northeast tower with a spire. A side-chapel and vestries were added in 1895.

In 1895 the daughter church of S. Werburgh was built in Hamil Road; it is a red brick building and was built on land said to have been given by the Wood family, at first it was a mission chapel within the parish of Holy Trinity, this was to cater for the people who lived in the newly built Park Estate it became the centre of a conventional district in 1929 and a parish in 1939 under a perpetual curate presented by the Bishop of Lichfield.





With the construction of the Stanfield Estate the S. Werburgh Parish centre moved to a new building, the present church on High Lane.

In 1958, there were found to be structural problems with the original church and it was decided to close the building in Nile Street and occupy the former daughter church. In order to connect the “new” church to its parish, boundary changes became necessary.

If you are confused by all the movement and changing of names worry not, from now on we shall only refer to the Hamil Road church as Holy Trinity, and the High Lane church as S. Werburgh.

S. Saviour’s church in neighbouring Smallthorne was born out of a different parish all together. It was carved out of the parish of St Bartholomew, Norton-le-moors and is under the patronage of the Rector of that Parish. S. Saviour’s was built by the landowner, Lord Norton, whose family continue to be influential anglo-catholics at Walsingham, as a chapel of ease in 1860 and later became a parish in its own right. S. Saviour’s retains a country parish church feel and was built in the style of the fourteenth century.



Looking Forward

Whilst we treasure our past we look eagerly to the future in the prayerful anticipation that as God has begun to work wonders among us he will continue to do so!

When the former incumbent of S. Saviour's moved, Fr Andrew was appointed as Interim Minister and Catholic Parishes Mission Partner for the North Stoke Deanery for a period, initially, of three years. The purpose of this appointment was to gradually work with the three separate parishes towards a greater cohesion and the prospect of pastoral re-organisation as toward the end of the three-year period the incumbents of both S. Werburgh and Holy Trinity were expected to retire.

Sadly in May of 2016, Fr Keith, the incumbent of S. Werburgh's died suddenly; naturally this changed much of our activity and thought, but enabled the incumbents of S. Saviour's and Holy Trinity, Fr Andrew and Fr Brian respectively, to work together with the PCC, congregation, and Parish of S. Werburgh's. This has lead us to the conclusion that the future of Anglo-Catholic worship, ministry, and mission in this area is best served by the development of a Team Ministry. The history and natural demographics of the areas immediately suggested a re- union of the parishes of Holy Trinity and S. Werburgh, under the care of a Team Vicar, with the post of Team Rector being undertaken by the incumbent at S. Saviour's.





Whilst we cherish our independent, though entwined, pasts, we look forward with increased confidence to our combined future that together, as a Team, we will be even better enabled to do what we love - sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with all in our area.



One of the difficulties we have had to compute is the idea that the churches no longer have “their own vicar” that we have gone from three clergy to two, with the arrival of the Team Vicar; however in the time that we have had another priest on a placement with us it hasn’t felt like that at all. In fact we feel that rather than only having one priest we all feel as if we have two. Fr Andrew has been very keen to make sure that each church will feel as if they are gaining a priest rather than us losing one.



We hope that the new Team Vicar will want to join in this forming tradition and will want to fully engage with life at S. Saviour’s as well as Holy Trinity and S. Werburgh’s, as Fr Andrew also strives to fully engage across the Team.

As we stand at the moment:

S. Werburgh – Electoral Roll 24 – is located on High Lane, a prominent road connecting the parish with the commercial centre, Hanley. It is the largest and newest of the three churches

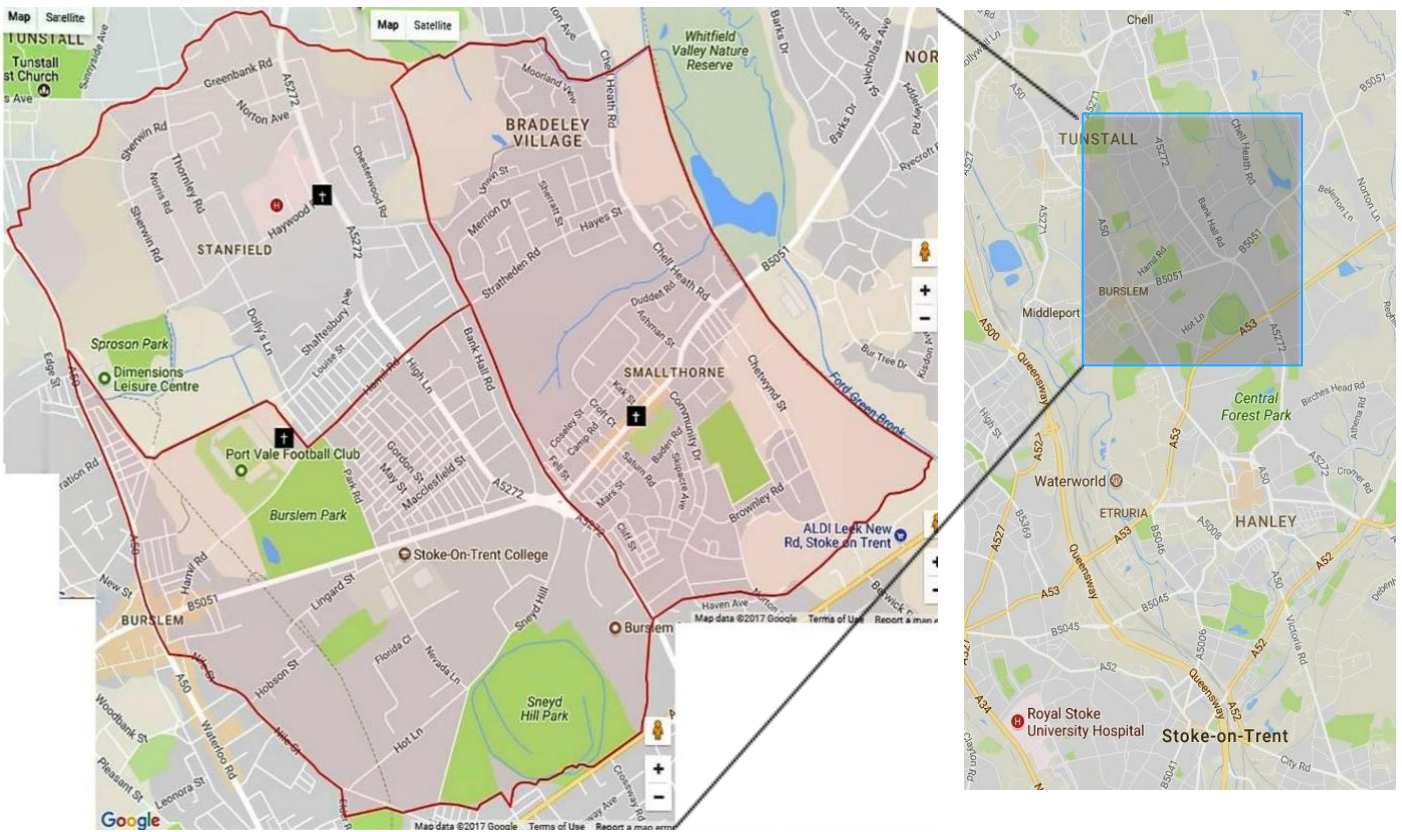
Holy Trinity – Electoral Roll 40 – is located on Hamil Road adjacent to Port Vale Football Club. It is the smallest in size of the three church buildings.

website: holytrinitysneyd.org

S. Saviour – Electoral Roll 72 – is located in the middle of the ‘village’ of Smallthorne where it remains a community focal point and is the oldest of the churches.

website: smallthorne.org

Team website: nptm.org.uk



Stoke on Trent

We've often had a bit of a bad press in the past but in reality Stoke is a wonderful place to live and work.

Stoke-on-Trent is a city covering an area known as The Potteries because of its world famous pottery industry. Like so many areas, the city has seen a considerable decline in its traditional industries over the years and still struggles with the closure of so many of the potteries "pot banks" of which it was so proud. However, there are now encouraging signs of the rebirth of the industry and the city is home to a number of well-known manufacturers including, Wedgwood, Dudson, Steelite, Churchill, Moorcroft, and Emma Bridgewater.

The city itself is made up of six towns: Stoke-upon-Trent (Stoke), Hanley, Burslem (the Mother Town because it was here that the pottery industry first flourished under Wedgwood), Tunstall, Longton, and Fenton. Hanley is the main commercial centre and is host to a shopping centre and several major retailers, there is also a thriving market. The Cultural Quarter is also located in Hanley; it is the home of the Regent, and Reginald Mitchell theatres, as well as the Victoria Hall. The nearby market town of Newcastle-under-Lyme is home to the New Vic theatre, a theatre set in the round and well-know for its innovative interpretations. Between them, these venues host a range of performances, including plays, concerts, live comedy, as well as ballet, opera, choirs, and tribute bands. There is a particularly strong musical tradition here and the Victoria Hall



hosts an annual concert season, but the tradition is also reflected in the work of a number of local amateur choral societies.

A number of pubs host gatherings for folk music and rock bands, as indeed do larger venues. Stoke was shortlisted for City of Culture 2021, and despite not being successful in that bid the city is in the process of completing a large number of public works to modernise the infrastructure and enhance its cultural prestige.

The city is also home to the award-winning Gladstone Pottery Museum, the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery with its permanent exhibition of the Staffordshire Hoard, the Etruria Industrial Museum which features a working steam engine, as well as Ford Green Hall a Stuart farmhouse, now listed as an historic house museum.

The city has good transport links; we are served by two junctions of the M6, which is currently being upgraded to a Smart Motorway from junction 15, the first at Stoke to junction 19 for Manchester. The A500 runs through the city making access to different parts of it much easier. The A50 allows for easy access to Derby and the M1. Stoke Station has direct links to London (1hr 35mins), Manchester (35 mins) and Birmingham (50 mins) as well as Bristol and Southampton for jaunts further afield.





There are two universities in the area, Keele University and Staffordshire University, as well as a large number of schools and colleges.

World of Wedgwood stands on the edge of the city at Barlaston (which happens to be the home of the Bishop of Stafford) and has recently undergone a huge renovation; the site includes the Wedgwood factory, shops, a tea room, café, as well as a museum. There are also monthly artisan and craft fairs and opportunities to throw pottery.



Middleport Pottery is also nearby and may be familiar to anyone who has watched the Great British Throw Down. It is an area which has also undergone a lot of renovation with the help and support of the Prince's Trust.



North Staffordshire is an area which hosts some beautiful gardens, including National Trust's Biddulph Grange and Trentham Gardens which also has a large garden centre and shopping village; it is also very dog and child friendly, so if your family includes children or pooches you may find a second summer home there. The city itself is also filled with a number of large well maintained green spaces. A number of lakes and country parks can be found around as well. Many of these are the regenerated remains of old collieries. Rudyard Lake and Westport Lake are near to the Team Parishes and are perfect for a peaceful walk.



This part of North Staffordshire has also been an historic centre for Methodism. Wesley himself preached in Burslem and the Primitive Methodists held their famous camp meetings at the nearby folly on Mow Cop. As a result for many families there is a strong Methodist identity.

And of course, no profile about Stoke would be complete without pointing out Alton Towers is only 17 miles away – need we say more?!

For those who prefer quieter thrills, the city is close to the Staffordshire Moorlands and the Peak District with its unrivalled scenery and countless walks. The beauty of the North Staffordshire countryside often surprises visitors. One has only to drive for a couple of miles from our churches to be in a semi-rural environment, and another ten miles brings one to the edge of the Peak District, while the beautiful countryside of Cheshire and Shropshire are only a similar distance in the opposite direction.

The North Wales coast can be reached in just over an hour by car and a great many people from Stoke spend weekends or holidays in Llandudno.

Whoever is appointed as our new Team Vicar will find the people of Stoke-on-Trent very friendly and welcoming, and whilst he is busy with ministry any family he may have will find plenty of enjoyable things to do!



The Deanery and Diocese

Although our parishes are a part of The Society we are deeply committed to engaging fully with the life of the wider Deanery, Diocese and Church. We engage with Deanery Synod, the clergy make attending chapter a priority and we welcome candidates of all traditions on placements preparatory for ordination.

In October 2017 the Deaneries of Stoke and Stoke North were joined together to form one city wide Deanery. Chapter meets regularly and is very well attended, it is expected that the Team Vicar will also make attending Chapter a priority. Fr Andrew presently serves on the Deanery Standing Committee, as a Bishop's Adviser for Vocations and as an Archbishops' Evangelist. Prior to his retirement Fr Brian had served on General Synod which demonstrate the commitment of the parishes, and the Team to the wider Diocese, and Church of England.



Our Area Dean is Shaun Morris, he is the vicar of S. Matthias in Hanford, near Trentham. He has served as Area Dean since the merger of the two deaneries. He is supported by two assistant area deans Tommy Merry and Dave Street.

The Bishop of Ebbsfleet's representative for the north of the Diocese is Fr Simon Maddison, vicar of S. Michael's, Cross Heath and S. Paul's Newcastle-under-Lyme. Fr Simon calls the Ebbsfleet clergy together for prayer and fellowship. Before taking up his present post Fr Simon was a parish priest in London. As it happens he trained for ordination alongside Fr Andrew at S. Stephen's House, they were deaconed together at S. Paul's Cathedral in London, and because Fr Andrew's training parish was Fr Simon's sending one they were priested together at S. Mary's in Hendon.



S. Werburgh



At S. Werburgh's we are a warm and caring congregation and in our new Team Vicar we are looking for someone who will nurture and lead the church in worshipping God, in celebrating the hope we have in Jesus, and in honouring Mary and the saints. We are seeking a priest who will take the parish and its mission forward into the future.

Since the 1960s S. Werburgh's has been Anglo-Catholic in its liturgy and theology. The mass is sung every Sunday and said twice during the week on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings.

Feasts and Solemnities are observed and we always enjoy welcoming regulars from the other two churches as all of our congregations become increasingly fluid

In 1993 the PCC, seeking to pursue mission and ministry from the richness of catholic tradition passed Resolutions A and B, and in November 2016 the PCC passed the new Resolution under the House of Bishops Declaration.

In May 2016 our previous incumbent died suddenly, and now after a long period of prayer and reflection we seek to drive ourselves forward, to grow our congregation and we seek a priest who can help us to thrive.

In addition to the parishes of the Team there are a number of other anglo- catholic parishes locally, S. Werburgh's is the largest of these and also happens to be quite central. We hope therefore that the new Team Vicar will be able to encourage the development of the church as a regional hub of anglo-catholicism.

The Parish

The church itself lies about halfway between the centres of Burslem and Tunstall and is almost in middle of the parish. The largest part of the parish is known as Stanfields and is a large housing estate.

The Social Mix in the Parish

The boundaries of the parish are not particularly obvious and are narrowly drawn. However, as with many parishes, many who live outside the boundaries believe this to be their parish church.

It is a compact parish of mixed housing: council estates (some now owner- occupied), terraced houses, detached and semi-detached post war houses, together with some modern development.

Social deprivation is apparent in some parts of the parish with many of the problems that this can typically bring, although other parts of the parish have reasonably affluent residents. In total the population of the parish is 5,500.





The Local Community

The parish is home to the Haywood Academy (11-16), judged 'good' in every category in their 2017 Ofsted inspection, and in 2015 were the only school in the country to win two national awards from the Department of Education - the regional Pupil Premium Award and the regional Character Education Award.

The Haywood Academy also has a Sixth Form located just beyond the boundaries of Holy Trinity, in Burslem's town centre.

Directly opposite the church is the Haywood Hospital and walk-in centre. Since his arrival as curate Fr Glen has re-built the relationship with the hospital and both he and Fr Andrew are volunteer chaplains leading worship and regularly (Covid-19 permitting!) visiting both staff and patients

There are a few small local shops nearby including a couple making and selling the (in)famous Staffordshire oatcake.

On the south west edge of the parish is the large factory site of Dudson, along with Dimensions Leisure Centre, another gym, and a moderately-sized Asda supermarket.

Worship

The worship of S. Werburgh's is in the more traditional catholic style and we hope the new Team Vicar will continue to support this and help us to deepen our spirituality

The Parish Mass is sung at 9.30am on Sundays, said masses are also offered on Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm and Saturday mornings at 10am.

The increasingly popular Rosary Group meets at 6.20pm on Wednesday evenings between evening prayer and mass

Stations of the Cross (often led by lay people) are followed during Lent.

Historically Holy Week and the Triduum have kept with full ceremonial although for Easter 2021 as a way of solidifying our life as a Team each day of the Triduum was celebrated in a different church; this was a bit of an experiment but it was wonderful to see so many people coming together from the different churches.

The Assumptiontide Festival which used to be a significant date in the calendar was revived in 2017 and although it has been a smaller event recently due to the pandemic, we hope will again become highlight.

Hymns Old and New is the principal hymn book along with the New English Hymnal. The congregation enjoy both traditional and modern hymns and responses. Unfortunately the feast of S. Werburgh falls in February which is not usually the ideal time of year for a party, however we keep the feast with Solemn First Vespers the evening before and then a Sung Mass on the day followed by a 'faith supper' – one whereby the Team Rector prays the people will bring and share enough food!



We like to encourage the full involvement and participation of all God's people in worship with altar servers, lay Eucharistic Ministers, readers, and intercessors.

S. Werburgh's prides itself on its high standard of worship.

The Congregation

The congregation is drawn from both within and around the parish and broadly speaking is made up of three groups

- Those who live locally
- Those who used to live locally but have moved, returning for worship (common to many Potteries churches)
- Those who have been drawn to the church because of its worship tradition and teaching.

Apart from teenagers, all age groups are represented in the congregation but the largest number is of older people.



The Church Building

The present Church was consecrated in 1953.



The church is a large brick building typical of its time and retaining many of its original features. The main body of the church is on the upper level, accessible from High Lane, its large and open, and on a sunny day flooded with sun light from the large plain glass windows. The decoration of the church is generally plain so as to accentuate

the brightness and the space, however a number of saints adorn the pillars of the nave. The church has a functioning pipe organ and has been gifted a Viscount electric organ. A large Pieta and image of S. Werburgh greet people as they come in and Our Lady of Fatima presides over the baptistry.

Outside the church, to the rear of the building there is a small but useful car park. The building is in reasonably good order, the high windows have been made watertight and damage to the plaster work has been repaired. The church is heated by six free standing gas heaters. A quinquennial is now due.

The chancel is raised above the floor level of the church by three steps. The sanctuary is raised a further step and the High Altar, on another, is east-facing. At either end of the north side aisle stands an altar, at the east end on dedicated to Our Lady of Walsingham and the west a chantry altar.



Originally the organ console was located in the chancel, when this was moved to its present position at the back of church space became available for an enclosed confessional. Over time these fell out of use and became storage spaces; however, as churches re-opened their doors in 2021 after the lockdown this seemed an appropriate moment to restore the confessionals. A remote control now operates a colour changing light-bulb to indicate whether a priest is available to hear confessions or not.

The church contains, as one would expect, a set of Stations of the Cross which are used especially during Lent.

Beneath the chancel is the chapel of Our Lady and S. Chad which can be accessed from the car park. This chapel seats up to 30 people and was used in the years BC (before Covid) for weekday masses it too has an east facing altar. As restrictions ease we anticipate returning there, especially in the colder months. The chapel was originally the choir vestry. Beside the chapel can be found the large sacristy with impressive vestment cupboards. The sacristy contains a number of vestments and plate.



The Church Hall

The Church Hall was built in 1963 next to the church and has a full sprung dance floor.

The hall is the only community building in the parish but despite this is not fully used and so we are looking for ways in which we can reintroduce it to the wider community. The kitchen has recently been refurbished by members of the congregation.

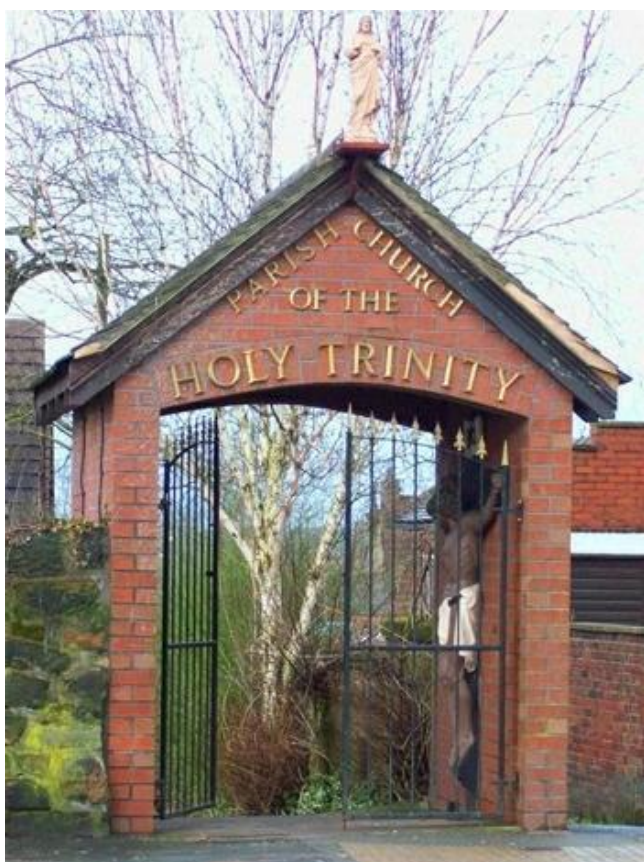
The hall can accommodate up to 100 people and it is used for church social gatherings such as quiz nights and faith suppers, as well as various parties, Summer and Christmas Fairs, and post-mass Sunday refreshments.

It is also used in the week by a keep fit class and by a martial arts club.



Holy Trinity

Sneyd Church has been anglo-catholic almost from its inception. Michael Yelton refers to it in his book “Anglican Papalism” as an example of a church which moved away from Roman Catholic influences in the 1920s in order to follow the “English Use”. This was accompanied by a strongly socialist ideology, described at length in “Earth and Altar” by Canon Donald Gray.



By the 1970s, for various reasons, the church had become less distinctly Anglo-Catholic, not least because the “parish communion movement” was gaining influence. The numbers attending the church also declined and there was a suggestion that the church be closed in 1980. Fortunately, the deanery Standing Committee fought against closure and a priest-in-charge appointed. He moved in 1982 and Fr Brian, the living being re-instated, as appointed in 1983.

Today there is an average congregation of 20-30 children and adults. As the smallest of our church buildings the restrictions around the Covid-19 pandemic have had the biggest impact here, and there are still some whose confidence needs rebuilding as we move forward and hope to return the larger numbers we saw pre-pandemic. The majority

are from the local neighbourhood while a number travel in because of personal connections and/or satisfaction with the style of worship, theology, and fellowship.

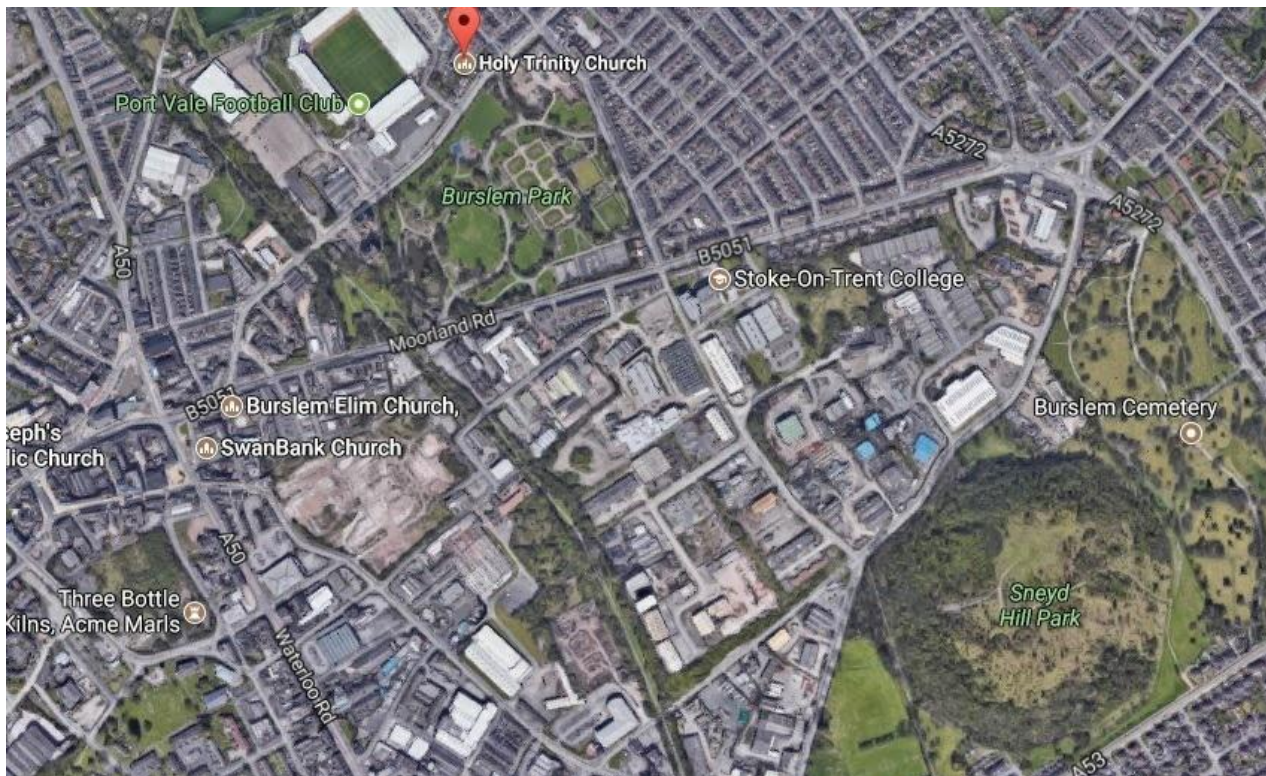
The Parish

Sneyd parish is large comprised of Stoke-on-Trent College (Burslem Campus), a lovely municipal park, playing fields, Port Vale Football Club, various industrial estates, and a large municipal cemetery, as well as derelict land formerly occupied by Royal Doulton Pottery.

The residential properties are:

- A large terraced house area near the church called The Park Estate. This is a mixture of owner-occupied and, more recently, rented accommodation. There are large properties sprinkled in amongst the standard 2-3 bedroom houses
- A smaller terraced house area near the centre of Burslem
- A medium sized estate of 1910s- 1930s semis and detached houses
- “a leafy suburb”.
- A new housing estate, currently under construction Nile Street

In addition, there are a number of small shops. The mixture makes for a parish of great interest and variety. The police and fire stations are also located in the parish and have been part of Fr Brian’s pastoral care. It is important to note there are also two state schools which have had strong links with the parish over the years.





Worship

Both of the last two priests here stood more firmly in the catholic tradition and the daily mass was restored, catholic ceremonial reinstated, and the teaching very firmly expounded. Pilgrimages to Walsingham (especially the youth pilgrimage) have had a marked influence on the worship. Although the order of the liturgy is clearly formal and catholic and the hymnody principally from the English and New English Hymnals, the small size of the building allows for an informality and an interaction between the priest and the people which is not always possible in larger churches.

Lay involvement is also a priority – reading, singing, serving, praying and so on. We try and ensure that the worship has a certain sparkle and the music is tackled with huge enthusiasm. The weekday masses are generally well supported and, again, enthusiastically celebrated – following the formation of the Team there is a daily mass in the parish but not always a daily mass in each church, however this is something we would seek to explore reviving. The Friday mass was always followed by a shared lunch, again something we hope a Team Vicar might revive.



Holy days of obligation are observed with a sung mass. Members of other churches regularly join us for these services if their own churches do not have these services or have them at times they can't attend. Likewise a number of our congregation will support special services in other churches. Holy Week is the high point of the year with good attendances during the Triduum; Holy Saturday being the major celebration. There is also a great deal of emphasis on partying together after mass.

The Church Building and Hall

The church and hall are joined by a sliding screen. This has advantages and disadvantages; the flow between the two is easy but makes using both for separate activities difficult. The hall is rented out to a weekly karate group and there are occasional children's parties.

In addition, there is a chapel for weekday masses when the weather is cold. The chapel also doubles as a very useful small meeting room. The Mothers' Union and Junior Church are based here.

A small but well-equipped kitchen, lavatories, and storerooms complete the useful spaces. The vicarage is almost attached to the church. Although there is no car park, Port Vale Football Club, located next to church, happily allows us to use their space. Access to both church and hall are wheelchair-friendly from the main road.

The church building is a standard 1890s hall, very similar to the school halls of the period; the decoration of the building and its fittings set it apart from other local churches. It has been described as "modern medieval". There are certainly the Edwardian influences of Bodley and Comper. Stained glass windows were rescued from the old church, as were the pews, altar, and some statues. Visiting clergy have noted the Spanish and South American influences in the décor.

The building is in very good condition and most of the recommendations made in the quinquennial report (October 2015), have been addressed. Another, however is now due.



The Vicarage



It is intended that the Team Vicar Holy Trinity on Hamil Road. The Vicarage is a relatively new build from the 1990s, it sits immediately in front of Holy Trinity Church with a small garden at the rear.

The house itself is large and spacious, despite the appearance from the outside! On entering the front door there is a hallway perfect for hanging coats, cloaks, and other vestments in liturgical limbo, as well as muddy shoes, prams, or dog leads. This hallway is separated from the rest of the house by frosted windows and a door, another door gives access to the large study.

Progressing further into the house there is a further large hallway from which each of the downstairs rooms can be individually accessed. To the right there is another entrance to the study, to the left access to the large fitted kitchen completed with island and breakfast bar; utility room, and through that, the garden. Ahead we find a modest dining room, next to that a toilet, finally at the foot of the stairs the large living room with French doors leading to the garden with its small pond. Two cloak cupboards are also to be found off this hallway.

Going upstairs we find a stained glass window halfway up, an inclusion not originally intended but a consideration to neighbours who feared being over-looked. It is one of those things that adds character and uniqueness to the place.

Upstairs a hallway runs the length of the house, again giving access to each room. To the left (overlooking the main road) are two large double rooms between which is to be found the bathroom and airing cupboard. On the right (overlooking the church and garden) we find another large double room which had been used as the Master Bedroom, a toilet, and a smaller single bedroom.

There is also access to a large loft space with a built-in folding ladder. The loft covers the enter footprint of the property and has a floor enabling it to be used for storage.

There is work that needs to be undertaken on the property and the Diocesan Property Department is at this time assessing what ingoing works will be undertaken, the parish will also assist with some costs towards decoration &c.



S. Saviour



Although not directly under the care of the Team Vicar, S. Saviour's is still an important part of the Team and the new priest will be a familiar face there too and so just a little information is supplied about the third part of the Team

S. Saviour's too has had a long history of Anglo-Catholicism which it retains to this day and the full round of the liturgical year is celebrated.

The congregation at S. Saviour's has steadily grown over the time that Fr Andrew has been with us and there has been a distinct shift in atmosphere. Of course every parish tells you that it is welcoming but S. Saviour's really is a very warm and friendly church, especially to visitors.



In the course of recent years various innovations have come about, the pews for instance have been moved to be at angles rather than facing directly forward; this may seem a strange and simple thing but has enabled the variety of worship to change. We now see one another more during worship which has engendered a feeling of family and inclusion. The large space at the front that this has left has meant that more informal acts of worship can take place to

include more interactive participation with the children (and adults!) it has also meant that for occasions such as weddings and funerals we have more space enabling both to take place with greater dignity and ease.



On Good Friday 2018 we decided to put the new commandment of Jesus, to love one another into practice and opened church for anyone to come in and pray, drink tea and coffee, and eat hot cross buns whilst members of the congregation went around the parish litter-picking in order to show our care for our community and to give something back.

This was such a success that on subsequent Good Fridays we have been joined by friends from a charity looking after refugees and asylum seekers who also want to give something back to the city and communities which they have now made their home. Sadly of course Covid-19 made this impossible in 2020 but were back at it in 2021.

The number at Sunday Mass pre-pandemic was regularly 35-40+ adults and children although the Church Family list of those who worship with us or receive communion at home stands at well over 100. Since returning to public worship we have seen that number fall to about 30 with more folk being ministered to at home, however we have continued to see signs of growth with several new people joining us.

In 2016 a fortnightly Children's Church service began as a means of encouraging young families preparing for baptism to begin to live out the promises they were to make and to spend time focused on teaching children the faith. This has grown over the years and we now see regular faces as well as those preparing for baptism, indeed a number of the children stay on afterwards for the main service and assist at the altar or as sidespeople. Since the formation of the Team, this service is in hiatus, however baptism families have been welcomed into the main worship which has led to adult baptisms too – a blessing in disguise. This is certainly an area where we would like to grow great lay-lead ministry.

Fr Andrew carries out an extensive funerals ministry and is the Deanery's "Funerals Champion" which means he encourages good practice and supports the training of clergy, not that he goes around bumping people off to create work!

Ongoing teaching and formation is an important part of life at S. Saviour's and there is a monthly evening prayer group, an annual Lent Course, and we will be run the Alpha Course as well.

Team-wide Views



Social and Fundraising Activities Across the Team we are very sociable, often in our parishes but increasingly more widely and this is something we hope the Team Vicar will be able to help us do further.

A thriving Baby and Toddler Group meets in the hall at Holy Trinity on Wednesdays. Something which has led which is a great joy for which we thank God. There are also social events organised for people in the community.

As noted earlier a martial arts club also meets at Holy Trinity; another as well as the Boogie Bounce exercise group meet in the hall at S. Werburgh's.



Other high spots of the year are the Trinity Sunday lunch, the Dedication Festival in November, and Holy Saturday parties. These are very much seen as extensions of the preceding worship.

At S. Werburgh's we hold annual Christmas and Summer Fairs, as well as regular raffles to help raise funds.

Quiz nights are held several times a year along with the old favourites – beetle drives and bingo. Usually we accompany these with a bring and share faith supper.



In recent years the Assumptiontide Festival has been given a new lease of life with Solemn Vespers, a procession, and Benediction. Fr Andrew is also very keen to promote devotion to S. Werburgh and to make more of her feast on 3rd February, this usually begins

with Solemn Vespers on 2nd February and a Solemn Mass on the day itself, followed, of course by food, drink, and fellowship!

Most of the Sunday congregation gathers in the hall after the mass to continue fellowship over refreshments. We hope the new Team Vicar will help us to encourage and develop our social and fundraising activities, especially those which can help bring congregation and community closer together.

At S. Saviour's, after some initial resistance it was decided to have refreshments after Sunday mass as well. It had been thought no-one would stay, in the end no one would leave! Following Our Lord's tradition of combining eating and drinking with teaching this is something we have really taken to. There are of course the traditional mulled wine and mince pies at the Carol Service, hot-cross buns on Good Friday, but also champagne and canapes after the Easter Vigil, and from 2019 a cooked breakfast after the mass of the dawn on Easter Day.

In June 2019 we began what we hoped would become a regular tradition when Bishop Geoff preach for us and this was followed by an open garden parish BBQ in the vicarage grounds, and much to everyone's relief there was barely any quiche! We hope Bishop Matthew will help to continue this for us!

Pilgrimage too continues to be an important part of our communal life with regular pilgrimages to Walsingham and plans are afoot for a pilgrimage to Rome in 2023 or 2024.





Pastoral and Sacramental Care

As with many parishes, particularly within the catholic tradition pastoral care of the sick and the dying is regarded as of immense importance. The clergy are ready and willing to be called out 24/7 in case of pastoral emergency or to administer the Last Rites.

Communion is regularly taken to those in hospital or the housebound, and the clergy regularly pay house calls to anyone in the congregation, just to say hello and see who things are going.

A lot of visiting is also undertaken by other members of the congregations as well, a reminder that our faith and fellowship is for more than Sunday.



Finances

On the whole the finances of the Team are healthy, each of the churches individual as its good times and bad but we are a support to one another.

Across the parishes it is a universal rule that first and foremost we do our best to meet our parish share obligations however there is sometimes a slight shortfall, the pandemic has caused a tightening of the purse strings as with many places, however we have largely weathered the storm well and our congregations have continued to be generous.



Full expenses are paid. The PCC does recognise however that the current financial situation within the Church of England coupled with the loss of some parishioners who gave generously does present a serious challenge for the future.

The majority of the congregations are members of the envelope scheme and all who are eligible to Gift Aid their donations do so. The Treasurer is proactive in ensuring that the Government's Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme is applied to all eligible donations.

We have also seen a growth in giving by standing order and we are in the process of acquiring means of taking card payments which will be especially helpful for couples paying for weddings.

Holy Trinity frequently has special collections to support the diocese of Ho in Ghana, and a number of members of the congregation make regular monthly donations amounting to £1,000 per annum, to support AIDS orphans in Mozambique. Indeed the church traditionally gives 6.25% of its annual income to charity.

At S. Saviour's the Social and Fundraising Committee has been re-founded not because we are in particular need of fundraising but in order to maximise our current income in order to be more efficient in our charitable giving.

All in all the new Team Vicar shouldn't be given too many financial headaches!



Weekly Worship Pattern

The pattern of worship across the Team has changed considerably over the last two or three years. The combination of the Covid-19 pandemic and the formation of the Team have forced a number of alterations and certain things have sadly had to go into abeyance. What follows is the **current** pattern of worship, however we are keen to be able to re-introduce things, particularly the daily mass at S. Saviour's and Holy Trinity where this was the normal practice.

Sundays

9.30am Sung Mass (S. Werburgh)

10.30am Sung Mass (Holy Trinity)

11.30am Sung Mass (S. Saviour's)

The current pattern is that whoever celebrates at S. Werburgh's also celebrates at S. Saviour's with the other preaching at all three and celebrating at Holy Trinity. Mass at S. Werburgh's and Holy Trinity is followed by refreshments, at S. Saviour's our Covid-19 restrictions have not yet enable refreshments to return.



Weekdays

Monday – all at S. Saviour's

9.00am Morning Prayer

10.00am Mass

6.00pm Evening Prayer

Tuesday – all at Holy Trinity

9.00am Morning Prayer

10.00am Mass

6.00pm Evening Prayer

Wednesday – all at S. Werburgh's

9.00am Morning Prayer

6.00pm Evening Prayer

6.20pm Rosary

7.00pm Mass

Thursday – all at S. Saviour's

9.00am Morning Prayer

9.20am Rosary

10.00am Mass

6.00pm Evening Prayer and Benediction



Friday – all at Holy Trinity

9.00am Morning Prayer

11.20am Rosary

12noon Mass

6.00pm Evening Prayer

Saturday – all at S. Werburgh's

9.00am Morning Prayer

10.00am Mass

6.00pm Evening Prayer



The Clergy of the Team

Team Rector

Fr Andrew Swift

Fr Andrew is married to Sarah-Claire and they are the proud 'parents' of two cats and two lunatic Japanese Shiba Inus – please there's no need to mention how much they look like a foxes...they already know(!) Following undergraduate studies in Law at King's College, London, Fr Andrew was trained for ordination at St Stephen's House, Oxford. He was ordained and served his title in the Diocese of London, he took up the role of Interim Minister and Catholic Parishes Mission Partner in June 2015.

Sarah-Claire's liturgical tastes are quite different tending more towards the charismatic evangelical, at present she works for a well-known charity based in Salford.

Assistant Curate

Fr Glen Thomas

Fr Glen is the assistant curate of the benefice. He is married to Alison, and they have two grown up children. He trained at St Stephen's House and was ordained to the sacred priesthood here at S. Werburgh's in June '21; and is now at the half-way point of his curacy. Since being in post, he has restarted the chaplaincy provision with Haywood Hospital, and has built and maintains the NPTM website. In his spare time, he makes excuses for never having time to attend the gym but can always find time to practice his calligraphy.

Honorary Assistant Clergy

Fr Kevin Scott – based principally at Holy Trinity

Fr Ron Whittingham and Fr Allan Townsend