

An aerial photograph of Christ Church Alsager, a large stone church with a prominent square tower. The church is surrounded by a green lawn and a cemetery with numerous gravestones. In the background, there are residential houses and trees. A large, stylized green cross graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image, partially obscuring the church's tower and the surrounding landscape.

Welcome to
Christ Church Alsager

Parish Profile

www.christchurchalsager.uk

A brief introduction

Christ Church is a lively part of the Church of England in Alsager, Cheshire - welcoming children, youth and adults of all ages. It is a parish church of about 190 adult members and a regular Sunday Congregation of some 125 adults plus 20 children and youth (double that on Messy Church Sunday). It is a growing evangelical church, with Bible-based teaching, open to the work of the Holy Spirit, with a strong family emphasis, a developing youth work and a vision for growth. Significant building going on within Alsager means the parish will increase by 40% over the next 7 years and we're excited by the missional opportunities this affords.

Our aim is to follow Jesus Christ and to grow in three directions:

Upwards: deeper in our love for God

Inwards: stronger in our relationships with one another

Outwards: wider in sharing God's love with our community

We are influenced by movements such as New Wine, Spring Harvest, Soul Survivor and Alpha. Our vicar has been supported over the last 12 years by the PCC and a Leadership Team. As a church we have, for many years, felt particularly called in the area of children's and youth work, and to this end we have a full-time Children's and Families Leader and also a full-time Youth Leader. Our part-time Administrator and a part-time Cleaner complete the paid team.

As well as two retired ministers, we have three Lay Readers and a Church Army Evangelist/Ordinand. Many other leadership roles within the church are held by lay people and we encourage one another to identify our gifts and to use them to serve the church and wider community.

We hope that this profile inspires you. We are excited about the next stage of growth as individuals and as a church within our community and look forward to sharing that journey with our new vicar. We're praying for a person of faith, a pastor, a leader who feels called to join us and excited by the potential to see the growth of God's kingdom here.

To get a better feel for our church, please have a look round our website at www.christchurchalsager.uk



A bit about Christ Church

There's something going on for all ages throughout the week at Christ Church: from Big Breakfast to craft group, bell-ringing to youth band, bowling to after-school clubs and much more.

Our Sunday worship is centred around two services:

- Our 11am service has an informal 'New-Wine' style with songs led by a band and supported by modern media presentation; this service is also linked to our children's work and includes regular all-age celebrations
- Our 9am service is more reflective and typically follows a 'light' Common Worship pattern, with hymns and organ

To encourage all the church community to come together there is a Coffee and Doughnuts time between the two services where everyone meets to share time with each other.

In recent years we have been blessed by considerable growth in Fresh Expressions:

- We hold twice monthly Coffee & Communion services in the hall, including lifts for the housebound, and a monthly informal service in a local retirement sheltered housing building
- We also run Messy Church for families each month with attendance of around 100



For the community, we run socials and together with support groups such as parenting courses, a toddler group and a job club. As part of showing God's love to the community we also run 'Big Breakfast' once a week (which regularly attracts 60 people) and we also get involved in town events.

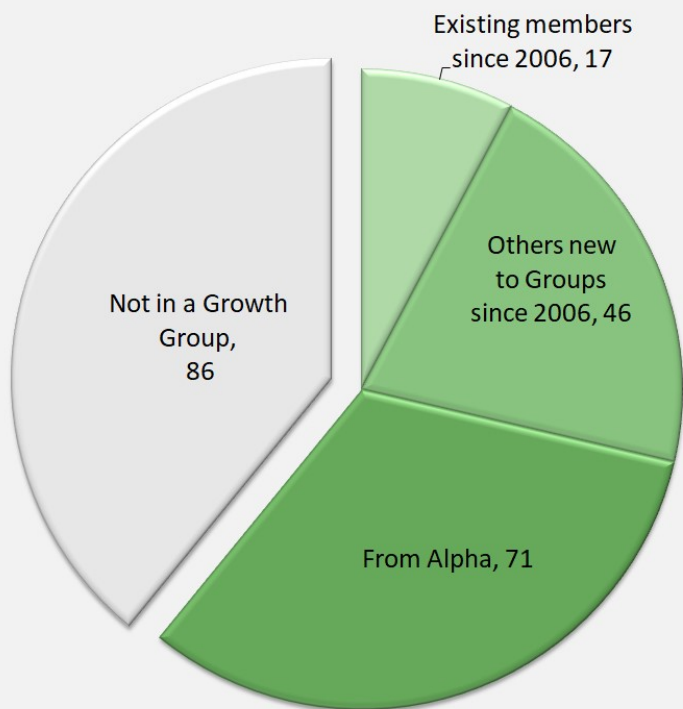
A key facility for the church is our church hall. This is on the same site as the church and in recent years it has been extensively renovated and developed, providing excellent facilities for use by church and community; including an office, a kitchen and dedicated rooms equipped for youth and pre-schoolers. It is situated close to the comprehensive school (Alsager School) on Church Road about ½ mile from the town centre.

A bit more about Christ Church

Over 60% of Christ Church members are part of one of our 12 'Growth Groups' (our cell/home groups) and these form a key part of the pastoral support network in the church community.

The church also has a very strong evangelistic focus and recently we have been running several Alpha courses each year which has resulted in many people coming to faith for the first time. The 'Alpha Effect' also shows itself in the Growth Group membership, where over 50% have come through Alpha. Enthused by the growth we have experienced, we particularly want to reach out to the many new people who are moving into the parish, which is planned to grow by over 40% over the next few years as a result of building 2000 new houses in Alsager.

We are very open to the work of the Holy Spirit and, echoing this, people are encouraged to use their gifts in the life of the church and to also share their faith in a natural way as part of their daily lives.



We seek to love and welcome everyone regardless of gender, race, mental health, physical ability, economic power or sexuality, and are exploring what this looks like in our Church.

We recognise that the Church has experienced some pain over the issue of human sexuality. The PCC is committed, personally and corporately, to seeking and listening to God, studying the Bible and having conversations within Christ Church and the broader church, to seek to understand better how we can show love to all people across the spectrum of views on this issue. We recognise that this exploration will lead to different outcomes for each of us and believe we should show grace, holding what we believe humbly, and treating what others think respectfully. We are looking for a vicar who can lead us in this continual exploration.

Youth ministry

We also have a good history of youth work in the church and we encourage youth to explore their gifts in the body of the church. For Yr7-Yr9, we run a Sunday group, Downtime (our midweek after-school café), a youth band and a very popular open youth club (attracting around 30-40 each week). There is also a Youth Growth Group for Yr9—Yr13 and over 60 people going through the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. We are developing strong links with the secondary school next door, and our Youth Leader, Matt Brown is working with the other youthworkers in the town on new initiatives for the holidays. Our vision for youth ministry is “to see Christ Church Alsager flourish in its inclusion of, and heart for young people, welcoming them as valued and equal members of the church community who are given space to be themselves and opportunities to be involved in serving and the leadership of the church. A place where they can become rooted in a community where they can grow in their identity in Christ.”



Our youth want a new vicar who is: loving, not too strict, includes and welcomes everyone, is funny, will come and see us sometimes, is just nice and friendly

Christ Church is important to us all

We also have lots going on for all ages and a good spread across the generations within our church family. We asked members of our church family, in growth groups, church services and at other activities during the week, why being part of Christ Church is important to them, here's what they said ...

Growth Groups are important as a good way to get to know people, develop our faith and get to know God better.

Being part of a warm and welcoming community living out our faith in Alsager, providing friendship, fellowship and support

Meets the needs of the community and makes a difference in our town

Growing in my faith

Uplifting music with variety of forms of worship giving choice at different services

It's like being part of a large family where I feel included and surrounded by love... able to be vulnerable

It's the friendliest church community I have ever known with a large number of committed and active people of faith of all ages

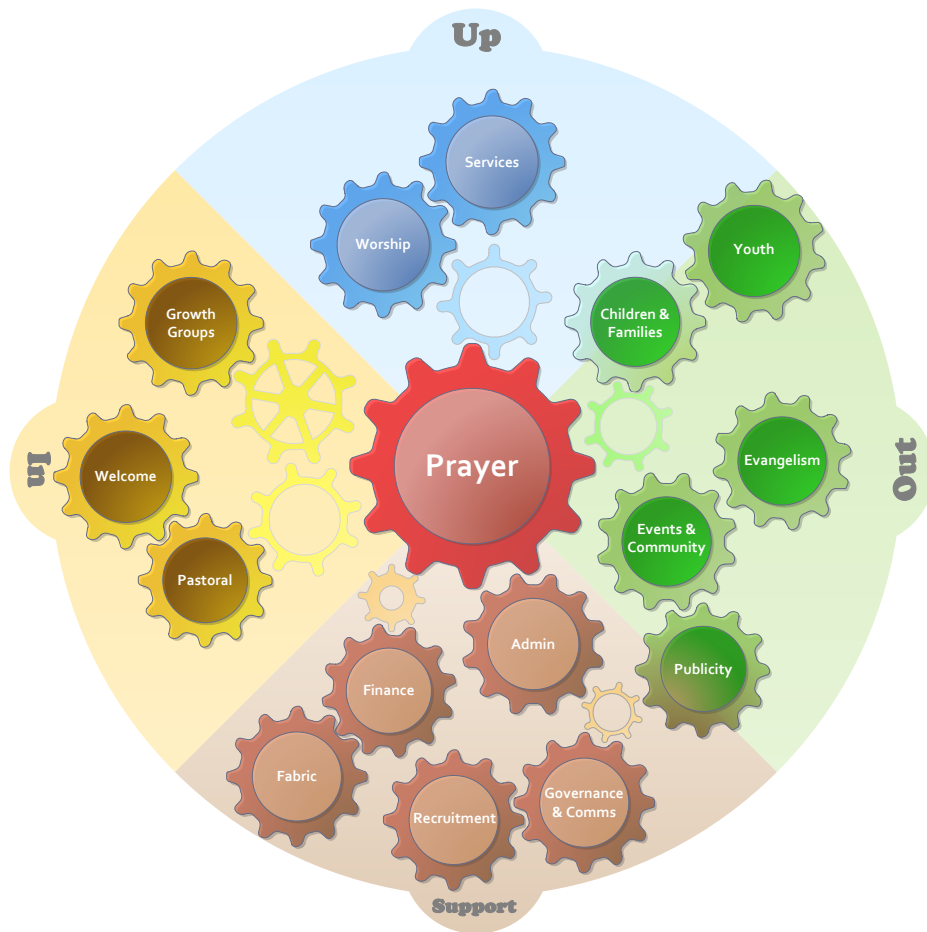
Focussed outreach to families, with children and young people encouraged to know God themselves

Encourages prayer, the deeper things of God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit

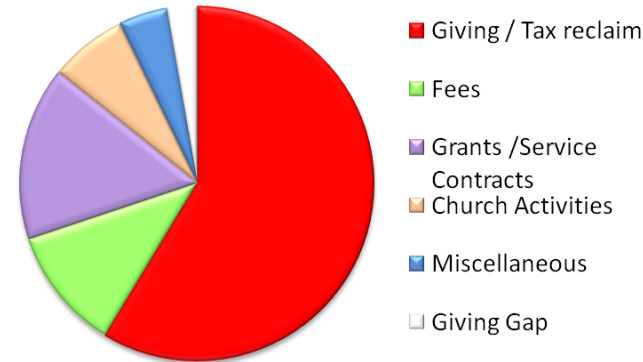


Church giving—time and money

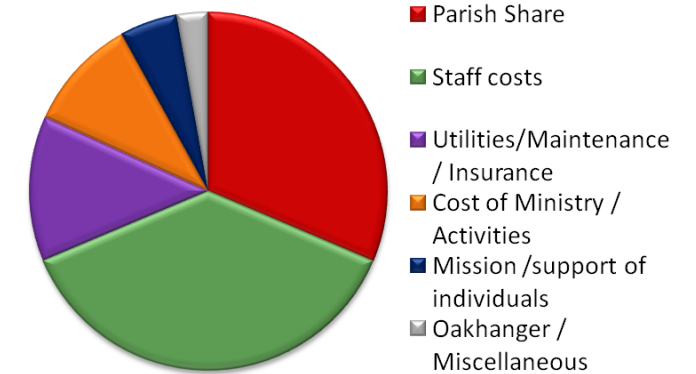
We are all encouraged to give both time and financially to support the work of the church. During the interregnum, our churchwardens, Janice and Dave, have organised things so that we all work together like cogs, with a named church member responsible for each cog and pulling teams about them to keep serving God and our community.



Income 2017



Expenditure 2017



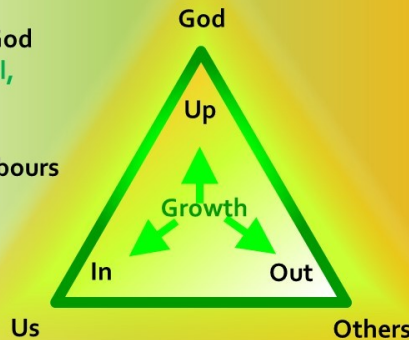
We are not afraid to talk about church finances and have a weekly 'Slice of Good News' in Sunday services highlighting church activities and the time and money which is given towards them. We don't hold any money-raising events in the community where our emphasis is on 'fun-raising' not 'fund-raising'. We pay our parish share of £64,365.84 in full each year. When the PCC sets the budget we tell members what level of giving gap needs to be met. While this is never easy, God provides. We currently have reserves of £70K which we feel is prudent given our level of staff. We have had to adjust to the loss of a local authority contract for youth work due to their spending cuts and also to the loss of around £6K contribution to our parish share in recent years from Oakhanger, which was a daughter church in a local village but has recently closed, with the mission there continued by the Methodist Church with whom we have a Memorandum of Understanding. We give 10% of our giving to overseas and home mission.

Our vision and hopes for the future

Our Vision

To love the Lord our God
with all our heart, soul,
mind and strength.

And to love our neighbours
as ourselves. (Mk12:30)



We eat a lot of Toblerones...

to help us remember our commitment to reach **up** to God, **in** to each other and **out** to others.

When we look at where this triangle is at the moment it has maybe melted a bit! We have worked really hard at reaching out to share God's love with our community but know we need to grow deeper in our love for God and stronger in our relationships with one another.



Hopes for the future

We asked the church family "what would you pray for Christ Church to be like in 5 years' time?" Here's what they said...

We want Christ Church to be

- **Building** on our strong foundations, with church membership more accurately **reflecting the parish profile** which is growing by 40%
- Growing **whole life disciples** moving on in our faith journeys , **confidently sharing our faith** with others on our frontlines
- Scripturally grounded and prepared to listen to God and be challenged anew
- A congregation which worships God including in new ways, where we see the Holy Spirit at work and are bold in prayer.
- A place full of **children and youth** who are discipled to grow in their faith and reach out to their friends and families, with the **spiritual depth of our youth work** blossoming alongside the social side
- **Every member ministry** where everyone has a place and a role regardless of age and activities that reinforce that we are all **one body**
- A loving place where **all are welcome** and equally valued: 'unity with diversity'
- A church where it is even more obvious that we **genuinely care** for each other, even those who are different , so we can be authentically ourselves
- A beacon of hope and powerful force for transformation as we **reach out to serve our local community** and further afield, working with other local churches where appropriate
- Financially stable

We're looking for a new vicar

...to help us to shape this vision. A person of faith, a pastor and leader.

We are seeking a person of Faith

First and foremost a follower of Jesus, called to Christ Church

- Who has strong **knowledge of scripture** and is an able **teacher and effective communicator** to all ages who can turn it into straightforward life-application
- Who has a daily and **real experience of Jesus** and wants this for us, helping each of us to become the person God wants us to be
- Who can help us understand what it means to **follow Jesus Monday to Saturday**
- Who is **full of the Holy Spirit** and **guided by prayer**
- Who can help us **listen to the Spirit** and discern what is next for Christ Church



We are seeking a Pastor

A 'shepherd of God's flock that is under their care, watching over them' (1 Peter 5:2)

- Who recognises and values everyone as a child of God and the **church as a family** of all ages
- Who actively fosters the sense of **community life** when we are gathered and scattered and **encourages** us in our ministries
- Who identifies with and **cares for all ages** through whatever life brings us
- Who **leads us in loving** each other

... a person of faith, a pastor and leader

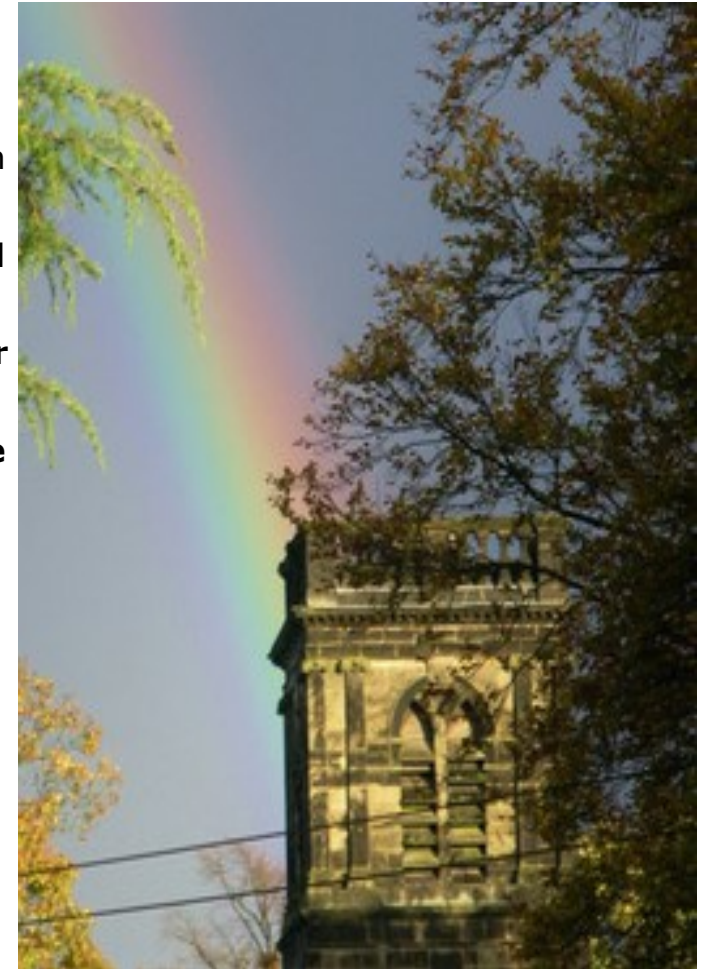
We are seeking a Leader

A servant leader with proven leadership gifts and emotional intelligence who can:

- Discern and articulate with us a bold **vision** for the next stage of Christ Church's life and lead us in developing **strategies** to move us towards that vision, innovatively where appropriate
- Encourage and empower us all to **identify our gifts** and motivate us to use them to serve the church and wider community
- Delegate responsibly, maintaining and extending our **devolved model of lay leadership** and **every member ministry**
- **Mentor and guide** current and emerging leaders within the congregation including as **line manager** to those employed by the church



- Understand **whole life discipleship** from an all-age perspective and our Monday to Saturday challenges, seeking to equip all ages to be witnesses on our frontlines
- Be a catalyst and enabler as the church looks outwards to reach out and serve non-believers, developing new **strategies** for mission in our town's new-build areas
- Help all of us **engage with and listen to culture but be rooted in Christ**; appreciate the structures and mission opportunities of being **part of the Church of England**
- Maintain and build on our **community links**



About Alsager

Alsager is a commuter town of around 15,000 people in the south east corner of Cheshire. It has one secondary school of 1,600 pupils rated Outstanding by Ofsted and five primary schools. There is extensive building going on within Alsager at the moment with the parish set to increase by 40% over the next 7 years. We have been reaching out to people moving into the new housing and see a huge opportunity for evangelism and growth.

Alsager's good schools and communication links make it popular with families. It is 3 miles from the M6 junction 16 and Alsager railway station is on the Crewe-Derby line. Regular bus services run through the town, including to Stoke-on-Trent shopping centre (Hanley) and Crewe station, from which there are connections to Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, London etc.

Although Alsager is largely middle-class (78% owner-occupied), there are hidden pockets of deprivation and we seek to reach out to show God's love to all those in need in practical ways. Our Job Club and Big Breakfast complement the practical services provided by other churches in our town (another Church of England, Catholic, Methodist, Pentecostal and United Reform) which run a food bank and Alsager Community Support Centre.



Some general statistics

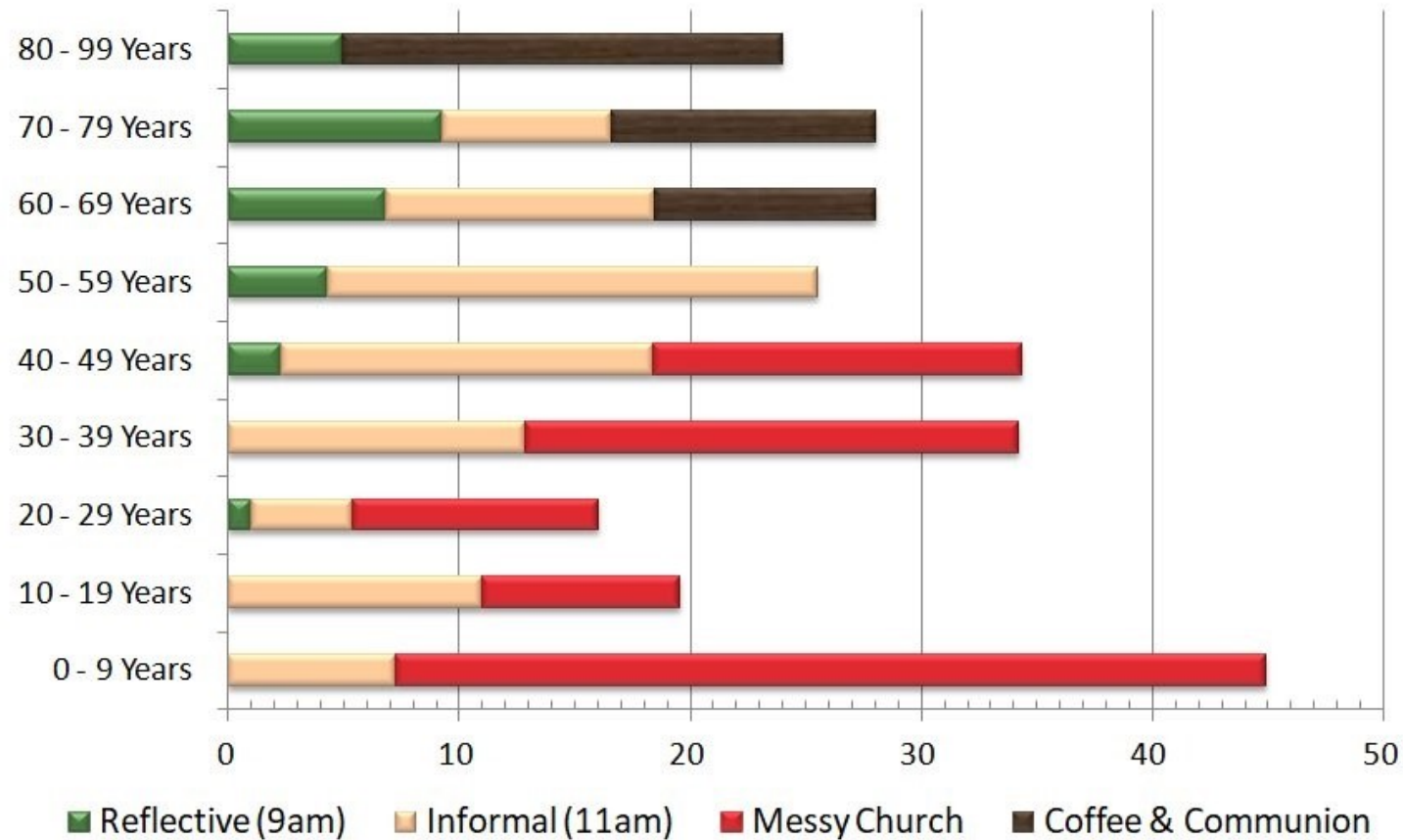
Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

Baptisms	2
Thanksgivings	6
Weddings	3
Funerals	16

From 2017 Parish Return.

2018 figures are expected to show a significant increase in baptisms, thanksgivings and weddings.

Average attendance by service and age



From 2018 church statistics.

The Alsager and church demographics are broadly similar, but the church has fewer:

- 13-30 year olds
- 30-49 year olds with no children

We are keen to address these gaps.

Buildings

All our buildings are in good repair and comprise the Church, Church Hall and Vicarage.

The Vicarage is a large four-bed detached house with large gardens to the front and side aspects, a large drive to the side and a double garage to the rear of the house. It is situated just two minutes' walk from the Church and within walking distance of Alsager High School and several of the local primary schools.



The Church and Church Hall are on the same site which enables family services that have some separate children's activities in the hall to be easily accommodated.

The church, which seats 180, was extensively modernised about 9 years ago, to provide a welcoming and flexible environment. The most recent Quinquennial inspection was in 2014 which did not identify any major repair work and none is expected in the upcoming inspection next year.



The Church Hall comprises the Church office, hall, lounge, a crèche room, youth room and additional meeting room plus a large fully equipped kitchen.