

The Parish of St John the Evangelist, Lostock Gralam, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 7PS



Profile

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." 1 Corinthians 12: 27

The Parish consists of two large villages, Lostock Gralam and Wincham, and the smaller communities of Lostock Green and Lach Dennis.

Lostock Gralam was originally a separate village on the outskirts of Northwich but is now a linked suburb. There is a mixture of old housing, dating back to the mid 1800's, and newer housing built within the past ten years. Most of the houses are privately owned but there is a large ex-Council estate where property is rented from local government. It has several small shops and businesses, a community centre and a very good primary school for pupils aged 5 to 11. There are four residential care homes for the elderly. There are several farms around the village and also a large chemical works. A recent development includes a business park with a new public house/restaurant and hotel and a Cooperative Store. There is also a good Indian Restaurant and two other public houses (The Slow and Easy and Boatyard Bistro and Bar). There are several car traders in the village which extends down Manchester Road towards Northwich in a ribbon development. There is a boatyard adjacent to the Trent-Mersey Canal and many other various businesses located in the village. The parish church of St John the Evangelist is situated to the south of the village near the railway station. It is a brick building dating from 1844 which was refurbished in 2005. The church is set in a large church yard and nearby there is a Church Hall. The fact that the church and Vicarage are on the outskirts of the village tend to isolate it (even though it is en-route to the railway station). Currently The Vicarage is being leased by the Diocese to Lostock Gralam Tiny Tots but the Parish Office is still available for use. The population of Lostock Gralam in 2011 was 2,298.

Lostock also hosts one of Cheshire's oldest football clubs, Lostock Gralam F.C., having played continuously at their home on Manchester Road since 1892. Lostock is one of the Cheshire's leading amateur clubs, despite being based in a relatively small area.



LACH DENNIS

Lach Dennis village is a mile further south and is mainly inhabited by retired professional and semi-professional people. There are a number of farms in the area. The village church of All Saints' is a small brick building with a timber framed black and white porch dating back to

1896. It is located between the Village Hall and the local inn/restaurant, Cheshire Steakhouse and Grill. All Saints' Church is much smaller than the main Parish Church. Some residents in Lach Dennis do feel a closer allegiance to the older 'magpie' church in Lower Peover or to Byley Parish. In 2011 the population of Lach Dennis was 232;



WINCHAM



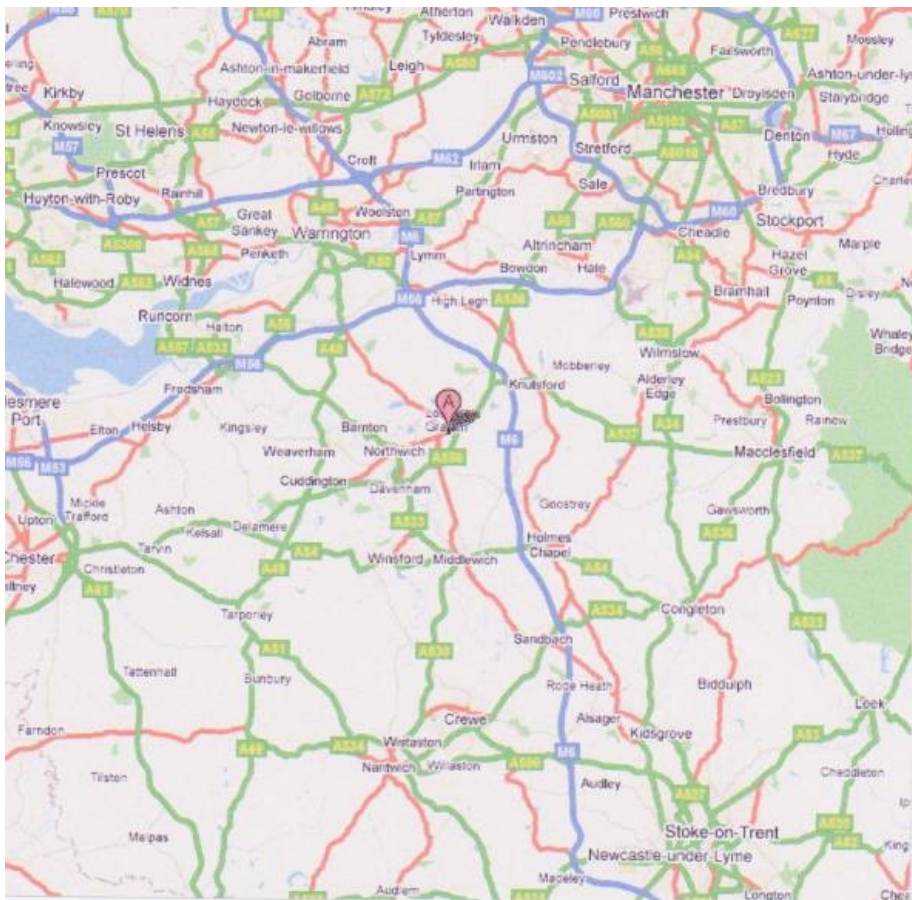
Wincham is a village community one mile north of Lostock Gralam with a community primary school, a village hall/community centre, shops, including a post-office, and a mixture of old and new housing. It is surrounded by farmland. The old church of St Andrew's in Wincham (pictured left) fell into disrepair and was eventually closed and the property sold. The main centre of worship is now St John's in Lostock Gralam, although Great Budworth Church is quite close and some residents do consider it to be their parish church. The housing mix is similar to Lostock Gralam but probably with fewer ex-Council estate housing. Wincham Hall Hotel is situated on the Warrington Road between Lostock Gralam and Wincham. The nearest public house to Wincham is The Red Lion at Pickmere. The population of Wincham in 2015 was 3045.



Lostock Green is a small village half a mile south of Lostock Gralam. It has no shops but there is a Methodist Chapel, which we have recently developed closer links with. The village war memorial is pictured left. There is also a funeral director's office (George Bells). There are also several farms around the community.



St John the Evangelist Church, Lostock Gralam



Where are we?

The Parish of Lostock Gralam lies on the outskirts of the old salt town of Northwich in mid Cheshire and is in the Anglican Diocese of Chester.

It is well served by the motorway network being close to the M6 and M56 which provide routes to the major cities of Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, London, Glasgow and Edinburgh. The village of Lostock Gralam also has a railway station on the main Chester to Manchester line. Crewe, a major railway junction town serving the northwest of England, is only a 40-minute car journey away. The nearest airports are Manchester International and Liverpool John Lennon. The proposed HS2 Route will cut through the centre of the Parish, which may effect the dynamics of the Parish.

After the sale of the redundant church in Wincham the Parish Church of **St John the Evangelist** was refurbished in 2005. This involved the congregation meeting for worship in the Church Hall from the Easter until the November. The refurbished and redecorated church was fully carpeted and a platform at the foot of the chancel and sanctuary enabled the worship team to be nearer the congregation. The old wooden pews were taken out and replaced with a hundred chairs with blue and red upholstery and the dark stained wood was painted a fresh green. At the back of the church, near the entrance, a sink, hot and cold water and storage facilities were included to enable tea and coffee to be provided after worship. A toilet for the disabled is sited off the church porch entrance.

Further improvements include the completion of the stained-glass East window using funds from a bequest, and the installation of a screen and projector which enables us to enhance worship. There is a fine organ, which needs financial investment, but presently we have no organist and depend upon CDs over the sound system.

The Church of St John the Evangelist



The East Window of St John the Evangelist Church, Lostock Gramam

"All are welcome in this place reflects very much our Church ethos- we are a loving caring and all embracing church with arms always open to accept you for who you are. Our parish is growing ever stronger - why not come and see and feel it yourself"

Ian Cliff—Churchwarden





The interior:
St John
the Evangelist
Church, Lostock
Gram and the
retractable
projection screen.

There is also a large churchyard and a church field (part of which is consecrated for future burials). The War Memorial is sited in the Churchyard near the Lychgate. The pathways have recently been resurfaced and the grass is maintained by two contractors. Grass –cutting is funded from an original legacy of £50 000 and it cannot be used for any other purpose (this has been explored through The Probate Office). The local Parish Councils also contribute towards the maintenance of the Churchyard. Adjacent to the local primary school there is a Memorial Garden for the burial of cremated remains.





The interior of the Church Hall— The Autumn Fair (2016)

The Church Hall (seen to the right beyond the War Memorial in the bottom left hand picture) is also a very valuable asset and used by several organisations: Tai Chi, Rhythm-time, martial arts, a painting group, dance groups etc. It is also used for post funeral teas and our regular church events, including our monthly Café Church Service. The Church Hall is managed by a small committee which meets four times a year to fulfil the requirements of the Charitable Trust. Members of the PCC are on the Committee. It was built as a result of fund-raising activities in the 1980's.



The Parish Barbecue and Quiz. (2018)



All Saints' Church, Lach Dennis.

The Church at Lach Dennis is a small red-bricked building dating from 1895. It is a very well-kept building and many visitors comment positively about its appearance. There have been adjustments made to the building over the years, including new pews and a re-polishing of the woodblock flooring. It is not a disable-friendly building however and there are no toilet facilities on site (although we have access to the toilets in the Village Hall next door). The steps into the chancel are steep and we have had handrails installed to assist members of the congregation, who are predominantly retired and the elderly (all aged over sixty years). The numbers attending vary between eight and fifteen although on major festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, or at special services like Harvest numbers may be much higher. Although, prior to the parish vacancy, we held a service at All Saints' Church every Sunday, we had established a pattern that on every second Sunday of the month we would alternate shared worship with Lostock Green Methodist Church. During the vacancy this pattern will continue, but there will only be one other regular service at All Saints' - a Eucharist on the third Sunday of the month.

The Worshipping Community.

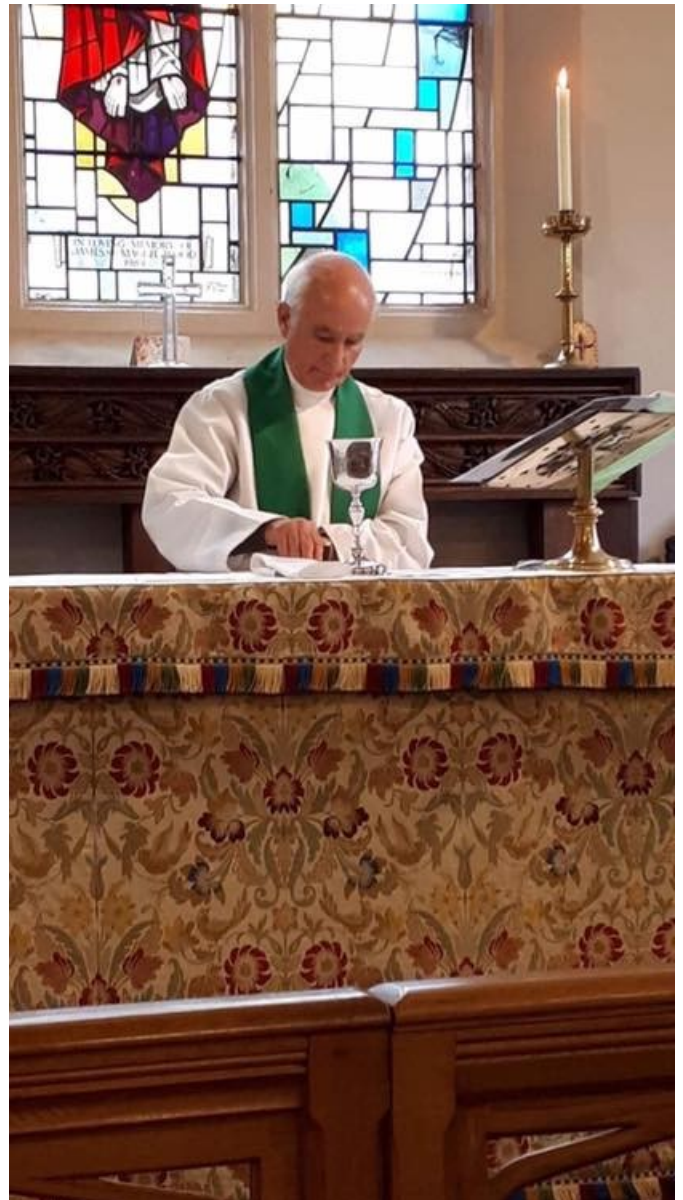
What do we do?

Although we have a church building which is an excellent resource, we know that a Church is really about people – those who faithfully and regularly worship, after all, are the Body of Christ. The main Parish Church of St John the Evangelist has a regular Sunday congregation averaging about forty people, mainly adults, ranging between mid-twenties to early nineties. We basically have an older congregation but are seeing some newer younger people joining us for the monthly Café Church and Messy Church. Some new members attend as a result of bereavement ministry and after attending Tuesday morning Open Church. A future focus for development within the parish is to engage more with young families and draw them into the church family – God's family. There is also a need to engage with the people of Wincham which is where the majority of the parish live.

On Sundays we have our main service in St John's at 10.30 a.m. and this is usually a **Common Worship Eucharistic Service** where we share the bread and wine together and where the presiding minister wears vestments—alb, chasuble and stole. We share the peace during the service. There is a rota for readers, intercessors and chalice administrators. The sides-people greet worshippers and give out the books. Tea, coffee and biscuits or cake are always available after the service, providing opportunities for a chat and for newcomers to feel welcomed.

We provide Seasonal Service Books to provide variety throughout the liturgical year. We use the hymn book Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New which enables us to use the traditional hymns, children's songs and Taizé chants.

On the third Sunday of each month we hold **Café Church** using power-point to project the service on to the screen. We now have this service in the Church Hall which lends greater informality. This is a much more informal service where fruit juice, coffee, tea, cereal and toast are available throughout the service. It is more interactive, may include drama and activities to engage both adults and children. We have started to introduce some more modern worship songs into this service and the initial response has been very positive. The leader does not robe for Café Church.



Often families join us for the baptism of their children and this is an opportunity for us to welcome people who do not attend church regularly. The Vicar, however, determines in discussion with the families, whether this or a separate service is more appropriate. Because our church is small and can only comfortably seat a hundred to one hundred and twenty people baptisms are often held separately so that family and friends can be accommodated.

The picture (right) is of a recent baptism which took place during Café Church.



Once a month a special service is held for very young children: **'Play and Pray'** is an occasion where a Bible story is the focus for craft activities and a short act of worship. This is open to anyone with pre-school children but it is also a vital part of the Churches link with Tiny Tots.

Although not affiliated to the church we do play an integral role in supporting the work of Tiny Tots and ensuring its survival and for this reason it is imperative that this should feature in future parochial ministry.

As stated, Tiny Tots currently leases The Vicarage from the Diocese.





The pictures (left) shows children making gardens and the worship which was part of our special Easter **Messy Church**. Each year we try to do something different to engage children and families and have an effective team of people who lead craft activities.



We originally used to have only four Messy Church 'services' a year—Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Harvest. They normally lasted about two hours. We have now started to provide Messy Church monthly (second Sunday afternoon of the month) but have reduced it to an hour and a half. This is still in its experimental stage and will be subject to review. Numbers attending vary with Easter and Christmas being more popular.

At Christmas Messy Church we combine it with a Posada when the crib figures are sent out into the community, travelling from home to home. They are (hopefully) returned on Christmas Eve for the 4 pm Crib Service. This service has become increasingly popular with young families.





The children releasing balloons in church for Pentecost Messy Church 2018

We have close links with **Lostock Gralam CE Controlled Primary School** which is next to the Church. Several members of the PCC are Foundation Governors. The staff and pupils join us for occasional services in church: Christmas, Easter, end of term services. The **Christingle Service** is an annual event raising funds for The Children Society. Members of the congregation assist in the making of the Christingles.

The Vicar and Parish Reader go into school to lead collective worship once a week during term time.



During Café Church in November we support Samaritans Purse and the **Shoebox Appeal**, engaging with the Scouts and the Primary School—young people from both attending the service.

The link with the primary school is a vital part of the ministry of the church as it enables dialogue to take place between families in the community and the church itself. To continue to build on the links will be an important part of future ministry as we seek to engage more positively with young people and draw them into the church.

The main focus of our work centres upon worship and prayer. Apart from our regular Sunday services and prayer meetings we hold a number of services where we hope to attract new members to our congregation. The new Church Year starts in Advent as we prepare for the Coming of our Lord, not only recalling the Incarnation and His birth in Bethlehem, but also looking toward the Second Coming.

As already referred to we hold our Messy Church and **Posada** when the crib figures are sent out into the community and returned at a short **Crib Service** on the afternoon of Christmas Eve. Our **Christmas Carol Services** at both St John's and All Saints', where we hear the Christmas story and sing familiar carols, are popular services. After the Carol Service in Lostock Gralam worshippers enjoy mince pies and mulled wine. In 2017 we held our Carol Service in the Church Hall as the Church heating system had failed. (pictured right) These services are often attended by people who are not regular members of our worshipping congregation and form an outreach into the community.

We celebrate **Candlemas**. On **Ash Wednesday** we hold an evening Eucharist with the Imposition of Ashes.

During **Lent** Stations of the Cross are held in the parish church and we either join the local Northwich Churches Together Lenten study or hold our own study course.

On **Maundy Thursday** we alternate between holding a Passover Meal in the Church Hall, followed by a Eucharist in Church, or holding a special meal (agape) in Church during the Eucharistic service. Both are followed by a time of quiet reflection as we wait for Good Friday morning and think on the trial and death of Jesus our Saviour.

Good Friday Devotional and Good Friday Liturgy are annual moments of quiet reflection. On Saturday we hold the Easter Vigil and the first Eucharist of Easter, complete with the lighting of the Paschal Candle from a fire lit outside the church. **Easter Day** Services are great festive occasions.



We regard **Bereavement Ministry** as being very important and it has resulted in many people becoming regular church worshippers. Each year, in November and on the Sunday evening nearest to All Souls' Day, we hold a **Service of Commemoration for the Faithful Departed**. Those who have lost loved ones over the past twelve months are contacted and invited to the service. The names of the deceased are read out and people have the opportunity to come and light a candle in memory of their loved ones. This service is well attended and very much appreciated by the community.

In line with many churches we have fewer weddings as other venues have become more popular.

Home Communions in the local Residential Care Homes take place once a month, usually the fourth Wednesday in the month. This is another important ministry within the community and can touch the lives of at least three dozen people who regularly attend—along with their carers. Home Communion is also taken out to those individuals who are ill and housebound. Our Parish Pastoral Worker is unfortunately unwell himself so the pastoral team work as individuals rather than in a co-ordinated manner. Visiting does take place and we keep a parish register for services to note anyone who we haven't seen for a while.

The Church also supports the Mid-Cheshire Foodbank and we are informed that we are a very generous church. We donate goods received at the Harvest Festival to the Foodbank. Money collected at the Harvest Services is donated to The Agricultural Chaplaincy.

The Church also has a link with a church in Tasnad Romania (through European Partners in Christ—EPIC). We send £118 a month to support the work of Iosif the pastor as he grows the church and draws more people to Christ. We are kept informed of what they are doing through newsletters and e-mails. We pray for each other.

As already referred to, we are part of Northwich Churches Together and maintain ecumenical links. A member of the Catholic Church led a study group within our church in 2017.





Social Ministry

Each Monday afternoon we hold **CAMEO** (Come and meet each other) in the Church Hall; on the third Monday in the month this involves a guest speaker or entertainment. This is a pastoral team initiative and has enabled members of the church family, and people who have been affected by bereavement, to meet informally. Generally, there is no agenda, just a chat over tea and coffee. Attendance varies from less than half a dozen to fourteen. It is run by a small, but dedicated team. The picture on the left shows Cameo Plus when the Lostock Ukulele group entertained.



On Tuesday morning we hold **Open Church** and this has grown significantly in numbers—now with an average attendance of about 24-30 people, some of whom have become regular Sunday worshippers. There is the opportunity for quiet reflection, but tea, coffee, toast is also served and people enjoy a good chat and sharing news and often there is an element of mutual help and counselling. People drift in and out and often it attracts the casual visitor. It also provides an opportunity to share the faith and meet people where they are. It is a true reflection of people's commitment that, from December to March 2017-18, people still attended when the church heating wasn't functioning!

Also on a Tuesday we have a small group of people who meet for **Craft Group**. This group started whilst the church was being refurbished in 2005. Initially it was a group of people meeting to create the kneelers (hassocks) in readiness for the refurbished church. There is the potential for this group to expand but it has to compete with Open Church and Cameo.



On the first Friday of every month there is a **Prize Bingo** in the Church Hall. This attracts a lot of interest and those who attend certainly feel part of the church community even though they may not attend regular church worship. People outside the regular church worshipping community are now prime organisers of this event. This social event brings in a small, but significant, income into the church.

On the second Saturday in March, June, September and December we held a Parish Breakfast in the Church Hall. After a full English Breakfast at 8.30 am there was usually a speaker. We have had a range of speakers over the years we have been doing it: Christian Aid, the RNLI, Under the Mango Tree, Bishops and Archdeacons, the local vet, the local community police officer as well as members of our own congregation. A contribution of £5 per head covered expenses. This originally started as Men's Breakfast but numbers dwindled so it was decided to change its name. We also used to run a Ladies who Lunch but the numbers attending also dwindled so it seemed wise at the time to amalgamate the two events. We have recently decided to shelve this and concentrate on other things.

The Church holds a variety of special and regular events to engage with the community. On Shrove Tuesday we hold our annual **Pancake Quiz Night** (pictured right) which has become increasingly popular. We have extended our Quiz Nights into Harvest Supper Evenings and Summer Barbecues too. Although originally a fund-raiser we recognise it now as a means of engaging with the wider community.

In September/October we hold our annual **Harvest Supper** where we have a quiz and a two course meal. This is also an extremely popular event and draws in people who are not regular attenders of Sunday worship.

We hold an annual **Autumn Fair** with home-made soup served. This has been enhanced by the involvement of independent crafts-people. A picture of this event is on page 7 of this profile.

We also arrange other specific events. An example would be the Summer Barbecue in 2018 (also featured on page 7). The 'chefs' are pictured right! We have also held joint ventures with the local Community Centre, specifically for the Queen's Ninetieth Birthday Celebrations in 2016.





The 'unofficial' **Church Choir** are now main contributors to special occasion worship. They sing at a number of our special services including Christingle, the Harvest and other major festivals. They are a dedicated group of people who meet on Wednesday evenings at 7.30 pm. Their leader, Mr Ian Cliff, is keen that they should extend their repertoire and contribute more widely into regular worship. The choir do not robe but have their own 'corporate image.'



They are also the choir assigned to sing in the Church Tent at the Royal Cheshire Show in June each year! The Choir make a significant contribution to worship within the church and make major contributions to festivals within the liturgical year. The leader, Mr Ian Cliff, has provided a real sense of encouragement and enjoyment.



The Choir have led concerts, as on the occasion pictured bottom right—Rev'd Brian Harris' birthday and leaving concert in October 2018—but have also taken part when we have had visiting choirs or singers.

Special Events

Occasionally we organise special events. In the past we have held Flower Festivals to celebrate the One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of St John the Evangelist Church in Lostock Gralam, and the One Hundredth Anniversary of All Saints' Church in Lach Dennis. We also held a Flower Festival to celebrate the Four Hundredth Anniversary of the King James Bible.

More recently, in December 2015, we held a Tree Festival to raise funds for The Joshua Tree, a local charity which supports families where children have cancer. The event was based on the story of The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde and raised about £1500. There were painted panels depicting parts of the story, a Castle created by a member of the church. Children's Mannequins were loaned by Marks and Spencers (modelling their latest children's fashions!) The Giant was provided by The Joshua Tree. The trees were provided free by a tree nursery near Nantwich. There was a great sense of team work.





We held a special service to commemorate the start of the First World War which involved children from Lostock Gralam Primary School placing paper poppies with the names of the Parish War dead onto a painted panel of the desolate landscape of the Western Front. (The picture shows the panel being used as a focus for the Prayer Initiative).

Although the main Remembrance Day Parades are held in Northwich, the service at Lostock Gralam is well attended with representatives of the Parish Councils present to lay wreathes.

Like many other parishes nationally we have been focussing on the commemoration of the end of the First World War. We have an 'art installation' which was the brain-child of a member of our congregation. It celebrates and commemorates the lives of all those named on our War Memorial with individual crosses for each one, with their details on laminated sheets. Many people have been moved by this and have been sending photographs of the people mentioned for inclusion in the display. It has been a positive means of touching the community. It has been a moving tribute to the fallen of the First World War. It also demonstrates the tremendous sense of teamwork, with people in the parish working together.

The church has a web page on achurchnearyou but also has its own Facebook page which has an increasing number of followers. We are looking at improving our web-page and social media output so that we can engage more positively with the community. We publish a weekly Noticeboard and a monthly Diary.



In 2018 a delegation of **South Korean Christians** spent a week as residents in the Church. They attended various worship centres in Northwich and prayed for the whole of the Northwich Community, often while walking through the town centre. It is two years since a similar delegation last attended Northwich. Last time they visited us for a midday meal, but this time they were sleeping in the church for the whole week. They were provided with breakfast and one midday meal and an evening meal. They have a very powerful ministry and it was a privilege to have them with us. The picture on the right is of the delegation on the morning of their departure.



Church Team

We have two Readers in the Parish.

Joyce Kenrick and Graham Sheen (pictured right with Rev'd Brian Harris at his final service as incumbent. Joyce is currently on a sabbatical whilst she cares for her husband Roger who is the Pastoral Worker. Joyce is very much involved with Open the Book and leads the team which goes into local primary schools.



Graham is also a Churchwarden.

David Lee is the PCC Treasurer and Ian Cliff is a Churchwarden. Ian is currently on The Foundations for Ministry Course.

Jane Hague is the PCC Secretary but also works at Church House in Daresbury.

The Parish Office is still in The Vicarage, Station Road, Lostock Gralam. It is separate from the areas which Tiny Tots Pre-school use.

Parish Vacancy 01606 43477 (calls will be re-directed to Graham's mobile number)

Churchwarden – Ian Cliff 01606 44991

ian_cliff@live.com

Churchwarden and Reader – Graham Sheen

01606 42940 grahamds53@btinternet.com

Pastoral Worker– Roger Kenrick 01606 891765

r.kenrick@hotmail.co.uk

Reader and Parish Evangelist – Joyce Kenrick

01606 891765 joyce.kenrick@btinternet.com

PCC Secretary - Jane Hague 01565 734217

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PCC Treasurer - David Lee 01606 47141

dajolee@btinternet.com



Jane Hague



David Lee and Ian Cliff

The Parish of Lostock Gralam

Diocese of Chester

Person Specification

The Parish of Lostock Gralam is seeking an energetic and enthusiastic minister to build on our successes and to encourage us in our purpose, which is outreach into the communities, as we seek to fulfil our Mission Statement: “Love God: Serve Others.”

The successful applicant will recognise the strengths of the leadership team and church members, encourage them in their various roles, and enable everyone to grow spiritually in order to fulfil God’s work. As team leader and team builder, developing the leadership team and effectively using delegation, the minister will find the support of a loving church family.

They will, within the context of the Parish, continue to build on the links developed with our local schools and residential care homes, and grow further the closer cohesion with the villages and communities within the Parish, with their varied social profiles.

They will help the congregation to grow as effective disciples of Jesus and witnesses to the love of God in everyday life, including in our workplaces, homes and neighbourhoods.

The Church’s desire is to be more effective in drawing the communities, and particularly young families, into God’s family and finding a personal relationship with the Risen Saviour.

A sense of humour is essential!