

ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH

BURTON-IN-WIRRAL

This is the Parish Church of
St Nicholas in Burton,
a place of worship where
seafarers, pilgrims and local
people have found comfort and
solace in the Christian
faith for more than
a millennium.

www.burtonchurch.org.uk



Welcome

St Nicholas' Church, Burton, in conjunction with the neighbouring parish of St Michael's Church, Shotwick, is seeking to appoint a part-time priest.

We envisage that the role will be based on 0.6 of a full-time position.

The successful applicant will be supported in true partnership by an experienced team of lay readers and

PCC members in providing

worship, pastoral care and evangelism across the parish.

We have an active and lively church membership and we seek to cater for

all those who want to know God and experience the presence of the Lord in their lives.



Foreword



Nigel Griffiths - Churchwarden

Having lived in the parish for many decades, I am aware of the important position the church occupies for many people, not only in our villages, but also for those beyond the parish boundaries. We work collaboratively with other parishes and currently chair the 'Neston Churches Together' group of ministries. St Nicholas' Church attracts people from the wider area through the

clarity of its Christian message, its provision of both traditional and modern forms of worship, its caring ministry, the warmth of its welcome and our beautiful Georgian church which engenders a sense of peace and belonging for all who choose to enter.

Each member of our PCC has a role in managing and supporting every one of our church activities. This approach provides vital practical support for our new part-time Vicar. In this Parish Profile, we outline the range of these activities, all of which help to demonstrate Christian principles in action that are implemented in practical ways for the benefit of everyone.



Ruth Abbott - Lay Reader

Our church is a place in which we seek to grow our little corner of God's kingdom here on the Wirral Peninsula through encouragement and outreach. We provide a range of ministries, from the traditional Evensong and Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion services to more modern All Age services.

And, for younger members of our church family, we have Messy Church to which children, parents, grandparents and carers are all very welcome.

Our congregation ranges from birth to over 90 years of age and we value each and every one of them as having their unique place in our hearts and in God's plan for us all. We are a friendly and outward looking Christian Church and we are committed to serving the Lord through our worship, through prayer and through the compassion we show towards one another. In this document we hope to demonstrate that our mission is to serve God through worship, through service and by our actions.





St Nicholas' Church

Its Vision

Our vision is to provide a church for everyone, whatever their background, whatever their spiritual journey. It's a place where people with a deep faith will feel at home as well as those who seek to understand. The church is here for people who want to know God's presence in their lives, a church where marriages, blessings and baptism are celebrated and where people are able to find comfort in times of sadness and despair.

Its Values

St Nicholas' Church values all who enter its gates, at church services, in times of quiet contemplation and at Messy Church. It's a church that values contact with people in their own homes, supporting them in times of difficulty or illness and whenever the church simply needs to be there for them. It is a church that doesn't judge or recriminate, a church whose doors are always open to those who wish to enter.

Its Role

The role of the church is to be part of the local community, to share the Christian faith, both in worship and in practical terms, with everyone in the parish, irrespective of whether a person is a regular church attendee or an occasional visitor.



Practical Ministry & Faith

St Nicholas' Church is committed to practical ministry in order to reach out to people of faith and of no faith at all. We endeavour to ensure that there is a Christian presence throughout each of the local communities with which the parish is involved. We seek to help and support our own church members to act out their faith in practical and effective ways, not just when attending church but in their everyday lives amongst those with whom they are in contact.

The parish is fortunate to have resources and talents that are shared with others. Our three lay readers participate in church services not only in Burton but also collaboratively across the wider benefice including services at St Michael's, Shotwick. On occasions they also officiate at services in other parishes.

Working as part of the 'Neston and District Churches Together' group of ecumenical churches, St Nicholas' Church currently chairs the group and leads the Bible Society's 'Open the Book' scheme. This initiative brings together volunteers from each of the Christian denominations in the Neston area to act out Bible stories at school assemblies in all the local Primary Schools.

As part of its commitment to ministry for all, church members visit local care homes every month to provide times of worship, music and fellowship for residents and care home workers.



Our Church Ministry & Leadership

St Nicholas' Church's vision is for a church that is at the heart of the parish and beyond, not the type of ministry that is in any way distant or remote from the lives of people who live in the area, whether people are regular attendees at church or not.

For those involved, church ministry means reaching out to all ages through the many activities in which the church is engaged. Our church's primary role is to help nurture an understanding of God's will through Bible-led teaching in the context of people's everyday lives and experiences; what we call 'down to earth' teaching.

Fundamentally we believe that it is the responsibility of all of us, both individually and as a church, to encourage people to develop a personal relationship with God. Prior to the introduction of Covid-19 restrictions our church members had access to teaching and fellowship through a variety of sources including Home Groups, Bible Study, Christian Living and Lent Courses, all part of our belief that it is our responsibility to provide meaningful opportunities for worship and reflection that meet the needs of everyone in terms of their ages, their traditions and their preferences. In an increasingly secular world ministry must also challenge us to adapt to meet the changing needs of the wider community and to help nurture a sense of mission towards God's greater plans.

St Nicholas' Church has important leadership resources available within its membership. This includes three experienced lay readers plus a further person currently in training, all of whom are committed to supporting the new part-time vicar across the wider benefice in terms of worship, teaching, pastoral care and evangelism.



Our Philosophy Towards Ministry



We seek to support our congregation from cradle to grave. Those who choose to come to St Nicholas' Church to be married are welcomed warmly. Couples usually either live in the parish or have a family connection with the parish. Regardless of whether they have been regular church attendees or not, they are always treated as family members.

We also have an active Baptism ministry in Burton. We view baptism as an evangelistic opportunity because we realise that for some it may be the only time they have the opportunity to hear the gospel.

For many years St Nicholas' Church ran a mother and toddler group which ceased only recently due to a lack of resources. It is something that we would very much like to reinstate. Recognising the pressure that some parents are often under in today's society we have a support group for the mothers which meets once a month of an evening in a local cafe.

We have plans for the future, supported by the PCC and other church members, which we hope to implement. The parish of St Nicholas has a relatively small catchment area. Consequently, with a small albeit supportive population we have to manage our finances wisely. To this end, whilst we have maintained contributions to the Diocese and to our outward giving programme, we feel it appropriate to seek a part-time incumbent in order to offer our parish greater financial flexibility. In addition, thanks to a recent financial pledge, we are fully confident of raising the funds to engage a youth and families worker. Amongst other activities it will enable us to restart the toddler group and provide a resource that will work with the toddler group and the village school. This will help to ensure that the resource we provide to young children and families is ongoing and consistent.

So Much More Than a Just a Church Building



A Twin Nave Church Building

It's a church for the people; a twin nave building accommodating around 200 souls. The oldest part of the church is the Massey Chapel in the north chancel.

Recent Improvements

As a result of a successful fund-raising appeal the church has recently remodelled its vestry area to create a warm and welcoming room where people can meet. It has a kitchen with seating and some imaginative storage.

A Flexible Layout

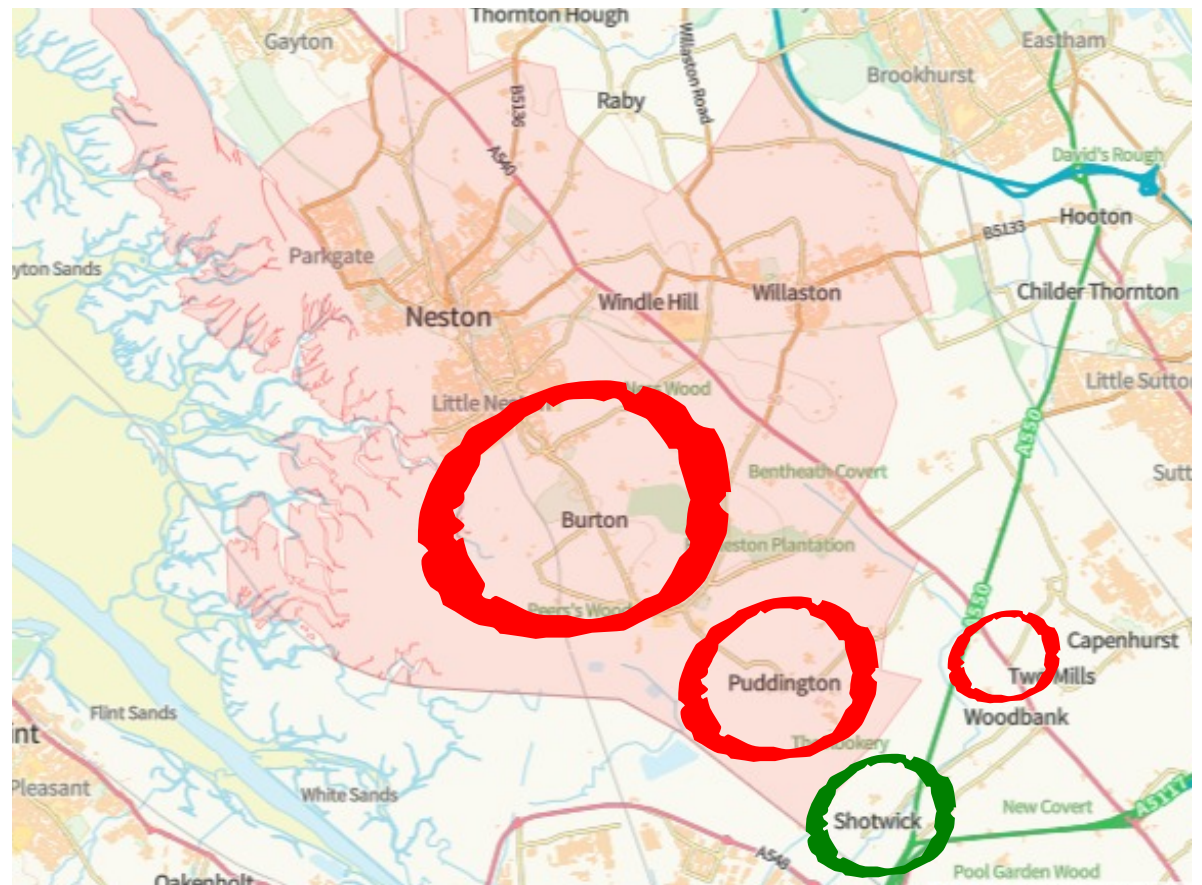
Whilst the church retains a traditional layout the building is extremely well maintained. Recent improvements have enabled flexible seating to be incorporated in the area of the Massey Chapel. The rails on the chancel steps are now moveable as are the choir stalls.

When moved away they reveal a large performance area across both chancels to facilitate concerts and school activities.



The Location & Environment of the Parish

The parish is located in a rural setting on the south west of the Wirral peninsula. It lies in close proximity to the industrial, business and residential conurbations of Ellesmere Port, Deeside and Birkenhead where areas of social disadvantage can be found. Indeed, our parish has a history of reaching out to other parishes and communities and supporting those in need. In days gone by Burton was a cross-roads for trade routes between Lancashire & North Wales and Birkenhead & Chester. In the thirteenth century it was considered important enough to be granted a Royal Charter to hold a market. Today the area is still agricultural but with very few people employed on the land. Our congregation and the local population are drawn from very diverse backgrounds and occupations. The two villages of Burton and Puddington are now residential and lie within conservation areas.



Supporting Youth & Young Families



We have an active Youth Church in Burton that meets in a range of settings. Our aim is to provide interest in the Christian faith for young children, youth and their families.

For primary school-age children we have All Stars. For our secondary school-age children we have a youth group called TBY (The Burton Youth). One TBY member recently described the group as:

"A fun and interactive environment which allows us to develop our faith and develop as young people"

In addition to the regular group meetings we also hold family events including:

- Church Games Nights
- Christmas Book at Bedtime
- A Light Party in the Autumn
- Easter Egg Rolling

Not all families feel able to enter into the formal church setting. Consequently we strive very hard to bridge the gap between the church and the local community. These efforts have been

successful through Messy Church which takes place in the Village Hall each month during term time and is well attended by families from the school and local area. Within our church family we have a significant number of parents with children who have specific needs, disabilities or vulnerabilities. Parenting such children is both a privilege and a challenge and we recognise that it is so important to respond to these needs with help, ministry, understanding and practical support.



Bishop Wilson Village School

Puddington Lane, Burton

Bishop Wilson School is a Church of England aided primary school with close connections with St Nicholas' Church through its Governors and its Trustees as well as its pupils. It has a long history of high quality education. The school continues this tradition for today's children with an enjoyable and enriching experience which equips them for lifelong learning.

The school promotes Christian family values alongside academic excellence. It very much encourages the involvement of parents and believes it is vital for the success of a child's education to develop a partnership between home and the school.

As a part of the village community, the school aims to provide a stimulating and safe environment where all children can fulfil their potential, not only academically, but also socially, physically, emotionally and morally to enable them to succeed in the future.

'The Joy of The Lord is
Your Strength'

We have a strong, active and
nurturing involvement with
St Nicholas' Church in all
aspects of School life.

Helen Friend,
Executive Headteacher



Bishop Wilson School receives visits from the 'Open the Book' team when the pupils see Bible stories acted out and brought to life

Mothers' Union

The Burton branch of the Mothers' Union has been a distinct praying and working presence in the parish for over 100 years. Its numbers remain relatively steady at around two dozen members. "Love and Service" are the watch-words. The overall aim is to promote the well-being of families world-wide, through prayer and action, and in Burton this is put to practical effect both within the parish and further afield.

The Burton branch meets monthly, usually in the Sports and Social Pavilion.

Meetings vary and include spiritual talks and services, speakers with subjects of general interest, occasional outings and shared meals. The committee meets regularly and endeavours to plan a balanced programme.

The branch contributes to the MU's charitable funds, which help worthwhile causes, such as establishing parenting groups, providing holidays for families in need, visiting in prisons and young offenders' institutions, providing for neo-natal units, and similarly important objectives abroad.

Being unable to meet during the Covid-19 pandemic has been difficult, particularly for those living alone. The branch has kept contact with each member on a monthly basis throughout this period.



Pastoral Care



St Nicholas' Church believes that pastoral care is a fundamental part of Christianity in action. Our aim is to reach out to local people as well as to our church family with the love of God, through prayer, listening, sharing and practical help. There is no age limit - pastoral care comes in many different forms and extends from birth to death. It is particularly crucial at times of bereavement.

As a church we try to reach out to people. We offer a monthly Holy Communion service which includes a 'Soup and Sandwich' lunch. It takes place in the sports pavilion and caters for the needs of people of any age who find it difficult to attend church due to the steep incline of the church steps.

The 'Hardy Perennials' monthly lunch provides support to the many single women and men in the parish who live independently. There is no 'membership' but the group meets over a meal and enjoys important fellowship together.

Similarly our church has a programme of visiting local care homes and people in hospital. Also, we all recognise that a great deal of pastoral care is undertaken quietly and sincerely by friends and neighbours within the community.

Pastoral care, in whatever form, is a very important part of Christian outreach for St Nicholas' Church - touching the lives of people in the community and demonstrating God's love for everyone, of whatever faith or creed. Pastoral care involvement provides an opportunity for a new incumbent to meet people and to deliver the word of God, at particularly crucial times in people's lives.



A church
committed to
reaching out
beyond its
boundaries

Music, Singing, School Plays, Concerts & Performances

Church music is organised by a small team of people who provide music suited to all occasions from a wedding or funeral, to a Christmas Carol service or a school concert, to a traditional Evensong prayer book service.

The options for worship at St Nicholas' Church include:

...

Organ music using the two manual Compton pipe organ

...

A lovely Bechstein upright piano

...

Singers who lead congregational worship

accompanied by musicians

...

Backing tracks used as and when required

...

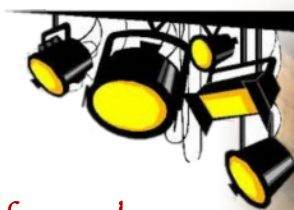
A mixture of traditional hymns and worship songs

...

A fully integrated audio visual system with a retractable screen, projector, video recording and live streaming

...

The church has flexible seating in the chancel area which facilitates school concerts, performances and choral events.



Keeping the Parish In Touch

Parish Magazine & Community News

A small editorial and creative team produce a high quality 'Parish Magazine and Community News' which is circulated bi-monthly. The publication comprises church related editorial, community news articles and information as well as interesting contributions from organisations such as RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands, Ness Gardens and other bodies. The magazine is distributed electronically to around 350 email addresses of people in and around the parish.

Email via burtonchurchcomms

The church holds the email addresses of people who have elected to be kept informed of church-related matters. This is an efficient and effective method of keeping in touch with people and enables information to be disseminated speedily whenever the need arises. During the Covid-19 pandemic the facility was used to provide church members with links to forthcoming church services and meetings that were held online. For people unable to access information via the internet the church has provided transcripts of church services as hard copy delivered to their homes.

Streaming of Church Services and Other Technology

The church continues to make use of live streaming to enable people to join church services from their own homes and for other church meetings. It is expected that once Covid-19 restrictions are lifted St Nicholas' Church will continue to live stream services from church to those who are unable to attend church in person due to ill health or infirmity. Other planned deployment of technology is the tap-to-donate facility in church to reduce the need for people to donate in cash.



Bells Have Been Rung in Burton for Centuries

The tower of St Nicholas' Church houses a ring of 6 bells which sound out over the parish for Sunday services, weddings and special occasions. They are rung by a welcoming group of 8 regular bellringers, drawn from the church community as well as others from around the parish. Visitors are always welcome as is anyone wishing to learn.

The bells date back to 1726 and are in excellent condition having been refurbished in 2020 with the support of parishioners, the 'Friends of St Nicholas' Church' as well as other community donations.



St Nicholas' Church is fortunate to have a magnificent set of high-quality handbells which is used by an enthusiastic band of ringers. The handbell group has been established for well over ten years and they play a variety of musical pieces.

Handbells feature at special services and festivals in church and at other times throughout the year. As a church we actively encourage participation by people interested in learning the historic art of handbell ringing. The group is often invited to play at community events throughout the Wirral and further afield, as well as at care homes, community events and on other occasions, especially at Christmas.

The Church & Its Local History

The picturesque location of the parish gives no hint of Burton's past importance as a thriving port on the River Dee or Puddington's heritage as a Roman Catholic stronghold and the location of the area's only known saint, John Plessington (1637-1679).

For over a thousand years the history of the church has been interwoven with that of the families and institutions that held the lease of the rectorship of Burton parish.

The settlements of both Burton and Puddington are recorded in the Domesday Book but the first wooden church was located in Burton well before the Norman Conquest. The first stone church was erected in 1086. It has been rebuilt several times, firstly in 1380 then subsequently in 1554, 1721 and the chancel in 1870.

At the time of the Reformation in the 16th century the Massey family of Puddington Hall controlled the parish of Burton. Staunch Roman Catholics, they refused to attend services in Burton, and the family and its servants created their own chapel in Puddington. Father John Plessington continued to minister to the Massey family but was ultimately charged with treason and convicted. He was eventually hanged, drawn and quartered at Boughton in Chester in 1679.

Although the parish and St Nicholas' Church has a very interesting past, it is first and foremost a church for today.



The Significance of the Quatrefoil



The quatrefoil has been used in church architecture, stonemasonry and carpentry for many centuries. Similarly, for mariners and seafarers across the globe the quatrefoil has traditionally symbolised the four points of the compass - north, south, east and west.

In Medieval times Burton Village was one of several important ports on the Dee Estuary.

It was frequented by sailors from around the world for whom St Nicholas was their patron saint. The first stone church in Burton was erected in 1086. When the chancel was rebuilt, around 1870 and latterly during internal refurbishment, the quatrefoil symbol featured extensively throughout the design of the building and its fittings.

Today, in Christian terms and for all those who worship at St Nicholas' Church, the quatrefoil represents the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The gospels describe the 'good news' and teaching of Jesus Christ upon which all Christian faith is founded.

At St Nicholas' Church the gospels provide the bedrock on which the church's ministry and teaching is based and it emphasises what Jesus taught us, the need to care for one another.



Church Events & Activities

Members of St Nicholas' Church, through a series of groups and teams, arrange a number of events and festival activities throughout the year, often involving the whole of the local community. Amongst recent events organised have been:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Coffee Mornings | - A chance to meet friends over coffee and cakes |
| Walk of Witness | - A Good Friday walk - Shotwick to Burton via Puddington |
| Hardy Perennials | - A monthly lunch date for people living independently |
| Games Nights | - Family activity with traditional games and pizza |
| Film Nights | - Films suitable for all the family on the big screen in church |
| Charity Auctions | - Supper in the village hall and an auction of items for charity |
| Remembrance Time | - Remembrance Sunday and All Souls Sunday |
| Open the Book | - Sharing Bible stories with children through outreach |
| Pumpkin Festival | - Participation in the Burton and Puddington festival |
| Advent Windows | - A church event for the whole community in Burton |
| Illustrated Talks | - Interesting topics deploying the big screen |
| Sleepout Challenge | - Young people's support for the Church Urban Fund |
| Harvest Supper | - Annual event bringing people together |
| Christmas Trees | - A festival event in church with a host of decorated trees |
| Carols on the Green | - Christmas Carols on Puddington's Village Green |



The Local Societies & Events

Gladstone Village Hall

Gladstone Village Hall was created for the villages of Burton and Puddington by Henry Neville Gladstone.

The hall, together with the surrounding land occupied by the Sports and Social club, were donated to the community in 1906 and are very much part of village life. The hall is a charity with four permanent trustees and a management committee which, in addition to managing the hall, organises various fund-raising events such as the annual Village Fete, a Farmers' Market, the Annual Pumpkin Festival, Bonfire Night and a Christmas Fair. The hall is also used for church events such as Messy Church, Harvest Suppers and fund-raising evenings and by many clubs and societies.

The Puddington Society

The Puddington Society has been in existence for nearly 40 years. Its committee organises events and social functions either on the Village Green in Puddington or in the Gladstone Village Hall for the benefit of the community. These include the annual 'Carols on the Green' event when people come together to sing Carols under the lights around a Christmas Tree.

The Burton Society

The Burton Society meets monthly in the Gladstone Village Hall. The society provides a varied programme of events and social activities. Its aim is to inform and entertain local people, along with their friends and family, with illustrated talks provided by knowledgeable speakers on topics of interest.



Parish Finances & Funding

General

All aspects of the church's operations and ministry are self financed. Like all parish churches we receive no direct financial assistance from any central source. Consequently, in order to meet its running costs of around £100,000 per year the church relies substantially on the donations it receives from church members together with money raised through other fund-raising activities.

Planned Giving

The church operates a 'Planned Giving' scheme which enables people to make regular monthly donations to church funds via their bank accounts. The generosity of church members is considerable and the scheme accounts for over 50% of all donations.

Church Fabric & Churchyard Funding

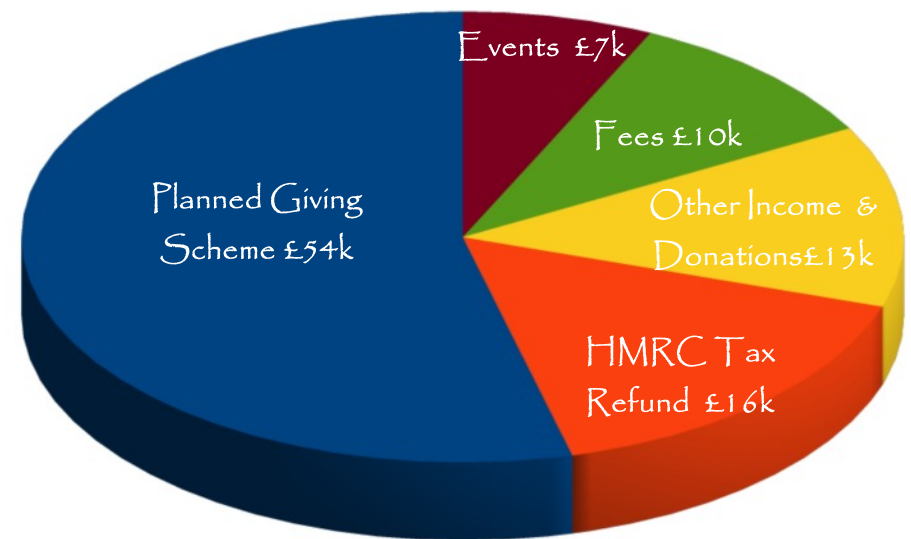
In years gone by money was donated by benefactors to enable two small funds to be set up to help contribute towards the upkeep of the church building and its churchyard.

Friends of St Nicholas' Church (FSNC)

Through regular donations and the proceeds of events FSNC members make a valuable contribution to the upkeep of the church.

Sources of All Church Income in a Typical Year

giftaid it
Making donations go further



The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is grateful to all who donate money, both church members and others, towards ministry or the upkeep of the church and its churchyard.

It is through the generosity of all those who value the presence of the church within the parish that St Nicholas' Church is able to prosper and to play its part in providing a place of worship and to support people in times of need.

Our Church's Ongoing Support for Mission & Charities

Principles

St Nicholas' Church, along with the wider community, provides support to a number of local causes as well as nationally and abroad. In addition to regular appeals in aid of specific causes, St Nicholas' Church donates 10% of its ordinary annual income (excluding special donations, tax refunds etc) towards the work of charitable causes.

Practical Support

Amongst the recipients, donations are made to charities that provide practical support to vulnerable groups including the homeless, people affected through deprivation and those socially marginalised. Further afield charities working to relieve deprivation and organisations dedicated to improving the plight of people suffering through a lack of resources or access to education are also included as are those organisations working in Jesus' name to bring about change.

Commitment in Action

Church members regularly support both the work of the church through Planned Giving as well as other charitable causes. Young people are also encouraged to become involved in fund-raising activities and are taught from an early age both at school and through youth activities that we all have a responsibility to look after one another and those less fortunate than ourselves.



The Future

We are keenly aware of the need for a new generation of people to rise up and become church members.

Consequently we try to nurture whatever shoots of growth with which we are blessed. We have an effective church family that offers encouragement and help to both the Vicar and the lay ministry. At this critical time we expect to work with a new part-time incumbent in a true supportive partnership: one that recognises the leadership that a priest will bring but also one that fully respects the part time nature of the role.

During the pandemic we have been streaming and emailing services, having online meetings and delivering printed notes to those who cannot access things electronically.

Whilst we look forward to the congregation returning to the church, some will need extra support and nurture to build back their confidence. On the plus side, streamed and emailed services have been reaching people near and far who might not otherwise attend services, and we therefore look to continuing that aspect of mission.

The wider challenge for Christians everywhere, in an increasingly secular and distrustful society, is to offer hope rather than despair, encouragement rather than suppression, teaching rather than scepticism, and belief rather than distrust.

Our role as a church is to reach out to those in need in ways that are spiritual, practical, and meaningful.



Seeking a New Incumbent ~ Who?

Our parish is seeking someone who will help to build upon what has gone before and who is attracted by all that the parish has to offer in terms of its potential for ministry, its location and its challenges.

Whilst recognising that this is a part-time role, one which is actively supported by an experienced team of lay readers and PCC members, he or she will have enthusiasm and a practical approach to Christianity, and will be keen to:

- Attract new people, especially young families, to become involved in the church;
- Support and inspire our team of lay readers, volunteer organisers, administrators and helpers within our broad church membership;
- Work with the PCC to recruit and develop a children and family worker;
- Continue both traditional and modern services;
- Continue involvement with the village C of E primary school;
- Encourage the congregation to live out their Christian faith in everyday life;
- Provide leadership on safeguarding and encourage all to contribute towards creating a safer church;
- Be there for those in need or distress;
- Continue and develop inter-denominational activity in the wider area.

There is the promise that the new incumbent will have the freedom and flexibility of a part-time role. Importantly, he or she will receive wide-ranging support from lay readers, PCC members, the church congregation and many other people in the parish.



Church Services at St Nicholas'

(Pre Covid-19 Regulations)

Weekly - Sundays

- 8.45am Holy Communion (BCP)
- 10.00am All Age Morning Worship

Weekly - Mondays

- 9.00am Start the Week in Prayer

Weekly - Wednesdays

- 10.15am Holy Communion (BCP)

1st Sunday of the Month

- 6.30pm Evensong (BCP)

1st Monday of the Month

- 11.00am Holy Communion (Sports Pavilion)
+ Soup & Sandwich Lunch

3rd Sunday of the Month

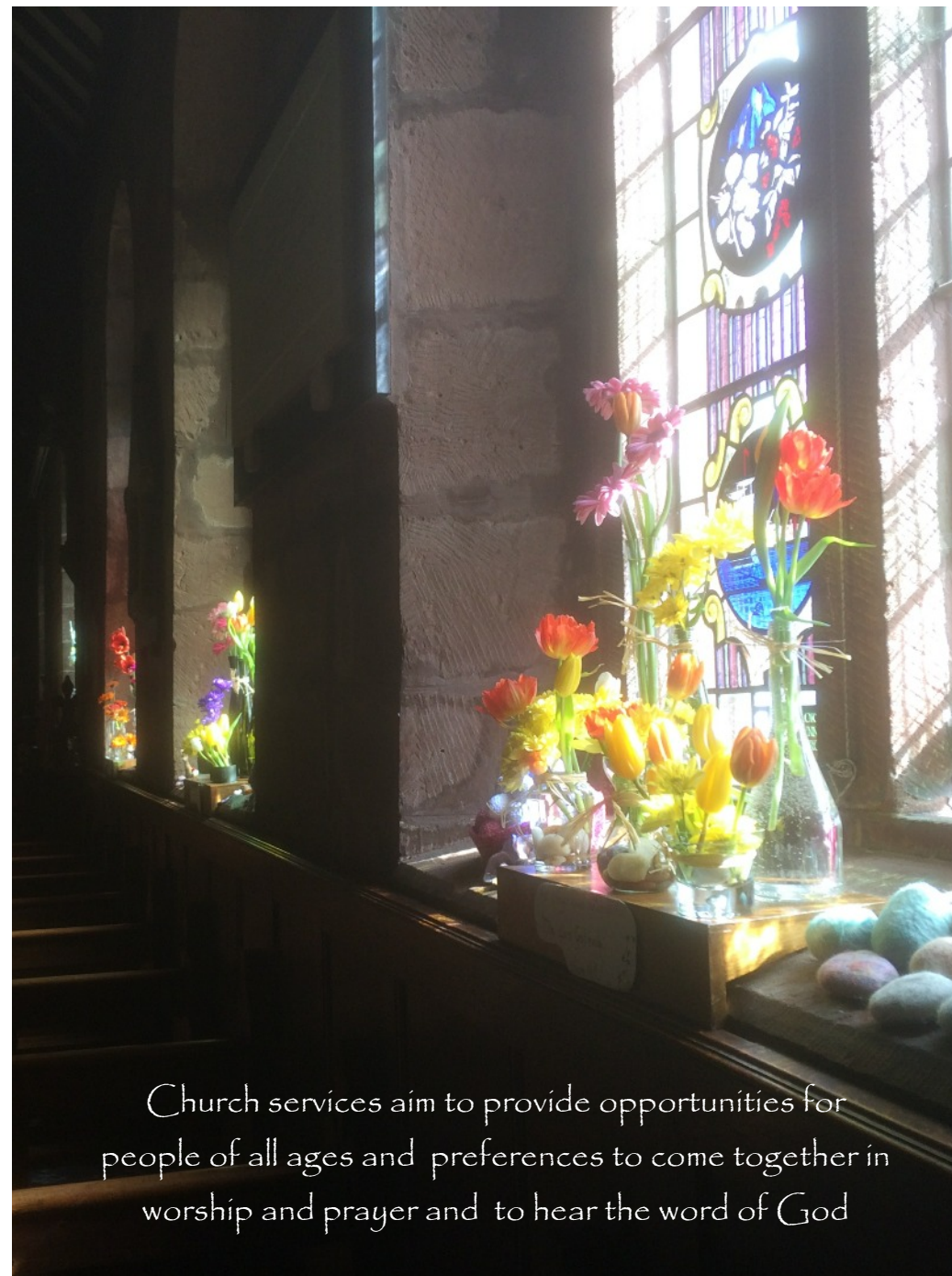
- 10.00am All Age Communion

Messy Church - Monthly

- 4.00pm Saturdays (during term time)

BCP - Book of Common Prayer, traditional

All other worship and communion services are in modern format



Church services aim to provide opportunities for people of all ages and preferences to come together in worship and prayer and to hear the word of God

Who's Who - A Short Insight

Lay Readers

Ruth Abbott

Basil Keys

John Morris-Best

(In Training)

Philip Hillman

Churchwardens

Nigel Griffiths

(& Safeguarding Officer)

Ivor Thomas

Deputy Churchwarden

Tony Carter

PCC Hon. Secretary

John Vinson

PCC Hon. Treasurer

Bryan Blakeman

Gift Aid Secretary

John Miles

Verger Duties

Ann Warr

- Services

Judy Redmond

- Open & Close

The Friends of

Robin Cowan

- Chairman

St Nicholas' Church

Gill & John Miles - Administration

Music & Singers

Alison Carter

Mothers' Union

Ann Rudd

Junior Church

Amanda Ankers

Lay Synod

Basil Keys

Church Bells

Jane Davies

- Tower Captain

Parish Magazine

Sue Birch

- Administration





St Nicholas' Church
A Place Where All Are Welcome



ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH

BURTON-IN-WIRRAL

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1184831

www.burtonchurch.org.uk

