

LIVERPOOL PARISH CHURCH

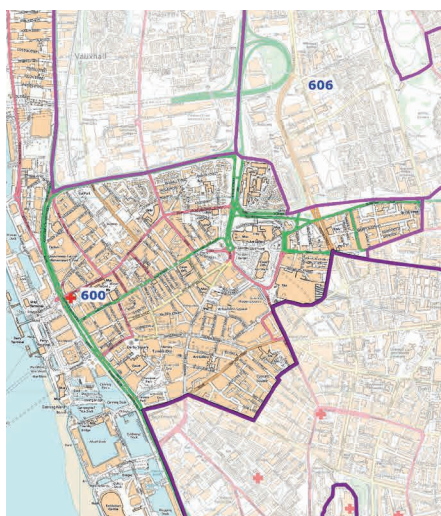
Our Lady & St Nicholas



Welcome
Parish Profile 2024

Introduction

Our Lady and St Nicholas is the parish church for the City of Liverpool. It is in the Catholic Anglican choral tradition and has a large, gathered, diverse congregation as well as many links with the local civic and maritime/military communities. It is part of the Diocese of Liverpool and is therefore committed to the diocesan vision of “being a bigger church, making a bigger difference, more people knowing Jesus and more justice in the world” (liverpoolcofe.org).



The parish is, in essence, the entire City Centre of Liverpool. This includes the retail districts (a large section of Liverpool One, Church St and Lord St), the business district (centred around Old Hall St), the Civic Buildings (including St George's Hall and the Town Hall), the Museums and Galleries, and the Pier Head. Lime Street Station is at the eastern end of the parish, and the river is at the western end. To the north, the Liverpool Waters development will soon see the building of 20,000 houses and, of course, Everton FC's new stadium at Bramley Moore dock, opening in 2025. The City Centre has seen considerable regeneration in the last 20 years, and there is now a significant residential population.

Overview

The Church of Our Lady and St Nicholas is the historic church of the city and the earliest evidence of a church on the site is in the thirteenth century. However, the current building is relatively recent: whilst the Tower dates from 1815, the main body of the Church was rebuilt in 1952 following wartime bombing. Due to the significance of our ministry, we are designated a 'Major Church' in the Church of England, and are part of the Major Churches Network (majorchurches.org).

The Church is a single parish benefice in the patronage of the Gladstone family (the current patron, Sir Charles Gladstone Bt, is the great great grandson of the Prime Minister, William Gladstone, who acquired the patronage in 1890).

The Church is in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England with the Eucharist at the heart of our worshipping life, although both the clergy and congregation come from a variety of church backgrounds. It is our priority to remain accessible to all as the Parish Church of the City, and so although we are confident in the tradition we represent, we aim not to be doctrinaire or exclusive. Vestments are worn, and incense is used on Sundays. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in a side chapel.

The work of the Church is broad and involves partnership with many different organisations (livpc.co.uk/downloads/vision). In the midst of what is sometimes an exciting and beguiling ministry, it is important to remember that our Sunday congregation is at the heart of our witness to the Gospel, and, as such, its spiritual nurturing and development must be seen as a priority.

The Church is open to the public every day between 9am and 5pm. It is also open on some evenings for regular groups which meet, including weekly AA groups, as well as three choirs (one of which is our own Community Choir, run in collaboration with the Liverpool BID Company), an Early Music orchestra for young people, and a variety of other organisations.

The congregation is largely gathered (just under 20% live in the parish and others come from all over Liverpool and the Wirral) and have chosen to worship at Liverpool Parish Church for a variety of reasons (perhaps because they used to live in the parish, or because of the style of liturgy, for social reasons, or because they have been brought to the church through one of our activities or partnerships). In 2024 the electoral roll stood at 138. In 2023 our normal Sunday morning attendance was around 100 (including about 10 children), although this increased significantly for festivals and the monthly Choral Evensong attracts additional worshippers. Those who attend weekday services are generally not part of the Sunday congregation.

Those who worship at Liverpool Parish Church represent the diversity of the city, coming from different social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. We pride ourselves on the openness of our welcome, and the Rector would be expected to lead our inclusive





theological teaching and spiritual growth. The age profile of our congregation is younger than many churches. We have a number of young families who regularly attend and Sunday School meets most weeks in term time during the Parish Eucharist.

We have a strong on-line presence through our website (livpc.co.uk) re-launched in 2022, and social media. Our social media strategy prioritises X (Twitter) and Instagram as the external face of the church, and our Facebook page is more internally focused, although there is fluidity between the two. We have a weekly e-bulletin on Wednesdays which goes out to the congregation and other members of the Church family.

Because of the nature of our City Centre location, the congregation can be transient, and we also welcome many visitors to our regular worship. The transience extends to the regular congregation: young adults in particular might stay for one or two years before leaving Liverpool because of work or education.

Occasional Offices

During 2023 there were:

- 17 baptisms; this ministry is currently led by the Revd Jenny Brady.
- 13 weddings, although traditionally the number has been higher as we are a popular venue. This ministry is currently led by the Revd Michelle Montrose. We have a wedding strategy (which can be seen in our Vision & Strategy document available on the website) and every year there are wedding couples who go on to confirmation and longer term membership of our church community. The PCC and congregation are absolutely clear that we support same sex marriage (although not currently allowed by Canon law). Over the last few years we have been pleased to hold services of blessing for same sex couples.
- 5 confirmations; these were three adults and two children from our congregation. Preparation is done by the clergy.
- 9 funerals; very often these are funerals from the maritime or civic communities and usually take place in church. Very occasionally we are asked to officiate at crematorium-only funerals.

Worship Pattern

Sundays

9am Morning Prayer

10am Parish Eucharist

6pm Choral Evensong (first Sunday of the month)

Incense is used every week at the Parish Eucharist and High Mass vestments are worn. There is a full serving team. The usual Sunday morning attendance is approximately 100 adults and 10 children. We normally get about 50 people at the monthly Evensong, including many who only attend this service.

Weekdays

9am Morning Prayer (except Saturdays)

12.15pm Eucharist (Wednesdays and Fridays)

Healing Mass (first Wednesday of the month)

1.05pm Roman Catholic Mass (Fridays)

Clergy and Staff

We are fortunate in having the support of a number of SSM clergy, either licensed to the Parish or attached to us with Permission to Officiate. They are:



The Revd
Michelle
Montrose
(since 2012)



The Revd
Canon Bill
Addy (since
2017; Fr Bill is
also Area Dean)



The Revd
Jennifer
Brady
(since 2020)



The Revd
Professor
Steven
Shakespeare
(since 2024)



The Revd
Canon Dr
Yazid Said
(PTO since 2015)



The Revd
Canon Ray
Hutchinson
(PTO since 2016)

The Parish has usually had a second stipendiary priest, and in recent years this has been a curate. It is hoped that the Rector would be a training incumbent in the future. The work of the Rector and the Church is supported by our Parish Administrator, Jean Wynne. For many years we have also had a lay Parish Assistant, who has often been someone exploring ordination. The last two Parish Assistants have been part of the Ministry Experience Scheme of the Church of England, which is focused in this Diocese in the Tsedaqah Community. Our other paid staff include the Organist (who is also the Liturgical Administrator), three caretakers/keyholders, a cleaner, the leader of the Lauda Project, and a number of individuals who undertake verging duties at weddings and special services.

Inclusive Welcome

Liverpool Parish Church welcomes everyone and understands all people to be equal in the sight of God and within the Church, and we would expect our new Rector to demonstrate a proactive involvement in developing inclusivity. The Clergy and PCC are committed to equal marriage and we will bless same-sex relationships in stand-alone services. We have worked with Liverpool City Region Pride for many years, using our Church and gardens to host events as part of Liverpool Pride. We also host Liverpool's World AIDS Day commemoration along with Sahir House, a local HIV/AIDS charity and have strong links with Open Table Liverpool (opentable.lgbt)



Spiritual Growth

Spiritual development of the worshipping congregation is of paramount importance and is currently led by Mthr Jenny Brady. There is a regular programme of quiet days (usually 2 annually, one in Church and one away) and small study groups (in recent years these have been online and take place during Lent and Advent).

Liverpool Parish Church has traditionally had a comprehensive Lent programme: historically for many years this comprised a series of daily lunch-time lectures from visiting speakers. In recent years this has evolved to reflect the changing demographic/working habits of the local business community and congregation and currently would typically include a programme of two or three recitals (including one large scale production of a Bach Cantata such as the St John or St Matthew Passion), one evening lecture and two house Eucharists (usually one in south Liverpool and one in Wirral, reflecting the demographic spread of our congregation). The culmination of the Lent programme is always the solemn liturgy of Holy Week and Easter, with the celebration of the triduum being the highlight of the year (this traditionally starts with an agape in the refectory before the Maundy Thursday Eucharist).

Children's and Youth Ministry

Over the past year there has been an increase in the number of children coming to Church with their families: there is a pool of approximately 20-25 children, with an average of 10-12 each week, with a large age range from very young babies, toddlers and preschoolers, and a child in nearly every primary school year group. There are currently about 4 young people in the 11-18 category, all of whom take an active role in the worship, mainly as altar servers.

There is a designated corner in Church providing age-appropriate resources for the younger members of the congregation, not yet old enough to join the main Sunday School, which can be used with their parents during the Sunday Eucharist.

Sunday School is lay led, by parents and other volunteers, with support also provided by the clergy and parish assistant. It takes place in the Alexandra Room in the basement of the church building during the first part of the Eucharist. The main Sunday School cohort is usually well attended with the same families on a weekly basis. We utilise an online subscription to Roots, in addition to other resources such as crafts, colouring, music and relevant educational videos. The children also play an active role in our Eco Church activities.

Integration of the older primary school age children into the worshipping life of the Church is a priority and they take it in turns to be part of the regular serving team and help with the collection. Two of our Year 5 children were confirmed by the Bishop before Advent and two Year 3 children were admitted to Holy Communion at Pentecost.



Social Justice



Lauda: The Lauda Project is a collaboration between Liverpool Parish Church and St Luke's in the City to connect Roma families living in Wavertree and Toxteth with their local church, the wider community and public services. The project benefited from significant input by the (then) Pastoral Assistant at OLSN, and his successors have continued to support the worship, reading group, community market and sports activities aimed at integrating the families with the local community.

The Project Leader is a fluent Romanian speaker. She is employed by Liverpool Parish Church and managed by the Team Vicar at St Luke's in the City. To date, funding has been provided by the Deanery Mission & Growth Fund and The Joshua Centre, and a bid to the Racial Justice Fund is being prepared for submission through the Racial Justice Officer at Liverpool Diocese, from which there is firm support for the success of this project. A member of Liverpool Parish Church is part of the Steering Group, currently working on enhancing governance within the project, in order that the bid is successful and that the initial funding (due in September 2024) can be applied without delay to value-adding activities.

Homelessness: Liverpool Parish Church is a key stakeholder in Change Liverpool (changeliverpool.co.uk) which runs an alternative giving campaign as well as the Homelessness Business Charter. Developing and promoting this work is part of the Church's responsibility towards those experiencing homelessness in the city centre.

Foodbank: Liverpool Parish Church supports the work of the Micah Foodbank, run by the Diocese, and acts as a city centre hub for food donations, not only from the congregation but also from the wider local business community. Micah collects and then distributes these donations through their food pantries, one of which the Parish Assistant supports with help on a weekly basis.

AA: This organisation holds meetings at the Parish Church on a Monday and Tuesday evening and Thursday lunchtimes. A city centre space, where anonymity can be preserved due to the nature of our building, has meant that the relationship between the organisation and the Church has been long lasting and will continue.

Options: This is a local charity for Supported Living which exists to support, empower and enable people with disabilities to live their lives to the full. They use our building on a regular basis for training purposes.

Environmental Awareness

At Liverpool Parish Church we are committed to becoming more sustainable and environmentally friendly in our vision and our practice, in alignment with the Church of England's route map to net zero carbon by 2030. Our journey began in 2019 with support from Faiths4Change, a Merseyside-based environmental charity, since when we have attained an Eco Church Bronze Award (A Rocha's Award Scheme for Churches in England and Wales) and are now working towards a Silver



Award. The steps we have taken to becoming more sustainable include: fitting LED bulbs in the church, providing an online version of the service resources for the congregation to access on their mobile phones, installing compost bins in the church garden and fitting solar panels to the church roof (we are the first traditional church building in the diocese to do this). We have recently undertaken a lifestyle audit of the congregation to understand people's priorities for the environment and what they would like to see the church doing. We would expect the new Rector to join us in this commitment and to provide leadership on environmental matters through both ministry and practical ideas.

Lay Involvement

There is extensive lay involvement including a full PCC with 4 Deanery Synod representatives, two Churchwardens and two deputy Churchwardens, a treasurer, a sacristan and large team of altar servers, sidespeople, readers and intercessors, buildings manager, 'Eco Church' co-ordinator, Sunday School leaders, congregational cantors, flower team, refreshment servers.

Social Activities

Due to the gathered nature of the congregation, social activities do not follow the pattern of many 'normal' parish churches but we do come together for regular celebrations, usually after the Sunday Eucharist (recent examples include lunches for Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee and King Charles' Coronation, and an Arabic breakfast hosted by Jordanian members of our congregation). We have a monthly coffee morning held on a weekday which is usually attended by about 20 of the retired members of the congregation. We also have occasional charity lunches held after the Sunday Eucharist when there will be a speaker from one of our supported charities.



Civic Ministry

Liverpool Parish Church has one of the most significant civic ministries in the country. We understand that civic ministry is much more than church services with external organisations. The Rector is the relationship holder on behalf of the Church and Diocese with many across civic and business institutions. This might involve working with the Public Health department in Liverpool, or advocating with Council leaders; it might be attending networking events in the business community; or it might be advising the Merseyside Lieutenancy or Liverpool Town Hall. The Rector is Chaplain to the Town Hall and attends many functions there, as well as collaborating on major events in the City calendar. This includes being part of the organising group for Remembrance Sunday (the largest outside London), or bringing different faiths together for Holocaust Memorial Day. Events such as the annual Armed Forces Day, Liverpool Commonwealth Association and the Lord Mayor's Civic Services take place at Liverpool Parish Church, as do other military and civic events. Throughout the year thousands of people attend civic events in the Church, including 2,500 people who attend about twenty carol services which take place every December.

The business community looks to the Church throughout the year, and the Rector is often invited to attend corporate dinners and to say grace. There is a particular relationship with the judiciary, and the Rector is Chaplain to the QEII Law Courts, as well as attending 'Bar Mess' dinners. A number of regimental associations have annual services at the church, including HMS Old & Bold Association (joint with the Submariners Association), the Parachute Regimental Association, and the Royal Signal Corps Association. Others, such as the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment and the Liverpool Scottish Regimental Association, have occasional services. A number of other organisations look to the Church for liturgical, spiritual, and pastoral guidance, from the Order of St Lazarus through to St John Ambulance and the RNLI.

Individual Rectors have built their own networks within the City, and there are plenty of people to help the new Rector establish fresh contacts and extend the reach of the Church.



Music and Art

Over the last few years the Church has become a beacon within the English Choral tradition. Our professional choir, the St Nicholas' Singers, has been established for over twenty five years and sings for most civic events, many weddings and other occasions, as well as at our monthly Choral Evensong (started in 2016) and once a month at a Choral Parish Eucharist. In 2020 we established an endowment fund to underwrite the cost of the choir. On other Sundays we have a group of 'congregational cantors' who sing a choral Mass setting, a psalm, and a communion motet. On some Sundays we have a fully congregational setting.

Our music is led by our organist, Ian Wells, who is also an honorary Deputy Organist at Liverpool Cathedral. We have three deputy organists within the congregation. In 2022-23 we began celebrating the organ music of certain composers with a series of voluntaries by Cesar Frank on the centenary of his death. This year (2023-24) we are similarly commemorating Stanford, Dubois and Faure.

For some years we have collaborated with the Liverpool Bach Collective. As well as concerts and cantata performances, we have staged annual liturgical performances of Bach's St John Passion or St Matthew Passion.





Liverpool Parish Church has gained a reputation for the visual arts in recent years. There are a number of permanent sculptures in the church and gardens, including the Liverpool Blitz Memorial (2000), the MV Derbyshire Memorial (2018), and the Homeless Jesus (2019). Other recent acquisitions or commissions include the Grail Boat sculpture (on permanent loan since 2016), the icon crucifix behind the altar (2019), and the new font (2019). In 2018 we launched the Liverpool Plinth competition in collaboration with the BID Company, which was loosely modelled on the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square and has brought an annual sculpture installation to a plinth on the church building, overlooking Chapel Street. In 2024 we have relaunched the competition as the Liverpool Sculpture Prize and broadened the entrance criteria to reach sculptors from across the country. Every year there are also temporary artistic installations and exhibitions. In the last twelve months this has included a large-scale installation in the Gardens as part of the City's 'River of Light' festival (2023), the national exhibition from the British Association of Iconographers (2023), an exhibition from artist Elizabeth Grey-King (2024) and an exhibition commemorating the life of the slavery abolitionist John Newton (2024).



Mission in the Economy

Mission in the Economy, an ecumenically funded chaplaincy charity providing multi faith services to the retail, business, private and volunteer sector predominantly in the North West of England, has its offices in Liverpool Parish Church Parish Centre, and it is likely that the new Rector will be asked to be a Trustee. Working closely with the Diocese and Archdiocese of Liverpool, as well as other denominations who hold membership with Churches Together Merseyside Region, the chaplains provide a wellbeing and listening service, alongside spiritual and pastoral care. Mission in the Economy has a long standing relationship with the provision of chaplains at Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Merseyside Police, YMCA Together Liverpool, YMCA St Helens, St Helens Council and Warrington Council. Mission in the Economy also provide workplace chaplaincy services and deliver chaplaincy training nationwide. More information can be found on mite.org.uk

Interfaith Work

Since 2018 the Rector of Liverpool has led on inter-religious work for the Diocese and also advises the City Council on all interfaith matters. This has led to strong involvement in a number of areas, including public health teams in the city. It is hoped that the next Rector will continue in this work, convening twice yearly meetings of the Faith Leaders' Group (chaired by the Bishop), and holding together a network of contacts. The Rector represents the Diocese as the Diocesan Interfaith Advisor (DIFA) and works closely in this with the diocesan Director of Social Justice. The Rector is also the point of connection between many faith communities and civic institutions.

Finance

The financial health of the Parish has been strong for many years. Revenue surpluses have been generated in all recent years and unrestricted annual income is usually within the range £150,000-£200,000. Endowment investments (currently about £550,000) are managed by Rathbones Investment Management and overseen by an investment committee including PCC representation and external advisors. Financial management responsibilities are shared by the Rector and the Treasurer (a volunteer role) and assisted by the Parish Administrator. Most income and expenditure is managed through online banking. Planned Giving is a source of particular strength for the Parish. The vast majority of regular donors contribute through monthly bank standing orders matched to Gift Aid declarations. (In 2023 the parish received slightly over £12,000 through Gift Aid reclaims.) More detailed information about the Parish finances may be found in the Annual Accounts filed with the Charity Commission here:

register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5005314/accounts-and-annual-returns

Buildings and Gardens

Liverpool Parish Church is a jewel in the crown of the city of Liverpool. It is a traditional church building in the heart of the city and has a history dating back hundreds of years to the embryonic port of Liverpool. It is situated on the waterfront with an imposing presence to those arriving by sea from around the world.

There are two apartments built into the Church: one (with one bedroom) made by converting a former library, and the other larger (two bedroom) apartment being a duplex style built above the Parish Centre. The centre is integral to the church building and contains offices and administration facilities, together with 2 rooms which are let out for meetings (one adjacent to our upstairs kitchen, known as the Refectory, and one in the basement, known as the Alexandra Room). The two apartments generate income, although they are also earmarked as accommodation for assistant clergy when required.

The parish benefits from the services of a full time building manager who operates in a voluntary capacity under the direction of the Rector and wardens and is appointed by the PCC (although the Rector has traditionally led on many capital projects). His role is to look after day to day maintenance issues and to authorise minor works and repairs. He is also responsible for the overseeing of all contracts relating to maintenance and services to the building.

The Church and Parish Centre are at the forefront of becoming an Eco Church; all lighting is now low energy where possible and our recently fitted 56 PV panels enables us to both have 'free' electricity during the day, and to export unused energy to the grid. Being the first church in the Diocese to have solar panels has generated considerable interest nationwide.





The gardens adjacent to the Church are a former churchyard and burial ground. This was re-purposed many years ago and the landscaped gardens which belong to the Church are maintained by the City Council as a 'closed' churchyard. The gardens contain a number of memorials to events connected with the city, including the first written record of a black resident of the city, Abell, who was enslaved to a Mr Rock, was buried on 1 October 1717 and was commemorated by a memorial stone laid in 2020. Most recently the Battle of the Atlantic memorial was opened by the Princess Royal in May 2023.

The building benefits from numerous grants and gifts which enable the PCC to maintain it to a high standard. Being the Civic Church to the city also benefits considerable usage and generates additional income.

For the last few years we have had a sustained programme of capital works to keep our buildings in excellent condition. Significant works have included new boilers (2014), new chairs (2016), stonework repairs (2016), refurbishment of Alexandra Room (2017), refurbishment of kitchen (2018), refurbishment of Pepys Flat (2018 and 2019), landscaping of Derbyshire memorial garden (2018), Narthex lighting scheme (2019), floodlighting (2022), creation of Battle of the Atlantic Garden (2023), refurbishment of lavatories (2023), roof works and solar panels (2024). The next Quinquennial Inspection is due in autumn 2024.

Walton Park Cemetery

Although our Church Gardens were the historic burial ground of Liverpool from the fourteenth century, they were closed to burial in 1849 and a new Parochial Cemetery was opened in Walton, which is still part of the benefice of Liverpool. The Cemetery is now closed, but we have given a licence to operate within it to Rice Lane Community Association, who run a 'city farm' and do community work. The PCC owns two properties in the cemetery: one is let to RLCA, and one is let as a private residence. After significant work on new leases and formalising the arrangements with RLCA, this should not take up too much of a new Rector's time.

St Nicholas' House

The Rector of Liverpool lives in Woodlands Road in the pleasant South Liverpool suburb of Aigburth. There is access to good local schools and amenities, including Sefton Park and the popular restaurants of Lark Lane. The house is four miles from church: an easy fifteen minute drive along the waterfront or slightly longer on a bicycle. The five-bedroom detached house has a small walled garden to the front, a driveway for two cars (although there is plenty of on-street parking as well), and a private enclosed rear garden.

All the rooms in the house are generously sized. Downstairs there is an entrance hall, a dining room, a lavatory, a kitchen with room for a table, a utility room, a study, and an extremely large sitting room. Upstairs there are five double bedrooms (one en suite) and a family bathroom.

The house is very suitable for entertaining, but as there are meeting rooms at church there is no expectation that Parish meetings will take place in the house.



The New Rector of Liverpool...

We are seeking to appoint a new Rector of Liverpool who is:

- A priest of deep faith and prayerfulness
- A priest who shares our vision of the Church continuing to be a living and dynamic Christian presence in the City of Liverpool
- A priest who is of the liberal Anglo-Catholic tradition and values the importance of excellent Eucharistic-focussed liturgy, our music and choral tradition
- Someone who is an accomplished preacher and teacher and who can nurture our congregation, lead us in spiritual growth and encourage theological reflection
- Someone who can lead us as we continue to develop in line with our Vision and Strategy document (livpc.co.uk) whilst also challenging us with new ideas of their own
- Someone who is outgoing and able to engage with all sectors of the Parish and City
- Someone who shares our open and inclusive values
- Someone who is deeply committed to pastoral care
- Someone who is committed to our Eco Church aspirations

You will be someone who is:

- An excellent communicator
- A team leader and good manager
- Experienced in running a large, ideally urban, parish
- Comfortable in a position of civic responsibility
- Financially astute and experienced at, and successful in, securing funding from grant-awarding bodies

We will support you with:

- A diverse, friendly, prayerful, searching- and sometimes challenging - congregation
- A capable and supportive ministry team and PCC
- A financially healthy parish
- Support and encouragement to take annual leave, retreats, CME and for your overall well-being



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