

# St Alban's Church

## Stoke Heath

### Coventry

Parish Profile



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## AREA DEAN'S INTRODUCTION

Coventry East is an exciting and varied place with a very multi-cultural mix of people living in the deanery and worshipping in our churches. We have the fastest growing population of any deanery in the diocese, and we are the most densely populated and most deprived deanery in the diocese. This brings its own set of challenges but also opportunities as can be seen in the varied way each church is seeking to build the kingdom in their parish.

There are 10 single parishes, a local ecumenical project and the diocesan resource church, St Mark's, who are revitalising their local parish church as well as supporting 2 new church planting initiatives across 3 other parishes. We have also have a deanery administrator to work across the parishes in our deanery that need admin support, which we hope will release clergy and churches to focus more on mission and growth.

This comes as a result of our deanery plan in which we seek new ways to work together in order to grow God's kingdom in our deanery.

University Hospital of Coventry and Warwickshire is a very prominent employer and resource within the deanery. With the rapid expansion of Coventry University (voted best Modern University in the Midlands) many students are living in Coventry East in halls of residence and rented housing, providing an energy and excitement as students come here from all over the world to study. Coventry is a city of sanctuary and has resettled more refugees than any local authority, many of whom live in our deanery.

Coming to Coventry East, means joining a really friendly and supportive chapter and synod. Within our chapter we have a Hospital chaplain, the Coventry university chaplain as well as several curates. Because Coventry East deanery is only 16sq miles our chapters are well attended and colleagues are close by which is great if you need help or want to collaborate on projects. We support one another as we know how demanding and isolating sometimes ministry can be.

We look forward to welcoming the new vicar of St Albans to Coventry East.

Rev Claire McArthur  
Area Dean - Coventry East



# MEET THE TEAM

## Church Wardens



I am Peter, I am church warden of St Albans. I have been in my role for the last 2 years.

The wellbeing of the parishioners and clergy is the main priority and providing a welcome to all who encounter our church and our Lord.

I assist in the preparation of the services along with the Sacristan and ensure the smooth running of church life. As church warden, time is spent organising the servicing of the equipment of the church (audio/visual, building, alarms, boiler, etc.) as well as physically maintaining the building, doing minor repairs and groundwork.

I am Carla and I have recently started my first term as Church Warden. I am delighted to be serving the church through this vacancy and excited to work with the new incumbent. I recall one of the first Sundays I spent at St Alban's, and after the service I was stood alone with my tea during fellowship when one of the ladies came and got me, saying no one stands alone at our church. I remember thinking what a lovely ethos to have and I can say no one does stand alone at St Alban's as we are one, which I hope you will see when reading our profile and maybe with some prayer and guidance you might receive the calling to join and serve St Alban's as you continue through your ministry.



The other church officers:



Cheryl -  
Safeguarding officer



Fiona -  
Secretary



Aga -  
Treasurer



James -  
Eco Officer

Our Congregation:



# THE DIOCESAN VISION AND WHAT IT MEANS TO ST. ALBANS CHURCH

## **Worshipping God**

Celebrating the Eucharist is central to the life of St. Alban's congregation, the time we receive Holy food to sustain us. It is also vital for us to meet regularly as a community of common belief in order to encourage and care for each other.

We come together to joyfully praise God and to thank Him for His goodness.

We allow quieter times during services to pray and to listen to God.

We try to make our worship accessible and relevant to every member of our congregation in their own situations and the locality, the nation and the world in which we live.

We enjoy the best of traditional hymns and worship songs, combining meaningful words enhanced by great music. Our future vision is to create worship that is welcoming to all, regardless of their churchmanship.

## **Making New Disciples**

We are thrilled by the numerical growth and diversity in our congregation, both in age and ethnicity.

We aim to continue, with God's help, the growth in our congregation by welcoming newcomers and providing an environment which they can call home and where they can flourish.

We want to provide a place where people's talents are discerned, recognised, and used.

We hope to provide a place where people's prayer lives will be encouraged and prosper.

## **Transforming Communities**

We have strong links with the local community - many local people already think of St. Alban's as 'their church', even if they are not regular worshippers.

We are seeking new ways to engage with the local community, through more active mission and outreach.

We would like to make more use of the church facilities for the benefit of the local community.

We want to help anyone seeking to know more about God to find a home and family at St. Alban's Church.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE PARISH

## The Parish Context

St. Alban's Coventry is a parish church in an urban area within Coventry, in the East Coventry Deanery, and has an area of 0.7 square miles. It includes the areas of Edgewick, Barras Heath, Upper Stoke and Courthouse Green. The parish is surrounded by six other parishes, between East Coventry and North Coventry deaneries. There are three Primary Schools within the parish boundaries: Stoke Heath, Frederick Bird, and Stanton Bridge. Stoke Heath has good connections with the church, attending assemblies once or twice a year, and Frederick Bird has also made church visits.



Overall, the parish is considered deprived, and would fall in the middle of the surrounding parishes when looking at the deprivation rankings. The congregation is diverse both in age and ethnicity.

## What we are like at St. Alban's Church

- We are a committed worshipping congregation, rooted in the Eucharist, where we give praise and prayer to God and give thank for our Saviour and friend, Jesus Christ.
- We celebrate the diversity of our growing multicultural fellowship.
- We are a loving, welcoming people, rejoicing in new arrivals and trying to make them feel at home.
- We give pastoral care to those friends who are unable to get to church.
- We are a caring church, loving our neighbours, the environment and the world.

## We are looking for someone who:

- Is infectiously passionate about the Christian faith and is excited to join with us in embracing a new chapter in the life of St. Alban's Church.
- Will join with us in continuing our joyful and fulfilling collaborative worship.
- Is easy to talk to and a good listener.
- Will continue the outreach which has resulted in a growing, diverse and multicultural congregation.
- Will join with our Youth & Children's Team in planning and providing high quality, engaging and exciting learning and social activities.
- Will help provide a pathway to leadership, not least among the young people.
- Will help the congregation discern and utilise their spiritual gifts.
- Will help the faithful explore the Christian faith and develop their personal discipleship.
- Will encourage prayer and develop small holistic groups.
- Will join with our pastoral team in caring for and visiting those who are unable to attend church

Attributes of St Albans in the form of a word cloud





# NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

St. Alban's Church has taken part in two surveys, the second of which was June/July 2018 before the pandemic struck and caused a pause, in further surveys. The church has worked hard to implement the recommendations regarding the '8 Essential Qualities' where we didn't appear to be doing so well. Additionally, we have been building upon the good and excellent areas from the survey. The following is a description of how the '8 Essential Qualities' are reflected at St. Alban's.

## Inspiring Worship & Passionate Spirituality

Our main Eucharistic services are every Sunday (10.00 a.m.) and Thursday (10.30 a.m.). The Sunday morning service is a joyful family occasion where we worship together in a lively and meaningful way while maintaining our traditions of clergy vestments, server, candles and flowers. The liturgy is based on Common Worship presented on two large screens and includes hymns and worship songs which are a mix of the best of the old and new via Worship Music Video. We have created a prayer corner in the east transept where prayers for healing are offered at a Sunday service once a month. Additionally, we have a twice monthly Sunday school for children to attend during the service, called JIGL (Joy In God's Love), which follows the ROOTS curriculum. For JIGL, the children go to our upstairs space at the start of the service, then rejoin the congregation after the Peace, and share what they have been doing during the notices at the end of the service.



St. Alban's celebrates all the major church festivals including our patronal festival of St. Alban. The Sunday service is collaborative in that there is a rota of members who take part by welcoming, delivering readings, leading intercessions, assisting with administering Holy Communion and operating the computer. The average congregation on Sunday numbers 50 - 60 people and it is a joy that that our congregation has grown in number and diversity in recent years. The said service on Thursday (Common Worship) appeals to those who like a quiet, contemplative service and attracts a congregation of around 14. Both services are

followed by refreshments and fellowship which we regard as very important for bonding, mission and pastoral care.



## Holistic Small Groups

### **Bible Study and Prayer Groups**

We have three or four groups each year to engage in courses during Lent and Advent and a single group running throughout the year, which stemmed from a Confirmation course. In total across the groups, around 30 people attend. Those who attend see this as an opportunity to not only share their faith, but also deepen their faith knowledge and grow in relationship with each other. It is an important part of how we worship, and we would want this to continue into the future.



### **Youth Bible Study**

The Youth Bible study was a fortnightly Bible study group for secondary age young people to study the bible, as well as come together and be creative with crafts to explore their Christian faith. During vacancy, they have only been able to meet once a month. This is something we are hoping to revitalise with the arrival of a new priest in charge. It has been a vital part of developing the faith of young people and has resulted in two confirmations in recent years.

## **Effective Structures**

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) is the governing body of the church and comprises the vicar (Chair), Churchwarden(s) (vice-Chair), Secretary, Treasurer, Deanery Synod representative and members elected by the congregation at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. Given its wide responsibilities, the PCC has three sub-committees, which are responsible to the PCC and are required to regularly report back. The sub-committees are:

**Worship, Fellowship and Outreach (WFO):** responsible for discussing church services with the clergy and making recommendations; for seeking ways of taking the Gospel out into the community and bringing people into the worshipping life of the church; for organizing non-fundraising fellowship events.

**Fabric Committee:** responsible for the organizing maintenance of the church building and for fundraising. Each year, the Fabric committee organises our major fundraising events (i.e. The Summer Fayre and Christmas Bazaar) to which the whole congregation contributes, and which raise substantial amounts of income and maintain valuable links with the local community. Also, every term Fabric committee organises a coffee morning and sale which again raises useful income and valuable contact with the local population.

**Youth and Children Team (YCT):** plan and run the young people's activities, such as the regular activities of Youth Bible Study and JIGL, and annually the Good Friday Workshop and the Light Party. They also help plan for All Age services throughout the year including: Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Backpack Blessing, Harvest, and Remembrance. This team has been especially struggling during the vacancy and we are keen that the new incumbent has a strong focus on and heart for young people.

# THE LIFE OF ST. ALBAN'S CHURCH & PARISH

## Mission within the Parish

Our parishioners are not only the people who are regular church goers, but also the people of the parish who clearly recognise St. Alban's as their church. They wish for their arrival on this earth to be recognised with Baptism and their departure with a funeral at the church. Contact with the parishioners is made in various forms: previous incumbents could not walk their dogs without being stopped for a chat; team members when working on the grounds are nicely interrupted for a chat, mostly as enquiries about church life.

The church has direct contact with the local primary schools, especially Stoke Heath and Frederick Bird, via clergy leading assemblies or the forms coming into church at Lent or Advent to further their curriculum activities.

## Eco-church

To help reduce the church's costs, assist in eco-friendly activity, and with the aim to achieve the 'Eco Church Bronze Award', we have over the last few years:

- Installed projector screens and projectors, for paper free services.
- Boiler replacement to reduce energy loss.
- Main lighting through the church building is now LED lighting (dimnable in the main) with a payback achieved within three years.

Our waste is divided into recycling bins for council disposal. The garden waste is composted adding 200 kilos of compost to the flower beds each year. The autumn leaf fall is mulched into the hedgerow in the car park.



### **James our eco officer says:**

*With the worsening effects of climate change and increasing loss of natural habitats, we all need to do our part to look after God's creation. At St. Alban's church we have been making changes to be more eco-friendly and are always open to new ideas. There is more to do but we are getting closer to our Eco Church Bronze Award and with everyone's help we should get there soon.*

## Pastoral Care

During the dark days of Covid lockdown, the church, with considerable help from the vicar, provided online Zoom meetings and streamed worship services plus DVDs for those not able to access the internet. Since the days of the 'new normality' we have continued to provide these services, which are really appreciated by the recipients as a way of keeping in touch and continuing to feel part of the church family. Here is what Trevor thinks:

Also, there is a small rota of people who bring Home Communion for house bound parishioners usually on a fortnightly basis, with around eight parishioners receiving.

## Alban's Angels

*Here's what Cheryl, Alban's Angels leader, has to say on behalf of the team:*

This group, for toddlers accompanied by parent/ carer, runs during school term time on Tuesdays, from 9.30 a.m. till 11.15 a.m. At each session, the children have lots of interesting, fun and educational toys to play with, there is a craft activity, a break for refreshments and the session ends with song time with instruments and action songs.

The group is run by two leaders with three assistants and, currently, around 17 children and 9 adults attend. Alban's Angels provides a safe, nurturing environment, which welcomes all pre-school children to play, interact and

experience group routines in an appropriate setting. Also, parents and carers have an opportunity to regularly meet each other and play with their children in a friendly group environment and form friendships of their own. The childminders who attend value the group as it offers an intimate setting with the same people and gives the children a sense of belonging.

Trevor says - I am a long-standing member of St.Alban's congregation, but for the last few years I have been unable to attend the weekly communion services in church so have enjoyed the recorded services via the internet, which makes me feel part of the church community. I have also had the benefit of visits from the vicar and a member of the church to bring me communion at home which I have appreciated greatly and which means a great deal to me, as it does to other members of the church who are unable to attend.



## **Flower Arrangers**

The flower arranging group meets on Saturday morning 10 am to 12 pm.

It is opened to everyone. At the moment we have 10 women attending, but in the past we have had men attending.

We pay a small fee each week to cover the room rent, heating bill, and any equipment we might need.

We have a weekly rotation list for arranging flowers to be displayed in our church.

On a table at the back of church there is a flower donation box where people can

remember lost loved ones and this money pays for the flowers for us to arrange for Christmas, Easter and St. Alban's Day in the church.

In our Saturday meetings we try different themes e.g. - the Church's calendar, different people's cultures and all kinds of celebrations or events.



## **Thursday evening Bingo**

This popular entertainment has been running for many years, initially under the auspices of the local 47<sup>th</sup> Scout Group, but which has been taken over in recent times by the church.

This provides a bit of welcome income and is a major link with local people who support the church in many ways, such as attending our Summer Fayre and Christmas Bazaar.

## **47th St. Alban's Scout Group**

The church has a very special relationship with its connected Scout group. Many members of our church have played an active role in the Scouts over the years, as leaders or treasurers, or serving on the board. In return, the Scouts have been supportive of the church, helping at the annual summer fayre and Christmas bazaar, and attending key services throughout the year including Harvest and Remembrance Day. The church also offers a special Christmas service for the Scouts, and the Scout group leaders are keen to continue and grow their relationship with the church.



## Drop In

Like Alban's Angels, this is a long-established group. It runs most Friday mornings during the year. The group has a core membership of around a dozen people and is open to anyone who cares to call in. They receive a warm welcome, light refreshments (toast and jam, cake and hot drinks at no charge!) in a friendly, comfortable, safe and non-threatening environment. There is always lots of interesting conversation and much laughter. The group could also be described as a small holistic group in that people get to know each other well and, over time, move from being total strangers to close friends.



Hi, my name is Carol and I have lived close to St. Alban's Church for most of my life. St. Alban's is very much a family church, a place where you can go to find friendship and laughter. I sometimes go to the Sunday services but choose to go only when I feel up to it as I have some health issues which I can find problematic. St. Alban's has an open-door policy, welcoming people from all walks of life. I choose to go each week to the Friday Drop-In where I have made many friends. It's a good opportunity to find out what's happening at church and there's always free tea, toast (as much as you like!) and a cake with as chat, a laugh or a cry, if that is how you feel, although I rarely leave unhappy as I'm always treated as one of the family. So that's how I see St. Alban's, "My Church Family" - roll on Friday.

Jill writes: I have been attending Drop-In at St. Alban's Church for about 2 years. I saw the sign for it as I drove past. It is a very friendly place and I was made very welcome. Tea, coffee, toast and cake are all free and in abundance. We talk on all topics, often starting with "do you remember?" If you are lonely, sad or need a place to rest, come to this church on a Friday morning, you will be made most welcome. Thanks for making me welcome and long may it continue!!

Marilyn Says: I was newly arrived in Stoke Heath area nine years ago and discovered St. Alban's Drop-in meetings held in the church centre. I have been attending ever since and have always received a warm welcome.

# LIFE OF ST. ALBAN'S IN PICTURES





# THE CHURCH BUILDINGS

## The Church

The church stands at the junction of Mercer Avenue and North Street, in Stoke Heath. It was consecrated in 1929. The church was designed by H.B. Cresswell and is built of red brick in basilica style with a pan tiled roof. The worship area consists of an aisled nave, chancel, north and south transepts, and a bell cote containing one bell. In the late 1990s the church was re-ordered, the work completed in the year 2000.



The worship area is divided from what is now a community area by a sound-reducing multi-fold partition. The partition can be drawn back to enlarge the worship area as required. A small coffee lounge was installed adjacent to the kitchen. Toilets include a mobility toilet with baby-changing facilities, children's toilets, and a shower cubicle. The high ceiling of the church was converted to add a mezzanine level with more toilets and a large upper room designated as a youth hall with storage, a small meeting area and more storage/ office. We have a modern Allen digital organ and sound system with hearing loop in the worship area. The worship area and community hall are carpeted throughout and equipped with comfortable chairs. The church building is maintained to a high standard through regular inspections, carried out by the Fabric sub-committee, who oversee a rolling programme of repairs and maintenance.

The church is bordered on the north, east and south sides by lawns and flower beds with a rose garden and bench installed to mark Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee. We do not have a churchyard for burials. We have a carpark located on Mercer Avenue, that is rented out to a nearby business for their employees to park during the week, giving us some additional income.

## The Vicarage

The vicarage is situated next to the church and is a double-fronted detached house comprising 5 bedrooms, large modern kitchen with dining space, study, and two reception rooms. It is double glazed and with central heating throughout. The house is fitted with an intruder alarm system, ring doorbell, and has a garage alongside. There is a private, mainly lawned, garden.



## Location

The post code for satnav is CV2 4PQ. Using this post code on [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) gives a few additional photos of the building and the activities of the church. There is also a church website: <https://www.stalbanscoventry.com/>



# CHURCH STATISTICS & FINANCE

## Average Weekly attendance

Average Weekly Attendance				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Adults	37	46	47	58
Children	6	8	11	18

## Occasional Offices

Occasional offices	2020	2021	2022	2023
Baptisms	3	9	21	13
Marriages	1	2	1	2
Funerals	9	6	7	8

## Administration

The PCC Secretary handles the minute taking for PCC. For the subgroups, a volunteer fulfils this role. The PCC treasurer handles the financial correspondence and banking. Church members maintain the website and create the digital recording of services. There is a church Facebook account that has previously been maintained by the incumbent. Rotas and church events diary are also completed by church members. The occasional offices diary and clergy diary was maintained by the incumbent.

## Finance

Finances	2020	2021	2022	2023
Income	£43,556	£37,631	£52,012	£40,073
Expenditure	£44,292	£41,974	£46,294	£42,727
profit/loss	-£736	-£4,343	£5,718	-£2,654
Reserves	2020	2021	2022	2023
Unrestricted	£32,057	£26,451	£37,681	£35,510
Restricted	£21,652	£23,046	£17,557	£17,074
Total	£53,709	£49,497	£55,238	£52,584

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For informal conversations about the post, please contact:

The Archdeacon Missioner, Barry Dugmore on 07487 578311

Email: [Barry.dugmore@coventry.anglican.org](mailto:Barry.dugmore@coventry.anglican.org)

Or

Area Dean Rev'd Claire McArthur on 07532 260027

Email: [revclairestoke@gmail.com](mailto:revclairestoke@gmail.com)

For Further Details and an application form please contact:

Debbie Niblett, Archdeacons' Administrator

Email: [debbie.niblett@coventry.anglican.org](mailto:debbie.niblett@coventry.anglican.org)

An application form can be downloaded from the Diocesan Website:

<https://coventry.anglican.org/about/vacancies/clergy-hr.php>

Enhanced DBS disclosure is required for this post.