PARISH PROFILE

St. Chad’s Skerton

At the heart of the parish
Witness of the Gospel
A thriving joyful community in Christ
St. Chad’s Skerton

Services

Sunday: Sung Eucharist at 9.30 am at St. Chad’s. Sung Eucharist at 11.00 am at St. Luke’s

Tuesday: In advent, Lent and before P.C.C. said Eucharist at 7.00 pm.

Wednesday: Said Morning Prayer at 9.30 am.

Thursday: Said Eucharist at 10.15 am. Followed by Chatterbox. Home Group 7.00 pm

Staff: - There are two retired members of the clergy and a Lay Reader
The Parish of St. Chad’s

The parish of St Chad’s provides a rich mixture of social backgrounds, from dense (and in places depressed) social housing to more splendid detached accommodation. The visionary move made in the 1930’s to establish a mission church to serve the mid-war housing boom requires no less vision today, though the difficulties (and joys) are more diverse today than they probably were then.

The Parish is dissected by our great transport system bringing with it challenges of apparent exclusion, and the location of the church on the Parish extreme does nothing to assist this.

Within the Parish there are two primary schools, one of which is for pupils with special needs, and both have links with the church.

There is a college of further education on the furthest edge of the Parish, but links to this establishment are not good and some work is required to forge new contacts and encourage more communication as a first step.
The Church and Buildings

Variously described as welcoming, homely, peaceful and calm, St Chad’s church is a modern building, which manages to effuse a very warm spiritual consciousness to all who enter. Set in a small corner of its Skerton Parish, the church and Parish Centre represent a welcome sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of life, which passes by on the sometimes-busy Torrisholme Road. Parishioners have recently improved the grounds and gardens, with working parties regularly tending these.

The Parish Centre recently refurbished during the past year included work on the roof and structure. The redecoration of the adjacent meeting room provides a meeting place for many activities, which take the work of the church outwards throughout the Parish and beyond.

Junior uniformed organisations are in the hall most weekday evenings, whilst during the daytime other groups use the meeting room and hall for a variety of purposes from social groups to social care groups.
St. Chad’s Skerton

The Church and Buildings

In the parish centre, a projector and electric screen are available for hall users. Refurbishment not only secured the structure of the hall for many years to come, but also brought the facilities completely up-to-date in terms of disabled access and health and safety. Redecoration internally and externally has brought a welcoming freshness, inviting people to enter and enjoy.

Immediately across the road stands the Vicarage, a sizeable mid-sixties building set in spacious gardens, having four bedrooms, central heating and enough space for a separate Parish office. Close to transport links for both Lancaster and Morecambe and still within walking distance of the city centre. Handy for the church, it has been a place of succour for many in the years gone by, and will be for years to come. Maintained to a good standard, there is plenty of room and it would make a comfortable family home. This is the proposed home for the new incumbent of the joint benefice.
The Church and Buildings

The interior of the Church includes under floor heating and a spacious and airy feel. It includes a prayer corner where modern posters of the liturgical year are displayed and a votive candle stand. A new addition is the installation of a projector with a Bluetooth link to the sound system.

The Church is left open as much as possible during daylight hours and visitors are able to light a candle and meditate in peaceful surroundings. Visitors can use the written prayer book to lead them on a journey around the building.

The Church has a PA and loop system installed and along with the Parish centre has good disability access. Worship is enhanced by the combined services of various organists and a small music group, which plays once a month. We also have an enthusiastic and talented choir.

The church's clear glass windows help it to achieve the dual vision of being outward looking and a visible presence in the local community.
Spiritual Life

The Parish has enjoyed a wide variety of spiritual experiences and in the past including quiet days at the Bernadine Convent at Hyning Hall, and the Carmelite monastery of Tabor. Sessions included Celtic spirituality, personality type, prayer and God’s creation. We would welcome opportunities to pursue these ventures.

Advent and Lent have provided the opportunity to explore prayer and meditation and is enhanced by our home group.

Visits have in the past been made to the Monastic community at Mirfield. Occasional services from the Book of Common Prayer such as Compline have been enjoyed. A small group of parishioners made pilgrimages to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham.

There is also a lay led Bible home study group, which convenes on Thursday evenings.

The Church held a display of commemoration during the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day.
Lay Involvement

There is an active lay involvement in the Church services. The P.C.C carries its full complement of members and meetings are well attended. A regular turnover of members is encouraged with the introduction of new faces.

Parishioners hold weekly chatterbox sessions and assist with the organisation of bi-weekly Lyrics and Lunch; in conjunction with St Thomas Lancaster; for dementia suffers. The organisers recently won a national award for work with older people. There is also an active Mothers’ Union group.

Social activities have been encouraged to fund raise and to enjoy fellowship and this side of parish life needs re-energising.
Lay Involvement

Outreach to the wider community is through our support of Mission Societies, local food banks and the homeless centres.

The Parish also enjoys the services of a Lay Reader. Lay involvement during services includes Bible readings, intercessions and Eucharistic Ministers some of whom take the Sacraments to home communicants.

Volunteers also maintain the attractive gardens.
Outreach

The Church is involved in its local community through Baptisms, marriages and has links with the local school. It also runs a drop-in group for the elderly “Chatterbox.”

The improved facilities in the Parish Centre have enabled us to reach out to our local community and provide a base for groups like Alcoholics Anonymous, Alanon, (a support group for the family and friends of people with alcohol dependency problems), and support groups for those suffering from dementia. There is also the full complement of uniformed organizations, Beavers, Rainbows, Cubs, Brownies, and Scouts. There is an active Mothers Union, craft group, dance group along with Lyrics and Lunch.
Music to feed the brain and lunch to enjoy together. For people living with dementia and their Carers.

Held at St Chad’s Church, Torrisholme Road, of the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at 10.45 am – 1.00 pm or 12.15 pm – 2.15 pm.

This is a joint venture with St Thomas’ Church to give help for those suffering from dementia, and their careers, who live of the north side of the river Lune.
Parishioners Views

The good thing about St Chad’s is that we worship as a family. The church is welcoming and the people are friendly. We have lots of rhythm and we enjoy music and singing.

We do a great Jacobs Join!

After the service, there is always a welcome to all in the church hall for a cup of tea or coffee along with yummy biscuits.

When I was confirmed, my classes were good because it made me think of my faith journey and how I would carry God’s work in the time now.

St Chad’s have Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Rainbows, it would be nice to see them attend Church Parade; sometimes there is not many there.

In the future, I would like to see Junior Church start again; we had fun whilst learning about stories and Jesus’ friends in the Bible.

Messy Church is great too. It would be good to have more. We get to be creative making the Easter garden during Eastertime, painting, and decorating eggs. Christmas time is full of glitter and sparkle; I enjoyed joining in with radio Lancashire singing Christmas carols.

Extract from one of St Chad’s young congregation.

During my 55 years association with St Chad’s, I have viewed it from the view of a member of the congregation, as a member of P.C.C., of P.C.C Secretary, as Church Warden, including once during an interregnum. Which involved many problems. Also as a representative of the Deanery Synod.
Parishioners Views

Briefly, I believe our strengths are:-

- Cheerful welcoming sidespeople
- Speaking to and welcoming newcomers
- Making people aware that refreshments are available but not being pushy

I believe we could improve in areas of:-

- We need to publicise any events and communicate more widely
- We need to publicise the groups using the church and hall for activities and try to introduce these people into church

Extract from words from one of St Chad’s congregation.
Pastoral Care

We believe that we are a Christian community that have in recent years moved in the right direction but there is still much to do. We see pastoral care of crucial importance and not restricted to those attending church. We are seeking someone who can recognise and support this and can help us make our vision a reality. Above all, we are seeking a vicar who will help us to continue to discern, through prayer, what God is seeking us to achieve in that all things are possible if we work with God.

For our part, we will work with the correct candidate and together develop this Skerton Parish as a caring Christian community serving God.

We have identified the key capabilities we hope to find in a vicar. They are listed to allow you to appreciate what we believe is important for our parish. We hope that this will help you to match your skills, experience and knowledge to our needs and expectations.

- Be confident in your faith and provide us with clear collaborative leadership in our discipleship.
- Appreciate, apply and develop our vision to grow our church.
- Demonstrate empathy and support for our music tradition.
- Build on our commitment to outreach and pastoral service.
- Show warmth, caring and understanding of our congregation and community.
- Have organisational abilities to lead, manage and grow our complex benefice.
Pastoral Care

Our parishes contain people with all the strengths, weaknesses, anxieties and skills of any group.

We hope that the correct applicant will be warm and with a sense of humour, be approachable, show understanding and clearly demonstrate that you care about the people in our congregation and community.

A Prayer to use during Interregnum

We pray for our parish of St Chad’s during the interregnum and for those who are leading us in worship at his time, the P.C.C. and the Churchwardens. As we enter this new model of ministry, we also pray for the priest and people of St Luke’s with whom we shall serve the people of Skerton as a joint benefice founded on the works and prayer of past and present generations.

We pray that the procedures for becoming a benefice will be sensitive and sensible; that our attitude to change will be positive; that we shall be flexible, adaptable and charitable as we aim for a mutual flourishing of our parishes in the future.

We pray for a priest of energy and enthusiasm to serve the needs of our large and busy parishes; a person of vision and mission who, with the support of both congregations, will build an effective church life serving the people of Skerton in the future.

In Jesus’ name

Amen
The Church has a long tradition of paying its Parish Share and Vicar’s expenses. It has had stewardship campaigns in the past and successfully supplements income by fundraising, social events and hall rentals. Finances are in a good position and with a joint benefice and possible half parish share, our hope is that this would continue. Over recent years, we have managed to achieve our goal of giving aid to local charities.

In the past, Christian Aid, The Children’s Society USPG and the Mothers’ Union have been beneficiaries to some of the church’s fundraising.

Special collections help support work with the homeless in the city, the city of sanctuary, local food banks and the Bishop’s Harvest appeal.
The Future

**The People** of St Chad’s hold the key to its future, with adequate guidance, support and leadership. The youth of the Parish are fundamental to its future mission and stronger links with all age groups is necessary. Young families need to be encouraged to participate in both social and church activities, whilst the older children will benefit from closer links to Uniformed Organisations that occupy the Parish Centre and from joining youth activities set up by the dioceses.

**Outreach** in recent years, has been successfully developed into areas of the Parish needing greater support. This service to our community is seen as integral to our purpose and aims for the future. We believe it is important and possible to further this work with the right leadership to give us both motivation and spiritual direction.

**As a parish,** we are excited about what we would like to achieve during the coming years. Starting from where we see ourselves now, we want to grow and become more vibrant and forward thinking. Our church is a visible sanctuary and we want to continue to nurture that image by making the church and its surroundings a tranquil haven from life. We would like to continue to keep it open during the day enabling anyone to drop in to light a candle, and enjoy the peace. Whilst our church may be on the edge of the existing parish, we would be right at the heart of a combined benefice with St Luke’s Skerton.

**Beneath that tranquillity however, we wish to be growing into a vibrant, joyful community in Christ.**
There are wide ranges of facilities on the doorstep of St Chad’s including Lancaster City itself with cinemas, theatre, museums, and universities. The Salt Ayre sports complex is on the Parish boundary. Morecambe is only a stone throw away with all the delights of a seaside resort including sailing club and spectacular views over Morecambe Bay and the Lake District. The prospect of Eden North offers exciting developments.
Within an hour’s drive, the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales are a stone’s throw away, offering a wealth of outdoor activities. Manchester and Liverpool too are within an hour’s drive with Salford Quays, the Albert Dock, theatres and concert arenas all accessible.