Introduction

We at St Bartholomew’s Church are a close, sociable & welcoming church, situated in the small semi rural town of Whitworth. The town has a population of approximately 7500 inhabitants of which around 5000 residents reside within the Parish of St Bartholomew.

During our Interregnum we are being supported by Rev’d Joanna Watson, a NSP, our Church Wardens & Rev’d Penny King at St. Nicholas, Newchurch with whom we are part of a Mission Partnership following the departure of our Incumbent.

1 Basic Information & Statistics

1.1 St Bartholomew’s Church, Whitworth, in the United Benefice of St Bartholomew, Whitworth & St. John the Evangelist, Facit.

1.2 Name & Address of Patron: Keble College, Oxford OX1 3PG.

1.3 Archdeaconry, Deanery & Name of Area Dean.

   Rossendale Deanery

   Archdeacon: Canon Jean Burgess

   Area Dean: Rev’d Rod Bevan

1.4 Anglican churches & licensed places of worship within the Benefice or parishes profiled here:

   a: St. Bartholomew’s Church is the Parish Church of Whitworth

   b: Approximate seating capacity: 150

   c: Name of any attached or nearby hall or other facility None

   d: St John the Evangelist, Facit
1.5 Official Clergy Housing:

The Vicarage
Studd Brow
Market Street
Facit

1.6 Population: Approximately 5000

1.7 Number on Electoral Roll 24

1.8 Average number of Sunday Communicants 15

1.9 During the last 12 months:

Baptised: 8

Admitted to Holy Communion prior to Confirmation: 0

Confirmed 0

Marriages 2

Funerals 1

Christmas Communicants (all services) 35

Easter Communicants (all services) 17

1.10 Circulation of Parish Magazine 20

1.11 Name & address of Church Wardens

Anne Tattersall, 92 Tonacliffe Rd, Whitworth, OL12 8SJ
Tel: 01706 343986

Susan Varley, 59 Cowm Park Way North, Whitworth
Tel: 01706 853072
2 Local Community

The Joint Benefice of St Bartholomew, Whitworth & St John, Facit, is situated in the small industrial town of Whitworth. Currently the Joint Benefice is Interregnum with worship being led by 1 NSP. Within the current Deanery Pastoral Plan, following the leaving of our Incumbent this led us into partnership with St Nicholas, Newchurch.

Whitworth has a population of approximately 7500 with around 5000 residents residing within the parish of St Bartholomew. Whitworth runs along a valley, for approximately 4 miles, north of Rochdale, surrounded by open Pennine countryside. Historically most of the inhabitants worked in the Cotton Industry or in local mining & quarries situated in the area. Whilst there is still a little local industry most employment is to be found in Rochdale & Greater Manchester.

There are still many stone built terraced properties fronting on to the main road & the older side roads. A new housing estate has recently been created on the site of the old Orama Mill. A similar new development is planned, again on the site of an old mill. Housing developments from the 1970s can be found on Cowm Park & Lobden.

Within the Parish there are 2 Primary schools namely St. Bartholomew’s Primary School & Tonacliffe County Primary School. Whitworth High school is also within the Parish. A warden controlled sheltered housing complex is also situated within the Parish along with a United Reform Church.

The area is well served with a variety of local shops including a Co-op store & a Tesco Express. Within the town there are excellent leisure facilities. The Riverside is a function venue which also houses the Council Chamber & the local Police office. On the same site there are also a swimming pool, bowling green & children’s play area.

There is also a modern Medical Centre & Dental Practice within the Parish. Whitworth also has a Golf Club, a football club, bowling greens, a museum, a Brass band (3 if you include the Junior Band & the Veterans band) a substantial Nature Reserve & a large reservoir used for water sports & skiing.
3    Worship & Worshippers

The main Sunday service is a sung Eucharist at 11.00am; the music for the service being led by a small choir. The AWA of this service is 18. The congregation is in the main retired with only 2 younger families attending. A said Morning Prayer service is held on Tuesday morning at 8.30am. A monthly Eucharist is held at Riddiough Court; an Independent Living accommodation complex with manager. Messy Church has been held in the past at St. Bartholomew’s Primary school 3 times a year. However, since our previous incumbent has left, coupled with a new Head having been appointed relatively recently, these services have lapsed. The children however still visit the Church 4 times a year; at the end of each term & at Harvest. The congregation at these services also includes many parents. Other services include an Annual Carol Service & the annual Rush Bearing Service held at the beginning of September each year; with both services attracting members of the community not usually present at our regular Sunday worship. Joint Services with St John’s are held for certain Holy days and are alternated each year. We also hold Stations of the Cross each Tuesday during Lent.

St. Bartholomew’s is a popular church for Baptisms, with 8/10 generally being held each year. As a church we maintain a follow up contact with the families; however, this has not led to an increase in our congregation numbers. On average we have 3/4 weddings each year; here we have had a little more success in attracting a small number of couples to join us in our Sunday worship.

4    Church based Groups & Activities

The Church was all but destroyed by fire in 1984. However, with a Diocesan Grant & the generous support of the local community as a whole, the Church was rebuilt in its present form. As all the fixed traditional pews were destroyed in the blaze, the seating arrangements are now far more flexible. As St Bartholomew’s has no Church Hall, this flexibility enables the Church to be used for many other functions. The new kitchen & toilet facilities have enabled us to cater for walking groups on a regular basis along with the church being annually used as part of the Rossendale Art Trail in October each year. The annual BBQ has become an important feature within the town, attracting many members of the local community. St Bart’s have been hosting a monthly Quiz for over 10 years in the local Brass Band Club. Not only has this been an excellent source of income, it continues to be an excellent mode of outreach into the community as a whole; helping not only our Church but putting a good few pounds over the bar of this local Club. In addition, members of our congregation cater for the Annual Rush Cart celebrations in September along with a Family Fun day in July. These are local council organised events & attract many hundreds of people.
On Remembrance Sunday 2018, the church hosted a World War I Armistice Commemoration café with music, artefacts & historical exhibits as part of the local council’s Commemoration Weekend. The Bells were rung for Victory following the Beacon lighting on the top of Brown Wardle.

5 Ministry

Shortly prior to our previous Incumbent leaving it had been established that St Nicholas, Newchurch, St John the Evangelist, Facit & ourselves at St. Bartholomew become a Mission Partnership. At that time, Rev’d Joanna Watson, a NSP, had been completing her training & has continued with us during our Interregnum. Working closely with Rev’d Penny King at St. Nicholas & our Church Wardens we have been fortunate to have this support during this time.

6 Mission

Our Mission as a church family is to strive to love God, our community & each other, through worship, learning, service & caring. Our vision is to know God & to make God known.
7 Finance & Stewardship

We at St. Bartholomew’s have continued to pay our Parish Share in full for many, many years. However, following the extensive renovation to the tower, along with the new kitchen & disabled toilet facilities, we did encounter some unforeseen expenses. These additional expenses, coupled with a final retention invoice from the contractors during the latter half of 2018, left us with a shortfall of around £3000 on our Parish Share. However, we are confident of fulfilling our obligations for the coming years. In support of this our Standing Committee have an appointment with the Diocesan Discussion & Agreement team to discuss & agree the Parish Share for the next 3 years.

Gift Aid from collections & donations is collected via the Manchester Diocese Gift Aid Lite scheme where all Tax refunds go directly to the Parish Share.