St Stephen and All Martyrs, Lever Bridge, Bolton
Parish Profile 2019
The parish of Lever Bridge, St Stephen and All Martyrs, in the Deanery of Walmsley, Archdeaconry of Bolton and Diocese of Manchester.

The parish of Lever Bridge, St Stephen and All Martyrs (SSAMs) is to the east of Bolton town centre, on the right as you drive along Bradford Street in the direction of Bury. It was until recently part of The Leverhulme Team Ministry which consisted of three parishes St James, Breightmet, St Chad, Tonge Fold, and Lever Bridge, St Stephen and All Martyrs.

As that Team has now ceased to exist, we at SSAMs are now seeking an interim rector who will oversee us in this new stage of our ministry and help us grow and develop our team / partnership with St James, Breightmet.

Bolton

Bolton, is north of Manchester and on the edge of the West Pennine Moors. It has easy access to the M61, M62 and M6 and is 15 - 20 minutes by train into central Manchester. It has a market, town hall, theatre, library and museums all of which reflect the role the town played in the industrial revolution and its subsequent history of spinning, weaving, heavy engineering and mining. There are two Church of England Secondary Schools in the town. For more details of the Metropolitan Borough of Bolton and surrounding areas go to: http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/Pages/Visitors.aspx

Within, and close to, SSAMs there are many leisure facilities all of which are a lovely asset to the locality including

- the Seven Acres Park in which the Lancashire Wildlife Trust is based;
- large areas of accessible greenspaces linking to Moses Gate Country Park and the Tonge Trail;
- Darcy Lever Cricket Club; Bolton Indian Sports Club; Bolton Lads and Girls Club football pitches; Premier Fives five-a-side sports pitches;
• Leverhulme Park including: athletics track, Children’s Centre, gym and physiotherapy centre;
• Darcy Lever Gravel Pits (site of biological importance);
• pitches for football, bowling, hockey and rounders;
• areas of reclaimed industrial heritage, including old canal route walks linking greenspaces and an old railway line converted into a leisure and commuter cycle route.

Multiple Deprivation
As a whole Bolton falls within the 16% most deprived local authorities in the country in all measures of multiple deprivation. SSAMs Index of Multiple Deprivation shows it to fall in the 10% most deprived areas of the country and overall the parish is amongst the 10% most deprived parishes in England. However it is not as deprived as some adjacent or nearby areas and therefore does not qualify for as many grants or assistance schemes etc. to help the Parishes and local community.

The table below demonstrates some of the issues faced in the SSAMs Parish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Poverty</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Age Poverty</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioner Poverty</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy Boys</td>
<td>74 years (highest in country 93, lowest in country 68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy Girls</td>
<td>78 years (highest in country 95, lowest in country 75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Qualifications</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Housing</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone Parent</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Occupation</td>
<td>35%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Ecumenism and links with other parishes
There are no Churches of other denominations within SSAMs, but on the parish boundary are The Bridge Church (Assemblies of God) and Christ Embassy. To the west of the parish is the town centre with a wide range of other denominations.

SSAMs is an active supporter of Urban Outreach, a town-wide project with many different aspects of work and hosts a ‘Grub Tub’ to support the local Storehouse food bank.

Worship
There is a three monthly rota for the services drawn up by all the licensed ministers. This is designed to meet the needs of the congregation and to provide pastoral continuity. We use modern language Common Worship services for communion (Order 1) and other services.
Service Pattern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday Worship</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st in Month</td>
<td>08:30 Said Eucharist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 Parade or All Age Eucharist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd in Month</td>
<td>08:30 Said Eucharist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 Parish Eucharist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd in Month</td>
<td>08:30 Said Eucharist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 Parish Eucharist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18:00 SSAMs Sunday Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th and 5th in Month</td>
<td>08:30 Said Eucharist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:00 Parish Eucharist</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mid-week</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>09:30 Said Holy Communion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However it has been mooted that once a month we do have a non-eucharistic morning service, possibly on the 1st Sunday, thus making the Parade Service more inclusive.

Staffing
The current full complement consists of:

Rector: Vacancy  
Reader: Julie Johnson  
Reader Emeritus: John Curtis  
ALM's: Heather Farmer, Gillian Hewitt, Deborah Williams

The Reverend Chich Hewitt, who is retired and lives within the parish of St James, Breightmet, and holds the Bishop’s permission to officiate, plus the Reverend Steve McGregor, an OLM attached to St James Breightmet, help with ministerial cover. There are other retired clergy living in adjacent parishes who also help during the vacancy.

Churchwardens  
Elisabeth Mulliner  
Pam Orford

Parish Representatives  
Heather Farmer  
Gill Hewitt  
Lee Trengove
The Vicarage
Built in the 1960's, the vicarage is a 4 bedroom detached property located between the church and the school. Further details of this can be found in the appendix.

The Church
Designed by the noted architect Edmund Sharpe, the church, consecrated 1845, seating 200, was built in the mid-19th Century in the Victorian gothic style using terracotta. The church is considered to be the finest of the three churches built with this material, therefore we are very limited in what we can do to the building. It is a Grade II* listed building which takes a lot of time and finance to maintain.

The last quinquennial report, March 2016, identified items of utmost importance which have been carried out. A team is looking into the necessary conservation work and ascertaining what grants may be available. (A full copy of the report is available on request.)

There is no church hall, but the church has use of the school outside of school hours.
Facts and Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (2015 Weighted)</td>
<td>4836</td>
<td>4836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Roll</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Sunday Congregation (Adults &amp; Children)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Sunday Communicants</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptisms</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriages</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals (including at Crematorium)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Communicants</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 &amp; 25 December</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christmas Attendance</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 &amp; 25 December</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Communicants</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Attendance</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Local Community

Of the local population, which is rising due to continuing housing development, 14% are pensioners and 23% are minority ethnic population.

The social character of the area is mixed. In some parts of SSAMS parish there is a distinct “village” feel with several generations of families living in the area. The age range of SSAMS parish is mixed from young families up to pensioner age.

There is a wide variety of housing in the area ranging from terraces and Victorian town houses to recent new build properties. There is no particularly predominant style in SSAMS Parish. There are two areas of housing aimed specifically at pensioners with single bedroom bungalows and also two areas of social housing.

The key issues currently facing SSAMS Parish are:

- Lack of facilities for community use, such as a village hall or community centre.
- Poverty issues.
- Isolation of elderly people.
- Potential tensions due to the changing nature of the ethnic mix.
- Lack of integration of some new developments and social housing with the main sections of the parish.
- Poor public transport links in the parish and low levels of car ownership.

We recognise that we need to grow our engagement with the groups in the local community but the lack of community and toilet facilities within the church are a barrier to
this. It is clear that the provision of facilities would assist with the community groups, such as the:
- Darcy Lever Residents Association;
- Darcy Lever Gravel Pits Action Group;
- Friends of Leverhulme Park, and local sports teams.

We are actively seeking ways developing and achieving our mission of being an open and welcoming church, centred on God, reaching out into the community.

School
The church shares the site with St Stephen & All Martyrs (Voluntary Aided) CE Primary School which has about 210 pupils on roll.

In the absence of an incumbent one of the wardens has been acting as a church / school link. In September 2018 a new head teacher was appointed, she is keen to re-establish closer links with the church. The whole school now has a weekly assembly in church, led by their staff and the child based ethos team. The head is also keen to re-establish core Christian values in the school. The school also holds a Carol Service and Harvest Festival Service in church as well as a “Wedding” for reception class.

The rector has in the past visited the school on a regular basis as part of their religious education and to lead worship in the school.

The church and school work together on some fundraising events such as the Summer Fair and school pupils and their families are invited to key events and festivals throughout the year via leaflets and the school newsletters.

The majority of our church events such as fundraising, or outreach such as Christmas craft days etc. are held within the school building as we do not have the appropriate facilities within the church building, (including kitchen and toilet facilities). We also use the school for a brew and socialising after the Sunday morning services.

We would like to build on these links to have a more visible presence in school, and develop relationships with the school parents and children. There are no other schools in SSAMs parish.

Worship and Worshippers
Our form of worship is open catholic centred on the Eucharist, however this is flexible depending on the needs of those attending services and as we develop our worship styles in new ways. On the third Sunday in the month there is a very informal 6.00 pm service called SSAM’s Sunday Night, aimed at children and their families who share in a wide range of different worship activities through the year.
The vicar wears vestments (alb, stole and chasuble) and the Readers, altar servers and choir are robed. ALMs wear everyday clothes. At the SSAMs service leaders are all informally dressed as activities can be messy.

Of the church Electoral Roll 40% live outside the parish. Although a fifth of the congregation are over the age of 70, more than a third of them are under the age of 18, and these children and young people are keen to be involved in the worship and are actively participating as servers, choir members, readers and sides-persons.

The social groups within the church are mixed, with some members being affected by social issues such as poverty and isolation. Over the years we have welcomed a number of university students from many countries into the congregation who have been actively involved in the life of the parish while at the university. They move away once they have completed their studies.

Church Based Organisations and Groups
- Explorers (our Sunday group for children) meets in school 2 or 3 times a month during the first part of our 10.00am service.
- Beavers, Rainbows, Brownies and Guides attend a parade Eucharist most months and participate in church events.
- Knit and Natter, Craft and Chatter meet monthly on a Tuesday evening (Easter – December) to make items for fundraising. There is an annual “Crafty Lent” group, exploring faith through creative activities.
- Study Group drawn from all the churches in the original team, meet monthly on a Thursday afternoon, except during Lent when they meet weekly.

Social life at the church is good. Fund raising events are often social events including Barn Dance, quiz night, afternoon tea with film showing and coffee mornings. People bring friends and family from outside the church or Parish. Not all social events are fundraising as we understand the financial issues facing some of the congregation. In the past some were joint with the other Parishes in the team, such as games or family quiz nights, with shared suppers. These can get quite competitive!

The monthly (March-December) Saturday Coffee Shop is open to anyone and, as well as those calling for a brew and a chat, it often attracts walkers on route through the churchyard as it links to Leverhulme Park and the Tonge Trail.
On the August bank holiday weekend we have held a church camp for several years at a nearby Scout Campsite. It is a low-cost break with financial support available, and equipment available to borrow. Some take a day camp option. Everyone has a brilliant time and comes back filthy and exhausted!

The church is kept open by volunteers on Wednesday mornings and Friday afternoons as part of the requirements for a previous Historic England grant. They undertake essential jobs on the church whilst providing an open and welcoming environment for visitors.

**Ministry**
The church has a collaborative ministry approach which we are continuing to develop and foster. Our ALMs are a visible encouragement in the areas of worship, prayer and pastoral care. Those working with children and young people are encouraged to work towards the various levels of the Bishop’s Certificate. There are teams for Pastoral Care and Fundraising. We actively encourage people to take part in all areas of church life and ministry as well as leading worship especially in more informal services to build their confidence and allow them to develop their own styles. We make people aware of the different options available such as Reader training or ALM. We adapt our ministry to encourage people to engage at the level they are comfortable with and as their time commitments allow.

Members of the congregation have begun to grow in confidence and are responding to calls for help, using their skills to help the church, both spiritually and practically. This includes those age 30-55. People are understanding that we need to develop our collaborative ministry. We continue to attract new families from the area and through school links.

**Mission**
Our Mission Statement is to be: An open and welcoming Church, centred on God, reaching out into the community. We completed our Mission Action Plan in autumn 2018 and, as has been stated, we are now seeking to develop new ways to link with our local community, and at the same time looking at new ways of worship to encourage our church to grow both spiritually and numerically. (A full copy of the plan is available on request)

**Finance and Stewardship**
We last had a stewardship campaign in 2013 and are currently starting to plan for a new one. The congregation and their response to calls for help and support has continued to
grow. Whilst people may not always be able to increase their financial giving they are very generous with their time and talents.

The church congregation are very supportive of various aspects of Urban Outreach’s work including the Christmas Dinner on Jesus appeal, WinterWatch homeless kitchen and advice centre, and the BL scheme to provide lunches for children during the school summer holidays.

The congregation supports the Bolton Lions Club Christmas toy appeal for families and children in need. Other charity appeals and fundraising events are well supported and in the last year we have supported four different charities with part of our planned giving. Although we struggle, we have managed to pay our Parish Share in full for a number of years and always ensured that the Vicar’s expenses were met in full.

Interim Rector Profile

We are looking and praying for someone who:-

• has a deep and loving relationship with God and is able to encourage others in their relationship with God and in developing their spiritual gifts and abilities.
• is down to earth with a warm pastoral approach, willing to socialise and get ‘stuck in’
• has experience in working with, and developing, a team.
• can work, communicate and engage with people of all ages to make them feel valued.
• is willing to work with and be a familiar presence in the school, helping to continue to develop strong supportive links with the staff, children and their families.
• will be able to connect the Bible to everyday life in an imaginative and creative way, including biblical preaching and teaching, making it relevant to today’s society.
• can relate to the people of the parishes with either experience or an understanding of working in socially-deprived areas, so we can better serve the local community.
• is a team builder who is prepared to delegate, with an ability to work flexibly and sensitively with clergy, laity and community partners.
• is a confident leader who will be open to challenge and prepared to innovate.
• will assist in developing the parish to build a strong Christian presence in the area, being inspirational, encouraging and motivating, and able to lead the church in growth and developing our relationship with neighbouring parishes with a view to developing an active team reaching out into the community.
• is comfortable with different worship styles and is willing to try new ideas when appropriate; supporting people to develop their skills in leading worship.