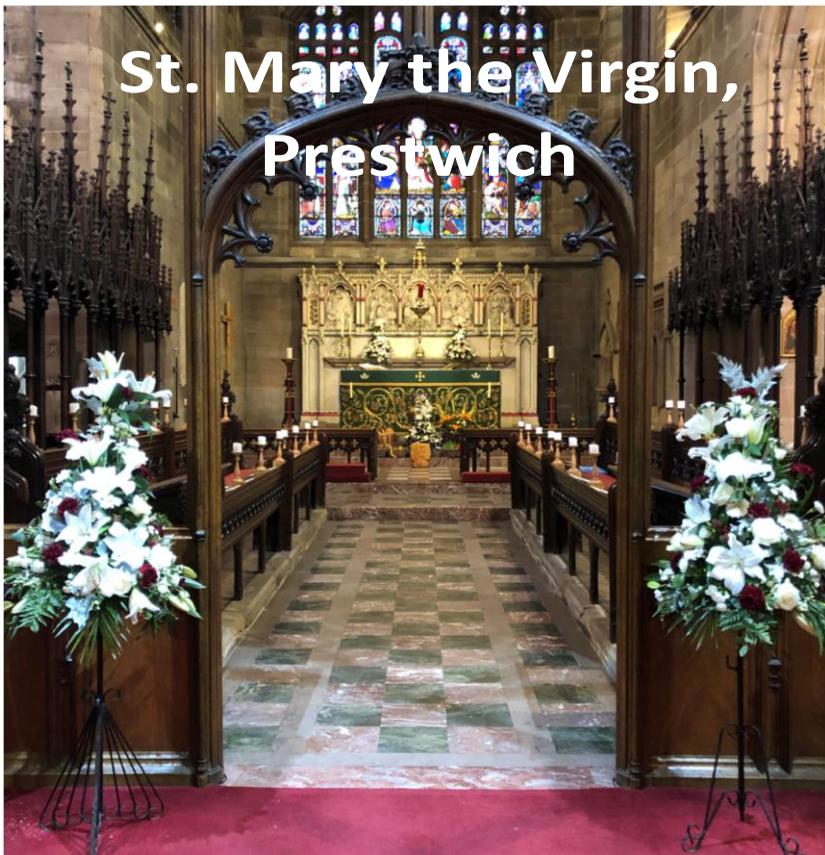


# St. Mary the Virgin, Prestwich



## PARISH PROFILE

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# About St. Mary's

The ancient church of St Mary's is a welcoming, friendly and inclusive Church where we seek to pray deeply, be missionfocused and act boldly with integrity and love. It is a place of beauty and holiness.

We sit in the heart of Prestwich village, three miles north of Manchester city centre, and are home to a diverse inclusive community spanning a wide range of ages and backgrounds. We are part of the Inclusive Church Network <[website@inclusivechurch.org](mailto:website@inclusivechurch.org)> and we long to share fellowship, life experiences and generosity with each other and the wider community through our services and outreach events. Our passion is to know and love God through faith and prayer.



Within the Bury and Rossendale Deanery, we are part of the Prestwich and Kersal Mission Community comprising seven churches: St Mary's, St Margaret's, St George's, St Gabriel's, St Paul's, St Andrew's, and St Hilda's. These churches cover a wide range of traditions and worship styles from evangelical to a Society church.

St Mary's itself is built on a strong progressive Catholic tradition with the Eucharist at the heart of our worship which is dignified, thoughtful and reflective as we focus on making the love of God accessible and tangible to all.

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Our vision is a commitment to:

- Keeping prayer and worship at the centre of all we do
- Putting the Gospel into action
- Giving and serving with joy We have:
- close links with our Church school
- an excellent four-part choir which enhances our worship with a range of traditional and, often, challenging choral music
- a developing programme focused on the nurture, education and formation of adult faith and spirituality, and
- a passion for children and young people ministry

**Vacancy Prayer**

Loving Father,

We pray for our Parish during this vacancy period.

We pray for our Church  
Wardens and PCC as  
they lead us at this time.

Help us to share responsibility, love one another and care for those in need. Together, may we flourish and continue to grow in faith.

By the power of your  
Holy Spirit, stir the heart of our new Priest to discern your Will.  
Prepare them to serve  
You and this Parish with love and joy.  
Amen.

St Mary's has always had a thriving congregation. The pandemic, as with many churches, had an affect on church attendance, with numbers dropping once the church was reopened. However, we are delighted to have welcomed new people into our community in recent times, many of whom are of working age, some with young families. We are proud that there are clear signs of shoots of new life emerging as we actively encourage people to offer their gifts and talents as we seek to grow in love with one another and with God. There is a clear passion and energy amongst those now becoming involved and we are excited about the future as they begin to play their part in rebuilding the kingdom of God in this beautiful, ancient, holy place.



## What We Are Looking For

We are looking for a priest who:

- has a deep prayerful and spiritual reliance on the love and grace of God
- has a passion for children's ministry, continuing to build on and develop the strong links with the parish school
- is of an anglo-catholic tradition
- is a collaborative team leader, team player and team builder
- is open, approachable and inclusive
- has vision and energy to enrich our congregation missionally, pastorally, relationally and spiritually

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- has a hunger and skills to reach out into the community to serve and support and bring in new disciples
- longs to grow God's kingdom and encourage others to do so
- is someone who is able to discern and deliver God's mission by:
- Growing young people's ministry
- Encouraging lay ministry
- Nurturing ministers in training
- Increasing social outreach
- Supporting links with the mission community churches
- Developing Worship within the Parish

## Services

### Worship

Our worship is principally Eucharistic and Vestments are worn at all services with the exception of Pre School Praise. Incense is used at major festivals.

On Sunday morning we have a service of Holy Communion (BCP) at 8:00am (currently suspended during the vacancy) and at 10:30am a Sung Parish Eucharist (Common Worship).

The first Sunday of the month is an all-age service with our church school in attendance four times each year helping to lead part of the worship.



Clergy lead worship each week on a Thursday morning in school alternating between Common Worship Eucharist and Liturgy of the Word services.

Holy Hour followed by a Eucharist of the Blessed Virgin Mary is held on the last Saturday of each month (currently in suspension).

At the beginning of September we celebrate our Patronal Festival.

An annual memorial service for the 5,000 patients of the Prestwich Hospital buried in unmarked mass graves takes place in October along with a Remembrance Service for the fallen in the two World Wars in early November.

All age groups are represented within the congregation which has a faithful cohort of regular worshippers from a broad spectrum of diverse social, economic and ethnic backgrounds.

There are a number of licensed lay Eucharist assistants and trained servers/crucifers, and several of our young people serve as acolytes.

Members from our congregation are involved in reading the lessons and leading intercessions, with children undertaking these roles in our all-age services.

Music is an important element in the regular Sunday Worship led by a loyal and competent robed four part SATB choir which is trained and directed by a professional organist and choirmaster.

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## Holy Week and Easter

During Holy Week the service pattern includes 'Stations of the Cross', said Eucharists and homilies, a Sung Eucharist on Maundy Thursday with Vigil, 'Walk of Witness', Litany and Ante Communion on Good Friday, an Easter Eve Vigil Service on Easter Saturday and Choral Eucharist service on Easter Sunday.



## Christmas

Following the tradition of Nine Lessons and Carols in Advent, a Crib service and Midnight Mass are celebrated on Christmas Eve, followed by a Sung Eucharist on Christmas Day.

# Ministry Team & Support

Currently comprises:

- Rev'd Carole Barnet, Associate Priest (OLM) – priested in June 2019 leads on Adult nurture, education and formation.
- Mrs Paula Holmes-Patel, Ordinand – to be ordained Deacon (SSM) in June 2025
- Stewart Barnet, Authorised Lay Minister (Pastoral Care) – has responsibilities that include visiting and taking Home Communion to the sick of the Parish or to those unable to come to church. Stewart (former Church Warden) is also Sacristan and Verger and leads on church building and fabric matters.



Ministry support comprises a mix of ALM and Lay participation, supported by visionary Church Wardens, and an active and engaging Standing Committee and PCC of 12 members.

St Mary's is fully committed to the safeguarding of all God's people. The PCC have adopted all safeguarding policies and, working with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, ensure that all roles are safely recruited including completing DBS checks and safeguarding training.

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The Parish Officers are:



**Pauline** - PCC Secretary



**Max** - PCC Treasurer



**Stewart** – ALM (pastoral),  
Verger and Sacristan



**Lindsay** – Church Warden



**Paula** - Ordinand



**Kim** – Safeguarding Officer

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# Mission & Outreach

## Children's Ministry

We have a passion for ministry with young people and are in the process of re-building this in various forms following the COVID 19 pandemic.

### Pre School Praise

For more than nine years Pre School Praise has been an important part of introducing and familiarising toddlers and their parents/carers to the church starting with a short service of worship, prayer and song followed



by craft activities and delicious and generously offered home-baked refreshments. It re-started after the pandemic and is very popular with young children aged 0-4 and with their parents/carers. It runs for an hour on Tuesday mornings during school time and is lay led by an experienced and creative team who dedicate their time to building warm and welcoming relationships with the children and the adults who come along every week.

### School

Our Parish school, St Mary's C of E Primary, is voluntary aided.

There are strong links between the Church and the school. We seek to foster good relationships with the pupils, the staff and the parents. The incumbent is an ex-officio member of the Governing body and the Associate Priest is a Foundation Governor currently with link governor responsibilities for RE and Collective Worship, PSHCE/RSE, Wellbeing and

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Attendance. Rev'd Carole also chairs the Pupil and Personnel Welfare sub-committee.

Members of the clergy team (currently supported intermittently by a Curate from one of the local Mission Community churches) help to lead worship in school each week.



Whole school services are held in church typically for Harvest, Christmas Nativity, Christingle and Easter. Various classes both from our Parish School

and from other local schools come into church from time to time for educational purposes, such as Remembrance Day or to learn more about the history of the church or about the sacraments in the Anglican communion.

Following a SIAMS inspection in March 2022, the school was proud to receive an overall grade of Excellent; Excellent for the impact of Collective Worship and Excellent for the effectiveness of Religious Education. We continue to seek to ensure that worship and the school ethos clearly express the Christian vision of the school and remain an integral part of each day. We believe this helps the children to grow into the global citizens that God calls them to be and to enable them to *'live life in all its fulness'* (John 10:10).

The last OFSTED inspection in 2014 judged the school as "Outstanding". A further inspection is due imminently.

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Children who attend our Parish School are offered the opportunity to prepare for 'Admission to Communion' before Confirmation. Additionally, the Ministry Team prepares Year 6 pupils for Confirmation and supports the teaching of RE in school.

The Church Christmas fair is held on the school premises and is well supported by the school and Parish community.

### Tower room activities

– are made available at the back of church each week by willing lay people to keep the children engaged during the Eucharist. The activities are theme-linked to the readings for the week.

### Children's newsletter

We are currently in the process of drawing up a newsletter more bespoke for children which can be made available in church and circulated around our Parish school.

### Mid-week children's service

– together with other Mission Community churches we are also exploring options around piloting a mid-week service for children. This would be open to all churches within the Mission Community with the help of lay members of the different congregations with a view to developing them into leaders for the future and potentially encouraging them to step forward to train as Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs).

## Adult Ministry

Associate Priest, Rev'd Carole, is passionate about prayer and spirituality and loves to walk alongside others to help them to grow in their relationship with God through prayer, scripture, meditation and

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exploring more deeply Gospel living in the context of current life and topics. Regular groups include:

### Breathing Space

An invitation for people to take time out from the busyness of life to spend with God in the stillness of our beautiful church.

We meet on the third Wednesday of each month led by a short reflection on a passage of scripture followed by quietly played music and time for private prayer.

### Connecting with God

Meeting on the first Friday of each month. This group has been running for three years focusing on a different theme each year: Year 1 offered the opportunity to explore different forms of prayer; Year 2 drew on scripture through an exploration of the Bible culminating in each member of the group leading part of a 'Walking Through the Bible' afternoon open to people across the Mission Community; Year 3 focused on Images of God - both how we see God and how God may see us.

### Other Groups

Advent/Lent groups are typically offered providing the opportunity for people to explore Gospel living more deeply. Carole also leads on preparation for Confirmation for both adults and children in Yr.6. Children are also typically prepared for Admission to Communion in Yr.3.

### Eco responsibilities

A core group of people has been formed to work together to facilitate Eco-themed days against the background of a clear developing and passionate commitment to the mark of mission to protect and safeguard

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the integrity of God's creation. In the past three years, the Parish has hosted eco-days, again each with a different theme.

In Year 1, the focus was on raising awareness of and minimising the use of plastics. This involved working with local community shops and businesses and, as a result, the Parish was invited to become an ally of Plastic Free Prestwich.



In Year 2, our theme was Food Glorious Food; with contributions from people passionate about sustainable and vegetarian and vegan eating; and in Year 3 we focused on re-using, recycling and up-cycling, much of which has continued. We also make regular donations of non-perishable goods to Porch Boxes and the local Methodist church Food Pantry.

We are seeking to nominate a Parish Eco Champion as we work towards applying for the Diocesan Bronze Eco Award.

### The Organ and Choir

The Church has a fine three manual and pedal pipe Organ by the London firm of J.W. Walker & Sons, refurbished in 2006.

The Choir (16 members) rehearses each Thursday and leads the congregational hymns in addition to singing an Anthem each week at the Eucharist. Support is also provided for various Occasional offices and services and at major Festivals during the Church year. Music is selected from a repertoire of Sacred Choral Music, ranging from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. All music is chosen to reflect the Gospel and other

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Bible readings of the day. The Hymn Book in use is Hymns Ancient & Modern, published in 2013.

The Music at St. Mary's is in the charge of a professional Organist and Choirmaster, Gary Hulme, A.R.C.O., L.T.C.L.

### Typical Parish Meetings

#### Weekly

PreSchool Praise, Ministry team meeting, School Eucharist, Choir Practice, Churchyard Action Group.

#### Monthly

Wardens' meetings, Holy Hour, Eucharist of the BVM Breathing Space, Connecting with God.

#### Bi-Monthly

Standing Committee, PCC

### Parish Publications

Pews News - weekly, Parish website

# Heritage

## The Building

The church building of St Mary's is an ancient holy place that has been



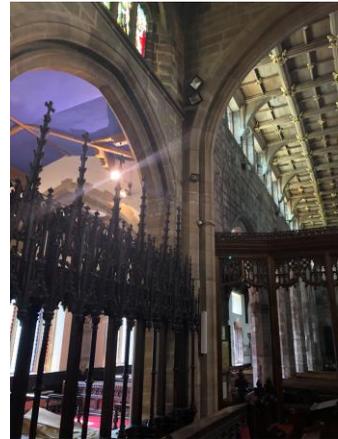
enriched by over 800 years of prayer and worship. St Mary's has played an integral role in the community of Prestwich over the centuries, with the name Prestwich deriving from the Anglo-Saxon 'priests dwelling'. Since its construction the building has evolved with several

architectural additions, mirroring the political and sociological changes that have occurred while the church has continued to serve the community.

The church displays a historical listing of all former rectors dating from 1300, through the reformation, to the present day; highlighting how the church is steeped in history and culture. Indeed, St Mary's has been described by Pevsner as a 'major church'.

Book ref:

"Lancashire: Manchester and the SouthEast"



Today, St Mary's is a Grade I listed building situated in a conservation area. St Mary's also has an extensive graveyard that borders Prestwich Clough, which is a 24 acre Site of Biological Importance. The church is constructed in red sandstone with stone slate roofs.

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We are fortunate to have received generous grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund to support maintenance of the fabric, and welcome all people to share in the history of St Mary's with regular Heritage Days, and through our website dedicated to [St Mary's Heritage](#).

St. Mary's is a popular venue for filming episodes of ITV's Coronation Street where it is known as "St. Mary's Church, Weatherfield".

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The stewardship of the church fabric is important to us. The last Quinquennial inspection took place in 2023. All the issues raised have been addressed ready for the next inspection scheduled for 2028. The fabric is regularly maintained and overseen by our retained and accredited architect and qualified trades companies.

### St Mary's Churchyard

St Mary's churchyard is one of the largest in the country with the oldest gravestone dating back to 1641. It is a wonderful, peaceful place for all who love nature, history and ecology. It is a working burial ground with



Commonwealth and listed graves. It is managed by our Churchyard Action Group (CAG), with assistance from the local Community Payback Group.

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## The Churchyard Action Group

(CAG) have a weekly working meet up on a Tuesday morning. We are



lucky to have a few incredibly knowledgeable local historians amongst them. They run popular Churchyard Tours about the history of the church and the fascinating stories of the people buried here.

The total area of the churchyard is around 3 hectares. We have a hearse house within the grounds. Notable graves include those of the three artisan naturalists, the grade 2 listed Sicilian Marble and

Aberdeen granite Brooks memorial, and the Welsh slate memorial to all 5000-6000 patients of Prestwich Hospital buried in unmarked graves. Each year the CAG perform a 'Poppy Drop' where a poppy cross is placed on every military grave.



## Heritage Day

Each September, around the time of our Patronal Festival, we open our doors for our annual Heritage Day. This is a popular local event with historic tours, quizzes, trails and information displays. With funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund we have been able to produce leaflets on the church, the churchyard, a guide for younger visitors and information boards. We hope to continue to expand and promote the heritage of St Mary's, to help people appreciate the local history on their doorstep.



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# Community

## Clergy Housing

The Rectory is a modern 5 bed detached property with a separate garage and was constructed in 2020. It is situated on Scholes Lane on the fringes of the parish and is set back from the main road on a private



drive servicing three detached properties. The Rectory is well maintained and decorated to a high standard complete with fitted kitchen, 2 bathrooms, Broadband, wifi and phone. It is ideally situated being centrally located giving easy access to all churches within the Mission Community.



## Neighbouring Parishes

St Mary's together with St Margaret's & St George's and St Gabriel's originally formed the Prestwich Mission Partnership in 2010.

This was the first Mission Partnership in the Diocese and was created to enable the local Anglican clergy and their parishes to work more closely together and benefit from each other's experience and achievements. Since then, following Diocesan reorganisation, the Mission Partnership churches have joined with three other churches to form the new Mission Community of Prestwich and Kersal.

## Mission Community

The Mission Community clergy team meet three times a month for prayer, sharing of experiences and pooling of collective wisdom, and to explore ways of working together going forward.



Over the past few years, St Mary's has been instrumental in engaging with the other churches within the Mission Community starting with our Eco-themed summer events. We are currently in the process of evaluating the opportunity to pilot the introduction of a mid-week children's service of worship referred to earlier.

## Prestwich

Prestwich is a town within the Metropolitan borough of Bury <https://www.bury.gov.uk/>, lying approximately half way between Manchester city centre and Bury town centre. There are excellent local

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public transport links with Prestwich sitting on both the Metrolink tram network as well as several well served bus routes. Located at junction 17 of the M60, there is easy access to the motorway network.

Prestwich has a strong ‘village’ community with vibrant night time opportunities. Several new artisan bars have opened in recent years which has seen Prestwich nicknamed the “Didsbury of the North” (a comparison to an affluent suburb in the south of the city). There are a variety of small shops, independent traders, and local supermarkets. There are several pubs and good restaurants in the town centre alongside a local library which hosts a variety of regular sessions.

Prestwich has grown in popularity as a commuter town and has been consistently named as one of the best places to live in the UK [Prestwich reacts to The Sunday Times' Best Places to Live 2024 list | Bury Times](#). There is soon to be a £100m+ regeneration of the Longfield Centre [Prestwich Village regeneration - Bury Council](#)

There is an active local heritage society as well as a thriving Environmental forum and an annual local festival starting with Prestwich Clough Day in May, “Festwich” and ending with the Carnival in June. Prestwich has a varied demographic, with a significant Jewish community which forms part of the second largest Jewish community in the country.

There are several primary schools, including the parish school, and two non-denominational secondary schools falling within the Mission Community boundary.

# Stewardship

The last stewardship campaign was undertaken in 2015. A new campaign needs to be a priority going forward to increase giving such that the parish can meet its financial commitments from the regular giving of the congregation. It is expected that a formal stewardship campaign will be run in the near future.

We run several fundraising events across the year, with our Christmas Fair being a key contributor.

## Parish Information

### From the registers 2024

Population:	7,764	
Electoral Roll:	106	
Baptisms:	20	
Weddings:	2	
Funerals:	Church: Crematorium: Burials: Interment of Ashes	11 tba 6 5
Confirmation* 2023 (next in 2025)	Adult Children	2 (5) 18 (10)
Average Sunday Service attendance	Adults Children	55 15

Fresh Expressions	Breathing Space Connecting with God PreSchool Praise	6 7 19 Adults, 15 Children
Easter	Communicants Total	Tbc 110
Christmas 2023 ( tba) 2024	Communicants Total	128 151

### Income

This year the church has introduced digital giving which has led to an increase in donations. In the future we recognise the need to encourage the congregation to reflect on their donations, including standing orders, and to give extra if it is possible for them to do so.

The church also receives income from filming for episodes of Coronation Street, with whom we have a good relationship. The church owns a local property which it rents out for additional income.

We have a dedicated Gift Aid officer responsible for recovering Gift Aid donations. This year we have received some legacies for which we are very grateful and there are also a number of small historic legacies we are in the process of rationalising.

### Expenditure

All expenses related to Ministry within Parish Life are met in full, and after discussion with the diocese we are currently paying a reduced parish share with an agreement to increase our contribution in the future.

Notable costs include repairs to the structure and fabric of the church, the increase cost of gas and electricity, maintenance of our rental

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property and upkeep of the churchyard for which we share the costs with the Churchyard Action Group.

### Income and Expenditure Summary

	1st Jan - 31st Dec 2023	1st Jan - 30th Sep 2024*
Total Income	£67,810	£111,968**
Total Expenditure	£124,314	£39,498*
Surplus (Deficit)	(£56,504)	£72,470

### Accounts and Reserves

As of 12th November 2024

Business Current Account	£13,961
Business Reserve Account	£62,212

\*\* including recent legacies some of which has been set aside for fabric repairs and missional opportunities.

+ £25,000 to be paid to the Parish Share by end of year

## What We Can Offer

- A friendly and open congregation
- Fully legitimate expensed ministry
- A modern 5 bed detached property
- A challenging ministry
- A supportive ministry team
- Enthusiastic and passionate Lay leaders

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