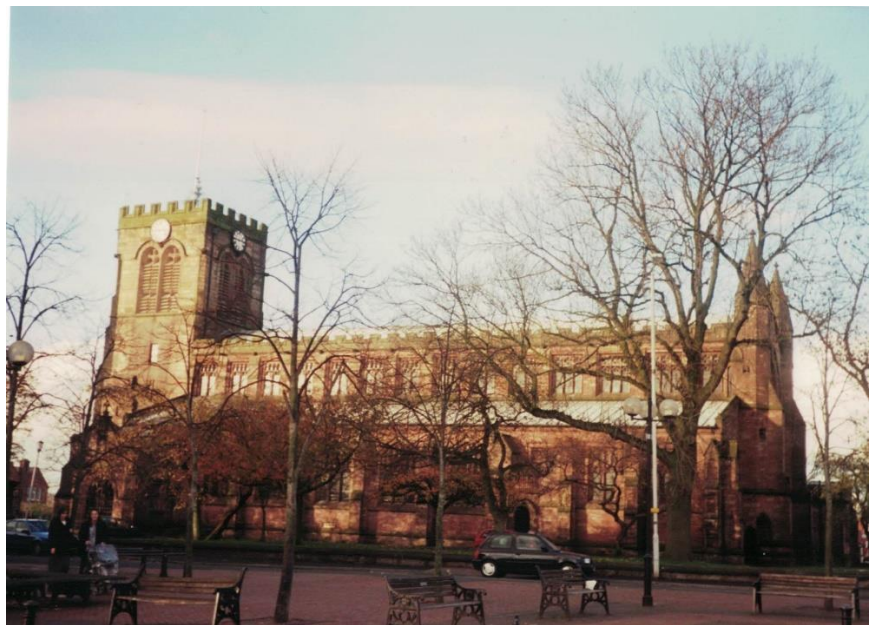
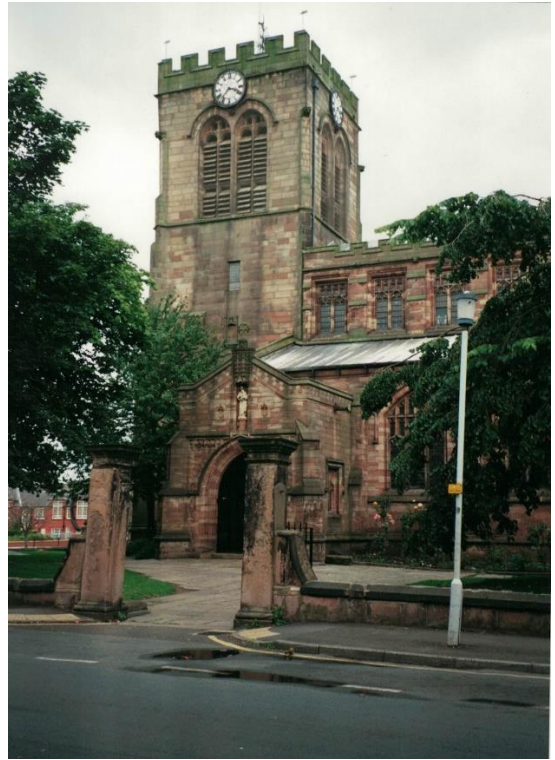


The
Parish
Church
of
St Mary the
Virgin
Leigh



Parish Profile 2023/4

Welcome

Now in the early stages of this interregnum the congregation here at St Mary's are faced with an exciting yet uncertain period in our long history knowing that at the end of this interregnum, we will be part of a benefice in plurality with our brothers and sisters in the parishes of St Paul and St Peter Westleigh.

Change is always worrying but at St Mary's we are working positively to help bring in these changes. Our aim is to bring about greater communication and interaction between the three churches as we continue to work together to further God's kingdom here in Leigh town centre and outlying areas.

Whilst the church is mentioned in 13th cent. documents, the actual date of its foundation is not known. Before the creation of daughter churches in the 19th century St Mary's was and still is known locally as the 'Parish Church' and central to civic services and large community events.

St Mary's practices traditional Anglican worship central to catholic, and we uphold and respect our traditional roots. We are the town centre church of Leigh and the focus of many civic events.

Going into the interregnum we have had to make slight changes to the pattern of services. We hope and pray that some could be reinstated.

We have positive links with three schools who regularly use the church for worship and other activities.

With the cost-of-living crisis faced by many in our parish we are looking to how we can expand our mission into the community.

Along with many churches today finance is becoming an area of concern. The PCC take a positive approach in this area, committed to paying our Parish Share.

Leigh St Mary's are ready for fresh eyes, fresh thoughts, and at the end of this interregnum fresh ways to lead us forward and bring together all the different ideas to be found in the new united benefice.

Our prayers are with all who may be considering this vacancy.

The Churchwardens

The Town of Leigh



Situated in the heart of the northwest just off the east Lancashire Road. 40 min by car to travel to Manchester and 45 mins to Liverpool The M6, M60 and M61 motorways are all less than 15 min away.

Leigh developed from mainly farmland to an Industrial town during the 18 and 19th centuries, cotton, silk, coal and engineering being the main industries on which the town grew. Famous for its

own cheese and rope making industry, all have now ceased to be. The Parish of St Mary's numbers some 10.636 and covers the town centre shopping area with much of the housing being Victorian terraced. These are gradually being replaced with modern housing.

Parts of the town have higher scores than average on several measures of deprivation, including low income, unemployment, poor health, education and crime. (source: ukloalarea.com). The Bridgewater canal borders one side of the parish and the town bypass another.



Within the town you will find plenty to do: -

Leigh Sports Village, Northwest Computer Museum, Lilford Park, Pennington Flash Country Park, Turnpike Gallery, Hope Carr Nature Reserve, The Archives Wigan and Leigh and The Film Factory

The Church building and attached Vestry

We have recently marked the 150th anniversary of the present church's consecration after the completion of the rebuilding of the main body of the church. The interior of the tower is 15th century with the exterior clad to match the new building.

It is thought that there could have been a church on the site of site Mary's in Norman times.

A grade II* listed building it is Victorian perpendicular built in ashlar sandstone by Paley and Austin of Lancaster.

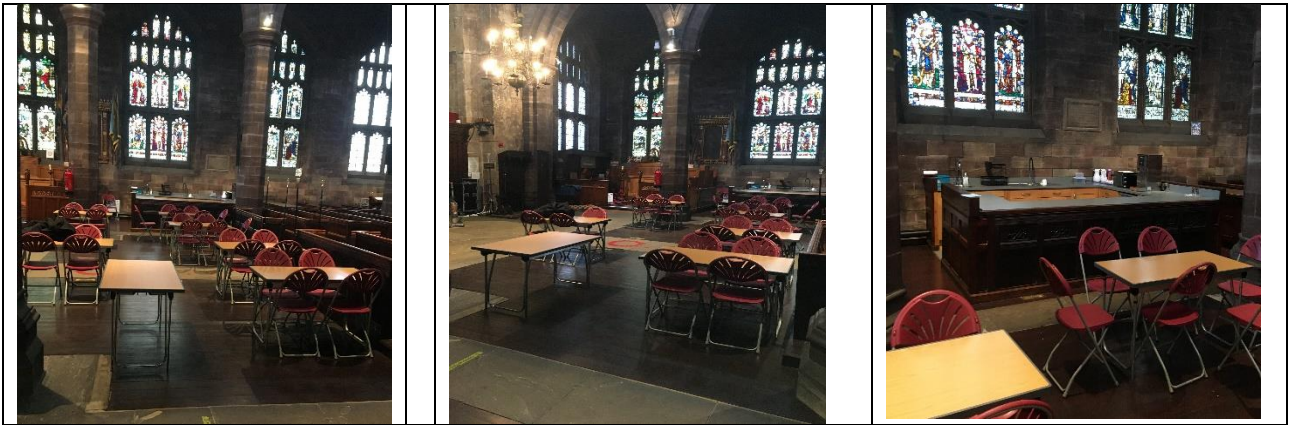
The church has a splendid Harrison organ dated 1910. After the latest refurbishment the seating capacity is 480. There are no other Anglican places of worship within the parish.

The Vestry

An addition to the main body of the church the vestry is used also for parish meetings meetings, and local community groups use it to hold their meetings. Sunday school is held here whilst the main service is taking place.

Re-ordering of the rear of church.

We have just completed our latest project by creating a space at the back of church to be used by both church and community



The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin

Welcome to *The Stable* Community Hub

*Places of Welcome - Welcoming Warm Places - Open Church
Friday Coffee - Wednesday 'The Hub'*

All Are Welcome in this Place.

Worship

Sunday Worship

Currently our Sunday morning service of Sung Holy Communion is held at 9.30am. Our 9.30am service follows a traditional style, with hymns led by the choir. At this service we use the liturgy of Common Worship Order One in Traditional Language.

Both the president and the chalice assistant robe for the Communion service (we have a full set of stoles and chasubles)

The services are printed in booklets and vary in detail according to the liturgical seasons. We use the 'Hymns Old and New' hymn book and pew sheets for those who like to follow the readings. Communion is distributed from the chancel steps. Readings and Intercessions are led by a member of the congregation. We have introduced a Prayer and Praise Service also at 9.30am should there be no clergy available.

Wednesday

9.30am Said service of Holy Communion (BCP) alternating with Morning Prayer (for the duration of the interregnum)

Organ, Choir and Bells

The Harrison Organ is well maintained and regularly serviced. We also have an electronic organ wired into the sound system.

The Choir is finding new popularity and can sometimes reach twelve in number. During the administration of communion, they will sing hymns and choral pieces accompanied by the piano. They sing for Sunday worship, weddings, on occasion funerals and other services during the year.

Bells

See us on Leigh Parish Church Bellringers Face Book page.

Sunday School

Sunday School is held in The Vestry most Sundays throughout the year, whilst the service is taking place. Here children of all ages learn about the gospel through arts and crafts activities. As part of the children's teachings, they go into church before the end of the service and showcase what they have been learning about to the congregation. The children really enjoy this part. Sunday School is run by dedicated members of the church who encourage the younger members of the congregation to develop their faith.



18th Leigh Scouts

Whilst based at Christ Church Pennington the Scouts are supported by the Parish Church.

The Vicarage



Across the way from the church you will find the Vicarage. A purpose built double fronted four bed roomed detached house with lounge, dining room, study, kitchen and cloakroom. Well maintained. Enclosed garden with shared boundary wall with St Mary's Primary School. Alarmed. Gas Central Heating. Garage. The

Vicarage is central for all amenities. Walking distance to all the primary schools within the parish.

Our Schools

The church maintains strong links with; -

St Mary's CE Junior School (Aided)

St John's CE Junior School (Aided)

Leigh CE Junior School (Academy)

Weekly assembly led by the incumbent some held in church. Carol Service's/ Nativity, Easter, and Harvest Services in Church for all three schools.

Other Local Schools with informal links with the church are:-

Leigh Sacred Heart Junior School

Leigh Central Junior School

Our Vision for the Future

WORSHIP - Providing for all the community: the committed, the enquiring, the unchurched.

To Do - we offer traditional worship every Sunday, we need to develop modern services for Sunday and during the week. Our intent remains to build on our congregations.

MISSION - Reaching out and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, making a welcoming church where anyone can feel at home.

To Do - several initiatives have included more active welcoming, and after service refreshments the proceeds which support Wigan and Leigh Hospice. Our new space at the back of church will allow for more activities.

TEACHING - Helping people to take the first steps, deepen their faith and mature into teachers.

To Do - we have regular Bible Study Groups and themed courses of Bible teaching. We have a Sunday School run during term time and this is an important area for development and growth.

UNITY - Serving God as one; celebrating different worship patterns while all striving for a common goal.

To Do – build upon the network of church groups that binds together members from different backgrounds and / or traditions.

SOCIAL ACTION - Responding with Christian love to the needs of both the community and the world.

To Do - This is an area we are looking to make great progress, with the development of our Community Area.



Desirable Qualities and Skills

We are a welcoming, friendly and energetic congregation with a strong sense of mission. However, the church is currently only engaged with a relatively small proportion of the population; the key challenge is how best to harness the energy of the congregation and lead it to reach out and grow. There is enthusiasm in the members and the PCC to work with a new incumbent to meet the opportunities faced.

Are you someone who can teach, challenge and work with us?

In showing us how to imitate Christ and be a mission-focused church.

In helping us to grow in discipleship and obedience to Jesus Christ

In building upon our Sunday worship to reach more members of our community, especially families and young people.

In harnessing our enthusiasm, motivating and enabling us to use our talents to the full

In working to further expand our programme for children and youth into our community

In helping us to break down any psychological and social barriers and attract new members as we spread the gospel by building up and using our teams/groups.
PASTORAL / WORSHIP / OUTREACH / OPEN CHURCH

In helping us set clear priorities for our resources (people and money)

We also pray that they will be:

A confident and effective communicator

At ease working with people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures.

Sensitive to the diverse nature of our church.

Committed to our shared unity in purpose, willing to roll up their sleeves and work with us in reaching out to the community)

A team leader who can help us set priorities.

Facts and Figures - 2023

Our Congregations

St Mary's Has 141 people on the electoral roll.

Average weekly attendance 62 Adults 12 Children

Sunday 9.30am Adults 52 Children 12

Wednesday 9.30am Adults 8

Occasional Offices

Baptisms Children – 31

Baptisms Adults - 1

Weddings - 1

Funerals in church – 22

Funerals Crematorium – 14

Burial of Ashes - 2

Easter Communicants - 97

Christmas

1224 attending for civic or school events (in the run up to Christmas)

249 attending Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Mission Statement 2023

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Leigh

We, the worshipping congregation being the active body of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, do in our vision, state that through our Worship and Ministry we will, as individuals and collectively: -

Proclaim the gospel message at all times and in all places to all people regardless of status.

Continue and grow our support to the children and youth of this Church and in the wider community.

Continue and strengthen the links between the local Churches and schools.

Continue to build and establish and maintain links with the community around us.

Continue to give support to those who come to us for baptism, marriage, in sickness and bereavement, or any other need.

Support Christian charities at home and abroad and give support to local organisations.

Take a role in the ecumenical movement within the parish of Leigh and hold the Church worldwide in our prayers and support.

Give spiritual guidance, training, and other support, in areas where it is needed.

By This All Shall Know That You Are My Disciples

Finances

Our church finances comprise the general fund and restricted funds.

Fabric/Major works

Organ Fund

Flower Fund

The aim of the general fund is to break even on a yearly basis and to hold reserves to cover three months expenses.

Parish share paid in full for 2023.

Clergy Expenses paid in full.

Enclosed copy of 2023 accounts(not audited)