

Diocese of Chester

**PARISH OF ST. LAURENCE, FRODSHAM**  
**PARISH PROFILE**

JULY 2019



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## Introduction

Welcome to the Parish Profile for St. Laurence Parish Church, Frodsham. Thank you for taking an interest in this vacancy. We hope the following material offers you a taste of life at St. Laurence's and in our town of Frodsham, and that you will consider making an application.

The patrons of this living are the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, Oxford (<https://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/>). Christ Church is in the happy position of being able to support the incumbents of its ninety livings through the revenues of the Dr South Trust, which is able to assist with grants for study, administration and holidays, as well as offering a biennial conference and loans for the purchase of a car.

As you read further into our Parish Profile, we hope you will gain a sense of our history, our current life and our hopes for the future. Although we are looking for a new vicar who will help us embrace change and be forward-looking, we would also expect that person to share some of the core values that, for us, characterise what makes this church special.

These values can perhaps best be expressed through our mission statement: "**To know God and to make God known**". In practice this means we aspire to

- Show God's love in, and be a place of welcome for, the whole community
- Be a caring community that is attentive to the needs of one another
- Affirm the sacramental basis of our faith, including putting the Eucharist at the heart of our worship
- Be attentive to the presence of God in worship, prayer, spirituality and contemporary culture
- Encourage whole-life discipleship and the living out of Christian ministry in daily life
- Be committed to life-long learning about Christian faith
- Maintain our historic building as a visible sign of God's presence among us and in our town; as a sacred space of prayer and sanctuary in the midst of a busy world

St Laurence's is a member of the **Inclusive Church Network**, 'which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.'

(<https://www.inclusive-church.org/>)

## Our New Vicar

We are praying for an experienced priest who:

<p><b>1. Mission and outreach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ministers (pastorally, liturgically) to those who look to the church at significant times of their lives, e.g. baptisms, weddings, funerals, bereavements</li> <li>• encourages members of the church to show God’s love in action in their daily lives</li> <li>• supports and nurtures those who are new to or enquiring about Christian faith</li> <li>• works with Frodsham CE primary school to foster life-long faith in members of the school community</li> <li>• helps to forge and maintain positive links with the wider parish, businesses, Town Council, community and external organisations</li> <li>• fosters and develops ecumenical relations and links with other churches in the deanery</li> </ul>	<p>E D D E D E</p>
<p><b>2. Leadership and working collaboratively</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inspires, motivates and builds up the church family</li> <li>• is an effective and inspiring team-builder as well as team-leader</li> <li>• leads the church in setting and holding its vision ‘to know God and to make God known’</li> <li>• equips, empowers and challenges members of the church family, individually and collectively, to achieve that vision</li> <li>• exercises a shared ministry as appropriate, listening carefully and working collaboratively with others (including clergy colleagues, churchwardens, PCC, staff and volunteers), so that individuals’ gifts and talents are identified and used effectively in any given situation or task</li> </ul>	<p>E E E D E</p>
<p><b>3. Liturgy, worship and preaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• leads worship that gives glory to God, prayerfully, competently and imaginatively</li> <li>• affirms and strengthens the Eucharistic focus of our church worship</li> <li>• plans, organises and conducts a programme of worship that supports the life of the church, including appropriate use of resources, music, teaching and preaching</li> <li>• plans, co-ordinates and facilitates programmes of Christian formation which support the church community and encourage faith development in ways that are appropriate to different ages and levels of faith or knowledge</li> <li>• communicates, interprets and proclaims the gospel in ways that engage with different audiences, occasions and purposes, including those with little or no knowledge of Christianity</li> </ul>	<p>E E E E E</p>

<p><b>4. Pastoral care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• facilitates appropriate initiatives and personnel to provide pastoral care as needed</li> <li>• offers support to those in need of pastoral care as appropriate, including baptism and marriage preparation, care to the sick and dying, bereavement, individual support and visiting</li> <li>• communicates effectively and appropriately in both written and verbal form with people of all ages and situations, inside and outside the church</li> <li>• demonstrates active listening and empathetic behaviour</li> </ul>	<p>D E E E</p>
<p><b>5. Management and parish organisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• able to lead, initiate and manage change</li> <li>• confident in addressing the church's finances and capable of thinking strategically about its long-term financial situation</li> <li>• works with staff, churchwardens and PCC to ensure that structures and resources for parish organisation are appropriate, including clear boundaries and accountabilities of roles</li> <li>• ensures that structures, processes and policies in relation to services, weddings, baptisms and funerals, health and safety, finances, fabric, staff management, safeguarding etc. meet diocesan and legal requirements</li> <li>• has a functional level of computer literacy including use of social media</li> <li>• is able to manage conflict effectively</li> </ul>	<p>D D E E D E</p>
<p><b>6. Personal development and spirituality</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manages his or her time effectively through personal administration, planning and organisation, working in a team, chairing meetings, interpersonal skills and delegating tasks and responsibilities when appropriate</li> <li>• follows an appropriate pattern of work that enables a full spiritual and personal life, as well as meeting the demands of day-to-day ministry</li> <li>• is committed to their own continuing personal and professional development and skills through courses of study, reading, consultancy, training courses and workshops</li> <li>• maintains a prayerful spiritual life with appropriate support networks (including spiritual director or equivalent, and regular retreats)</li> <li>• inspires growth in others through learning and example and by acting as a model of the love of God in action</li> <li>• takes proper care of themselves and their personal relationships, including adequate time for family life, friendship, recreation, renewal and physical/mental well-being, through taking a weekly day off and their full holiday entitlement.</li> </ul>	<p>E E E E E E</p>

Key: E = Essential, D = Desirable characteristics

## Personnel

### (i) Clergy

St. Laurence's has a full-time SSM curate, Revd Angela Askwith. Angela did her training through the St. Mellitus Centre NW and was ordained priest in June 2019.

In addition, the parish has a number of licensed retired clergy (Revds Kath Williamson, David Leslie, Joy Clark, and Russ Naylor) who preach on Sundays, officiate and assist with aspects of pastoral care, study groups and other activities.

### (ii) Licensed Lay Readers

The parish has four lay readers: Andrew Rudd, Gail Fullbrook, Gill Newcombe and Mavis Thompson (Emeritus) who preach on Sundays, lead Evensong and assist with other aspects of ministry such as pastoral care, music, study groups and retreats.

### (iii) Churchwardens (from April 2019)

Betty Rutter and Joanna Ayliffe.

A meeting of the ministry team, comprising clergy, lay readers plus churchwardens, meets fortnightly.

### (iv) Part-Time Paid Staff

St. Laurence's currently employs a number of people on part-time contracts:

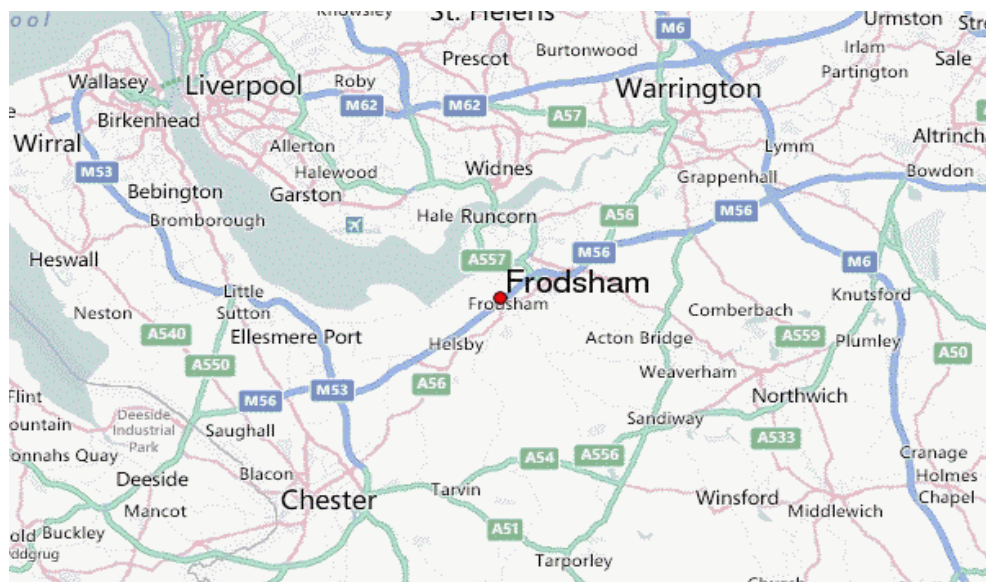
Church Organist and Director of Music	Thomas Cameron	8.9 hours per week
Parish Administrator	Linda McClintock-Tiongo	8-10 hours pw; fixed-term contract.*
Verger	Tom Ruscoe	Fees paid for specified services, e.g. funerals
Registrar	Midge Harvey	Fees paid for specified services
Church Cleaner	Tom Ruscoe	4 hours pw
Parish Hall Cleaner		10 hours pw
Parish Hall Administrator	Pauline Lowrie	2.5 pw
Bell ringers		Fees paid for specified services
Choir		Fees paid for specified services

All paid staff receive the Real Living Wage or standard fees set by the Church of England.

*\*N.B. Temporary arrangement from July 2019; parish administrator based in Parish Hall to assist with co-ordination of essential activities during the inter-regnum.*

## The Parish

Frodsham is an historic market town in West Cheshire. It sits beneath the wooded escarpment of Beacon Hill, known locally as Frodsham Hill or Overton Hill, which rises to the height of just over 500 feet (152 m). Beacon Hill forms the northern point of the Mid-Cheshire Ridge, a range of sandstone hills that extends southwards to Delamere Forest and Tarporley. The Sandstone Trail, created in 1974 and popular with walkers (and their dogs) and cyclists, starts at the Bear's Paw pub in the town centre and passes directly outside the church on its way south to Whitchurch in Shropshire.



The parish is bordered to the north by Frodsham marshes, the M56 motorway, the Mersey estuary and the Manchester Ship Canal and to the north-east by the River Weaver. Runcorn, a former industrial centre and port, was designated a new town in the 1960s and lies to the north-east on the southern bank of the River Mersey. To the south-east is predominantly countryside and the smaller villages of Kingsley, Norley and Alvanley, which together comprise a separate benefice. Along the main Chester Road (A56), approximately 3 miles to the west, is the village of Helsby. It has its own parish church (St. Paul's), a Methodist church, several pubs, shops and take-aways, two primary schools, health centre and High School.

Since the 1960s Frodsham has grown in size through a succession of new housing developments. Much of this population growth was due to major industrial developments such as oil and petrochemicals in Widnes, Runcorn and Ellesmere Port. In 2012 Peel Energy was granted permission to build Frodsham Wind Farm on the marshes with a total of 19 turbines located between Frodsham and Helsby.

Although the local economy is nowadays mainly focused on light industry, agriculture and re-tailing, Frodsham remains a popular place to live and increasingly popular with commuters. The town has good transport links by motorway and public transport to Chester (20 mins), Warrington, Manchester (30 mins) and North Wales. In May 2019 the so-called Halton Curve railway line will re-open, establishing a direct passenger route to Runcorn and Liverpool for the first time since the 1970s.



*Frodsham Marshes and Windfarm*

Frodsham is part of **Cheshire West and Chester** council, re-electing our two sitting councillors who are members of the Conservative group in CWAC in May 2019. It lies within the parliamentary constituency of **Weaver Vale** which in 2017 returned a Labour Member of Parliament, Mike Amesbury. **Frodsham Town Council** (parish council) has its headquarters at Frodsham Castle Park [<https://frodsham.gov.uk/>] and comprises sixteen local councillors, mainly independents, representing four wards.

Frodsham is remarkably rich in social capital, with a high degree of belonging, a vast range of networks, uniformed organisations and community groups, from conservation to concerts, bowling to drama, and music of all kinds. There are several community spaces -- the Community Centre, Castle Park Arts Centre, our own Parish Hall and others – which are all almost continuously booked by voluntary groups. In many respects, Frodsham is a town that still thinks of itself as a ‘village’, which is how many people still refer to it. Community events throughout the year attract good support, such as the annual Christmas Festival in late November, Festival of Walks in April, charity music festival in May, Downhill Run and Festival in the Park in July.

The town has plenty of independent shops, two supermarkets and numerous pubs, restaurants and coffee shops, although it is experiencing similar economic pressures to many high streets throughout the country, such as shop and bank closures. A busy street market is held every Thursday which brings many shoppers from the surrounding towns and villages.





*Christmas Festival*

There are four **primary schools** in Frodsham: two community schools (Manor House and Weaver Vale) and two Church schools (St Luke's RC and St Laurence's CE). The town's high school closed in 2009, reopening as a health clinic (including two GP practices), leisure centre and library in 2012. Secondary students attend Helsby High School, two miles away.

**Census statistics** (2017) record that Frodsham ward has a resident population of 9,300. Demographically, Frodsham is older, healthier, more prosperous and less ethnically diverse than either the rest of Cheshire West and Chester or the national average, as the following snapshots indicate:

*Source: CWAC, Frodsham Ward Snapshot, November 2017*

	Frodsham	CWAC	England
Population proportion aged 0-15	16.7%	17.6%	19.1%
Proportion aged 65+	26.3%	21.0%	17.9%
White British/Irish	96%	94.7%	79.8%
BAME groups	4%	5.3%	20.2%
Median equivalised household income	£31,600	£28,700	£27,900
Index of Multiple Deprivation – proportion living in most deprived quintile	14%	17%	20%
Pupils achieving GCSE 4-9 in English and Maths	79.0%	62.5%	--
Population with level 4 qualifications/equivalent or above	38%	29%	27%
Owner-occupier households	78%	71.5%	64.1%
Recorded crime per 1000 population	40.8	58.0	102.5

Nevertheless, pockets of relative deprivation exist; and in recent years, members of the church have been active in identifying and addressing issues of social need. In 2014, we contacted the **Trussell Trust Foodbank** in Runcorn and began making plans for a distribution centre within Frodsham itself. This is now located in the Girl Guide HQ on Ship Street.

At the end of 2018, members of St Laurence's *Faith in Action* group were instrumental in launching a series of conversations around the problem of **loneliness and social isolation**.

Having resolved to broaden out discussion to include members of other churches, voluntary groups, local councillors and charities, a series of town-based meetings has led to the formation of a group going under the name of "*Frodsham Bee Friends*". Its activities will focus on raising awareness of the impact of isolation and loneliness; improving community engagement across all age groups; acting as a bridge between formal service providers and residents; encouraging greater engagement with existing activities and organisations; and sponsoring opportunities such as training that will build skills, awareness and capacity across business, voluntary and statutory sectors.

**Foxhill House**, the Chester Diocesan Retreat Centre, is situated within the boundaries of Frodsham Parish. St Laurence's is highly involved with its life and ministry. Some members of our Church regularly lead retreats there, others act as chaplains. It is increasingly a significant base for spirituality in the area, hosting meetings for Churches Together and local clergy, providing a space for counselling, spiritual accompaniment, training and retreats, as well as Monday Eucharists and Friends Activities. A member of our congregation is currently part of the Foxhill Development Group. We are blessed to have such a rich resource on our doorstep.

**Frodsham Deanery** is unusual in its diversity, reflecting a local area made up of an industrial-urban new town (Runcorn); rural villages (Ince and Elton, Kingsley, Norley and Crowton) and a market town (Frodsham). While some good relationships exist within the deanery (such as our common work with churches in Runcorn on the Food Bank), our links with other churches in Frodsham itself, through Frodsham Churches Together, are probably stronger (see later).

## **The Church: buildings and churchyard**

### **History and Heritage**

There has been a church on the current site since Anglo-Saxon times and it is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. It is dedicated to St. Laurence (or Lawrence), who according to legend was a deacon with responsibility for maintaining and distributing the Roman church's alms to the poor and who was martyred in c. 258CE by the Emperor Valerian. His emblem is a grid-iron on which, according to tradition, he was put to death.

While some features of the original Saxon church remain, the building is largely Norman in design and dates from c. 1160-1180. Later additions include the chancel, arches and two side chapels: the Blessed Sacrament (or Helsby) and the Lady (or Kingsley) Chapels, all of which date from the fourteenth century. There are eight bells, four of which date from 1622, two from 1734 and the final two were added in 1911. The Frodsham Team of Bell-Ringers is well-supported and practises weekly at St. Laurence's. It rings for the 10:00 Sunday Eucharist, weddings and funerals and other special occasions.

A major programme of restoration was carried out in the church between 1880-1882, which removed the galleries and the pews and installed central heating, a new pulpit and font. New chairs were introduced in 1922. A new table-style altar now stands in the nave and was dedicated by the Bishop of Chester in 2010.

Since seating in the nave is provided by movable chairs rather than fixed pews, our main worship space is reasonably flexible. We hold services ‘in the round’ on occasions, especially at major festivals. It also means that despite the age of the building we can accommodate a variety of other community uses, such as concerts, drama (Frodsham Players meet and perform in the church) and heritage days. In 2016 we installed a projector and two screens which are used to good effect for Sunday worship and other events.

During 2014-15 an extensive programme of renovations were carried out to the chancel roof, stone work and windows, supported by an external grant to the value of £250,000 from the **Heritage Lottery Fund**. At the same time Christ Church, as patron, funded additional works to the value of £140,000.



*“Windsails” art installation*

The **Church Organ** is the third organ in the Church’s history. It was built by James Jepson Binns and installed in 1883. It is situated on the north side of the Chancel at the east end of the church. It was originally powered by hand-operated bellows which have now been superseded by an electric blower that was installed in 1923. At the same time the console was converted to electro-pneumatic action. It comprises some 2196 pipes in 36 voices on 3 manuals and occupies a large portion of the vestry.

St. Laurence Church also manages The Organ Lot Charity, which was registered in 1930. The charity is funded by rental income from a plot of land of approximately 16 acres known as the Organ Lot, lying between Newton and Alvanley. In 1960 two further fields in Kingswood were

sold and proceeds invested in this fund. The income goes towards maintenance of the organ and/or payment of the church organist.

As an historic listed building, St Laurence's is both our greatest and most treasured asset and a major liability. We know that for many people in the wider community, beyond the gathered and regular congregations, the church is an important historic building which is the focus of significant family memories and a site of local heritage. For the members of the immediate church family, however, this is often experienced as both a privilege and a big responsibility. We recognise we are the guardians of something that for many people in Frodsham (and beyond) is the most tangible sign of the church's presence and a valuable expression of the continuity of the Christian faith. Yet we are aware that the building must be more than a museum. Ideally, it should also bear witness to the enduring relevance of the Gospel, as a place of living faith, enabling us to continue worshipping God and exercising a ministry of hospitality and welcome.



*"Tree of Life" Mosaic in St Laurence Church*

Prompted by the terms and conditions of the HLF funding which required us to enhance community access to and engagement with the church building and its heritage, we are thinking seriously about how to use the building most creatively and appropriately. Our aim is to find a balance between honouring 800 years of this place as a house of prayer and maximising its effectiveness as a community resource for today. The church is open during the day and many visitors drop in briefly but we recognise that we need to make the building and what it stands for more comprehensible to an increasingly post-Christian population.

In June 2018, the PCC organised an open afternoon to encourage all those who use the church – regular worshippers, primary school and occasional visitors – to come into church and comment on aspects of the building, its current use and potential, issues of accessibility, and so on. This generated many insights, not only about the building itself, but what it stood for. When asked for key words to describe the church and how they felt on entering it, people said things like:



WordItOut

Similar sentiments can be found in the comments left in the visitors' book which is permanently on display by the south entrance.

Some people commented on how to make the church more welcoming and accessible:

"I am not sure that the porch is very welcoming. It is very dark with the door shut. Can we have a better ramp for wheelchairs?"  
"Have a glass entrance so people can see inside the church. Sometimes it feels a bit intimidating to come in if the doors are closed."  
"The entrance to the church would be a good place to have a display about any charity work the church supports, any events that are taking place in the church community in the near future."  
"I think the Lady Chapel is a well-used space – lovely to have a meeting space within the church."

## Parish Hall

Our parish hall is located in the centre of town on Church Street on the site of an old school. While this means we do not have much in the way of meeting space immediately adjacent to the church, the Hall does furnish us with a public facility that can be made available to the wider community. An extensive programme of refurbishment to the value of £250,000, funded largely by external grant applications, was completed in 2006. As well as hosting church-sponsored events (most coffee mornings, a Thursday morning Eucharist and parish lunches), it is hired out to community groups and managed by a small committee of church members.



*Parish Hall, Church Street*

## **Finances**

A copy of 2018 Annual Accounts is included as a separate file.

Total receipts for 2018 were £128,268.83 of which around £76,500 came from regular and occasional giving, including just over £14,000 in Gift Aid. Total expenditure from our unrestricted fund for 2018 was £127,996.65, of which around 50% (£64,365.84) went to pay our parish share -- an increase from £62,795.88 in 2017. £63,443.83 was spent on maintenance and repair of the church buildings and to manage and resource the work of the church within the town. The balance carried forward into our unrestricted fund at 31st December 2018 totalled £19,688.92, marginally below our target minimum of £20,000 proposed in 2015.

In August 2014, the church held a campaign to encourage members of the regular congregations to review their **planned giving**, which succeeded in generating an overall increase of approximately 16%. One of the key messages of that campaign was that it cost an estimated £2000 per week to run the church. However, we are aware that we must look again at ways of generating income in the future and securing our financial position, although we find it difficult to talk about money. A small sub-group has been meeting over the past year to plan a comprehensive review of how we set and maintain a budget, increase regular giving and encourage donations from visitors. We have met with Martin Smith, Diocesan Stewardship Advisor and in February 2019 the PCC invited Emily Allen, Diocesan Buildings and Heritage Officer, to give a briefing on fundraising. This now needs to be developed, shared with, and owned by, the PCC and wider church family.

## Worship and church services

The weekly pattern of worship is as follows:

Sundays:

08.00 Eucharist (Said: Common Worship)

10.00 Parish Eucharist with robed choir (Sung: Common Worship) and Junior Church

18.30 Choral Evensong with robed choir (BCP)

Second Sunday Parish Eucharist includes Prayers for Healing with the Laying on of Hands.

Baptisms are held during the Parish Eucharist (1st Sunday) or at a 12:15 Service held on the 4th Sunday of the month.

Weekdays: from Monday to Saturday prayers to begin and end the day, often lay-led, are said in church.

Tuesday 19.00 Eucharist (CW)

Wednesday 10.00 Eucharist (CW)

Thursday 11.00 Eucharist (CW: Parish Hall)

A monthly Eucharist is also held on Thursdays at Ashley Court, a residential complex for the over-55s in the centre of Frodsham. Church members, lay and ordained, help to lead an informal ecumenical service at Chapelfields care and nursing home on Sunday afternoons.

Over Christmas, total attendance at all services is in excess of 800; our Christingle service, in aid of the Children's Society, normally attracts 600 adults and children.

Preaching is generally linked to the Lectionary and sometimes themed. For some years now, the 10.00 Sunday Eucharist has used musical settings composed by members of the church, and we are blessed with some highly creative musicians, artists and writers. We value the way their gifts and contributions enrich our life together, particularly in worship. We also use materials from Taizé, the Iona Community and Inclusive Church.

Increasingly, we are trying to think of the church family as comprising a number of different congregations. There is considerable overlap, for example between those who attend on Sundays and mid-week; but for some, a weekday Eucharist is their main point of contact. In addition to these, the long-standing activities for parents and children such as *Shake Rattle and Pray* and the termly Eucharists for the school, mean we try to vary our services to meet the needs and interests of different kinds of people throughout the week.

## **Education: Children, Schools and Adult Learning**

St Laurence's currently has the following provision for education and Christian formation:

### **(a) Pre-School Children**

*Shake Rattle and Pray* is a short service of stories, songs and prayers with a craft activity based around a Bible story. The children play while parents and carers enjoy time for fellowship and refreshments provided by members of the Mothers Union. The service is held every Wednesday in term time for pre-school children from 10.45-11.45. Average attendance is approximately 10 children every week.

### **(b) Frodsham CE Primary School**

Links between Frodsham CE school and the church are good. St Laurence's nominates Foundation Governors to the governing body, plus a Link Governor for RE and collective worship who meets regularly with the school's head of RE and visits classes to observe lessons. Governors attend SIAMs/ OFSTED/Learning Review meetings.

Services in church mark the various Christian festivals throughout the year, with a termly (weekly in Lent) Eucharist either in church or school. There is weekly worship delivered in school. A special prayer board links the concerns of parish and school.

An annual admission to Holy Communion programme (for year 4) includes a visit to Noddfa, a Roman Catholic retreat house in North Wales, and children then lead the Sunday morning service in church at which they are admitted. We are currently a pilot parish for a diocesan programme for admitting children to communion.

There are joint creative projects, e.g. Stations of the Cross, Experience Easter. Volunteers from the parish go into school on a weekly basis to hear children read. The vicar and governors offer support to staff wellbeing. Members of parish help with class visits to the church linked to the RE curriculum. There is mutual support for fund-raising activities between church and school.

Developing better links with Weaver Vale and Manor House schools is a priority for the future; both schools' Heads would welcome greater contact with the church.

### **(c) Children**

Junior church, based on the Godly Play programme, takes place every week during Parish Eucharist with children returning to main service for Communion and to report on activities (often with games, art and songs) at the end.

Messy Church, held termly, is popular and well-attended, including families not regular churchgoers. St Laurence church members also volunteer at the termly Frodsham Churches Together Messy Church event at Weaver Vale School.





*Junior Church presenting at the Parish Eucharist*

### **(d) High School and Teenagers**

The church has no provision for a parallel session to Junior Church for older children or young people on Sundays, partly due to lack of meeting space. Some older children enjoy helping out with the younger children at Junior Church. Some members of the church family are active volunteers with the local youth club based at the Community Centre.

Some good links have begun to be established between the church and Helsby High School, through collaboration on music and drama, including hosting a Christmas concert.

### **(e) Adults**

Home based **Study Groups** are held in Lent and Advent and occasionally at other times, although total numbers tend to be small. These are often themed. During Lent 2019, for example, we followed the Church of England's Pilgrim booklet on the Beatitudes through Sunday sermons and study groups. We keep Holy Week together, with themed addresses at the daily evening Eucharist and a 24-hr period of reflection and worship at Noddfa, a retreat house in North Wales.

Our *Faith in Action* group addresses questions of how we can live out our faith in practical ways. It has initiated a town conversation around combatting loneliness within our community, and currently is discussing issues of climate change and our responsibility to care for God's creation.

Members of the congregation are actively encouraged to attend activities beyond the parish at Foxhill. Several have successfully completed Foundations for Ministry (diocesan) and Exploring Faith Matters. An annual parish weekend is held in mid-September at Noddfa, combining study, reflection, worship and social time.

## Pastoral Care

St Laurence's is recognised as a particularly caring church. Members of the congregation are attentive to the needs of the community and there is an extensive informal network of support throughout the church. This is loosely co-ordinated by a Pastoral Link team. A system of visits and support is also provided by the local branch of the **Mothers' Union**. Clergy and laity regularly visit those in hospital, care homes or ill at home. Home communion is taken to individuals unable to get to church by both clergy and laity. A member of the congregation has recently been appointed as lay chaplain to Chapelfields, the Frodsham MHA care home.

## Discipleship and Laity Development

The previous incumbent, Fr. Michael Mills, actively encouraged lay leadership in Sunday worship. This includes reading lessons, preparing and leading intercessions at Sunday 10.00 Eucharist, acting as servers, sacristan, Eucharistic ministers and administering Prayers for Healing.

There is an active team of officially sanctioned laity who administer home communion to the housebound.

Beyond worship, the laity also takes an active part in running the Parish. The PCC is proactive, with sub-groups overseeing finances, pastoral care, events and communications. The project to secure funding from the **Heritage Lottery Fund** between 2012-2015 was lay-led.

St. Laurence's is one of over twenty pilot parishes within the diocese of Chester's response to the national lay leadership programme, *Setting God's People Free*, which is prompting us to think more about lay ministry and discipleship beyond the gathered congregation. Members of the church have attended "Champion Day" training courses in support of the scheme and in 2018 a questionnaire was circulated to all members of the church to solicit opinions on how they might be better supported and equipped to exercise a ministry beyond the gathered congregation.

## Ecumenical Relations

Ecumenical relations in the town are strong. **Frodsham Churches Together** represents St. Laurence's, St Luke's (Roman Catholic), Frodsham Methodists, Main Street and King's Church (Independent Evangelical congregations). Ministers meet together monthly. As part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity there is a pulpit swap amongst the churches. An annual Walk of Witness takes place in the town on Good Friday, together with children's activities. A joint newsletter with details of services, special events and news items is delivered to all homes three times a year.

A planning committee meets regularly to plan a joint New Year service and an annual 'Thy Kingdom Come' mission which includes a 48-hour prayer vigil for the town, held in the barn of

‘The Bear's Paw’ public house on Main Street. We are also helping to organise and participate in an Alpha course due to be held for the first time in June.

Frodsham Churches Together also has a strong link to the Salvation Army's campaign around anti-modern slavery and human trafficking, which has included local fund-raising and educational work.

Churches Together has recently embarked on a project to appoint a **Parish Nurse** to serve the town and surrounding villages, with a focus on well-being and mental health. The project has initial funding for three years and it is hoped an appointment will be made in late 2019 or early 2020.

Additionally, there is some crossover of membership and support for fund-raising (particularly for Christian Aid Week), study and social events.

The church also actively supports the Trussell Trust Runcorn Foodbank by acting as a collection point and providing volunteers for the distribution centre (at Guide Headquarters in Ship Street) and the warehouse (at Bethesda Church in Runcorn).

## Outreach and Mission

As one part of the Body of Christ in this town (1 Cor 12: 12-31), we understand ourselves as sharing in God’s mission to reconcile Himself to the world, expressed most fully in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We are called, as God’s church, to affirm all people as made in God’s image and to be a sign of God’s love in the community.

Some of the practical ways we try to live up to this commitment include:

1. keeping the church building open as a sign of welcome and hospitality;
2. open baptism policy and strong collaboration with the CE primary school;
3. participation in charitable work, community service and campaigning for social justice;
4. encouraging people to put faith into practice in daily life.

**Funerals:** a member of the Bereavement Group visits the family by arrangement with the vicar. After the funeral an invitation is issued to add the deceased’s name to the book of remembrance. Names of recently departed and anniversaries of death are remembered in intercessions. There is an Annual service with refreshments for relatives on the nearest Sunday evening to All Souls' Day.

**Baptisms:** open baptism policy; initial visit from congregation member; anniversary cards are sent with information about children's services and activities. The church also hosts a *Mother and Toddler group* in the Parish Hall every Tuesday in term time from 9.30-11.30. This is a friendly and informal group for all children up to school age together with their parents and

carers. Each week there are varied activities. The group is run by volunteers and members of St Laurence Church, and numbers attending are approximately 20 to 30 children.

Weddings: the vicar meets with the couple for marriage preparation.

Designated members of the church maintain our Facebook page and Twitter account with regular prayers, news and links to campaigns.

The monthly parish magazine is circulated to over 200 homes and most local shops and businesses.

Internationally, the PCC pledges to support an **overseas charity** every other year and generates on average around £1700 each year. Support for **Christian Aid** is on-going, and includes regular fund-raising events and occasional emergency appeals. Christian Aid Week is a major event in the church's calendar; house-to-house collections and other activities generate around £7000. We also support members of the congregation who have international links with charitable causes or campaigns, such as MuCAARD in the Philippines, Amnesty International letter-writing and teaching materials for a school in Kenya.

St Laurence's has strong links with the island of Mindanao, Philippines where two members of our congregation, Linda and Romy McClintock-Tiongco, divide their time between Frodsham and the Philippines where they live and work alongside Muslim, Christian and Tribal communities. In 2018 the church community chose their charity MuCAARD as its annual charity (<http://mucaard-uk.org/>).

Other regular charitable support and fund-raising includes:

Children's Society: fundraising through Christingle service and home collecting boxes (£4611 in 2018).

Trussell Trust Foodbank: collection point, publicity, warehouse volunteers, management of distribution centre.

Anti-Modern Slavery: campaigning, advocacy, fund-raising.

MerseyAid (refugees): donations, volunteers.

All our charitable and international links feature regularly in parish intercessions and receive coverage in the monthly Parish Magazine.

## Clergy Accommodation

The vicarage was built in the 1960s and is situated approximately two minutes' walk from the church, on Vicarage Lane (B5152). The house is set back from the road with four bedrooms, a lounge, separate dining room, downstairs study and cloakroom, garage and large garden. Any necessary refurbishment work and redecoration will be carried out during the inter-regnum.

## Looking to the Future

Over Easter 2019, a **questionnaire** was distributed to those attending church and to a wider local constituency via social media asking for their perceptions of St. Laurence's and its future. Over 75 people participated. Some keywords to emerge were:



As one respondent to our Easter Survey put it, “St Laurence’s should be broad, inclusive, loving, thriving in unity and peace. Attractive to those who don’t see themselves as believing, belonging, or wanted.” We identify strongly with this vision but recognise the demands it places upon us. That same Survey revealed huge reserves of goodwill towards the church within the wider community, but this, too, is not something we should take for granted. While we are proud of what St Laurence’s represents, we know we must be prepared to embrace change and meet new challenges.

### Our current and future priorities

- To support members of the congregation of all ages and stages on their journey of faith
- To continue to be a parish church that serves our wider community
- To uphold a Christian presence and proclaim the Gospel in a post-Christian culture
- To ensure the financial sustainability of the church and its heritage, especially given the pressures of maintaining the only Grade I Listed building in the town.

We recognise that growth and development are vital elements of ensuring that St Laurence’s continues to honour its mission statement of **‘knowing God and making God known’** in this place. We hope you will consider joining us in that undertaking. If you are successful in your application to be our next vicar you can expect to work with a prayerful and caring church family with energy, talent, good sense of humour and strong commitment to the good news of Jesus Christ.