

PARISH OF CIRENCESTER WITH WATERMOOR & CHESTERTON

Parish Profile 2017

Introduction

- 1.0 Background**
- 2.0 The vicar [we think] we need**
- 3.0 Challenges**
- 4.0 The parish**
- 5.0 Anglican churches in the parish**
- 6.0 People**
- 7.0 Activities & mission**
- 8.0 Finance**

Appendices

- A Schedule of services**
- B Data**
- C Buildings**
- D Accounts**



Thank you for your interest in the position of vicar serving this three-church parish in Cirencester. This is an exciting opportunity and we are looking forward to working together to realise the potential of this diverse and dynamic parish. The new vicar will be leading an enthusiastic team of lay and ordained individuals (licensed and retired), keen to see the parish active in the community and sharing, through words and actions, the Good News of the Kingdom. The parish includes the whole town and is in the Cirencester deanery in the Diocese of Gloucester.

This profile expresses our hopes and our vision for the next stage of our journey together as the Body of Christ in this community of Cirencester. It gives background information about the town and parish, and identifies the resources we have in people, buildings and administrative processes. It describes our current ministry, with its challenges and opportunities. It suggests the qualities that we think will enable and equip our new incumbent to lead the parish in developing its potential. We pray that it will enable you to reflect on how we might best build on the past, while looking to the future as the hands and feet of Christ within our community.

As a parish we are committed to the diocesan 'LIFE' vision:

“To go out and share the transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ so that people may know life in all its fullness”

1.0 Background

Our parish covers the town of Cirencester in Gloucestershire on the South flank of the Cotswolds. The previous incumbency was over eight years and we hope to appoint someone who is able to commit to us for a similar length of time. This post would be ideal for someone in the 'learning community' who has the potential to assume wider responsibilities.

The parish website is www.cirenparish.co.uk

2.0 The vicar [we think] we need

Following consultation within our churches and in the wider town, we would like to appoint someone with many of the following qualities: someone,

- Who has:**
- A clear vision, spiritual depth and a robust faith
 - People and pastoral skills
 - Sensitivity to existing traditions of worship and the ability to embrace diversity while achieving balance
 - A sense of humour
- Who is:**
- Able to make the Church relevant and accessible to families and young people
 - Able to reach out to all generations – including those in care and nursing homes
 - Visible and inspirational
 - Confident and with diverse experience (of life or ministry)
 - Receptive and encouraging
 - Collaborative and adaptable but robust and able to make decisions
 - Keen to foster inter-denominational dialogue
 - Supportive of liberal Catholic churchmanship and of organ and choral music within a broadly Catholic liturgy
 - Able to integrate sacrament, pastoral care and mission
 - Committed to quality in the conduct of worship
 - A person of prayer, a compelling preacher and an imaginative worship leader
 - Confident in different styles of worship, including BCP liturgy [*although most of our services are Common Worship*]
 - Inclusive and able to unite our varied church communities
 - Enthusiastic about serving the whole *civil* parish and reaching out to those not normally found in our congregations
 - Ready to nurture and train others, including volunteers
 - Experienced in, or enthusiastic about working with, a fresh expression of church in the parish which holds a Bishop's Mission Order
 - Able to maximise the opportunities presented by our people, our buildings, and our town



3.0 Challenges and Vision

There are a number of overall challenges which inform our vision for the future:

- 3.1 Ensuring and developing a common/parish vision to which all can aspire within the diversity of our different congregations.
- 3.2 Reviewing worship patterns (including age and attendance profiles) across the three churches to extend/ develop styles of worship and liturgy that will widen choice (including reaching out to the un-churched) and enrich the whole community.
- 3.3 Developing the pastoral care within the parish, to ensure a warm welcome to all those who visit our buildings and a sense of care and belonging for those who have particular need or are no longer able to attend church
- 3.4 Ensuring that we are welcoming and relevant to people of all ages and ready to engage with the growing population of the town
- 3.5 Using and developing facilities to make our buildings more user-friendly for worshippers, local people and visitors.
- 3.6 Reviewing the existing portfolio of parish properties for their usefulness in developing the mission of the church in the parish.
- 3.7 Maintaining and nurturing the choral tradition.
- 3.8 Nurturing, maintaining and growing our team of volunteers to support the work of the parish – including outreach and mission.

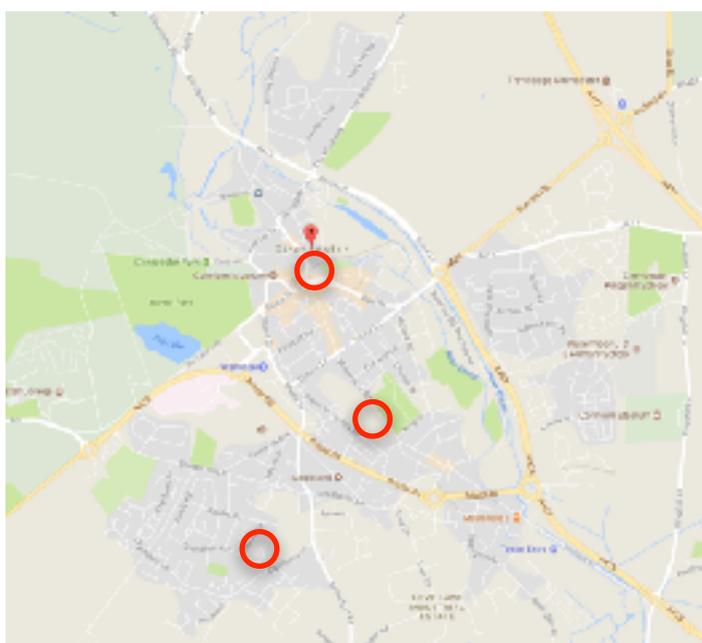
4.0 The parish of Cirencester

4.1 The town

The population is over 20,000 and is currently growing with extensive development on the East, and further development (over 2,300 homes) planned on the West. This development (location shown below) will include a primary school, a neighbourhood centre, community facilities, and a surgery.



The three Anglican churches (shown to the right circled red on the plan) lie respectively in the mediaeval, 19th century and immediate post-war parts of the town. The above plan shows how the expanding town has and will have substantial suburbs out of the sphere of influence of these church buildings.



A market town with Roman origins (it was the second largest city in Roman Britannia), Cirencester prospered on the back of the wool trade in the Middle Ages, and the parish church of St John Baptist reflects that prosperity.



Markets are still held (up to three times each week) in the recently re-ordered market place outside the parish church, and the town remains an important shopping centre. Much of the economy is now reliant on commercial, service and professional businesses based in the town and on trading estates.

There are a number of festivals (such as the Phoenix and Abbey 900 festivals) involving community organisations.



Despite the scenic charm of much of the town, and its undoubted prosperity, it can also be socially and economically polarised with significant pockets of deprivation; many families are living in poverty and regularly using the locally based foodbank. There are significant opportunities for our churches to work in partnership with others to serve these groups.

There is a hospital (non-casualty) and an increasing number of retirement home complexes.

4.2 Other Christian churches in the parish

Relations with other churches in the town are good. 'Churches Together in Cirencester' is active and has several shared projects, eg Holocaust Memorial Day, World Café and work with GARAS to house Syrian refugees.

The churches in the town include:

Baptist Church – recently moved to newly built premises on the South of the town	Roman Catholic Church
Society of Friends [Quakers]	Salvation Army
Methodist/ United Reformed Church	Community Church
New Life Church	

In addition, Harnhill Centre of Christian Healing is just outside the town.

5.0 Anglican churches in the parish

Our worship tradition is liberal Catholic and sacramental and our congregations include people from a wide variety of Christian backgrounds (including Baptist, Quaker, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Brethren, and Methodist).

There are three Anglican places of worship and a fresh expression of Church subject to a Bishop's Mission Order:

*The Church of St. John Baptist
(known as the Parish Church)*



Holy Trinity, Watermoor



St. Lawrence, Chesterton



5.1 The Church of St. John Baptist (known as the Parish Church)

Dominates the market place. It is the largest parish church in Gloucestershire, is open every day of the year, and welcomes thousands of tourists. Guided tours are organised regularly and the tower is open on special days.

Dominates the market place. It is the largest parish church in Gloucestershire, is open every day of the year, and welcomes thousands of tourists. Guided tours are organised regularly and the tower is open on special days.



Although a church has been on the site since the 12th century, most of what is seen today is from the 14th to 16th centuries. The building is light and spacious, and its three main doors open directly onto the adjoining streets and market place. Recent re-ordering of the market place has given the church access to an extensive pedestrianised area adjoining the South porch

Following a major re-ordering, completed in 2010, the church now has a stone floor incorporating under floor heating, and the pews in the North and South aisles have been removed, stacking chairs being used when required. The nave pews can also be moved as necessary.



Worship in the parish church has a sacramental focus. There is a strong musical tradition overseen by a director of music with an international reputation as an organist, and an assistant organist (who is also one of our youth workers). Full choral evensong in the parish church takes place three times per month.

The offices of Morning Prayer, midday prayer and Eucharist, and Evening Prayer are celebrated daily.

The rebuild of the parish church's '*Father Willis*' organ (completed in 2010) has given us a world class instrument, and a week long organ festival is held every two years – attracting international players. There are also regular lunchtime concerts throughout the year.



Major festivals are celebrated with full ceremonial in High Church tradition, and the church is often filled to capacity for these services.

Once a month there is an 'All Age' Mass, with a focus on our younger members, but still using 'Common Worship' Eucharist as its core, incorporating a range of themes, and the 'toolkit' of Catholic worship but integrated with flags, activities and inclusion of children of all ages.

Since the re-ordering varied secular use of the naves and aisles has been possible – including dinners, film shows, dances and wedding receptions, in addition to a full programme of concerts, and the church is an integral part of such days as the opening of the town's Advent festivities.

5.2 *Holy Trinity, Watermoor*



Built in 1851 (at a time when the town was expanding to the South) to designs by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Open daily it stands in its own well maintained churchyard – although there are no graves there is a garden of remembrance.

It is an inclusive and welcoming church and worship here is a little more relaxed (less choral, but with musicians and singers, and more modern

hymns). The main act of worship is at 10 am on Sundays, with a children's corner for pre-schoolers who go for 'story time' during the sermon and intercessions. On the first Sunday of each month an all-age service is led by a group of musicians and singers.



There is also a quieter and more contemplative Eucharist on Sundays at 8am and Wednesdays at 7pm.

The church is a popular venue for weddings and baptisms and is also used for concerts.

5.3 *St. Lawrence, Chesterton*

The most modern of the three, and built in 1951 in the midst of a new housing estate on (what was then) the edge of town. It is a dual-purpose building (with parking) used by the community during the week; on Sundays the East end is opened up to reveal the altar and sanctuary for a 'Community Eucharist' at 10:30am. There is a quiet Communion service at 10.30am on the first Wednesday of the month. Situated next to the proposed housing development, the church offers significant possibilities for mission and ministry.

Local stakeholders such as the (non-church) primary school, local play workers, a neighbourhood group and an Anglican fresh expression of church would all be willing partners in further developments. Some of these groups have partnered for the last four years to provide a summer holiday play-scheme for local families. They are willing to work together to develop further outreach.

5.4 *Fresh expression of church – 'The Upper Room'*

'The Upper Room' is an Anglican fresh expression of church and the subject of a Bishop's Mission Order made in 2013. It makes use of rented rooms in the Market Place. There are significant untapped possibilities for mission and ministry. www.freshexpressions.org.uk

The parish has additional buildings at its disposal and these are detailed in the appendix. The PCC has been reviewing how it uses its portfolio of buildings to best further mission.

6.0 People and administration

6.1 Parish structure

There are three churches but an active single PCC (members have a wide range of age and involvement) which meets monthly. The PCC is a registered charity. It has a number of sub-committees including *Standing Committee* (which meets infrequently), *Finance Committee*, and *Personnel Committee*; all make recommendations/ decisions for ratification by the PCC

There are two parish wardens (with legal responsibility for the whole parish, and particular responsibility for the parish church) and also two deputy wardens each for Holy Trinity and St. Lawrence.

Administration is centred on the office located in the Parish Centre. There are good copying facilities for service sheets, magazines etc. There is a part time parish administrator (who also does the book keeping), with two part time assistants. They are supported by able volunteers dealing with considerable clerical and other work.

There is a weekly staff meeting (mainly clergy and readers) at which the programme of parish services and events for the following two weeks are considered, and potential bookings for future diary dates are reviewed. The meeting also provides an opportunity to address pastoral and other issues.

6.2 Clergy

In recent years the stipendiary full time clergy have included the Vicar (vacancy), Associate Vicar (Fr. Howard Gilbert, with particular responsibility for Holy Trinity and St.Lawrence and currently also Area Dean) and a stipendiary curate.



At present, in addition to Fr. Howard we have the Rev. Katie Richardson (ordained priest) and Fr. Julian Wilson (ordained deacon) both of whom are non-stipendiary and part time. This is a training parish and the incumbent will need the skills necessary for training new clergy.

There are two Readers (and a further peripatetic Reader), and the parish is (gratefully) dependent on a team of retired clergy whose services are vital even outside vacancy.

6.3 Employees

In addition to the staff at the Parish Office there are a Director of Music, an assistant organist and a part time organist for Holy Trinity, a full time youth and children's worker and a part time children's worker, two part time vergers based at the parish church and cleaners.



The church shop in St John Baptist trades as a limited company, and employs a part time manager and assistant manager. They lead a team of volunteers who run the shop during church opening hours.

6.4 Volunteers

Volunteering is essential to the parish, and, in addition to providing help in the office, includes stewarding (enabling the parish church to be kept open all day), flowers, cleaning, events, guiding, choir, children and youth work, church welcoming group.

7.0 Activities and mission

Key areas include:

7.1 Youth & children's work

The parish took the decision in 2014 to employ youth and children's workers, and to fund these posts as an investment in this area, although we have also been supported by a number of charities. We are committed to this mission and our approach is 'kindness and enthusiasm'. Our youth and children's worker says,

"We have over 200 or so children attending our various groups every week with emphasis on trying to get our children as excited about our worship and tradition as I have been all my life."

Our parish youth workers (and a team of volunteers) work to encourage young people to play an active role in parish life, whether that be in reading, serving, singing in the choir or volunteering. There is a summer camp every year involving outdoor activities and a pattern of daily worship.

Our youth and children's worker has recently launched an outreach venture called 'Cornerstone' providing after school clubs, a drop-in for parents, coffee mornings and more youth groups.



In addition, specially focussed events and groups include:

- All Age Worship with Eucharist takes place on the first Sunday of the month at both the Parish Church and Holy Trinity Watermoor



- *Little Angels* is a special service of singing, prayer, stories and fun for our pre-school children and their families. It is held at the Parish Church on Thursday afternoons



- *Messy Mass* takes place every two months at the Parish Church. This is a simple child-friendly celebration of the Eucharist. We move around the church for different parts of the service; the prayers and hymns are in 'accessible' language and there is often an activity during the talk for all to join in.



- *Sparklers* is the Parish Church Sunday school group while *Trinity Kids* is based at Watermoor. Both groups are open to children of all ages and meet during the 10.00 service. Both churches also have a children's area equipped with toys and books. *Flames*, a group for 8-14-year olds, meets on Sunday afternoons, while *Blaze*, our group for 14-18-year olds, is on hold. In addition there is a very successful children's choir – '*Sing It!*'

7.2 Schools

Our two Church of England schools are an important part of parish life.

Powell's School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School which has two classes per year group. Our youth worker based at the parish church has forged strong links with Powell's and leads weekly assemblies. The vicar of Cirencester is an ex officio governor.



Watermoor School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School which currently has 160 pupils on roll, but expects to grow over the next few years due to relocation closer to the new developments on the east of the town. The associate vicar is a governor. There is an active link with Holy Trinity (and these are being developed, eg the recent school art exhibition) and the children's worker based at Holy Trinity takes regular assemblies at the school.

7.3 Chaplaincy

The parish has led the chaplaincy team at the Royal Agricultural University in recent years, and the opportunity exists to maintain and develop these links. The rural studies students will go out to manage farms and estates all over the country – including many areas where the rural church struggles. The university holds its convocation ceremonies in the parish church.

The parish is also a lead player in the chaplaincy at Cirencester Hospital.

Regular monthly services are held in three main care homes, and in three sheltered housing complexes.

7.4 Local stakeholders and 'outreach'

The primary schools, special school, two secondary schools (both with an excellent reputation) and sixth-form college, local play groups, and a neighbourhood group are possible partners in further developments.

The parish works with and supports the 'Street Pastors' team.

The parish is involved with several 'Open the Book' teams.



There are a number of informal house groups, prayer meetings and Bible study groups, and a men's group and ladies' group meeting monthly.

One of the largest Mothers' Union branches in the diocese meets monthly.

7.5 School of Faith

The School of Faith ran for seven years, providing a rich variety of short courses and lectures initially in the parish and then across the deanery. These were led by the clergy and a team of experts from the locality. The school took a 'sabbatical' last year to consider a different operational model. The aim is to return to a parish base, equip disciples for ministry and mission, and strengthen relationships within the Body of Christ.

8.0 Finance

The PCC has struggled (unsuccessfully) to avoid running a deficit on its revenue expenditure for over fifteen years. On the other hand, there are substantial capital reserves, and substantial 'restricted' funds for the maintenance of our church buildings. The 2016 accounts are attached.

Particular areas of challenge are:

- declining regular giving
- rising average age of regular givers
- increasing burden of the parish share

There is a volunteer treasurer who handles finances (with the assistance of the book keeper), reports to the PCC and prepares figures for our professional accountants.

There are a number of indirect sources of finance, not under the control of the PCC (although PCC representatives or the churchwardens are trustees). These include bodies such as the John Jones Charity which is required to make over a proportion of its net income for the maintenance of the parish church, and '*The Friends of Cirencester Parish Church*'.

'*The Friends*' is a registered charity established forty-one years ago to raise funds for the fabric, and the maintenance and enhancement of (principally) the parish church. There are over two hundred individual members and some corporate members. Grants are made following requests from the PCC. In the past year, for example, these grants have included substantial sums to support repair to the South Porch entrance and the tower.

In addition the Friends have supported work at Holy Trinity, and have provided furnishings for the parish church – including a new communion chalice in 2016.

APPENDICES

A. Schedule of routine services

		St John Baptist	Holy Trinity	St Lawrence
Sunday	8.00	Holy Communion <i>BCP</i>	Holy Communion <i>CW</i>	
	10.00	Sung Eucharist * <i>CW</i>	Sung Eucharist* <i>CW</i>	
	10.30			Eucharist <i>CW</i>
	6.00	Evening Prayer <i>BCP</i>		
Monday to Saturday	9.00	Morning Prayer <i>CW</i>		
	11.45	Midday prayers		10.30 Eucharist <i>CW</i> 1 st Wednesday
	12.00	Noon Eucharist <i>CW</i>		
	4.30	Evening Prayer <i>CW</i>		
Wednesday	7.00pm		Eucharist <i>CW</i>	

* On the first Sunday of the month, there is an all age service at both these churches.

B. DATA

	St John Baptist	Holy Trinity, Watermoor	St Lawrence, Chesterton	Total
Population				20,000
Church electoral roll				516
Usual Sunday attendance	164	116	20	300
Usual weekly attendance	66	6	10	82
Baptisms 2016	19	31	1	51
Weddings 2016				11
Funerals 2016				45
Parish Share 2016				149,081
Parish Share 2017				161,000

C. Other buildings in the parish

The Parish Centre

A former Unitarian chapel in Gosditch Street just North of the parish church, and now housing the parish administration downstairs and with a large meeting room (with adjoining kitchen) upstairs. Used by the parish for PCC meetings, Sunday School and parish events, but also used extensively by non-church groups.

The Parish Hall



Built in 1972 and located in the grounds of Holy Trinity. The Parish Hall is used for Sunday school, after service coffee and regular parish events. One of the few halls in the town with parking space, it is in demand by other organisations, has regular bookings throughout the week and is often used at weekends for parties.

No.6 West Market Place

A lock up shop opposite the West door of the Parish Church. Acquired in 2013 and currently let on a commercial lease. Acquired with a view to *possible* parish use one day ...

No.1 Coxwell Street

The future of the former parish office in Coxwell Street is under review; currently used as much needed storage.

We are fortunate in holding these extraordinary assets and want to ensure that they are utilised fully.

There are currently three dwellings:

The Vicarage, Dollar Street

The Diocese has agreed that the current vicarage will be sold and replaced by a more suitable building.

The Parsonage, Holy Trinity

A spacious mid-Victorian building recently re-furbished.

54 Alexander Drive, Chesterton

Normally used as a house for a curate but currently let out. It is relatively small and lacking dedicated study or office space.

D. Accounts

2016 accounts are available from the Parish Office at office@cirenparish.co.uk