



PARISH PROFILE

TEAM RECTOR



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WELCOME

Thank you for taking the time to read our parish profile.

We hope that through these pages you will gain a sense of who we are, what we love, and what we long for as the Hanley Team Ministry.

We are an honest, warm, down-to-earth group of churches serving the heart of Stoke-on-Trent. We are proud of our heritage, realistic about our challenges, and hopeful about the future. We are praying for a rector who will walk with us, encourage us, and help us grow into the people God is calling us to be.

THE PERSON WE ARE SEEKING

We are looking for a new Rector to work alongside our Interim Missioner and lay volunteers who is:

- A person of deep and visible faith
- A priest with a heart for urban mission, finding creative ways to enable the people in our communities to encounter the love of Jesus
- Patient, encouraging and able to motivate others
- Comfortable with difference in worship, culture and expression
- Confident without being authoritarian
- Able to hold tradition and innovation together creatively
- Pastorally sensitive in a community facing poverty, isolation and challenge
- Resilient, hopeful and able to lead with warmth and humour

And who will:

- Lead and enable worship across churches with differing contexts and traditions
- Encouraging spiritual growth, discipleship and confidence in faith
- Supporting and developing lay leaders and volunteers
- Help our congregations move from maintenance to participation and mission
- Building on strong school relationships, particularly through Encounter and Bubble Church
- Help us work collaboratively across the team rather than sustaining isolated churches
- Help the churches discern their identity and calling within their specific communities, so that we can reach our communities with the good news of Jesus and grow in number.
- Engage realistically and hopefully with issues around sustainability of some of our churches and the best way to shape ourselves for mission in the future

This is not a role for someone who wants to “do everything”, but for a rector who delights in growing others, nurturing gifts, and building confidence.

We are not seeking a “super-hero”, but a faithful priest who will journey with us, challenge us where we need it, help us grow in god’s calling to discipleship and mission, and see the opportunities of the parish with fresh eyes.

THE PARISH

The Parish of the Holy Evangelists, Hanley, covers the city centre and five surrounding districts, forming a ring of diverse communities with a population of approximately 26,000. The area includes long-established terraced housing, newer residential developments, retail and industrial spaces, schools, medical centres, faith buildings, and community hubs.

Stoke-on-Trent is a distinctive and historic city, surrounded by beautiful countryside and green spaces, and is proudly recognised around the world as the World Capital of Ceramics.

Centrally positioned within the United Kingdom, Stoke-on-Trent is ideally placed for travel. It lies only a few miles from the M6 motorway and benefits from excellent road links to the M1 and beyond via the A50, making it easily accessible for visitors and residents travelling from all directions.



The city, which celebrated its centenary in 2025, is a city of resilience and loyalty. While ranked among the more deprived authorities nationally, it is also rich in community spirit, generosity, creativity and

pride. Many people who leave return for family, faith and special occasions. Others move in seeking affordable housing and strong community roots.

Our parish reflects a changing urban reality:

- Long-standing residents alongside newer, more transient populations
- Significant ethnic and cultural diversity
- Growing numbers of people seeking practical help, pastoral support, or simply a safe place to be

Stoke-on-Trent is a city shaped profoundly by its industrial heritage, particularly the pottery industry that gave rise to the “Six Towns”, of which Hanley emerged as the commercial and civic heart. For over two centuries the area attracted waves of workers

drawn by ceramics, coal and allied industries, creating strong neighbourhood identities, tight-knit communities and a tradition of mutual support. The rapid decline of heavy industry in the late twentieth century brought significant economic and social change, leaving lasting effects of deprivation, ill health and reduced employment opportunities, alongside resilience and pride. Hanley today reflects these overlapping histories: a diverse population that includes long-established families, newer housing developments, students, and communities shaped by post-war and more recent migration. It is a place of contrast, where cultural regeneration, education and housing renewal sit alongside poverty and transience, and where many people carry deep local loyalty even when church attendance has declined. This complex social landscape continues to shape the mission context of the churches in Hanley, calling for ministry that is relational, patient, hopeful and firmly rooted in the everyday realities of city life.

The parish itself is made up of several distinct “urban villages,” each with its own identity and long history, contributing to a strong sense of local community. With a range of schools, amenities, transport links, and leisure opportunities, Hanley offers a varied and well-connected place to live, combining the energy of city life with green spaces and access to the surrounding countryside.

We recognise that moving to a new area can be daunting. We have a good reputation for our friendship and hospitality. A new Rector may be sure of a warm welcome, support and assistance from local people, groups of congregations and experienced volunteers.

OUR SHARED VISION AND VALUES

“We aim to be a visible sign of Christ, with a passion to serve God in the heart of the City.”

Through prayer, conversation and discernment, parishioners across all five churches share a remarkably consistent vision for the next five years.

OUR VALUES

1. Hanley Parish is a loving family that mirrors the diversity of local communities.

We believe that God’s love is good news for everyone. We seek to welcome people of all faiths and none, offering friendly, accessible spaces and a variety of Christian worship. We aim to relate to one another with warmth and respect, listening carefully to the gifts, needs and experiences of our neighbourhoods, and learning together as communities of faith.

2. Hanley Parish is creating an intergenerational culture.

We are committed to engaging and encouraging children, young people and families, while valuing the wisdom, faith and experience of older members. We prioritise partnership with local schools and households, developing missional activities that nurture mutual growth, belonging and spiritual development across the generations.

3. Hanley Parish demonstrates generous friendship and service through a teamwork approach to ministry and mission.

We share responsibility creatively for worship, outreach and pastoral care, seeking to enrich Christian life for individuals and congregations alike. By working together across our five churches, we aim to discern God's call, support one another, and develop ministry that is collaborative, faithful and sustainable.

OUR VISION

We long to see:

- Churches that are vibrant, welcoming and trustworthy
- Intergenerational congregations, where children, families, and older people belong together
- A confidence in faith that is lived in both word and action
- Buildings that are used, warm, accessible and visibly open to the community
- Worship that is faithful, nourishing and offered in a variety of styles
- Deeper relationships with our schools and neighbourhoods
- Churches known locally as places of hospitality, care and hope

We value:

- Generous friendship and teamwork
- Respect for difference and diversity
- Spiritual growth as a lifelong journey
- The wisdom and faith of older members, alongside openness to new expressions of church

THE REALITY WE FACE

We are also honest about our current situation.

- Our congregations are small and predominantly older
- A devoted core of volunteers carries much of the responsibility
- Many attend Sunday worship but are not yet engaged mid-week or in leadership
- Not all attendees have a confident or active faith.
- Limited opportunities for **spiritual growth and discipleship** during the week
- We have lost at least one generation of churchgoing adults and families
- Our buildings, though loved, are often cold, costly and in need of improvement

- Public transport, mobility, and modern patterns of life create barriers to engagement
- Financial resources are limited, though we currently meet our Common Fund commitment

We do not see this as failure, but as the context in which God is calling us to faithful, imaginative ministry.

OUR CHURCHES

There are 5 churches in the parish, but only 3 have regular Sunday worship. We have an Interim Missioner who is establishing a new congregation at one of those churches (St Mark's) and looking at the future sustainability of St Luke's and St Matthew's (both of which have a mid-week Eucharist only)

Christ Church, Cobridge

Electoral Roll 29 Average Sunday attendance 21

Sunday Eucharist 9.30am

Christ Church, Cobridge, is a Grade II listed building dating from 1839–45, set slightly back from the main road between Hanley and Burslem, offering a calm and reflective space in the midst of a busy urban area. The church is sacramental in outlook and values the Eucharist, while maintaining a welcoming and unpretentious style of worship.



Sunday worship is supported by an organist, servers, and a rota of readers and intercessors, and is followed by time together over tea and coffee.

The congregation reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the surrounding community, and in recent years a number of newer families have joined and stayed. Children are warmly welcomed in worship, with a safe and informal space provided each week, even though structured children's provision remains an area for growth. A faithful core of approximately eight to ten people carries much of the responsibility for worship, pastoral care and outreach.

Christ Church has a strong presence throughout the week. Activities include:

- *Cobridge Kiddies*, a playgroup that ‘feels like family’ – such is the Kingdom of heaven



- at the other end of the age range, a *Lunch Club* that offers great, nourishing food, companionship, warmth and safety.
- an ‘*open door*’ throughout the week, available to anyone who passes, to be a place where people can enter and pray, and available for community use

The church is known locally as a place where help can be found, particularly by those experiencing poverty, ill-health, isolation or distress. Its proximity to a large NHS medical centre brings a steady flow of people through the doors, many of whom would not otherwise encounter the church.

Christ Church is close to the Two Saints Way, the pilgrimage route between Chester and Lichfield so is suitable as a stopping point for those on pilgrimage.

The building is structurally sound but, like many historic churches, is expensive to heat and maintain, which limits some activities, particularly in winter. Christ Church is also near the Two Saints Way pilgrimage route and has potential for further development as a place of welcome and rest for pilgrims and visitors.

Holy Trinity Church, Northwood

Electoral roll 27 Average Sunday attendance 23
Sunday Eucharist 11am
Monthly BCP Evensong 6pm (lay led)

Holy Trinity is a handsome Grade II listed church dating from 1849, situated in a densely populated area of terraced housing. It has come from an Anglo-Catholic heritage, with



sacramental worship at its heart, and retains a dignified and prayerful atmosphere that is deeply valued by those who worship there. Sunday worship is Eucharistic in style, complemented by a monthly Book of Common Prayer Evensong.

The congregation is relatively small but stable and maintains a strong sense of identity and commitment. Worship is carefully prepared and music plays an important role, including the use of traditional liturgy and choral settings. At the same time, there is openness to developing worship in ways that engage a wider range of people.

Although the church itself is primarily used on Sundays, Holy Trinity is closely linked with Northwood Parish Hall, located a short distance away. The hall is a major asset, hosting a wide range of regular activities including uniformed groups, recovery groups, youth provision, and worshipping communities from different cultural backgrounds. This means that many hundreds of people pass through church-owned buildings each



week, even though only a small proportion currently enters church worship.

The challenge — and opportunity — for Holy Trinity lies in exploring how these extensive community connections might deepen into relationships, discipleship and spiritual engagement, while respecting the independence of hall users.

- Concerts - Money is raised at the church through occasional concerts (as from the Troublesome Reeds, pictured, one of whom worships at Holy Trinity) linked to coffee mornings, stalls, including home-made produce, and raffles.
- Holy Trinity Church also co-ordinates fund-raising for charities such as Water Aid.
- Congregations from all the churches join in the annual Christmas Shoebox Appeal.

Holy Trinity is keen to make use of its church building. The church has been approached by a group from the YMCA that is seeking to use the church building for worship on Sunday afternoons.

Northwood Parish Hall



The hall is situated one block away from Holy Trinity Church. It is a valuable and well-used asset to the parish and wider community. It was built by the Church of England and opened in 1954.

In recent years, well in excess of £100,000 has been spent on the hall's refurbishment, mainly on plumbing, heating and a completely new roof (insulated to present-day building standards).

It is a comfortable, spacious and efficient building and represents a significant source of income.

Regular activities include:

- Girl Guides, Brownies, Rainbows
- YMCA Youth Club
- Games Club
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

The hall is booked also on an ad-hoc basis for birthday parties, family get-togethers (often by the local Muslim community) and a child care group (Search Light Care Services) operating in North Staffordshire.

St Mark's Church, Shelton

Electoral roll N/A Average Sunday attendance 15

Sunday service 10am (led by Interim Missioner)



St Mark's is one of the oldest churches in the parish, dating from 1831. It is close to the City centre, Cultural and University Quarters. It is often described locally as the "Potteries Cathedral" because of its prominent position and historic role. Major fabric works, costing approximately £2.6 million, completed in 2025, have secured the building and enabled the re-establishment of regular worship following a period of closure.

The church is now home to a growing worshipping community, with Sunday attendance typically between 15 and 20 adults alongside children. Worship alternates between Eucharistic services and Services of the Word, allowing flexibility and encouraging participation. A current Alpha course has attracted around sixteen participants, and baptisms and confirmations are once again becoming a feature of church life.

St Mark's has exceptionally strong links with its Church of England primary school, which received 'outstanding' at SIAMS inspection, notwithstanding that for 97% of the pupils English is not their first language and 87% of the children are from a Pakistani Muslim background.

The school uses the church frequently for assemblies, performances and events, and pupils play an active role in decorating and shaping the space. Projects involving art, language and story have helped the building speak meaningfully into the life of the

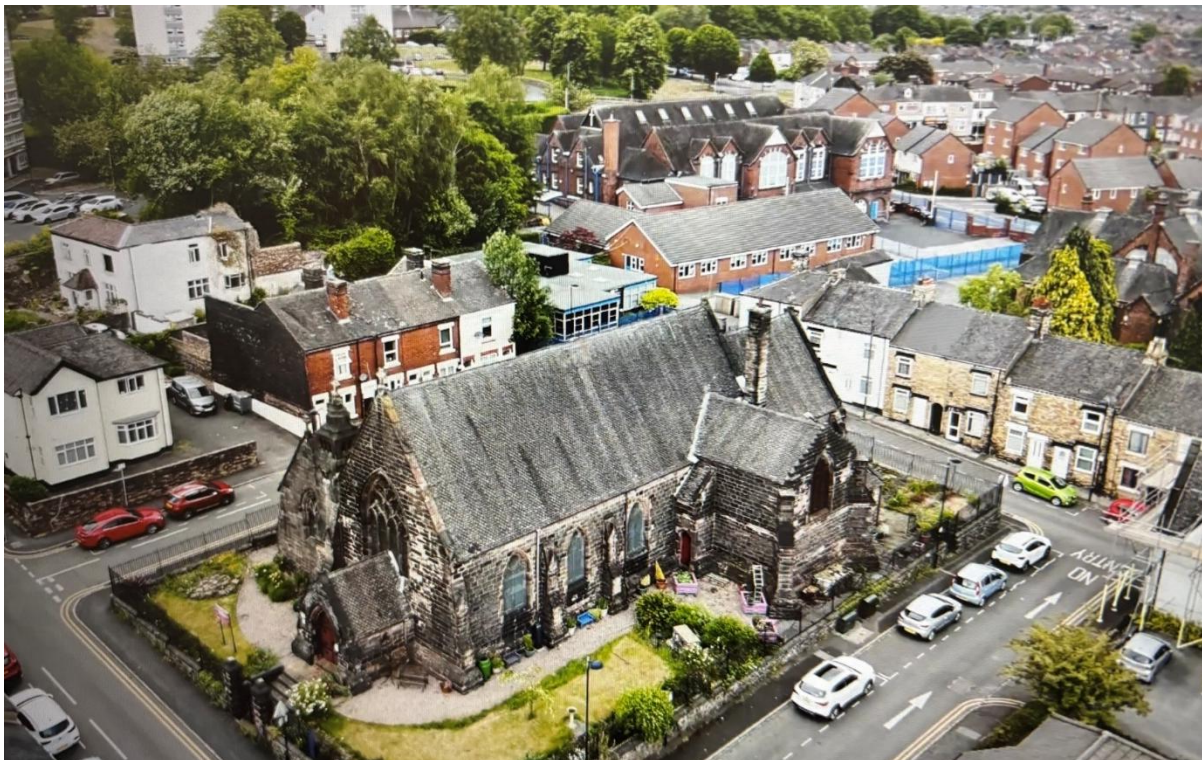
community. There have been theatre performances, Christmas tree decorating and courses for parents.

The church shares its building with several Christian congregations and community initiatives, including All the Small Things CIC, Open Door drop-ins, and Places of Welcome, and an emerging Bubble Church. This makes St Mark's a lively centre of social action, hospitality and encounter, even as it continues the careful work of forming a stable, confident worshipping community. There is dedicated churchwarden, but other lay leadership will need to grow as the congregation does.



St Luke's Church, Hanley

Electoral roll 29 Average weekly attendance 13
Wednesday Eucharist 11am. Bubble Church Monthly Sundays 3pm



St Luke's is a small, welcoming church with a strong identity rooted in its close relationship with St Luke's CE Academy. Consecrated in 1845 and refurbished in the late twentieth century, the building is modest but well cared for, surrounded by an award-winning church garden maintained by a dedicated volunteer team. The area around it is developing with 200+ new families in a relatively new housing development on the doorstep.

Worship at St Luke's is mainly Eucharistic, though open to developing new styles, and currently takes place mid-week rather than on Sundays. These services are increasingly shaped by school involvement, with pupils and staff joining the congregation regularly, particularly for special services and seasonal celebrations. This has brought new life, energy and visibility to the church during the week.

St Luke's hosts a number of community-facing initiatives, including:

- Places of Welcome, providing a safe and hospitable space for conversation, refreshments and signposting,
- a Parent Café linked to the school
- Wednesday afternoon toddler group



Bubble Church has also been introduced, offering an imaginative, informal worship experience for very young children and their carers.

Much of the activity at St Luke's is sustained by a small number of committed individuals, and the church can feel fragile at times. Nevertheless, its strong school links, openness to new expressions of church, and steady engagement with families mark it as a place of significant potential.

Rev Mike Bridgewater's contract has recently been renewed to continue the development work. An Indian Orthodox Church also uses St. Luke's for its services.



St Matthew's Church, Birches Head

*Electoral roll 21 Average weekly attendance 8
Tuesday Eucharist 10am*

St Matthew's stands in the original heart of Birches Head and serves a primarily residential area comprising long-standing households alongside newer developments. Opened in 1958, the church is a modern building with a flexible interior and a striking WW1 commemorative stained-glass window that forms a focal point for worship.

St Matthew's does not currently host regular Sunday worship, instead gathering mainly for a Tuesday morning service attended by a small but committed congregation. A very small core group sustains much of the life of the church and has shown remarkable faithfulness and perseverance.

Mission and outreach have focused on engagement with families and older residents. A monthly Messy Church has, at its best, welcomed significant numbers of children and adults, combining craft, story, worship and shared food. Additional activities include coffee mornings, lunches and a weekly Over-55s club that draws in people from the wider community, many of whom have little other contact with the church.

The church also has links with a nearby primary school and has hosted occasional services for children. However, practical constraints around parking, visibility and resources present challenges to long-term sustainability and growth. Recent work has begun to explore future options for the building and its mission potential, seeking ways to be faithful to the community while facing realities honestly.





Encounter Stoke is a SMMIB-funded, 7 year project which brings together local churches, schools and people in partnership[in 9 locations across the city to establish nine new inter-generational worshipping communities, each one reflecting the unique flavour of its local community.

Encounter creates safe, welcoming spaces where everyone can feel that they belong. Opportunities are provided to spend time together, learn new things and explore the difference faith can make whilst working together to bless the local area.

St. Luke's Primary Academy and Church and St. Mark's and St. Mark's Primary Academy are two of those nine locations. At St Luke's the work currently includes support for Bubble Church, parent and carer café in the church, lunch time faith club in the school and an after-school club. This sits alongside seasonal intergenerational worship events. St Mark's is just being brought on board with similar activities planned.

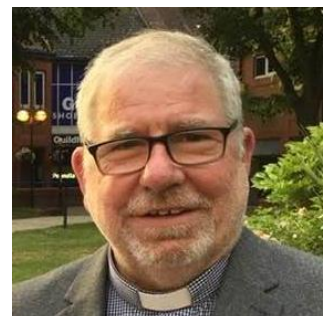
Find out more at encounterstoke.org

CHURCHYARDS

- Holy Trinity and St Mark's have closed churchyards which are maintained by the local authority.
 - Christ Church has a contract for maintaining the grass and hedges, with volunteers doing a regular litter pick.
 - There is a garden around st Luke's looked after by a team of helpers. It has won 'best kept churchyard' prizes over past years.
 - A local community group does a lot of work around St Matthew's to maintain its garden area looking beautiful and tidy.
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THE PARISH TEAM

Rev Mike Bridgewater holds 2 separate part-time appointments are Interim Missioner in the benefice. The first is focussed on looking strategically at the possibilities for sustainable mission at St Luke's and St Matthew's. The 2nd focuses on reestablishing a worshipping congregation at St Mark's and preparing the parish for partnership



with St Mark's school in the Encounter Project there. Both contracts run until Jun 2028



Rev Gill Shilkoff, a self-supporting Associate Minister in the Team, will be retiring in the autumn of 2026.

Derek Durber and Angus Paterson are the parish churchwardens. Angus is also the PCC treasurer.

There is a PCC secretary and 1 Deanery Synod rep.

Each church has its own DCC, warden(s), treasure and secretary.



A faithful band of volunteers provide music for our worship, serve coffee, produce a monthly parish magazine and many other tasks, often unseen, enabling the life of our churches to flourish.

General enquiries and funeral arrangements are coordinated by members of the laity.

SAFEGUARDING

All the churches within the Hanley Team are fully committed to creating a safe environment for all children, young people, and adults with whom we have contact.

To this end, we have adopted a Safeguarding Policy and follow Church of England Guidelines. Safeguarding, creating and maintaining a safe environment for all, is regarded as the responsibility of us all.

Our Parish Safeguarding Officer's contact number can be found on our notice boards and the front of each weekly pew sheet.

FINANCES

We are not rich by any means, nor are we in dire straits. In the last few years we have been able to pay the Diocese our agreed request for the Common Fund, though this has

been negotiated to enable the appointment of the Interim Missioner and look to what size of stipendiary team might be sustainable in the future. We hope this will mean that there can be 1.5 stipendiary posts in the team on an ongoing basis. This hasn't been easy, but has been possible through the generosity of all our congregations and also from the Parish Hall income.

It is important to say that our individual church treasurers work extremely hard.

Note: In the 2025 English Indices of Deprivation, Stoke-on-Trent is ranked 19th out of 296 local authorities, with 29% of neighbourhoods classed as highly deprived against a national average of 10%.

COMMUNICATIONS

A weekly pew sheet is produced and distributed both in hard copy and by email. It sets out details of services, collects, post-communion prayers, and readings, and includes notices for the week ahead. It also usually incorporates the Diocesan Weekly Prayer Diary.

In addition, a monthly magazine, *In Touch*, is produced. Printed copies are available for those without internet access, while a digital version is published on the Team Ministry's website and circulated by email locally, across the country, and to a small number of friends overseas.

As well as providing contact details, service information, photographs, articles, and items of general interest, the magazine also lists the regular and occasional activities taking place across the Team's churches.

DEANERY

Our Deanery is a large and diverse one, encompassing 35 church buildings, as well as a hospital and a university. There are around 30 licensed clergy serving in a variety of roles, supported by a small number of active clergy with Permission to Officiate (PTO).

Deanery Chapter meets approximately eight times a year and is well attended. These gatherings typically include worship, shared hospitality, and the opportunity to reflect together on a particular topic or issue. There is a strong sense of collegiality, despite the breadth of traditions and theological perspectives represented.

Deanery Synod meets three times each year.

The Deanery has recently identified the following priorities:

- Enabling people to flourish in Christlikeness
- Growing healthy congregations
- Inspiring and equipping confident leaders

To support parishes in these areas, the Deanery is seeking to work collaboratively in several ways, including:

- Offering a Learning Community programme to each benefice
 - Refreshing the Mission Action Planning process to make it more practical and effective
 - Providing the opportunity for annual and more focused Ministerial Development Reviews (MDRs) from senior staff
 - Strengthening central training provision, particularly for lay ministers
 - Making more effective use of Deanery Synod and Chapter
 - Developing more structured support for parishes during periods of vacancy
-

THE RECTORY

The rectory is located on Harding Road in Hanley, within easy walking distance of the main shopping area. It offers five bedrooms, a separate study, a recently fitted kitchen, an ample lounge, a spacious garden, and a large driveway.

Next door is the YMCA, which provides supported accommodation for young people each night. Opposite the property lies the attractive Hanley Park, which extends as far as Stoke railway station, approximately a 20-minute walk away.





LIVING in STOKE

Hanley is one of the six towns that together form the Potteries and the City of Stoke-on-Trent. Over the past 30 years the city has changed significantly, moving on from its industrial past of coal mining, steelworks, and bottle kilns. As those industries have declined, the area has become noticeably greener. Each of the six towns retains its own Victorian park—once known collectively as the “lungs” of the city—and, close to Hanley, there is also the well-established Central Forest Park with its lake. The wider area benefits from its proximity to open countryside, lying on the edge of the Peak District.



Today, Hanley offers a lively and evolving city-centre environment. While the traditional high street has faced the same challenges as many across the country, there has been substantial redevelopment, with investment in retail parks, hospitality, and cultural

venues. The city centre includes a vibrant “Cultural Quarter,” with theatres, museums, and galleries, including the renowned Victoria Hall and nearby New Vic Theatre. The area attracts visitors for a wide range of attractions, such as Trentham Gardens and Monkey Forest, the World of Wedgwood, and Alton Towers, all within easy reach.

Despite its urban character, Hanley remains rich in green and recreational spaces. Hanley Park, directly opposite the rectory, offers an attractive setting for walking and relaxation, while the Caldon Canal runs through the wider Team Ministry area, providing scenic towpath walks, wildlife, and a tangible connection to the city’s heritage. Sporting and leisure opportunities are plentiful, with two professional football clubs—Stoke City and Port Vale—nearby, alongside local amateur teams and strong cricket leagues.

The Potteries

Stoke-on-Trent, often known as The Potteries, is a city of character and distinction, renowned for its world-class ceramics heritage, creative spirit, and strong sense of identity.

Home to the Staffordshire Oatcake and Channel 4’s ‘The Great Pottery Throwdown’, Stoke-on-Trent celebrated

100 years as a city in 2025. At its heart is a unique blend of industrial legacy including world famous potteries like Wedgwood, Emma Bridgewater and Moorcroft that still produce outstanding ceramics today and green spaces like the stunning Trentham Gardens.

Innovation, craftsmanship, and community continue to shape a forward-looking city that honours its past while embracing the future. With a proud history, a growing cultural scene, and an enviable central location, Stoke-on-Trent is a compelling place to visit, live, and invest.

The wider area

Stoke-on-Trent’s central location, makes a wide range of stunning locations easy to reach, from nearby Biddulph Grange Gardens and Alton Towers Theme Park to some of England’s most varied countryside.



To the north-east are Leek, the Staffordshire Moorlands, and the Peak District National Park extending into Derbyshire; to the north-west, the Cheshire plains and historic



Chester, with the coast of North Wales beyond; and to the west, Shrewsbury and the Shropshire Hills.

With Manchester to the north, Birmingham to the south, and excellent road links via the M6 and with the A50 stretching from the city to the M1 and beyond, travelling across the country is straightforward.

AN INVITATION

If you are a priest who longs to serve an urban parish with heart, honesty and hope; if you delight in people, value both tradition and creativity, and believe that church can still be a place where lives are changed by God's love, then we would love you to consider applying.

We do not offer an easy ministry, but we do offer a genuine one: shaped by real communities, faithful people, and a shared desire to grow in confidence, joy and discipleship. You would be joining a parish that knows its challenges, celebrates its strengths, and is ready to walk thoughtfully and prayerfully into the future with a rector who will journey alongside us.

We look forward to welcoming you, listening to your story, and discovering together what God might be calling us to next.