

# ELLESMERE PORT PARISH PROFILE

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Ellesmere  
Port  
Parish



**ST THOMAS &  
ALL SAINTS**

**CHRIST IN THE CENTRE OF THE CHURCH;  
THE CHURCH AT THE CENTRE OF THE COMMUNITY**

**ST LAWRENCE**



**2025**

## Section 1 – INDEX AND SUMMARY OF PARISH PROFILE

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**Thank you** so much for your interest in our parish and for taking the time to look at our profile.

It is our hope that through the profile you will understand who we are, and how we currently serve God through our ministries.

This is our collective, shared vision for the future of our two churches in the Parish of Ellesmere Port and **YES**, we like to dream **BIG**.

## Hello.....

Hello, my name is Rachel, and I am the Rector here in Ellesmere Port Parish. I arrived in post at the end of May 2024. I feel extremely blessed to be part of such a welcoming and committed community.

Many things have struck me since I arrived, but one that has particularly encouraged me is the commitment to prayer within the parish. The daily prayer, on Facebook, Monday through to Thursday, is not only a place where people pray for the needs of the congregation, but also for the life of the parish, our community, and our world. There is also a group that meets on a Monday to pray for the clergy, the leadership team, and the things we are doing in the parish, which is a source of strength and confidence.

I took over from a Rector who had been in post for just over 20 years, and the person who feels called to be the new Associate Rector will be filling the role of somebody who has been here for over 13 years. It is a new chapter for the parish. I feel like it is a parish that is up to the challenge.

Although our overall numbers are not significantly high, there is much that goes on in the life of the parish. However, we are in a season of thinking about everything we do and any changes that need to be made, as well as discerning where and what God is calling us to now.

When I arrived, I inherited something that was a result of a 'Dreaming Big' day. Due to the events of the last year, we have yet to transform this into a vision that is owned by the congregation, along with a strategy that enables it to become a reality. However, we haven't just sat back! The previous Associate Rector and I have had regular away days that have enabled us to set clear goals and priorities for the parish. It would be my hope that the new Associate Rector will join with me in helping the parish redefine the vision as we discern together what God is calling us to in this exciting new chapter.

I like to see myself as a relational leader, and I greatly value team and the different strengths we can all bring. We meet weekly as a clergy and staff team, monthly with the wardens and half-termly with the ministry team. I would want to work closely with the new Associate as we lead together in discerning what God is calling us to now.

Know that we, as a parish, are praying for you as you read this profile, that you may gain a sense of whether God is calling you here to Ellesmere Port.

I hope you enjoy reading the parish profile. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give me a call.

**Rachel Newell (Rector)**  
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## Section 1 – OUR DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE PARISH

As part of the process of appointing our new rector we took some time to create a dream division for the future of the parish, which was the following:

- taking and planting worship across the whole parish
- nurturing and growing bible teaching through Cell groups and enquirers courses
- having an open door to promote innovative ways of sowing the seeds of faith
- developing partners in worldwide mission
- specific healing services
- building a music group
- improve ecumenical relationships in our town
- the completion of the Beacon Project by 2026 to make the St Thomas Church Building a multipurpose, ecofriendly, star attraction in the area for **faith, hope, and charity**
  - a building that can be seen clearly from the main road
  - is attractive for weddings and funerals
  - is a community hub, accessible for all
  - rooms able to be hired, to generate funds to help with our wider mission

The clergy have met regularly and identified priorities for the parish which has helped us to address some of the above. However, as we enter a new chapter in the parish we are hoping the new Associate Rector will work with us to redefine the vision, and help us think through what it looks like.

### **Qualities we are seeking in our Associate Rector**

- Feels a strong sense of call to the parish of Ellesmere Port.
- A deep devotion to Christ, reflected in all aspects of your personal life, and a commitment to prayer, humility, and integrity.
- Will lead alongside our Rector in all areas of parish ministry, and in time will work out specific areas of oversight. You will be able to help us refine our vision, leading to a new chapter in the parish.
- A team player, collaborator and communicator who can work effectively and harmoniously with the Rector, fellow clergy, staff, and lay leaders. You should be excited about fostering the spiritual growth of individuals and building teams within the church.
- A strategic thinker who is comfortable with navigating change, setting plans, managing projects, and delegating responsibilities effectively, whilst practising good self-care and workload management.
- Is an inspirational evangelical preacher who can deliver services with enthusiasm and can relate them to our lives.
- Has a desire to reach out beyond the church walls and share the good news of Jesus in creative ways.
- Will foster a good safeguarding culture in the parish, to ensure that the church is a safe space for everyone.
- Have strong interpersonal skills and be prepared for the challenges of pastoral ministry, being able to build and maintain trust and rapport with individuals of all ages and backgrounds.
- Supports the Beacon Project as we discern a way forward.
- Possess a pleasant demeanour, a positive attitude and last, but certainly not least, must have a good sense of humour.

## Key responsibilities

- **Sharing in leadership:** Working in partnership with the Rector and other clergy in leading the church, including sharing in the leadership of the staff team and attending and leading relevant committee meetings.
- **Preaching and Teaching:** Regularly preaching and teaching across congregations. Also, working with both Church of England schools in the area and other primary schools to further God's Kingdom.
- **Overseeing specific ministries:** Taking responsibility for particular ministry areas within the church, based on your gifts and experience in conversation with the Rector. Developing vision and leadership within those areas.
- **Mentoring and Development:** Developing and training other leaders and volunteers within the church.
- **Pastoral:** Being a point of contact for pastoral care, providing support, counsel, and visiting those in need.

## What we can offer

- We can offer you a supportive, friendly, and hardworking church family, keen to engage, and work for the parish.
- You will not be on your own! You will have the support of the Rector, PCC, Church Wardens, Associate Minister, Parish Administrator, and ministry team.
- Whilst realising that your job is never finished, we will insist that you always take your days off, annual holidays, training days, sabbaticals, etc.
- We will always support you through prayer.
- We will listen to any problems or issues you have and do our very best to support you.

## Challenges

- We are one of the largest parishes in the Diocese of Chester, and yet we have a very high proportion of residents who have no connection with a Christian church.
- Engaging children and young adults.
- Finance. Whilst we have always met our parish share, we are conscious that this has sometimes been a struggle. We would like to be in a position where we can offer more support to home and overseas mission.
- Maintenance and development of our buildings and surroundings.
- An ageing population.



**God of Mission**  
**Who alone brings growth to your church,**  
**Send your Holy Spirit to give:**  
**Vision to our planning,**  
**Wisdom to our actions,**  
**And power to our witness.**  
**Help our church to grow in numbers,**  
**In spiritual commitment to you,**  
**and service to our local community.**  
**Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Source: LyCG Prayer

*This prayer underpins everything we do and is used at all of our services.*



<https://ellesmereportparish.co.uk>



<https://www.facebook.com/EPortParish>



<https://twitter.com/EPortparish>



## Who Are We?

We are a lively, outward facing, evangelical parish with two worship centres: St Thomas & All Saints, Ellesmere Port and St Lawrence, Stoak. Our tradition is open evangelical with a strong emphasis on Bible based preaching and teaching; particularly linking our preaching and teaching to the application in our daily lives.



The parish provides regular opportunities for worship and prayer, pastoral support and guidance, a network of cell groups in which people can grow and develop their faith in a relaxed setting. There are many opportunities to engage in the work of the church, the local community and beyond.

In addition, the parish provides for the wider community with the occasional offices of funerals, baptism and marriage, opportunities to explore the Christian faith and volunteering in the community. The church provides services and activities that are particularly aimed at engaging the wider community.



### **The Ellesmere Port Parish**

The staff team currently consists of a full time Rector, one retired member of clergy, a part time Associate Minister all ably assisted by a part time Parish Administrator.

We have two readers, an OWL (an Occasional Worship Leader) and one ordinand.

We have a very vibrant PCC consisting of 18 active members from across our churches, 4 of whom are churchwardens: 2 serving St Thomas and 2 serving St Lawrence.

The mission statement of the parish is:

**‘Christ in the Centre of the Church; the Church at the Centre of the Community.’**

## Section 2 – THE CHURCH AND ITS PEOPLE

### Our Beliefs

We are a welcoming, friendly church community meeting in two buildings St Thomas & All Saints in Ellesmere Port and St Lawrence in Stoak. We aim through our worship, witness, and service to put into practise our mission statement: **‘Christ in the Centre of the Church; the Church at the Centre of the Community.’**

### Our Sunday service patterns are:

Coming together every Sunday with the family of God is a top priority for us. This is where we are fed with God’s Word, and resourced and equipped to go out into a new week.

#### St Thomas & All Saints

9am Common Worship Holy Communion service with traditional hymns and organ, with an average weekly congregation of 25.

10.45am First Sunday – Café Church

2nd, 3rd & 4th Holy Communion Service or Service of the Word

Ignite – our Children’s group meet during this service.

Our main morning worship services are family orientated, relaxed and quite informal using a wide variety of liturgy. Members of the congregation are very involved in this service leading intercessions, reading, sharing testimony, assisting with communion and offering prayer ministry.

The worship is a broad mixture of recorded and live music led by our key board player, a lead vocalist , plus sometimes a guitarist and violinist as well as a drummer!



We have had a number of people from this service who have, or are, exploring a call to ordained ministry.



## Café Church

On the first Sunday of each month we have a Café style church service. It has a very relaxed atmosphere, sitting at tables and sharing refreshments. We still partake in worship and, following a short talk, we have various activities designed for all ages to join in together.

These services are very well supported by the wider community, and we see a lot of new faces on a regular basis. For many people Café church has become their church. The monthly congregation can range from between 50 and 80 with many children and young people attending.



## Ignite

This is the children's service at St Thomas which runs every week except for the first Sunday of the month, when we run Café church. The children have their own age-appropriate session.

The children of St Thomas are very much part of the congregation and we are blessed with the number of younger members who regularly attend this service.





## St Lawrence

11am Common Worship Holy Communion Service or Service of the Word with traditional hymns accompanied by the organ.

Members of the congregation are also involved in this service leading intercessions and readings as are some of the younger members of the congregation. Many people are from the surrounding area and know and support each other well. We have a growing relationship with the local pub who hosted our first curry and carol evening, a great success!



## ABC - 4pm Second Sunday

ABC [Adults, Babies and Children] is our family service at St Lawrence, based along the lines of Messy Church.





### **WHAT'S NEXT**

This is our new monthly group for our young people in Year 6 upwards. We always enjoy food, fun, time with friends and some input to help us build foundations for a life following Jesus. We often use material from Youthscape.



### **United Services**

Usually on the fifth Sunday of the month or special occasions we come together for one United Service alternating between our two churches.

### **Preaching & Other Services**

The preaching at our Sunday services follows either the Common Worship Lectionary or a sermon series.

We encourage the church family to join with Morning Prayer from the Daily Office which we broadcast Monday – Thursday at 9am via Facebook Live. On occasions we have had as many as 800 plus views. This is led by clergy and congregation members.

The preaching at our Sunday services is complimented by teaching through courses held throughout the year and in small groups.

In addition to weekly Sunday services, we also hold a host of annual services such as:

- Christingle
- Blue Christmas
- Annual Civic Service
- Remembrance Day Service; working with Civic parties and armed forces.
- Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals which are arranged directly with the clergy.



## Welcome Teams

We have a team of people at all three Sunday services who greet everyone with genuine warmth and kindness. A common comment from newcomers is, "We were made to feel welcome from the moment we entered the church. "

## Prayer Ministry

We are a prayerful church and at the 10.45 services at St Thomas we have prayer teams ready to pray, after Holy Communion, should anyone require this for themselves, a friend or family. This ministry provides love and compassion for those in need and is well supported. People also regularly approach the teams with prayers of thanks for answered prayer.



## Church Wardens & PCC

Following the 2025 APCM we have eighteen elected members of the PCC including four churchwardens and four co-opted members plus our Safeguarding Officer. Two members serve on the Deanery Synod.

All members of the PCC choose a focus subgroup to work with during the year. These are:

**The Fabric Team** that looks after the church buildings and grounds. (This team includes the four church wardens.)

**A Finance Team** that controls all receipts and expenses, plus gift aiding.

**An Eco team** that is overseen by our Associate Minister.

**A Community Outreach team** that focus on our engagement with the wider community.

We are a lively, and friendly bunch who work together with our clergy to help bring in the Kingdom of God to the parish, community and beyond.



## Clergy Wellbeing

We have a team who meet each Monday on WhatsApp to pray for the clergy and the life of the parish, ensuring that all we do is surrounded in prayer. The clergy have found this of great comfort and support during difficult times.

## Cell Groups

We presently have 4 cell groups that meet every two weeks at various times in people's homes.

The material may come from the current sermon series, a specific course or the group may decide to do something different.

Each group has social nights out that are always good fun, and grows friendships.

The individual groups support various church projects through fund raising events, such as cake sales or sausage and bacon butty sales after church services.

## Pastoral Care

With the help of our OWL (Occasional Worship Leader), we have begun to take a good look at the pastoral care of both our congregation and community. We believe that pastoral care isn't about a team but about a culture. We are looking at various areas of the life of the church so that all may feel welcomed and cared for.

## Chaplaincy at Cheshire Springs and Vale Court

A small team from the parish regularly visit Cheshire Springs and Vale Court care homes. Sometimes it is for a chat, and other times we take Holy communion. Our relationships are developing, and it is wonderful to see residents and staff visit the church for Christmas and Easter services. It is hoped that this area of chaplaincy can develop and expand to other care homes.



## **Section 3 – THE CHURCH AND ITS WIDER COMMUNITY**

### **Schools**

**The Ellesmere Port Church of England College** is situated over the road from St Thomas and has 615 students including a sixth form. It is part of the Frank Field Education Trust and was rated “Good” in the latest Ofsted report and also in the SIAMS inspection.

We have good links with the school with Year 7 attending a welcome service in September, and visiting schools for services at Easter, Christmas and Remembrance. We also deliver lessons to various year groups.

We are working together on how we can bless our community. The students have helped with our food initiative program, supported Experience Easter and are looking to help deliver Messy church to our local primary school.

**Ellesmere Port Christ Church** – Church of England School (voluntary aided) provides opportunities for partnerships between church and school. It was rated ‘Good’ in the recent OFSTED report and ‘Outstanding’ in the SIAMS inspection. It is federated with Bishop Wilson Church of England (voluntary aided) Primary School.

A member of the church currently serves as Chair of Governors together with a number of church members serving as Foundation Governors. There is a position of governor which can be taken either by the Rector or Associate Rector.

Clergy lead regular collective worship, deliver messy church for each year group and take part in the termly value days.



We are welcomed into many of the primary schools in the parish leading acts of worship/assemblies and delivering lessons. Alongside this, our Assembly team provide weekly assemblies.

We are thankful for the many opportunities we have to help our local schools deliver their RE curriculum.

Many of the schools hold their Christmas services in church, which is always a great opportunity to share the hope of Christmas with the students and their families.

A parish highlight of the year is Experience Easter. This year eight primary schools attended. It gave us an opportunity to share the Easter story with 300 plus children in an interactive way which all the children really engaged with, and hopefully enjoyed!



Feedback from the schools was very encouraging which included the following:

*"The team of people at the church who had organised the experience for us were superb at making the event child-friendly and informative."*

*"Our aim is always to ensure the children in our school know more and remember more in each subject they study, and I was so proud to hear them joining in and sharing what they already knew and then being able to extend their knowledge during the trip."*

*"We had a wonderful time and have also been able to respond to the challenge we were given which was to create a piece of art to put on display in the church."*

## Assembly Team

Our Assembly Team is regularly welcomed into nine of the local primary schools. The stories are taken from "The Lion Storyteller Bible" by Bob Hartman and are aimed at KS1.

The team consists of a group from our congregation and we are currently going into three schools every week. We have a variety of ways to present the stories using various props, costumes, puppets and even the children themselves who love to be our "helpers."

### Some Quotes from the children

- L "It makes me happy"
- B "I like listening to the story"
- R "Being a helper"
- K "I like it because it makes me laugh and I can sit good"
- J "We are helpers"
- M "dancing to the song My God is a great big God"





## **Community Outreach**

### **Food Initiative Group**

The food hamper project was initially set up as a response to the pandemic, but grew organically over time, and continues to grow, as more families than ever request food to enable them to feed their children over the school holidays.

We have worked with schools to identify those who are in greatest need and have supported up to 165 families per holiday.

The initial funding came from the church congregation and appeals to local businesses, friends, family and street WhatsApp groups. As the project has grown, we have sought funding from the National Lottery, various local supermarkets, businesses, our local council, and small trusts.

This project is currently under review with the schools as we consider what is needed as well as what is possible with both funding and the church team.



### **Family Activity Days**

It was from meetings with local headteachers and canvassing opinion on the needs of the community that Family Activity Days were launched. Alongside a day trip, families were provided with a hot meal on their return. This reduced food poverty as well as lessened social isolation within the community as a result of the pandemic.

This project is also under review as we consider what is needed now, as well as the funding and church team challenges that make it possible.







### Toms Tots

Tom's Tots is our weekly (term-time) group for preschool children and their carers. A wonderful time is spent with activities, song, story, and food. It is a lovely community where we get to build long-term relationships with families. We have a wonderful team of volunteers who make it happen.





## Tea at Two

Every second Wednesday of the month, in the St Thomas Coffee lounge, we host an afternoon tea for anyone in need of company. Tea, coffee, and cake are served. Many of those who attend have been bereaved or live alone.



## PALS

On the last Friday of the month we have lunch cooked in the church hall at St Thomas. Members of our congregations, friends, family and community join together for what is always a “sell out” occasion.

PALS is all about sharing fellowship with one another and is a great success.





## Advent and Christmas

This is a very busy time at both of our churches with much going on, apart from Sunday services, including Blue Christmas, Christmas Fair, Christingles, Christmas activity day, shoe box appeal, knitted angels which pop up around the community, school visits to church and to the schools, Christmas 'goody' bag for the bereaved and people on their own, giftbags for Forum housing residents, singing in the arcades and carols and curry night at a local pub.



## Scouts

The 8th Ellesmere Port (St Thomas) Scout Group is a sponsored Group meeting in the Church Hall and grounds; it is also an open Group.

There are 5 sections running currently from 4 to 18 years old.

The total group size is now in excess of 100 young people meeting regularly, and a leadership team of about 15. Various activities, including camps, take place during the year.

Our Assistant Minister is Chaplain to the Scouts.

## Other Outreach initiatives

- West Cheshire Foodbank
- Visiting and keeping in touch – monthly newsletters & phone calls to vulnerable parishioners
- Response to appeals: DRC, Ukraine, Christian Aid, etc
- Shoe Box Appeal
- Links with care homes
- Contact Centre – this is staffed by volunteers and is an independent organisation who use our facilities thus allowing non-resident parents contact with their children.

## Uganda - Link with Nyakatukura Primary School

Through a member of our congregation, we have links with the above school working alongside Christ Church School and St Andrews Church -Tarvin. This includes visits to Uganda and individual child sponsorship of school fees.





## Section 4 - THE CHURCHES AND BUILDINGS

Our church community meets in two buildings: St Thomas and All Saints, Ellesmere Port and St Lawrence in the local village of Stoak. The two buildings are very different in appearance and fabric but the commonality between them is the faithful worship, friendship, and dedication to doing God's work that takes place in both churches.

### **St Thomas and All Saints Church**



Ellesmere Port, St Thomas Church was initially built as a tin building in 1909. The present brick building dates from around 1957-1961, and in keeping with the times the inside has been extensively reordered since then. Future reordering of St Thomas is planned subject to the necessary funding being raised through our Beacon Project. The church benefits from a good-sized car park. Within the main building the worship area is a considerable space with seats rather than pews and with a designated children's area.



The main building also includes a large parish office and toilet facilities. The coffee lounge with kitchen facilities is adjacent to the main worship area.



Our children's areas are something we are very excited about and it means that our children have a dedicated place in both of our churches.





There is a church hall situated on the footprint of the original tin church. The hall, complete with a large kitchen facility, is used for numerous church community events and is also hired by members of the local community for a range of activities and private parties.



### St Lawrence Church, Stoak.

Thought to be more than 700 years old, Saint Lawrence church is a grade II listed building steeped in history and worship. The church tower displays a one fingered clock of great antiquity which dates to 1736. There are several clear leaded windows and one beautiful stained-glass window situated in the nave. The interior of St Lawrence creates an authentic, historical country church atmosphere and is a popular wedding venue. In recent years substantial works to the roof and tower have been completed and further work is planned. There is a coffee area to the back, toilet facilities off the porch and a designated children's area.

There is a well maintained graveyard at St Lawrence which is in the process of being closed and holds some interesting monuments. There is also a good sized carpark.



## 4 Deeside Close

4 Deeside Close is a four-bedroom detached house located in the Whitby area of Ellesmere Port, with the postcode CH65 6TH. It is situated on a private road shared with five other properties, offering a sense of exclusivity. The house is a spacious family home with a contemporary kitchen, three reception rooms, a modern bathroom and a bedroom with an en-suite. There is also a downstairs toilet and office.



## Nearby services

- Closest primary school: [Ellesmere Port Christ Church CofE Primary School](#) (100 yards)
- Closest GP: [Whitby Health Partnership](#) (400 yards)
- Closest hospital: [Ellesmere Port Hospital](#) (440 yards)
- Closest supermarket, [Morrisons](#) (0.6mi)
- Closest secondary schools: [The Whitby High School](#) (630 yards); [The Church of England College](#) (0.7mi)



## **SECTION 5 – OUR FINANCES**

### **Our Parish Finances**

We have three members of the PCC who head up the finance team and they take on the roles of Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Gift Aid Officer.

Full details of our finances can be found in our annual return to the charity commission:

<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5005399/accounts-and-annual-returns>

Our funding comes from the generosity of our parishioners, the renting of buildings and car park spaces, regular fund-raising events such as our Christmas Fair, Summer Fair, afternoon teas, bacon & sausage bap mornings, and the occasional lump sum donations / legacies.



We encourage the principle of tithing to God's work and the PCC aims itself to give away a regular, planned amount in support of Christian organisations working at home and overseas. Through our tithed giving in recent years, we have supported missions abroad in Kenya and Uganda as well as Tearfund, Christian Aid, and the Ukraine appeal. Nearer to home we support CPAS, Falcon Camp, and other local churches.



Through the goodness of our congregation, the generosity of local charities and grants received we have been able to achieve our mission:

***'Christ at the Centre of the Church; the Church at the Centre of the Community.'***



## Our Finances in summary

- Our Parish Share is up to date and has always been paid on time, even during Covid.
- We have a healthy reserve fund for our buildings as well as a contingency fund which has been replenished post pandemic. Some of this funding has come from funds previously held by the Diocese which have been released to further our mission in the community and beyond. We have recently had to dip into these funds to meet our parish needs.
- We are very proud that our PCC has sanctioned the re-ordering of St Thomas Church [The Beacon Project] to make it a building which will better facilitate our vision. Under our own auspices we have raised a third of the funding [£220,072] and now plan to approach charities for grants. The building works will commence as soon as the funding is in place.



## Section 6 - ELLESMERE PORT AND SURROUNDING AREA



**Ellesmere Port** is a town in the borough of Cheshire West and Chester in the county of Cheshire. It is on the southeastern edge of the Wirral Peninsula 6 miles north of Chester and 12 miles south of Liverpool. The first houses in Ellesmere Port were built around the docks, which now houses the National Waterways Museum. The town has a growing population of 65,421 according to the 2021 census.

**Stoak** village is 4 miles from the centre of Ellesmere Port and is a small rural community with a population of 180.

The parish is an increasingly diverse community with some areas of great deprivation, the farming areas of Stoak village, alongside many flourishing new builds and established housing estates.

The town has excellent transport links with motorway networks to Liverpool and Manchester, plus the beautiful North Wales countryside is on its doorstep. The town has many shops and numerous supermarkets.

Some of the local amenities include Ellesmere Port Sports village, the Blue Planet Aquarium and Cheshire Oaks Shopping Designer outlet with many shops and restaurants. The Coliseum (part of the Oaks) has a large multi-screen cinema, 10 pin bowling as well as numerous shops and restaurants. Nearby is the historical city of Chester famous for its Roman walls and ruins as well as it's beautiful Cathedral. Chester Zoo is also a great place for a day out.

