Parish Profile

Christ Church Downend

Contents

Introduction	4
A message from our patron	5
Our church community at a glance	6
Our values, vision and our new vicar	8
How we would support you as our new incumbent	10
Gathered worship	10
Church structure and leadership	12
Ministry structure	13
Youth ministry	14
Children and families ministry	15
Mission and evangelism	16
Discipleship	17
Pastoral equipping	18
Our response to the Covid-19 pandemic	19
A snapshot of activities in the life of our church	20
Finance	21
Our church buildings	22
What is the area like?	24
The vicarage	25
Appendix 1: how we created the Parish Profile	26
Appendix 2: map of the parish	27

Introduction

We are a thriving Anglican church in the north-eastern suburbs of Bristol with a strong sense of gratitude for what Jesus has done for us and a heart to share God's love with our local community. We are an open evangelical church and would be very glad to welcome a man or woman as our next incumbent.

We are all about life! Our strapline is "Learning to live the life." We aim to be a people who have found their identity and purpose in Christ and who are learning to live like Jesus, for God's glory. We want to worship the living God together with creativity, joy and variety, reflecting the fact that our community is made up of all ages, and people of different walks of life and church experience.

We want to be equipped by Scripture and the power of the Holy Spirit for our daily worship and work as disciples in the whole of life, living out Kingdom values and making a difference in all the places we spend our time. We love to welcome people of all ages in our local community to connect with us, especially our primary and secondary schools, those in debt, the lonely, and those needing encouragement and a fresh sense of purpose. Many of those we connect with have family ties to the church, having been baptised here, attended acts of worship through the church schools, or have parents or grandparents who got married here. Others have joined us from a range of denominations and are now making their home with us.

We long that many more people might find faith and flourish as God intended. We love reaching out to them to show them God's love in friendship, practical action, and to invite them to "come and see" what God is doing and how he wants them to be a part of it. We want the quality of our relationships to speak volumes about what God is like.

- We value Biblical teaching that deepens our understanding of who God is, inspires us to love him more, and helps us ask "How then shall we live?"

We long to see others receiving the life that Jesus offers and recognise this as a shared responsibility. We are on a journey of prayer and are learning to go deeper. We are discovering a healthier rhythm of work, Sabbath rest, and play. We seek to encourage and nurture leadership among all ages and believe that everyone has gifts and experience to share.

We are still learning: we are not the finished article! But we offer a warm welcome and we will support our new vicar wholeheartedly in whatever God has in store for us next.

'Learning to live the life'

cpas
Making Mission Possible

A message from our patron

The Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS), the largest Church of England patron, is patron of Christ Church Downend and is delighted to be able to support this next stage in the life of Christ Church.

'... Every child the chance to explore Jesus'

CPAS is one of the 10 historic Anglican Missions, and for 185 years has been supporting local churches in reaching the whole nation with the Gospel.

Besides its work appointing new incumbents for parishes in every diocese in England, CPAS runs 100+ holidays each year at which children from all walks of life have the opportunity to encounter Jesus and strengthen their Christian faith. CPAS also supports church leaders (lay and ordained) all around the country in their important task of vision, leadership and evangelism.

Our aspirations are currently distilled into four prayers: "Every Church a pathway to faith; Every leader a catalyst for evangelism; Every Christian a courageous witness; Every child the chance to explore Jesus."

Our church community at a glance

248
On our electoral roll

23,000
People living in our parish

370
In our Church Family directory

Many of the congregation are active in the local community during the week supporting neighbours, engaging with community groups and volunteering.

- Strong leadership team
- Part time associate minister
- A third year curate
- Paid and volunteer lay leaders
- Input from a Bristol Diocese associate minister

We hold a variety of activities mid-week for different ages, interests and needs, with a strong youth ministry and children's ministry.

We connect and grow through
life groups 12

Six mission partners

- An orphanage in India
- Christians Against Poverty
- Church Missionary Society
- Mission Direct
- Open Doors
- Transform Europe Network

Building 4 Life Project

Whilst we have outstanding debts from our Building 4 Life Project, we have a repayment plan in place and good management of our general funds and giving.

Links with our local community

- We run Alpha and Youth Alpha, the Wellbeing Course, and Kintsugi Hope.
- We host a Christians Against Poverty debt centre, employing the centre manager.
- We have a strong relationship with Christ Church CofE Junior and Infants Schools. Members of Christ Church are on the governing bodies and our staff team deliver acts of collective worship.
- Our youth team has built significant relationships with our local secondary school. We also have good connections with several other local schools.
- We run outreach and discipling youth groups, Messy Church, a faith-inspired toddler group, and a children's outreach exercise club. We have a strong Mothers' Union and support a Seniors film club.
- We have two parish halls that are hired out to the community. The church itself is also now an attractive large meeting space, which can be hired out.
- We have good relationships with other local churches and, together, we run an annual outdoor service and family fun day.
- Congregation members visit a variety of nursing homes within the parish to conduct services and offer home communions.
- We are not a "destination" church but we currently hold four to six weddings, six to eight funerals and 10-15 baptisms per year. We sometimes hire a baptistry for adult baptisms.

Gathered worship:

- Average Sunday attendance pre-pandemic: 218 adults, 35 youth & children (2019 figures)
- Currently two or three Sunday services and a well attended mid-week communion.
- Strong leadership and administrative team and a large base of active congregation members who play their part in the worship and witness of Christ Church.
- Contemporary worship band and traditional music and organ. Our style is generally informal, with robes only being worn by clergy at more traditional services. We enjoy the creative arts and have several people with gifts in this area.

'We have good relationships with other local churches...'

'Christians Against Poverty is such an important part of being God's hands and feet'

Our values, vision and our new vicar

Current core values which are helping us to learn how to operate as a community:

Our core values, which help us learn how to operate as a community:

Thankfulness

We want to enjoy and celebrate how Christ has lavished His love upon us. We would like to get better at celebrating each other's milestones and hearing more stories of God at work in and through us all.

Prayerfulness

We try to start with prayer, end with prayer, and pray along the way. We want to drink deeper from the well of prayer and also look wider in prayer for our community and wider mission. We want to get better at listening to the Spirit and discerning His guidance.

Openness

We continue to seek the Spirit's guidance to grow in humility and grace towards all people. We have welcomed people from many different spiritual traditions and denominations, enjoying the new things we have learnt from each other. We want to build on our community links and our friendship with other local churches.

Graciousness

We try to be a community that acknowledges mistakes, says sorry, forgiving one another as we reflect the wonderful grace we have received in Jesus.

Our Vision for the next five years

We have a general sense of direction as we follow the vision of Whole Life Discipleship but we hope the new incumbent will help us discern, develop and deliver the vision, potentially along the lines of the following:

- **Wider and deeper engagement with the community of the parish**
- **Greater integration of the different age groups and congregations**
- **Deepening our Whole Life Discipleship commitment**
- **Maximising our potential**
- **Financial stability and flourishing**

Some of the challenges our new incumbent can help us to tackle:

- Engaging with a wider cross-section of the parish, many of whom have no points of reference from which to connect with faith
- Unifying the different congregations and unlocking the potential of the Church Centre, Quakers Road
- Growing our confidence in inviting others and in being able to articulate and share our faith
- Ensuring that all age groups in the church community feel valued and part of things
- Repaying our debt from the Building 4 Life project and getting the church on a more secure financial footing to fund our current and future ministry.

How our next vicar can help us achieve this:

We are excited at the prospect of welcoming a new vicar to Christ Church to help lead us forward into this vision, bringing their unique gifts and experiences

Desirable qualities for our new vicar:

Characteristics

- A person of faith, with a commitment to prayer and a desire to continually learn, grow and invest in their own relationship with God
- A "people" person: someone able to get along with people of a variety of ages, and from different social and church backgrounds.

Skills

- An ability to lead the team, investing in them, challenging and encouraging them, as well as being part of the team as we all learn together
- Envisioning, inspiring and equipping the congregation as disciples who can then make disciples.

Passions

- A desire to see congregation members reach their potential in Christ
- A heart for the unreached many in our parish
- A passion to communicate how Scripture speaks to us and guides us how to live in our contemporary culture.

Experience

- Working in churches with strong youth and children's ministries
- Familiarity with the ideas of Whole Life Discipleship
- Helping a church to move to the next "level".

'A heart for the unreached many in our parish'

How we would support you as our new incumbent

We have been praying for you already! We will continue to pray regularly for you to know God's strength, guidance, wisdom and peace. We recognise that leadership and especially ordained ministry is a sacrificial calling, and we will thank God for leading you to this place to minister with us.

We will welcome you into the church family, and love, support and care for you and your family.

We will take our share of responsibility and bring energy and enthusiasm to the work of mission and ministry. We have a strong, united and supportive PCC that is ambitious for God, eager for growth, willing to change and able to get things done. We have a good team of staff and volunteers who are ready to use their gifts to support your work and the ministry and mission of the church.

We will support you in undertaking appropriate study and further training, making sure that you have time for reflection and retreat and can enjoy a Godly rhythm of Sabbath rest and work

Gathered worship

Worship is at the heart of who we are and what we do. We try to offer a variety of worship styles to reflect the diverse church experience of our congregation and the different ages and learning styles found among the church family.

We seek to be faithful to the breadth of Anglican tradition and to learn from other traditions as well. As we have two church buildings we are able to offer alternative styles of worship on Sunday mornings, and have experimented with different styles in the evenings.

We seek to make Sundays the place to gather and be equipped for the scattered ministry we all carry out Monday to Saturday, so we look for relevant and practical examples of how to live in the light of the Gospel.

Current worship patterns

Sundays

9.15am Holy Communion or Morning Prayer using Common Worship at the Church Centre, Quakers Road. A 25-30 strong congregation of mature Christians with a warm welcome and a strong sense of community. Music is provided by an electric organ.

10.30am Morning Worship or Holy Communion at the Parish Church Combining Anglican liturgy with contemporary worship band and a mix of traditional and modern music. Teaching might be combined with creative elements and interviews/ testimonies and time to respond through song, silence and prayer. Average congregation: around 100 adults. Full range of groups for young people and children with average attendance 15 youth and 20 children. All Age Services approximately once a term and uniformed groups joining us for occasional parade services. This service is live streamed.

6.30pm Evening service: Monthly Celtic Worship with a strong creative and reflective element, attracting around 40 adults. We hope to reinstate monthly Spirit Space services in 2022: a contemporary service with an emphasis on worship through music and teaching, with café style seating and strong youth participation in leadership.

Thursdays

9.30am Common Worship Holy Communion Service: in the Parish Church with a strong sense of community and mutual support. A 10-15 minute sermon, with intercessions led by congregation members. Around 40 adults with most people staying for coffee and cake after the service. The congregation includes elderly and older members, active retired and working people who are available due to shift, part time or flexible working. It also provides a good place for those busy serving on Sundays to be fed spiritually through worship and teaching.

Numbers at all of these services have been significantly affected by the Covid pandemic but are gradually rising towards pre-pandemic levels. A Worship Team comprising the clergy and others who lead and preach currently meet regularly to discern, plan and evaluate the direction and content of worship services.

'Being new to the area, we were made to feel very welcomed into the church'

Church structure and leadership

The PCC functions well with a good range of members and a commitment to growth and service to the community. The PCC has its own vision statement as follows: 'The PCC co-operates with the incumbent in promoting the whole mission of Christ Church with a particular responsibility for ensuring wise and faithful stewardship of the Church's resources, to enable vision to become reality.'

Leadership team

The activity of the church has been divided up into different ministry areas overseen by ministry heads. This has enabled different aspects of church life to flourish without all daily operational issues having to go through the vicar, who is then free to mentor ministry heads to support them to be strategic. Regular staff meetings help to keep a sense of unity and direction. We try not to have activity for its own sake, seeking rather to evaluate, reflect and be strategic for the kingdom.

The team currently comprises the following members:

- **Rev Paul Peterson:** Associate Minister. Paul has been at Christ Church for just under 12 years having previously been curate in charge elsewhere in Bristol Diocese. He receives a half stipend from the diocese and also oversees a series of CPAS Ventures in the South East of England. Paul has chaired the PCC for the past nine years
- **Rev Aidan Watson:** Curate. Aidan is in the third year of his curacy, planning to leave in June 2022, and currently oversees the Children's Ministry
- **Anita Dobson:** Head of Discipleship Ministry in a half time paid capacity. Anita is also heavily involved in our worship ministry, Messy Church and toddlers outreach group
- **Maggie Nichols:** Church Warden, our assistant Parish Administrator and Church Buildings Manager. Maggie has played a key role in the Church reordering project
- **Diane Paddon:** Youth Ministry Head on a volunteer basis. Diane has also led on the One Church One Day prayer initiative and is heavily involved in the wider community
- **Gary Smart:** Assistant Youth Ministry Head with vast experience of youth ministry
- **Rosie Brydon:** Christians Against Poverty Centre Manager.

In addition the PCC employs an additional part time administrator, a part time bookkeeper, and a cleaner. We are currently looking to employ a part time children's worker as opportunities open up following the Covid pandemic. We only look to employ staff where there is not the volunteer capacity to help fulfil our vision. We have a number of gifted occasional preachers and service leaders.

Investing in people

We believe in all-member ministry and encourage everyone to identify and grow their gifts, both within the church setting and as scattered church from Monday to Saturday. A wide range of people take part in preaching, leading, organising and serving in our various ministries.

Training opportunities include: Growing Leaders and Global Leadership Summit.

Discipling opportunities include: Imagine Learning Hub and training events run by London Institute of Contemporary Christianity; Transforming Work course, Emotionally Healthy Leadership.

Members of the leadership team have advised on or contributed to wider initiatives in the city and in the wider church.

Young adults have in recent years participated in ministry internships such as New Wine Discipleship Years, Relay scheme and local church internships. They have been involved in leading University Christian Unions, CPAS and Scripture Union camps and mission outreach such as Circuit Riders.

Ministry structure

The structure currently in place for 2021 and will be subject to review by the new incumbent.

Youth ministry

God has called a dedicated team of volunteers to run the youth ministry at Christ Church. Pre Covid, the youth team were running eleven youth meetings each week, reaching over 150 secondary school age young people through a mixture of outreach and discipleship groups, all underpinned by prayer, meeting in our Youth Hub, on the local streets and in local parks, and in our local secondary school.

Youth ministry at Christ Church is about being family. Every young person is valued, loved and accepted for who they are. We know that people belong before they believe, and we provide a loving safe family space, where young people can grow and flourish.

During Covid, four groups ran every week on Zoom, offering vital stability and support. Groups have now returned to being in-person.

The young people's favourite Sunday is Story Sunday, where members of the adult church join us to share something of their testimony. This is always very powerful and helps to build relationships with the wider church. The young people help to lead joint youth celebrations with local churches, which also builds a sense of a wider Christian family.

Annual youth weekends away have also served to build that sense of family, drawing closer to God and to one another. Many of our young people also benefit from CPAS Ventures and similar summer residentials, where faith is built and they are developed as young leaders.

'Every young person is valued, loved and accepted for who they are.'

For years we have been self-funding, with generous financial support from our local Co-op, South Gloucestershire Council, the local parish council, the police and personal donations, reflecting the high regard held in the community for our youth ministry.

Young people in mission

During the past eleven years the youth team have taken on monthly Serving Sunday projects, showing God's love in practical ways to the community. They have partnered with our CAP ministry, and some trained to deliver Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Courses to young people and adults, in addition to the Flourish and Courage Wellbeing Courses run at Downend Secondary School.

They have also been involved with overseas mission projects and have taken groups of young people to Uganda, Tanzania and India.

Children and families ministry

Our parish and the surrounding communities are full of families, and children and young people are very much central to our vision and at the heart of our church family life. We long for every child to know their place in God's heart and discover His purposes for them. We believe that families are best placed to go on this journey together.

Until September 2020 we employed a head of children's ministry and are currently seeking to appoint a new person to this role. In the meantime Aidan Watson (our curate, who has experience as a children's worker at a previous church) is overseeing the ministry.

Prior to Covid, around 80 children aged 0-11 either regularly or occasionally attended Sunday church. During lockdown some groups met online. A café style "Families at 4pm" service meant that we were able to provide support for children's Christian development throughout. As of September 2021, we returned to offering Sunday school groups for ages 0-11 meeting in person, led by our teams of volunteers, with recent recruits supplementing an experienced core.

Outreach to children and young families has similarly been affected by COVID, but is gathering momentum again. Messy Church, Jigsaw Toddler Group and Move It Club reach out to a variety of local families with love, encouragement and evangelism.

We have strong and well-established links with our two church schools, Christ Church Infants and Christ Church Juniors. This is evident both in the governing bodies and in regular assemblies, Bible clubs and "Experience" journeys. The Diocesan Church Schools Award recently recognised the quality of our partnership. Schools provide a great opportunity for us to serve and reach out to our community. Unless delegated, the new incumbent would serve as an ex-officio foundation governor of Christ Church CofE Junior and Infants School.

Mission and evangelism

At the heart of our "whole-life disciple making" vision is a desire to bless others and to make Jesus known both in our local community and in the wider world. We partner specifically with six organisations, supporting them through a tithe on our general fund income, through prayer and, where possible, through active participation. Our mission champions ensure their particular mission organisations are profiled across the church.

We currently support:

Christians Against Poverty (CAP): running the Bristol North East CAP Centre and funding the Centre Manager's salary. The congregation is heavily invested in this through our CAP Café, befrienders scheme and food donations.

Open Doors: especially in prayer for persecuted Christians across the world.

An orphanage in India – A Christian orphanage, school and outreach ministry in Andhra Pradesh. There is a strong partnership with our young people and their leaders, with regular visits to India.

CMS (Ben and Katy Ray): We help fund Ben and Katy's salary as they run a project for disabled artisans in Iringa, Tanzania. Ben and Katy have spoken at Christ Church and a team worked with them in Iringa in 2015, with a possible further trip in 2022.

Mission Direct (Jan and Richard Bacon): Jan and Richard regularly host teams and work with the local community in sustainable development. Some of the older members of our congregations have participated in the team projects.

Transform Europe Network (Misa and Ina Hiorescu) - We have specific links with Misa and Ina in Ursoaia, in Southern Moldova. We supported them through a tithe on the Building4Life re-ordering project which paid for the building of a church and we have continued to partner with them since.

Other mission activities

We participate in **Christian Aid week**, have an active Mothers Union group and are working towards an eco-church award.

Alpha and other nurture courses have been an integral part of Christ Church's ministry over the years, and many people have come to a living faith in Christ as a result.

Christ Church has a long history as a mission focused sending church, and in the past two to three years we have seen members of the church family from teenagers upwards, moving onto ordination training, equipped as worship leaders and released into youth ministry. Our Associate Minister oversees a series of **CPAS Youth Ventures,** and several of our young adults are young leaders on these and other similar residential camps.

This sits alongside our understanding that all of us are engaging in mission on our frontlines seven days a week.

Mission In local partnership

We join in with the **Bristol Noise** outreach activities each year. Our youth ministry head also takes the lead with our monthly '**One Church One Day**' prayer days which link with churches across Bristol.

Our clergy are part of the BS16 group of churches which seek to reach out to the community. An example was this video produced during the pandemic.

An annual open air service and community fun day called C in the Park has been an effective, relatively low key way of building links in the local community and between local churches.

Discipleship

As shown by our choice of strapline, "Learning to Live the Life," we look at ourselves as disciples, seeking to learn from and follow Jesus, and make disciples of others. This vision has been strongly influenced by the Imagine Church initiative from the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity (LICC). LICC helped us on this journey to see church through the lens of discipleship which is reinforced by the Church of England's Setting God's People Free initiative.

We encourage discipling in a number of ways:

Welcome

We show welcome and hospitality to newcomers

Life groups

We use Life Groups to help people settle, feel at home and flourish in their Bible study, prayer, friendships and serving

Discipleships for all ages

Our Discipleship for All Ages ministry aims to support people where they are on their personal faith journey and help them to grow

Whole life discipleships

We recognise Whole Life Discipleship in our gathered worship, equipping people to serve God throughout the week on their "frontlines". Each month we pray for a different Frontline Focus such as people who work or volunteer in Finance and IT. We seek to make references in our teaching, songs, visuals and prayers to the world people have come from and are going back to, and practical ideas to live like Jesus in the challenges they face

Spiritual disciplines

We embrace a range of Spiritual Disciplines including a variety of forms of prayer.

Pastoral equipping

We believe it is important that everyone at Christ Church feels valued and cared for. We also long to extend the same love of Christ as widely as we can in the parish. These are difficult aims in a large church and a huge parish!

We also recognise that while we all need extra care and support at times, the best gift we can bestow is to help one another rely ever more on the Lord for wisdom, sustenance and guidance. By doing so we can find strength through our personal relationship with Him, feeding on Scripture and drawing near in prayer. We recognise that the vicar, the clergy and even the wider leadership team cannot meet all the pastoral needs of the congregation, let alone those outside who need support. Everyone is encouraged to play their part with kindness, practical help, prayer and hospitality. We have a prayer link online where immediate needs are shared via email.

For some years we had a paid head of pastoral ministry. Since 2018 the clergy have worked with a group called the Care Co-ordinators, who meet regularly to pray for and discuss the needs of those in crisis or with long term needs for support. Before the pandemic we had a thriving chaplaincy ministry to local care homes and are currently assessing what may now be possible: there is much potential to reach out to the lonely and isolated.

Many people, both within the church community and in the wider parish, tell stories of how they have been blessed with practical and prayer support during times of need. There is so much need that we would love to be able to meet in God's strength.

'We value the love and care shown by the church family and the sense of journeying together'

Our response to the Covid-19 pandemic

Throughout the initial months of the pandemic Christ Church prioritised the maintenance - and growth - of a sense of community. This was particularly important during lockdowns, at a time when many people have felt lonely, disconnected and grief-stricken. Among the initiatives undertaken were telephone calls made by members of the congregation to those identified as needing additional support. Brief five-minute meditations – titled Bread for Today - on scripture were provided on a daily basis by members of the congregation via Christ Church's YouTube channel, while Sunday services were uploaded to the YouTube channel and featured music and prayers from the homes of parishioners. Several home groups met online, as did children's and youth groups, the PCC and staff team. As soon as permitted to do so, in-person services resumed, with live streaming continuing for those unable, and uncomfortable, at the prospect of participating in-person. In partnership with our CAP Centre, the church also extended practical support to individuals and local school families who were struggling financially during the first year of the pandemic, delivering food shopping each month, and investing in relationships.

Whilst some are still cautious, our in-person worshipping life is developing again with a renewed sense of freedom and energy. In September 2021 our children's groups were relaunched, and our youth ministry returned to regular face to face meetings.

'... the children's groups and young people's groups continuing online through these times is amazing'

A snapshot of activities in the life our church

This diary "snapshot" shows how different teams are involved with a variety of ages during the week and how activities range from outreach to fellowship to discipleship. Some of these activities take place on a monthly basis and some events have not yet resumed since the pandemic.

Finance

In 2017 a re-ordering project transformed the church into a building fit for modern worship and community activities. The cost of this project (approximately £1.5m), was predominately met by the congregation through generous giving, interest-free loans totalling £320k, a £100k loan from the diocese, and some small grants. Outstanding debts will be reduced to £212k by the end of 2021, and a plan is in place to repay this amount by 2027.

Prior to the pandemic, we explored maximising revenue from our buildings, to accelerate repayment of loans and welcome the local community into our Church and halls. With Covid restrictions being lifted, this remains our aim. We also receive frequent legacies, which will be used to repay loans.

Souces of income 2020

Income in 2020 was nearly £384k, of which £167k was received through planned giving, £50k from additional donations, £66k in legacies, £46k through Gift Aid, £35k from grants, and nearly £20k from letting and other income.
In 2020 we spent a total of £303k, £90k on church running costs, £75k towards the Parish Share, £66k on staff costs, £45k given to our mission partners, £15k on children's ministry, £9k on discipleship and pastoral care, and £3k on gathered church. Youth activities are self-financing. In 2021 we are on track to increase our Parish Share contribution back to £90,000.

How we spent our income 2020

Our church buildings

The parish church

The parish church was built in 1826 and is considered to be a fine example of a Georgian church. Surrounding the building is a closed churchyard.

Building 4 Life

The 2017 reordering involved:

- Repair and remedial work on many long overdue issues such as the garden room roof and some stone work
- Complete replacement of all mechanical and electrical components, including rewiring, plumbing, heating and lighting
- Remodelling of the spaces around the nave and chancel to create a new prayer chapel and office spaces, and accessible toilets
- Remodelling of the entrance area of the nave to form a new entrance, dedicated Welcome area and enlarged kitchen and servery
- Removal of the pews and replacement with stone floor and wooden metal framed stackable chairs.

The vision for the project was to make the church a centre for:

Christian spirituality

Christian spirituality: the beauty and simplicity of the building is in itself an aid to worship. The flexible space allows for front facing, cafe style and in-the-round services, labyrinths and prayer stations.. Lighting can be adjusted to create different moods. The chapel provides a separate space for quiet prayer. Prayer stations and labyrinths can be laid out in the nave.

Community

Community: the facilities and decor have provided spaces to be hired out for cultural events and groups. We've experienced a greater sense of community in being able to sit "in the round." Local schools come for special services and events as the children can sit on the floor and the stage area is perfect for performances. Local school staff and other companies occasionally hire the space for meetings and conferences. There is much more potential for growth in this area.

Creativity

Creativity: Audio visual facilities, exhibition hangings, lighting and a flexible space for concerts and drama, art work and school activities. We are seeing more bands and choirs booking the space for rehearsals and performances as they come out of the pandemic. The local folk club has booked monthly concerts for 2022. We've had exhibitions from local photographers and artists as well as school art. There is much more potential to be tapped.
Future maintenance should be more straightforward and the space is more accessible, including for prams and wheelchair-users.

Most of the issues raised at the last quinquennial inspection were dealt with during the re-ordering project, with the next inspection being due during 2021.

The Church Centre, Quakers Road

The Church Centre was built in 1964 with a view to deepening connection to a section of the parish that is some distance from the church. The building was designed for worship on Sundays and community activity during the week. The traditional 9:15 a.m. service continues to provide a warm and friendly atmosphere and there is potential for growth and outreach at the venue again.

During the week a variety of groups use the hall, where there are adjoining rooms owned and used by Guides and Scouts.

The Parish Hall

Built in 1952, and located near the churchyard, the spacious Parish Hall is used for Sunday children's groups and mid week activities for the community. The parish office is situated in the building and bookings for regular activities and special events are increasing again post- lockdowns. The kitchen can cater for 100.

The Youth Hub

In the process of deciding how the church should be remodelled, a preliminary step became an obvious one: to convert the old fashioned and unused stage in the parish hall into a dedicated youth space to house our growing youth ministry. In 2013 the building was extended and facilities put in so that the Youth Hub, with its separate entrance, screen, sofas, pool and table football has become a great place to hang out, to learn, to grow in faith and to belong.

The Youth Hub is also being used more widely as a venue for Alpha and as a community space for hire.

Car Parking

The Church has a few reserved spaces in a car park which it shares with the local medical centre. Visitors to the church can use the car park at any time and on Sundays there is usually sufficient room for all. The Church Centre in Bromley Heath has parking to front and rear.

What is the area like?

The largest city in the South West, Bristol serves as a cultural and business hub for a wide area. Many people comment that Bristol is large enough to have a critical mass for cultural variety but not so big that it seems overwhelming. The city has its kaleidoscope of different types of housing, socio – economic groups and ethnic mixes, from the Regency houses of Clifton to the tower blocks at Lawrence Hill.

Downend is a quiet suburb some five miles north east from the centre. Downend Parish consists of distinct areas: Downend, Staple Hill, Bromley Heath and Blackhorse. Downend itself is mainly populated with Victorian terraces, 20th century semis and bungalows.

The Church Urban Fund map of Downend Parish shows the parish boundary in pink, while the pin indicates the location of the parish church. This demonstrates that the majority of the area of the parish can be classified as least deprived, and it is appropriate to call it middle class. However, it is a parish with a much larger than normal population.

Downend and Bromley Heath have a significant number of retirees. Many people have lived in, or near to, the parish for their whole lives. Staple Hill and Blackhorse have much higher working-class populations and have a different makeup to the rest of the parish. Staple Hill, with its good transport links to the city, is increasingly popular with young professionals as it is more affordable than other areas. The densely populated tower block estates in Staple Hill, three minutes-walk south-east from the church, are classified as "most deprived."

Whilst the church certainly interacts across classes, it is fair to say that we can grow in this area. Messy church and the Wednesday "Move It" club are extremely popular with people outside the Sunday congregations from Staple Hill. However, there is little interaction from this initiative with the wider church, and our Sunday congregations are much more representative of Downend and Bromley Heath than the rest of the parish.

More information:

- Visit Bristol
- Downend and Bromley Heath Parish Council
- Diocese of Bristol

'Much of the youth work in the parish happens at Christ Church'

Facilities for children and young people

The parish contains nine schools, including Downend Secondary School with whom our youth team are building an ever deeper relationship. Currently a team goes in to run "Flourish" sessions for girls and there are plans for an equivalent session for boys, teaching about self esteem. Christ Church CofE Infants School and Junior Schools have excellent links with us as church schools. We have positive contact with most of the other primary schools and have connected with them to a varying degree over the years according to the capacity of our teams.

A range of local groups are available for those with younger children, including babies and toddlers. There are many clubs and uniformed groups for children and teens. Much of the youth work in the parish happens at Christ Church.

The vicarage

The vicarage was built in the 1990s in the grounds of the substantial former vicarage, now a nursery. A short walk from the church, the vicarage has a substantial garden and ample parking. The house has four bedrooms, one bathroom and two separate toilets (one on each floor). In addition to a conservatory and lounge, there is an office and an area for meetings. The building is fitted with a burglar alarm and is double-glazed throughout.

Appendix 1: how we created the Parish Profile

In June 2021 the PCC commissioned a group to create the Parish Profile.

In July 2021 the group carried out a consultation process to get a sense of what people in the congregation value, what they think are areas to develop and so on. There were opportunities to fill out an online or paper questionnaire and also to attend group sessions where issues could be discussed. Life Groups were also given the chance to discuss.

The questions were:

- What do you value and appreciate most about Christ Church?
- What are the biggest challenges we face and what might be missing?
- What are the areas in which you hope to see Christ Church develop and thrive in the next five to 10 years?
- What gifts, characteristics, skills and abilities will our new vicar need if they are to lead us and help us achieve this?

Responses were then gathered and collated.

These responses informed the Parish Profile group, helping to shape the key points and emphasis of the Profile.

The Parish Profile Group consisted of:

Paul Peterson: Associate minister
Bryan Ashton: Churchwarden
Eloise Phillips: PCC member and youth leader
Anita Dobson: Staff team Head of Ministry for Discipleship
Adam Parfitt: PCC member
Jamie Paddon: Treasurer

Appendix 2: map of the parish

Downend Benefice

Parish boundary

Diocese of Bristol | 1:50,000 Digital map from Dotted Eyes.
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Learning to Live the Life

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