

**THE FREE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**

**PARISH PROFILE
FOR**

**ST GEORGE'S,
MILL HILL,
BLACKBURN**



What Does the Free Church of England Believe?

Please read the document, 'Understanding the Statement of Principles' which can be found on the website at:

<https://fcofe.org.uk/resources/documents/>

You will also find other documents there relating to the Free Church of England.



Welcome & Introduction from the Bishop:

The Rt Rev'd Dr John Fenwick
Bishop Primus of the Free Church of England
& Bishop of the Northern Diocese



The Free Church of England describes itself as 'Evangelical, Episcopal, Liturgical'.

Evangelical because we confidently proclaim the Good News of salvation offered through faith in the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Episcopal because we maintain the historic ministry of deacons, presbyters and bishops in historic succession. Our Orders are recognised and accepted by the Church of England.

Liturgical because our public worship is according to Anglican patterns, led by robed clergy.

St George's, Blackburn has confidently lived within this historic tradition since it was planted over 100 years ago. In addition to their local witness and mission, its clergy and laity have played an active role in the wider work of the FCE at diocesan and national level.

This is an exciting time for the Northern Diocese. We are on a journey to become a church planting diocese and in recent years have been blessed with the ordination and appointment of new men, and the welcoming of new congregations.

We are praying for God to send us the right man to join our diocesan family, to minister Word and Sacrament at St George's and to work with us joyfully in the Lord's service.

+ John Fenwick

From the Church Council:

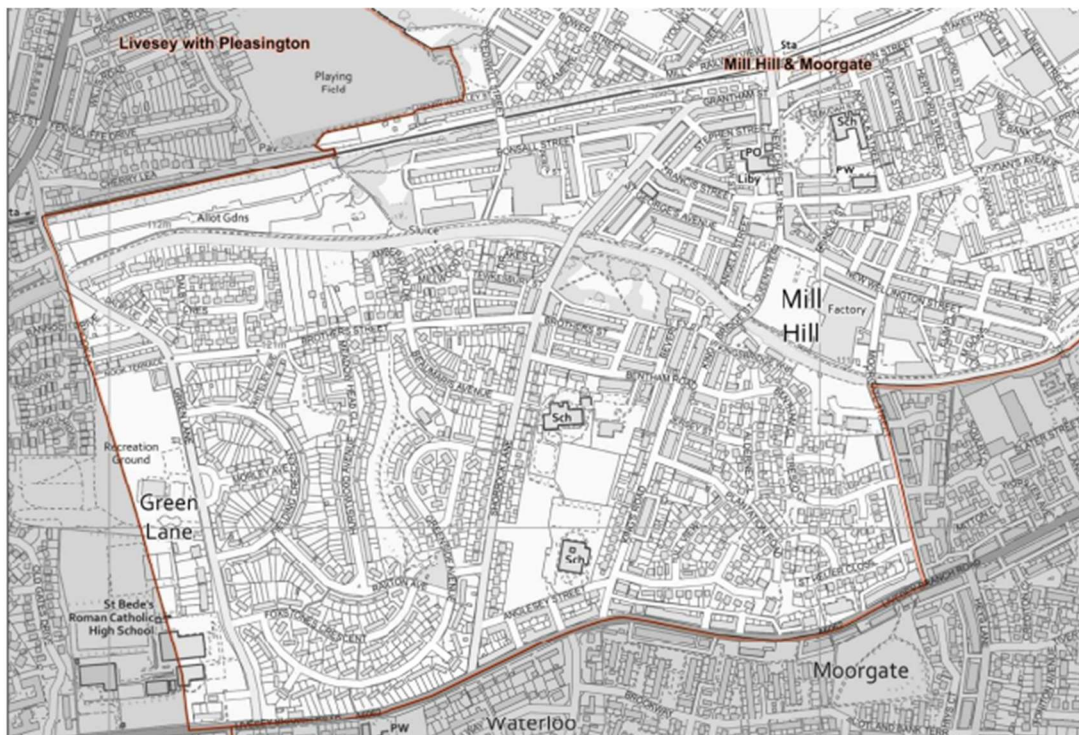
St George's is a happy, Christ-centred congregation in Mill Hill, Blackburn. Our congregation are really committed to the church and to their faith, working hard – often in challenging circumstances – to keep the church alive and active.

Established in 1907, we have continued to faithfully witness to the people of Mill Hill and the surrounding areas, providing a spiritual home to a diverse congregation drawn from many different backgrounds.

Our worship is in-keeping with the traditions of the Free Church of England, with freedom to use traditional and contemporary resources. We believe that tradition and modernity can sit side-by-side in worship for the benefit of all our congregation.

We are praying for a minister who can take our church forward, drawing on our best traditions and helping us grow in faith, whilst reaching out to those on the margins and making St. George's a beacon of hope in Mill Hill. We are a church with a great deal of potential and the right man will be able to grow this church, both numerically and spiritually.





About the area

Mill Hill is situated in the west of Blackburn. The area is predominantly residential with basic terraced properties being the main house type. The area is popular with families with a local shopping provision on New Chapel Street. There is a frequent bus service to the town centre of Blackburn and it also has a train station on the main East Lancs train line. There are good motorway links via the M65.

Churches in the area

The area of Mill Hill is served by three other churches in addition to St George's Free Church of England.

The Parish Church is St Aidan's which is a five-minute walk from St George's. St Aidan's has a medium size primary school and they have two services each Sunday: Parish Eucharist at 9.30am and Family Service at 11am. They share a minister with two other Blackburn parishes.

St Peter's Catholic Church is at the bottom end of the district and also has a medium sized primary school.

Blackburn Gospel Hall is a short distance from St George's too. They have a morning service and evening bible study in addition to a Monday evening children's club.

An evangelical group used to meet at Mill Hill Community Centre but this no longer meets at that venue.

Previously, a Methodist church was also located at the top of the district but this closed around twenty years ago due to falling attendance, with many of the congregation relocating to the nearby Methodist congregation in Feniscowles.

A short distance from Mill Hill is the parish of St Francis, which also benefits from its own primary school. They, like us, have a thriving Uniformed Group section and offer lots of community activities in the church hall.

Education

There is one infant school, three primary schools and one secondary school in the immediate area. Three of these schools are faith-based:

Meadowhead Infant School
Meadowhead Junior School
St Peter's RC Primary
St Aidan's CE Primary
St Bede's RC High School

Primary schools have fluctuating school rolls due to the regular movement of families in and out of area. Access to the schools for a minister is challenging.

Population and demographics

The population of Mill Hill is 6350, of which 27.9% are aged 0-18 years.

60-64% of children in Mill Hill are entitled to free school meals. The main industries for employment are Health and Social Care and retail. Unemployment figure are above average at 6.9%. Mill Hill is an area with some significant pockets of deprivation. 50% of households own their own house and 45% of families are in rented accommodation. The number of people in rented accommodation is 10% higher than the Blackburn average.

92% of Mill Hill residents were born in the UK and 94% have English as main language.

The area is predominately white (91%), significantly higher than the Blackburn with Darwen average of 70% white. Blackburn has a growing non-white population.

67% of people in Blackburn identify as Christian while the number having no religion has doubled in the last ten years. Other religions have become more present in the area over the last few years and the number identifying as Muslim has seen a rise of 20% in the last decade.

We are looking for a minister who, like our Lord, has a heart for the poor and insecure, and can show some of the most vulnerable in society the power of the gospel in transforming their lives.

Worship at St. George's

We currently have one service per week at 10.30am on a Sunday.

On the first Sunday of the month, it is traditional to celebrate Holy Communion. The service broadly follows the order of service in the Free Church of England Book of Common Prayer but there is an openness to using a more contemporary Anglican forms of worship (and this congregation trialled the modern language service for the Northern Diocese).

The second Sunday is a Family Service and Church Parade when the Uniformed Groups and leaders are expected to attend. Each month a different group participates in the service with a presentation, readings or special prayers.

The third and fourth Sunday follow a slightly amended version of Morning Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer. The service also includes the reading of a Psalm and the Gospel for the day by a member of the congregation, a quiet time for prayerful reflection and a member of the congregation often leads the prayers of intercession.

Should there be a fifth Sunday in the month, we often have a Songs of Praise service with special readings and hymns.

During the year, we also hold **special services** to mark significant events:

- Maundy Thursday Communion gathered 'round a table together like the Last Supper'
- Good Friday reflections with reading and special hymns
- The Harvest Festival with crowning of the harvest queen
- A very special and moving Remembrance Sunday service organised by the Uniformed Group leaders
- A Gift Service in December for children to gift their old toys to children less fortunate
- A very popular Carol Service with a local brass band
- A Crib Service on Christmas Eve.





Raising a glass on Easter Day!



Remembrance Sunday



Fun at the Crib Service



Our brass band Carol Service is always popular!

Numerically, we have a congregation in the mid-twenties for most services, with the exception of Church Parade where around seventy people attend. Both of these numbers have declined in recent times, particularly Church Parade attendance post-pandemic. We also lost a number of faithful congregants in recent years. We are now seeking to prayerfully grow our congregation.

Work with children and young people

St George's is a church with a great deal of potential when it comes to engaging children, young people and their families.

It is increasingly rare to have any children at our morning service, save the monthly Church Parade and Family Service but we are a church that has so many potential inroads into young families.

The Sunday School closed around the time of the pandemic and has not reopened. In its final incarnation, it was a monthly meeting, following the Café Church service, with activities in the style of a 'Messy Church'. It was attended by around fifteen children at this time. We are sure that, with the right volunteers and mission, Sunday School can be a vibrant part of our church again.

Our optimistic outlook on the potential for Christian children's work stems from the fact that we currently are home to eight Uniformed Groups: Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Explorers, Rainbows, Brownies and Guides. Over a hundred children attend a Uniformed organisation each week. The Scout group also have an activity centre near to the church which provides outdoor activities for children, including other Uniformed Groups, schools and community groups. This is run as a community venture and is independent of the church.

Just one group leader is a regular congregant at the current time but several group leaders have attended two or more services a month in the past. Church Parade is on the second Sunday in each month. Numbers have also struggled post-pandemic but the Sunday School Superintendent has visited the groups and spoken to the leaders. In May, for the first time since the pandemic, the group took part in the service and we have seen numbers of children attending start to climb.

Social Events

We hold several long-established social events each year which are important ways of raising money and reaching out to the community. The right minister will be able to use these events as a further opportunity to grow the church.

On Holy Saturday, we hold 'The Easter Breakfast' where families can come and have a cooked breakfast as they celebrate this most-significant time together. It forms part of our Easter marathon: Maundy Thursday Communion, Good Friday Reflections service, Breakfast and Easter Day celebration. Twice a year, the Scout group runs a 'Chocolate Bingo' to raise fund for their camps.

The November Sale is our Christmas Fair, where we usually raise well over £2000. The congregation and Uniformed Groups all work together to make this a happy event and a great success.

Until recently, we also had two groups that met regularly: the St. George's Book Club and the TLC Social Group. Both of these have not reopened post-pandemic.



Raising money for the work of St. George's at the November Sale



Christmas Chocolate Bingo



The Book Club

If you have a heart for the challenges of our community, a desire to help our congregation grow and develop in their faith and a passion for working with families, then God may be calling you to be our minister.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible based teaching and encouragement of further study of the Bible. • An understanding of the FCE. and commitment to hold fast its principles. • An interest in young people and fostering their involvement in church life. • Proactive in the various groups, encouraging a close relationship and participation in church life. • A vision and optimism for the future. • A commitment to pastoral care, with regular visiting to those in need. • Support and encouragement for participation in the services by members of the congregation. • To lead a democratic church council and be willing to listen to various ideas or points of view. • Good communication and inter-personal skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A knowledge of Technology and ability to use our equipment. • Whilst age is not important, we would welcome a younger person; perhaps with a family.



Dr Bob Stephen, General Secretary of the Free Church of England, said of St George's after his first visit to a service and to the Church Council:

"St. George's, Blackburn is an honest Christian community, seeking to be faithful to God and available to all in the locality. The congregation represent the community and are faithful in their support of the church. The church seeks to use the building as a gateway to the church by welcoming different community groups to avail themselves of the facilities. There is a sense of purpose and of fun when the people come together and an integrity in the worship and witness. There is much potential here."

**For an informal conversation with the Diocesan Bishop,
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**For an informal conversation with the General Secretary,
Tel: 07939 991 454
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For those wishing to arrange a visit to the Church prior to applying for the vacancy, please contact the General Secretary to arrange this.

For an Application Form, please contact the General Secretary.

For information about joining the Free Church of England or transferring your ministry to the Free Church of England, please refer to the Ministry Pathway section of the website (<https://fcofe.org.uk>) and then contact the Bishop.