



Parish Profile
Christ Church
The Lye and Stambermill



Contents

1. Our Vision	3
2. Who are we looking for?	4
3. What is our church like?	5
The regular congregation	5
Worship	6
Ministry Team.....	7
Mission	7
Groups and Activities	9
A Sending Church	10
Church Finances	11
4. Diocese of Worcester.....	11
5. Greater Dudley Deanery.....	13
6. The Lye and Stambermill Parish.....	14
The Vicarage	14
Schools.....	15
Transport Links and beyond	15
And last but not least	15



1. Our Vision

We aspire to be a vibrant Christian community, reaching out to our neighbours with the gospel of Jesus Christ; a community where all feel welcomed, valued and cared for, where all are able to be engaged and use the gifts God has given to them; a community whose members are growing in their knowledge of Christ and in Christian maturity; a community that is a blessing to those it serves.



2. Who are we looking for?

Someone who will:

- strengthen and grow our church, that we become more fruitful in worship, fellowship, church, outreach and service to the community
- develop and harness practical and spiritual gifts within the congregation
- engage more with the congregation, and new members especially, to enable all to grow deep roots, depend on Christ daily, and be able to share their faith in their daily lives
- engage sensitively and respectfully with those who hold different views, and be prepared to learn from them
- encourage all members to grow in the life of the church, actively participate, take on roles and engage within and beyond Sunday attendance – House Groups, Prayer Groups, PCC and the many other facets of our church
- thrive in the face of challenges of an idiosyncratic and fractured local population, some of whom claim the church as their heritage whilst neglecting or disowning its faith.

Someone who:

- is an able Bible preacher and teacher who communicates God's message clearly and faithfully

- subscribes to the Church of England Evangelical Council's Basis of Faith, including the two Additional Declarations on the lordship of Christ and on marriage and sexual intimacy
- has a heart for people, who listens as well as talks, and longs for all to know the love of God and grow into maturity in Christ
- is at ease with people from a variety of backgrounds and of different ages
- is a servant-leader after the example of Jesus: firm and clear in their leadership, yet humble and open to discussion; an enabler, a reconciler.



3. What is our church like?

We are a conservative evangelical church; the PCC agrees with the CEEC Doctrinal Statement as a basis of faith. We believe the Word of God as revealed in the Bible. We have developed an outward looking, caring ethos, opening the door to the incoming Roma community, and welcoming a broad range of people into the church. We care also for the needs of our members and rally round any who need support, practically, financially, spiritually. The congregation generally are at ease with women in positions of leadership, but some would struggle, on theological grounds, with a female incumbent.

The regular congregation

From about 60 active members, our Sunday morning service gathers around thirty-five

adults and a few children. We are a diverse group, varied in age, ethnicity, income and education. Many live outside the parish, but more recently new members have come from the immediate area. Our church is what unites us.



Worship

The morning services are led by a team of four in rotation. Our services follow the CofE liturgy, with songs led by the music group, and the word read and preached from the Bible. Prayers are usually led by members of the congregation, and there is often a time for sharing of needs, celebrations, and the work of God in our lives. Usually, we have a children's group looking at the sermon content in an adapted way, reuniting with the main church for communion with their families. Our morning service is live-streamed via our [Facebook](#) page, something we started during lockdown which continues to be appreciated by any who cannot attend.

Our evening service is small and informal, meeting in the church hall, and open to questions and discussion following the sermon, with fewer songs and no music group.

We also hold a short service on Friday lunchtimes, linking to our Open Door drop in coffee morning, led by the Ministry Team.

Weddings and funerals are few, but more frequent are baptisms (including full immersion) and dedications.

Exploiting our High Street location, in the summer we have started holding some services outside on the church lawn, leading up to a week of mission to the local community.





Ministry Team

You will work closely with and be supported by a well established team including:

Chris Kent - Self-Supporting Associate Priest

Graham Dyer - Licensed Lay Minister / Reader

Doug and Sylvia McLean - Authorised Lay Ministers for Worship Leading

Rachel Prosser - Administrator / Secretary

Mark Kent – Music Group Leader

Paul Newton – Occasional Service Leader

Mission



We wholeheartedly believe in mission, overseas and at home. A group from the church has twice visited Moldova to foster links with a church we support in Vişneovca.



At home, we have witnessed to our own community through Summer Missions, holding outdoor services and organising activities in and around the Church.

We give ongoing financial and prayer support to a range of missionaries and organisations, particularly those we have a close or personal relationship with. In 2023 we supported the following organisations with a combined total of £6,412:

- Operation Mobilisation - Moldova – Ettiene & Anita van der Merwe and Christina Bodarev
- SIM UK - Malawi – Megumi and Helen Fazackerley
- Open Doors – Supporting persecuted Christians worldwide.
- British Youth for Christ – Jon Sewell
- Wycliffe UK – Paul Newton

Groups and Activities

For many, Sunday worship is only a part of what it means to be a member of Christ Church. Throughout the week church members are engaged in outreach and care, Bible study and prayer (often over Zoom), worship, and social activities. Our building is also used by external organisations engaged in community care (e.g. CAB and ESOL classes), a Zimbabwean and a Roma church.



We are exploring how we can partner with [Redeeming our Communities](#) to extend God's love to our community beyond the bounds of traditional church worship. In October 2023 we hosted the [Lye ROC Conversation](#) which brought council, government, police and charity organisations together working for the common goal of improving the community. Out of this there has been a recent appointment of a part time christian ROC Action Group leader to be based at our church.





We run activities in and around the church for all ages, giving opportunities to learn more about Jesus. Activities have included outdoor cafe, parent & toddler group, men's club, Christian-Muslim dialogue groups (men's and women's), prayer table, Christian book table, litter pick, Christian film night and painting exhibitions. We also support the local food bank, operate our own clothes bank, and run a Warm Place.



A Sending Church

For many years Christ Church has supported and encouraged those who have felt God calling them to ordained or lay ministry, resulting in members of the congregation being ordained as priests in the Church of England, others being licensed as Lay Readers (LLM) and yet others as Authorised Lay ministers (ALM). These have numbered around eighteen people since 1980.

Church Finances

Christ Church is currently in a healthy financial position with an unrestricted General Fund balance of approximately £37,000 at the end of December 2023.

We have paid our requested Ministry Share to the Diocesan Board of Finance in full every year for over 20 years.

We have over 30 regular planned givers of which 25 are Tax Efficient (i.e. Gift Aided), currently producing a regular monthly income of approximately £5,000.

We have also benefitted from some large Tax Efficient individual donations over the past few years, which have helped achieve the unrestricted balance above.

Our total Income in 2023 was approximately £97,000 and our total Expenditure £90,000.

We have donated a total of £9,562 towards Home and Overseas Missionary Societies, Relief Organisations, and other Charity Organisations in 2023, including OM Moldova, SIM UK Malawi, Open Doors, British Youth for Christ and Wycliffe UK Bible Translations, Tear Fund, Christian Aid and Stourbridge Debt Advice Centre.

We believe that if we are acting in God's will, He will provide the necessary financial resources to accomplish our endeavours.

Annual accounts can be accessed from the Charity Commission website by entering charity number 1134648.

4. Diocese of Worcester

[The Diocese of Worcester](#) covers an area of 671 square miles and includes parishes in Worcestershire, the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley, and a few parishes in northern Gloucestershire, south-east Wolverhampton and Sandwell. It has around 170 parishes and 280 church buildings, together with 100 church schools. The diocese is divided into two archdeaconries, with six deaneries.

Our diocesan vision is to grow as kingdom people, sharing the good news of Jesus' love in Worcestershire and Dudley. As the body of Christ, we join together to worship God creatively, make disciples, share hope, and transform communities as we live out values of love, compassion, justice and freedom to bring about the kingdom of God on earth.



Priorities 2023 – 2030

Over the next few years, we aim to:

- **Double** the number of children and young people worshipping in our churches.
- Create **100 new worshipping communities** offering a range of ways for people to come to faith and worship God. (eg Forest Church / Café Church / Walking Church).
- **Invest in the renewal** of around a dozen churches to ensure that each major area of population has at least one church with 150 people attending weekly, enabling them to support other local churches.
- Underpin these by investing in our clergy and lay leaders, providing **training and development** opportunities to enable them to grow and feel supported and equipped for mission.

[Download a pdf summary](#) of our priorities along with the different ways your parish can get involved.

[Download a pdf](#) of our full diocesan transformation strategy

One size doesn't fit all - we want to strengthen local churches and encourage and resource them to explore what it might mean to grow in health and sustainability in their context as they worship God, make disciples, share hope, and transform communities.

We share a vision for a church which enables its people to be:

- Deeply rooted in prayer and study of the scriptures
- Renewed and transformed by regular worship
- Equipped to witness to the gospel of love, compassion, justice and freedom
- Dedicated to helping children, young people and young adults to belong and be nurtured in faith
- Devoted to growing deeply in discipleship, offering our time and talents and money to God
- Resourced and released to minister to others
- Ready to engage with and serve our community
- Committed to making our buildings fit for purpose as a spiritual and community resource.

5. Greater Dudley Deanery

The [Greater Dudley Deanery](#) was formed during a diocesan reorganisation in 2021. The Deanery covers the whole of the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley along with a handful of parishes in Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Worcestershire. This makes the deanery relatively large nationally, and the largest by population in the diocese. The benefit of a larger deanery is the greater opportunity for team working between clergy and churches, and for drawing suitably significant groups together for training.

The Deanery is led by a Deanery Leadership Team (DLT) which includes an Area Dean, two Sub-Deans, and up to five lay members. The DLT guides the agenda for the Deanery Synod, and represents the deanery at certain diocesan meetings.

The expectation is that Deanery Synod acts as a focus and stimulus for parishes to deliver the mission priorities of the diocese. Deanery Synod meetings serve as a place of mutual support, encouragement and challenge to lift individual churches beyond the parochial and broaden understandings of mission. Increasingly churches work together, sharing resources and opening up new opportunities for mission.

The Deanery Chapter, of over 30 licensed ministers, is primarily a place of mutual support and encouragement, as well as a place to discuss matters of business. The Chapter meets every 4/5 weeks over lunch, and meetings are well attended.

The DLT works closely with the Diocesan training department to provide training for clergy and laity at all levels of ministry.

The task of growing healthy and sustainable churches in the Greater Dudley Deanery is challenging. Through good, collaborative working within and between parishes, between clergy and laity, and between Deanery and Diocese, along with a great deal of prayer, we face the challenge and celebrate together as God's Kingdom grows.





6. The Lye and Stambermill Parish

From Wikipedia:

Bentley's History, Guide and Classified Directory of Stourbridge of 1841, describes the district of Lye and Lye Waste as "almost one continued series of humble dwellings and workshops interspersed at intervals with others of a more respectable appearance".

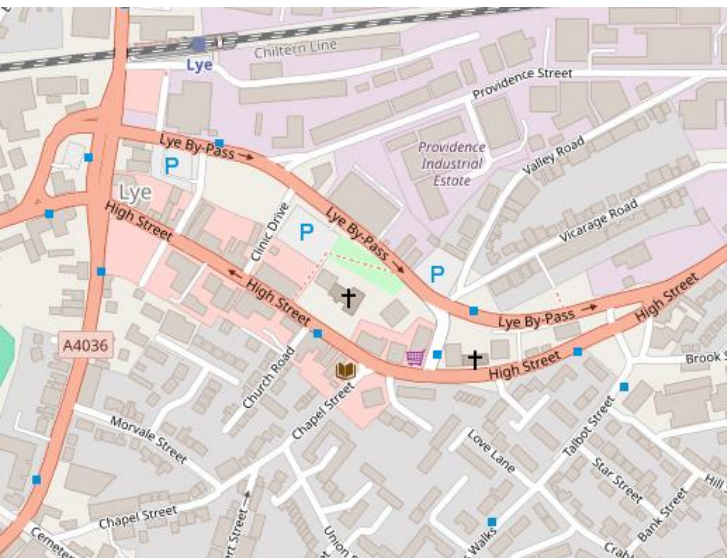
I suspect Bentley would still recognise the humble aspect of Lye today. It is not a prosperous area. [The Church Urban Fund](#) ranks our parish as among the most deprived in the country. The High Street, where Christ Church is prominently situated, has suffered a decline in the long-established restaurants and independent shops it once supported.

Lye has long hosted a diverse ethnic population characterised by immigration, most recently with the arrival of an inter-related Roma diaspora. Whilst resentments have arisen, pride in the local area has also flourished recently,



most evident in the weekly High Street litter picks organised and well attended by local traders and inhabitants.

Whilst the Roma people are largely Christian in affiliation, Lye is also host to earlier Muslim Asian immigration, now actively supporting three mosques and running local shops and curry houses.



The Vicarage

The Vicarage is next door to the church, sharing the same driveway entrance from Lye High Street. The house is modern and purpose built, with a study room to receive callers privately from the main accommodation. It has its own garden to the rear and a vegetable plot to the front, a garage and parking for more cars. Solar roof panels were installed recently, together with an electric car charge point. The Vicarage is centrally heated, has four bedrooms, a large kitchen with separate utility room, dining room, a lounge opening to the back garden, toilets on both floors and an upstairs bathroom. It is being refurbished during the vacancy.

Schools

There are no Church of England schools in our parish, but Cradley C of E and Oldswinford C of E primary schools are possibilities outside the parish. There are no secondary C of E schools nearby. The previous incumbent's children both went to a local primary school. One went on to an Independent school in Birmingham and the other to a local secondary. Both went on to graduate from major UK universities. There is also a network of Christian parents who home-school. Stourbridge is home to the well regarded sixth form King Edward VI College.



Transport Links and beyond

Lye train station (for trains to Birmingham, Worcester and beyond) is in walking distance, and Birmingham and Stourbridge can also be reached by bus. The area is convenient for the M5, M6, M40 and M42. Previous generations have left us an extensive network of canals.

The countryside is nearby; the Clent Hills are a short cycle ride away, the Malvern Hills (area of outstanding natural beauty) a little further.

Lye High Street still offers a choice of curry houses, takeaways, and a Fish & Chips, whilst local grocery shops cater to traditional British as well as Asian tastes. A new Aldi supermarket is within about a ten-minute walk. The doctor's surgery and two pharmacies, an independent hardware shop and a Post Office are on the doorstep.

A short drive takes you to Merry Hill, a major shopping centre, with two supermarkets (Asda and Lidl) all the major shops one would expect – Marks & Spencer, Primark, Clarks, Regatta, The Range, Currys, Halfords and many more. There is also a cinema and bowling alley.

And last but not least

As our illustrations show, our High Street church is a combination of a traditional exterior and modern interior. Our meeting rooms are of various sizes, including a foyer, office, coffee bar/hall, equipped kitchen and several group-sized rooms. The versatile building also has a modernised and adaptable nave and sanctuary which benefits from having no pillars, leaving a large uninterrupted carpeted floor space with individual chairs. With such potential we would like to see even more use made of our premises for both in-house and external organisations' own ministry and development.

