



**The United Benefice of St Mary the Virgin and St John the Baptist,
Bathwick, Bath**

November 2012

Table of Contents

About us	3
Who are we?	3
What are we?	4
Where are we going?	4
Who do we want to lead us there?	4
The role of Eucharistic worship in our discipleship vision	5
Around the Benefice	7
Bathwick St Mary VA School	8
The Diocese, the Deanery, the Benefice and the Parishes	9
St Mary the Virgin Church	10
St John the Baptist Church	14
Our new priest	18
Person profile	18
Pastoral Support	19
The Rectory	19
Useful Links	20

Table of Images

St Mary's Junior Church during their Good Friday service.....	3
Tucking into a bring and share meal after St John's 150th celebrations.....	4
One of the many stained glass windows in St John's church.....	5
St Mary's Junior Church during a Sunday morning service.....	6
Bathwick St Mary's VA Primary School	8
St Mary the Virgin church.....	10
St Mary's Nave Altar, with Christmas crib beneath.....	11
There's always time for a cup of tea!.....	12
St John the Baptist church.....	14
A small part of the baptistry floor mosaic in St John's church.....	14
The main nave and Rood screed inside St John's.....	16
Operation Christmas Child packing shoeboxes in St John's.....	17
The front of Bathwick Rectory	19

About us

The Bathwick benefice consists of two Anglo Catholic parishes seeking to spread the good news of Jesus Christ and His kingdom in a traditional way in the 21st century.

In August 2012 the PCCs met together and were challenged to answer four questions in the hope that this would guide us towards a better understanding of ourselves and the kind of priest that we are looking for.

There was a wide variety of answers; here is a selection:

Who are we?

- We come from a broad socio-economic spectrum of society, with a mixture of ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- We are two individual but closely linked parishes each with their own ethos and community.
- We support a variety of charities through regular giving each week and special fundraising. Our charities range from local organisations to international groups in Zambia and Goa.
- We are a widespread community with many travelling from outside the benefice to get here as well as having a strong parish membership.
- We have a flourishing Junior Church and we enjoy a strong relationship with the local church school, Bathwick St. Mary's Primary School.
- We have a good relationship with the Russian Orthodox Church that meets in St John's church each month and with Operation Christmas Child that run their regional hub operation from St John's each November.
- We are a lively and sociable group with many social events during the year, and have a reputation for some fantastic bring and share buffets!



What are we?

- We are Anglo Catholic, supporting the See of Ebbsfleet, Walsingham and Glastonbury Pilgrimages. St John's also supports Forward in Faith.
- We are Eucharistically centred, with the Sacrament reserved in both churches.
- Music is central to our worship, with a strong choral tradition. The choir is regularly invited to sing at community events and major services. They also have an international tour most years.
- We support four care homes in the benefice with regular communion services.

Where are we going?

- We actively encourage and embrace change, through evolution rather than revolution.
- We want to expand our worship opportunities to enable more people to join us, particularly the challenge of encouraging more young people at both churches.
- We enjoy our traditional style of worship, but want to find more opportunities for including others.
- We want to extend our work within the community, with better links to the nearby university, prayer and study groups, lunch clubs and stronger ties amongst our own parishes.
- We want to encourage and develop lay ministry, supporting and complementing the work of our priests.



Who do we want to lead us there?

- A priest who will demonstrate and foster the joy of Christian fellowship.
- Someone to expand our links with education and the local community.
- A person who will take an active part in the wider church in Bath.
- A good teacher, listener, leader and friend.
- Somebody willing to encourage our musical traditions.
- A good sense of humour is also useful!

The role of Eucharistic worship in our discipleship vision

At a time when Christian witness is ever more important in modern society, and change and uncertainty in people's lives is accelerating, the church universal can be a haven for those in need.

Love, friendship, consistency and a listening ear together with prayerful support can be offered by all Christian people to those in need whether they are homeless, jobless or a troubled neighbour.



Our parishes offer regular worship through the Eucharist. The words of the Liturgy which are used on a regular basis become familiar and often comforting. For just as hymns and songs sung on a Sunday repeat themselves and can be heard over again in one's head during the week, so too do liturgical words. They become a comforting mantra in times of need. Words such as "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again" have such relevant meaning for today and we need reminding of these very regularly. This happens through frequent participation in the Eucharist.

Christ died, taking upon himself "the sins of the world", so that our misdeeds, wrongdoings and wrong choices could be taken away from us. We understand that we are forgiven, our slate is wiped clean and we can start a new page of our lives.

Christ is risen, so giving us the confidence to know that evil does not and will not ultimately dominate or conquer.

Christ will come again gives us the promise and hope for the future especially when we might be uncertain or unclear about what will happen.

Worshipping together in such a way enables us to become one large family, uniting and strengthening us for our witness in the world. Young and old come together before the Lord where we are all one in His sight as we participate and share in the breaking of the bread and the pouring of the wine. This is not an exclusive invitation – everybody is encouraged to come to the communion rail for communion or for a blessing.

The termly Eucharist held at Bathwick St Mary Primary School exposes young people to a situation which has often never been experienced before and is held in a non-threatening environment. In a similar way our Parent and Toddler group and Junior Church provide a welcome for young families. Numerous children have begun their Christian pilgrimage through these services.

We try to live out our faith through our daily lives, and we pray that those with whom we come into contact may be touched by the love of God.



Around the Benefice

Bathwick is situated south of the River Avon, within the beautiful Georgian city of Bath. Bath has been designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site and has been a tourist destination since Roman times. It is famous for its hot springs and subsequent spas, and their most recent incarnation is the modern Thermae Bath Spa complex. The city is just over 100 miles west of London and is easily reached on the M4 by road or from London Paddington by rail. Famous for its history (Roman and Georgian in particular), Bath is also a thriving modern city. It offers an enviable lifestyle, and its calendar is filled with festivals and theatrical, musical and sporting events. The compact city centre is full of architectural gems and a wide variety of shops, with many independent specialist boutiques alongside the big-name stores. There is also a wide variety of eating and drinking establishments to suit all tastes, and there is an obvious emphasis on local produce (Bath was the first place in Britain to open a Farmers' Market).

Bathwick is largely residential although it includes a number of businesses, two small shopping parades, a museum and several pubs. The housing consists of detached and terraced Georgian houses, a few low rise apartment blocks, 19th and 20th century housing estates and some more modern infill. The benefice and city provide a home for a large student population. The population of the area is approximately 5,000, although this will expand when the Ministry of Defence site is redeveloped for housing in the next few years. There is little unemployment in the benefice and the work is largely professional. In recent years the number of younger families has greatly increased making a fairly evenly balanced population in age.

Bathwick has two fine parks in the form of Sydney Gardens and Henrietta Park. The recently refurbished Holburne Museum sits at the west end of Sydney Gardens. The Bath Spa hotel and several smaller hotels and guest houses attract visitors to the benefice throughout the year. There are four residential/nursing homes where a service of Holy Communion is held monthly. These services are often taken by our team of Readers. Bath supports two universities and one of them, the University of Bath, is just outside the benefice at the top of Bathwick Hill. 2,200 students live on campus with many more living across the city. In particular there is post graduate accommodation adjacent to St Mary's. King Edward's Independent School is also within the benefice.

The Argyll United Reformed Church, Bethel Baptist Chapel and the Metropolitan Church are within the benefice. The St John of Kronstadt Russian Orthodox church meets at St John's each month. Ecumenical fellowship is encouraged with these and other churches nearby through the work of the Bath Churches Together group.

Bathwick St Mary VA School

We have strong links with Bathwick St Mary VA Primary School, which has been in the benefice since Victorian times. The current school was built in 1986, has 225 pupils and is well known for its high level of achievement. The governing body consists of 14 members, 8 of whom are Foundation Governors appointed by St Mary's PCC. Our priest is an ex-officio Foundation Governor and has traditionally taken an active role in the life of the school. Members of St. Mary's congregation are also actively involved with the school - one is currently the Chair of Governors. Our priest has been welcomed to lead collective worship on a regular basis and a termly Eucharist at the school for years 4 to 6. End of term services are held at St. Mary's for the whole school and some pupils participate in the annual Education service.



The Diocese, the Deanery, the Benefice and the Parishes

We are in the Diocese of Bath and Wells and additionally enjoy the oversight of the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. The Diocese has a lively link to the Church in Zambia. The Bathwick benefice has links to the churches in Buchi in the Northern Diocese of Zambia and supports them financially and in our prayers.

We are part of the Bath Deanery. Until recent reorganisation Bath was the largest Deanery in the country and is still larger than many dioceses. All types of churchmanship are represented in the Deanery although St Mary's and St John's are the only remaining Catholic parishes. Our Archdeacon and Rural Dean encourage us to participate fully in the work of the Deanery and Diocese. "We really need the Anglo-Catholic perspective represented". The Deanery Plan, recently formulated, focuses on Discipleship. The Deanery Vision Statement is:

Everyone a disciple, everyone a disciple maker, every church a discipleship community, everywhere a discipleship invitation.

As we said in page three, we are two parishes working together to spread the message of the Gospel. Whilst we have many connections we are two separate identities, with two PCCs, two buildings with two congregations and for 150 years, two separate histories. We maintain our own separate Sunday morning services with all other services shared between the churches and attended by members of both parishes. Weekday masses and Sunday Evensong are shared between the two churches. Other major festivals are also shared, for example the Maundy Thursday Service is held in St Mary's and the Easter Vigil in St John's.

We have a joint meeting of the PCCs annually, preceded by a Mass – and of course we have had met regularly to formulate our profile! The Walsingham Cell draws members from both churches as does the annual Walsingham Pilgrimage. In recent years joint pilgrimages have been to Rome, Assisi, Turkey and the Holy Land. We regularly meet socially for events such as Harvest suppers, quiz nights and fundraising.

The descriptions which follow are therefore those of the individual parishes which comprise the Joint Benefice.

St Mary the Virgin Church

Our Mission Statement

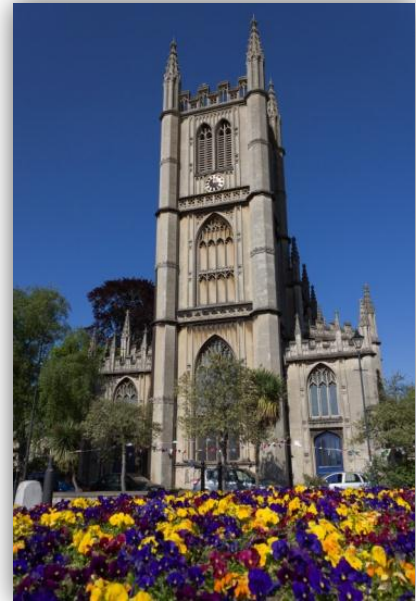
By God's grace and mindful of our heritage we aim to extend the Community of Faith where God is glorified and the Good News of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and lived.

Church

There has been a church in Bathwick for over 1000 years. The present galleried building was designed by the noted architect John Pinch and built in 1820. It was then west facing, with a three decker pulpit. With the Oxford movement St Mary's became drawn to the ways of the Anglo-Catholic tradition in which it has remained, and a fine new chancel and sanctuary by G S Street was built in 1875, the pews having been turned eastward! The building is listed Grade 2* and is considered an excellent example of Neo-Gothic style. There is seating now for some 600, although a fair proportion of this comprises the gallery which is only used about 6 times a year. The front pews have been removed in stages over the years, most recently to allow for a full width raised stone floor able to accommodate a movable platform enabling westward celebration of the Eucharist. This platform has proved effective for school services, presentations and public lectures.

There is a peal of 10 bells with a competent and enthusiastic band of ringers who have won a number of championships. The bells are rung for the Sunday service and other special occasions, as well as their weekly practice.

Adjoining the church is a hall complex with vestries, kitchen and lavatories as well as an office which serves both parishes. There is disabled access to both the church and hall.



Services, Churchmanship and Ethos

St Mary's has a strong spiritual attachment to the Catholic tradition, but we like to think of ourselves as a broad, tolerant and inclusive church. We are a church serving the parish and a proportion of the congregation are more middle way. The Eucharist is celebrated most days of the week and Morning and Evening Prayer takes place daily.

The main service is Sunday's Sung Eucharist, usually Common Worship based, with a range of traditional and modern settings. Vestments are worn and the celebrant is assisted at the altar by a team of Servers and Readers. Incense is used in procession and in the Eucharist. The New English Hymnal is used, supplemented by hymns and songs from other sources. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in a tabernacle in the Lady Chapel and the Holy Oils are reserved. Confessions are heard. There are between 90 and 120 communicants (Easter day 150). A thriving Junior Church, some 45 strong, brings joy and vitality to our services. The Junior Church joins the main 10.30 Mass as far as the Gloria, then leaves for their own activities in the hall, to return to the main service at the Offertory. As a next step from Junior Church we are setting up a group for children aged 8-12. The Diocesan Fund for Growth has made financial provision for a part time youth worker but so far we have been unable to find the appropriate person. In the meantime a group convenes once a fortnight during Sunday worship as well as the occasional activity such as a disco.

An adult choir some 20 strong is led by a highly talented Director of Music, and are accompanied by a very fine Father Willis organ. The choir is well known locally for its role in supporting services.



Community and Youth Outreach

St. Mary's is very much in the centre of the community and the hall is used on a very regular basis. During term time the after school club, Skoolkidz, meets in the afternoon. Jo Jingles, a pre-school music group, meets on two mornings and U3A art group meet on another.

Our own Parent and Toddler Group meets on two mornings a week throughout the year. This group is very successful and from it there have been many baptisms and confirmations. Although the group is autonomous it works closely with members of the congregation. Over the years it has been a meeting point for many new arrivals in the parish and from further afield. The parents hold several activities during the year and raise money for the church and charities.

Congregation

Like most of the churches in Bath Deanery St Mary's has an eclectic congregation - some 40% of the 167 on the electoral roll living outside the benefice. In recent years the congregation attendance from within the parish has increased. The age of the congregation covers a wide range from the elderly to families with young children.

In 2011 there were 15 Baptisms, 3 Marriages and 9 funerals.



Walsingham Cell

This group of faithful people meet on a monthly basis for prayer and fellowship at either St. John's or St. Mary's. An annual pilgrimage is made to Walsingham.

The Soup Run

Teams from St. Mary's and neighbouring Widcombe parish use the kitchen for preparing soup and sandwiches for the homeless as part of the Bath Central Churches outreach.

The Environment

As a church we are trying to be as aware as possible of environmental issues and to use Fair Trade goods wherever possible. We are a certified Fair Trade church and run a Fair Trade stall in church after services.

Fabric and Finance

The last quinquennial inspection reported that the fabric was in good condition and there was no immediate cause for concern. A "Restoration Action Group" (RAG) has been successfully raising funds towards maintaining the fabric and the facilities and a new and improved PA system has recently been installed. This will be followed by redecoration, relighting and the overhaul of the organ.

Overall the finances are in sound condition. The Parish Share is paid in full. Sunday alms are divided between the PCC and a number of charities. Substantial sums are sent to our link parish in Zambia. There is a maintenance trust of which the Rector and Churchwardens are the trustees.

Cemetery

The parish possesses a cemetery at Smallcombe which, since its closure in the 1980s, has been maintained by the Local Authority. The original St Mary's Churchyard, near St John's, is also maintained by the Local Authority, with the active involvement of St. Mary's Churchyard Trust.

St John the Baptist Church

Our Parish Prayer

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. We praise you for calling us to be your people, your beloved sons and daughters.

Guide us as we try to follow Jesus. Help us to hear your word and praise you in our worship and in our lives. May your Holy Spirit deepen our love for you, and teach us to love and serve you by loving and serving all your children, especially those in need.

Bless our work and our prayer, and grant that our lives may give you glory through our words, our witness and our worship. We give you praise, Father, through Jesus Christ our brother and Lord, in union with the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Buildings

The parish was once part of a wider Bathwick parish that was separated into two parishes. St John's church was built in 1861 as a place for the "labouring classes" to worship, and as such was the first church in the city to have no pew rents. The church rapidly filled and was greatly extended in 1871 by the addition of the main nave and sanctuary, with a baptistry being added in 1879. The Sacrament was first reserved around 1900 and the church has been a beacon of the Catholic faith ever since.

St John's has a number of features that make it a particularly beautiful church:

- Wall paintings of the Stations of the Cross, which are copies of those found in Antwerp Cathedral.
- Rood screen Calvary figures with attendant figures of St John the Evangelist and the Virgin Mary. Later figures of St John the Baptist and the Virgin and Child adorn the front of the screen.
- Ornate mosaics on floors of the High Altar, Lady Chapel and baptistry and a mosaic of the Nativity above the High Altar, designed and laid by the studios of Salviati.
- A painted reredos in the Lady Chapel.
- Stained glass in all windows.



There are additionally 3 vestries, 2 on the south side and 1 on the north. The church is a Grade 2 listed building.

The most recent quinquennial survey highlighted the need for repairs to the main roof and windows. Part of the work on the roof has been completed including re-slating of the east end and above the sanctuary and choir. Extensive internal ceiling repairs and decoration was carried out in 2007.

The church hall next door has recently been refurbished and the hall is capable of comfortably seating around 70 for a meal or meeting, along with a well-furnished kitchen, toilets and wireless Internet access. The refurbishments included new double glazed windows and heating as well as full redecoration. The hall is used regularly during the week by a variety of outside groups, including music, fitness and community social organisations.

Externally the church has a garden area and graveyard (now closed), as well as parking for about 12 cars.

Church services

Services are held weekly on a Sunday and Thursday in the Lady Chapel. Major festival and saint's day services are held jointly either at St John's or nearby St Mary's. Major services at St John's are held at the High Altar supported by Servers and a choir.

Regular services include the following:

Sunday

09:00 Sung Mass with hymns and sermon. The service follows a traditional rite with some modern alternatives and with hymns and responses. The priest is supported by Servers and Readers, vestments are worn and incense is used every week.

Average attendance – 30.

17:00 Walsingham cell meeting (monthly).

18:00 Evensong and Benediction (Fortnightly). Average attendance – 10.

Thursday

10:30 Said mass. Average attendance – 10.

Major services are held during the year to celebrate and commemorate feasts and festivals. These include Ash Wednesday liturgy, Good Friday liturgy, Easter vigil, Corpus Christi (with procession of the sacrament), Harvest, Advent carol service and Christmas Vigil. Other feasts are held within the benefice at St Mary's church.

Congregation

St John's has a long Catholic tradition, and in the past has lost a big proportion of its members to the Roman Catholic and Ordinariate churches. This has greatly reduced our numbers, but it is pleasing to see that our numbers are now growing again by the addition of new members from outside of the parish. We are almost exclusively an adult congregation, joined occasionally by young family members, and many of us are retired.

Most members of St John's congregation do not live within the parish boundaries and many travel a long way to join us. St John's, along with St Mary's, is one of the last Anglo-Catholic churches in the area and this draws people to join us from outlying areas.

Church officers, office, admin, expenses

St John's maintains a full PCC which meets regularly every 2 months throughout the year to discuss all major parish business. St John's pays a share of the running costs for the joint parish office, which is located at St Mary's. The office handles most of the administrative running of the parish including requests for baptisms, banns and weddings, funerals and also hall and church hire.



Parish links

St John's enjoys strong links with the local community. Mid-week communion services are held within nursing homes around the parish and we support city ecumenical events. We share our building with the parish of St John of Kronstadt Russian Orthodox church. The Orthodox community meet once a month in the church and afterwards for a meal in the hall. We also offer our buildings for three weeks every year to Operation Christmas Child. They use St John's as their regional hub in Bath for collecting and sorting shoe boxes before they are sent as Christmas gifts for children in deprived areas of the world.

Finances

St John's continues to pay all bills in full each year, including the parish share which is paid early in the year. A modest level of savings and investment is available should the parish require additional capital.



Our new priest

Person profile

We are seeking a forward looking priest of integrity and prayer, a teacher able and prepared to explain, to preach and to challenge our faith.

We want this person to continue our Anglo-Catholic churchmanship and be sympathetic to our strong musical tradition. We hope for a priest who is energetic and approachable and able to work among young people. We would prefer somebody with the calibre needed to be a training priest as the benefice has previously been inspired by the variety of teaching that this brings. We also look for somebody who will enjoy this role both within the churches and in Bathwick St Mary Primary School.

We believe that an ideal candidate would be an Anglo-Catholic priest who can:

- Strengthen and enhance our understanding of the scriptures.
- Actively encourage church growth, particularly from families and younger adults.
- Support our membership of Anglo-Catholic organisations such as Church Union and Forward in Faith, and continue our links with the Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham.
- Appreciate and promote our musical traditions through participation.
- Be visible around the benefice and wider community, maintaining existing links and nurturing new connections.
- Be willing to visit members of the congregation in their homes, understanding that many do not live within the benefice.
- Encourage the benefice to embrace a modern style of Catholic worship without losing sight of our traditional past.
- Support the PCCs in their work to maintain our beautiful buildings.
- Remain within the traditional diocesan structure whilst upholding our support of the See of Ebbsfleet.

The PCCs of both parishes have discussed and passed resolutions A and B relating to the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure, and the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 (Resolution C). We have petitioned for episcopal oversight from the Bishop of

Ebbsfleet and enjoy his support during the year. Both churches are members of the Church Union and St John's is a Forward in Faith parish.

Pastoral Support

Bathwick currently supports four trained Readers, plus a further Reader in training. We are fortunate to enjoy the support of three retired clergy who assist with services and other ministries. We also have a team of lay Eucharistic ministers who support each service as well as Servers at both parishes. Members of the congregation are involved in readings, prayers and as sides-people in both parishes.

A benefice Administrator is available two mornings a week and is the primary contact for bookings of halls at both churches, requests for services and general enquiries. She is supported by a team who print service sheets weekly and the benefice magazine each month.

The Rectory

The rectory is an attractive, late 1930's 5 bedroom semi-detached house built in Bath stone. It comes with a garage and driveway parking, as well as secluded front and rear gardens. It is located in a quiet street of similar houses and yet only about ten minutes walk from both churches. The rectory is within the catchment area for Bathwick St Mary VA Primary School which is about 5 minutes away on foot.



Useful Links

Diocese of Bath and Wells

<http://www.bathandwells.org.uk>

The See of Ebbsfleet

<http://www.ebbsfleet.org.uk>

Bath Deanery

<http://www.bathdeanery.org>

Bathwick Benefice

<http://www.bathwickparishes.org>

Bathwick St Mary C of E Primary School

<http://www.bathwick-st-mary.net>