The Church of England in Dudley

Vicar in Team
with special responsibility for
St Francis, Dudley
&
St James, Eve Hill

www.cofedudley.org.uk
Dudley

Dudley; the Place and the People

Set at the heart of the Black Country, Dudley has a rich heritage. Alongside its historic castle there is Dudley Zoo and the Black Country Living Museum; the latter keeping alive the contribution towns like Dudley made to the industrial revolution. Today there remain various light industries around the town and there are attempts to stimulate tourism in the town centre area. The retail centre at Merry Hill is another significant source of local employment (on the site of the former steel works).

In 1974, the town amalgamated with Stourbridge and Halesowen to form the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley. Most of the Council’s offices, including the Council Chamber, remain in Dudley town centre. Overall, the borough has a population in excess of 300,000 and is bounded by Birmingham to the east and Wolverhampton and the rest of the Black Country to the north. The Dudley Team Ministry is comprised in all of 5 parishes with a population of 25,600 in an area of approximately 3 square miles. Two other parishes – St Edmund’s and St John’s – are not currently within the team but are part of the existing Group Ministry. The area includes UPA inner urban and estate settings alongside more mixed residential areas. These estates are around Dudley town centre which is the main shopping area. However many retailers are located at the Merry Hill shopping centre on the southern edge of the Group area towards Brierley Hill.

The nearest main line stations are at Cradley Heath and Dudley Port with inter-city services from Wolverhampton and Sandwell & Dudley. There are frequent bus services between the town and Birmingham (e.g. 126), Wolverhampton (No. 1), etc.. We are 4 miles from the M5 (Junction 2) with links to the M6 and M42.

Dudley’s demographic profile is broadly comparable to the national census data (2011) though with slightly more young people as a percentage of population. Approximately 20% of the population is from ethnic minorities and the town is multi-faith, with mosques, gurdwaras and temples alongside churches. There is an established interfaith network for the borough and many of the churches participate. Most parishes lie within the target area of Black Country Near Neighbours for developing interfaith relations.

In all there are 10 primary schools across the Group area (two CE VA schools) and two secondaries (11-16) (one VA, one academy status) plus one special school. Dudley College (F.E.) has expanded recently into new premises in the town centre and with it a new centre for sixth form teaching. The local hospital at Russell's Hall, just outside the Group area, has its own chaplaincy team. Civic links are present, especially for St Thomas & St Luke in the town centre.
The Churches

St Francis, Dudley

St Francis Church is 82 years old and serves an area largely made up of two housing estates where there are pockets of deprivation. Part of the estate was demolished some years ago and is being replaced, phase by phase, by a new housing development, Friar’s Gate. The Priory and Wren’s Nest Estates are close knit communities, with a strong loyalty to St Francis for the occasional offices, even though Church attendance amongst locals is not high.

The church has tended in the past to be modern catholic in style and much of this remains. Regular memorial services and all-age services are the main ways in which worship connects with the community. There is one main act of worship on Sundays, and average attendance is around 45. There is also provision for children on Sundays with a Sunday school. There is a regular communion service on Wednesday mornings, which is usually well attended.

Baptisms usually take place in the afternoons, with the family attending one preparation session, a ‘First Taste’ church service, and a ‘Welcome’ church service.

St Francis has an exchange link with Auferstehungsgemeinde Church (Church of the Resurrection), Bremen in Germany which is now in its 28th year with visits every year between the respective churches. With other churches in Dudley, St Francis is also associated with local Food Bank.

The site is complex, having an adjoining Parish Centre, which is a suite of rooms utilised by many community groups. This also includes a fine community café that is open to the public on weekdays from 9.15am – 2pm serving traditional light meals and snacks. The café is well supported and offers work experience to co-workers who have learning difficulties. The Parish Centre has its own management committee with representation from the PCC.

Apart from the café and rooms in the Parish Centre, there is also a Church Hall which has recently had new heating installed; they are all let out to various organisations, these include Brownies/Guides, an over 50’s Exercise Group, Bingo, Weight Watchers, Dancing & Music Groups, Martial Arts & Karate Clubs.

There are two primary schools and children’s centres, and a busy community centre in the parish. The church is very involved with the local schools and community at Christmas and Easter.

St James, Eve Hill

St James (Grade II listing) stands at the corner of a busy traffic island. It was built in 1840 as the town expanded and is surrounded today with a mix of residential estates as well shops and businesses on Wolverhampton Street going into the town centre. Opposite the church is a small new housing estate in construction - St James Mews.

Worship is central in style with robed choir. There is a weekly
eucharist (CW) morning or evening, alternating with non-eucharistic worship – whether of morning prayer or baptism. MAGIC (Me and God in Christ) offers activities for younger children during morning service though it has proved difficult to sustain leaders for this.

Near the church is Jesson’s CE (VA) Primary School to which the PCC nominate foundation governors. Jesson’s holds services in church at the beginning and end of term and at Easter, Harvest and Christmas. Castle High School is also close by.

There is a weekly luncheon club attended by members of the congregation and the wider community. This, with other activities, takes place in the Crypt beneath the church and the Crypt is available for wider community use. The facilities are used in the week by the Brownies and Dudley Choral Society as well as other occasional bookings.

The congregation holds themed social evenings once a month. The Mothers’ Union holds its meetings once a month and during the summer months, open the church on a Saturday for coffee mornings.

**Other Churches of the Dudley Team Ministry**

**The Church of St Augustine of Hippo, Holly Hall**

The building was completed in 1884 to serve the Holly Hall, Woodside and Harts Hill areas which surround it. Money was donated by owners of local iron industries, nearby Cochrane Road bearing the name of one of these. In 1985 the building underwent change with the roof replaced and a kitchen, storeroom and toilets installed. Over the years the Congregation have worked hard to maintain the fabric of the building. Currently the PCC has agreed further repointing of the brickwork, the installation of a new sound system and with the help of a generous donation, a new Nave Altar.

So far in 2014 there have been 14 baptisms and 3 weddings and the building, being a local landmark, holds considerable respect within the local community. Never having been fitted with pews the building offers a flexible space which has been used for exercise classes, barn dances, Christmas and summer fayres, Exhibitions, etc. as well as an ability to change seating for services, for example putting the chairs in a circle or into the shape of a cross.

The pattern of worship at St Augustine’s has included Sunday Eucharist, a midweek Holy Communion Service and a weekly Bible Study Group. In Advent and Lent both a daytime and evening group have been available to parishioners. The congregation is familiar with a variety of different worship styles.

On most Saturdays the space is used for a shop selling donated clothes and household goods for the benefit of the local community and raising income for the church. Holly Hall Friends group meet at this time and provide refreshments for shoppers and others who come in to see the building.

St Augustine’s supports the Children’s society, Christian Aid, the local food bank and with the other Churches of the Group, the interfaith network in Dudley. Locally there has been the tradition of working with the Methodist Church and The New Testament Church of God which are both in the
Parish. Links were established with the local Primary and Secondary schools, Woodside Day Centre and Oakleigh Lodge Care Home and Stoneleigh Residential Home.

**St Barnabas, Russells Hall**

St Barnabas Church was built in the 1960’s to serve the new housing estate at Russells Hall. The building is a versatile ‘dual use’ space where the sanctuary can be screened off to create a large hall, with kitchen and serving hatch. The worship style has varied over the years, and while some catholic touches remain, has become generally less formal in recent times. The congregation is mainly elderly, but nonetheless has a delightful Junior Church with five children on roll. There is currently only one main act of worship each week, which is rather early (9.30am) and not a good time of day to attract new members. Average attendance is around 17.

In recent times the congregation has rallied round to elect officers after a long period without wardens or treasurer, and has been energised by the need to raise funds to re-felt the roof. They have been extremely creative in organising fundraising events and these have been very enjoyable. It has been some years since St Barnabas had a wedding, and baptisms are few and far between, but it still has a fairly high number of church funerals.

Nearby there is a primary school and a special school, a youth centre and sheltered housing plus Holly Hall Academy. A newly built retirement village is served by an ecumenical team.

The congregation has recently begun monthly ‘shoppers’ mornings where refreshments are available and popular ‘rummage table’ laid out. They hope to extend use of the building, and have several ideas in hand, yet to be developed.

**St Thomas & St Luke**

St Thomas with St Luke (locally known as Top Church – Grade II*) is situated at the top of Dudley High Street. Many shops on the High Street have struggled to stay open and established businesses have often shut up shop to be replaced with fast food outlets and payday loan shops. Funding has been secured for regeneration in the town centre and it's hoped in time that this may reach up as far as the church.

The tower and spire of St Thomas & St Luke form a landmark that can be seen for many miles around. Built in 1818 to replace a smaller Church dating back several hundred years, the church hosts a number of civic events, including Battle of Britain Sunday as well as carol services.

The congregation is small and struggles to maintain a landmark building. The worship style is liberal catholic with robed choir. Holy Communion (CW) at 11.15 am with once a month Evensong. There is also a midweek Communion service on Wednesday morning.

The Parish Rooms at the rear (east end) of the church are available for hire and the PCC is exploring how these can be better used in future. The rooms are also occasionally used for birthday parties and other events.

The church is always open to the public on Saturday mornings with tea and coffee available. The
church has recently installed 'wifi' to develop its welcome to the community. With St Edmund's ('Bottom Church'), the church has been identified as one of three national pilots by the Church Buildings Council at Church House as the PCC looks to ensure the building has a sustainable future.

Map of Dudley showing the Churches

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The Diocese of Worcester: Kingdom People

The Diocese of Worcester of which Dudley is a part has adopted eight characteristics as marks or priorities for mission. Parishes, deaneries and the Diocese as a whole, have been exploring how their activity flows from and contributes to being Kingdom People together. The characteristics are:

1. Deeply rooted in prayer and study of the scriptures
2. Renewed and transformed by regular worship
3. Equipped to witness to the Gospel of love, compassion, justice and freedom
4. Dedicated to helping children and young people to belong and be nurtured in faith
5. Devoted to growing deeply as disciples, offering our time, talents and money to God
6. Resourced and released to minister to others
7. Ready to engage with and serve our community
8. Committed to making our buildings fit for purpose

Recent Developments

As indicated earlier, the Central Dudley Group Ministry consists of seven parishes; the five listed above together with St Edmund, King & Martyr in the town centre and St John's, Kates Hill. These seven parishes have been considering the formation of a new team ministry for the town as greater collaborative working is essential for the future. With seven congregations and dwindling resources, the churches know they face difficult decisions around ongoing viability. A review of all the church buildings has recently taken place and the two town centre churches – both Grade II* - are both working with the Church Buildings Council to secure their future.

The churches have explored forming a new team ministry and consultations are taking place on a set of pastoral proposals, which when adopted, will form the basis for future ministry. Three churches (St Augustine's, St Francis and St Thomas & St Luke) will be designated parish churches, with the others (St Barnabas, St John's and St James) being designated associated chapels of ease or licensed places of worship. The three stipendiary clergy will in time be licensed to the team, with special responsibility for specific churches. The five parishes of the existing Team Ministry listed above will form a single parish. St John's will remain a discrete parish, though will be incorporated into the Team.

The proposals ensure that all staff appointments in Dudley should be open to women as well as men. St Edmund, King & Martyr becomes an extra-parochial place with its own ecclesiastical charity. This means, in effect, that the parish area of St Edmund's is shrunk to the church and churchyard. Assuming the charity maintains the current position of St Edmund's on the ministry of women (Resolutions A & B are in place), the bishop would be responsible for appointing a male member of the clergy either from among the team or elsewhere to be priest-in-charge.
Team Vicar, Dudley Team Ministry with special responsibility for St Francis and St James

Role Description

General

- To share with the Bishop both in the cure of souls and in responsibility, under God, for growing the Kingdom in this parish, in line with current priorities established by the Bishop.
- To be the Parish Priest to this parish, having regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy as described in the Canons, the Ordinal, the Code of Professional Conduct for the Clergy and other relevant legislation.
- To work with the PCC towards the development of the local church (both people and building) so that it is sustainable, and effective in mission.
- To ensure that a high standard of worship, preaching and pastoral care is provided so that people are more able to live as disciples of Christ.
- To develop the ministry of the laity, through training, delegation and support, so that they take more responsibility for the mission and ministry of the parish; and where there is a Shared Ministry Development Team to work with it as described in the SMDT agreement.
- To collaborate within the deanery in mission and ministry and, through the deanery plan, in such shaping of ministry as resources and opportunities may require.
- To be proactive and persistent in seeking the fullest degree of ecumenical cooperation wherever possible.

Specific

- To work flexibly and collaboratively within the current Dudley Team Ministry as it looks to implement new patterns of mission and ministry within the town.
- To enrich the spiritual life of our congregations, drawing on existing worship styles – both eucharistic and non-eucharistic – and refreshing it in new ways.
- To participate in a staff team as colleagues work with the churches in a new phase of our journey together.
- To encourage and support our churches’ ministry alongside children and young people.
- To offer and receive companionship with others in our journey of faith and to nurture, encourage and share gifts.
- To foster relationships between churches and their local community, especially school(s) and families.
- To develop partnerships enabling the creative use of premises.
- To enable a renewing of confidence in sharing our faith.
Person Specification

- Rooted in faith with a personal spirituality that sustains and nourishes.
- An enthusiastic and reflective team player.
- Significant levels of personal organisation in the absence of administrative support.
- Self-motivating in circumstances that can often prove challenging.
- Creative and able to improvise.
- Aware of personal limitations and ready to draw on the gifts of others.
- Be visible and able to relate to the community.
- Respect for people from a variety of backgrounds, ages, cultures and faiths.
- Proactive in making opportunities for encounter and mission.
- Able to manage the expectations of congregations learning to work together in the context of reduced staffing.
- Experience of and insight into working with children and young people.
- Readiness to set and maintain boundaries between ministry and personal life.

The Vicarage

The successful candidate will live in St. Francis Vicarage (50 Laurel Road, Dudley. DY1 3EZ), a two minute walk from St Francis Parish Church and in close proximity to Wren’s Nest Nature Reserve and Priory Park.

The Vicarage at 50 Laurel Road is a two-storey five bedroom detached dwelling house built in the 1930’s. The construction consists of plain clay roof tiles over fair-faced brick cavity walls with PVC framed double glazed windows. Downstairs there are two sitting rooms, dining room, study, utility room, spacious kitchen and a delightful, generously sized entrance hall with parquet-flooring. Upstairs there are three double bedrooms, two single bedrooms, and large walk-in airing cupboard with modern boiler.

The garden is a corner-plot with well established borders and mature trees and shrubs.