

DIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

DEANERY OF SEFTON

THE PARISH OF ST LUKE

GREAT CROSBY

PARISH PROFILE

2004

INTRODUCTION

1. Crosby is seven miles north of the centre of Liverpool and marks the northern end of the city's conurbation. Though a suburb of Liverpool, it also has a strong community sense, having in the past been a local authority in its own right. It is socially mixed, though without major areas of deprivation. The population of Crosby (including Blundellsands and Waterloo) is around 40,000.
2. The parish of St Luke was founded in 1853. It occupies the central part of Crosby, including the shopping centre which the church adjoins. With 9535 residents in 2001, it is the most populous parish in the town.
3. Average adult attendance in 2003 on Sundays was 62 at 9.00 am, 112 at 11.00 am and 32 at 6.30 pm. In addition there was an average of 55 children at the 11.00 am Sunday service, although there was a significant difference between the average of 90 children at the monthly parade service and 46 on other Sundays. Allowing for those who come more than once about 190 different adults attend on a Sunday. A further 22 adults attend the Wednesday 10.30 am Holy Communion. In 2003 there were 338 people on the electoral roll. 176 lived in the parish and 162 outside. The church membership covers a good variety of ages and stages but is lacking in the 18-30 age-range.
4. We have enclosed with this profile a copy of the activity reports for all our groups as provided to the 2004 APCM, and also the accounts for 2003. More details of the parish and all its activities can be found on our website: www.stlukecrosby.org.uk.

CELL CHURCH

5. About three years ago we took the decision to work towards being a cell church. During this time we have changed the structure of our homegroups and based them on cell church principles. We currently have 12 groups with a total membership of about 120, and a further two groups are expected to open shortly. We are encouraged that change is gradually taking place and the groups are starting to reach out and increase in numbers. The homegroups generally use the discussion notes produced twice a month based on the sermon at the 9.00 am and 11.00 am services. We believe our cell group values are slowly being put more widely into practice, namely:

- A All Involved
- B Becoming Disciples
- C Creating Community
- D Doing Evangelism
- E Encountering God

6. We wish to continue along the cell church route, although we realise we still have some way to go. We have shown our commitment to this by paying leaders from St Mark's Haydock to act as consultants on our cell church development. We believe we can only nurture and care for the many who attend or are drawn to our church by involving as many as possible in small groups. In this way people's gifts can be released and support

given. We believe the small groups should be the place where people pray powerfully together and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are released and developed.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

7. Our Sunday worship consists of three services. About five years ago, after a period of prayer and consultation, we decided upon three distinct and different services to meet the needs of our membership, accepting that this meant we would develop largely as 3 distinct congregations.

8. The 9.00 am communion service is a traditional service based on *Common Worship Order One*. We follow the lectionary readings and the service is printed out in our home produced seasonal booklets. Those who lead the service are robed. We have hymns, a sermon and prayers, often led by members of the congregation who also read the old and new testament readings. There are 55 to 80 adults at this service but rarely any children. Once a month we offer prayer for Christian healing at the rail and, as at all our main services, prayer is offered in the side chapel at the end.

9. The 11.00 am service is deliberately planned to be all-age worship, always including lively songs for the children, prayers based on the Scripture Union SALT material, and a good news time, and seeking to involve the children as much as possible. We do not robe for this service. We use an overhead projector and are planning to move to PowerPoint. Our monthly pattern for this service is:

(i) On two Sundays the children leave for their groups in the church hall about half way through the one-hour service. They use the SALT material which has been introduced by a brief "Bible time" during the all-together part of the service. The remaining adult congregation then has a sermon designed to be applied at the cell group midweek gatherings. Homegroup notes are produced based on the sermon. The sermon, which is the same at 9.00 am and 11.00 am, is recorded.

(ii) On week 2 we have a parade service which is very well attended, particularly by the uniformed organisations. This is again an informal service using SALT. It lasts about 45mins and includes songs, hymns and a short children's talk.

(iii) On week 4 we have a short, lively, all-age praise service with a short story etc. Slightly fewer attend but it is very much part of our regular pattern of worship.

(iv) When there is a 5th Sunday we have an all-age communion service.

10. At our weekly 6.30 pm evening service we try to explore different patterns of worship. We try to listen to God in prayer and respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. People are encouraged to share the things that they believe God is doing in their lives, or a word or picture they have received through the Holy Spirit. We often have a

longer period of worship led by a worship group or by a single worship leader on guitar or piano. At this service we often have a more in depth Bible teaching session.

11. During the week we have a Wednesday communion service at 10.30 am. Many of those who attend do not come to any other service. We use the *Book of Common Prayer*, and about 22 people attend. We meet once a week for ecumenical prayer. This service rotates around the five Crosby Churches.

12. We have a wide variety of musicians but no single co-ordinator of all our music. The resources potentially available are illustrated by our having, in the last few years, played the major part in local productions of *Hopes and Dreams* and *Here and Now*. In addition St Luke's is one of five churches that sponsors *Merseyside Prom Praise*.

OUTREACH INTO THE COMMUNITY

13. St Luke's is situated at the heart of Crosby, and, together with our ecumenical partners, aims to be a strong Christian presence in the community. We do so by a variety of means, including links with schools, local organisations and the *Crosby Herald Church News* page, clubs and activities for local people, and via our church website.

14. St Luke's Halsall CE Primary School, which currently has approximately 240 pupils (excluding nursery classes), plays a vital role in our outreach and witness to the community of Crosby. The links between church and school are exceptionally strong, and many church members both lay and clergy, are actively involved taking assemblies, or helping in class, building relationships with staff and children. The vicar of St Luke's is a member of the school's board of governors, of which the outgoing vicar has been chair.

15. Much of our focus in reaching out into the community has been on younger families. We see this theme as linking our all-age worship at 11.00 am, our school, our children's groups, our pram club (many people's first contact with us), baptisms and our over-subscribed uniformed organisations. We ran a summer holiday club last year, and have in the past run parenting classes.

16. We acknowledge that we are currently weak in reaching older teenagers, though we have an open youth club for 11-13 year olds. The local Methodist Circuit has recently appointed a youth worker with whom we hope to work closely. But we feel a particular opportunity is developing in local schools. The church has actively supported proposals for one of the local secondary schools, Manor High, to seek a change of status to voluntary aided Church of England school with effect from September 2005. There are currently no Church of England secondary schools in the whole of the borough of Sefton, so this would fill a recognised gap in secondary school provision in the area. If the change of status goes ahead, it would provide a wealth of opportunity for St Luke's and other churches to become involved at the early stages and to forge links with staff, pupils and their families. St Luke's also has a Religious Education Resource Centre based at the parish office, which currently serves over 40 local schools, and there is great scope for development of closer links with the many other schools in the area (both state and private).

17. St Luke's aims to provide pastoral care and Christian witness and support to the wider local community through a range of other activities, including:

- (i) home and hospital visiting and bereavement care,
- (ii) regular invitations to representatives of local community groups and charities to our PCC meetings to tell us about their work and how we might support them,
- (iii) a wide range of other, more social activities, including bell ringers, Mothers' Union, Women's Fellowship, St Luke's Players amateur dramatics society, football and golf societies.

Members of St Luke's are involved as individuals in a range of community organisations often not linked to the church.

18. These are the numbers of baptisms, weddings and funerals in the last three years.

	baptisms	weddings	funerals
2001	28	14	90
2002	24	8	75
2003	36	10	83

SHARED MINISTRY

19. *All Involved* is one of the five core values at St Luke's, and we are committed to a genuinely shared ministry in all aspects of our church life. We aim to be a loving supportive Christian community where everyone is listened to and valued, and all have something to offer – including children and young people as well as the adult congregation.

20. St Luke's currently benefits from the services of an ordained local minister (female), a retired OLM (female) and a retired NSM (male). All three were ordained having been long-standing members of St Luke's. We also have five lay readers. The clergy and readers come from a variety of Christian traditions and all take a full share in leading services and preaching (the previous vicar often sat in the congregation). We have a diocesan-recognised Shared Ministry Team, commissioned in 2003. It currently includes the vicar, OLM, retired OLM, wardens, treasurer, one reader and our administrator. We expect that the membership will be reviewed when a new vicar is in post. The SMT meets monthly and seeks to clarify and "hold" the church's vision and direction, as well as providing mutual support and prayerful encouragement. It operates as a sub-group of the PCC.

21. As paid staff we have an administrator and a site supervisor who deals with maintenance etc. We have encouraged many people to develop and use their gifts. Arenas for this include our maintenance team, office team, children's work team (though we

have no single co-ordinator), world mission group and a range of group leaders. The vicar has had an important role as a facilitator.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

22. Over the years we have developed our prayer healing ministry. Those wishing to be involved in this ministry are encouraged to do a prayer ministry training course. Prayer for Christian healing and wholeness is widely available throughout every aspect of our church life.

23. For some years we have run Alpha groups and many have experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives as a result of what God has done. We seek to use the Alpha course as one of our main methods of evangelism and to link people in to other small groups as a follow up. Some of our Alpha groups have been run ecumenically and for a number of years we have used a junior Alpha course as the basis of our confirmation preparation.

24. For those who wish to go further we have developed our own 12 week *Going Deeper Course* which has proved to be very helpful and has led to some moving on into homegroups.

BUILDINGS

25. The church, church hall, parish centre, vicarage, graveyard, and substantial car parking are all on one very large site in the centre of Crosby.

26. The church was consecrated on 26 December 1853. It can seat about 300 people, the majority in pews in the nave. The north transept was re-ordered in 2003 with carpet and moveable chairs. Wheelchairs, prams and buggies can access this area, but only from the west end of the church. Plans are in hand to provide proper access via the nearby north door. There is a small chapel and three rows of moveable choir stalls in the south transept. There is a vestry, a meeting room and two toilets at the east end. The interior of the church was redecorated in 2003. The church was badly damaged by fire in 1972, and the nave area was substantially reordered then. The roof dates from then and is coming towards the end of its natural life. We have already embarked on the process of applying to English Heritage for a grant. There is a pipe organ with two manuals and pedals.

27. The single-storey parish centre was built in 1990. It contains the parish office, a smaller office, an RE resource centre (used by local schools), a small counselling room, a kitchen and two toilets.

28. The church hall was opened in 1971. It has a main room with stage, a coffee lounge, a small meeting room, a kitchen and toilets. In addition a small office, with its own external door, is used by Crosby Credit Union.

29. The vicarage dates from 1971, has four bedrooms and stands in its own garden.

30. The graveyard is very large (about four acres) and contains around 6000 graves. There are only a handful of plots still available for burials, but there is plenty of room for the interment of ashes.

OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATION

31. The parish office is often the first place of welcome to St Luke's during the week, and is the hub of the administrative structure of the parish. All information flows through it. The parish administrator manages this flow, leads a team of volunteers, supports the clergy and other leaders, serves on the SMT and services it and other committees. The office team try to work to the principles of the five values of cell church.

32. Areas of responsibility for the administration team include:

(i) The team are in the process of putting onto PowerPoint the 11.00 am service and all special services. This is hoped to be in place by Easter 2004.

(ii) Rollcall 2000 (a database of church members), funeral follow up letters, 11.00 am service preparation and administration of protection for all.

(iii) Maintenance of graveyard records and searches, baptism, wedding and funeral records.

(iv) The vast amount of printing and publicity engendered by the various groups in the church and community.

(v) Management of the graveyard (which is maintained by the maintenance team).

(vi) Some of the publicity and administration for the Crossroads Centre and Churches Together in Great Crosby.

(vii) Administering the hiring-out of spaces in the car park.

(viii) Administering parish weekends away, conferences and courses.

(ix) Dealing with bookings for the parish centre and RE resource centre.

(x) Day-to-day bookkeeping of the administration and fees accounts and petty cash.

33. The office staff also provide a listening ear and support those in the parish seeking help and, where appropriate, pray with them.

SUPPORT FOR WIDER MISSION

34. Support for the wider mission of the church has a high profile. We support seven mission agencies, for each of which we have a link person charged with keeping its work and needs before us, eg through fundraising, displays in church, our *focus of the month* on an agency, and occasional special events or visits.

35. The seven agencies are (in no particular order):
- (i) The Diocese of Bunyoro-Kitara in Uganda. We have a strong link and there have been a number of visits both ways, including by the Bishop.
 - (ii) Malcolm and Liz Molyneux (members of our congregation) – doctors working in Malawi.
 - (iii) CMS where our current mission partners are the Kimbers working in Romania.
 - (iv) The Toybox Charity working with street children in Guatemala.
 - (v) Liverpool YMCA, the Director of which is a member of our church.
 - (vi) SAMS where our current mission partners are the Mescos in Arequipa, Peru.
 - (vii) The Children’s Society particularly focussed on our Christmas Eve Christingle Services.

OTHER ANGLICAN CHURCHES IN THE AREA

36. St Luke’s is part of the deanery of Sefton, which comprises three parishes in Formby, the united benefice of Altcar and Hightown, two parishes in Blundellsands, two in Crosby, and the united benefice of Sefton and Thornton. At present all nine benefices are allocated an incumbent or priest-in-charge and the only vacancy is the one at St Luke’s. There is a fairly natural geographical dividing-line between the five parishes at the Formby end of the deanery and the six at the Crosby end.

37. The diocesan targets for clergy numbers require a reduction of one incumbent in Sefton Deanery by 2006. Discussions are taking place in the deanery on how to achieve this, but it will be at the Crosby end. St Luke’s is certain to be involved in the necessary pastoral reorganisation, and the PCC has already expressed a preference for a team or group ministry involving as many as possible of the Crosby end parishes.

38. We recognise that we are a comparatively “strong” church and believe that, with sensitivity, we can be something of a “resource church” for others with whom we shall increasingly be working as the future pattern of ministry unfolds.

39. All Saints’ church and hall were built in St Luke’s parish in the 1930s and were served by a curate until All Saints’ became a separate parish in 1982. Friendly links have been maintained ever since, and the two parishes technically form a group.

40. Several active retired clergy live in Formby.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN GREAT CROSBY

41. Churches Together in Great Crosby (CTiGC) was set up, and a covenant signed, in 1986. It comprises Moor Lane Methodist Church, the two Roman Catholic churches of St Helen and SS Peter & Paul, and the two Anglican churches of All Saints and St Luke.

42. In 1986 CTiGC set up the Crossroads café and drop-in centre in rented accommodation. Recently, a very successful fund-raising effort allowed the construction of a new, larger, purpose-built building, and this was opened on 20 September 2003. CTiGC organizes a weekly ecumenical service of morning prayer (held in each church in turn), an annual service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and an open-air service in the centre of Crosby every Good Friday. It organises a series of Lenten talks each year and runs a welcome-in scheme for newcomers to the area. Leaflets giving details of Christmas and Easter services are delivered in the area, and a crib is placed in the village each Christmas. The clergy fraternal meets monthly.

43. The operation of the covenant was reviewed in 2002, and the five churches and their ministers pledged themselves to deepening their commitment to working together.

FINANCE

44. Details of the parish finances are in our annual report and accounts, but here is a brief summary.

	2002	2003
	(£'000)	(£'000)
Total Income	193	181
Expenditure		
diocesan and stipends quota	56	58
donations to charities/mission agencies	39	38
salaries	24	28
maintenance of buildings and graveyard	17	22
other expenditure	43	43
total expenditure	179	189

45. The church has reserves sufficient to cover about two months' expenditure. Nearly all the money given to charities and mission agencies was raised specifically for this purpose.

46. Givers to church funds include 100 who pay by standing order and 116 who use weekly offering envelopes. Allowing for couples, this represents about 250 regular givers. The congregation has a good understanding of tax-efficient giving.

47. The vicar's expenses are met in line with diocesan guidelines.

THE PERSON WE SEEK

48. St Luke's is a large, active and diverse parish. Though predominantly low church in practice, it contains members with a wide variety of opinions and preferences on issues of church teaching, worship and ethics. The decision to organise our services on the basis of three distinct Sunday congregations is one reflection of this. We are looking for someone who will accept and work with this diversity – not feel threatened by it or look to impose a more monochrome pattern. In terms of churchmanship, we think it likely that he or she will be an open evangelical receptive to insights from the charismatic movement.

49. We have worked hard to develop and build consensus around our current pattern of church life. We seek somebody who will respect that as a basis on which to build, rather than somebody who is looking for a blank sheet. That said, we recognise how much our church life has changed and developed, and we do not expect this to end! Our new vicar will lead us in discerning where God is calling us to move, and will work to carry people in that direction. This can be a slow process requiring patience.

50. A particular issue we recognise is that the very diversity and range of activities in St Luke's can make it hard to feel that the church has any coherent sense of direction which is widely-owned. Our new vicar will be somebody who can challenge this by painting a positive picture of where we are going rather than undermining what has been built so far. We are also aware that a "busy" parish like ours can become inward-looking and seek somebody who will keep us outward-focussed to the needs of our community and the wider world.

51. We think some of our current emphases are crucial; and look for someone who will sustain them. They are:

- (i) A varied pattern of worship including a commitment to an all-age approach at 11.00 am.
- (ii) A commitment to shared ministry (including the Shared Ministry Team) and to an enabling approach to leadership which encourages a range of people to develop and use their gifts.
- (iii) Our developing exploration of the cell church approach and the wish to see it and the cell church values permeate more area of church life.
- (iv) A commitment to the work of our church school. We look for somebody who will play an active role as a governor and in informal support of the school and its staff.
- (v) A determination to take seriously and work at ecumenical relationships and the links with other Anglican churches, including embracing pastoral reorganisation as an opportunity not a threat.

52. In terms of personal characteristics we would look for:

(i) Somebody who will see the diversity of outlooks and gifts in St Luke's as a strength and be happy to embrace and work with it.

(ii) Somebody with the personal organisation and capacity to handle a wide and demanding job. The vicar's involvement in many areas is crucial to oiling the wheels and encouraging people to feel valued in their work.

(iii) Somebody who is happy in a clear leadership role, knowing that in a church of our size this means not being able to please all the people all the time!

(iv) Somebody at home with both formal and informal worship and with a pattern of teaching which is centred on the Bible.

(v) Somebody who takes seriously the opportunities a vicar has for "representative" ministry on behalf of the church, notably through baptisms, funerals and weddings. They are very important in this parish.

(vi) Somebody with a proven record of working with others, including delegation, letting-go, and supporting and encouraging others, particularly when they make mistakes.

(vii) We find it hard to believe that somebody who has not already served as a vicar will be appropriate for this post, unless he or she has substantial experience in a different but related field of the kind of leadership described in this profile.