

## Parish Profile

# Holy Cross, Gleadless Valley Parish Church

Holy Cross is a conservative evangelical Church of England Parish Church for people of all ages and stages of life and from all backgrounds and nations. It is located in the Gleadless Valley on the south east side of Sheffield.

### Our Parish and Community

The Gleadless Valley consists of four main estates - Newfield Green, Rollestone, Herdings and Hemsworth. They were built in the 1950s and 1960s. Together they have a **population** of over 10,000 people.

In their early years, these estates were heralded as a European landmark for new housing because of the blend of tower blocks, flats and terraced houses built around the natural open spaces of the valley's existing woodlands. Sadly, in recent years, they have become one of Sheffield's least desirable communities to live in.

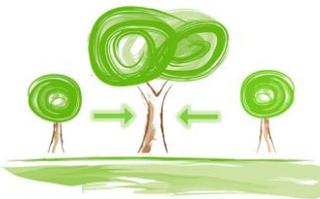


The majority of parishioners are of white ethnicity (96%), but there are a growing number of people from multicultural backgrounds (immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers) – this is increasingly reflected in our church family. The rate of employment in the parish is very low (5.15%) which puts it in the bottom ten percent in Sheffield.

Gleadless Valley is an area of significant social deprivation – 65% of inhabitants are in the top 5 percentile for social deprivation. The parish is the sixth most deprived in Sheffield Diocese and many in our Church Family and community face financial, health and social difficulties.

### Exciting New Beginnings

Holy Cross Gleadless Valley began as a congregation in 1961 and met in homes until the current building was completed in 1965. In 1999, the parish was teamed with Christ Church Heeley.



In March 2011 the Diocese of Sheffield offered Holy Cross the opportunity of a church "graft" with a group of people from Christ Church, Fulwood. This happened in September 2011 when the 18, or so, members of Holy Cross were joined by 17 adults and 8 children from Christ Church, Fulwood and Rev'd David Middleton was appointed as the Vicar. Pastoral Reorganisation was completed in November 2012 and Holy Cross Gleadless Valley is now a parish in its own right.

### A Growing Church and Presence within the Parish

Over the past 8 years, the Lord has united us as a church family, growing us as His disciples and drawing in a steady stream of new people of all ages and from all backgrounds and nations.

Although most in Gleadless Valley are white-English, our church family reflects a continuing influx of residents from overseas. We are a diverse mixture of ages, cultures, backgrounds, nationalities, literacy and physical ability.

The **Electoral Roll** is over 70 with over 80 adults and 60 youth and children **regularly attending** Holy Cross and counting themselves as part of the Holy Cross church family – a significant number are from overseas (especially the Democratic Republic of Congo). The majority of the church family are from the Gleadless Valley estates – only a few commute from the surrounding area.

### A Diverse Staff Team

In 2013 Anna De Castro joined the staff team as **Families' Worker** – committed to helping us reach people of all ages and helping them come to know Jesus and grow in relationship with Him. The post has now come to the end of its second 3-year funding cycle and Anna has moved to another church 'graft'. We are therefore seeking a new Youth and Children's Minister.

In July 2016, Pierre Kabaya started as our **part-time International Ministry Assistant**. He has just begun a second 3-year term in post. Both these additional posts (mainly funded from outside the church) reflect the church's on-going commitment to welcome and minister to local people of all ages and stages of life and from any background or nation.

In June 2018 Rev'd Stewart Deering was appointed as the **Training Curate** to Holy Cross. He was ordained Presbyterian on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019. It has been a joy to welcome him and his family and we have greatly benefitted from his growing ministry.



We also have an unpaid **Women's Worker**, Aly Middleton, who is part of the Staff Team and responsible for evangelism, discipleship and pastoral care amongst women in the church and in parish.

Since 2011 David and the PCC have sought to encourage investment in **Ministry Trainees**. As part of a two-year Ministry Training Scheme, men and women have had the opportunity to **Grow** in Christ, **Serve** at Holy Cross, **Learn** how to handle and teach the Scriptures and **Explore** future Christian ministry. Wonderfully both our previous ministry Trainees, Nathan and Melanie, have stayed on with us at Holy Cross. We do not currently have a Ministry Trainee, but hope this will change in Summer 2020 (COVID-19 permitting).

## **Our Mission**

We believe that the mission of Holy Cross is to be a church for people of all ages and stages of life and from many backgrounds and nations seeking, individually and corporately, to: **glorify God** – Father, Son and Holy Spirit by:

- **Knowing God through Jesus Christ,**
- **Exploring life together as a church,**
- **Reaching out to Gleadless Valley and beyond.**



We aim to fulfil this Mission Statement by being disciples who make disciples who:

### **Meet Jesus in His Word and listen and respond to Him obediently by -**

- allowing the Holy Spirit to transform us to be like Christ and united in Christ - applying God's Word to every area of our lives while being dependent on His grace;
- turning to Him in Praise and Prayer - because of who He is, what He has done and is doing, and asking His help in all things.

### **Love one another practically by -**

- loving and caring for one another regardless of age, background or nation and being committed to meeting together throughout the week;
- helping one another, through the Holy Spirit, to be equipped for all we face in life, using spiritual gifts to serve one another by serving the Lord.

### **Proclaim Christ boldly by –**

- reaching out with the Good News of Jesus Christ through words and actions to our families, friends and community;
- sending out missionaries and supporting worldwide mission through Mission Partners and Partner churches.

The PCC review our Mission Statement regularly and a wider Leadership Team meet for a Half-Day Away of prayer to set appropriate priorities. At the end of 2019, the church Leadership Team set priorities for the next 4 years (2019-2022). These **6 Priorities** (set out below) give us focus in day-to-day ministry and guide the PCC in how to use money given to Holy Cross.

-  **1. Staff Team.** Ensure that we have the right Staff Team so that, under the Lord's Hand, we can fulfil His mission.
-  **2. Funding.** Ensure that we have the money needed for the staff posts.
-  **3. Building.** Make certain that we have a building that is fit for the growing work of the Lord's Kingdom in Gleadless Valley.
-  **4. Accessibility.** Enable variety with accessibility in how we reach people with God's Word – in both Sunday & midweek ministry.
-  **5. Serving.** Communicate the needs of a growing church and the areas of church life that require more people to serve – providing appropriate equipping for all.
-  **6. Personal Evangelism.** Commit to outreach in our community with a specific focus on door-to-door ministry, personal evangelism and personal invitation – including prayer and equipping.

**Priorities 1-3** reflect the overall life of the church and Mission Statement, our context and current needs.

**Priorities 4-6** reflect the three main aims for church life and how we work out our Mission Statement in respect to our relationships with: God in Jesus, with each other in the church and with those in our community and further afield.

## Mission in Action

### Knowing God Through Jesus Christ:

At the heart of church life is our belief that Jesus is God and that, through His death on the cross and His resurrection, He opened the way for us to have a personal relationship with God now and enjoy eternity with Him after this life. Given this, our main goal is to help all ages come to **know Jesus Christ personally** and then get to know Him better. Foundational to this is making sure that everyone can meet Him in, and hear from Him through, the Bible. This past year we spent time in the following parts of the Bible: Acts, Psalms, Galatians, John and Genesis.



**On Sundays** we meet at 10am for a relaxed friendly service which caters for adults, youth and children of all ages. When the service is not entirely All Age, we have Sunday Club groups for children and Pathfinders for School Years 7-9. We try to follow the same programme in our adult, youth and children's ministries so that everyone can chat about meeting and getting to know Jesus better from the same passage of Scripture.

Our usual **pattern of services** is:

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	All Age Service
2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays	Holy Communion
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> Sundays	Service of the Word

**On Sunday evenings** there is an informal service at the Vicarage/curate's house. This is for those who have served in our youth and children's ministries during the morning service and for those who were unable to come. These services also work well for those who find meeting in large groups difficult.



Since 2013, our church family has become **more ethnically and culturally diverse** and now around 65% are from BAME background. As this has happened, we have tried to ensure that all our activities are accessible to everyone. This has been very challenging, especially as a third of our church family only speak English as a second language and are unable to read. Services now often include songs and prayers in different African languages and translation in a variety of languages – mainly through our part-time International Ministry Assistant.

As our numbers have grown this has increased the pressure on the limited space in our building. Currently, we do not have the people with the spiritual gifts needed to put on a second service. As a result, we have looked at other ways to make our building suitable for our developing needs. We have engaged an architect to work with us on a **modest extension** and have made good progress with this. We recognise that, due to our setting, much of the funding will have to come from outside the church community and are already investigating possible avenues.



**Midweek Ministry** is shaped so that everyone is helped to know and grow in Christ. We have two daytime and three evening Growth Groups – these follow the Sunday sermon series and are times of Bible Study, prayer and fellowship. Support from a member of Christ Church Fulwood (one of our Partner Churches) has enabled us to begin a new ministry to overseas women wanting to learn English in the context of Bible study.

Our **midweek Youth ministry (YBS)** caters for boys and girls separately due to local circumstances. The ministry to boys has been going long-term and is flourishing. The ministry to the girls began in Autumn 2018 but happens sporadically.

Each year we take all regular YBS youth and fringe members to the Oakes Christian Holiday Centre for a joint 'Youth Getaway' with youth from St Andrew's Kendray – last year 20 went from Holy Cross. This summer we were thrilled that 7 of our boys attended a summer camp for the first time. We pray this will set a precedent.

### Exploring Life Together As A Church:

As a Church, we are committed to exploring life together as followers of Christ. This includes life within our church, as well as the wider church – in our Deanery, Diocese and beyond. A key part of this in church life is **building relationships** which is difficult with such a diverse church family. We have regular church family meals and these, coupled with a time of 'Welcome' in our services have helped us grow together.

**Midweek**, meals before evening Growth Groups and central meetings provide valuable times of fellowship. We also enjoy midweek meals at other times – most notably the Maundy Thursday Agape meal, Christmas

Festive evening, Women's Breakfasts and a Men's Curry Nights and Breakfasts. Sometimes we open up our men's and women's events to friends, family and locals as an opportunity for them to explore Christianity.

**Evening Growth Groups** alternate with our monthly central meetings – **Praise and Prayer** (Church Prayer Meeting) and **Digging Deeper**. The latter provides further opportunities for us to think through God's Word and how it applies to everyday life. Topics usually flow from the sermon series.



To help us all share in serving and use our spiritual gifts, we have an annual '**Serving Season**' usually in the summer term. It has been a joy to see more of the church family committing to serve the Lord in different areas of church life – to that end almost 70% of adults and some young people are serving.

To help people into serving, we have regular times of equipping and 'buddy' existing and experienced members of teams with new and, potentially, inexperienced people.

In December 2018 we started a new **Baby and Toddler Group**. The heart of this group is a Bible talk with a song time. The group also enjoys food, play and craft together. Over the past months this has grown and there is now a core of church mums and others who attend.



Each year we take time to focus on giving financially to the Lord's work. Our '**Giving Season**' flows out of our sermon series and is worked out in Growth Groups and Digging Deeper. In recent years, it has been humbling to hear that the number of individuals and families who give is increasing and that people are giving more – often out of great poverty.

Many in Gleadless Valley face **significant trials in daily life** – much of this is caused by unemployment, domestic challenges and ill-health. There is also an increasing number of refugees locally. Helping and supporting those in need shapes our ministry as a church and our budget and an increasing amount of support is being given to the Vicar's Discretionary Fund – to help alleviate suffering by providing food, top-ups for gas/electric/transport and other necessary every-day items.



Although a relatively poor church (annual giving income is around £35,000), we are keen to support Christians overseas – especially those linked to Holy Cross. In 2018 we sent **emergency relief** to those in **Kiziba Refugee Camp in Rwanda** following a massacre, and in 2019 we sent relief to **Mozambique** following the cyclones.

We have an annual **Church Day Away**. This provides wonderful opportunities for deepening relationships with one another and with the Lord Jesus. Every other year we spend the day at the Oakes Christian Holiday Centre. The intervening year the church family joins with other ReNew South Yorkshire churches for the biennial assembly.

We are committed to the ministry of our **Diocese and Deanery**. All the Staff Team (lay and ordained) regularly attended **Attercliffe Deanery Chapter** and our Deanery Synod Representatives maintain an important presence at Synod meetings. Our Vicar serves as a Deanery Clergy Representative on Diocesan Synod – taking the opportunity to highlight some of the missional barriers posed by the current Church of England Fees arrangements. Within **Sheffield Diocese**, we have good relationships with the Bishops of Sheffield and Doncaster and receive episcopal oversight from the Bishop of Maidstone. [The church believes in the complementary roles of men and women in church life and has passed a resolution under the 2014 House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.]



Within **South Yorkshire**, Holy Cross is part of the ReNew South Yorkshire network. Most of our Staff Team attend the ReNew South Yorkshire leadership retreat each January. Our Staff Team and a Church Warden also attend the national ReNew Conferences.

### **Reaching Out To Gleadless Valley And Beyond:**

This third strand of our mission sees us reach out to, and care for, others in our community who are not necessarily Christians and support our Mission Partners to do likewise in their contexts.

We aim to be gentle and gracious but unashamed in our outreach to those who do not know Jesus. Some of those who come on Sundays would not call themselves Christian – we try to make them feel welcome and at

home. Our services take account of this – particularly at Easter, Remembrance, Christmas and at our ‘Big Weekend’ (in July).



We run regular “**Taking a Look**” courses so people can find out who Jesus is, place their faith in Him and enjoy a life-changing personal relationship with Him. We also do door-to-door visiting.

Our outreach in Gleadless Valley comprises the following regular events and partnerships:

**The Big Weekend.** This comprises a Community Fun Day and an all age guest service on the following Sunday. Over a hundred visitors came in 2019 and it has resulted in new people associating with Holy Cross.



**All Age Café and Saturday Café.** All Age Café happens monthly and Saturday Café prior to major events (Easter, Big Weekend, Remembrance and Christmas). These cafés are foundational to our outreach to local residents from all backgrounds and faiths. We aim to share the love of Jesus by word and deed with everyone who comes to our cafes - meeting spiritual and other needs alongside each other. Other local organisations regularly use our cafés for their own support work.

**Gleadless Valley Masterplan.** The government has given £500,000 to draw up a masterplan for the future of Gleadless Valley. The church is recognised as one of the key organisations able to help locals engage with the process and communicate ideas, concerns and feelings. Consequently we are investing time in this.

**Partnership with local stakeholders.** We work hard at partnering local organisations operating in Gleadless Valley. Our Vicar chairs a bi-monthly ‘Partners Group’ which the staff team attend. This group enables us to deepen local partnerships and better provide holistic support for as many people as we can in our community.

**Ministry to those in need and the vulnerable.** Alongside our joint work with local partners mentioned below, we find ourselves reaching out to a growing number of vulnerable people who face debt and money problems. Several years ago, this led us to set up a local **Credit Union Information Point** as an alternative to loan-sharks and pay-day lenders. We are greatly helped in staffing this by members of Christ Church Fulwood. It remains one of the most used and productive Info Points in the region.



**Gleadless Valley Foodbank.** Our staff provide one of the gateways to the Foodbank and as a church we take 2 collections of food over the year as well as smaller donations through the year. From time to time church members help out with this vital local source of food for those in tough times.

**Ministry in local Care Homes.** We serve 3 local Care Homes providing services at Easter, Remembrance and Christmas. This year, we started a monthly Holy Communion in one of them. These ministries have drawn mounting interest and seem to help residents, their relatives and carers.

**Ministry in Schools** – Our Families’ Worker has built up an excellent relationship with Bankwood Community Primary School and takes a series of classes at least once a term. At present we do not have the resources to commit to our other school – Valley Park Community Primary.

In addition to going out into our community, we also want the local community to be able to benefit from our **church building and facilities.** Our buildings are now frequently used by other churches, community groups, refugee groups and Sheffield City Council. Use of our building by our community is important to us and our plans for an extension have this at their heart.

**Looking further afield...** we pray for and give 10% of our church family giving to support 3 Mission Partners: the Oakes Christian Holiday Centre, The Potter family (with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Mozambique) and St Thomas Heideveld (South Africa). Yorkshire Camps are also Mission Partners. The following churches and Trusts support the ministry here: Christ Church Fulwood, Christ Church Walkley, Emmanuel Wimbledon, St Luke’s Wimbledon Park, St Helen’s Bishopsgate, St Ebbe’s Oxford, All Souls Langham Place, The Gospel Partners Trust and 13:33 Trust.



## **Final Thoughts**

We are very thankful for the way the Lord has blessed us as a church family. Our desire is to keep serving Him faithfully. It is our prayer that the church continues to have people of all ages and stages of life and from many backgrounds and nations at the heart of it.