

# ST MARY MAGDALENE BELMONT

# ST LAURENCE PITTINGTON



# INTRODUCTION

The United Benefice was created in 2007 linking the parish of St. Mary Magdalene Belmont (SMM) with the smaller parish of St. Laurence Pittington. The United Benefice falls in the Diocese and Deanery of Durham. Although the parishes of Pittington and Belmont are different in many ways the Benefice has proved to be successful, and the two churches work well together, each bringing different history, experiences and complementary talents and gifts that strengthen the whole.

In this document the profiles are presented in two sections, the first relating to St Mary Magdalene and the second to St Laurence. Their slightly different presentational styles reflect the character of the individual churches but we share many of the same priorities, and in particular we are in very close harmony in our search for the right person lead us forward.

## **ST MARY MAGDALENE CHURCHWARDENS**

Kevin Reynolds and Anne Corbett

## **ST LAURENCE CHURCHWARDENS**

Dave Arnott and Jean Gartland

# THE OPPORTUNITY

## WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Our two churches are looking for an **energetic leader** who **loves people** and feels at ease communicating with everyone in our community. We are seeking someone who **delights in building teams** and working through people's gifts. We need a **compassionate encourager** who will **help us to see God's wonder** and **presence** in Belmont and Pittington.

We are praying for **spiritual leader** with **a strong faith** that is **deeply rooted in prayer** and the **Eucharist**. We hope for an **imaginative Bible teacher** who connects Scripture with everyday life. We'd like someone **self-reflective** and committed to their own personal development. **We need a catalyst** to **unleash the energy and enthusiasm for change** within the Benefice and lead us in addressing our future priorities.

## WHAT WE CAN OFFER

Loving and supportive congregations who care for each other and the Priest-in-Charge.

Opportunities for our Priest-in-Charge to grow in Christ and take time for retreat.

A committed and supportive staff team.

Positive and supportive PCCs.

A desirable location to live and work.

Financially stable parishes.

# ST MARY MAGDALENE BELMONT



# SUMMARY

We are an open, flexible and welcoming, evangelical community church serving the villages of Belmont and Carrville and some homes in Gilesgate Moor. We see our church as welcoming, friendly, caring and giving of ourselves in service to God and to the members of our community. We are a congregation of active people, including several professional individuals who give of their expertise, those who are now retired and freely give of their time, and many lay people involved in worship, ministry and mission. We are thankful that our worship together is significantly enhanced by having in our congregation retired clergy to support our incumbent and a benefice choir who practise weekly and sing at key services and festivals. We seek to be faithful to God, faithful to each other and faithful to our shared future as a United Benefice.

We aspire to be a place and a community through which God's love shines, and by which our world is transformed.

## **INSPIRED BY MARY MAGDALENE, WE SEEK TO:**

Respond to the grace we receive from God

Travel together where Jesus leads.

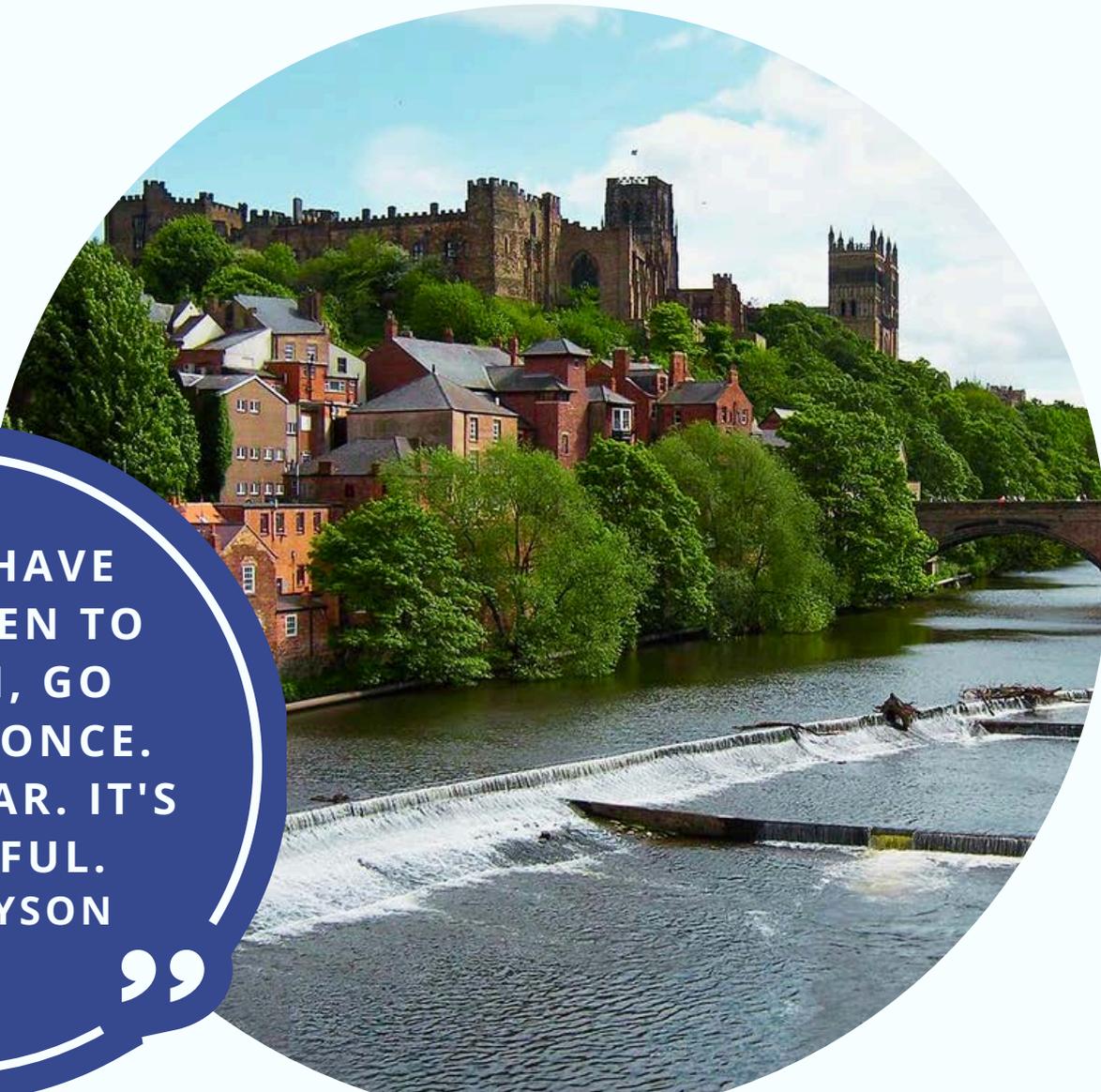
Provide from our resources to grow God's church and care for all in need.

Be called by name to share our experiences of the Good News of the Gospel.

# THE PARISH

The parish of Belmont is situated on the outskirts of the beautiful Cathedral City of Durham and has an estimated population of 8,769. Few places in the world can match Durham with its dramatic setting on a rocky horseshoe bend in the River Wear. The great Norman Cathedral and nearby Castle - which is part of the University - form a World Heritage site, recognised by UNESCO as one of the most exceptional historic and architectural features of the planet. There is a good selection of shops, including several bookshops and many national names, a range of sporting opportunities and varied options for eating out.

The University of Durham is an integral part of the city and contains one of the finest theological departments in the world. Cranmer Hall is based in the city and those thinking of ordination and those in training frequently use our church to worship and explore their calling.

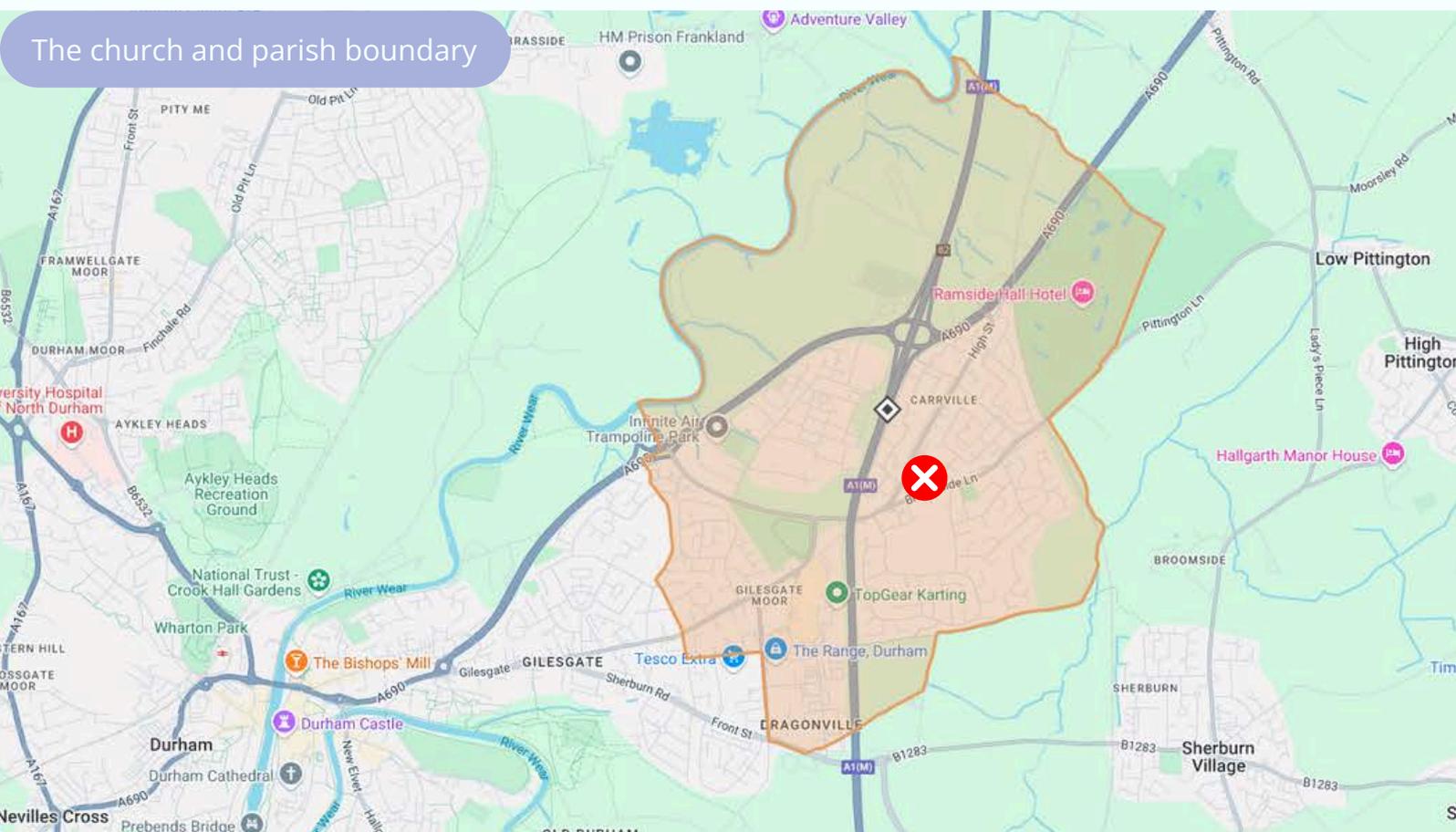


**“ IF YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN TO DURHAM, GO THERE AT ONCE. TAKE MY CAR. IT'S WONDERFUL. - BILL BRYSON ”**

St Mary Magdalene is principally a residential parish with some industrial and commercial outlets. Belmont is a popular and sought after place to live with many families with children of all ages and a significant number of retired people. The parish has a Care Home and a house that supports people with severe physical and mental disabilities. With an IMD Score of 10.7 and an IMD rank of 9496 out of 12443, it is relatively well off in comparison with the rest of the country. The parish is split by the A1M allowing easy access to North and South and is a combination of suburban and commuting populations.

There are **four primary schools** - Belmont C of E Primary School, Cheveley Park Primary School, Thomas More RC Primary School, and St Hilds C of E Aided Primary School, constitutionally linked with our neighbouring St. Giles parish. Belmont Community School (11-16) is an up-and-coming secondary school in the parish, which is rated Good by Ofsted.

Belmont Parish Church has special responsibility for Belmont C of E Controlled Primary School. There are three foundation governors including the incumbent who is an ex-officio governor. The parish also has a community centre, a health and fitness club, shops, library, 2 doctors' surgeries and a large retail park. In 2005 the modern, well-equipped and versatile Belmont Parish Hall was opened in the grounds of the Parish Church and is a facility greatly valued in the community.



The church and parish boundary

# WORSHIP

The **10.30 Eucharist** on **Sundays** is at the heart of our worship at SMM. It is a fairly traditional service with organ music and liturgy.

Generally, clergy wear an alb and stole but we are open to fresh ideas and creativity in our worshipping life.

We celebrate Holy Communion at **9.00** on **Sundays** (BCP) and at **10.00** on **Wednesdays** (CW), both of which see 15-20 people. Every first Sunday of the month we enjoy **joint services** with St Laurence.

There is **plenty of lay involvement** in our services in all manner of things from welcome, reading, prayer ministry, and worship leading.

Music is key aspect of our worship together and we are blessed with a **Director of Music**, who is ably supported by other talented pianists. Together with members of St Laurence, there is an established and valued Benefice Choir.

“

WE FEEL  
VERY  
FORTUNATE  
TO BE HERE

”

**40-50**

PEOPLE

@

**SUNDAY  
10.30  
SERVICE**

# MISSION, DISCIPLESHIP, AND COMMUNITY

## Mission

**Café Church** runs weekly on Wednesday mornings and provides a fantastic opportunity for local residents to drop in for coffee, cake, and community. We pray and chat about faith in a friendly and informal environment. The cakes and sausage rolls are particular favourites of the 45-55 regular attendees.

Once a month we run **Messy Church** in the Parish Hall. We have a multi-national group with around 20 enthusiastic children who hear a story from the Bible, take part in craft activities, and enjoy afternoon tea together,

On Thursdays, the volunteers at **The Table** offer a weekly meal and friendship for older members of our community - this is a real godsend for some of our attendees who to try make it whatever the weather!

On top of this, we have a **Mothers' Union** and publish **The Grapevine**, our popular monthly magazine.



The **Occasional Offices** form an important part of our ministry to the local community. Last year we saw **15 baptisms** of children of church members and members of the local community. We take **wedding** preparation very seriously and encourage couples to attend church as part of their preparation for process. Prayer and support to bereaved families is essential to our **funeral** ministry, Each year we invite those who have lost loved ones to our All Souls service and have established a Garden of Remembrance in the church grounds.

**Easter** and **Christmas** typically see our largest services of the year and we use them as opportunities for witness. We have **good links with local schools** and local organisations and host many special services of celebration.

**We are a church which reaches out to those in need**, and we are blessed to have a number of people who visit those who are sick, isolated and bereaved.

Our dedicated **Pastoral Visiting Team** is an important element of the care and Christian outreach of our Church. They work alongside the clergy and **Lay Chaplain**



## **Discipleship**

**Home-based fellowship groups** have been a valuable way of helping our church to pray and study together, and support each other in time of need. We currently have one group who meet weekly and would love for these to be a core feature of our church life again.

We **encourage all** of our Christian community to **share and develop their gifts**. God has made us into a body and we have hands for serving, ears for listening, mouths for speaking, and feet fitted with the readiness of the gospel of peace.



## Community and Community Links

Community is the glue that holds our church together. We have a committed **Artwork Group** who create beautiful pieces for our church building and a **Social Events** group that populate the church calendar with fun get togethers.

Ecumenically, alongside the occasional joint service with Carville Methodist Church, the church is home to a growing Russian Orthodox Church who meet once a month on Saturdays.

We enjoy an **excellent relationship** with **Belmont C.E. Primary** who visit the church throughout the year and have a Scout and Guide Group based out of the church building.



“ I COULD IMMEDIATELY FEEL THE WARMTH AND WELCOME OF THIS CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY ”



# BUILDINGS

## THE CHURCH

The Church is a **well-maintained** and **lovingly cared** for Grade II Listed building built in the 1850s, Featuring Mousey Thompson carvings, 3 fine stained-glass windows, and a 1902 Harrison Organ, it is a fine place to worship and call our home.

**150**

**SEATING CAPACITY**



It has had **significant improvements** made to it over the past decade, including a new heating system, improved toilet and kitchen facilities, and the repurposing of the Narthex for small group meetings

**GRADE II  
LISTED**



## **THE PARISH HALL**

The Parish Hall is built in the churchyard, and adjacent to the church. It is a magnificent facility for church and community, suitable for a wide range of activities, and hired for community and family occasions.

The hall is separately managed by Belmont Parish Hall Association (BPHA) and run on a daily basis by a Hall Manager and a team of volunteers. The church has reserved use of the building on Sundays for after service coffee, for Messy Church (2.00- 5.00 on the First Sunday of the month), the monthly Mothers' Union and for festival events

The Parish Hall Association mounts a complementary programme of events that include a hugely successful programme of Master-Musician concerts, featuring young internationally recognised musicians from all over Europe and sometimes beyond.

The church also hires the main hall for Café Church on Wednesday mornings and The Table on Thursdays. BPHA also runs its own events in addition to what the church may organise – for example, monthly classical music concerts, quizzes, fitness and Yoga sessions.



# FINANCES

Our typical annual income tends to be between £85-105,000, however last year we received a sizeable legacy that contributed to our funds. Historically we have met our Parish Share of £62,000 but have struggled in recent years.

**£132,356**  
INCOME (2024)

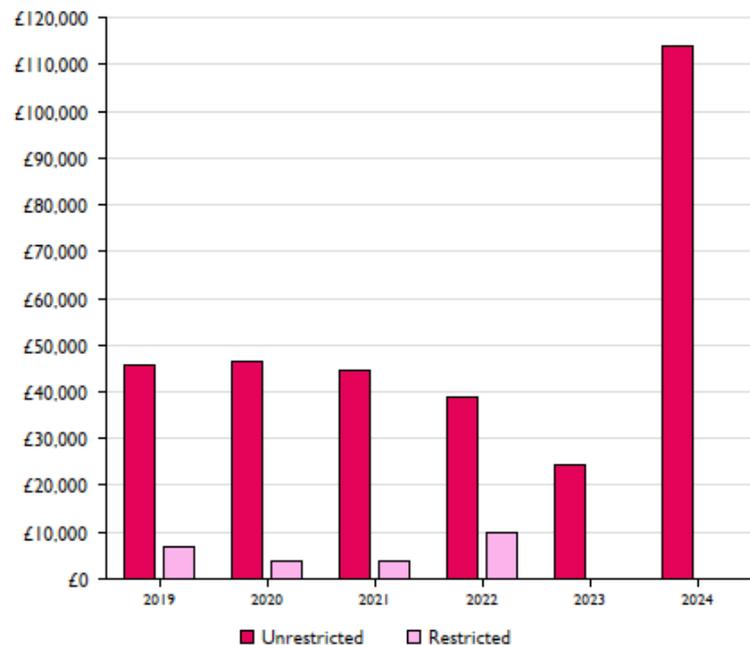
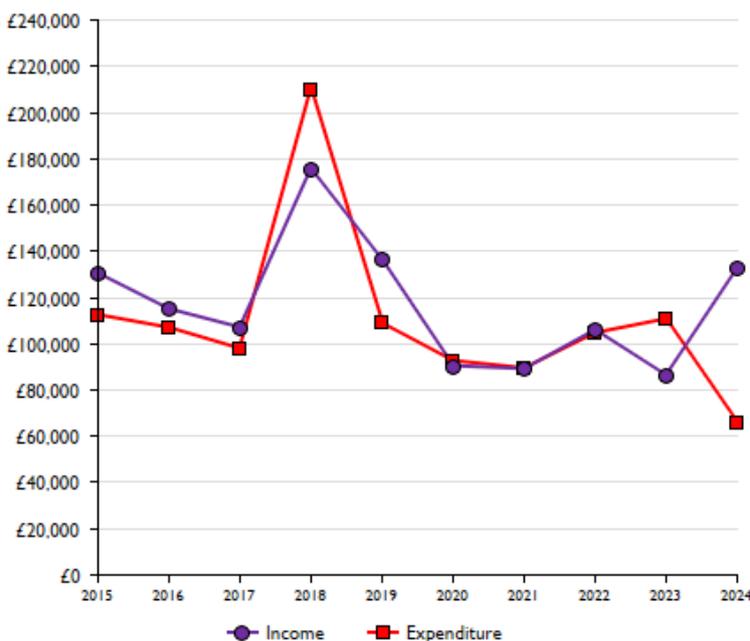
**£65,851**  
EXPENDITURE  
(2024)

**£113,775**  
UNRESTRICTED  
RESERVES (2024  
END)

We currently employ two people: our organist and our cleaner. These people receive salaries on a monthly basis and an independently appointed auditor calculates PAYE

The Gilligate Church Estate Charity generates income from endowed funds and distributes that income according to prescribed shares to the parish churches of St Giles and Belmont and to the Education Trusts in each parish. Currently the Trust's net assets are just over £2,000,000 and we claim roughly £24k p.a. The incumbent is an ex-officio member of this Trust.

## ST MARY MAGDALENE FINANCES OVERVIEW



# THE VICARAGE

The Vicarage is a spacious, detached family home, built in 1988, and set in low maintenance gardens with lawns – about two minutes' walk from St Mary Magdalene and several minutes' drive from St Laurence. It has gas central heating and there is parking space for up to 3 cars.

Upstairs It consists of 4 bedrooms, one bathroom with shower and WC, one shower room with WC; and downstairs a separate WC, 2 living rooms, dining room, kitchen, utility room and a large study.



**4**  
**BEDROOM**  
**DETACHED**

# ST LAURENCE PITTINGTON



# SUMMARY

We are a village church serving the people of Pittington, Durham and beyond. The church family is gathered from a wide range of people and backgrounds but like many churches we have a predominantly aging congregation, and **we recognise the need to develop our ministry amongst children and young people**. The congregation has a broadly central but varied and open churchmanship and lay participation in our worship is encouraged. This variety is reflected in the different styles of worship and the many activities we enjoy. **The church is a happy place to be** with a small but welcoming, inclusive and active congregation and it is very much a part of the village community which provides a firm foundation for outreach.

The historic Grade 1 listed building provides a remarkable focus for our worship and an attractive setting for other activities that bring opportunities to develop relationships with members of the community who would not normally enter a church.

We expect a new minister to help us to explore and develop existing and new areas of our ministry, to encourage the further development and application of the gifts and talents of our congregations in both churches in our United Benefice and to strengthen our ministry within our communities.



# THE PARISH

The parish of Pittington lies to the east of Durham City and has its roots in the former mining communities of High Pittington and Littleton and the smaller agricultural centres of Low Pittington and Hallgarth. It is now a growing and exciting village, with many new inhabitants, some new housing and it is a residential base for people who work in and around the university city of Durham. The village has a highly regarded restaurant, a shop, a hotel and a pub.

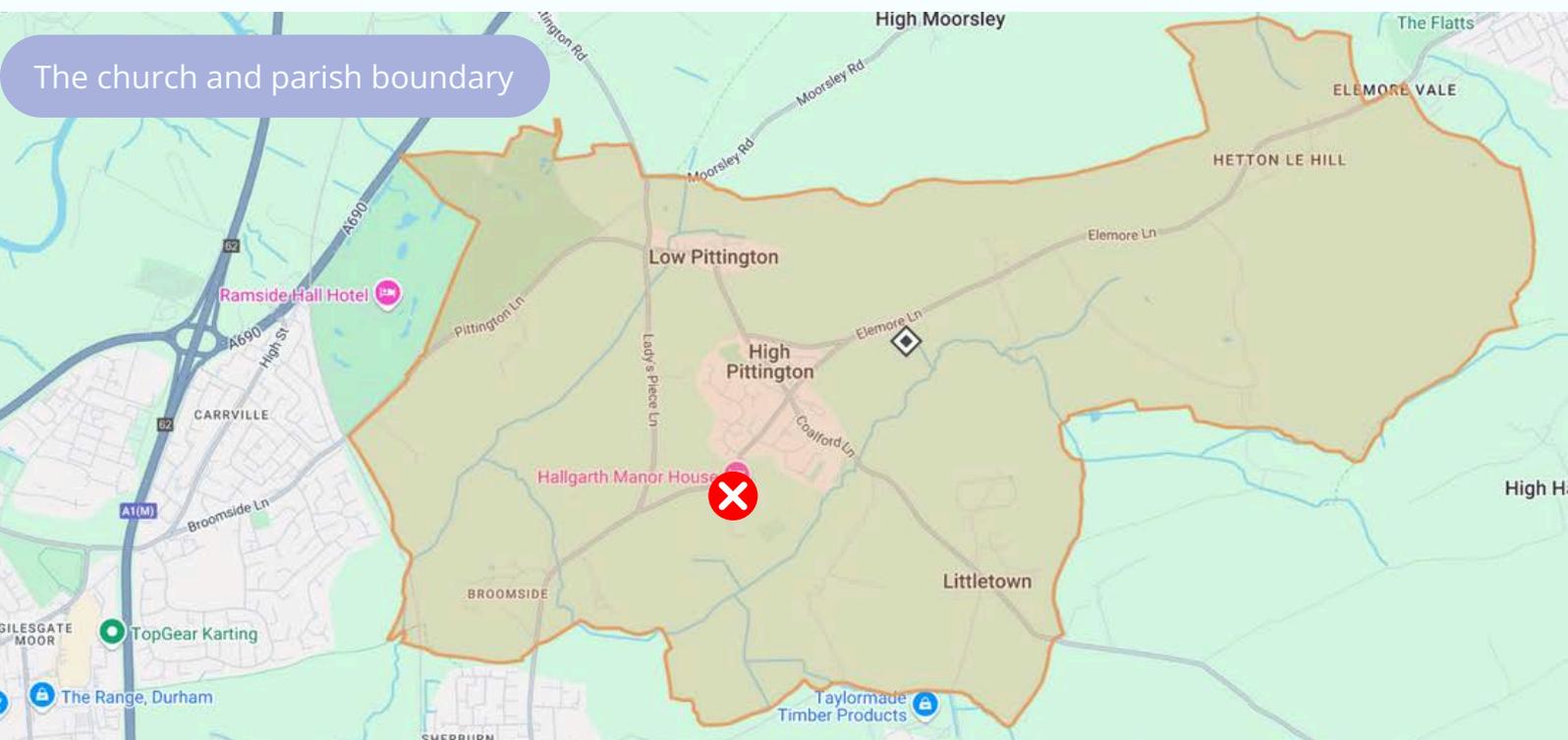
The location of the church is behind the Hallgarth Manor Hotel (recently renamed 'Sixty-One') in High Pittington, at the end of a lane, opposite the Old Vicarage which is now privately owned.

The total population is around 2500, with a mixed housing pattern of local authority houses and bungalows, private houses and newer housing estates. With very good access to road and motorway links, the main east-coast rail route and two airports this is now a very convenient residential area not only for Durham City but also for Teesside, Tyneside and Wearside



The present generation is likely to be the last with living memories of the long mining history of the area. As this generation naturally reduces in number, younger families are arriving. The working population in the villages has changed from a workforce in the local vicinity to a much more mobile / commuter workforce. In many households both parents work and children are often supported by local grandparents, which reflects the traditional, stable family structures of the region. Pittington has an excellent and popular primary school which includes a nursery unit. The church enjoys a good relationship with the school. The two organisations promote and join-in each other's activities. We host many educational visits from the school and also their carol service. School leavers progress mostly to the secondary school in the neighbouring community of Belmont although some travel further afield.

Social interests in the Village focus around various activities based in the village hall (which is used by the church each week for our Girls Friendly Society activities), the school (which has an active and well supported PTA), the Sixty One Hotel and the church. The village is also home to the Methodist church of St. John which has a diminishing and mostly elderly congregation. The church building provides a beautiful venue for occasional concerts and for photographic groups.



# WORSHIP

We gather at **9.30** on **Sundays** for **Parish Communion** and it very much has a homely, village church feel to it. There is also a joint service for the two churches once every month, alternating on the first Sunday of the month. The Benefice Choir supports these services. The Choir is really well established with approximately 16 members.

We have always sought to be inclusive and not to develop a worship style that alienates those of differing churchmanship. This is reflected by a congregation from a broad range of traditions from catholic to evangelical and a corresponding acceptance of worship styles from the very traditional to the modern. We have vestments and **value Holy Communion**, while caring deeply for a **preached ministry** of the Gospel of Jesus. **Lay ministry** is **encouraged** and **valued**.

The Sunday congregation includes members of most age groups with the noticeable exception of children of school age

During the warmer months there is Private Prayer at 10.00-11.00 on Thursdays. This has a regular attendance of six people who cannot always get to the Sunday Service.

**20-25**

PEOPLE

@

SUNDAY 9.30  
SERVICE



# MISSION, DISCIPLESHIP, AND COMMUNITY



We have a **highly successful Girls Friendly Society group** with a long waiting list to join, which also reaches out to girls and their families who are not necessarily regular worshippers at our church. The group meets in the village hall, but we struggle to attract young people to worship with us in church. **We would value the experience of our new minister to develop our ministry to children.**

We are also a **'Small Pilgrim Places'** site and mapped walks have been developed between us, Durham Cathedral and Witton Gilbert Church. Meditation leaflets have been published to guide the visitor on a reflective journey.

The **Occasional Offices** are one of the ways we reach out to the local community. Weddings, baptisms and funerals vary in number each year. Last year we witnessed 12 baptisms, 3 marriages, and 1 funeral. Our historic church is a popular wedding venue and we have had more than a dozen weddings in some years. We see weddings as part of our ministry and **many couples who had no previous connection with our church continue to worship** with us after their wedding.



We have the church open on Saturday afternoons from May to September and we have been trialling unmanned open weeks when the church remains open to visitors to reflect, pray or just appreciate the architecture. These have proved to be very successful.

Throughout the year we provide very **popular Cream Teas** and this is a major contributor to our mission and outreach. As well as being a great fundraiser, it draws the local community to the church and we often have **more than one hundred visitors** to each tea.

Special services such as our **'Family Carols and Nativity'** regularly see **over 200 attendees** and they provide a valuable opportunity to welcome and include those who would not usually attend a regular Sunday service. We had developed our special services including a Harvest, where the Pitlington School children submit their artwork to hang between the arches. Activities beyond formal worship include ecumenical Lent groups.

**St. Mary Magdalene and St. Laurence work well together** and have regular joint services, a joint choir, a shared magazine, some fundraising and social events. We also have some families who attend Messy Church in Belmont as well.



# THE BUILDING

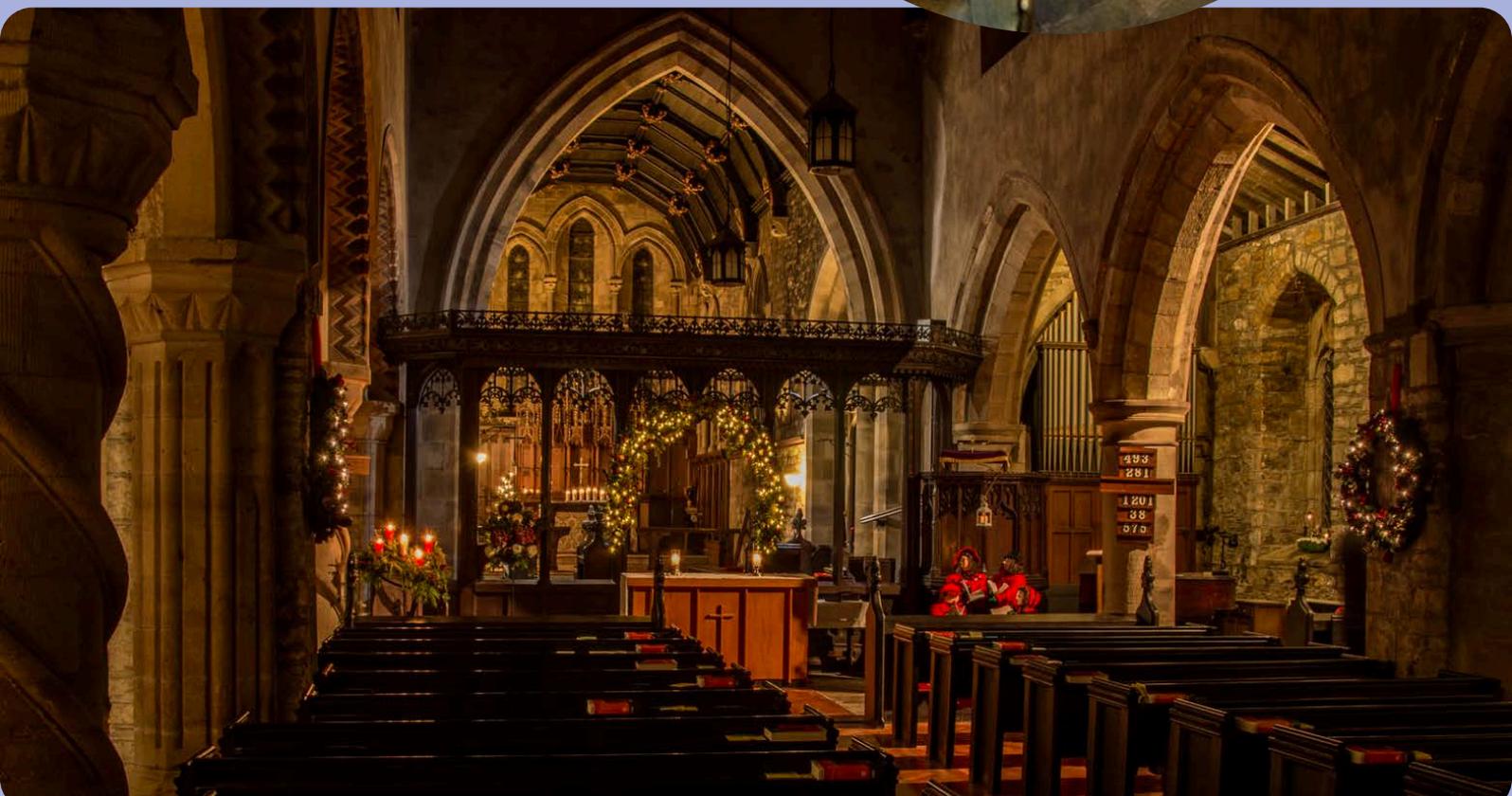
St. Laurence's Church in Pittington is **one of the most historical churches in the area**, with an 11th century architectural base, and additions of Norman and Medieval interest, including beautiful arches which could well have been prototypes for those in Durham Cathedral's Galilee chapel. The church is Grade I Listed.

St Laurence's has been **well maintained** and although the maintenance of such a significant building is costly in terms of time, effort and money the resources have always been found and the effort has **never distracted us from the true purpose of the church.**

Our most recent major building repair was to have a clerestory window completely refurbished and glazed at a cost of £11,000. The raising of the money was achieved in twelve months through open day events such as 'Snowdrop Saturday' and via 'posh nosh' dining evenings at Belmont Parish Hall. We received a £2,000 grant towards this from Northumbria Historic Churches Trust. Crumbling stonework behind the organ is our current maintenance concern.



**GRADE I  
LISTED**



# FINANCES

The Church has always met its pledged Parish Share despite our many other financial demands such as increased insurance premiums and the general running costs of a Grade I listed building. We have also managed to maintain our annual charity giving and recently confirmed our target of giving 5% of our regular income.

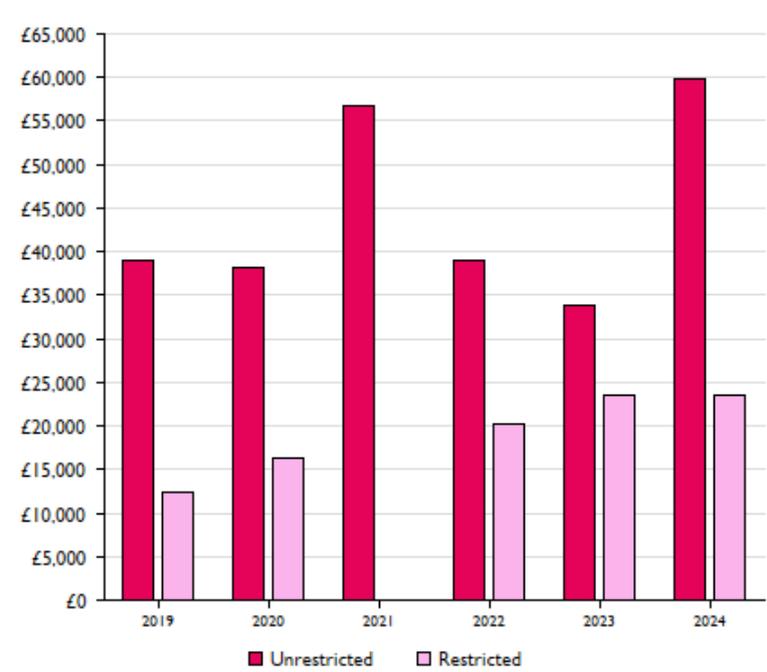
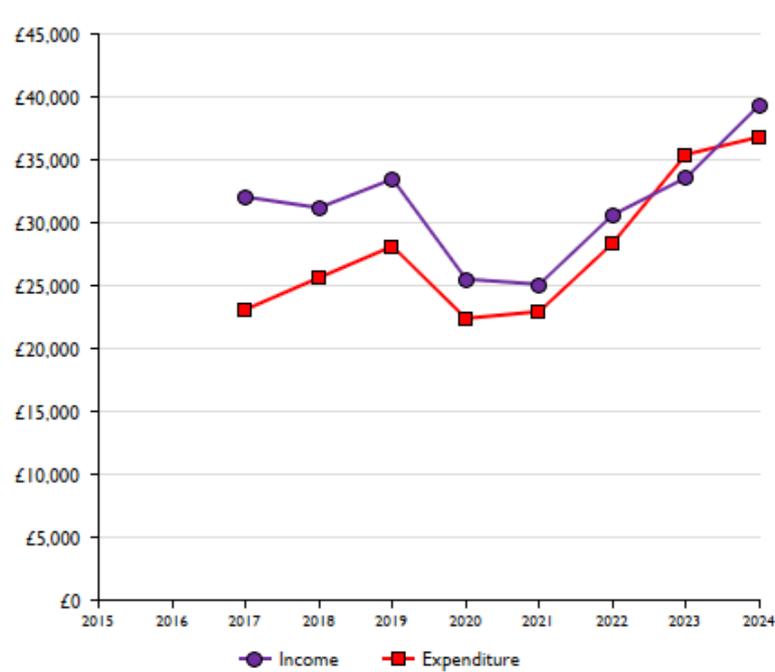
**£39,301**  
INCOME (2024)

**£36,744**  
EXPENDITURE (2024)

**£59,915**  
UNRESTRICTED RESERVES (2024 END)

The day to day operation of the church is funded mostly from regular giving but well supported events such as cream teas generate essential additional funds to maintain and improve this historic church building whilst providing valuable opportunities for outreach to allow us to be the body of Christ more effectively in this community.

We have always been keen to get away from the popular image that churches only reach out to the community when they need to raise funds for maintenance. With that motivation, events such as occasional summer open days, linked to the annual Heritage Weekend draw people into our church and provide an opportunity to meet with visitors who might not normally set foot through the door. It is an opportunity to 'give' to the village and everything from the refreshments to church tours are free to all.



# DO YOU FEEL CALLED TO JOIN US ON OUR JOURNEY OF FAITH?

GET IN TOUCH!



# DETAILS

To enquire about this post, please get in contact with



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## ST MARY MAGDALENE



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## ST LAURENCE



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