

Parish Profile 2024

All Saints' Church & the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,
Northampton



Introduction

Thank you for reading this profile. The role we are seeking to fill is a new one, built of a mission partnership – described in the sections that follow – that is being newly pioneered between two town-centre churches with many shared interests and aims. The appointment of a new Associate Priest to the two churches will be a key element in initiating this partnership, despite much good ground-work already accomplished, and this makes the both the role and the landscape challenging to describe. The overarching objective is to reignite mission and ministry at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, giving succour to those within the worshipping and wider community who are already giving so much, and to support the partnership with All Saints' Church in productive and imaginative ways.

So while good foundations exist upon which to reseed much of this, we have attempted not to overstate our plans but to describe the potential, in the hope that this role will prove an attractive prospect for a candidate seeking something different.

Vital Information

The Church

All Saints' Church was founded (possibly on Saxon foundations) by the Norman Earls of Northampton sometime during the twelfth-century, and enjoyed a place of prominence even from its earliest years. A substantial fire destroyed much of the church in September 1675, and the present church – which dates from 1680 – owes, among many benefactors who supported the town in the aftermath, much to the Patronage of King Charles II. A number of notable clergy served here, including the Reverend Edward Reynolds, to whom is generally attributed the General Thanksgiving in the Book of Common Prayer, and his son-in-law the Reverend John Conant.

Briefly a Collegiate Church created in the reign of King Henry VI, much of the Reformation Era brought a distinctly presbyterian style. Today this is very much changed, embracing a 'Prayer Book Catholic' tradition that places an emphasis on confident liturgy, regular celebration of the Eucharist, and many nourishing influences from the Catholic Movement in the Church of England. The Church building remains open for much of the day, seven days a week, and while there are, in term-time, ten acts of prayer and worship each week it continues to be a place of welcome and prayer for all who live, work, and learn in the town.

In recent years, All Saints' has become an **eclectic** and **diverse** church, reflecting both the communities from which people travel to worship here and those who live in an expanding residential sector in the town centre.

An **inner-urban community** of (in 2011) 2162 residents, with solid ecumenical and interfaith links. All Saints' is Northampton's and Northamptonshire's Civic Church, and besides the regular worshipping community of Sundays and Weekdays, welcomes worshippers from all across the County at moments of celebration and remembrance.

The Incumbent

The Reverend **Oliver Coss** BSc, MA, FRSA, SSC, was born in Germany in 1982. A computer science graduate, he trained for ordination at the **College of the Resurrection, Mirfield** and was made deacon by the Archbishop of York in 2007, and priest by the Bishop of Hull in 2008.

Father Oliver served his title at **St. Mary the Virgin, Cottingham** in York Diocese, and was Vicar of Small Heath in the Diocese of Birmingham between 2011-2016. He is married to **Eleanor**, a Teacher at Northampton College, and they have two daughters, **Rebekah & Jemimah**.

Father Oliver is, among other responsibilities, Rural Dean of Greater Northampton, a Chaplain in the Army Cadet Force, and County Padre of Northamptonshire Royal British Legion.

Parish Profile

All Saints' Church, Northampton

*A parish of the Diocese of Peterborough,
and under the Episcopal care of the Bishop of Richborough.*



The Bishop of Richborough visiting All Saints' in 2023

I. All Saints' Parish

Two Parish Churches lie within the boundary, the first is the Parish Church of All Saints' with St Katherine (reflecting the closure and demolition of the former church of St Katherine in 1953), and the second is the Parish Church of St. Peter. Made redundant in 1996, this church is cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust where, in an ancient coaching in presently under restoration, the new headquarters of the Trust is being established.

The tradition is Prayer Book Catholic / Anglo-Catholic.

Electoral roll number(s): 84

Pattern of Sunday worship

8am	Holy Communion (BCP 1662) (USA: 12)
10.30am	Choral Eucharist (CW Order I in Trad Language) (USA 85)
<i>occasionally</i>	Choral Evensong

Weekday services:

- A small group of lay people are involved in officiating at Choral Evensongs.
- The Friends of All Saints' Music, consisting mainly of choir parents and senior choristers, organize international choir tours and domestic choir trips, aided by our full-time Director of Music, and sessional Assistant Organist and Singing Tutor.
- A dedicated team of Churchwardens oversee the maintenance and opening of the church building, as well as acting as welcomers and guides to those visiting the church.
- A choral foundation (of some 40 members) sings several choral services through the week, and participates in a five-day per week music education programme. Partnerships exist with several schools, neighboring churches with a choral tradition, and with Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts Trust, of which All Saints is a specialist hub.
- All Saints is part of Northampton Society of Change Ringers, providing adult education courses, ringing experience, and ringing for services across four central Northampton Churches.

House, study and prayer groups:

- Choir activities listed above are complimented by annual confirmation courses for choristers and others seeking Christian Initiation.
- A book group meets on a monthly basis.
- Lent study groups have formed around lunchtime services and concerts.

Areas of particular mission and ministry:

- Tourism and hospitality
- Ministry in neighbouring schools including, but not limited to, Malcolm Arnold Academy, Spring Lane School, and All Saints' CEVA Primary School
- Supportive ministry (including on-call cover) to Northampton General Hospital.
- A substantial youth ministry through the choir and the music programme, producing several high-profile figures in the church music world and nurturing musical and ministerial vocations.
- An ad-hoc chaplaincy to local government organisations, sometimes formalized depending on the particular chairman or Mayor. A responsibility to discharge Civic Services, and to relate well to the Armed Forces community, both active and retired, across the county.
- An ideal place for interfaith



The Ukrainian Flag hanging from the Portico to mark the anniversary of the outbreak of war

engagement, both working alongside interfaith practitioners, and leaders from other faiths from among Islamic, Sikh, Hindu, Jewish, Ba’hai, and Buddhist communities active in the area. A ministry of persistent hospitality across religious difference.

- A place of recollection and remembrance for use in times of national mourning.
- Occasional collaborations with broadcasters such as the BBC. All Saints’ Church produced two editions of the national online service for the Church of England in 2021.

All Saints’ is among the most deprived in the country, ranking 483rd of 12382 parishes.

Opportunities for the development of fresh expressions of church:

- Development of a more intentional form of town centre chaplaincy, that would be directly supportive of businesses and enterprise in the area and offer a supportive figure to those tackling poverty and homelessness. Offering the church to those coming to work in Northampton as a place to come together.
- Ministry to the night-time economy, working with Northampton Guardians and Northampton Street Pastors, to explore ways in which the church building and community could contribute to safer streets and the pastoral care of those who find themselves in difficulty.
- Making better use of St Peter’s Church (made redundant and now in the hands of the Churches Conservation Trust) as a place of worship very close to the residential areas of Spring Boroughs, and the Heritage Gateway under intense development.



The Mayor of Northampton and 'King Charles' on Oak Apple Day.

Particular future plans already established:

- Good and productive relationships exist with Northampton Business Improvement District, who provide navigators and welcomers to the town, who work alongside police and community wardens. This would be an ideal foundation for a specific offer and welcome.
- Productive relationships with Street Pastors
- Productive relationship with the Churches Conservation Trust and relevant Friends group.



Solemn Blessing of the Fish and Chip Shop in 2018

Areas and types of co-operation with other local churches:

- Castle Hill Church (URC), Spring Boroughs. Shared leadership of Churches Together in Northampton. We support their foodbank and efforts in the estate.
- St. Anne's Church (Archdiocese of Russian Orthodox Churches in Western Europe) – Excellent working relationship, with share events and worship. St. Anne's often keep Pascha at All Saints' Church.
- Northampton (Roman Catholic) Cathedral.
- Mount Pleasant Baptist Church
- Other relationships with smaller churches and ecclesial communities.

The parish had formerly passed Resolutions A&B and requested alternative oversight under the Act of Synod. Following the deprecation of these provisions, it resolved in 2016 to write a letter of request under the terms of the House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests 2014, and receives ministry from the Archbishop's AEO, the Bishop of Richborough. The parish insists on maintaining an honoured place for those who do not agree within our community, and those we invite to preach, teach, or partner reflects that intention.

3. Vision and Priorities



The Blessing of Palms on Palm Sunday

All Saints' Church understands itself as a civic church, with a distinctive liturgical ethos highly influenced by so-called Prayer Book Catholicism and Anglo-Catholicism, with an unrivalled history among its peers. Its image is often synonymous, alongside one or two other iconic buildings such as the Guildhall or the Lift Tower, with the town of Northampton itself. The history of the church reaches into the story of the demise of Anglo-Saxon Britain, and the rise of Norman Christianity. In the post-Reformation/Restoration era it became a notable rebel against Laudianism and was ministered to by significant figures in the presbyterian movement. From a far more central churchmanship for much of the twentieth century, it has spent much of the last thirty years evolving up the candle by good teaching, preaching, and gentle conviction. Today it presents a confident liturgy, eucharistically-centred, and grounded in a belief that it has a duty of hospitality to all who cross its threshold.

The primary vocation of a church is to engage fully with the whole of the parish, regardless of race, creed or any other protected characteristic. In a civic church where the parochial area is vanishingly small, it's recognised that this vocation extends across the town and county of Northampton, as well as to those who simply alight upon our church. The outworking of this vocation comes through the following principles:

- The daily offering of Mass and the Divine Office is at the centre of our parish life, in which God is glorified and his people are nourished on word and sacrament.
- The proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ within the local and gathered community through sound teaching and vibrant worship.
- To deepen and encourage lay leadership in the parish, and encourage vocations to lay and ordained ministry.
- To encourage a serious and prayerful religiosity through regular mass attendance and the development of pastoral concern within church and society
- To make confident disciples of our young people and young adults.
- To continue to build our church upon solid social and financial foundations.
- To engage fully with the Diocese of Peterborough, and to make a positive contribution to the local church.
- To maintain our building as both a living centre of worship, and as a building of national significance.

These are the incumbent's and PCC's vision and priorities.



Merchant Navy Day 2021

4. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre



Cadets from A Company - LNR Army Cadet Force at Holy Sepulchre on Remembrance Sunday

As part of the implementation of the Northampton Deanery Plan, a new mission partnership is being pioneered between All Saints' Church and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Famous as one of England's few remaining Norman round churches, it shares with All Saints in the patrimony of the Norman Earls, and bears witness to the tradition of recapturing the architecture and significance of St Helena's great basilica of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. The church has the following significant assets:

- A grade-one listed building with a multi-faceted tourism and heritage draw.
- An excellent array of stained-glass windows, including one designed by Kempe.
- An 1880 pipe organ designed by John Stringer of Hanley, Stoke on Trent, which is now in urgent need of restoration. It was awarded a Grade II* Historic Organ Certificate in 2003 by the British Institute of Organ Studies.
- A small but highly dedicated worshipping community, who have worked hard during the interregnum to care for their church and their plant, not least through seeking partnerships with those who can help and support them. This is particularly exemplified in partnerships between parish officers of the two churches, and work with the Community Payback Team who have made a substantial difference to the environment.
- A very large complex of church halls, including some that have been used as domestic accommodation, with much present social capital in serving the community, and much potential to be developed.
- Three charitable trusts that support the maintenance of the church building and the mission of the parish, including the Holy Sepulchre Restoration Trust which has raised £1.3m for the church over the course of three decades.
- A network of heritage organisations that have an interest in the broad and specific history of the church, for example the Western Front Association. The church

contains the regimental chapel of the Northamptonshire Regiment, which was merged in 1960 with the Royal Lincolnshire Regiment to become the 2nd East Anglian Regiment (now known, after further mergers, as the Royal Anglian Regiment).

- A location in a part of Northampton that is presently the subject of a public consultation pending urban renewal and development, and into which there has been a growth in new residential accommodation.
- Other resident churches meeting in the halls, mainly drawn from African and Pentecostal Christian traditions.
- A part-time administrator, supporting dedicated wardens and volunteers, who also oversees the life of the parish halls.
- A large churchyard full of trees and flowers and natural habitats with opportunities for environmental projects.
- A local amateur community theatre group uses the church for winter performances.
- Community groups such as the Over Sixties, Over 50's Keep Fit, and Friday Friendship resident in the community halls.

Future

- A committed team of people are meeting regularly to consider the future of the community and building, inspired by the Five Marks of Mission and the treasures that have been entrusted to them. They are seeking to explore new ideas and ways of working.
- The church has recently been strengthening links with the community and heritage organisations. They have a wonderful relationship with the Probation Service and West Northamptonshire Park Rangers. Links with a local school are currently being created. The churchyard is also to be used as an outdoor therapy space in the summer months.
- The team is keen to find new uses for the church and church hall and to utilise the space more effectively.

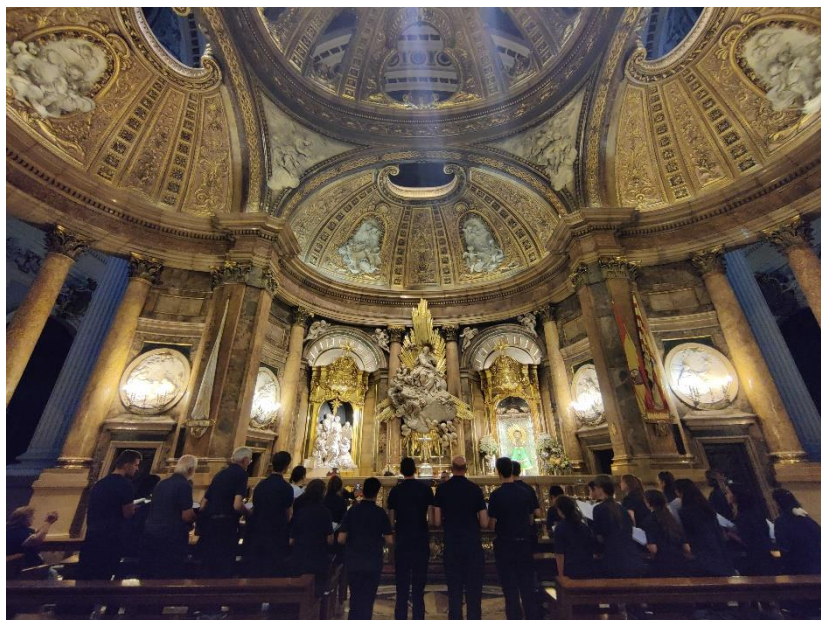


The Round Nave of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with the 'modern' nave in the background.

5. Role of the Assistant Priest in Future Plans

As the mission partnership described in the preceding section develops, the appointment of a new associate priest is a key part of the realisation of all the potentials we hope to exploit. Key among them are the sharing of resources, the development of an integrated tourism and heritage plan for churches (alongside the Churches Conservation Trust, and their new headquarters within the Benefice), the development of meaningful support and partnership with those providing anti-poverty services, and the pastoral care of armed forces personnel, dependants, and veterans. We hope that the key tasks will be:

- Working with the incumbent, and with a potential training curate, in re-establishing evangelism and the proclamation of the Gospel.
- Re-establishing consistent pastoral care and a worshipping presence at the Holy Sepulchre, which complements and adds to the ministry of All Saints. Developing, alongside the worshipping community, meaningful and appropriate worship that will aid leading the parish into growth.
- Promoting meaningful relationships and sharing between parish officers and administrations, enabling the benefice to function fruitfully.
- Attending carefully to the principles of Mutual Flourishing, serving within one context where a resolution has been passed under the House of Bishops Declaration and another where, under the previous incumbent, it has been designated an 'Inclusive Church'.
- Working with tourism and heritage agencies, and with statutory bodies, to develop the place of the Holy Sepulchre in the town's heritage profile.
- Serving a neighbourhood in which there is acute deprivation and social need.
- Working with the parish to fulfil the potential and objectives outlined in 'Unleashing Potential', a 2019 report into the future of the church. This is available on request.



All Saints' Choir on Tour in Zaragoza Cathedral in 2023

8. Accommodation:

Two parsonages exist as viable accommodation for a new Associate Priest. The successful candidate will receive the support to determine which would best suit their needs.

10. Additional Information

Expenses: The candidate can expect to have all reasonable expenses reimbursed, up to a nominal limit of £1800 per annum. Business telephone calls and telephone rental will be paid in full, as will water charges on the parsonage. The diocese is responsible for maintaining the house, and paying for Council Tax.

Locality: Northampton is, at present, a constantly evolving town, and an exciting place to be. There are innumerable avenues for future ministry, and a wide breadth of potential experience. Fast trains connect the town to London and Birmingham, both roughly within an hour's journey, and to further travel to national and international destinations.

11. Contacts

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