



Church of the Good Shepherd, Poole
'Knowing and Sharing the love of Jesus'
Church Profile 2024

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Introduction to the vacancy by the Bishop of Sherborne

This post offers an excellent opportunity for the right candidate to bring their own skills and gifts to a varied and welcoming parish.

The Church of the Good Shepherd (COGS) is in an urban setting within the growing conurbation of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. The parish has a mixed population with many long-term residents, as well as those who have moved into both private and social housing, and includes a large, settled travellers' population. Ministry is varied: there are excellent opportunities for outreach into the local community as well as with neighbouring churches, and a partnership with the main parish church of St John's.

Poole has its areas of need as well as areas of plenty. Local churches are involved in social action across the town, where food banks work amongst those in need and projects to alleviate debt and addiction are much appreciated. There are good partnerships between agencies and the churches of all denominations play an important part in community life. With the development of the new church building there will be significant opportunities for the right leader to develop COGS' ministry outwards to be a church with very much an open door for all.

We are seeking a pastor and a pioneer, someone willing to get to know and nurture the current congregation, and to further develop the church's mission through welcome, hospitality and pastoral care. This would suit someone who would like to, within the hours available, see where the Holy Spirit is leading and to respond through increased partnership and co-operation. We are looking for a priest with a commitment to build on all that is already happening and to continue the important community links, seeing the huge potential to work with others to make a difference.

The parish sits within the wider Poole and North Bournemouth deanery. The aim of the Area Dean and Assistant Area Dean is to create a supportive environment for clergy and lay leaders of all traditions, to develop local training and to encourage parishes to work together as much as possible for the good of the wider area. There are a number of active retired priests in the deanery who get involved in the life of the local church and offer cover, and their gifts, when required.

This post offers much for those who enjoy being near the coast and a town, with good links north, east and west. Ministry in Dorset is rewarding and enjoyable. In recent years significant changes have been made in the way clergy are supported and encouraged, leading to a greater sense of collegiality. We may in the future explore a bid for national church funding to further enable mission and ministry in our coastal towns, particularly enhancing areas of deprivation and whoever comes to COGS will be important to this.

Should you wish to know more about this post please do not hesitate to pay a discrete visit to take a look around or contact the Vicar of St Johns, the Revd David Price (01202-740235) or the Archdeacon of Sherborne (01305-269074). We look forward to hearing from you.

Bishop Karen

The church is looking for a part time Minister who is:

- An evangelical with a pastor's heart;
- A person walking with Jesus through the ups and downs of life;
- A teacher of the Bible and leader of relaxed informal worship;
- Someone with both vision and adaptability, who would develop and nurture us;
- A person of prayer, dependent on God's grace and power;
- Someone with a passion for children and families, and rebuilding links with local schools.

If you think that could be you, please read on ...

Welcome & introduction

Welcome to this profile of the Church of the Good Shepherd in Poole. It has been written to give a brief description of church life and to help you consider whether COGS (the way we abbreviate the church name) might be a good match for the person you are. We hope you will prayerfully consider whether this might be the next step for you in your life and ministry.

COGS is part of the parish of Heatherlands, having been planted by the parish church, St John's, in 1931 just before a major expansion of housing in the northern part of the parish. Heatherlands is the most populous parish in the Diocese of Salisbury, with a population of around 16,000.

The covid years were challenging for COGS. When covid began, the church rapidly embraced live-streaming for services, prayer meetings etc but the Minister unexpectedly had to finish his ministry for health reasons. Since then the church has been led by the Vicar of Heatherlands and the COGS wardens, each playing a part in leading services alongside visiting clergy and lay leaders.

Vision and values

*How can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?
And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?
Romans 10.14*

The mission statement and strapline of the two churches in Heatherlands parish is 'Knowing and sharing the love of Jesus'. Our aim is to be churches for everyone in the community and a Christian presence in Upper Parkstone. The churches aim to reach and serve the local

community, helping people find faith and grow in it. We are committed to serving Jesus in ways which are welcoming, relevant and user-friendly and being places where people of all ages and situations find something for them.

COGS and St John's have a clear evangelical tradition. The parish's patron is the Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS) and the two churches have worship and activities which are Bible-based, engaging in Jesus' name with the local community. COGS and St John's work together offering 'Christianity Explored' and 'Hope Explored' and preparing candidates for confirmation.

One exciting aspect of the new minister's role will be to lead the congregation as it transitions to its new building – construction will be almost complete when the new minister arrives. The PCC is managing the project and has put a funding package in place, and we are looking for someone enthused by the prospect of leading COGS from the old to the new, alongside recovery from the impact of covid, partnering with the team at St John's, Heatherlands.

Poole

Poole Harbour is the second largest natural harbour in the world (after Sydney!). It has been a place of activity since the time of Christ, and the first thing one encounters when entering Poole Museum is a 2,000 year old log boat. The current town of Poole is about 800 years old, and waves of expansion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have given it a current population of about 153,000.

Following a merger of local authorities in 2019, Poole is part of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole unitary authority known as BCP (confusing for some Anglicans!). The conurbation is substantial, with a population around 400,000. Poole blurs into Bournemouth a mile or so east of the Church of the Good Shepherd.

It is surprising to some that Poole is in Salisbury Diocese but that most of Bournemouth is in Winchester - this reflects the fact that Poole has historically been in Dorset but most of Bournemouth was in Hampshire until a 1974 change of county boundaries.

COGS and St John's are part of the Poole & North Bournemouth Deanery, which contains 21 parishes and the pioneering Poole Missional Communities, serving a population of 180,000 people. The new minister would be part of the Deanery Chapter of clergy meeting regularly for mutual encouragement and support. The current Deanery Plan includes objectives of developing partnerships with other local churches, avoiding working in 'silos' and investing in the growth of God's kingdom.

Rossmore

Rossmore is the area in which COGS is located. It is an area of mixed local authority and privately rented properties as well as owner-occupied homes. There are small shops, primary and secondary schools, a Pupil Referral Unit, a library, community centre, pubs and an area of heathland.

Rossmore is quite a disadvantaged area, with some portions in the lowest 10% nationwide according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and the remainder in the lowest 20%: this is reflected in the issues and challenges which COGS experiences. There are about 2,500 settled travellers living in the area, and the church has good relations with local travellers. For this reason, COGS was chosen in 2023 as the venue for the Archbishop of Canterbury to meet with travellers from across the county.

The church is well regarded in the community, and engages constructively with local issues and needs. It is a hub for some aspects of community life and a place of welcome and acceptance for many.

Sunday mornings at COGS

*Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs.
Psalm 100.2*

The current service programme at COGS sees one service each Sunday morning, at 10.30am. Current congregations are depleted compared with pre-covid, currently usually 30-40, with over 60 individuals attending over the course of a month, plus some people who have yet to re-emerge after lockdowns etc.

The Sunday service is usually a Service of the Word. Holy Communion takes place once a month, currently when the Vicar of St John's leads the service. (Services at St John's are usually 9am and 10.30, so communion is available in the parish each Sunday).

Worship at COGS is relaxed and informal. During the covid outbreak, the main musician had to leave due to ill health and he is now playing less frequently. Currently most Sundays, hymns are sung using lyric videos. Singing is lively and committed. Two members of COGS are trained as Lay Worship Leaders, and there has been good lay involvement during the vacancy.

There are few 'occasional offices' at COGS so the pattern of services focuses on building up the regular worshipping community.



Pastoral care

Love your neighbour as yourself. (Matthew 22.39)

Since the vacancy arose at COGS, some aspects of pastoral ministry have been covered by the Vicar of Heatherlands supported by the COGS wardens. Additionally, there is a married couple in the congregation at COGS who are Lay Pastoral Assistants and make a major contribution to pastoral care of the church community and local people.

With the combination of lay leaders at COGS and effective team working with St John's, the pastoral 'load' for the COGS minister is not excessive and could be managed and built up within the time available. At present there are very few baptisms and weddings at COGS and slightly more funerals, about one a quarter.

Children and Young People's ministry

*Let the children come to me and do not hinder them
for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.
(Mark 10.14)*

The ministry of COGS to children and young people is an important element of church life. The most vibrant part of children's ministry at COGS currently is Boys Brigade & Girls Association on Wednesday evenings, led by the Children & Families Worker from St John's and volunteer helpers for children aged 5 to 11. When members of the BBGA group reach age 11, some of them 'graduate' to the 'YOYO' ('You're Only Young Once') youth group run by the St John's team.

Sunday ministry with children and families was suspended during the covid pandemic and needs rebuilding, including links with the three local schools: we still have an occasional link with one school and the other two are open to future involvement. What COGS currently lacks is a leader with motivation and energy, who could build/gather a team around them. There is both need and opportunity here, highly relevant for a prospective new Minister.

Ministry with Older People

Even to your old age and grey hairs, I am He, I am He who will sustain you. (Isaiah 46.4)

Older people are strongly represented at COGS. Available data indicate that about one in six pensioners in the parish experience poverty, already above the national average, even before the current cost-of-living crisis.

‘Home from Home’ is the name of COGS’ Friday lunch for Senior Citizens from the local community. This is currently monthly rather than weekly due to a reduction in the number of volunteers, and there is potential for further development.

Safeguarding

At COGS we are committed to both complying with safeguarding guidelines and also nurturing a culture of safeguarding where church is a safe place for all. Whilst safeguarding is naturally important in our children’s work, it is numerically more significant at present in our work with vulnerable adults, who constitute a significant part of the congregation. We are looking for a Minister who will lead us in developing safeguarding as an important aspect of church life.

A new church building

*Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain.
Psalm 127.1*

One aspect of the new Minister’s role will be the exciting task of transitioning to the new church building, for which construction is well underway and completion is expected this summer. The project to replace the previous building on the site embodies trust in God and faith for the future, and will enhance the worship space, also offering a ‘multi-user’ aspect which is much more attractive than the previous timber building.

The project to develop COGS has the full support of St John’s and the parish. The PCC has agreed to borrow the money needed to plug the gap between the construction cost and funds raised, as well as allocating parish resources to fund construction. This is a substantial commitment which will remain in place over the next twenty years as the loan is repaid.

The story of COGS began in 1931: the church was planted before the main road and most local houses even existed, but with prayerful vision for reaching and serving the new community which was then being planned. A ‘temporary’ timber building was constructed in 1931 and was used for much longer than expected (92 years!), but the ravages of time were inevitable, leading to the design of a new building, in close cooperation with the Diocese. The original building was demolished as the first task in creating the new church building.

Just south of the church building, a brick-built hall was added in the 1950s (this is the venue for worship services and other activities during construction, so the original windows were recently replaced with this winter in mind!)

The Minister: why half stipend OR ‘house for duty’?

The post being advertised is either half stipend (while living in your own house) or ‘house for duty’. The parish house could either be occupied ‘house for duty’ by the new minister or rented out to generate half a stipend.

The house: 72 Alexandra Road

The house is about a mile from the church, in a part of Parkstone with less socio-economic challenges than Rossmore and with larger living spaces than can be found in the more densely populated area around the church. It has three reception rooms, a study and five bedrooms.



Picture: 72 Alexandra Road

One parish, two churches



COGS is part of Heatherlands parish, in which the parish church is St John's in Ashley Road. Although formally still the ‘daughter church’ of St John's, COGS is regarded more as a ‘sister’

and partner in the gospel. The Minister of COGS is an integral part of the parish team and attends the weekly parish staff meeting with the Vicar and St John's Children & Families Worker.

As described under 'Vision & Values' the two churches share a mission statement: 'Knowing and sharing the love of Jesus'. There is a common PCC (which meets quarterly) and each church has a District Church Council (which meets in the months between PCC meetings). During the vacancy period, COGS has benefitted significantly from its relationship with St John's, with regular visits from both the Vicar and lay leaders there and coordination of the two churches' service programmes. One aspect of the role for the new Minister of COGS is that one Sunday a month he/she will 'swap' duties with the Vicar of St John's.

Leaders at COGS



Could this be you?



Rev David Price, Vicar of Heatherlands



Bex Simpkins, Parish Children & Families Worker



Mrs Lynne Young, warden of COGS and Lay Worship Leader



Mrs Mary James, administrator of COGS



Henry & Caroline Harley, Lay Pastoral Assistants

For further information about the two churches, you may like to visit our websites:

www.cogspoole.com
www.stjohnspoole.com

Appendix 1: Church finances

*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
Luke 12.34*

The Heatherlands parish share has been paid in full for the last twelve years, with the majority paid by St John's. At COGS, the building project has naturally been the focus for recent giving and this has resulted in a deficit for general ministry, but we remain confident in God's provision and guidance.

A brief summary of COGS finances in 2022 is shown below, recognising that this was an 'unusual' year due to reduced activity and the lack of a minister at COGS.

COGS finances	
Income:	
Planned giving	£23,955
Gift Aid	£4,704
Lettings (big reduction after covid)	£2,396
Income from sale of 35 Stanfield Road	£8,292
Other income	£4,178
Total	£43,525
Expenditure:	
Contribution to parish share	£36,096
Administration	£3,098
Church running costs	£7,052
Halls running costs	£3,939
Total	£50,185
Reserves in hand at year end:	£12,692