

BRANKSOME'S NEW BEGINNING: Spring 2025

Our dear St Aldhelm's Church began among the poor: labourers' families employed in the local clay industry. Our Church was intended to be a glimpse of heaven amid smoky, busy Branksome.

Today, the potteries are replaced by the Redlands Shopping Precinct, and the smoke of kilns, gas works and trains, by the fumes of traffic around Pottery Junction. But ***St Aldhelm's remains, a breath of fresh air, peace and prayer*** amid the bustle and anxiety of our changed, but no less challenging context.

Dear friends, in 2018 we appealed for support from our members and were able to turn financial deficit into surplus. We unlocked the doors and became 'Open for Prayer', a commitment that has clarified and amplified our vision to be a welcoming, inclusive and, most of all, a prayerful Church. The Tuesday Recitals' broad repertoire and generous hospitality reflect that vision – as does the Christmas Tree Festival that for so long has drawn and touched many thousands of visitors. The Covid pandemic closed Churches but from ours the Angleus bell continued to proclaim the comfort of Christ's incarnation to the isolated, fearful residents of our parish. When the lockdown eased ours was among the very first Churches to enable people to safely gather for worship amid its large and sacred space. Requests for prayer began to be an almost daily indication of the hearts' cries of local people. We began to notice an increased diversity amid our congregations: families, young adults, even teenagers, began to explore the faith as expressed through our traditional, sacramental worship combined with brief but searching and honest sermons.

Now as we prepare for Fr Pip's departure to another sphere of ministry, ***we invite you all to review and renew your affiliation to this remarkable Church.***

First, we can together ensure that St Aldhelm's finances are secure, so that the Diocese may confidently appoint a new Vicar - and potential candidates may apply knowing that ours is a supportive and sustainable Church. Neither we nor the Church of England receive any income from the state. We raise funds through the Hall and by means of social and other events but by far the biggest source of our income is each and all of us, St Aldhelm's members and supporters. Please consider how much, and by what means, you can give so that the Church and its future can be sustained. Every gift by every means is valued and precious but most helpful to us in budgeting is the dependable income derived from Standing Orders or – best of all – the Parish Giving Scheme (which saves our unpaid Treasurer so much extra administration.)

Secondly, using the attached form, ***we invite you to reflect on some of the ways by which you already or can in future support St Aldhelm's.*** Among all those, prayer may be least visible but most efficacious...

Our giving – financial and other – is not the payment of a subscription. It is, more simply, ***a joyful act of thanksgiving for a God from all good things flow,*** who reveals in Jesus his heart opened in love towards us, who forgives us our sins and heals all our infirmities, who loves us to death – and to life that conquers death.

Our services will explore this theme on Sundays 16th and 23rd March, and we invite you to bring your completed Stewardship Pledges to the ***Gift Morning on Saturday 29th March*** beginning with a simple Mass at 9am and concluding at 12 noon with the Angleus – but of course you can convey pledges to us at any time and by any means!

Stewardship Response Form

As we prepare for Fr Pip's departure to another sphere of ministry,
we invite you to review and renew your affiliation to this remarkable church
as we look ahead to new beginnings at Branksome.

MY PLEDGE to NEW BEGINNINGS at BRANKSOME

Tick

Pray I commit to regularly praying for the financial health of our church	
Review I will prayerfully review my current financial giving	
Give I will join the Parish Giving Scheme https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/home/ parish code 340634244 I will make a one-off donation	
Time I wish to take on a voluntary role (Please speak to a member of the church team)	
Talents I would like to offer my skills (e.g. gardening, admin, IT, DIY etc.)	
Bequest I have left a gift in my Will /I pledge to leave a gift to St Aldhelm's in my Will	
Keeping in touch I wish to receive the weekly newsletter and occasional information by email (please provide email* address below)	

Please complete your details below & feel free talk to a member of the church stewardship team about your pledge on our Gift Morning at St Aldhelm's on 29th March 2025, 9am-12pm.

Name

Address

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*Email

Phone

Thank-you for your valuable role in shaping New Beginnings at Branksome!

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