

St Mary Redcliffe – Parish Profile

This document seeks to give a flavour of St Mary Redcliffe and the texture of its ministry. Its contents are structured as follows

- **Ministry and Mission (paragraphs 1 to 13)**
This section looks at St Mary Redcliffe's ministry through commitment to regular and good quality worship and its four areas of focus: parish, workers, students and visitors.
- **Worship and liturgy (paragraphs 14 to 24)**
This section covers ST Mary Redcliffe's liberal catholic churchmanship, the regular offices and pattern of services.
- **Music (paragraphs 25 to 31)**
This section covers the different aspects of music at SMR and its importance.
- **People – lay involvement (paragraphs 32 and 33)**
This section covers the widespread involvement of the laity in the running of St Mary Redcliffe and the desire to increase this.
- **People – clergy involvement (paragraph 34)**
Paragraph 34 covers the commitment of supporting clergy to the life of St Mary Redcliffe
- **Place and Location (paragraphs 35 to 43)**
This section covers the nature of the parish and especially the involvement with local schools.
- **The Building (paragraphs 44 to 50)**
This section covers the church, the organ, the bells and the Undercroft.
- **Administration and Finance (paragraphs 51 to 54)**
This section covers the parish office, the paid posts at St Mary Redcliffe and the charitable trusts and what they fund at SMR.

Also on this cd-rom are:

- A Year at Redcliffe
- Past, present and future
- Diocesan Strategy
- Bristol South Deanery strategy
- Details of the vicarage

Our website gives more information about St Mary Redcliffe. The address is www.stmaryredcliffe.co.uk

Ministry and mission

1. The St Mary Redcliffe mission statement is “Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness”
2. The Christian community has worshipped continuously on this site for nearly 900 years. We seek to proclaim the gospel, maintain public worship and serve God in this place. Our ministry is to:
 - the parish which is mainly in an urban priority area
 - newcomers moving into new apartments in the area
 - workers coming into the city each day
 - 100students living in rented accommodation in the parish. This number will rise by a further 300-400 in the next eighteen months. The students come from University of Bristol, University of West of England, the City of Bristol College and Filton College.
 - visitors from across the world
3. The clergy team at the church includes a non-stipendiary priest and a number of retired clergy who assist.
4. We are in the South Bristol Deanery which in common with all Diocese of Bristol deaneries is developing a deanery strategy. For some time we have been considering where our future partnerships should be: deanery, the immediate city centre and the wider city community
5. We have concluded that as well as care of our own parish we have an important future in the area to the north of the church building – the immediate city centre – and in the wider life of Bristol as a whole. In the document which looks at areas we wish to explore we think it important to form partnerships with those church and secular bodies that will complement our ministry rather than be confined by existing structures. We care for a large and significant church which attracts many visitors, situated at the heart of a great city. Bristol has vibrant civic, community, educational, professional, economic and business aspects to its life. As a church community we wish to engage fully with that wider city life. This role has been a distinctive and valued part of our ministry and mission for a long time and is, for example, demonstrated by our civic links, such as the annual Rush Sunday civic service.

6. Whilst we have that wider role we are also rooted in the lives of our local community. Our present worshipping congregation reflects an eclectic and healthy diversity. These factors help us to ensure that we do not become the narrow preserve of “the great and the good” but rather we are a place for all God’s people attracting those from the many diverse communities in the city.
7. Our close physical proximity to areas of considerable social deprivation offers us a particular challenge. In the recent past there has been a part-time parish worker but this position is now vacant and needs to be reviewed. Our current main social welfare outreach is the Redcliffe Care programme, which offers care and support to people over 70 (from within the parish and from the wider central and south Bristol areas). That programme operates a weekly Lunch Club in partnership with the City Council’s social services section and the Bush, a local authority operated specialist training and development centre for those with learning difficulties. It also provides three or four special daytime services followed by refreshments for the local older population (e.g. at Christmas, Easter, around mid summer’s day and at harvest). A Christmas lunch, followed by entertainment and tea, is provided in the Church Centre for those who would otherwise be alone on Christmas Day.
8. There is a monthly Monday bring and share lunch to provide fellowship and support. It meets in a parishioner’s home.
9. The St Mary Redcliffe branch of the Mothers’ Union meets monthly. Redcliffe Guild is a meeting group which provides fellowship and meets twice monthly.
10. Our present youth work includes a choir and a club for choristers, a youth group, Rainbows, Brownies and Guide groups, Sunday school and crèche provision. A recent initiative is First Sunday, once a month parallel worship in the Undercroft for parents and children, mirroring the 9.30am worship taking place in the church but with words and music more accessible to a younger age group.
11. We wish to find ways of developing our involvement in social welfare activities and work with children, young people and families.
12. We also recognise our position as part of the global community of God’s world. At home we look for ways in which we can create community dialogues, for example our Journey into Science project which hosts various events each year. We seek to address the needs of that wider world by supporting the principal Anglican mission agencies (CMS and USPG), by organising an annual Lent Project (usually in support of a

cause in the developing world), by maintaining overseas links with Christian communities, letter writing for Action by Christians Against Torture, supporting or organising other appeals and seasonal focuses and responding to particular needs and emergencies. In addition, we provide exhibition space to charities and community groups and donate specific service collections to charitable and mission purposes (for example at Christmas).

13. To our core congregation, to those who live, study or work in this parish and to those who visit the church or pass through it, we offer welcome, support in times of joy and sadness and in the everyday experiences of life, together with the sacraments and offices of the church.

Worship and liturgy

14. Our public worship and liturgy are of central importance to us and are firmly rooted in the Liberal Catholic tradition. Accordingly vestments are worn at all celebrations of the Eucharist, with cassock and surplice for officiants at other services. Incense is used occasionally on weekday Principal Feasts and Principal Holy Days.
15. Considerable care is taken in the preparation and delivery of public worship, reflecting the importance we attach to it as a key part of our ministry and mission. We aim to achieve and maintain excellence and dignity without pomposity and challenging and thought provoking preaching.
16. Music is central to our principal Sunday services (9.30am Eucharist, Matins and Evensong are sung) and to the celebration of Principal Feasts and Principal Holy Days. In addition, sung Eucharists are offered on Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day, with the office of compline on All Saints Day. There is full liturgical provision for Holy Week.
17. St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School regularly use the church for school services and a number of outside organisations hold services here, for example carol services.
18. There is significant lay involvement in the provision of public worship; for example in the 9.30 am Sunday Eucharist approximately sixty volunteers are involved as sidesmen, in the choir, as crucifers, acolytes, readers, intercessors, Sunday school teachers and licensed Eucharistic ministrants, in addition to our vergers and staff musicians, whose principal responsibilities are focused on public worship.

19. The current forms of service chosen for use are:-

- Sunday 8am Eucharist Common Worship Order One (traditional language)
- Sunday 9.30am Eucharist Common Worship Order One (traditional language)
- Weekday Eucharists and Principal Feasts and Principal Holy Days Common Worship Order One (contemporary language)
- Sunday Choral Mattins Book of Common Prayer
- Sunday Evensong Book of Common Prayer

20. The current pattern of services is:-

Sundays and average attendances since 31 January 2005 – an (*) denoted the figures include choir and officiants

- 8am Holy Communion - average attendance 14
- 9.30am Sung Eucharist - average attendance 229 (*)
- 11.15am Mattins - average attendance 45 (*)
- 6.30pm Sung Evensong - average attendance 70 (*)

Weekdays

- Tuesdays 12.30pm Holy Communion
- Alternate Thursdays 12.30pm Holy Communion with Ministry of Healing and Anointing
- Prior to the interregnum we were able to offer Holy Communion every Tuesday and Thursday at 12.30pm, and on Wednesday at 7.30am and 12.30pm.

21. **Occasional offices are all derived from Common Worship.**

- **Baptisms** 36 (from June '04 to June '05)
- **Weddings** and Blessings 15 (from June '04 to June '05)
- **Funerals** 8 (from June '04 to June '05)

22. There are also regular prayer and house groups run by lay leaders. The prayer group meets each Tuesday at lunch time. It prays for the work of this church. There is one house group which meets monthly in the evening for Christian study which might be based on the Bible or some other literature. There is a Bible study group that meets monthly during the day.
23. There would normally be a lent course or a series of lectures or sermons. This year this was run by visiting preachers.
24. There are regular adult and young peoples' confirmation classes.

Music at St Mary Redcliffe

25. The role of music is central to our worship and liturgy.
26. The musical team consists of the Director of Music, Assistant Organist (presently held as a job share arrangement), Organ Scholar and Organ Student. The main choir consists of 20 boys aged 8 – 14 and 20 men aged 15 and above. Choir practices are held on Tuesdays and Fridays. Vocal coaching is provided for choristers. The choir sings at Sunday services (other than during school holidays), and undertakes regular tours to UK cathedrals with occasional overseas visits.
27. There is also a mixed voice adult Chamber Choir, which sings one or two services per term and the Friends Occasional Choir which sings during school holidays. A number of visiting choirs also provide services during the summer.
28. The PCC has approved the establishment of a Girls' choir (ages 11-18) in September 2005. The choir will sing one Thursday Evensong at 5.30pm during term time, following its practice, plus occasional Sunday services (perhaps once a month).
29. In addition, a wide range of musical events, concerts and recitals occur throughout the year. Due to the size of the church and its favourable acoustics, a number of outside musical groups perform here regularly (e.g. Bristol Bach Choir, Bristol Chamber Choir, "Exultate" Singers, school ensembles).

30. There is a regular lunchtime recital series on Thursday lunchtimes in school terms. In addition, a young talent concert has been organised every Mothering Sunday. Recordings are made approximately every three years. The music team arranges celebrity concerts (choral and instrumental) and the four day summer music festival, held to coincide with our Patronal Festival in July. The Friends of the Music organisation provides some support for these activities.

31. Maintaining and developing our musical activities is a priority.

People – lay involvement

32. Significant progress has been made in widening lay leadership and encouraging lay involvement in all aspects of the church's life (particularly during the last five years). We now have large numbers of committed and active volunteers who participate in every aspect of our life:

- preparation and delivery of worship
- serving at the altar (Members of the Guild of Servers)
- providing music (liturgical and other)
- bell ringing
- providing our ministry of welcome to worshippers and visitors (stewards and sidesmen)
- providing pastoral care to our core worshipping community and the parish in general and special ministries to the elderly and those who are vulnerable or have special needs (e.g. Redcliffe Care and its Lunch Club and the Christmas lunch);
- undertaking work with children and young people
- ensuring the care, maintenance, safety and security of the premises
- providing publicity, communications and administrative support
- participating in mission outreach.

33. The PCC is composed of 24 elected members, 5 deanery synod members and 2 church wardens ex officio. It meets 11 times a year and through various sub committees supports SMR's ministry.

People – clergy involvement

34. St Mary Redcliffe has long supported priestly formation. In recent times the people of St Mary Redcliffe have put forward a successful candidate for ordination about every three years. The stipendiary staff is supported by non-stipendiary and retired priests who enjoy serving and worshipping here. All are wholly compliant with the liturgical and pastoral discipline of St Mary Redcliffe.

Place and location

35. St Mary Redcliffe is the only Anglican church in this **urban parish**, close to the centre of Bristol. We are close to the historic floating harbour, the city centre and main railway station, as well as the central commercial and shopping areas of the city. It is set prominently on rising ground, on land outside the old city wall and features in the general and the maritime history and heritage of the city (including the nearby Redcliffe Wharf and 13th century Portwall). The physical setting is of both national and regional importance, for example the church remains within the largely unchanged boundaries of the building's original medieval plan.

36. The **parish** is very diverse and its population is expanding. This is largely due to conversions of former industrial and commercial buildings to multiple occupancy permanent residential use or to student accommodation. There is also regeneration of large new commercial and business premises, housing major firms. In addition there is a mix of smaller commercial premises, including shops and smaller offices, with hotels and leisure facilities, schools and Bristol General Hospital within the parish boundaries.

37. The present **residential population** of the parish is approximately 2,500 – 3,000 and expanding rapidly. The existing residential buildings are very mixed in age and character, ranging from local authority owned social housing to high quality private leasehold dwellings.

38. At the date of writing this Profile, the **electoral roll** of the church had 354 names on it of which 51 reside within the parish boundaries. The regular worshipping community comes in part from the immediate local area but also from across the whole city and well beyond, as shown in the distribution map in A Year at Redcliffe p 24.

39. We maintain and wish to strengthen our existing links with all our **local schools:**

- Redcliffe Early Years Centre
- St Mary Redcliffe Primary School [VC]
- St Mary Redcliffe and Temple Secondary School [VA]. This is the only Church of England secondary school in the diocese

40. The incumbent is a foundation governor ex officio of St Mary Redcliffe and Temple CE VA School and ex officio Chair of the Trustees of the St Mary Redcliffe with Temple Educational Charity. The incumbent is also a foundation governor ex officio and a Trustee of St Mary Redcliffe CE VC Primary School. Pastoral care for the pupils and staff in these schools has been an important part of our ministry.

41. The incumbent is also ex officio a trustee of a number of other small local charities.

42. The Anglican and Methodist communities share a **church hall and associated amenities** adjoining the Methodist church, to the south east of St Mary Redcliffe. We fund two thirds of the costs of this facility and provide members of the management committee. The process of planning a successor building and facilities on the site is ongoing, involving discussions between not only the two church communities and local community representative bodies but also the charitable trust which owns the adjoining **sheltered accommodation for the elderly** (Dr White's Close). There is a six unit **almshouse for single elderly ladies** immediately behind the church (Fry's House of Mercy), the church community provides the trustees for the charitable trust responsible for this. Chaplaincy is provided to both Dr White's and Fry's House by the clergy of the church.

43. St Mary Redcliffe is an active member of the **Greater Churches Group**. We have hosted summer visits from Cathedral Camps.

The building

44. The present church building is one of international importance. It was built over a 300 year period but largely from the early 13th to the 15th centuries. The oldest surviving parts date from 1115 although the majority of the building is 15th century. There were alterations and restoration activities in the Victorian era, for example the rebuilt spire is of that age.
45. The church is a grade 1 listed building. However, the present environs do not befit the quality and importance of the building, nor facilitate access to it. We are actively engaged in the longstanding and continuing debate between interested parties and the responsible planning authority (Bristol City Council) on how future development, road alterations, traffic controls, new and improved pedestrian access and the like can be used to improve the setting and actively enhance the life and work of the church. This work is linked into the completion and implementation of the Conservation Plan for the church. It is of considerable importance to our effectiveness and is therefore a matter of priority.
46. The **building is open to the public** seven days a week (with stewards to provide a welcome), for public worship, private prayer and reflection and general visiting. We regard it as essential to maintain this level of open public access.
47. The **organ** is recognised as one of the finest and most significant pipe organs in the country, built by Harrison and Harrison (1912). It has four manuals, seventy one stops and over 5,000 pipes. It is much used and in demand by organists and recitalists. An Organ Restoration Appeal is to be launched shortly; the independent consultant Dr William McVicker will act as our adviser for that.
48. The church has had **bells** since 1480. The current fourteen bells (with the tenor weighing approximately 50cwt) are generally recognised as one of the finest rings in the world. Nine of the present ring were cast in 1903 by John Taylor of Loughborough whilst the eighth and tenth were cast in 1763 (Thomas Bilbie of Chew Stoke) and the eleventh in 1622 (Purdue of Bristol). Two further John Taylor bells were added in 1951 and 1969 (the latter recast, formerly hung in St John's Bedminster). Ringing practice is weekly every Thursday. The bells are rung regularly twice a month on Sunday mornings, before every Sunday evensong and for weddings, funerals and Festivals.
49. There is a 1930s **undercroft** beneath the north porch, which houses a meeting room, catering (including a franchised café) and toilet facilities.

50. A staged **programme of access improvements** and safety works around the church has begun. This will provide better access for the disabled and it is hoped that an easily accessible lavatory for the disabled will be provided.

Administration and finance

51. There is a well equipped parish office situated to the south side of the church. The building offers sufficient space to accommodate small meetings

52. Current paid staff posts are:-

- Musicians (see Music at St Mary Redcliffe)
- Head Verger
- Assistant Verger and Sacristan
- Part time Verger
- Steeple keeper
- Administrator (currently this post is vacant and under review)
- Parish Secretary
- Cleaners (two).

53. **Funding** of the care and maintenance of the building and the conduct of public worship, staff costs, plus funding of liturgical music and other music provision (including organ recitals and secular concerts) is greatly assisted by the following charitable bodies:-

- St Mary Redcliffe Church Lands Charity (charity number 211109), otherwise known as “the Vestry”, which dates its recent origins to 1588! Its main income must be used towards the maintenance and repair of the church building and the conduct of worship within it. It provided £382,607 for those purposes in the year ended 5 April 2004.
- The Canynges Society (charity number 242231) is the friend’s organisation for St Mary Redcliffe and its funds must be used to support restoration, upkeep and improvement of the church’s fabric and to assist with major restoration works.

- Temple Ecclesiastical Trustees (charity number 229907) must use its funds to further religious and charitable work in the former Temple Parish (now part of St Mary Redcliffe parish), the former Holy Cross Parish and across the whole Bristol Archdeaconry. It gives us a regular annual sum and various occasional donations for particular needs.
- The Friends of Music at St Mary Redcliffe Limited (charity number 1077720) supports our musical life and ministry, in worship and through concerts and events.

54. This support relieves the PCC of much of the financial burden of the physical building, freeing it to concentrate its fundraising efforts on the church's day to day operational costs and its ministry and mission (including our contribution to the ministry and mission of the wider church in this diocese through the Quota contribution). Details of PCC finances are set out in A Year at Redcliffe.