

Summary

We are delighted that you have chosen to read the Parish Profile for St Matthew and St James, Mossley Hill and that you are considering joining us as our next Rector.

As you read through this profile, we hope that you might prayerfully consider whether God is calling you to take on this key role in the next chapter of St Matthew and St James history.

We are a busy, welcoming and thriving church with a growing family congregation and a smaller but stable more traditional congregation.

St Matthew and St James Church is situated in Mossley Hill, a suburb of South Liverpool with good transport links, retail, housing, schools and green spaces. It is one of the 17 churches in the Liverpool South Deanery and part of Churches Together Mossley Hill.

The parish itself is growing with considerable housing developments planned in close proximity to the church.

Our buildings have recently been extended and refurbished and are well maintained and valued by the community.

Whilst we have some challenges with increasing our regular giving, our finances are encouraging due partly to the income revenue stream from hiring and letting our buildings.









We value our worship traditions which include the more traditional and the contemporary and the fact that they exist alongside each other and each respects the other.

The role is an exciting one, and not without its challenges, but we know that, for the right person, it has the potential to be deeply rewarding.

We are certainly excited about what God might have in store.



We believe that the church is the people not a building but we are blessed with an amazing building which we ensure is cared for to enable us to continue God's work in this place as set out below.

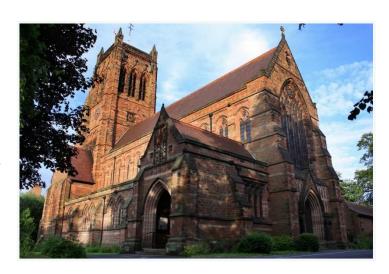
About our Church

Our official name is St Matthew and St James, but everyone knows us as Mossley Hill Parish Church.

We are the church on the hill at the top of Rose Lane where the local shops, pub, businesses and restaurants are found.

Our magnificent Victorian building is a landmark with our tower and clock visible for miles around but being at the top of the hill means we have had to adapt how we reach out to our community.

Although our position means that we cannot rely on footfall to encourage engagement, our visible presence enables us to reach out to our community in other ways.



The Buildings

The church building is Grade 2* listed which comes with blessings and challenges.

We are keenly aware of our responsibilities as custodians of a heritage building and we continue to work hard to ensure our buildings are in good order and shared with our community.





We are fortunate to have a magnificent Father Willis organ which we ensure is well maintained and played regularly as part of our services and at concerts.

A church is of course much more than a building, however at Mossley Hill we are extraordinarily privileged to be able to worship God in a beautiful and awe-inspiring building.

Our footprint is the church, church hall, outside lawned area, Memorial Garden at the rear of church and a car park.



Reordering and Refurbishment

We recognized the need to reorder and refurbish our church back in 2011 and began this process with our **Memorial Chapel.** We were able to do this through donations from the congregation and a significant donation through a Trust.

This transformed the chapel and resulted in a special, comfortable and quiet space for prayer which is now well used.

Also, as part of this refurbishment we installed new lighting which won a design award.

We then made a brave decision in 2016 to undertake a large high specification reordering and refurbishment of both our **Church and adjoining Hilltop Centre** building with funds from the sale of the old vicarage. This reordering was completed in 2017. We have further plans to improve accessibility of the entrance and expand our community rooms when funding allows.



Our church now has well designed flexible seating, new toilets, baby change, a catering standard kitchen, screens on pillars and centrally and a fit-for-purpose tech room which houses the sound / camera equipment.

The history of this and more details can be seen on our website under 'Heritage and Restoration'.











As a result of this work, we now have a well ordered and maintained multi-functional church space and superb Hilltop Centre facility for both church and community use.

With this great flexibility and a business model of lettings and hirings we have sought to future proof ourselves to ensure we can continue to pay our bills and fulfil our mission giving.















Maintenance of the Buildings and Grounds







Our Clerk of Works, PCC, Finance Team and regular Church Tidy days ensure that the church buildings and grounds remain well maintained and in excellent order.

We have recently planted a hedge along the main lawn as part of the 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee' which many of the church family helped with.

We do however face some challenges in completing repairs to the church tower following recommendations from a Quinquennial inspection.

This will require some significant expenditure, time and effort to achieve but we have started the process of putting together a plan. With our recent reordering experience, we are confident of this being successful.



The Vicarage





This is a 4-bedroom detached property with garage, built in the 1980's. It is situated a short walk from the church, and is set back from Rose Lane with its own driveway and a large garden.

It is currently rented-out by the Diocese but will be available for the chosen incumbent to move into when required.











About the Community

We take seriously the opportunities for outreach and service to the community presented by the services associated with life events - baptisms, confirmations, marriages and funeral ministry.

Baptisms

We have a lay volunteer who provides a link for baptism families and arranges everything required.

We are working hard at present to catch up with the backlog of all those baptisms that had to be postponed due to Covid. Our Associate Minister (an SSM) is helping with this.

Whilst baptisms generally happen as a separate service, we encourage parents to come along to our next family service when we present their baptism gift and certificate. We hope that this provides a way in which these families can become part of our regular worshipping community.









Weddings

Our church is a popular venue for weddings, and we support couples as they prepare for their married life together.





Funerals

Sadly there will be times when we need to reach out to those grieving or going through difficult times. Our Pastoral Team is there to help.

In Covid times this has been more difficult, but things are becoming easier again.

Confirmations

This year we have more than 12 adults and children signed up to a Confirming Faith course which is intended to lead to Confirmation but is also a place for people to find out more about their faith. This is being led by our Associate Minister.

In 2021:

12 baptismal service with 16 baptisms 6 Weddings

1 Wedding blessing 5 Funerals in church

6 Funerals at Crematorium 4 Burial of ashes

Follow up with families we meet through these ministries is very important and we look to develop and strengthen these.



Covid

How our community presence was affected and how we are coming through.

Pre-Covid Hospitality and Events

Before Covid hit we had been a very busy church holding many social and fundraising events to both bring in the community and enable our church family to enjoy time together.















We were always looking for ways to join with our community especially for significant occasions both locally and nationally.





Our events were always well received and attended, and hospitality became a focus for us which was made easier due to our excellent facilities and a very enthusiastic hospitality team.

We hosted concerts, orchestras and visiting choirs including the Liverpool Philharmonic and Liverpool Cathedral which were hugely successful in bringing the community into church.





Page 9 of 30











We had several well attended Open Heritage days in which we welcomed our community to enjoy guided tours of the church and its history.

Other events included:

- A special afternoon tea for a charity based in Vietnam.
- Makers Markets and a Baby Fayre in which we welcomed small local businesses to set up tables and sell their products.

We have also hosted: a fashion show with the PTA of a local school; concerts; our Summer and Winter Fairs; BBQs and after-church lunches, to name but a few.

We always try to make our AGM a welcoming event to encourage as many as possible to come along.









Hirings and Lettings

Service to the local community has been an established mission priority.

We made a key decision to invest the proceeds from the sale of the old vicarage building to extend, improve and refurbish our church buildings to facilitate this.

The Hilltop Centre and the church both provide space for community use throughout the week. Some of these uses provide income to the church, and most of them involve a mix of church and non-church participants and an opportunity for mission. All provide a benefit to the local community.



Pre-Covid our buildings were regularly used by many community groups including a Pre-school, a Dance school, Slimming World, an Art group, a Befriending group, Pilates, Baby ballet, adult ballet and a Parkinson's group plus many "one off" hirers.

We have worked hard to build links with all the groups who use our premises and extended generosity at times when it was needed.









South Liverpool Linking Lives

This befriending group was set up in 2017 in response to concerns in our parish about isolation experienced by some and the need to offer friendship to those living alone.





This became very successful with many volunteer befrienders in place and weekly group sessions held in our Hilltop Centre.

Services and Growth

We have seen amazing growth after starting our unique family contemporary service in 2017 with often over 100 adults and 100 children in the service.

Many of this congregation were new to church and our bacon butty and coffee after the service helped us to connect and develop fellowship and friendship.

On Sundays this was the place to be!

A hospitality team came into being that made many fun events happen.

Our 8.30am and 11.00am services had a regular, steady and faithful congregation in which there were a number of the older members of the church family and many long standing friendships.

Many of them were the stalwarts who had done much of the church volunteering for years but who were ready to pass on the baton.

With new people moving into the Elan housing development opposite the church we had started to plan events and ways in which we could welcome them.

We put together welcome packs and distributed a few and had been planning a welcome event which had to be shelved due to Covid.







During the Pandemic

Like most churches during the pandemic, we had periods when we had to completely close all our church buildings.

We quickly had to learn new skills and move "church" online.

Our strap line became:

"the church is not the building it is the people"

We realized that we needed to be able to still reach out and maintain contact with the church family.

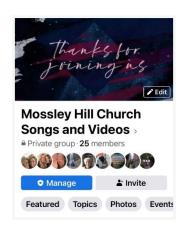
Social Media

Our social media presence throughout was key to this with a Church WhatsApp group with over 120 members, an active Facebook page, weekly video News bulletins and a new website plus regular updates via email and plenty of Zoom meetings!.

Pastoral Care

The pastoral side of the need to keep connected was very important as many were living in isolation. We were very aware that a number of our congregation did not use or have access to internet information, so we ensured they were kept informed through phone calls and mail shots.











We had a small team who had a list of those we knew to live alone or who were in potentially vulnerable situations, and they kept a check on them. At Christmas and during Lent we delivered Bags of Joy to this group, and they were really well received.



Throughout lockdown and during the last two years we have had a strong online presence based on our Facebook page. We learnt very quickly what we needed to do and produced an online service each week in which we used various ways to involve members of the church family.

Examples of this can be seen on the Mossley Hill Church Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/MossleyHillChurch

A **Thought for the Day** started on our social media during lockdown and still continues as it remains much appreciated.

Here is a link to the Christmas church family messages that accompanied our Christmas online service in 2020:

https://fb.watch/b2ewutapIU/







We found many often innovative ways to engage across the congregation with seasonal activities.

During Lent and Easter particularly, we set up the following:

Zoom sessions with some really interesting speakers such as The Archbishop of York; a Lent Lego challenge; Lent painting stones; baking through Lent with a video from one of church families demonstrating how to bake Resurrection Rolls.











The same family also did a 'How to make a Christingle' video which followed on from our distribution of 'Make your own Christingle' bags.



An Advent virtual windows proved really popular.

These all helped to keep us connected and to enable the messages of Easter and Christmas to continue.

When groups could no longer meet and despite seeing our rental income decline, we ensured we kept in touch with all the groups and offered our support if needed.

This maintained contact and helped with transitioning back post Covid.

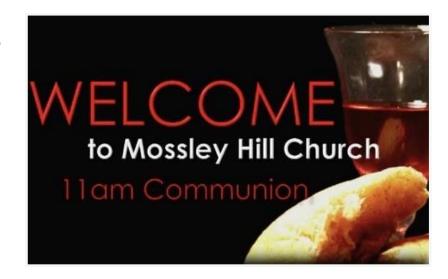


Post-Covid

As soon as it was safe to do so we opened up church but initially we had to reduce numbers and had a booking system.

Communication with regular updates ensured everyone knew what was happening and the basis for the decisions being made.

We were delighted to find that a large percentage of the family service congregation and more than we expected from the 11.00am service wanted to return back to in person services.



Slowly but surely we have seen our numbers rise and whilst not yet fully returned to pre-covid levels, we are not far off.

Live Streaming

We have continued to Live Stream the 11.00am service each week but we are unable to live stream the 9.30am due to music and video copyright.

With all we did to maintain contact this resulted in a smooth transition back to church for many and although there are still a few who we may have 'lost', the majority found it easy to return and we are still seeing growth.

We lost a few hirers along the way but have been able to successfully rebuild a healthy user base.

Most of our groups have returned to meet again, some in a different format but most happy to be back.

For the Befriending service ways to continue contact had to be found during Covid and this included the use of Zoom and doorstep/ garden gate visits.

The volunteers have maintained their contact subject to what each individual has felt appropriate.

Recruitment of new cases is currently in abeyance whilst the leader (a paid grant-funded post) is on maternity leave but the volunteer service and group sessions continue.



Lessons Learnt

We have learnt a lot from the challenges of Covid and feel that we have become stronger as a result.

We have a busy diary for party and events booking as our venues are very popular.

How we interact with people using our premises is important to us and we try to show God's love through kindness, support and compassion in our dealings. We see this as an essential part of our community outreach.

In recent weeks we have been looking at ways in which we can make ourselves more visible and welcoming to the community and perhaps may be able to do something over the summer.

Our parish is due to experience a huge growth in numbers due to further housing developments in close proximity to church.

We want to be ready to meet the need that this will generate, and we feel we are equipped to do this.

Holy Week this year saw us be able to return to church and sharing the Easter message in various ways including the church family decorating the Easter Cross with daffodils outside and using our heritage cross in church.















About the Parish

Mossley Hill is a popular familyfriendly residential suburb with a strong sense of community located to the south of the city.

It is a lovely area of Liverpool, combining gorgeous green areas, famous roads and lots of independent, local businesses.

The area has a great selection of properties available, with mainly semi-detached houses, some detached properties and terraced streets.

At the 2011 Census, the population was 13816 but a lot has happened in the intervening 11years.

Rose Lane is a pretty part of Mossley Hill, with cafés, a pub, restaurants, shops and a dental practice dotted along its length.

Linking Aigburth Road and Allerton Road, Rose Lane is a popular destination and thoroughfare.

There is a large Tesco store on this road, as well as other local convenience stores along the way.







Changes Ahead in the Parish



The parish and catchment area is expected to boom in numbers in the coming few years with University Halls of Residence (Carnatic and IM Marsh) closing to become residential housing.

There has already been a significant housing development across the road from the church and we are starting to welcome some of the new residents.

This will be an exciting time for us for mission and growth.

Green Spaces

Mossley Hill is blessed with green spaces and with plenty of parks. One of the most popular parks in Liverpool, Greenbank Park is a tranquil bit of green space in Mossley Hill. With a lake and a great little café and bistro at the entrance it's the perfect place to visit.

Two more of the most popular city parks Calderstones and Sefton are also nearby.





https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/sudley-house

Sport and Culture

Sudley House which is close by church was the home of George Holt and his family, who was a Victorian merchant with impeccable taste in period furniture and paintings.

It is now one of 7 museums and art galleries run by National Museums Liverpool and is a great place to visit.





Mossley Hill Athletic Club is next door to the church and is one of the leading sporting and social clubs in South Liverpool and part of the community since 1924.

There are over 1,000 members playing archery, bowls, cricket, football, hockey, rugby, running and tennis.

We maintain good links with the club.

We couldn't forget to include that part of **Penny Lane** which is a popular stop off on Beatles tours and is within the parish near to the Greenbank area.



Schools

There are a number of highly-rated schools in the area with 2 schools in the Parish itself. **Liverpool College** is an Academy taking children from primary through to secondary.

They have good links with us and use the church for a number of services and concerts.





The other is **Greenbank Primary School** which is close to the park area.

We have welcomed classes from the school to sing at concerts and to visit the church to learn about our history and our faith.

The area close to the parish is well served by several other excellent primary and secondary schools.



Health

There are several GP practices both within the parish itself and close by and a Dental practice just down the hill.

The first private hospital in Liverpool (Spire) is situated just across from Greenbank Park and currently due to Covid is providing a backup service to the NHS.

Transport

There are great transport links with Mossley Hill railway station on Rose Lane offering regular services to Liverpool city centre and there are many bus routes too.

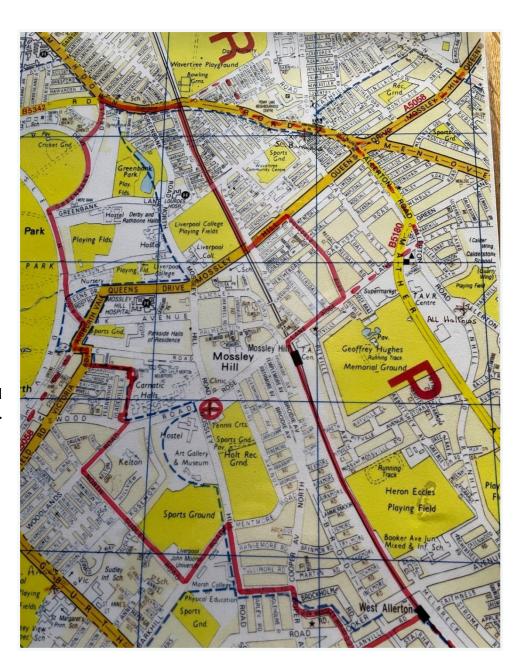
Parish Boundary

The church is located at the south end of the parish boundary, so the natural catchment area of the parish is not reflected in the boundary.

We can attract people who live outside our parish but feel that this is where they belong.

It is a long way from the two farthest ends and people at these extremes tend to look to nearer churches in the first instance.

This has the potential to impact on involvement in and relationship to some areas in our community. We understand this and we intend to focus on this particular issue more.



We see this as an exciting challenge and another opportunity for growth.



The Church and its People

St Matthew and St James is a busy, warm, welcoming and growing church.

We actively offer and support different traditions in our services from a Common Worship Holy Communion at 8.30am, Service of the Word / Holy Communion at 11.00am to a completely contemporary style family service at 9.30am which uses a multimedia approach.

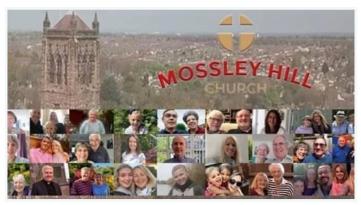
Pre-Covid we also had a 4pm choral Evensong which we are hoping can resume after Easter 2022.

One of the joys of St Matthew and St James is being able to resource a variety of services and events with different styles of worship, from the more traditional through to the most contemporary. We see a place for both, and have tried to develop a real breadth in our expressions of worship.

Due to our large space, we are able to hold special services for the community throughout the year including Remembrance Sunday and Christingle services which see large numbers attending.

This contemporary service has seen phenomenal growth with currently 137 children on the register whilst regular 8.30am and 11.00am services include an older faithful and steady congregation on average of about 90.









On a typical Sunday we welcome up to 250 people into our church across the 3 services of which over 150 attend the 9.30am family service.

We remain faithful to the legal forms of service but aim to use them as a framework within which to express the life and variety of a very mixed congregation. Ceremonial is simple.





We tend towards an evangelical base. However, we remain a comprehensive and inclusive church open to all.

We provide for Communion before Confirmation.

Music

We have a strong and varied musical tradition. We employ an Organist/Choirmaster who directs our non-robed choir who sing regularly at 11.00am Communion services.

A small music group also leads contemporary worship songs at the 11am services.

Alpha and Discipleship

We have run Alpha a number of times and various other courses which people found particularly helpful using Zoom during lockdown.



Ours is a very child friendly church and we have been awarded the Diocese Child Friendly Award for many years now.







Church Groups

Our children's groups (JAM) meet during the 9:30am family service after being in church for songs and worship. Numbers are growing and have continued to do so after we returned following the Covid breaks.

We have also just restarted a Mossley Hill Minis Under 3's creche which is set up at the back of church so parents can remain engaged once the older children go out to their groups.

Our church-run baby and toddler group CAMEO (Come And Meet Each Other) was a thriving group pre-Covid but has stopped during Covid. It has taken some time, but we are delighted that it is now restarting after Easter 2022, as it is an important part of our outreach.

A summer **holiday club** for ages 3-11 has been a regular feature in August for the past 30 years. This has attracted up to 140 children a year and has been hugely successful. It is run using Scripture Union material. Covid meant this could not go ahead in 2020 but a scaled down Covid-safe version went ahead in 2021.

Although not officially connected to the church, we welcome the local **Scouts and Guides** group for parade services and at our Remembrance service.



Recently we have started what has become a very active **Eco Church group.**

We were given the bronze award some time ago and are aiming now for the silver.

The Eco group are busy looking at ways to highlight what needs to be done and a few weeks ago encouraged us to join in with the Big Garden Birdwatch weekend.





Following the pandemic our previous 2 women's groups have combined and now meet once a month in the afternoon under the heading of 'Christian Women's Fellowship'.

We also have a **Sewing Group** which has been responsible for much of the heritage work in church such as banners, tapestry cushions, wall hangings and a Triptych.



Our Employees

We employ an Organist /Choirmaster and there is a non-robed choir who sing regularly at 11.00am Communion services.

We also employ a Church Administrator part-time who works from home.

She deals with all church enquiries, baptism, wedding and funeral administration plus all that is involved in the lettings and hirings of the building.

Prayer Ministry

We have an active prayer ministry WhatsApp group which was set up during the pandemic and which enabled us to keep prayer going when it wasn't possible to do this face to face.

This group pre pandemic were available each Sunday at services to offer prayer to anyone who needed it. This is gradually being reintroduced.

The Memorial Chapel is open twice a week for people to meet together in prayer.

Clergy Care

We pay reasonable clergy expenses, we expect our clergy to take proper holidays and days off and we would support the Rector in their training (CME), reading and personal development

We have an understanding and concern for the health, well-being and development of our clergy.

Safeguarding

As a church we take safeguarding very seriously. We have a dedicated safeguarding officer. At each PCC meeting there is a place on the agenda to report on safeguarding.



Our Financial Position

Our Main Sources of Income

Our main source of income is planned-giving by the congregation. The majority of this is by standing order, which has been a huge blessing during the pandemic lockdowns. Our other major source of income is from lettings of our improved church premises.

Maintaining our Budget and Reserves

At the beginning of every year the PCC agrees an income and expenditure budget for the year and our Treasurer submits quarterly management accounts showing our actual financial results.

Covid-19

Like all churches our finances for 2020 and 2021 were affected by the Covid pandemic but we thank God that over those 2 years we still achieved a surplus of income expenditure totalling £30,696. In addition, in response to the request from the Diocese, we were able to pay all our Parish share, although we were grateful for a grant towards this through the Diocese.

Charitable Giving

We are committed to giving away 10% of our regular income.

Mission

We have a long standing commitment to support both overseas and home mission but this has changed by necessity in recent months due to links with our overseas partners having come to a natural end.

We have though maintained our support of Christian Aid and we do have strong links to home mission, particularly The Children's Society and Merseyside Asylum link. We continually look at ways in which we can strengthen this.

Following a sermon from a visiting minister about social justice we have plans to start linking with a local food bank.



Our Strengths

1. We have a broad base of different worship traditions.

We have successfully maintained this broad base and these congregations respect each other and would embrace ways in which they could support each other more.

This is important to us and we would wish this to continue.

2. We are a growing church with a large number of young families

The uniqueness of what we do for our 9.30am service attracts families and our numbers have not dropped significantly post Covid. We have great opportunities to disciple this congregation.

3. We have a strong social media presence and communication structure.

Whilst Covid inevitably posed challenges for us we worked hard to ensure that we communicated well and maintained our contacts with the various arms of the church family using all available social media. This resulted in a congregation that stayed together, cared for each other and even developed new relationships and understanding of each other.

4. Our leadership team and worship team are committed, able and competent.

This has enabled our church to continue and grow even whilst in an interregnum.

5. We have a strong income stream from lettings and hirings.

We worked hard to build this up and to share our building.

This income stream inevitably stalled during lockdown but through supporting our building users and remaining in contact once Covid restrictions were lifted we saw most of our hirers return and our income stream resume.

With some loss of regular giving and on the plate donations this rental income has kept us going during difficult times and helped us to continue to pay our Parish Share.

6. We have buildings that have been refurbished and reordered.

They are in excellent condition and well maintained.



Our Weaknesses

I. We need to develop a ministry for teenagers

This is currently lacking.

We take them to Confirmation but need to be stronger beyond this.

2. We need to strengthen our financial giving.

We are heavily dependent on a small group of regular givers and keep ourselves financially stable through the income from lettings and hirings.

We have found it challenging to engage the new families in our thriving service with regular giving but recognize that this is something we must work to improve.

3. We need to grow more leaders

We have a small group of committed and able worship leaders and an Associate Minister who is a SSM but it has been difficult to identify and encourage others particularly in the younger age groups to step up.

To enable us to grow further this is important to address.

4. We need to continue the work we have done to engage volunteers.

Like many church communities it is often a small group of the same people who get things done and take responsibility.

We have seen encouraging shoots of growth of volunteers in some aspects of church life but need to see more people prepared to step up.

5. We need to develop our Men's Ministry and strengthen our Women's Ministry.

Pre pandemic we had hosted a Deanery men's breakfast in church in February 2020 but had done little more at that point.

Our family service has many fathers, grandfathers, uncles, godfathers etc who we would love to start to involve.

We had made significant progress in developing friendships and relationships with the Mums, Grandmas etc from the family service and some had done Alpha.

This stalled with Covid and we need to look at how to pick this up again.



When the church leaders and our members were asked to pray about who God might bring and following a "Have your say" survey of the congregation, in which we specifically asked our children, we feel the following characteristics emerged.

We are looking for a Rector who can:

- Encourage people to live out their faith in their everyday lives
- Have a heart for children who will enjoy working with, strengthening and developing the
 ministry for our children, especially the teenagers and young people. The church family
 young people were clear they would love someone who would be supportive, kind,
 caring, funny, friendly and involve them more in all we do.
- Disciple the new growing congregation.
- Work collaboratively, encouraging all to develop their skills for God's work.
- Support the church to work collaboratively with the Deanery
- Encourage and develop new leaders.
- Enhance and develop the pastoral work we do and our prayer life.
- Have a heart for the older members of the congregation and their pastoral needs.
- Communicate well and be able to also use social media for this purpose.
- Preach confidently and inspire the congregations.
- Develop further the links we currently have with the Mossley Hill community so we can
 ensure we are doing what is needed for them especially with the opportunities that new
 housing developments will bring.
- Recognize the importance of letting the premises to the community and the benefits that this brings to the church financially.
- Encourage the church family to be generous with their time, talents and money.
- Be proactive in supporting the existing traditional and contemporary styles of worship and looking at ways the various congregations can get to know each other better successfully integrating as one church family.
- Be sympathetic and understanding of the diverse nature of modern day society to ensure that we are a fully inclusive church.



We hope that this has given you a good insight into life within our community as you consider whether you might be called to join us at Mossley Hill as our Rector.

If you require any further information about life here please check out our website www.mossleyhillchurch.org.uk our Church Facebook page and you can also find us on A Church Near You.

We will continue to pray for whoever God has chosen to come here to do his work.