

St John's Church



Charfield



Charfield Parish

What we are

St John's is the Church of England Parish Church for Charfield. We are part of a "benefice" (a group of churches sharing the same rector) with churches in Kingswood, Wickwar, Hillesley and Rangeworthy, and are in the Diocese of Gloucester.

The Rector of the Benefice is Revd David Russell. Revd Rick Williams works with him and focusses on Charfield (where he lives) and Kingswood.

As Charfield's parish church we have a duty of care to all its residents, whether they be church members or not, and are the first port of call for important moments in people's lives such as baptisms, weddings and funerals.

What we do

We come together for worship on Sundays (usually 9:30am), Wednesdays (10am) and other special days. We have a prayer meeting on Thursday mornings (9:15am). About twenty-five people attend a typical Sunday, but on special occasions the church can be very full.

We are here to enable people to engage with God in their lives in whatever ways we can. We offer regular opportunities for people to worship God, or learn more through teaching and Bible studies. With the Charfield Benefice, we do our "Live Topics" discussions, looking at what our faith has to say on the big issues of the day. We seek to demonstrate his love in practical ways, through care for individuals in need or engagement with our wider community.

We have started a "Mini-praise" service four times a year geared at those with very young children, to provide forms of worship which can work for little ones and their parents.

We link regularly with Charfield school by taking a weekly "Open the Book" assembly in which we present Bible stories in drama... the children always look forwards to these.



St James' Jamboree, 2018

We put on special events to try and build up the community life of the village, such as this "Freshers' Fair" and the 2018 "St James' Jamboree" mediaeval festival.



Remembrance 2018

We are a focus at important times of the year, such as Remembrance Sunday, All Souls and our Christingle, Crib and Carol services around Christmastime. Or important times in people's lives... baptisms, weddings and funerals among others.

We provide a quiet place where people come to bring their own prayers and concerns. The church is left unlocked during the day, and quite a number of people make use of it. Our children's play space in the church is also available and used.

Church members are active in visiting and caring for people in the village at times of need when requested, and we can offer prayer as well.



Boules Club

We are an important part of the social life of our village, with our Lent Lunches, summer Cream Teas, Boules Club and Christmas Fair drawing large numbers of the village together.



A St John's Cream Tea

Through our "Change 4 Good" programme and other collections, we support local, national and international charities.

What is our history?



St James, Churchend

The original parish church in Charfield is St James, on Churchend Lane. It originated in the 13th Century, but was rebuilt in the 14th century.

During the eighteenth century, Charfield moved from a village based on the wool industry to one based on industries powered by or dependent on water, and the village shifted from the ridge to the river-valley. The coming of the railway in the nineteenth century furthered this trend, so that St James was no longer in the centre of its village. The need for a new parish church in the valley was recognised, and this was built, as St John's, in 1881. The Arts and Crafts movement was under way at this time and was particularly strong in Gloucestershire, and St John's reflects this in its design.

St James remained a place of worship until the 1960s, but is now in the care of the Churches' Conservation Trust. They allow us to use it for occasional worship, and we hold annual services on the Sunday nearest St James' Day (25th July) and at Christmas-time (Carols by Candlelight on the Saturday before Christmas. As congregations and clergy numbers



Annual Carol Service at St James

have declined, St John's has been joined with other churches under shared clergy oversight. In 2000 it was put together with St Mary's Kingswood, and in 2011 these two were combined with Wickwar, Rangeworthy and Hillesley into the Wickwar Benefice.

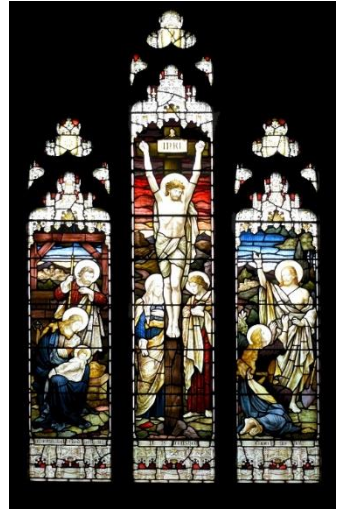
What we believe

As part of the wider Christian church, we believe that God made himself known to us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, God in human form. Jesus died for us and rose to new life, and in doing so enabled us as human beings to know life beyond death. We believe that God continues to be at work in the world through his Holy Spirit living in Christians, and that one day the world will be made into the place that God always meant it to be, the Kingdom of God.

Most of all, we believe that God loves the people he created, and longs to be in a relationship with them. We break that relationship when we do wrong, but such is his love that he always seeks to restore it.

Our beliefs are shaped by the Bible, and so the Bible is important in our worship, read at every service and usually preached on to help bring out its meaning for us today. We believe we are called by God to be a community with each other and with him, and we express this through sharing together in the common meal we call “Holy Communion” or “Eucharist”. We believe that God wants us to relate to him and to be those through whom he works in this world, and so we try to keep those channels of communication open by praying, both together in church and individually at home. We believe that God has high standards for us which can make the world a better place for all, and we try to understand and follow those standards, and to work where practical to bring about change in the world to benefit those who are disadvantaged.

And we know also that in none of these areas do we always get it right, but we also know that he knows that too, and loves us anyway. And so we know that church is not only meant for perfect people, but for ordinary people too.



Who we work with

Anyone who wants to work with us! We have fruitful partnerships with:

- **Charfield Congregational Church**, with whom we share a Good Friday Walk of Witness, work together on a presence at the village fete and send Christmas boxes to Romania (*see right*).
- **Wickwar Benefice**, the team of Church of England Churches of which we are part, along with churches in Kingswood, Wickwar, Rangeworthy and Hillesley. We worship with them during the summer holidays, on the 5th Sunday of the month and on other special occasions, and work with them on joint projects.
- **Charfield School**, where we do weekly “Open the Book” assemblies, and who hold their Christmas assembly in church.
- **Charfield Parish Council** with whom we keep close links with a member of the Parish Council joining us for our Church Council meetings to keep open channels of communication.
- **Charfield Village Hall Committee**, having a stall at their annual village fete (*see right*)
- **Charfield Yarn Bombers** who like to display their creations in our church and churchyard.
- **The Scouts** who attend Remembrance and Christmas services and run a jumble sale for us.
- **Clean-up Green-up Charfield** who run our plant sale.
- **Dementia Connections** whom we have supported financially through our “Change 4 Good” programme.
- **Friends of St James and Churches’ Conservation Trust**. We retain legal responsibility for St James’ Churchyard, and have occasional services at St James.
- **Foundation Room** We have an ex-officio role in administering the Foundation Room (currently used by the pre-School).



Village fete 2018

Where we hope to go



Charfield "Freshers" Fair
St John's Church, 7 September, 2-5pm

Are you a new arrival in Charfield – a fresher?

Or are you a graduate of life in our village?

Whether you are new to our Charfield or have been here since Adam was a boy, come to our Freshers fair and see what Charfield has to offer. The community of Charfield is waiting to welcome you and make you feel at home.

- What activities and groups are there in Charfield?
- What is there for children to do?
- What support is there for older residents?
- What's it like to live in Charfield?
- How can you make friends and meet new people?
- What new activities would you like to see?
- What would you like to be involved with?

There will be lots of stalls with local groups there to tell you about what they do, and also post-it boards for your feedback.

There will be children's activities, and tea and cakes. If the weather's fine, refreshments will be in the garden, where you'll be entertained by 'God's Grampies' and you'll be able to have a go at boules.

We'll also have a special welcome service in St John's at 9.30 on Sunday 8 September – complete with Rick's 'Punch and Judy' puppet theatre.



We hope we are already a friendly and welcoming church, and as the village expands, we particularly want to ensure that those new to Charfield are able to find a place where they can feel welcomed and able to participate.

We believe that the message of Jesus Christ is good news that is worth sharing. We want to find effective means to share that message more widely in ways that will enable people to hear it and decide for themselves what it might mean in their lives.

We believe that God in Jesus loves the people of Charfield, as he loves all people, and wants that love to be demonstrated through his church. So we want to extend the ways in which we can share God's love in practical ways.

What else do you think we could do that might help you?

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