



St Thomas' Church, Crosscrake Parish Profile January 2025



Website
crosscrake.church



A church
near you



Facebook

“The aim of our church community
is to be a true family of God;
living, worshipping, and working
in what we know is a difficult
and demanding world.

We will be open and outward looking,
growing in faith, using the talents of our members,
radiating our witness to Christ,
meeting Him in our neighbours,
giving and receiving the love of God.

As people at St.Thomas', by God's Grace
we strive to live by his values,
worship and pray together,
reveal the Good News
and see God's Kingdom grow.”

Dear Applicant,

This profile will give you a good picture of life and ministry in this wonderful part of Cumbria, which is deeply rural but also close to the thriving market town of Kendal.



The Diocese of Carlisle is committed to the God for All vision, a vision to share the good news of Jesus Christ with all our neighbours. Launched in 2015, it is underpinned by a commitment across four denominations in Cumbria (the Church of England, the Methodist Church, The Salvation Army, and the URC) to see God's Kingdom flourish across the county.

The vision is based on four values: Follow Daily (helping each other to follow Jesus more closely); Care Deeply (listening to our communities to serve them and to challenge injustice); Speak Boldly (sharing our faith in Jesus in everyday ways); and Tread Gently (seeking to sustain and renew the life of the earth).

Mission Communities are the way in which the Church in Cumbria seeks to live out the God for All vision. They are seeking to be deeply collaborative groupings of churches - between denominations, between clergy and laity, and between different communities - working together to proclaim afresh the gospel to each generation, faithful to its tune but improvising together to create new melodies for our place and time. They are about enabling each local church to minister to their community.

We are looking for clergy who resonate with this, who love God and love people, who will look outwards into the community in mission, help people grow in faith and who will enable the faith and gifts of all.

If this stirs something in you, we'd love to hear from you.

With every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Saner-Haigh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Introduction



St. Thomas' Church is a thriving, growing church with a regular weekly congregation of some 40 people.

Children are an important part of our church family and we have close links with the local C.E. Aided school.

The D.J.s (children's Sunday worship group) has a steady attendance regularly in excess of 10 children rising to more than 20 on special occasions.

Three times a year we hold activity mornings (Christmas, Easter and summer) with attendances of approximately 40 children as well as parents and helpers.

In 2018, we embarked on an exciting new project to build an additional meeting space adjacent to the church for a variety of uses by the congregation and local community.

We are seeking a Parish Priest who will build on these firm foundations and work with us to share the Gospel in our community.

We strive to see a thriving, growing Christian community which is a spiritual home for those of differing backgrounds and churchmanship.

In a village with only one church we want to be as inclusive and welcoming as possible to all.

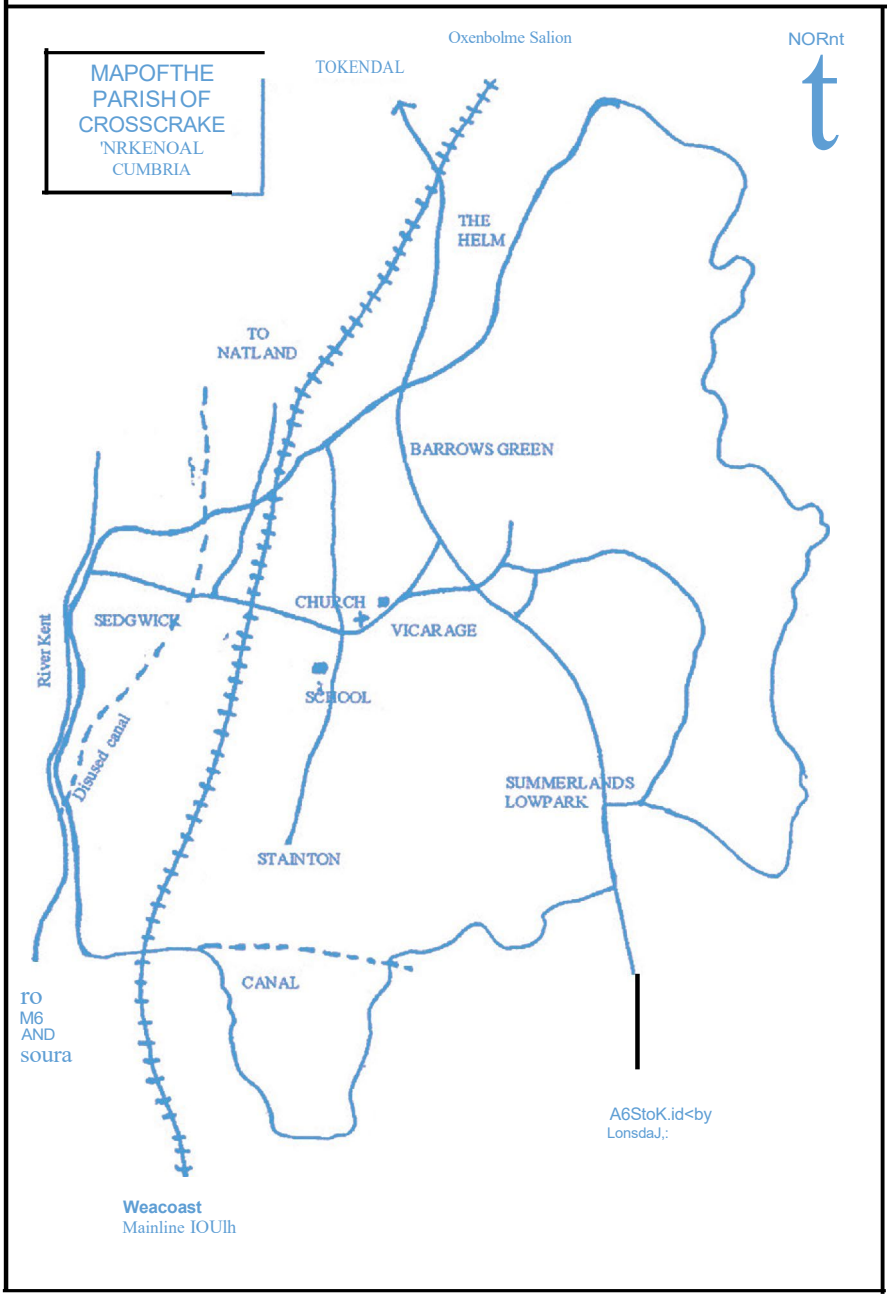
We look to strengthen our existing patterns of Church life and witness as well as developing new expressions of witness and involvement in the wider community.

We look to extend our outreach through pastoral ministry, making the Church relevant, appealing and accessible.

We will examine the ways in which we can work effectively as a Mission Community towards achieving the vision of God for all.



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PARISH OF
CROSSCRAKE
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History of the Parish

The Parish is situated in the attractive, undulating drumlin country on the eastern side of the valley of the River Kent about four miles south of Kendal in South Lakeland. It comprises the civil parishes of Sedgwick (165 households), Stainton (126 households) and part of Preston Richard. The population is approximately 1000 with a Church electoral roll of 71 (2024).

The only shop and post office in the parish, at Sedgwick, closed about twenty-five years ago. There is a small industrial estate at Summerlands. There are still some family-run farms in the Parish but most people in the Parish either work in Kendal or travel to Lancaster and even further a-field. (Average distance of travel to work is 15 miles) One local farm has diversified and has developed a Maize Maze, a seasonal caravan park and egg farm.

The mean age of the population is around 35. Of the adult population in Sedgwick of 359: some 174 are economically inactive, in Stainton out of the adult population of 250: some 80 are economically inactive. (ONS census 2021).



History of our Church

The Church, which is dedicated to St Thomas, is in the centre of the parish with its Vicarage and a few houses close by. It occupies a site at a crossroads on an ancient ridge road south from Kendal where there was once a cross erected by a Norseman, Kraki. The churchyard dates from 1823.

The present church building dates from 1870 and replaced a Chapel of Ease founded in 1190. This Chapel had fallen into disrepair and the new church was re-sited 50 yards downhill to the east of the old Chapel. The building was designed by the architects Paley and Austin in a pleasing simple gothic style, which fits well into the rural environment. It is constructed from slate walling with sandstone dressings under a steeply pitched Westmorland green slate roof. Owing to structural problems it has been much altered. It can hold around 140 and has an average Sunday attendance of 40. Attendances on special occasions can reach 100 or more. There is no other place of regular worship in the Parish.

2010 Regeneration

A Regeneration Appeal was launched in July 2010 and raised £90,000 for the work undertaken in 2011.

The work was completed and comprises a re-ordered chancel, new electrics, decorating and carpeting, disabled toilet, kitchen facilities and a new oil-fired boiler. Some pews were removed to provide useful circulation space at the front of the church; for more comfortable seating and the freedom to use the space for various activities, for example baptisms.

The building has been well loved and cared for over the years. One of the aims of the alterations was to provide a more inclusive and welcoming building.

Services



The main service of the week is a Common Worship Eucharist (Parish Communion) every Sunday at 10am. On the first Sunday the service is All-age Communion with a simplified liturgy aimed at young families who stay in the service throughout. There are occasional mid-week and other special services.

On fifth Sundays, services are shared with other members of the Helm group of Parishes in different churches.

Hymns are taken from 'Hymns Old and New'. Readings are taken from the Revised Standard Bible according to the lectionary. There is considerable lay participation; members of the congregation lead the intercessions, read the lesson and gospel, and take up the elements for Holy Communion in procession. Several members of the congregation are licensed to assist in the distribution of the chalice at Communion and take Holy Communion to the housebound. Members of the congregation in rotation welcome, distribute books and take the collection.

The DJs meet during service time on the third Sunday of the month. Crosscrake School, the local Beavers, Cubs and Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Scouts attend periodically.

Over the past few years, the Patronal Festival has been celebrated on the Millenium Field in Sedgwick, which encourages wider local support.

The average attendance at the main morning service is around 40. The churchmanship is central. We are conscious that we need to be inclusive and cater for people coming from a wide range of Church traditions and indeed from other denominations who have chosen to worship with us.

The remarriage of divorcees is currently at the discretion of the priest. There have been several remarriages recently.

Music

The Church has a pipe organ, played by a regular organist, and a piano when there is no organist. The Church has a robed choir, of up to 10 adults, affiliated to the RSCM.

PCC

The PCC currently comprises two Churchwardens, one Deanery Synod Representative and 12 elected members (which include the Treasurer and PCC secretary) who serve a 3-year term. The Head Teacher of the School is an ex officio member.

Occasional Offices

In 2023 there were 4 funerals, 0 weddings and 5 baptisms.
In 2024 there were 4 funerals, 0 weddings and 4 baptisms.

Ministry in the Parish

Since the departure of our last incumbent in July 2021, Revd Terry Wilcock has been licensed as non-stipendiary Associate Priest to the parish. His licence has been renewed annually by the Bishop due to his age. Terry was Priest in Charge of Crosscrake Parish, House for Duty, 2004-2011, before he moved on to other appointments.

Terry currently takes the majority of Sunday worship and works two further days a week on pastoral work and supporting our church school. There is also a lay group who do pastoral visiting, and another lay group who lead Collective Worship at school on Tuesdays.

The non-stipendiary curate to the Helm Mission Community also takes worship and is lead on the Mission Community Eco Group and the Crosscrake Tuesday drop in. Her curacy is likely to end within the next year. We have been fortunate that the former Priest in Charge at Natland, Old & New Hutton, has organised some service rotas and occasionally led worship at Crosscrake, as well as being generally supportive of our church.

Helm Mission Community

This comprises the Anglican churches of Natland, Old Hutton, New Hutton, Crosscrake and Holy Trinity Kendal; plus, the Salvation Army at Kendal, & the URC Church at Kendal. Ministers of these churches meet regularly for mutual support, prayer and planning of activities across the Mission Community.

Fifth Sunday services rotate mainly around the churches at Old Hutton, New Hutton, Natland, Crosscrake and the Salvation Army – these services are well attended by all churches.

From time-to-time members of the Mission Community (lay and ordained), meet for strategic planning of the way forward. Joint services and meetings also take place in Holy Week, with some joint study groups in Lent.

The Congregation



The congregation comprises those living in the Parish and others from outside. They come from a range of social strata, occupations and age. Although some of the congregation have chosen to come to the area to retire from all over the country, others belong to local families who have lived and worked in the area for several generations. There is a significant number of young families.

There are no shops in the Parish and there is one public house. Cars are a necessity not a luxury. With rising house prices the parish has become increasingly affluent, and younger families struggle to find affordable accommodation.

There is still a small amount of social housing in the parish and some houses are available for private rental. There are several holiday rental properties and bed and breakfast accommodation.

Charitable giving

In addition to their regular giving, the congregation has given generously to various charity appeals.

Charitable giving amounted to:

2022: £3,182

2023: £2,678

In 2024 so far, donations have been made to:

- Children's Society: £280
- Manna House: £250
- Christian Aid: £560
- Bishop's Harvest Appeal: £252

Finances

Crosscrake has been able to more than meet its parish share over the last two years when share offers have applied and the PCC's target of giving 10% of our income to UK and overseas charities has been achieved.

Year	2021	2022	2023
Income	£30,756	£48,890	£87,688*
Expenditure	£32,492	£42,545	£86,261*

* Includes monies for transfer to hub account.

50 parishioners pay a gift-aided donation by standing order or through the envelope scheme.

Church groups

DJ's (Discovering Jesus) meets once a month in a room at the back of Church during the morning service. It is lay-led. The children range from toddlers to teenagers, averaging about 10 children in all. Most of the children are from families who attend church but very occasionally there have been children dropped off and collected.

The children have lots of fun with games, songs and crafts. The session is always Bible based following Scripture Union material with opportunity for prayer and questions.



Tots meets monthly. After prayers, singing, storytelling, games and craft activities, the children have refreshments together. Numbers vary but often there are 12 children (with Mums, or Grans) up to Nursery class age.

In addition to this, children's activity mornings are held at Christmas, Easter, and at the beginning of the summer holiday. These have become increasingly popular with children and are well attended by 30, from tots (and babes in arms) to young teens. These are held in church. There is also an outreach initiative to young families in the Parish.

Crosscrake Mothers' Union

Approximately 16 members meet monthly on Wednesdays from 2-3.30 pm. The afternoon begins with an act of worship because prayer is at the heart of the organisation. Through the year speakers help to widen knowledge of the great variety of work that goes on locally and nationally and overseas by the Mother's Union members to promote, nurture, and sustain Christian family life.

The MU provide refreshments at Tots, the Children's Activity Mornings and the Tuesday Drop in sessions.

Home Group

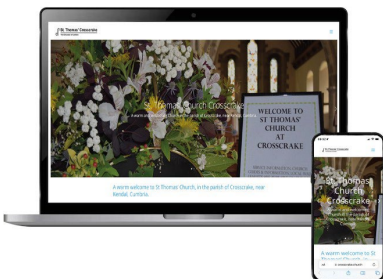
There is one lay-led home group, which meets fortnightly to study the Bible.

Parish Magazine

A Parish magazine is produced in-house monthly and has a circulation of 160 around the Parish. It's outreach extends beyond the church community.



Crosscrake Online



We have a dedicated website for Crosscrake Church, viewable at www.crosscrake.church which contains latest news, upcoming services and events. News and events are also listed on the 'Church near you' website and our Facebook page.



Social Life

Friends of Crosscrake Social Committee meets regularly in homes and works hard to plan a varied array of social events throughout the year including such activities as: Parish meal, Plant Sale, 4 Lent Lunches, a Christmas Fair etc. Some events are purely social, others to raise money. We have held an annual cream tea event in July for several years now.



The Harvest Supper and a New Year's meal are held in the local pub. The men of the congregation meet from time to time for dinner at a local hotel.

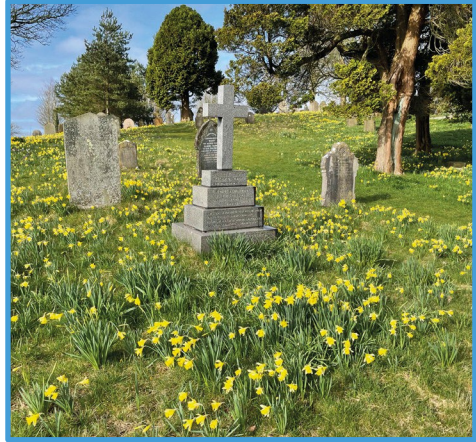
Members of the congregation are involved in many village organisations such as the two Parish Councils, the WI, Craft group, Sedgwick Ladies and the Badminton and Cricket Clubs and many do voluntary work in the wider community.

There is a weekly drop-in on a Tuesday morning, providing a warm place for members of the whole community to socialise and support each other.

The Churchyard

The churchyard, which surrounds the building on all sides, is mostly 'natural' and has a glorious display of snowdrops and daffodils in the spring.

There is adequate space for burials currently and an option to buy adjacent space if and when the need arises. Spaces are normally available to members of the Church and local people. Consideration is given to those who have family or historical reasons for wanting a gravespace. There is an area for cremated remains and a memorial stone naming those whose ashes are interred has been installed. A car park was constructed on the east side of the building in 2005.



The Vicarage

The Vicarage, which was built in 1948, replacing a Victorian one, is situated about 100 yards to the east of the church.



The vicarage has four bedrooms, three reception rooms, a study and a recently refurbished kitchen and bathrooms and has been decorated and re-carpeted throughout.

It is situated in extensive grounds.

Crosscrake School

The school, which has Voluntary-Aided status, is nearby and has close links with the church. At present there are around 60 pupils including nursery provision. There are excellent relations between school and church. There is collective worship and other RE Work. There are six foundation governors, appointed by the church.



The Associate Priest is an ex-officio School Governor and acts as Chaplain to the school. Additionally, a rota of lay people lead collective worship every Tuesday. The school makes regular use of the church for end of term worship and RE Work.

The school received a 'Good' rating in it's latest Ofsted inspection report of March 2023 and the SIAM report of 2024 noted the following:

- There is an exceptionally strong, reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with the local worshipping Christian community. As a result, pupils and adults are enabled to thrive spiritually.
- Each pupil is treated as a unique child of God. Inclusivity is the norm. Pupils and their families are welcomed into the warm embrace of the school. Everyone is cared for and given many opportunities to blossom.
- Pupils make notable progress in religious education (RE). This is because it is a highly valued subject in the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.

Our Future - Community Hub



Crosscrake Community Hub is an ambitious project which is central to Our Vision and future growth as a Church.

It aims to reconnect people of all ages, build community, and increase our serving of one another.

Opening in the spring of 2025, the Hub will provide a contemporary, purpose-built, well-equipped and accessible building for the Church and wider community. At its heart will be a community centre and café servery where people can meet, eat, learn, access support, and live well together as a community.

The project was officially launched five years ago. Extensive public consultation along with the full support of our local school, parish councils, district council and voluntary agencies shaped its direction. All believe the Hub can play a critical role in tackling the social inequalities that are an often-hidden side of rural life.

We are extremely grateful to the many Trusts and Foundations who gave their support and to our Church family and friends who responded so immediately and generously to our massive appeal for funding. We have now reached our funding target and are fully committed to deliver on the trust they have placed in us.

In a world which is ever changing our response as a Church is to seek opportunities to grow, serve and reach out.

We aim to deliver:

- New church-based activities and expressions of worship connecting with people who might not come to a Sunday morning service such as young families and young people e.g., café style church, a youth group; helping us to transform and grow as a Church.
- Inter-generational activities providing opportunities for children, young people and the elderly to be and remain active, valued members of the community.
- Weekly drop-in sessions with lunch and social activities helping to reduce loneliness and improving health & wellbeing, particularly but not exclusively, in our elderly population.
- Access to services, advice & signposting. Our aim as a Church is to work in partnership with other organisations. Westmorland & Furness Council, Age UK, CAP Kendal & District Debt Centre, Sight Advice and Mind are all keen to use this resource and widen their reach. We know that during times of difficulty, early intervention in a safe place can stop a problem from turning into a crisis.
- A wide programme of educational and cultural activities e.g., digital training for the elderly.



Following the policies and guidance from the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, at Crosscrake we endeavour to ensure that everyone in our parish family feels safe, cared for and welcome as we worship together.

The PCC discuss safeguarding regularly, led by our Safeguarding Officer and work to ensure that we meet all expectations outlined by the Church of England.

In order to do this, we use the safeguarding dashboard.

Our varied activities are risk assessed and roles and responsibilities are clear due to recent and relevant training.

A full copy of our safeguarding policy and the Church of England's policy on promoting a safer church can be found on the safeguarding page of our website at: crosscrake.church/safeguarding

Strengths, Weaknesses & Plans

The 5 main strengths in our church are:

- We are a church who welcomes all.
- Good links with church school and uniformed organisations.
- Good help from the congregation with children's activities.
- A wide range of well-supported church and community activities.
- Vicar's parish visiting, drawing the community together.

The 3 main weaknesses in our church are:

- Poor church representation in parts of the parish in general and among teenagers in particular.
- Need for more spiritual growth and prayer life.
- The need to extend outreach and pastoral care outside services, including events for open invitation.

Plans for ministry and mission over the next 5 years

- Broaden range of and variety of worship with the possibility of occasional non-eucharistic services for families.
- Keeping a close eye on the maintenance of the church building.
- Use the Diocesan Vision and Strategy document as a basis for a Mission Plan.
- To create a purpose-built additional meeting place for church and community use.

Crosscrake Church PCC, November 2024.

We would wish our new incumbent to...

- Lead and develop our Worship enabling people of all ages and differing church traditions to feel comfortable at our services.
- Provide spiritual support and further the spiritual development of the congregation.
- Listen to people of differing views and opinions and enable everyone to use their skills and become involved in the work of the church.
- View work with young families and the links with school as an important part of their ministry.
- Be someone who will make themselves visible in the Parish and see visiting and pastoral care as important and be able to communicate and empathise with people of all ages.
- Be someone who will help to promote Crosscrake Church & Community Hub amongst the people of the parish.
- Be willing to work well within the Helm Mission Community and any future Mission Community.

Crosscrake Church PCC, November 2024.

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