

welcome to CHRIST CHURCH Doncaster

Welcome to Christ Church, situated on the edge of Doncaster town centre. Reachout Christian Fellowship own the building and meet here for Sunday worship. One of the aims of the Fellowship is to see the church building and congregation serving the local community. The Christ Church story begins in 1821 when John Jarratt, a local businessman donated money for the building of a new parish church. Doncaster's population at that time was expanding and an Act of Parliament was passed in 1826 for the erection of Christ Church.



The site chosen for the church was some two acres of waste ground known as 'The Sand Pits', a former sand and gravel working used as a rope walk, a parish pinfold and a general drying ground for the wardrobes of Laithegate. The foundation stone was laid on 9th October 1827 in a ceremony that took place after a procession through the town. Ladies could view the ceremony from a raised platform constructed especially for this purpose. The foundation stone itself is reported to be about six feet square with the inscription 'Unless the Lord build the House, their labour is in vain'. At present the location of this stone in the building is unknown to us.

The church, built of Roche Abbey stone and of neo Gothic design, was finished on 26th June 1829, consecrated on 10th September and opened for worship on 1st November 1829. Doncaster's population continued to grow and to accommodate increased congregations, the church was enlarged in 1856 by the construction of the chancel at the east end. This was designed by Sir Gibert Scott, who also designed the rebuilt St George's Church, now Doncaster Minster.

Over the years the fabric of the building deteriorated and by 1989 became too expensive for the congregation at that time to maintain. Christ Church was therefore declared a redundant church. After prayer and seeking architectural advice it was bought in 1994 for £5 by Reachout Christian Fellowship. Ten years later in December 2004 and at a cost of almost £1m it opened again for public worship.

The Porch (1)

The main entrance to the church is via the large west door which opens into an octagonal porch. Behind the small wooden door on the north (your left as you look into the church) are steps leading up to the bell tower and base of the spire. Unfortunately this is not open to visitors at present. The small door on the south side hides a storage cupboard.

Beneath the flagstone floor of the porch is a void, approximately 6 metres (20 feet) deep and octagonal in plan. We are not sure of its purpose but it might have been to enable the weight of the tower to be transferred to the underlying sandstone bedrock.

An Original Pew (2)

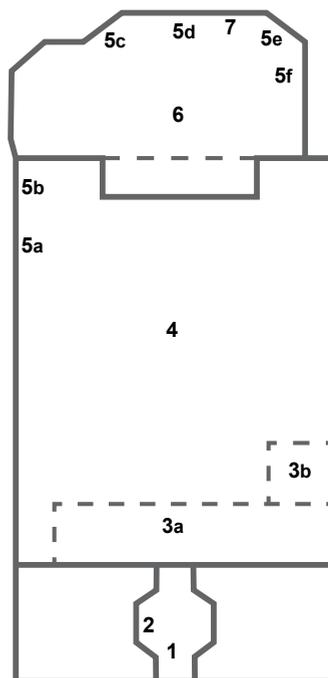
One of the original pews rests against the north wall of the porch. The interior furnishings of the church, including the pews, had been taken out before the church was sold. The old pews are understood to have found new homes in various parts of Doncaster. The one now displayed was kindly donated back to the church after it was re-opened.

The Foyer (3)

The foyer (3a) along with the creche (3b) were created in 2009 by the construction of wooden and glass partitions. A plaque near the glass doors leading from the porch is a reminder that at one time the Anglo-Catholic practice of commemorating the Stations of the Cross was performed in the church. One of the crosses can be seen on the wall to the right of the door as you look towards the porch. The sliding doors at the east of the foyer lead to the nave.

The Nave (4)

The main feature of the nave is the high ceiling and the view to the large east window. The walls carry a number of memorials in this main part of the church and several of these refer to bodies interred in one corner of the crypt. The crypt runs the full length of the building beneath the nave but, because of restricted access, is not open to the public. A gallery runs around the north, west and south sides of the nave.



Stained Glass (5)

The vibrant colours of the stained glass windows are the work of John Baptiste Capronnier. He came from Brussels in the 1860s and had much to do with the modern revival of glass painting. Christ Church is one among a number of churches in the north of England displaying his craftsmanship.

Most of the windows except 5a, which depicts a Coat of Arms, illustrate events from the life of Jesus. 5b illustrates the story of the Good Samaritan, 5c shows the angel announcing the birth of Jesus to the shepherds. Can you see the one asleep?

The three central lights of the main east window (5d) depict Jesus ascending into heaven while the disciples look on in wonder. The left light shows John the Baptist baptising Jesus and the right light shows the Last Supper. Window 5e is of the Three Wise Men offering their gifts to the baby Jesus. We think that 5f indicates John the Baptist pointing to Jesus and saying 'Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world'.

The Chancel Ceiling (6)

The chancel was constructed in 1856 to accommodate increasing congregations and is the design of Sir Gilbert Scott. The painted rafters are a feature of the chancel, whereas in the nave the rafters are hidden by the nave ceiling.

The Writing on the Wall (7)

The Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Apostles' Creed are carved and highlighted on the wall beneath the main east window. These remind us that, as our Heavenly Father, God provides for our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. They also remind us that we too have responsibilities.

Outside Features

The copper clad spire of Christ Church is visible from miles around. In 1836 the original stone spire was shattered by lightning and damaged again in 1850. In 1919 it was removed for safety and replaced in 1938 by the current wooden-framed copper clad spire.

A number of former local dignitaries are buried in the churchyard, amongst them the son and daughter of Sir Edmund Beckett Denison, who was responsible for bringing the railway to Doncaster. Further information about the churchyard can be obtained by contacting Friends of Christ Church Graveyard.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray that all who enter Christ Church would meet with your Son, Jesus Christ; we pray that His peace would be real to them as they spend time in this place and that this peace would remain with them as they leave.

Amen.

We hope that you have enjoyed your visit.

Please do sign the Visitors' Book before you leave.

Opening/Service Times

Sunday Service 10:30am

CLAY youth meetings on the last Saturday in the month 7:30pm

Teen Challenge drop in for homeless and those with alcohol or drug abuse problems
Friday 7:30pm - 9:30pm

Christ Church Cafe open for refreshments and light snacks
Thursday 10:30am - 2:00pm

Church open for prayer, refreshments and viewing the first Saturday in the month
from 10:30am - 12:30pm

Contacts

Reachout Christian Fellowship Tel: 01302 728629

www.christchurchdoncaster.org.uk

Friends of Christ Church Graveyard

Tel: 07743250024



Text: Based partly on material from Doncaster Central Library Local Studies Section and produced along with the plan by Roy Harris.

Design: HERITAGE INSPIRED (www.heritageinspired.org.uk)

