

Earlier this year, we launched a new feature on A Church Near You for editors to see how many visits their pages were having each week, month or year. St Helen's Northwich has received over 23,000 visitors to their A Church Near You page each year. In



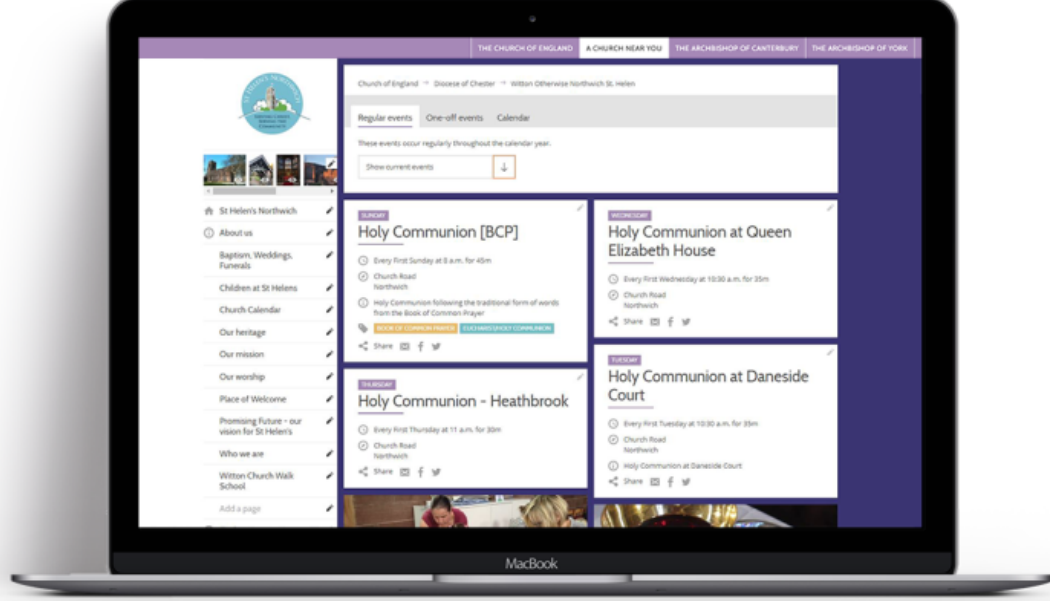
St Helen's Northwich is situated at the heart of a northern town that is now seeing a lot of development and regeneration. The church, the oldest building in the town has a rich history and in recent years has taken steps to become more connected and of service to the local community.

There was a recognition that improving communications, and in particular online communications, needed to be an important part of the plan. Most of our communications spoke primarily to existing church-goers, we wanted to connect with those who didn't come to church.

Over the course of 6 months, we looked at our church magazine, our social media comms and our website, trying to see it through the view of the wider community.

Our website looked dated and was becoming more complex to control with the growing number of pages as we sought to put everything online.

We started looking at how we should improve our presence on A Church Near You, and we recognised that it could become our new website.



We liked the simplicity of the structure, the ease of adding events and news stories and importantly how easy it was to link with national campaigns such as Follow The Star and Pilgrim Journey. We moved the essential information from our old website onto [A Church Near You](#), updated the copy that spoke to the wider audience, re-directed the domain and had a new website.

As we launched it, we also started using our [Facebook pages](#) more effectively, promoting specific events, the ones we were now highlighting on ACNY, and we started to see more people connect with us.

We launched a new family service promoting it through ACNY and Facebook and started reaching a new group of people. The church also started other initiatives to connect with the local community: a group that came together to make poppies for Remembrance stayed together and made gifts for Christmas and Easter; There was one off concerts and events; an Afternoon Tea at the Tower has seen hundreds coming to church to climb the bell-tower and connect with their town's heritage.

Being intentional about improving our communications has extended our reach into the community, and is encouraging people to contact us, using the form provided in ACNY. We use an email address that goes to a few of us, so we typically respond in minutes or hours, rather than days.

[A Church Near You](#) has been an important part of our communications change, more people are seeing us, visiting us and starting to see the church as an important part of our community.

A post from a couple of days ago onto the Northwich Life Facebook group (over 27,000 members) shows how the message is spreading.

"I'd just like to say a great big thank you to Julian and Ray at St Helens Church Northwich who arranged for my Nephew to try his hand at bell ringing this afternoon. My nephew has ASC, he doesn't live in Northwich, but has to go and see St Helen's church every time he visits and loves hearing the bells ring. Julian and Ray were fantastic throughout and it was so kind of them to provide him with this lovely experience; he absolutely loved it."

If you want to find out how your church can use [A Church Near You](#), read more from our Labs Learning blogs [here](#).

Keep up to date with all things digital and join our Digital Labs newsletter.

[Subscribe here](#)

- **Images and copyright: A guide to using images online legally**

19/04/2024



- **How to make the most of Instagram to reach your audience in 2024**

12/04/2024



- **Everything you need to know about the Church Organiser**

05/04/2024



Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/digital-labs/blogs/st-helens-church-northwich>