

St Paul's Church and Monastery was built on land given by King Ecgrith of Northumbria in AD681.

It was founded by Benedict Biscop, who seven years previously had built the church and monastery of St. Peter's at Wearmouth. The chancel of St. Paul's is the original Saxon church built as a separate chapel possibly dedicated to Our Lady.

A large Basilica was built on the site of the present nave and dedicated on 23rd April, AD685. The present nave and north aisle are the work of the Victorian architect Sir George Gilbert Scott. The monastery, to which the Venerable Bede came as a boy, thrived in the 7th and 8th centuries. It was here that Bede lived, worked and worshipped. His bones now lie in the Galilee Chapel of Durham Cathedral. In AD794 the Vikings sacked the church and monastery, but in AD1074 the church was repaired and the monastery re-founded by Aldwin, Prior of Winchcombe Abbey in Gloucestershire. The monastery then became a daughter house of the Benedictine Priory at Durham (now Durham Cathedral).

At the Dissolution of the Monasteries, St. Paul's became the Parish Church.

Today the church is one of the four churches of the Parish of Jarrow and Simonside (Team Ministry)