



St. Mary's Church

Wrotham Rd, Gravesend

Parish Profile 2024



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

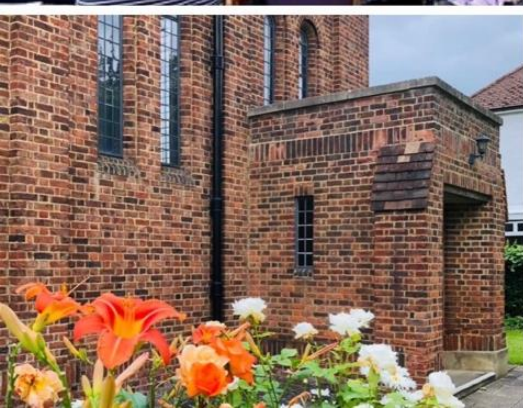


Diocese of
Rochester



Table of Contents

<i>Our next vicar</i>	2
<i>Ministry in the area</i>	4
<i>Buildings</i>	4
<i>Worship patterns</i>	4
<i>Outreach</i>	7
<i>Fellowship</i>	7
<i>Staff</i>	8
<i>Finance</i>	8
<i>Location & facilities in the parish</i>	8
<i>Population</i>	9
<i>Schools</i>	9
<i>Hospice</i>	9
<i>Alms houses and sheltered housing</i>	10
<i>Gravesend Deanery</i>	10
<i>Wider church</i>	10



Welcome to St. Mary's Gravesend.

"Rooted in prayer, growing in Christ, sowing the seeds of his love."

We hope you find our profile interesting, and that you will consider whether God is calling you to ministry with us.

Our PCC has worked hard to pull together this document to capture something of who we are, information about our context, following our own prayers and discernment what we think our next vicar will be like, and something of the opportunities that we see in this part time appointment. We are increasingly diverse and strive to be an inclusive church, we welcome applications from people with protected characteristics. Our worship is varied but usually informal. There's always laughter and we don't take ourselves seriously, but we do take what we do seriously.

Our next vicar

We wish to appoint someone who:

- has an ability to relate to and understand the needs of our young families. This is essential to our mission and identity as a church
- can work with us to discern a vision to increase and develop our church membership and deepen our Christian faith
- understands and can express inclusivity
- has strong leadership skills and can motivate our lay ministry team
- prioritises safeguarding, encouraging everyone to promote a safer church
- deals sympathetically with bereaved people
- can support our varied volunteer ministries
- can help us build upon our positions

We agree to offer them:

- a happy PCC who enjoy working together
- a kind and considerate congregation
- personal space for rest and recreation
- enduring friendships, and encouraging self-care
- laughter and fellowship

Churchmanship:

We have a charismatic style of worship underpinned by a modern catholic theology. Laughter and children making a noise are a normal part of our services.

Living in Love and Faith:

We are unanimous as a PCC in supporting a priest who wishes to use the prayers for love and faith. We strive to be a truly inclusive church and our view is that there are no exceptions.



Ministry in the area

In recent years the PCC and church have worked hard to develop our **identity, values and our mission and vision statements** which guide choices we make and help focus us on what we aim to be. You can read about this by visiting <https://www.stmarysgravesend.org.uk>

Our previous incumbent was chaplain to St. George's primary and secondary school next to our church and regularly took assemblies in other schools in the parish. One of our readers is a chaplain at the hospice in the parish and other ministry in the area includes ambulance chaplaincy, visiting the sick and bereaved, a weekly toddler group, school governorship, monthly litter picks around the parish, collections for the food bank, and a yearly holiday club for primary aged children.

Buildings

- a) The **Church** was built in 1938 and is in a reasonable state of repair with some items from the quinquennial that need attention in the short term. Internally it is light and spacious and has no fixed furniture. There is, of course, the Vicar's vestry, an office and a meeting/creche room with limited kitchen facilities.
- b) The Church **Hall** is attached and was built in 1972. This has full kitchen facilities, a storeroom and youth room/Sunday school space. The main hall can seat 120 people and there is a stage. We have several weeknight bookings and occasional private bookings, but do not accept parties with amplified music due to the proximity of private housing.
- c) The **Vicarage** is a 5-minute walk from the church. On the ground floor it has a large lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room and study. The entrance hall has a toilet leading from it. Upstairs there are 5 bedrooms, a bathroom and shower and another toilet. The master bedroom is ensuite. There is a good-sized rear garden and a garage plus hard standing for at least 3 vehicles.



Worship patterns

We have a said **Holy Communion at 8.30am Sundays**, using Common Worship Order 1 in traditional language and **Holy Communion at 10.00am on the 2nd and 4th Sundays**, using Common Worship Order 1 – each with Sunday School. **The 1st Sunday 10.00am is café worship**, and the **3rd Sunday is morning worship**. Where there is a **5th Sunday, worship style may differ**.

We aim to run a study course each Lent, this year we are using the Leading Your Church into Growth course called 'Moving On'.

Once a month we have a thriving **Saturday Messy Church** congregation, larger than the Sunday congregation. We have recently seen movement from our Saturday congregation to our Sunday.

In addition to an **organ**, we have a **music group** with piano, violin, bass guitar, and **singers**, this allows predominantly **modern worship** with occasional traditional hymns.

The Electoral Roll stands at 65, and the usual attendances at Sunday services 5 at 8.00am and around 40 adults with up to 10 children at 10.00am (statistics for mission return 2023). Our worshipping community was reported as 150 people 65 of whom are children or young people.



Sunday morning worship



Christingle service on Christmas Eve



Remembrance Sunday



Maundy Thursday



Café worship



Messy Church

Outreach

We have a thriving **Toddler group** which meets each Wednesday during school term time. Regularly with 70+ attendees (toddlers and minders) each week.

Messy Church has opened the doors to a new group of families and created an additional congregation. Members of the existing church community run activities and support the emerging faith of those who come along. Recently we have seen cross over to café or other worship.

We hold a **summer Holiday Club** which attracts about 25 school age children which runs for 4 days during the main school summer break. This event closes on the Sunday with the children (and parents) coming to church, followed by a barbecue. In addition, we have year 6 from our local school in church for '**Why Easter?**' and '**Why Christmas?**' events each year.

We recently restarted Beavers, Cubs and Scouts who attend Remembrance services and take part in socials such as church fairs.

Since 2019 we have held **summer and Christmas fairs**. These are great outreach and well attended by the local community.

One of our Readers is **chaplain to the ambulance station staff**, a second is an **honorary chaplain to the Hospice**. Another is a **safeguarding expert on General synod**, and our LLM is both licenced to the diocese for work with **SECamb**, and a **lay canon on Cathedral Chapter**. However, three of these are over or close to 70.

We recently started a monthly community litter pick which operates in different areas of our parish.

Fellowship

Two **quiz evenings** are arranged each year to which other churches in the Deanery are invited.

There is a "**Curry Club**" who meet every other month at one or other of the local curry houses.

In addition, we have had **PCC and parish away days** and have recently started a **Thursday drop-in** and fellowship in church, and a monthly **men's group** that meets in the pub by the town pier.



Staff

We have 3 Readers, 1 LLM, 2 Church Wardens, 1 PA, safeguarding and DBS leads, a treasurer and worship leader. We have an experienced PCC with a range of talents and interests.

Finance

We are mindful of our financial responsibilities to the diocese and do the best we can. Our budget for the coming year is positive. We make monthly payments into a church repair fund designed to meet the costs of anticipated repairs at the next quinquennial review. Recent initiatives have improved our finances: a stewardship campaign, restarting exciting summer and Christmas fairs, and increased hall bookings. We have seen a significant improvement in our financial security over the last few years.



Location & facilities in the parish

The church is situated on the A227 Wrotham Road, approximately ½ mile from the A2 trunk road, and about one mile from the town centre and station. The parish contains school fields, farmland, a golf course and a public park. Ebbsfleet railway station (with fast trains to London) is about 2 miles from the church and Bluewater shopping centre 5 miles.

The housing is mixed with quite a large estate part social housing and part privately owned. Other areas contain private housing consisting of a lot of terraced properties and some semi-detached.

A **new housing development** on the edge of the parish is almost complete and has added considerably to the closest population within the parish bounds. We have already engaged in outreach work there and welcomed folk to our church.

Additionally, the **parish boundaries were recently increased** to include much of a neighbouring parish. This has added additional housing and schooling to the parish bringing fresh challenges and opportunities which we are yet to fully realise.

There are four **small shopping parades**, a **fire station** and **ambulance station**, a **library** and a **bowls club**. There are **three public houses**, one of which has a **Premier Inn** attached to it. A Morrison's **supermarket** and Lidl, Screwfix, as well as a Carvery and hotel. We also have an Eleanor/Lion's **Hospice** in the parish which we have been involved in since its inception.

<https://www.visitkent.co.uk/destinations/gravesend/>
<https://www.visitgravesend.co.uk/>



A map of places making up the borough of Gravesend

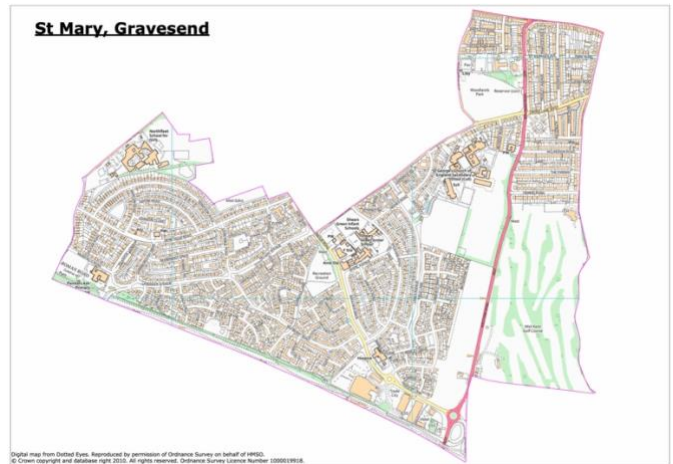
Population

Summary of Parish statistics

Deprivation rank (1=most deprived, 12,239=least deprived)	5,549
Parish population (2021 census)	8,326
Parish number of occupied households	3,300
Area (square miles)	0.8
Population density (people per square mile)	10,246

Parish residents' ages		Residents' ethnic identity	
% aged 0-4	5.6	% Asian ethnicity	9.9
% aged 5-19	18.4	% Black ethnicity	4.9
% aged 20-29	11.1	% Mixed ethnicity	2.3
% aged 30-44	19.1	% White ethnicity	80.2
% aged 45-69	31.1	% Other ethnicity	2.7
% aged 70 and over	14.7		

Parish residents' religious affiliation			
% Buddhist	0.3	% Sikh	8.0
% Christian	51.3	% Other religion	0.3
% Hindu	1.2	% No religion	32.8
% Jewish	0.1	% Religion not stated	4.7
% Muslim	1.4		



Source: <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=67bce0ed36dd4ee0af7a16bc079aa09a&extent=-0.4317,51.313,0.1986,51.5945>

Schools

There is a **primary school**, plus **infant and junior school** (maintained) with a **nursery** in the parish, and of course St. George's Church of England **All Through Academy** (Primary and Secondary) which adjoins the church, and Northfleet School for Girls. The infant & junior schools make use of the church two or three times a year and St. George's school uses it daily for a short service and assemblies. Two of our P.C.C. members are also **governors** at this school and the previous vicar was part-time chaplain working in the schools daily. It is likely that the new vicar may be invited to become a governor.



There are exceptional ties with the school community. The vicar takes termly assemblies in each of the schools and there are reception visits to church to learn about Christmas, and year one visit to learn about baptism.



Hospice

The hospice opened about 30 years ago under the auspices of the "Lions" and our previous vicars have been chaplains there since the start. A few years ago, the hospice merged with the "Ellenor" hospice in Dartford. One of our lay readers is an honorary chaplain, visiting at least 4 days per week, and we know that her work is very much appreciated by patients and their families. At Christmas we have held a blue Christmas service and have remembrance services for the bereaved.



Alms houses and sheltered housing

We have some alms houses in the parish but no contact at present. In the recent past we visited Shears Green Court sheltered housing and sung carols there each Christmas.

Gravesend Deanery

The Gravesend Deanery consists of 13 benefices between Greenhithe to the west and Higham to the east and sandwiched between the A2 trunk road and the river Thames. The Deanery has committed to working together (usually with the deanery clergy) to provide training courses: Hearing God's Word and Speaking God's Word to help in the development of lay ministers. The East Gravesend Group clergy share marriage preparation, confirmation preparation and Lent study courses. We also work closely with Churches Together in Gravesham.

Rochester Diocese

To find out more about the diocese of Rochester please visit our website at:

<https://www.rochester.anglican.org/>

Wider church

We have strong links with the Kisauni Pentecostal Assembly of God church in Mombasa, Kenya. Over the last twenty + years we have raised several thousand pounds to assist them in completion of their church building and one of our readers and his wife usually make an annual visit to them.



St. Mary's supports the Children's Society through a Christingle service. We have weekly collections which go to the foodbank.



St. Mary's is once again a thriving church community, building new congregations, engaging with the wider world, and making a difference in our local community. We now seek to build upon this growth, developing into our expanded parish boundaries, consolidating our new congregations, deepening emerging faith, and discerning the next stage in our journey. We welcome a priest who is ready to love our congregation.

