

A photograph of St. Mary's Church in Hadlow. The foreground shows a weathered stone wall with a Gothic archway. A blue circular window is visible on the wall. In the background, a tall, ornate Gothic tower rises against a clear blue sky. The scene is set in a courtyard with a cobblestone path and green grass.

# St. Mary's Church Hadlow



# Welcome to Hadlow

The village of Hadlow lies in the Medway valley of Kent and four miles north-east of Tonbridge along the A26. It is conveniently located for access to the County Town of Maidstone, Royal Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks. There is a mainline train station at Tonbridge serving both London and the south coast to Dover and Hastings.

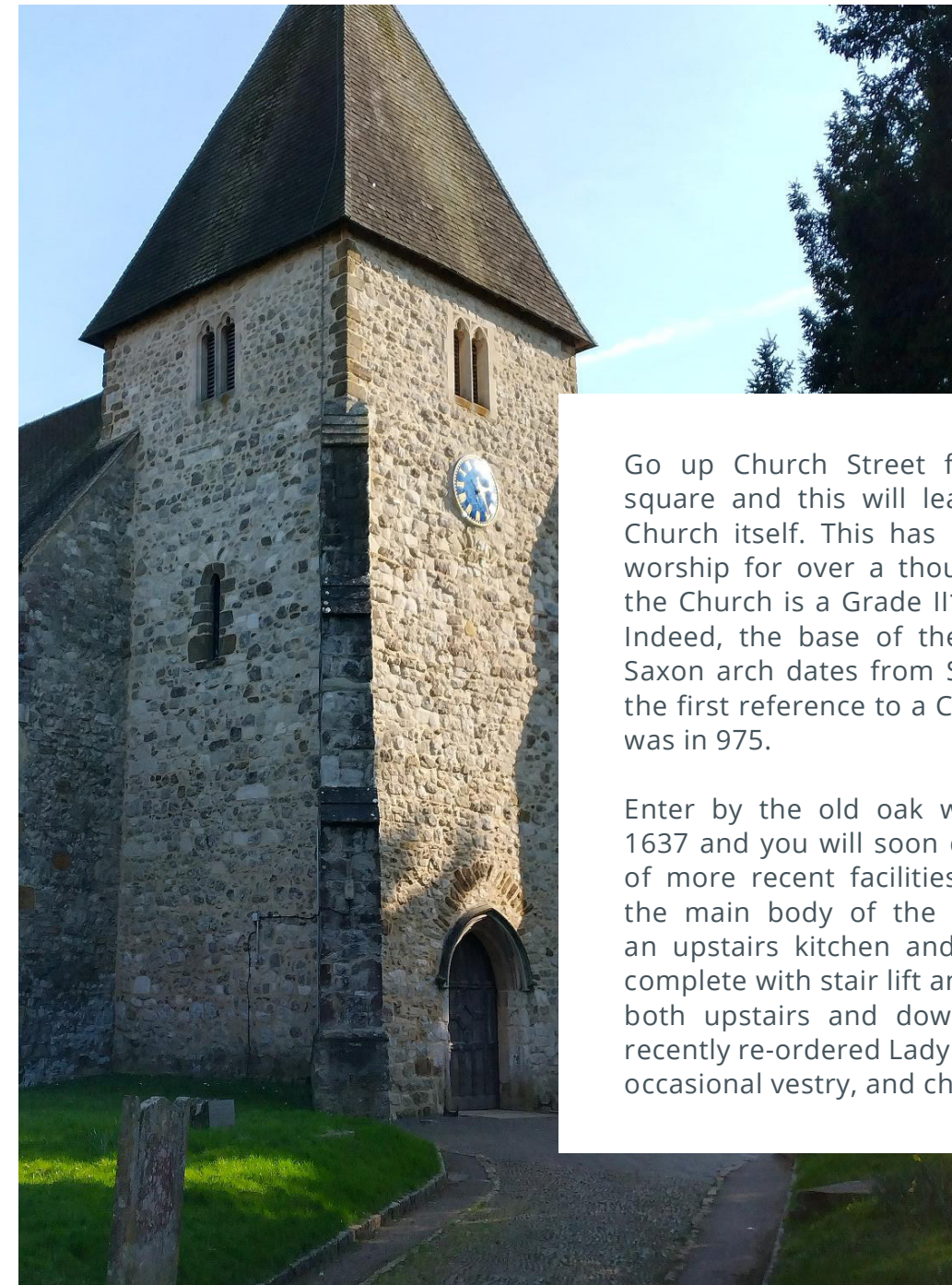
Should you ever lose your way, Hadlow Tower is the perfect landmark. This fifty-metre-high Gothic folly is the tallest, best preserved, and most distinctive in England and was once part of the former Hadlow castle.

In the village square you will find facilities ranging from a pharmacy, post office, baker, convenience store, barber and hairdresser to a vintage homeware and coffee shop and takeaway. In the centre of the village there is also a dental practice, medical centre, and library, as well as an osteopath and a pub!

The village has two pre-schools, a primary school, a secondary school and Hadlow College itself which offers further education in land-based studies. The surrounding countryside has plenty of scope for walking and exercise. There are also numerous clubs and sports on offer including bowls and a cricket club.

There is a diversity of housing in the parish ranging from fifteenth century cottages and listed buildings through to more modern dwellings with a mixture of private, local authority and housing association accommodation.

The vicarage itself is a substantial four bedroomed house dating from 1987. It is well-appointed and recently refurbished and located just along the road from the village square it offers spacious accommodation with its own secluded private garden. It also has a modern kitchen, utility room, office, and garage.



Go up Church Street from the village square and this will lead to St. Mary's Church itself. This has been a place of worship for over a thousand years and the Church is a Grade II\* listed building. Indeed, the base of the tower with its Saxon arch dates from Saxon times and the first reference to a Church in Hadlow was in 975.

Enter by the old oak west door dated 1637 and you will soon discover a range of more recent facilities. In addition to the main body of the Church there is an upstairs kitchen and meeting room, complete with stair lift and toilet facilities both upstairs and down, as well as a recently re-ordered Lady Chapel, a vestry, occasional vestry, and choir robing room.



Hadlow Church also has a Chapel of Ease in Golden Green, which is itself a Grade II listed tin tabernacle dating from hop picking days in 1914. The village also has the Roman Catholic Church of St. Peter.

Hadlow is an expanding village of around 4,000 people including a population of around 350 at Golden Green. In the 2011 census 67% of Hadlow's residents identified themselves as Christian though of the 135 people currently on the electoral roll only 93 are resident with 42 coming from Tonbridge and elsewhere outside the parish. Attendance on Sundays averages around sixty and there are already four weddings booked for this year.



However, it is the members of the congregation themselves that reflect the true spirit of the village. "Open, welcoming and friendly" is how one new worshipper described the St. Mary's Church experience.

But isn't that what you'd expect from a Church that continues to thrive after a thousand years?



---

# Tonbridge Archdeaconry

It is with great delight that I commend this parish profile for the parish of St Mary's Hadlow to you as you discern God's call whether to serve here as Vicar.

You will see from the profile that this is a parish with a long history of effective Christian presence, and today offers a vibrant and thriving worshipping community in a setting that is rich in history as well as having opportunity for growth into the future.

This church finds itself in a vacancy at a time when parishes and congregations are navigating their way out of a very unsettled two years following the pandemic. Whilst this presents its own set of challenges, it is also an exciting time for the Church in Hadlow to embrace the new opportunities that the end of restrictions now offer. The congregation and people of the benefice are keen to be able to give their new Vicar the support that will be needed into the coming months and years.

As Vicar you would also have the support of Deanery colleagues within the Paddock Wood Deanery, one of six that lie within the Tonbridge Archdeaconry. The Archdeaconry is one of three within the wider Diocese of Rochester.

The Diocese as a whole is home to some 1.3m people, which is set for significant growth (of around a further 300,000 over the next 20 years) – including areas that will impact this benefice. Whilst growth is inevitable, much of Tonbridge Archdeaconry retains its rural identity, with urban centres found in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, and Paddock Wood, and around the Aylesford area. For this benefice many look to Maidstone, in neighbouring Canterbury Diocese.

Tonbridge Archdeaconry shares its life together under the canopy of the Diocesan strategy, Called Together, which focusses upon 5 priorities, based upon the five marks of mission:

- To enable each church to be mission minded
- To help children, young people and adults live out everyday faith in Jesus
- To support loving service in local communities
- To speak and respond to the prophetic voice of justice and peace
- To protect creation's life for future generations

I am committed to these priorities. Together, across the Archdeaconry, and indeed across the Diocese, we are working to realise these priorities within the many different contexts God has placed us. In this parish profile you will see how St Mary's Hadlow is responding to the wider Called Together strategy.

With prayers for you as you discern God's call to this place.

Ven Sharon Copestake  
Archdeacon of Tonbridge



# St. Mary's Church Today

St Mary's is a single parish benefice which is increasingly unusual.

Hadlow is known for offering Liberal Catholic Eucharistic based worship in a variety of traditional and modern styles, ranging from a weekly 8am BCP to monthly Messy Church in addition to the main 10am service on Sundays and also a mid-week Communion on Wednesday mornings. On months where there is a fifth Sunday there is a Family Service.



## Church Activities & Support

- A full and supportive PCC with Outreach and Education, Mission, Finance and Fabric sub committees
- This friendly Church has good links with the local schools and college, the Scout Group, the Parish Council, and the recently reopened Roman Catholic Church
- The Church has a part-time Administrator who produces a monthly village newsletter which is distributed to every home in the parish
- St. Mary's Church has an Anna Chaplain who runs regular coffee mornings and occasional lunches for seniors as well as working with the Home Visiting and Communion teams
- Messy Church for children and their families monthly on Sunday afternoons
- Weekly Coffee Pots & Tiny Tots for pre-school children with their parents or carers



- St Mary's Church has a strong musical tradition with a robed choir
- The Alfred Monk organ is one of the finest village church organs in the south-east
- The Church tower has eight bells and there is an active band of expert Bell Ringers
- Café Plus with members currently busy knitting banners and flags for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee
- Hadlow Food Bank

- World Mission links with Kibakwe in the Diocese of Mpwapwa in Tanzania, the Delhi Brotherhood and Mission Aviation Fellowship
- An annual "Holiday at Home" for seniors run by our Anna Chaplain
- A Hospital Transport Service
- Christmas stalls, Scarecrow Trail and Advent windows and a Christmas tree festival
- Occasional concerts and organ recitals
- Hadlow has previously had a tradition of training for ministry of both Curates and Lay Readers





# Future Opportunities

The congregation values our traditional Eucharistic style of worship, many of whom come from outside the village as a result. But we recognise the opportunity for other forms of service to make worship at St Mary's more accessible to those unfamiliar with church as much as those from different traditions.

With the full support of the congregation, we hope that a strong leader would consider the opportunities listed below.

## Hopes & Expectations

- To rejoice in God and future opportunities to grow the Church in Hadlow, particularly by encouraging younger families
- To try to expand our range of worship styles, such as through Messy Church and Family Services



- To build a Youth Club
- To grow the team to expand our relationships with the pre-school, primary school, secondary school, Hadlow College and the numerous village organisations
- To endeavour to be even more at the heart of the local community, focused particularly on families and children as well as older people
- To make greater use of the Church buildings as the centre of the community such as by offering greater hospitality and opportunities for social activity within the church
- Aim to open the church every day to provide a morning café facility, as well as sponsoring more concerts and community-based events
- To lead the parish in a project to upgrade and relocate kitchen facilities in the church building as well as the décor and to invest in high-tech Audio-Visual equipment to enable the presentation and streaming of both sound and film
- To encourage generous giving and seek ways to finance development plans





# Our New Vicar

The Vicar of Hadlow is an important leadership role. It requires someone who is able to build teams and to delegate. Hadlow needs an incumbent with a pastoral heart as well as someone who is a good communicator.



## Expected Qualities and Duties

- Be a strong leader
- Be someone who is pastoral and concerned with outreach
- Be a good communicator
- Have a passion, energy, and vision for ministry
- To grow the ministry in Hadlow and Golden Green particularly among families and young people
- Be a collaborative leader who will enable and empower laity to grow in faith and develop their gifts
- Be a good organiser and delegator
- Be able to build a programme of appropriate services for the community

- Be keen to join in village life and encourage people to join in community events and worship with the Church
- Be enthusiastic to include community leaders, the parish council, schools, and others
- Be supportive of women in ministry
- Lead the way with Safeguarding
- Take festival services for the schools and college as well as act as a chaplain for Hadlow College
- Encourage and grow the musical tradition
- Be present in the community to engage with members of the parish
- Lead regular weekdays services including Wednesday mornings and evening prayers / prayer groups
- Take an active role in communicating Church activities to the whole Parish
- Lead Hadlow traditions including Carols in the Square on Christmas Eve and the Walk of Witness on Good Friday
- Support the work of the Outreach and Education, Mission, and Fabric sub committees of the PCC
- To embrace the full scope of Generous Giving including time and talents



# Whats on Offer

We understand that a successful Church is going to rely on the two-way partnership between the Parish and the Vicar. These are some of the things Hadlow can offer a new Vicar.

Hadlow is a single Parish Benefice with a modern, 4 bedroom, detached Vicarage in the heart of the village.

Hadlow is a caring community where you will feel welcome and we will continue to pray for our new Vicar.

We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all.

We recognise the importance of wellbeing in everyone and so have committed ourselves to the Church of England's Covenant for Clergy Care & Wellbeing.

We want our vicar to enjoy living in Hadlow and, as well as being there for us, to take an appropriate amount of time out to look after yourself and those who matter most to you.

Hadlow offers a full PCC and several subcommittees and teams, committed to delivering in different areas of Church Life

Hadlow is lucky to have a part-time Parish Administrator who has been in the role for many years.

We have a ministry team including an Anna Chaplain and a retired Vicar.

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.*

*Matthew 7:7-8*

# Message from the Area Dean

As Area Dean I have been greatly encouraged by the community at Hadlow and the congregations of St Mary's Church.

Members of the church family are friendly and keen to get involved in mission and ministry. The Vicarage is a lovely house a few minutes away from the church and centre of the village. St Mary's is a beautiful and useful building set in an idyllic setting just off the village square. This is a gem of a parish in a fantastic setting.

Hadlow is part of the Paddock Wood Deanery, a group of rural and suburban parishes on the edge of the Diocese mostly to the south of Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. We are a happy, cohesive, friendly clergy chapter (no really we are!) and keen to welcome our new colleague to Hadlow.



Rochester Diocese has proved to be a good home for me since 2016 and I highly commend this role to you. If I can be of any help to you please give me a call on 01892 890688 or email [revandrew@mail.com](mailto:revandrew@mail.com)

Reverend Andrew Axon  
(Area Dean and Vicar of Lamberhurst & Matfield)



# Who's Who

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

*1 Peter 4:10*

**Michael Payne** - Church Warden

**John Speed** - Church Warden

**Jenny Hopkins** - Anna Chaplain

**Janice Massy** - Parish Administrator

**Martin Massy** - Treasurer and PCC Secretary

**Cathy Brill** - Parish Safeguarding Officer

**Nicola** - Deputy Recruiter

## PCC

Cathy Brill

Melissa Crawshay-Williams

Kirsty Finch

Jenny Hopkins

Richard Hopkinson

Lee Kirk

Janice Massy

Lea Menday-Kolozsvari

Katerina Nixon

Lisa Porritt

Iris Shaw

## Deanery Synod Representatives

Barry Wheeler

Mike Harvey

## Vergers

Anne and Iris

## Retired Clergy in Parish

Rev. Christopher Miles

Some of the groups of people who help keep St Mary's running.

## Sidesmen

Annie, Bett, Carole, Claire, Jenny, Kirsty, Lee and Mags

## Fundraising & Outreach Team

Janice, Kirsty, Sharon, Katherine, Lee, Lisa and Melisa

## Finance Team

Martin, Mike, Duncan, Gabrielle and David

## Fabric Team

Duncan, Anne, Martin, Shephanie and Richard

## Education Team & Sunday Groups (Jesus and Me and Messy Church)

Cathy, Jenny and Katrina

## Mission Team and Foodbank Team

Alison, Siobhan, Julia and Linda

## Zoom Operators (Audio for Sundays)

Gill and Viv

## Organist & Choir Directors

Michael and Francis

## Choir

Lisa, Joycelyn, Liz, Jenny, Sharon, Iris, Katerina, Julia, Linda, Mavis, Pippa, Jim, Mike and Martin

## Readers (For Sunday Services)

Lee, Annie, Mavis, Sylvia, David, Brenda, Lisa, Bob and Cathy

## Intercessors

Nicola, Janice, Lisa, Cathy, Stafford and Julia

## Bell Ringers

Phil, Emma, Ann, Stan, Howard, Ray, James, Rachel and Janice

## Home Communion Team

Jenny, Iris, Penny and Liz

## Home Group Coordinator

Nicola

## Wednesday Toddlers Group (Coffee Pots and Tiny Tots)

Cathy, Pippa, Jim, Jem, Carole and Val