



# Parish Church of St James Hatcham and the United Church of St Michael

Local Ecumenical Partnership with St Andrew's Brockley United Reformed Church

St James London SE14 6AD October 2021

## Welcome to our Parish Profile

We hope it will give you a flavour of our church family and our mission to the local community so that you can prayerfully discern if God is calling you to be our next vicar



**The Parish of St James exists to honour and serve the living God, to love and support one another and enable people to discover the love of Christ for themselves**

# This is us...

## Who are we?

Our parish is based in New Cross, South-East London, and we greatly value our Anglican tradition as part of Southwark Diocese and Deptford Deanery. Over the years our leadership has focussed worship through regular communion, Bible-based teaching and prayer.

Despite the vacancy and the challenges of Covid-19 and lockdown, we have been blessed to see our congregation growing in numbers. We believe this is due to our core values of being one family, being welcoming, and being rooted in the local community. We have developed a strong lay leadership and organisational structure which is creating a more prioritised vision based around Living for Jesus. We have experienced spiritual growth through the lay involvement in worship necessitated by organising Sunday worship via Zoom; and through the support of clergy from our diocese and deanery who have given their time to regularly celebrate communion with us.

## Our ethos

- We believe everyone we meet outside our doors and everyone who God invites through them is welcome in God's house without preconceived ideas or judgements.
- Living and worshipping in a multicultural, urban priority area, we see our mission as introducing God into the everyday lives of all we meet, inside and outside church and bringing them the Good News of Jesus.
- Set in a transient and fast-changing locality, we see ourselves as an inclusive, extended family offering stability and continuity.

## Where have we come from?

We are a partnership of three churches: the parish church of St James Hatcham, St Michael's United Church, and our Local Ecumenical Partner (LEP) St Andrew's United Reformed Church Brockley. Our LEP is a much valued and distinctive feature of our mission and we recently celebrated 45 years of successful collaboration. Going forward, we believe God will bless this partnership with a new URC Church Related Community Worker to make our service to our local community more effective.

## Worship

- Our worship is traditional but relaxed; we like liturgy, but we like it to be enjoyable and inclusive.
- We are rooted in Bible-based teaching from our clergy and lay leadership, which has always been encouraged.
- We prioritise sharing in communion and love to worship the Lord through music and psalms.

- We encourage lay involvement and have been richly blessed by many of our members sharing their faith stories during lockdown.
- We have been encouraged by the simple directness of worship led by our young people.
- We encourage prayerfulness individually and as a church family.
- Friendships flourish over tea and biscuits after the service.
- As a family we love to celebrate and enjoy the many cultural traditions we share. God is not just in the breaking of bread but in chicken, rice and peas or a Sunday roast.
- One of our principal goals is to encourage and empower each person, young or old, to discover and pursue the mission God has for them, and to play an active part in church life and mission.

As well as encouraging all to contribute to the worship and prayer life of our churches, we have a strong organisational structure and we thank God for the committed and talented people who take responsibility for the stewardship of our buildings and resources – our church wardens, treasurer and PCC.

## Witness

St James has always been ready to adapt to the changing needs of our church family and the community in which we serve. In the 1980s the parish church moved out of the original Victorian building into what was the church hall next door. This building was remodelled and reopened in 2012 to be the attractive, flexible worship space we have now.

- We have a small but beautiful **memorial garden**. Alongside the war memorials, nestling among the plants, are granite stones marking where the ashes of some of our church family are already interred.
- Our buildings have flexible spaces which are hired out to many community groups; from other churches to self-help groups.

The United Church of St Michael was built in the early 1970's and in 1975 became one of the first ecumenical partnerships with St Andrew's Brockley United Reformed Church. Now an LEP, the church has worked tirelessly to bring God's love to the **Milton Court** housing estate. The parish works very closely with St Andrew's in this mission, and the leadership of all three churches work closely together. We are currently working with St Andrew's to appoint a URC-funded (with locally funded expenses) Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) who will be identifying mission opportunities in the area.

- As well as the church, the building comprises **St Michael's Community Centre** and three flats which are rented out to provide income.
- The Centre is a Charitable Company, and the trustees have been revitalising the building to create the community hub it was designed to be. Our flexible spaces are hired out to many community groups; from other churches to a commercially-run nursery and after-school.
- St Michael's community centre is becoming a valuable asset for the area, and we are praying that it will offer more opportunities for mission.

## Leadership Structure

We have a committed PCC with, on average, 10 members regularly attending 10 meetings per year. We aim to be good stewards of our human resources, our finances, buildings and, under the leadership of our vicar, to pray and care for the spiritual wellbeing of our church family and our vision for future mission.

Between PCC meetings, the day-to-day oversight of our churches, including making maximum use of our meeting spaces through lettings, is overseen by our standing committee. This consists of the vicar, the church wardens and the treasurer.

## Our website

In May 2020 we created our church website [stjamesandstmichaelshatcham.org](http://stjamesandstmichaelshatcham.org) to highlight how our church families work and worship together. We hope to widen the reach of this resource with the support of our new vicar.

## Our neighbours

- **St James Hatcham Church of England Primary School.** The parish church was built with a school attached in the 1840's and we have worked together ever since. During the interregnum the church liaison officer has worked closely with the school and is currently vice-chair of governors. Historically, the vicar of St James' has been a foundation governor.

Weekly morning assembly in church is very important and currently years 4, 5 and 6 meet on Wednesdays, and years 1, 2, 3 and reception meet on Fridays during term time. We encourage clergy and others to be guest speakers at assembly where appropriate. At the beginning and end of each term the church liaison officer has been at the school gates to see the children and meet their parents.

The church liaison officer is part of the school's faith group which monitors the RE curriculum and how the school's Christian values are being promoted throughout the school. Last year volunteers from years 5 and 6 became faith ambassadors, modelling the school's values of love, joy, hope and peace, and reporting back to the faith group any areas the children have found helpful or challenging.

The school's SIAMS rating is outstanding, and its Ofsted rating is good with elements of outstanding. Both inspecting bodies reported that the close relationship between church and school was a vital ingredient to this achievement. You can find out more about the school on their website [st-jameshatcham.lewisham.sch.uk](http://st-jameshatcham.lewisham.sch.uk).

- **St James & New Cross Nursery Trust.** The nursery is set up as a charitable trust offering nursery places to the local community. Historically, the vicar of St James' has been a member of the board and currently the church liaison officer is fulfilling this role.

- Sadly because of lockdown the **Trussell Trust Food Bank** based at St James' since 2012 had to close but two of the church volunteers have transferred to another local branch. Additionally, the church volunteers who collected regular large donations of food and toiletries from our local Sainsbury's have continued to do so and deliver them to the main Trussell Trust Food Bank centre. You can find out more about the Trussell Trust on their website [www.trusselltrust.org](http://www.trusselltrust.org).
- **New Cross Learning (NXL)** is a community-run library with an effective and positive presence on New Cross Road. You can find out more about the library on their website [newxlearning.org](http://newxlearning.org). Church members played an instrumental part in setting it up and have given time to support activities there. We have organised large community events with NXL and retain a mutually supportive friendship.
- **Goldsmith's University** campus surrounds St James' Church and school and it leases the old parish church building from the diocese for art space and events. We have a good relationship with the college which hires rooms in the church for various activities throughout the year.

During the interregnum the current Anglican Chaplain, Rev Ann Clarke, has kindly celebrated communion with us from time to time and we would like to build on this relationship to support her work. However, given that the student population forms a major part of the demographic of this area, consideration might also be given to facilitating another church which felt called to set up a mission to students.

## Opportunities and challenges – we're all in this together!

Our church family has always been committed to lay involvement in the life of our churches. During lockdown and the interregnum services continued online via Zoom and 24 members of our congregation (including seven young people) contributed their thoughts on how their faith impacted their ability to deal with lockdown. Since we have been back in church, we have been blessed by clergy from our deanery coming to celebrate communion with us, but we have been equally blessed by many of our church family leading, preaching and praying at Sunday family services.

We look forward to sharing with you what we have already learned about ourselves and our communities; and encouraging you to bring fresh insight; working and praying with us to seek God's will for this next stage in our mission.

- We believe in family. **Will you help us to create strong pastoral links?**
- We aim to encourage lay involvement. **Will you help us to ensure succession planning by finding and equipping members to take on or take over the many essential tasks required to run churches?**
- We aim to be good stewards of the resources we've been given. **Can you help encourage giving?**

- We have two buildings to maintain, and we need to use them wisely, not just as worship and mission spaces, but also to generate income. **Do you have the prayerful and practical skills to help us build on our financial stability and grow our mission?**
- The mission strategy for St Michael's Local Ecumenical Partnership is the combined responsibility of the clergy and leadership at St James', St Michael's and St Andrew's URC; the St Michael's joint churches council; and the combined fellowships of all three churches. It is important that you share our vision and be excited by the opportunity to work with, break bread with, and worship with our ecumenical brothers and sisters in order to bring pastoral care and mission to the Milton Court Estate. The clergy of the three churches sit as ex-officio trustees of the St Michael's Community Centre and work with the trustees of the centre to further its mission to be a beacon of hope for the wider community. **Are you able to meet the challenge of being united within a LEP where belief, theology and churchmanship may differ? Can you prioritise the necessary pastoral, practical and time commitment to encourage growth and financial stability?**
- We hope you will want to share in our mission with the school, offering spiritual and pastoral support and taking on the required practical role of foundation governor. You will be supported by the church liaison officer, church members who have children at the school and lay volunteers. **Can you help us engage parents who are not currently church members?**
- Can you help us build on our experience of running a Food Bank? **How can we work together to bring the Good News sensitively to the many people in crisis in our area?**
- Can you help us build on our relationship with New Cross Learning? **How can we take this forward?**
- We are building ongoing relationships with Goldsmith's College and the Anglican Chaplaincy. **Can you work with us to nurture these relationships in an appropriate way as opportunities arise? Can you help us facilitate a potential partnership with another church which feels called to student mission?**

## Is God calling you to be our new vicar?

- Our location means we have a very broad constituency in terms of culture, ethnicity, age, permanent residency, and ambitions/expectations – council tenants, young professionals, young families, retired and elderly, students. You will need to have a strong personal faith in order to welcome and minister effectively to this diverse community.
- While being respectful of our strong traditions of worship, you will need to take a prayerful and empathetic approach in seeking flexible new forms of worship and engagement that attract and keep all of us engaged and growing in faith.

- The vicar of St James carries a lot of responsibilities. You will need to be well-organised and be able to prioritise your time to cover the day-to-day tasks, as well as prayerfully encouraging mission focus.
- You will need to be a good listener and effective communicator who will encourage members of our church families who already have busy lives to join you as we work together to discover God's vision for St James' and St Michael's going forward.

## Has God equipped you for the task?

We are looking for someone with a strong personal faith who will appreciate what we have already achieved in order to help us meet the challenges we will face as we move on to the next phase of our journey with God.

- Can you preach and teach the Bible in a way which is rooted firmly in contemporary life so that it is relevant to the people in our parish and the wider community?
- Can you show strong leadership by getting alongside our church family to encourage greater involvement through nurturing, motivating and affirming their talents?
- Do you have the wisdom and grace to create and encourage partnerships with the other churches in our deanery and beyond?

## If you are called to us, we will encourage you to...

- Let us pray for you and those you love
- Take regular holidays
- Not have your phone/computer on 24/7
- Ask if we can help with your ministry
- Plug into the deanery for mutual support
- Have a private life
- Accept our social invitations only if you want to
- Claim all appropriate expenses
- Enjoy the vicarage and garden as your home
- Be happy with us!

# Practicalities

## Our services

Both churches hold 10.00 am Sunday services. We use Common Worship for our communion services and follow a traditional family service format. We leave it up to the clergy to decide whether to robe. At St James' communion is celebrated on the first, third and fifth Sunday of each month. At St Michael's communion is celebrated in the Anglican tradition on the second Sunday and in the URC tradition on the fourth Sunday of each month. During the interregnum and lockdown we have not had any mid-week meetings.

We regularly come together for joint services, particularly for our patronal festivals and at Easter, Advent and Christmas. After the St James' patronal festival there is always a BBQ which includes guests from across the deanery, especially in the last two years the clergy who have supported us during the interregnum; and St Michael's Patronal Festival is

organised in partnership with our LEP friends from St Andrew's and includes refreshments afterwards.

### **Electoral Roll**

The Parish Roll is 68; 48 from St James and 20 from St Michael.

We treasure our diversity and see ourselves as one extended family. Ages range from toddlers to 80+ and this includes everything from large family groups, to single parent families, couples, singles and students. We have a good balance of men and women. We have a very mixed congregation from white British to those with African, Caribbean, and South American backgrounds.

### **Location**

The parish of St James Hatcham is in an Urban Priority Area in the London Borough of Lewisham, South-East London. It is part of the Deptford Deanery of Southwark Diocese.

We have two churches in our care:

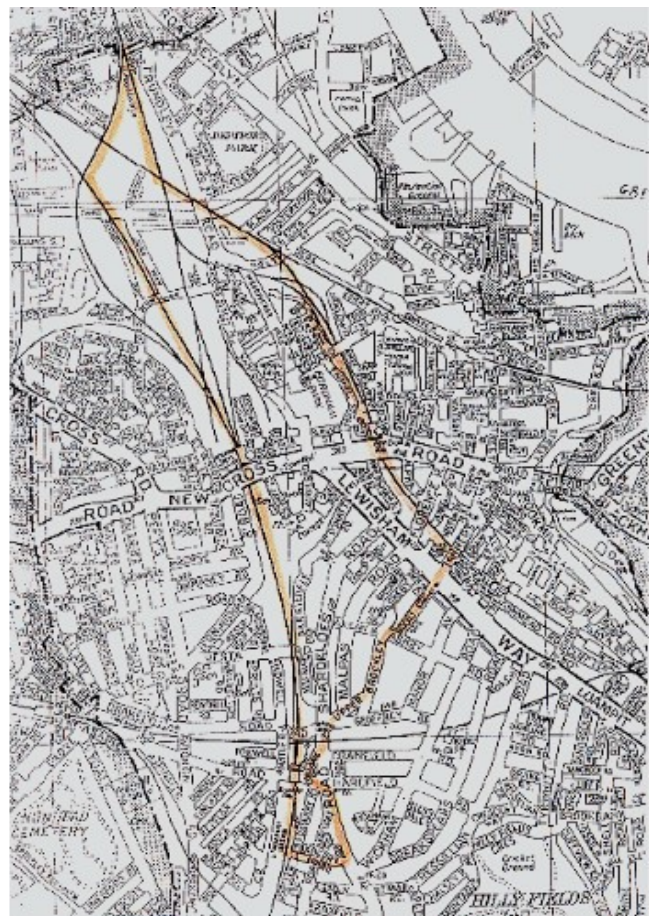
#### **The Parish Church of St James Hatcham St James, London SE14 6AD**



#### **The United Church of St Michael LEP Desmond Street, London SE14 6JF**



#### **The Parish of St James Hatcham**





## **Finances**

In 2020 our combined income from both churches was £77461, expenditure £71188. Our income comes from personal giving; the generosity of dedicated and committed members down the years who left us substantial legacies to invest; and revenue from hiring facilities at St James' and St Michael's. One of our challenges is encouraging a regular commitment to personal giving from all our current members, including claiming Gift Aid wherever possible. Additionally, the income from room hire, rental from both churches and the St Michael's flats does not cover the maintenance and running costs of the two buildings, the two churches which worship in them, and the community centre (NB the centre managers are responsible for maintaining the internal areas).

St James' is far from wealthy, but we are committed to supporting the Diocese and Deptford Deanery. The Parish Support Fund is an area of ongoing concern as we aim to increase our contribution year on year as generously as we can.

A full set of audited accounts is available on request.

## **Our vicarage**

St James' vicarage is tucked away behind both the old and the new St James' church buildings which lie within the footprint of Goldsmith's College teaching blocks and student accommodation. However, there is no public access to the college through the church driveway and the vicarage has its own gated entrance.

The house was built in the 1960s and the downstairs area comprises a sizeable lounge and dining area, kitchen, spacious study, hallway and toilet. Upstairs are four good-sized bedrooms, bathroom, separate toilet and separate shower.

The large, quiet garden leads off from the church garden and benefits from high fences fronted by mature trees.

# Our vision for the next five years

## **What St James' & St Michael's would like our churches to look like in five years' time**

*<sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. <sup>10</sup> Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2:9*

We are made up of different age groups, backgrounds, beliefs and traditions which, although messy and challenging at times, creates a strong church family. During the interregnum and throughout lockdown God has blessed us by strengthening our leadership and lay involvement. We are seeing signs of growth and new families have joined us. Over the next five years we believe he will grow the blessings he has already given us so that we can share them with our local community.

### **We are:**

- a caring family knit together by the Holy Spirit and growing in love
- a prayer engine
- a place of worship and praise
- a place for sharing food and fun
- a strong community that is creative and adaptable, while maintaining our core values
- an inclusive place where all people are encouraged to serve God with acceptance and respect
- a place where people are listened to and affirmed
- a place of blessing and empowerment for those who are passing through our neighbourhood
- a generous people who give to UK and international charities
- an active member of the deanery, working as part of this important strategic mission team (to the Community, Goldsmiths, and the Local Estates)
- a committed member of the Local Ecumenical Partnership with St Andrew's URC Brockley
- an attractive online presence.

### **Over the next five years we hope to build on the above to become:**

- a prophetic voice for our area
- recognised as a place of peace, hope and stability in a community facing gentrification and change
- a people who prayerfully seek God's will in Mission and Fresh Expressions of Church where appropriate in our parish and community
- prepared with the people and facilities to welcome those attracted by our witness and to help them on their faith journey
- willing to identify and work alongside other people and organisations, both Christian and secular.

## **How we envisage working towards our vision with a new clergy person**

<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus asked, 'What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to?' <sup>19</sup> It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches.' **Luke 13:18-19**

We will nurture, encourage, and pray for our new minister as part of the church family so that he/she can grow with us organically as an effective mission team. It is important our new minister is someone who can identify and engage with the racial and economic diversity of our community.

### **Together we will:**

- Continue to encourage lay involvement
- Build on our model of diverse and caring family that is attractive to those looking for a spiritual home recognizably part of their community
- Build on our good relationship with the deanery as a strategic centre for mission
- Be open to working with other churches as God may direct us to further His mission
- Build on our good relationship with St Andrew's URC Brockley as a model of ecumenical unity but honest in where we agree and where we agree to differ
- Be a welcoming presence on the Milton Court Estate, facilitated by a new Church Related Community Work Minister (CRCW), a URC funded appointment (with locally funded expenses).
- Find new ways of bringing the good news to the different areas of mission open to us
- Make effective use of our buildings, creating a safe space as people come out of lockdown.

## **How we would like to engage and shape our relationship with our key local community groups**

<sup>14</sup> 'You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. **Matthew 5:14-16**

We see ourselves growing as a true ecumenical community of three churches built on a bedrock of mutual respect which welcomes all, embraces all, but holds people lightly and then lets them go on to whatever God calls them to next. Our churches are in a transient and sometimes rootless community: students, young families and schoolchildren, those on low incomes. We see our mission as being God's lighthouse, attracting people to Jesus who brings healing and empowerment through his Spirit in us. And having lit the candle of faith in them, sending them on their journey with our ongoing prayers and blessings. Central to this will be listening and responding in ways that are appropriate and affirming.

### **We would like to build on:**

- Our strong relationship with St James Hatcham CE Primary School
- Our growing relationship with the nursery, St James & New Cross Gateway Trust
- Our good relations with New Cross Learning

- The experience gained from running a Food Bank scheme and the ongoing involvement of our volunteers.

**We would like to identify ways to engage meaningfully with:**

- Goldsmiths University
- The community on the Milton Court Estate
- The local community in New Cross and Deptford
- The online community through our website and social media platforms.

**How we view our relationship with the deanery as part of the church vision and the bigger picture**

*<sup>4</sup> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. <sup>5</sup> There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

We believe the deanery can be an effective church support system and a strategic hub for mission. We have been blessed by clergy from the deanery and Trinity House supporting us during the interregnum.

**We support the deanery by:**

- continuing to be the third highest giver to the Parish Support Fund despite the interregnum and lockdown
- our representatives and our church family playing an active part in deanery planning and activities.

**We would like to see:**

- our new minister fully engaged in the deanery
- our deanery clergy visiting each other's churches as a regular part of their ministry and mission, while respecting each other's churchmanship and worship traditions
- a strategic mission hub, prayerfully considering where mission should be targeted and how
- our deanery working with Rev Jay Colwill, Director of Mission and Evangelism for the Diocese of Southwark, to create mission teams from across our churches
- our deanery working with Rev Will Cookson to identify churches in the diocese and beyond who might be willing to partner with us and/or second people with the right mission experience to our deanery projects.

**Prayer and support**

*<sup>1</sup> Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. <sup>2</sup> In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat – for he grants sleep to those he loves. Psalm 127:1-2*

Prayer has been and will continue to be at the heart of our church family. It is the foundation on which we believe God will not only build us into an even stronger church but will bless us as he leads us to work with new people and to go out to our neighbours.