

A photograph of St Stephen's Church in Hackington, a stone building with a tall, pointed steeple. The church is surrounded by lush green trees and a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there is a grassy area with several gravestones and a path leading towards the church entrance.

St Stephen's Church Hackington Rector

Parish Profile
August 2026

From the Archdeacon of Canterbury

As the patron of the parish of St Stephen, Hackington in Canterbury I am pleased to invite applications for the post of Rector of the parish. Thanks in part to a legacy and financial support from the Diocesan Board of Finance this post (which had been previously advertised on a part-time basis) will be a full-time appointment on an interim basis (three years in the first instance). As part of the package of support, the Board of Finance and I will be offering oversight and support as plans for the development of the ministry of the parish are formed. It is an expectation that the Rector will engage fully and proactively with the support that is offered.

Details of the parish and its life are contained in the profile prepared by the PCC. The parish is demographically mixed, with a mixture of private housing in a part of the city between the city centre and the University of Kent and a large estate with a much higher index of multiple deprivation. An important part of the role of the next Rector will be to engage with this estate and to seek opportunities for community outreach and mission across the whole parish. As well as around half of the campus of the University of Kent the parish also contains St Stephen's Infants and Junior Schools (despite the name these are not Church schools) and The Archbishops' School, a Church of England secondary school with which there have historically been close links.

This is an excellent opportunity to take on leadership of a parish in the liberal catholic tradition at a time when things are looking up in its life. Since the departure of the last incumbent, an interim priest in charge has taken the helm and the PCC has turned around its finances. There is still a lot of work to do but there is a re-energised group of people with whom that work can be shared.

Music plays a large part in the life of the parish and an enthusiasm for the choral tradition of the place is essential.

If you would like a conversation about this position, please be in touch with my office via Caroline Hemington (chemington@diocant.org) for an appointment.

The Venerable Dr Will Adam, Archdeacon of Canterbury



▲ *The Venerable Dr Will Adam, Archdeacon of Canterbury*

A Message from the Bishop of Dover

Welcome and thank you for taking an interest in the role of Rector of St Stephen's, Canterbury. You will see from the parish profile some of the specific things that the parish is looking for – and a little of what the team here hopes the future may look like. Of course, a key part of your discernment process in coming to this role will be gaining a sense of the bigger picture of us as a diocesan family, our vision, and priorities for the future.

Who we are

Founded in 597 by St Augustine, Canterbury Diocese is the oldest diocese in England and has a special place in the life of the national and worldwide Church. With its iconic Cathedral it forms a focal point for the life of the whole Anglican Communion, offering a spiritual home and place of pilgrimage for people from every nation and walk of life.

Kent is renowned as the ‘Garden of England’ and this rural heart is core to our identity – yet the communities we serve are very diverse. Our Diocese stretches from Maidstone to Thanet, from the Isle of Sheppey to the Romney Marsh. We have 350 miles of coastline with historic ports and seaside resorts, alongside rural communities, market towns and commuter-belt urban developments. Affluent areas often sit alongside pockets of major deprivation, offering an exciting and challenging mission context.

Our vision

By God’s grace we want to be a people who are...

...confident & creative disciples of Jesus Christ

...rooted in scripture & drenched in prayer

...living gratefully, giving generously, caring for creation & sharing the gospel

...growing in number & expectations – of God & ourselves

...motivated by justice & love, open to the Spirit & ready for adventure! **Therefore we will...**

‘Therefore we will...’ is a recognition that words without actions are empty. It is a commitment to

taking real steps now to make this vision a reality soon. The current actions that flow from this vision are outlined in our current strategy document [which you can find here](#). Of course, these actions will change and develop over time - and it’s exciting that some of our parishes are already considering this vision carefully for themselves, exploring together what actions they will commit to take, what their local ‘Therefore we will...’ might look like.

At the heart of all we do is this vision: a vision of transformation for ourselves and our communities: *Changed Lives → Changing Lives*. In your role, in your place, we will be looking for you to join in with what God is already doing and play a crucial part in making this vision a reality.

Our direction

Our vision unites us in purpose but will be expressed in different ways according to what makes sense for different parts of our diocesan family. We are working closely with our deaneries to identify, resource and support them as they seek to grow their mission, ministry – and their churches – in ways that make sense to their contexts. Each deanery is developing its own mission plans - and you could play a key role in helping to develop your deanery’s vision for the future.

As a diocesan family, we are also deeply committed to our calling to build a safer, more welcoming church for all. We will never be perfect, but we can work together to make our churches safer. At the heart of this ethos is the conviction that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility - and that it needs to be at the heart of everything we do. You can find out more about our approach to safeguarding [here](#).

Our commitment to you

We know that supporting healthy, flourishing ministers (lay and ordained) is crucial for a healthy, flourishing diocese. Therefore, we offer the ‘Canterbury Diet’ to all our new incumbent ministers – this is an intentional programme for ministerial development, health, growth and faith. A similar lay programme is in development too. We offer pastoral supervision and spiritual accompaniment, an invitation to be part of residential training programmes focused on learning, leading and mission, action learning sets, as well as a range of specialised training events, and other regular opportunities for growth in prayer and spirituality.

In short, I hope that you will be as excited by our vision, priorities and opportunities as we are. Be assured of our prayers as you consider your next step in ministry.

The Rt Revd Rose Hudson Wilkin
Bishop of Dover and Bishop in Canterbury

+ Rose





Who are we?

We are a gently liberal catholic parish. The congregation is Inclusive, open and very welcoming; accepting of the ministry of women and keen on a challenging and enriching level of preaching and learning.

We want to see people encounter God in worship, in the Eucharist and in their daily lives. We want to grow in our ministry and reach all ages. We look forward to nourishing common causes with our neighbouring parishes, and to working with our new priest on our journey of discipleship, which will enable us to be a warm, welcoming, spiritual family, bringing the message of Christ to all.

Like many churches we experienced testing times during the Covid pandemic but discovered the blessings of online worship, we continue to live stream our Sunday services. Inevitably, our numbers did dip but we have recently experienced encouraging growth and a lowering of the average age. The congregation

is older than the surrounding local community with fewer young volunteers.

We want to see:

- worship placed at the centre of our parish life, as it has been for more than a thousand years, through liturgy, music and prayer;
- our congregation nurtured and developed through pastoral care, preaching and teaching;
- extended outreach to the wider community, and especially in the Hales Place estate, to include ministry with children and young people in our schools and universities.
- St Stephen's working more closely with other churches in Canterbury to share the love of God in our local community.



Where are we?

Our parish includes the old village of Hackington, which has been surrounded by densely populated housing estates during the past 50 years, becoming part of the urban development of Canterbury. The campus of the University of Kent lies to the north-west of the parish. The city's three universities have their own chaplaincies and we have some students in our congregation.

The old village centre includes the church, the Manwood Almshouses, Ye Olde Beverlie Public House, the Church Hall and the Rectory (built in the 1960s and including four bedrooms and a study). The population at the last census was 10891, 47% listing themselves as Christian in the census, and 57% are within the age bracket 18–29. The electoral roll stands at 75.

The parish is diverse, with some areas of the housing estates being deprived and bordering on Urban Priority Area status. Other areas, are wealthier and well-established. Many houses, originally built for families, are now in the low value rental market.

St Stephen's Infant and Junior Schools are close by the church; they are parts of two different secular multi-academy trusts. Previous Rectors have been governors at both schools and conducted assemblies but links are weaker now—this is an area for development. The schools visit the church building and churchyard for curriculum purposes and there is scope for developing this.



▲ *Billy the Donkey leading our Palm Sunday Procession*

The Archbishop's School is a Church of England Foundation Secondary school in the parish and the Rector is an ex officio Foundation Governor. The school's chaplain has preached at St Stephen's and the church is used by the school for worship occasionally. There are opportunities for volunteering with the chaplaincy team and in other ways. There are two independent churches that meet in schools within the parish: a Vineyard congregation meets in the Archbishop's School and belong to Churches Together; Emmanuel Church meets in the Junior School and is affiliated to the Federation of Independent Evangelical Churches.



Our worship

Our regular services are:

Sundays:

10.30 am Sung Eucharist (CW)
6.00 pm Choral Evensong (BCP)

Wednesdays:

10.00 am Holy Communion (CW)

A small ecumenical satellite congregation meets monthly at Barton Mill Court, a sheltered housing complex for the elderly.

A series of service booklets provide an easy-to-follow liturgy for the festivals and seasons of the church's year.

Baptism: open policy. St Stephen's Church accepts those who request baptism so long as it is practically possible. Over the last five years there has been an average of 10 per year.

Communion: for some years our practice has been to communicate baptised children before they have been confirmed, following the House of Bishops guidelines.

Weddings: over the last five years there has been an average of 2 weddings each year. Divorcees are normally welcome for marriage, subject to discussion with the incumbent and permission from the Bishop.

Churchyard: the Churchyard is closed for full interments but still available for burial of cremated remains. There are about 12 funerals or interments of ashes each year.



Our Ministry

Canterbury Diocese, the oldest and second poorest diocese in England, covers East Kent and includes some of the most deprived parishes in England (C.U.F. Index). Oversight of the diocese is delegated to the Bishop of Dover, the Right Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin.

A retired priest in the congregation is currently acting as 0.2 Interim Parish Priest. Our curate is a Self-Supporting Minister, who was priested in June 2025. She will remain in the parish long-term.

- We have a **Pastoral Group** which co-ordinates the pastoral care, visiting the sick and lonely and giving them practical support; it organises baptismal visits, wedding arrangements, and bereavement visitors. The prayer sub-group organises an emergency prayer chain.
- Our **website** and **Facebook** pages are kept up-to-date to make information widely available and to

show what we are doing each week. We live-stream our 10.30 a.m. and 6 p.m. services most weeks so that those who are unable to attend in person can join our worship. Over the past year, around 1,500 hours of our services and other videos were viewed on our YouTube channel, where we have nearly 500 subscribers. The electronic 'Pews News' is sent out weekly to around 150 recipients and is also posted on Facebook.

- There has been a Lent Group meeting each year, and Parish Retreats and PCC Away-Days have been arranged.
- We have had an active branch of the worldwide **Mothers' Union** here for well over 100 years. We actively support MU projects to improve family life, both in this country and abroad.

▼ *A recent Confirmation service at St Stephen's with the Bishop of Dover*





- Ministry with **younger children**; the Seekers group during Sunday morning worship in the hall, is currently suspended pending recruitment of additional leaders. Nutkins play group, a Mothers' Union activity, is also suspended for the lack of children.
- **Outreach** in the name of Christ to the needy is an essential part of our work. We support actively two charities working with and for the homeless: Porchlight and Catching Lives. We also support the Community Larder run by our neighbour parish of All Saints, which is used by some of our parishioners.
- The **Acorn Café** meets each Wednesday morning and welcomes people from across the area. There are usually over 35 people each week, including residents and carers from a nearby assisted living community, 'Without Exceptions'. Similarly, our monthly **Tea@3** attracts people from the area.
- A monthly **Theology Group** meets to hear high-quality speakers and to engage in lively discussion to explore our faith and to challenge preconceptions. These are mostly held via Zoom and typically have 12–15 attendees.
- We consider our custody of God's creation to be a vital part of our Christian life. We have received a Bronze Award from **Eco-church** and are working to improve this to Silver.
- The **Churchyard Working Party** meets each month to enhance the churchyard and improve the experience of those visiting St Stephen's. We have created a Quiet Garden below the East window of the church, where people can sit to enjoy the peace and ecology of the space.

Quotations on this and other pages are from new members of our congregation over the past couple of years.



God is speaking to us. This is where we need to be. Why?

As newcomers and coming from a background in churches with a choral tradition, the choir and music are, for us, central to the Liturgy, including the choice of hymns and anthems.

In addition, the Sermons are well prepared and well delivered, often with that hint of humour, but bring the teaching of the scriptures to our everyday living.

St Stephen's is welcoming, friendly and inclusive.

Jenny & Peter Jupe

◀ *Easter activities for children*

▼ *The Acorn Café draws in people from across our community*



We felt at home at St Stephen's. People are friendly, supportive and approachable. Our daughters have been welcomed into the choir and when we honour God, he honours us.

Hamer Kapur

[Click here to listen to our choir singing 'My soul there is a country' by Parry in Rochester Cathedral](#)



Music

Music is central to much of the worship at St Stephen's. We have a choir of adults and children, affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music, who sing at Sung Eucharist and Choral Evensong services each week. Many people have come into our congregation through association with the choir, including students studying at the city's universities. The high profile of music in the parish is much appreciated by the congregation. The choir sings a huge variety of anthems (around one hundred each year) and service settings from plainsong and renaissance polyphony through to contemporary repertoire by composers such as John Tavener and John Rutter, including some pieces written especially for us.

- The choir regularly deputises in our own cathedral and in recent years has also sung the services at Exeter, St. Albans, St. Edmundsbury, Rochester, Southwark, Chichester and Coventry cathedrals.
- The choir is often called upon to sing for Diocesan and community services throughout the year.
- The organ was rebuilt about 10 years ago to give a more versatile instrument and we have adapted some of our choir stalls, giving the choir the opportunity to sing from different places in the church building, creating a more flexible liturgical space.
- Our Director of Music has run a weekly after school singing club that has brought new children into the choir; many of these children have gained places in the Canterbury Cathedral choirs.

Members of St Stephen's Choir rehearsing in Southwark Cathedral

Finance

In common with many parishes, finances have been stretched for some years with increasing costs and stagnating income. However, the period since the previous incumbent retired has been one of consolidation with a much lower parish share cost. We have been able to address the arrears of previous years with the support of the Diocese.

We have adapted our finances to the changed conditions over recent years by encouraging the use of standing orders, introducing online giving and card readers. We have also joined the Parish Giving Scheme. The parish is reminded regularly about stewardship matters. We appreciate that a full-time post will bring higher costs but also more opportunities to increase regular attendance and giving. The Diocese will be providing additional grant funding to enable us to seek a full-time Rector.

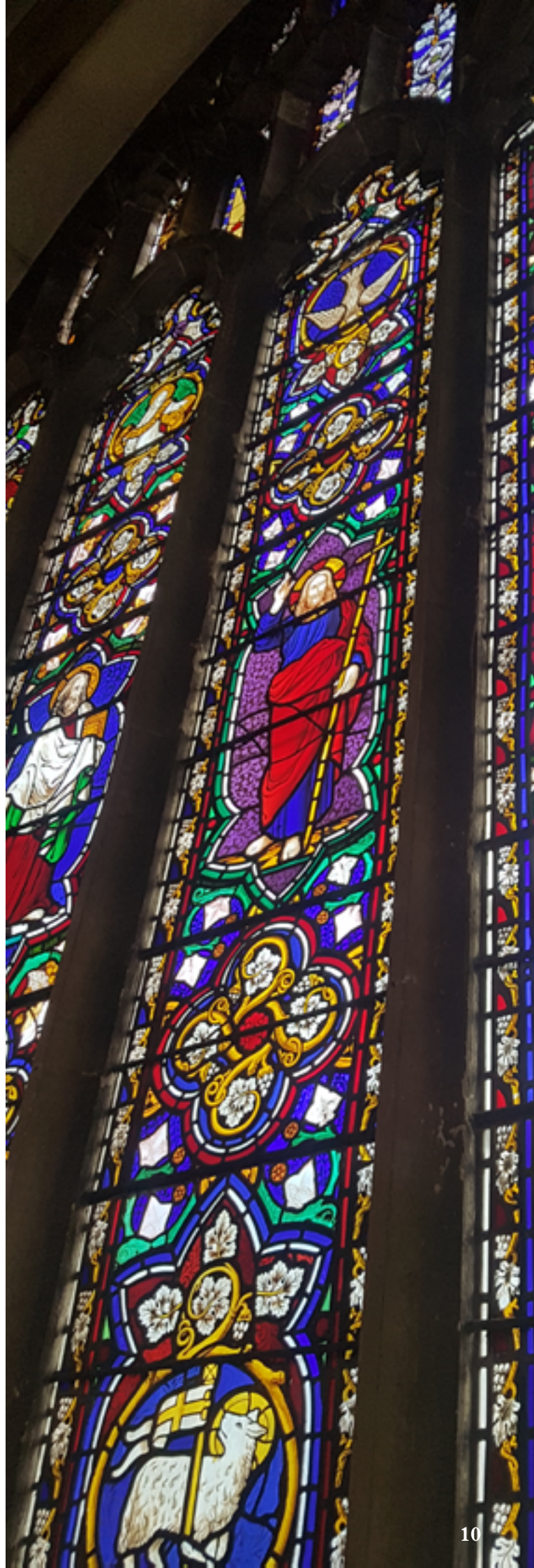
There are other things that we could do to increase our income as we have assets that we could use to generate income from the wider community. This could include letting the committee room in the hall more, or using it in an alternative way such as for a café. We could use the church building more as well and encourage wider community engagement with the church such as through weddings or concerts – all ideas will be considered. We have seen some growth in numbers recently and if this were to continue and encourage more younger people and families, we would have more manpower to implement some of these options.

The church hall has always been an important bridge to the local community. As well as providing functional space for a reasonable cost, it is essential to bring in funds to support the church finances. We have spent some funds on maintaining the hall recently but we could do more such as solar panels to save energy.

The Friends of St Stephen's was established over 25 years ago in order to raise funds from the wider community for the fabric of the church. The current project is to contribute to repairs to the stained-glass windows for which some grants have also been secured – work on phase one of this started in August 2026.

We also have some additional restricted funds, largely for the maintenance of the fabric of the church and the churchyard.

Detail from the East Window ►



Church Buildings



▲ *St Stephen's Church Hall; the church is at the end of the path towards the left of this picture*

The present church is about nine hundred years old with later developments and is Grade I listed. Work required by the last Quinquennial (2022) has been completed and the church has been made more accessible.

- The church stands within an attractive 'closed' churchyard maintained by Canterbury City Council, with some congregational assistance. There are areas for interment of ashes.
- The PCC has been seeking the provision of toilets for the church in conversation with the DAC. There are toilets in the church hall which is quite close but to maximise the potential of the church

for the local community it is important that toilet facilities are provided at the church.

- The tower has a ring of eight bells rung by our team of championship ringers shared with the neighbouring church of St Dunstan. The tower is known in the county as being a centre of excellent training, catering for all ringing abilities. Holiday practice sessions are held, providing an outreach to young people.
- The nearby Church Hall has a kitchen, meeting room and Parish Office, toilets (including a disabled toilet and baby-changing facility) and a large hall, that is used extensively by local community organisations.



Worshipping at St Stephen's Church with my family gives us a sense of peace and belonging. It is a place where we can connect with our faith and take time to reflect. Being part of the church community also makes us feel supported and reminds us to live with kindness, gratitude, and faith.

Biobele Harry-Amos & family

Parish Organisation

There are nine elected members of the PCC, with a good age-range. One of the Deanery Synod representative places is vacant. Members have met their Safeguarding training obligations and careful records are kept. Meetings are held six times a year with Standing Committee meetings in between.

A Safeguarding Officer is in post.

The Property Committee includes several people of wide experience in maintenance of buildings and property and they keep the Grade I listed church and the hall in an attractive and very good decorative and structural state.

The Social Network organises catering for events such as soup lunches, teas and quizzes.

The Friends of St Stephen's have been very successful in raising money for the maintenance of the building by hosting events several times a year, welcoming people from across the Canterbury district.

*St Stephen's Church in snow, with
St Stephen's Infant and Junior Schools beyond*

St Stephen's Rectory

The Rectory sits just a few hundred metres from St Stephen's Church overlooking St Stephen's Green and the Manwood Almshouses. The property was built in the 1960s within the grounds of a larger property which at one time was also the Rectory. It sits sheltered behind the old garden wall, and is a comfortable modern home. It is double-glazed throughout and has recently had new central heating installed.

With over 2,000 ft² of internal space, there is a large lounge that opens onto the rear garden, an adjoining dining room, along with a kitchen and study on the ground floor.

St Stephen's Rectory sits in mature grounds which have been well maintained over the years by previous incumbents and their families, with the help of some parishioners.

There is a double garage and large driveway providing ample off-road parking.

From St Stephen's Rectory, it's a short 15 minute walk into the centre of Canterbury, a vibrant city with a range of shops and restaurants, a modern theatre, concert venues, museums, and of course, the Cathedral.

Canterbury West railway station is a 10 minute walk away, from which it takes under an hour to get to London St Pancras International.

East Kent offers beautiful countryside. There are a range of coastal towns, with Whitstable and it's picturesque harbour only 10 minutes from St Stephen's, and Broadstairs and Margate with their sandy beaches around half-an-hour's drive. Cross-channel links from Dover and Folkestone are a short journey away.

▼ *St Stephen's Rectory*



Outreach to the Hales Place estate



▲ *Hales Place estate spreads out to the north-east of the historic centre of St Stephen's. The Parish Church can be seen in the bottom left of this aerial photograph.*

A significant area of the parish is known as the Hales Place estate. In the 1960s, Canterbury council built 1,400 homes to meet the needs of the growing population of the city, and to replace properties elsewhere in the area that had been damaged in the Second World War, or demolished as part of slum clearance.

Over the years these went from being family homes, to providing students of the University of Kent term-time accommodation. Consequently, the population of the parish became quite transient.

However, in recent years, the University has provided more of its own accommodation for students and

these properties are returning to the rental market as HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupancy) or into the low value rental market. About 1 in 6 of the parish population live in 'communal establishments'. The overall deprivation index for the parish is 59% but the significant prosperity in the south-west of the parish masks the deprivation elsewhere.

The estates around Canterbury, including the Hales Place estate, are some of the most deprived in the south-east. The bishop has asked for parishes to make outreach to these areas a priority, and it is expected that the next Rector of St Stephen's will work at reaching out into the Hales Place estate showing God's love in action.

Are you the right person for us?

When PCC members were asked to pray about who God might bring, the following characteristics emerged—that our new Rector:

- Is a person who lives by the teaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, showing love, compassion for others and prayerfulness.
- Has the vision and enthusiasm to reach out to all areas of the parish, drawing those on our fringe into a closer relationship with Jesus and the Christian faith.
- Comes with pastoral skill and the ability to listen and have the time to do so.
- Is comfortable with and encourages team working.
- Is comfortable with the inclusive ethos of the parish.
- Will engage with our local schools and take an active role in their life.
- Will engage with families and young people and make them more aware of the church and what it has to offer, encouraging them to explore faith and Christian values.
- Will lead us, with commitment and enthusiasm, in finding ways of reaching out to the traditionally harder to reach parts of the parish, including Hales Place.
- Will appreciate the place of high quality music, both traditional and modern, to enhance the beauty of the liturgy.
- Will engage wholeheartedly with support offered by the Diocese of Canterbury to strengthen the mission, ministry and finances of the parish and the use and care of our buildings.



Our challenges and opportunities

- **Children's Ministry:** there is an urgent need to revitalise our ministry to children. Attendances at the Christmas services and events show that there are families in the parish who would welcome a connection to the church for their children.
- **Schools' Ministry:** an improved relationship with the three schools would open the possibility of encouraging families to consider the church as a community that would benefit their children.
- **New forms of worship:** the church has run Messy Church in the past. We would like to develop some new venture of this sort to expand our appeal to people in the parish.
- **Finance:** building on the recent positive review by the Generous Giving Advisor we continue to strive to maintain our financial viability.
- **Identity:** developing the character and identity of St Stephen's in a Deanery of 'gathered' congregations, rather than local parish churches, leading to us having sufficient volunteers to develop church activities.
- **Development:** seeking means to increase the number of families in the congregation and being open to a wider range of uses for the church building. As part of the grant offered by the Diocesan Board of Finance support in developing the mission and ministry of the parish is being offered.
- **Looking outward:** continuing to support the neighbouring All Saints Parish's Community Larder and taking up opportunities in the deanery, such as Volunteering with the Archbishop's School chaplaincy team or supporting students through the mentoring scheme.

▼ *A special service for Advent Sunday*



The Deanery of Canterbury

We are ten parishes and a Cathedral working to support one another in mission and ministry across the city and immediate district of Canterbury.

Chapter and Synod are both well attended and widely appreciated and we enjoy good relationships across the full diversity of Anglican tradition, viewpoint and expression.

Over the last three years, our Deanery Leadership Team and Mission and Ministry Team have been facilitating reflection, planning and resourcing of deanery planning, working closely with both diocese and parishes.

The Deanery Mission Plan has been adopted.



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www.ststephenscanterbury.net