



St. Mary's Church

Wrotham Rd, Gravesend

Parish Profile 2025



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Welcome to St. Mary's Gravesend.

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

Our PCC has worked hard to create 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 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.

We are excited by our diocesan vision to **seek first the Kingdom of God**, and to **Change, Serve and Grow**. We feel that we are actively engaged in this work here at St Mary's and look forward to what our new Vicar will bring to this vision.

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
- has a passion for working with secondary and primary schools
- 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
- is willing to sensitively bring their own ministry to build upon where we are in the diocesan vision

We agree to offer them:

- a happy PCC who enjoys 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 worship style that, whilst recognisably Anglican, is welcoming and relatively informal. 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>

We are hopeful that our next vicar will look forward to working with the school, next to our church, and its Chaplain. St Mary's is used for acts of worship by the school on a daily basis with the worship planned and delivered by school staff. We hope that our new vicar will refresh relationships with the primary schools in our 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.

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 new Electoral Roll stands at 47, and the usual attendances at Sunday services at around 40 adults with up to 10 children (statistics for mission return 2024). Our worshipping community was reported as 130 people 55 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. And we have recently hosted a secular concert in the church for the local community.



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.

A **pub group** meets monthly to share fellowship in a local pub by the town pier.

In addition, we have had **PCC and parish away days** and have recently started a **Thursday drop-in** and fellowship in church.



Staff

We have 3 Readers, 1 LLM, 1 undertaking Bishop's Certificate, 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

% aged 0-4	5.6
% aged 5-19	18.4
% aged 20-29	11.1
% aged 30-44	19.1
% aged 45-69	31.1
% aged 70 and over	14.7

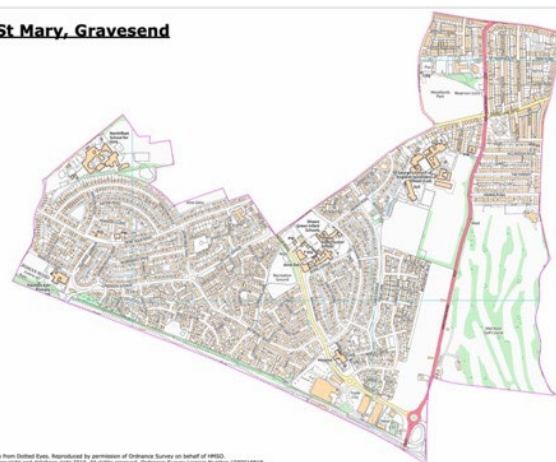
Residents' ethnic identity

% Asian ethnicity	9.9
% Black ethnicity	4.9
% Mixed ethnicity	2.3
% White ethnicity	80.2
% Other ethnicity	2.7

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		

St Mary, Gravesend



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 School** (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 **governors**, and the previous vicar was part-time chaplain working in the schools daily. We have an excellent relationship with the new full-time chaplain. It is likely that the new vicar may be invited to become a governor.



There are exceptional ties with the school community.

The previous vicar took termly assemblies in each of the schools and there have been reception visits to church to learn about Christmas, and year one has visited to learn about baptism. We would hope to build upon these relationships and to develop them.



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 and sheltered housing in the parish but there is no contact at present.

Gravesend Deanery

Gravesend Deanery serves the town of Gravesend itself as well as wider areas to the East of the town including Chalk, Shorne and Higham. It is a diverse deanery with a good Clergy Chapter who work well together and are supportive of one another..

Rochester Diocese

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

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

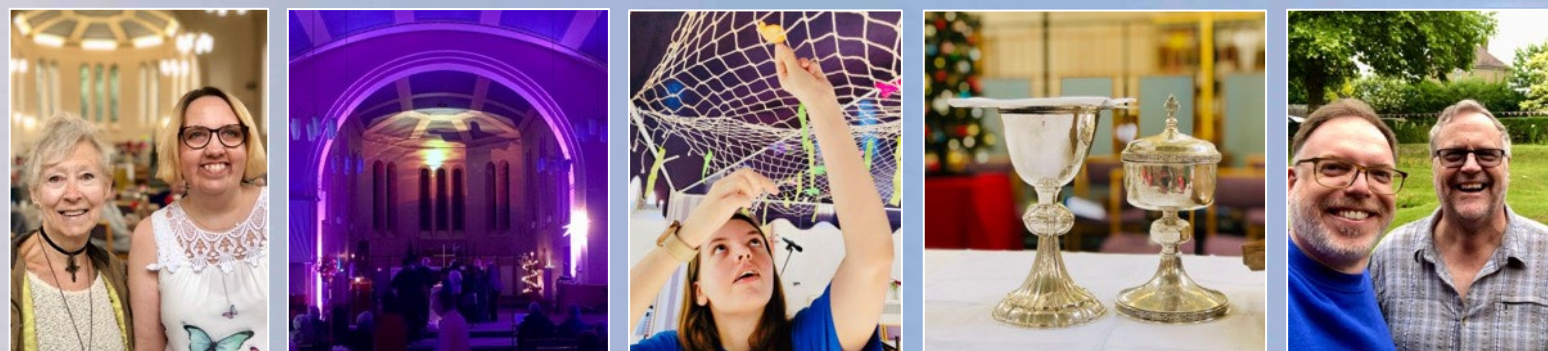
This is an exciting time to join the Diocese of Rochester since Bishop Jonathan launched our new vision, <https://www.rochester.anglican.org/about-us/ourvision/> and there is a positive and hopeful feeling amongst the clergy since our successful bid for 11 million pounds of missional funding.

Here at St. Mary's, we are excited that the funding enables us to offer this as a full-time post.

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 also 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.

