



All Saints Tooting

Welcome to this parish profile for All Saints Tooting
A Church of England church, in the diocese of Southwark



All Saints is a lively, active, joyful and loving place, where we try to keep God as the centre of all we do and to share the love we receive with all our neighbours.

Mission statement: Faith in this community

We hope that we live this statement out in our Christian life together.

We believe that 'church buildings should be for building communities', somewhere people feel welcomed and encouraged regardless of race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, age, physical or mental disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation – whether church members or not.

In the words of John (1 Jn vs 18):

'Our love is not to be just mere words and talk but something real and active.'

We abide by this through our Christian life together as a congregation and in our outreach activities to others. This church is strongly connected to its parish, and provides ways to love and serve God and each other.

OVERVIEW

Worship

With a membership of around 130 adults and 20 children, we've long been a liberal, welcoming and inclusive church. Worship at All Saints is a faithful offering to God, in praise of creation.



Our principal service is the parish eucharist at 10am on Sundays. We are quite traditional in our worship, liberal-catholic in our outlook and eucharistic in our ecclesiology.

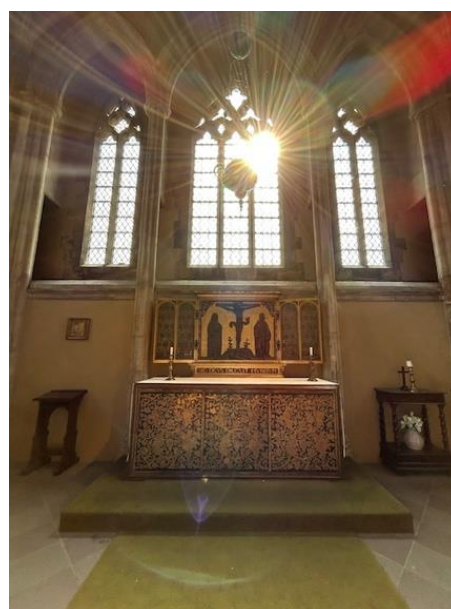
Music plays an integral part in our services. It combines traditional and modern, and balances the devotional and the informal. Similarly, we look to those who lead worship to be able to engage in ways that are warm and relaxed and, when required, more reverent and formal.

On Sunday evenings, we have either evening prayer, a spoken Eucharist or choral evensong (a popular and beautiful service, led by our own choir or featuring guest choirs). Baptism is regularly incorporated within the Sunday morning service.

Prayer

Prayer is central to our sense of a living church, alongside the sacraments, scripture and fellowship. An area in the north aisle is set aside for devotional candles and prayer, as well as our peace candle, created as part of our Churches of Sanctuary membership.

The Lady Chapel is a smaller space, ideal for contemplative practice, such as evening prayer. We also have Advent and Lent bible study groups.



Music

All Saints has a rich heritage of music performance and praise, due to splendid acoustics and the inviting space. The choir has been carefully and lovingly nurtured by previous and current musical directors and plays a key role each week in our worship.



As well as sung music, we have instrumental solos during the Eucharist. Our Harrison organ is world famous, and we've been able to encourage organ scholars from local state schools to regularly come and practise their skills on it during the week, and supplement musical direction for services. We are

incredibly proud that one student has been offered a Cambridge scholarship as a direct result of his tuition in church.

A CHURCH FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Ministry at All Saints belongs to the clergy and the whole laity. Working together to build a community that worships, teaches and cares. Being part of this community and welcoming people in is a witness to our hospitality and faithfulness. Here are some examples of how All Saints serves our neighbourhood.

Open church

Our church is open every Tuesday and Thursday morning for two hours. Staffed by volunteers, it offers a place of sanctuary and prayer, and friendly conversation over a cuppa. During the winter, All Saints is a registered 'warm space' for anyone worried about their heating bills. We have a pastoral support group which offers pastoral help for anyone unable to come to church or who doesn't receive regular contact outside of church services.

Child-friendly space

All Saints allows children to be children and to participate in their own way. In our weekly morning service, kids have their own activities in Junior Church (during school term). They return at the end of the service to share their accomplishments in words, prayers and the art they've created. Junior Church also plays a key role in specific services, such as the much-loved and innovative reinterpretations of the Christmas story at Advent.

There are two primary schools in the parish (Franciscan and Hillbrook) both of which have established links with us. The clergy team visit local schools when requested, and

host visits to church by school parties. We also run a series of popular, family-friendly film screenings on Saturdays, with the added bonus of a popcorn machine!

Lunch club

For the last nine years our lunch club has been serving a two-course meal - at a very low cost - on the 2nd Friday of the month. What started as a way of reaching out to our older parishioners and including them in our pastoral care, has blossomed to an on average attendance just over 40, including parishioners and local people, family members and single households. It's a wonderful opportunity for intergenerational conversations, fellowship and sharing nutritional food prepared by our team of volunteers. During the pandemic, we continued the service, taking meals to our diners in their homes.



Christmas

Celebrating Christmas is an exciting and much-anticipated time and a great example of welcoming in our neighbours. We see over 2,000 visitors over the festive period. Our Christmas services include a family crib service for all ages, midnight mass and watchnight mass on New Year's Eve.

The Christmas fayre transforms the church into a colourful, festive space, with the money raised split between the church and a local charity. We host school carol concerts and services for many local schools, have carol singing (with refreshments) in our churchyard, and a sell-out evening of beer and carols in a local pub. It's brilliant.



Wandsworth Arts Festival

The church has been a venue for the annual borough-wide arts festival for the last three years. We host a variety of plays, performances, exhibitions and concerts featuring local performers and artists. For two successive years, we've won the audience award for best venue due to our hospitality. And a subsequent grant from Wandsworth Council enabled us to buy portable staging which we use for a variety of events throughout the year.

Aside from the Festival, we put on regular musical events, such as a series of popular jazz concerts.

All Saints Tooting Friends (ASTF)

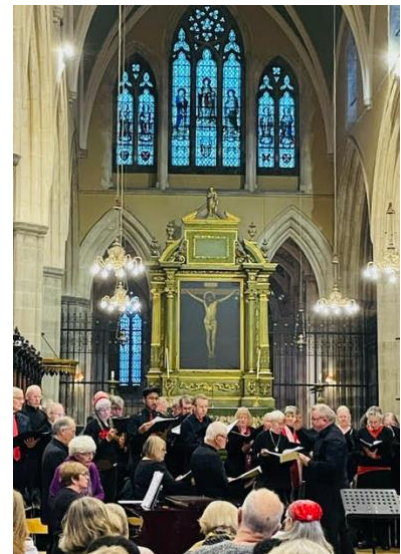
Created in 2023, this operates both as an Instagram platform and in-person events. It promotes the church building, its history and heritage, and our mission to the wider community.

ASTF has organised talks with local historians, supported by Wandsworth Borough senior citizen grants, and concerts in the church. It has built up a network of local connections and raised funds for church projects. There's an ongoing project to replace the plaques from the War Memorial in the Memorial Garden.

Churches Together in Balham and Tooting

All Saints is a key partner in local ecumenical dialogue and fellowship. We host two big services each year: Prelude to Holy Week and Prelude to Advent. They feature contributions from many local churches and worship groups, combining music, singing, poetry, prose and prayer.

Churches Together works hard in connecting people new to the area, and those who are less accustomed to traditional forms of worship who find spiritual sustenance in other activities like music, sport and nature/the environment.



Eco church

We've earned a bronze award as an eco church, for our approach to the local environment and promoting sustainability goals within the church.

We've experimented with biodiversity in areas of the church grounds, nurturing a wild meadow with flowers and grasses in a natural, uncultivated landscape. Our Junior Church get their hands dirty too with fun eco activities like seed germination and making a bug hotel.

Inclusivity

Following a church-wide consultation, the PCC have applied to Inclusive Church for membership. This is part of our commitment to be as welcoming and inclusive as possible, irrespective of ethnicity, age, (dis)ability, sexuality, gender and social background. Our philosophy is to welcome - and encourage - people to be themselves, and not to conform to a preconceived ideal.

We've a long-term project to improve accessibility and have recently bought an altar table for use in the nave, to make celebrating the eucharist easier. Plus, our recent Soul Food Café event, an evening of entertainment, music and refreshments for the Windrush generation, brought together many attendees from Afro-Caribbean communities.

Church of Sanctuary

As part of our journey to become an accredited Church of Sanctuary, All Saints has signed the City of Sanctuary pledge. It welcomes sanctuary seekers and those who are isolated or dispossessed in other ways into our community.

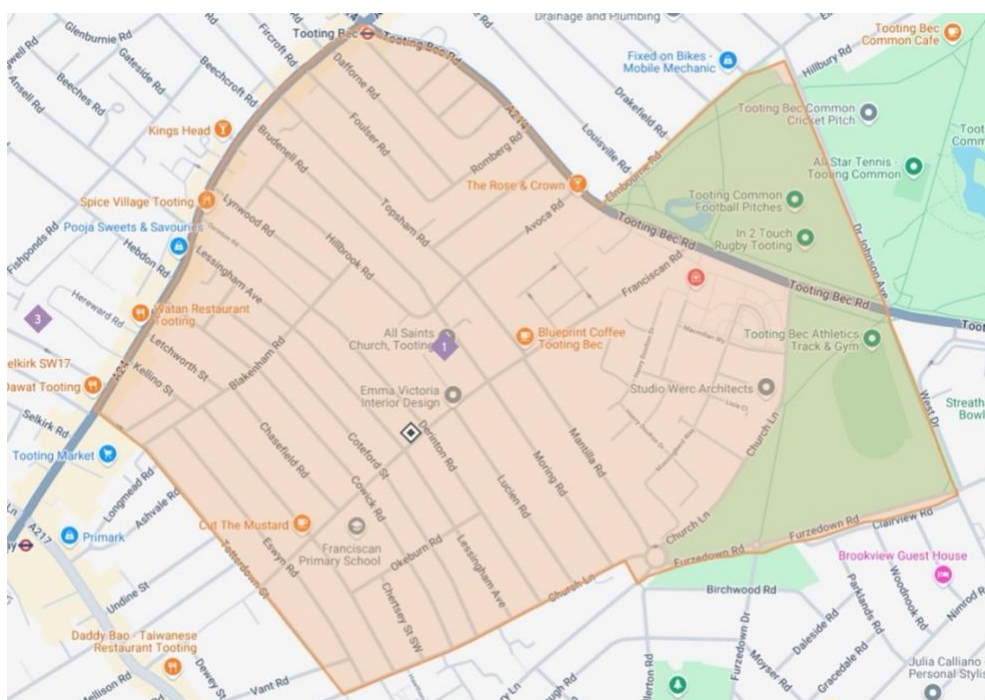
We find ways of embedding this knowledge in our activities, such as the Arts for Sanctuary exhibition and Sounds for Sanctuary, an immersive, meditative experience, both part of our Wandsworth Arts Festival events.



Bell ringing

Our eight bells are now regularly rung by a small team. Some from the congregation who are learning bell ringing, and others from the Surrey Association of Church Bellringers. The bells are rung on the last Sunday of the month, before evening Eucharist, and for special occasions such as weddings.

OUR PARISH AND BEYOND



The parish comprises a network of residential streets, bordered by Upper Tooting Road to the west, and incorporating parts of Tooting Bec common to the east.

It's a richly diverse community and this is reflected in the make-up of our congregation and celebrated by members.

Tooting has seen a rapid rise in shared households and professional workers. The proximity to good transport connections, the tube, overground rail and buses has made the area very desirable to aspiring young people as well as existing professional families. We're regularly in demand for baptisms, funerals and the calling of banns and two or three weddings a year.

Parish statistics

According to the Church Urban Fund, the population of the parish is just over 12,857, and it ranks 4,092 out of 12,239 parishes, so it's a relatively deprived parish compared to others in the country. Other stats include:

- 17.4% are in social housing
- 10.2% are classified as 'older people'
- 40.6% are ethnically diverse

Using Census data from 2021 for the area within which the parish sits:

- 44.4% of over 16s are single
- 53% are female/47% are male
- 28% are in a household of 4 or more
- 30% are a couple with no children
- 19% are Asian or Asian British
- 11% are Black or Black British
- 7% are mixed or multi-ethnic
- 59% are white
- Approx. 5% identified as LGBTQ+
- 35% identified as Christian
- 37% stating no religion
- 12% identified as Muslim

A mixed community

Tooting is a very mixed, ethnically diverse community. Some are from the original Windrush generation and their descendants, while others are 2nd and 3rd generation Asian families. As a result, many religious communities worship in the locality. There's a Gurdwara, an Islamic centre and a Pentecostal church, plus a mosque and an Islamic primary school just across Tooting High Street.

Culturally, Tooting is exciting and thriving, with many grassroots community groups and organisations.

Just outside our parish are two hospitals: St. George's University Teaching Hospital and Springfield, a centre for in and out-patient mental health services. We're also close to HMP Wandsworth which is currently served by a neighbouring church, St Mary Magdalene.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

The church buildings

For over 100 years Tooting has been blessed with this remarkable church. A grade II listed building, it was designed and built by the renowned architect Temple Lushington Moore to serve the newly built estate of Totterdown Fields and was consecrated in 1906.



With its neo-gothic style and spacious nave and chancel, All Saints has an ambience described as being 'a holy place for meditation, for prayer and of speaking with God'. Through soaring

music and the accompaniment of its magnificent Harrison organ, the church offers a great space for worship, singing and fun (for instance as a venue for wedding receptions as well as marriage services).

The flexibility and size of our space enabled All Saints to stay open much longer during the pandemic, bringing in worshippers who still attend. (We still stream our services online, which is greatly appreciated, and expands the reach of our ministry well beyond Tooting.)

The integrated buildings and gated parking areas are widely used by the church and local organisations. There are ongoing works to repair and refurbish parts of the church building, particularly the roof and adjoining structures. Plus, an organ restoration project which requires further fundraising and management.



Adjoining the sacristy and well-equipped parish office is our parish hall, complete with kitchen and servery. This is used for a twice-weekly, longstanding playgroup, our monthly lunch club, plus various evening groups and social events.

On Sundays it's also home to a Ghanaian church group, The Church of Christ. We also have a long-term lease with Lucky Beans Nursery who use the Graveney and Alexandra rooms.

To the east of the church lies the All Saints Memorial Garden used extensively for recreation and relaxation during spring and summer months. With a central War Memorial bordered by paving and grass, this area provides a natural contrast to the urban setting of Tooting. On the north side, we've a recently consecrated Garden of Remembrance, for the burial of ashes of local people.

The Vicarage

The Vicarage is an attractive, spacious and well-maintained detached house on Franciscan Road. It has five bedrooms, some ensuite, a study, kitchen and laundry room, dining room, a long lounge and front and rear gardens. Adjacent to the church and adjoining buildings, the property is conveniently located near the shops and main bus routes.



The ministry team

- Curate: Rev'd Dr Matthew Linfoot (SSM, part time)
- Associate Priest: Rev'd Gordon Waller (SSM, part time)
- Associate Priest: Rev'd Prof June Boyce-Tillman MBE (SSM, part time)
- Licensed Reader: Alan Archer
- Licensed Reader: Sydney Wager

Our regular services

- Sunday Eucharist @ 10am: robed, with choir, common worship
- Sunday evenings @ 6pm: either evening prayer or spoken evening communion or choral evensong

Administration

Safeguarding is taken very seriously at All Saints. The Safeguarding Lead and the PCC revise and strengthen our safeguarding procedures, which is particularly important due to the high number of visitors on our premises, eg for the nursery and play group.

Although the parish is financially solvent, the current financial climate is challenging. In the past two years the church has had to use money from the reserve fund to meet increased running costs, rises in utility bills etc. The co-treasurers are working with the PCC to reduce the outgoings where possible, and to identify ways of supplementing the already generous stewardship of our congregation.

The Deanery

There are eleven churches in the Deanery and All Saints is represented by three lay members at the Deanery Synod. In addition to regular synod meetings, the churches of the Deanery collaborate for training and social programmes. There's an annual interdenominational Good Friday Service of Witness through Balham and Tooting in which many of the local churches participate organised by Churches Together in Tooting and Balham.

The next 5 – 10 years

Our Mission Action plan is due for revision, and work has already started on shaping our future. Conversations across the congregation highlight a strong desire to continue our current trajectory - to enhance and build our worshipful congregation and expand our work in the parish and community.

Areas that offer opportunities for growth include our junior church and work with children, to put them further at the heart of our church. We would love to offer more for children in our parish, perhaps clubs and weekday activities and involve them more in the congregation and our worship.

There's also scope to encourage further participation from our young adult congregation, perhaps offering theological and spiritual courses, bible studies and weekday worship. As one member commented:

"We love that as a couple in our late 20s and early 30s there are people in their 90s at All Saints we call friends."

Music at All Saints is a great source of joy, and we'd like to develop that further by building up the choir and renovating the organ.

Financial considerations are also important, especially the need to continue and complete various capital expenditure projects (roof repairs, organ restoration and improving accessibility). There's also potential to achieve better financial returns on our assets.





Our Next Vicar: a holy person drawn to us by God

All Saints is looking for a welcoming, spiritual and energetic priest, who will enjoy living in Tooting, and bring leadership, encouragement and enthusiasm to our parish. We're seeking a vicar who, in addition to general spiritual and pastoral qualities, will

- Inspire, guide and enable the congregation
- centre us in our faith through discipleship, prayer and worship
- help us develop our strategic vision for the parish
- be collaborative, connecting with existing stakeholders and forging new partnerships.
- be theologically liberal-catholic, and inclusive
- be open to developing creative and imaginative ways to engage with underserved demographics, eg young people and children.
- appreciate the role of music at All Saints
- support our community initiatives, especially those based in the arts, the environment and the ideas of sanctuary
- help develop our social media and online presence

In line with our commitment to being a fully inclusive church we welcome the General Synod's decision to make the 'Prayers of Love and Faith' available for use at standalone services. Once approved for parish use, we'd like our vicar to offer such services for couples who have entered into civil marriage and to celebrate same-sex relationships to the degree permitted by the Church of England.

In the words of our Junior Church we're looking for

"Someone with a big smile and a big heart".

Person Specification:

E: essential; D: desirable

1 Qualifications and Training:

- Ordained priest, from within the Church of England or from a Church in communion with it, or a Church whose orders it recognises (E)
- Enhanced DBS clearance to include adults and children (E)
- Experience of parish ministry (which can include curacy) (E)
- Training and formation in a theological college or equivalent from outside the UK (E)

2 Experience

You will be able to demonstrate experience and understanding in these areas:

- Leading and collaborating: experience of supporting, mentoring and encouraging others (E)
- Pastoral work and Christian mission with a range of different groups, eg young people and children (E)
- Experience of staff and volunteer supervision (D)
- Experience of contributing to the strategic vision of a parish or church (D)

3 Knowledge, Skills and Competencies

- A foundational and developing knowledge of theology (E)
- Inspirational preaching in a variety of contexts and different formats (E)
- Project co-ordination, eg fundraising (E)
- Excellent communication skills in liturgical and non-liturgical situations (E)
- Creative approach to the design of services in keeping with a liberal-catholic tradition (D)
- Good IT Skills and ability to develop social media/online content (D)

4 General Attributes

- Evidence of a deep prayer life (E)
- Understanding the importance of music in worship and other contexts (E)
- A willingness to encourage the development of activities in the arts and environment (E)
- An ecumenical outlook and openness to work with other churches and faiths (D)

All Saints is excited and confident that this process, with God's help, will lead us forwards to be a thriving church.



All Saints Tooting

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www.allsaintstooting.org.uk