Sittingbourne St Michael w Murston, Bapchild & Tonge

A Message from the Bishop of Dover



Welcome and thank you for taking an interest in the role of Vicar of Sittingbourne St Michael with Murston, Bapchild & Tonge, a two-parish benefice in the Sittingbourne Deanery in Kent. You will see from the parish profiles some of the specific things that both parishes are 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 these roles 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. In 2023, Diocesan Synod agreed to three bold outcomes which flesh out how our vision will be achieved by 2030.

Three Bold Outcomes

1. Double the number of children and young disciples.
2. 200 new Christian communities.
3. Every parish, benefice and deanery showing signs of revitalisation.

Every deanery is engaged in an ongoing process of deanery planning, which feeds into our diocesan strategy process which you can find outlined here. Our strategic planning across the diocese is a dynamic process - and it's exciting that parishes are considering our vision and the bold outcomes vision for themselves, exploring together what actions they will commit to take, what their local 'Therefore we will...' might look like.

As well as the three bold outcomes our diocesan synod has committed to a net zero carbon action plan. When General Synod and Diocesan Synod adopted this goal, it was clear that it would be very challenging. However, the significant changes in global weather events in recent years have underlined the urgency of tackling the amount of carbon we produce. The leadership shown by the Church of England is important and the action plan takes a positive approach to working towards this ambitious target.

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

Our Safeguarding Ethos

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

The Canterbury Diet

for Incumbents and Priests in Charge

After licensing the Incumbent meets with the Director of Mission & Ministry
who introduces the priest to the
Canterbury Diet
and offers a
Pastoral Supervisor
with whom she/he meets not less than four times per year

Ministers acquire a
Spiritual Accompanier
and meet regularly, recommended 6-8 weekly

In the first two years the Incumbent or Priest in Charge attends the
Ministry Training Programme
Monday to Friday residential courses generally held in Bruges
Week One : **The Minister as Learner** (January, soon after licensing)
Week Two: **The Minister as Leader** (June, of the same year)
Week Three : **The Minister as Missioner** (January, the following year)

Participation in the annual
Ministerial Development Review
Meet with Consultant Reviewer, complete a Personal Development Plan;
meet with Archdeacon a year later and update the PDP, and so on,
with opportunity to review Pastoral Supervision and Spiritual Accompaniment.
Also meet with the bishop during the course of the two-year cycle.

As able, participate in professional ministry courses:
Management Skills Course
Working with Conflict
Leading Change
each a two by one day course, offered regularly at advertised times through the year

Participation in four
Wellbeing Courses
two hour evening meetings, two offered per year

Participate in relevant
Continuing Ministry Development Events
at advertised days and times

Golden threads

How are prayer and spiritual practices being developed?
How am I learning and reflecting on ministry practice?
How are we attending to good relationships and collaborative ministry?