

Welcome to the Benefice of **St Mary's, Lamberhurst and St Luke's, Matfield**





Welcome

We are delighted that you are expressing an interest in our Benefice and we pray that you will gain a real sense of who we are. We hope this profile will help you to discern whether God is calling you to join us and serve as our Vicar.

We thank God for bringing us to this point and trust He is calling the person of His choice to be the next Vicar here. We believe there will be challenging and exciting times ahead and we look forward to a Vicar who will help us to develop and live out our faith and grow as a church, overflowing into our friendly communities and neighbours with the love of Jesus.





Our Benefice Vision

We seek to be Christ-focused Church communities that:

- Worship in historic, cherished buildings where all can feel welcome and loved.
- Provide opportunities that appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds to find, develop and deepen faith in Jesus.
- Are at the heart of the life of our villages, sharing God's love through daily life and well-advertised events, and developing links with non-Church bodies and local businesses.
- Are alert to those in physical, mental or spiritual need in our villages, and help and serve them as best we can.
- Share resources, and work closely with neighbouring churches of any denomination to build God's Kingdom.

Our hopes for the new Vicar

Based on feedback from the two congregations we hope you will:

- have Jesus Christ at the centre of your life, your ministry underpinned by regular Holy Communion, prayer, reflection and listening to the Holy Spirit
- focus on Bible-centred teaching to encourage and deepen our faith
- have a heart for mission, helping us to establish and work towards implementing God's vision in our communities
- be visible in the communities of Matfield and Lamberhurst.
- engage with pastoral care for people of all ages and backgrounds within the Church and the wider community, by working with and encouraging others in pastoral care and prioritising this as a mission of our Church
- have a demonstrated interest and commitment in expanding the families and youth work of the Church, and continue to nurture our relationships with the schools in both parishes
- engage with mission, scripture and worship in varied ways
- help us to develop our gifts and abilities as we live out our faith day by day
- support and encourage our Churches' musical talents

And be able to do all of the above and maintain a sense of humour!

What we can offer our new Vicar

- Congregations who want to learn more about discipleship in order to develop their relationship with God and each other.
- Two Christian communities who have been working together for over 40 years are friendly and welcoming to all; who are striving to make their churches accessible, and would really value guidance on new and effective ways of spreading the Good News of Jesus in the wider community.
- Two LLMs in training and one Lay Reader.
- An excellent and experienced Parish Administrator who carries out a wide range of administrative tasks for the Benefice, and is engaged with neighbouring parishes in the Deanery.
- A volunteer team that is enthusiastic, loyal and hardworking and which is active and supportive in church services and behind the scenes.
- Good links to the Church of England Primary School in Lamberhurst and to the Church of England Brenchley and Matfield School.
- Good fundraising ability within our congregations. Both sets of villagers are very supportive, helpful and generous.
- A modern vicarage in the village of Lamberhurst, close to amenities.
- The opportunity to make the most of the beautiful rural setting and be part of the lives of the two villages that the Churches serve, which have a wide range of local societies and clubs.
- A Deanery Chapter which meets regularly and is warm, welcoming and supportive.

The Vicarage

The Vicarage is a 6 bedroom detached family house in a small development built about 20 years ago. It is in a quiet location, 5 minutes walk from the village centre with primary school, shop and post office, coffee shop and pubs, yet is also on the edge of open countryside.

The house boasts excellent living accommodation over three floors. There is a large living room dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, TV room and a spacious custom built study/office. There is also a cloakroom off the hallway.



On the first floor there are three double bedrooms including the main bedroom with extensive fitted wardrobes and an en suite shower room, a single bedroom and a

good sized family bathroom with bath and separate shower. On the second floor there are two large rooms with views over the countryside. There is gas central heating and security alarm.

The house is surrounded by its own walled garden and has a brick built double garage with separate access.



Church Life

Worship

We aim at relaxed dignity in our worship. Sunday morning services at both St Mary's and St Luke's are a mix of Morning Praise, Holy Communion based on Common Worship and JAM Sundays as set out below.

First Sunday of the month	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• JAM (Jesus & Me) Sunday at Brenchley & Matfield School, 10am• Said Holy Communion at St. Mary's, 8.30am
Second Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holy Communion at St. Luke's, 10am• Morning Worship (with All Age Choir), 10am
Third Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Morning Worship at St Luke's, 10am• Holy Communion at St. Mary's, 10am
Fourth Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holy Communion in both churches, 10am. <i>(In vacancy this is currently a joint service in one of the churches)</i>
Fifth Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A joint Holy Communion service with parishes of Matfield Lamberhurst, Brenchley and Horsmonden, held in one of the 4 parish churches, 10am

There is a Thursday said Holy Communion service at St. Mary's with a small but loyal congregation.

In our vacancy, this is the current service pattern. We may need to combine a few more services to accommodate a lack of

clergy. Both congregations are relaxed about the need to work with available resources.

Average Sunday morning attendance at St Mary's is 35-45 adults and 4 children. We don't currently hold Junior Church; this represents a key opportunity for the right vicar to build engagement with young people.

St Luke's average Sunday morning attendance is between 15 and 30.

In Holy Week, various meditative services are split between the churches. At Christmas carol services are held in both churches, and on Christmas Eve, both churches host very popular Christingle Services. There are Christmas morning services at both churches. In Spring each church holds a Snowdrop Service for those mourning the death of loved ones. Lamberhurst school comes to the church for services at Harvest, Christmas and Easter.

We hope to explore variety in our service times, styles and location and involve all age groups.

Music

There is a small choir at St. Mary's who take part in all services. They include anyone who wants to join in on the second Sunday, on Christmas Eve and other festival services. At St. Luke's we do have two regular contributors. We would welcome the opportunity to build singing more within our worship.



Occasional Offices

In recent years, funerals have averaged around 10, weddings 2-3, and baptisms 3-5.



The churches have an open baptism policy, and recognise the significant pastoral opportunities that occasional offices present.

A Confirmation Service is held annually with Brenchley and Horsmonden. The location of the service moves from church to church each year.

Staff Colleagues

There is one qualified Reader linked to the Benefice, and two further Licenced Lay Ministers in training, who are starting to take services. We have two regular organists, one who plays twice a month and one once a month, and we have several other local organists that we use regularly. There is a salaried Parish Administrator and PSO who works three days a week from home.

Community Life of the Churches

The community life of our Church is inextricably linked to the villages that we live in. As well as the informal gatherings of the Church family, the Churches host other events for their respective villages. These include annual events, such as Lent Lunches, a Harvest Supper, Carols in the Pubs, Open Gardens, Matfield's Village Fete and Christmas Fayre.

The Churches seek to reach out to the elderly and vulnerable of all ages across the Benefice. Members of the congregations are involved in volunteer caring schemes, and twice-yearly tea parties are organised for the elderly.

Love Matfield, which was initiated by the church as a way of getting people together to organise events, organises monthly coffee mornings and other events within the village.

For the past 3 years St Luke's has held quiz nights in MVH to raise money for Prison Fellowship Angel Tree Charity, supporting Rochester Prison offenders and their children sending Christmas presents from dads in Rochester Prison and working closely with the Chaplain there.



Children and Family

There is an excellent relationship between St. Mary's and the school at Lamberhurst. Until his departure, the previous vicar held weekly assemblies in school and was actively involved in the Christian life of the school. In vacancy we are continuing to work with the school. We hold huge school church services at St. Mary's for Christmas, Easter and Harvest. One of our churchwardens and one PCC Member are on the governing body and there is plenty of motivation within St. Mary's to maintain this relationship. The baby group in the village



recently came for a special Christmas session in church. There is a small group of children regularly involved in the choir at Lamberhurst.



The school for Matfield is located in the neighbouring village of Brenchley. Matfield has part-funded a Youth Worker within the school for many years. We are now recruiting for a new Primary School Chaplain and Children and Youth Worker.

St. Luke's Matfield and All Saints Brenchley have recently launched a new format of service for the first Sunday of the month, JAM (Jesus & Me) Sundays, aiming to widen engagement with children and families.

We think the work with children and young people represents a significant opportunity for the right vicar to really develop this area and bring their own ideas and experience to it. There is a definite will and enthusiasm for this within both congregations.

Village Life in Lamberhurst



Lamberhurst is in attractive undulating countryside in the south of Kent. The centre of the village is in the valley of the River Teise, with St Mary's Church on higher ground to the North. The vicarage is in a modern housing development at the end of one of the main roads in the village centre.

The parish population is 1,636. 24% of households are single person households, and of these, 51% are aged over 65. Just under 92% of the village population was born in the UK. 53% of households describe themselves as Christian. 71% of the households own their own property (data from the 2021 Census). The number on the Church electoral roll is 96.

There is a busy general store and post office in the centre of the village, along with a pub, a coffee shop, and a unisex hairdressing salon. The Memorial Hall, originally built in the 1920s, hosts many activities including a monthly cinema, a renowned annual pantomime and a free monthly coffee morning. There is an active dance school which uses the hall most afternoons and evenings.

The doctor's surgery is at the South end of the village where there are also two popular pub/restaurants. A children's nursery and preschool is located among several business units situated on the vineyard.

Close by the Church is the scenic course of Lamberhurst Golf Club. To the East of the village is Scotney Castle, a popular National Trust property, and only a short distance further on is Bewl Water, a



large reservoir with facilities for visitors. Bedgebury National Pinetum is within three miles of the village, with extensive cycle and running tracks, children's playgrounds and beautiful forest walks.



The countryside generally is a mixture of farmland and woodland, and there is a wide network of footpaths.

There are many organisations and societies within Lamberhurst and these include; History Society, Pantomime Society, Little Lambs Baby Group, Coffee, Cake and Company group that meets monthly, Book Clubs, a very active Hospice Friends Group that organises very successful community events, and a successful Community Cinema.

Lamberhurst Church produces a free Parish Magazine which is distributed free to over 600 households and shared online.

Lamberhurst Music Festival is run by members of the Church and other villagers and is an independent charity. Its sole purpose is to put on outstanding music to raise money that will ultimately

benefit the fabric of the Church. It uses the Church as a venue as well as Bayham Abbey (a nearby ruin managed by English Heritage) and concerts are diverse – from gospel choirs to opera. Lamberhurst has benefitted from hearing some world-famous musicians.





Village Life in Matfield

Matfield is a vibrant and friendly semi-rural village located in the Weald of Kent. At its heart lies an impressive village green, the largest in Kent, which serves as a focal point for village life. Many local events take place here, including the annual Matfield Village Fete, regular summer cricket matches, and beacon lighting on significant national occasions.

The village centre includes a well-stocked butcher/greengrocer offering fresh, local produce. Matfield is also home to two popular pubs, and an outreach Post Office three mornings a week.

Matfield Village hall is a large, well-equipped facility which supports a wide range of community and sporting activities throughout the year. These include fitness classes, local clubs and societies, social gatherings, and seasonal events. A notable event is the well-supported St Luke's Christmas Fair which is held in early December.



The parish has a population of around 1,000 people (2011 Census), with 18% under the age of 16 and 18% over 64. Around 3% of residents come from a minority ethnic background. The village has approximately 400 households, with about 300 being owner-occupied—many of them high-end homes.

The current number on the electoral roll is 41.





Clubs and organisations within Matfield include: Love Matfield which organises a range of whole-community events through the year; Brenchley and Matfield Local History Society, Brenchley and Matfield Cubs, Scouts and Brownies, a Horticultural Society and a Cricket Club.

The Matfield Christmas Fair and the Summer Fete both raise money solely for St. Luke's.

Matfield and Brenchley together produce a monthly magazine run by a team of volunteers, to which St. Luke's is a contributor.

Matfield is surrounded by an extensive network of footpaths, making it a popular starting point for walking and rambling groups alike. Each year, the Love Matfield group organise a couple of community circular village walks. These popular and enjoyable events typically include a stop at St Luke's Church for coffee and cake, followed by a sociable soup lunch at the cricket pavilion. Brenchley Wood nature reserve and Cinderhill Woods are both lovely, local places to walk and experience nature, offering tranquil trails and rich wildlife.



Facilities within or close to the Benefice

- **Local Towns** with a good range of banks, shops and supermarkets
- **Hospital** with A&E department, and Hospice
- **Primary schools** – Lamberhurst St Mary's and Brenchley & Matfield (both Church of England)
- **Secondary schools** - a range of grammar schools, comprehensive schools and the outstanding Bennett Memorial Church of England school in Tunbridge Wells.
- **Other churches within the villages** – Strict Baptist Chapels. The Orthodox Church uses St Mary's Church, Lamberhurst, once a month.
- **Roads** – both villages are very close to the A21 that runs from Hastings to London
- **Railway services** – local stations offer good access to London and the Coast
- **Buses** – there are good local services and a National Express coach service to London



St Mary's Church, Lamberhurst

A church of some sort has stood on this commanding site for many centuries and was first consecrated in 998. Over the years the Church has been added to. Thanks to the dedication of the villagers it was rescued from the threat of ruin some 50 years ago. It now has modern facilities. The Church has a peal



of 6 bells. It is an unusual and highly regarded building with many interesting features, which contribute to its Grade I listing.

The Church has a separate chapel, the Scotney Chapel, that is enclosed by oak and glass doors. This allows a large space for youth or other activities to run alongside the

service and a place for parents with young children. It is also used for meetings.

The large, undulating graveyard is still in use and is cared for by volunteers and contractors. It is particularly impressive



during February when it is carpeted with snowdrops, and attracts many visitors.

Of particular interest is the yew tree which stands at the South Door. It has been estimated to be over 1500 years old. A well-used public footpath runs through the churchyard and down to the river or through the golf course. The golf course runs to the South and West of the churchyard and gives an openness and country feeling to the Church.



St Luke's Church, Matfield



St Luke's Church is situated a mile outside the village and is a Grade II listed, near original Victorian building, surrounded by a well-kept churchyard noted for its wildflower display.

Matfield was originally part of the ecclesiastical Parish of Brenchley. Completed in 1876, St Luke's Church was commissioned by the Vicar of Brenchley who felt that Matfield needed its own Church. St Luke's was designed by his nephew Basil Champneys, an architect well known for his

ecclesiastical and educational buildings. Brenchley's Vicar installed his son as the first Vicar of Matfield.

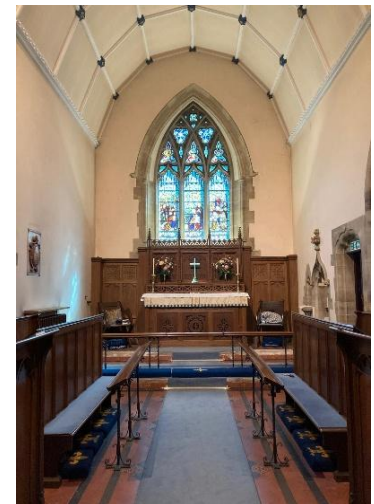
The building remains largely unchanged except for a 1965 extension for the choir vestry. The short tower at the West end contains a single bell. A statue of St Luke is set in the North external wall. The Church has a number of richly tinted stained glass windows. The interior consists of a nave leading to a chancel with an aisle on the South side



In 1991 a unique hanging glass sculpture was installed, depicting baptism as a first step to eternal life. Jenny Clark who designed it, also designed the attractive engraving on the glass doors which were installed in 2012.

There is a large new churchyard down the small road adjacent to the Church. The care and maintenance of the old churchyard surrounding the Church is now the responsibility of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

St. Luke's 150 anniversary is in 2026 and preparations are underway for events throughout the year to mark it





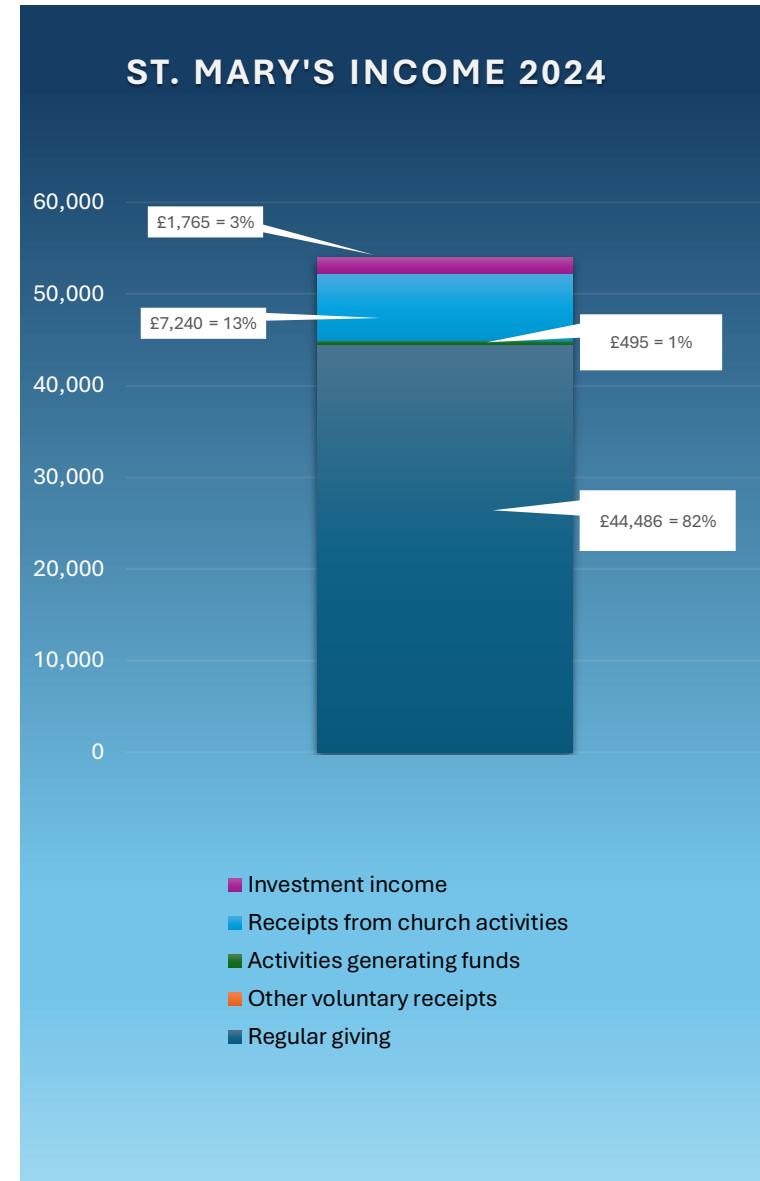
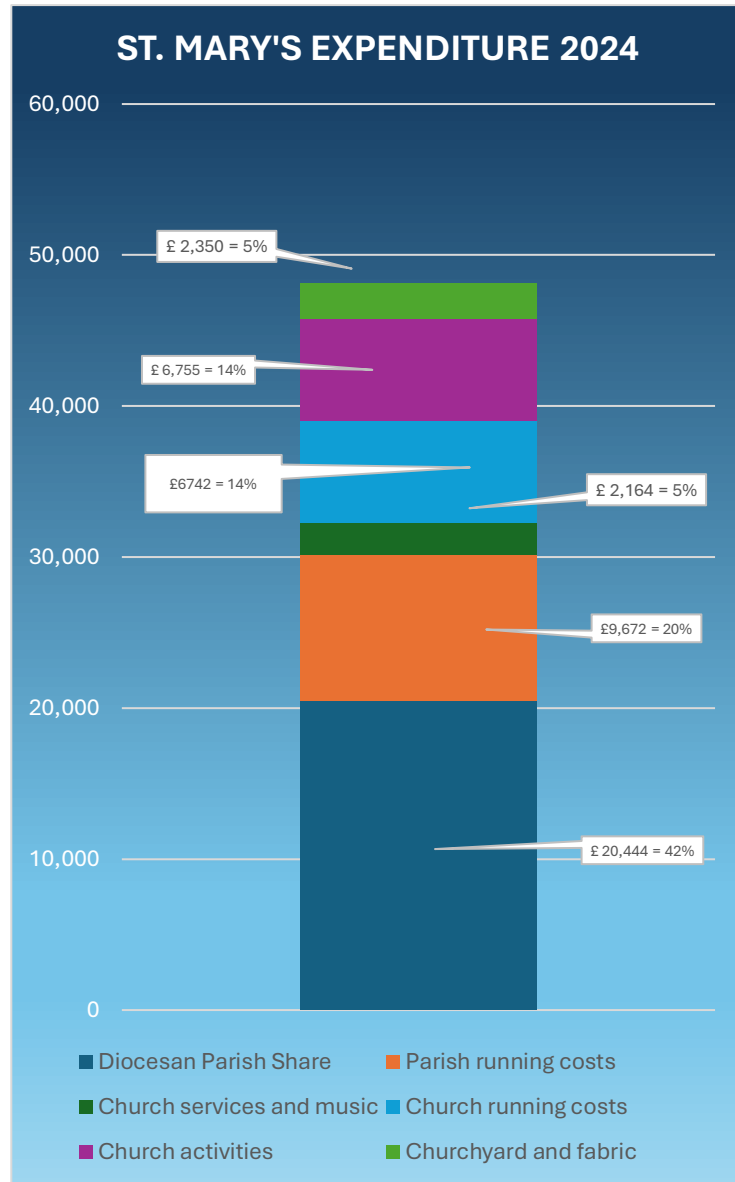
Finances

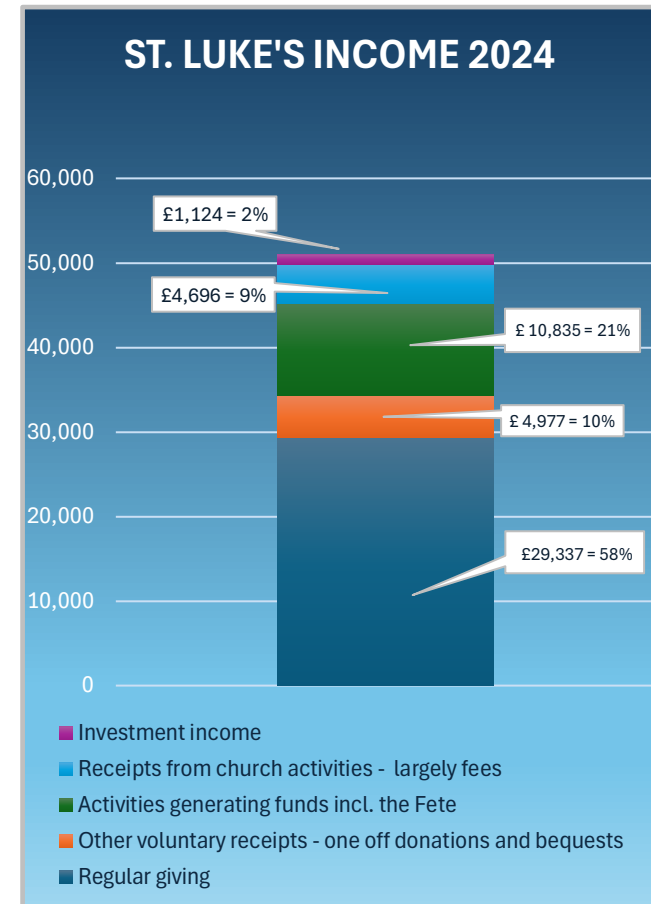
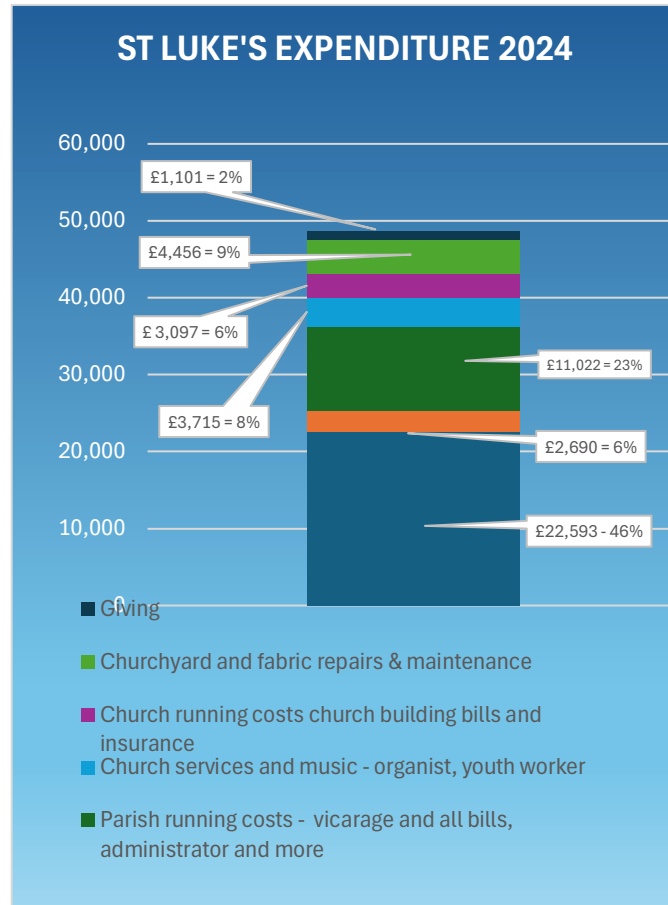
The finances are overseen by Treasurers in Lamberhurst and Matfield.

St. Mary's income exceeded expenditure in 2024. The vast majority of our income comes from regular giving, with ad hoc bequests (unusually, none in 2024, but several,, including one substantial bequest, in 2025). We benefit from access to funds from the Lamberhurst Music Festival charity, whose charitable object is to raise money for St. Mary's Church, and who put on several concerts a year, in the church and elsewhere.

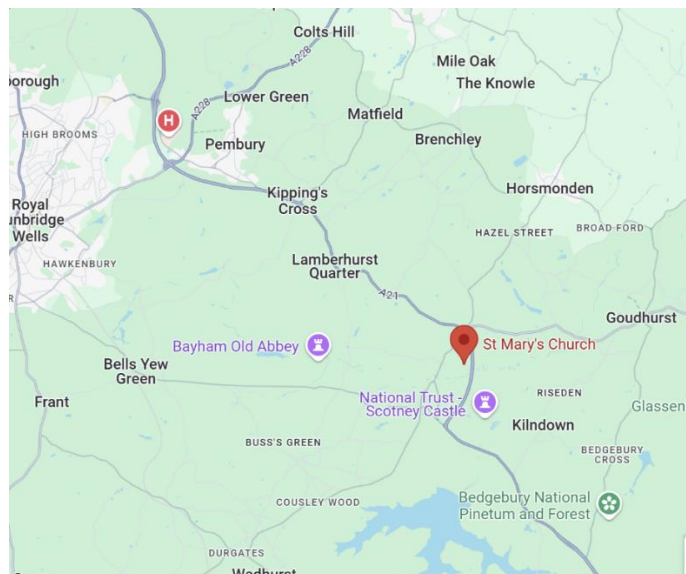
Our most recent Quinquennial Inspection (2023) set out a number of medium-term investment priorities to maintain the fabric of the church. Having had a few years where we have been working to consolidate our financial position, we are now focusing on preparing to invest. We are working with the church surveyor to prioritise projects to the value of around £200k. We anticipate that half of this amount will be sourced from the LMF funds and bequests, and we will be kicking off a fundraising campaign for the remainder, starting 2026. Our church treasurer has extensive experience in fundraising and grant sourcing and will be a key part of this.

St Luke's income also exceeded expenditure in 2024. St Luke's has benefitted from consistent financial stability in recent years, thanks to regular giving, and significant funds generated from the Christmas Fayre and Summer Fete. St. Luke's also benefits from a reserve. St. Luke's last quinquennial review was in 2023, and there were no major works required, though several more minor ones, which are being worked through. There is sufficient funds within a building fund and repair fund to address them.

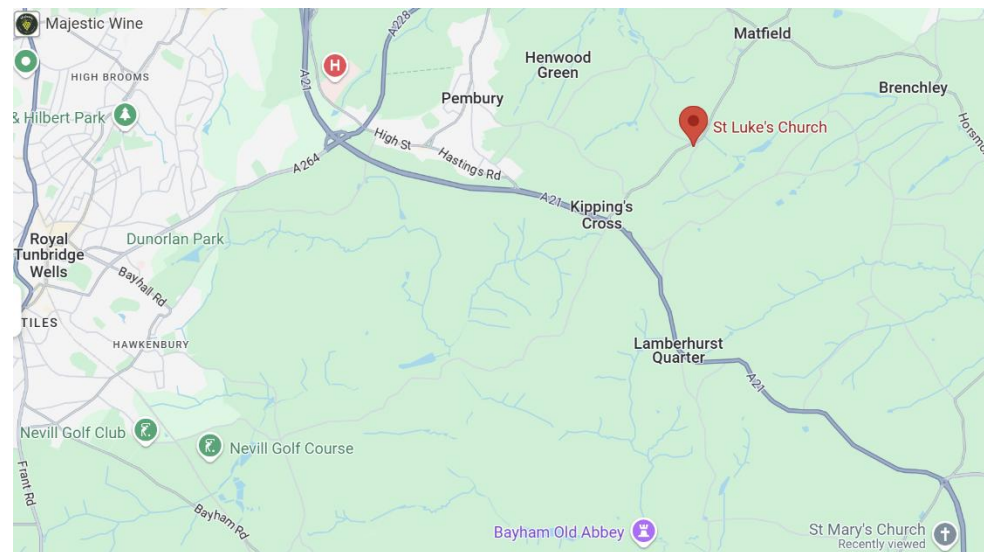




ST.MARY'S



ST. LUKE'S



Postcodes of both churches:

St. Mary's Lamberhurst TN3 8DU

St. Luke's Matfield TN12 7LH

Our website: www.stlukesandstmaryschurches.org



[St. Mary's Lamberhurst & St. Luke's Matfield | Tunbridge Wells | Facebook](#)



[Stmarysandstlukes \(@stmarysandstlukes\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

APPENDIX

Message from the Bishop of Rochester

Welcome to the Diocese of Rochester and thank you for your interest in this exciting role. Our parishes and congregations are the beating heart of the Diocese and are central to our desire for churches to flourish and God's kingdom to grow across all our wonderfully diverse communities.

Our vision

As a Diocese we share the vision that we are Called Together **to change, serve and grow** the church across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.

Much work has taken place to understand what these three themes mean for the life of the Diocese and our priorities, and to define what and where resources will need to be allocated to deliver them.

Through prayerful engagement and discernment, what has begun to emerge is an understanding that we are a community:

Seeking first the Kingdom of God, and called together by God to change, serve and grow with compassion, courage and creativity.

- **Change** is about the need for us to adapt in a changing world, so that our churches can play their full part in serving God and drawing people once more to faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Serve** is about the attitude we need to adopt if we are to earn and gain that cherished place in people's hearts and at the heart of our communities.

- **Grow** is about what God wants to bring about in us and through us, as people growing into the likeness of Christ, and as churches where people are being drawn to follow Jesus through our words and through our deeds.

Our objectives

Within this overall vision, our emerging key objectives are to grow *missional churches, with missional leaders and missional disciples*, that are:

- Growing younger and more diverse,
- Growing numerically, spiritually, financially and in impacting their communities, and in turn are
- Creating a safe and healthy culture for all

This is the latest phase in developing our strategic plans, which are vital to our seeking to grow the kingdom of God across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent, and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.

Central to these plans is sustaining and growing a flourishing and well-resourced parish structure, so as to enable our local churches to take their full and rightful place at the heart of their communities: serving God and serving the people, loving God and showing his love in and to our communities.

If this vision excites you and you believe God may be calling you to this role, then we would love to hear from you.

With my prayers and best wishes,

+Jonathan

The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs
Bishop of Rochester



BE PART OF IT

The vision stands on the shoulders of a generation of previous post-war pilgrims of the Diocese of Rochester who, also at a great moment of societal change, upheaval and challenge, had a steadfast belief that through their combined endeavour, generosity, and faith, they could grow the Church and God's kingdom.

This is what we are being called to - let's make it happen!

OUR VISION

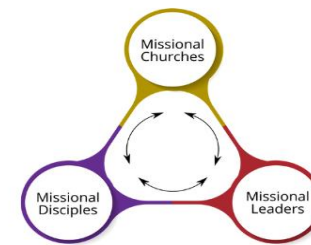
As a family of faith across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent, and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley we understand that we are:

Seeking first the Kingdom of God, and are called together by God to change, serve and grow with compassion, courage, and creativity.

OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

Within this vision, our key objectives are to grow **missional churches**, with **missional leaders** and **missional disciples**, that are:

- Growing a safe and healthy culture for all
- Growing younger and more diverse
- Growing spiritually and numerically
- Impacting their communities
- Releasing financial resources for mission
- Planting and growing new missional churches



MAKING IT HAPPEN

Four workstreams help focus our work to **grow God's Kingdom** and ensure a **flourishing and well-resourced parish structure**.

All are seen through the lens of **growing safe and healthy cultures**, because if we are truly seeking God's Kingdom, then we must reflect it's values of righteousness, peace, wholeness, and fullness of life for all.



Dear God, Fill us with courage and vision to carry your light into new places, meeting people where they are, and sharing the life-changing truth of your gospel. Bless these communities with strong and Spirit-filled leaders, faithful disciples, and hearts ablaze with love for you.

May our churches and communities become vibrant and healthy expressions of your Kingdom—places where your Word is proclaimed, lives are transformed, and communities are renewed.

Guide us, Lord, and remind us always that you are with us, empowering our every step, even to the end of the world.

In Jesus' name, we pray.

Amen.