The Parish of Murston, Bapchild and Tonge

The Benefice of Sittingbourne St Michael with Murston, Bapchild and Tonge

(Sittingbourne Deanery)

Introduction

As representatives of our churches, we are excited that the search for a new vicar coincides with a season of real growth in our parish with a hunger among our people to be open to the Spirit and to see his Fruit growing among us. If you would like to be a part of our next exciting chapter, please read this profile carefully and consider applying for the post – we would love to meet you.

Our Parish consists of several Christian overlapping congregations, groups and fellowships, some of which meet in All Saints Murston and St Laurence Bapchild. Other groups meet in Bapchild and Tonge CE Primary School. Worship at St Giles Tonge is currently suspended so that we can focus on building up the church in Bapchild and Murston.

The three churches of the parish are:

All Saints Murston –is Grade II listed and was built in 1874. It is situated in an urban area close to the town with a mix of old and new housing and adjacent trading estates.

St Laurence Bapchild – is Grade 1 listed and over 900 years old. In a village setting just of the A2, there is a mix of old and new housing and various village amenities.

St Giles Tonge – is an ancient Grade 1 listed building. The small population at Tonge is very scattered in this predominantly farming community with its landmark Tonge Mill and Pond.

The Parish School is:

Bapchild and Tonge CofE Primary School (Headteacher: Mr Christian Kelly) – a school of 210 children with an attached Nursery of 40 infants.

Also Sunny Bank and Lansdowne Primary Schools and Goldilocks Nursery are in the Parish.

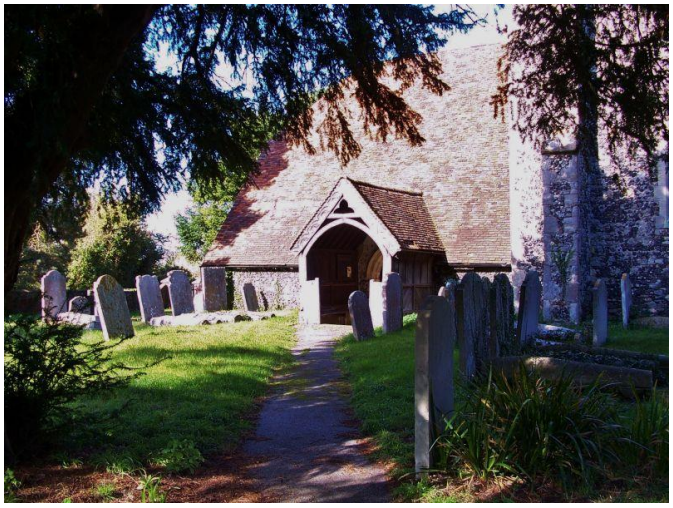
Murston



Bapchild



Tonge



Sharing Our Vision

As part of the Canterbury Diocese, we uphold the Diocesan objectives, known as the Three Bold Outcomes, to be achieved by 2030:

1. **Doubling the number of children and young disciples in the Diocese**
2. **Creating 200 new Christian communities**
3. **Every parish showing signs of revitalisation**

and we, for our part, are focusing on our own Three Things which are:

1. **Re-establishing prayer and bible reading at the heart of our community**
2. **Re-establishing Sunday Worship at Murston Church**
3. **Increasing public awareness of Church services, events and good news**

We are well on our way with both sets of objectives. Since the Diocesan Outcomes were set, we have reestablished a monthly prayer meeting and weekly Bible Study group. Our Sunday morning congregation has been growing with an increase in numbers on the Electoral Roll. We also have a well-established Christian primary-aged after-school club ('Faith Explorers') and a Youth Club ('The Hub') for secondary-aged young people. We have come some way, but we need a vicar to help us discern and undertake the next steps.

Pattern of Worship

At the start of 2025 we reorganised our pattern of worship. At St Laurence Bapchild the pattern is:

1st Sunday – Family Worship (with puppets)

2nd Sunday – Morning Prayer (Common Worship)

3rd Sunday – Family Worship

4th Sunday – Holy Communion (Common Worship)

Every service begins at 10.00am

Sunday morning services at Murston and Tonge are currently suspended, however Murston is used for the weekly Bible Study, and there are plans to reintroduce worship at Murston once a month (initially) on a Sunday afternoon.



Youth Hub



Family Service with Puppet