St. Michael, Sittingbourne



Parish Profile 2026

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Introduction

St Michael Sittingbourne is a parish ready for a priest, and ready for a new chapter in its history of Christian witness to the town and people of Sittingbourne.

There are challenges and opportunities awaiting our new priest, and there are many joys to be found in a community of Christians that long to know and serve God in this place. We believe that there is a growing hunger for meaning and community in Sittingbourne, and St Michael's has the potential to be a place where those who seek can be warmly welcomed and introduced to God and the Christian life.

After a recent re-organisation of our deanery, St Michael's is the town centre church and parish of a new benefice - Sittingbourne Saint Michael with Murston, Bapchild and Tonge. This parish profile for St Michael's should be read in conjunction with the profile for Murston, Bapchild and Tonge.

We believe that the recent benefice re-organisation reflects the manner in which our churches hope to work together in our witness to God in this pace. There is huge potential for mission here, supported by funding from the recent sale of a now-redundant church. We hope you will find our parish profile inspiring.

Who Are We?

We are:

- a worshipping community
- a praying community
- a community who reach out

The PCC set our vision and mission in 2023 (see SWOT analysis, appendix b) and revised it in March 2026. We defined our mission to revitalise our church as:

'Through our worship, fellowship and service, to celebrate the life and teaching of Jesus Christ' in:

1) Our communal life, prayer and worship
2) The nurturing and encouraging of growth in the faith
3) Our care and support of anyone who is in need
4) Our action for peace, justice and care of creation

We want to do this through the three essential characteristics of who we are:

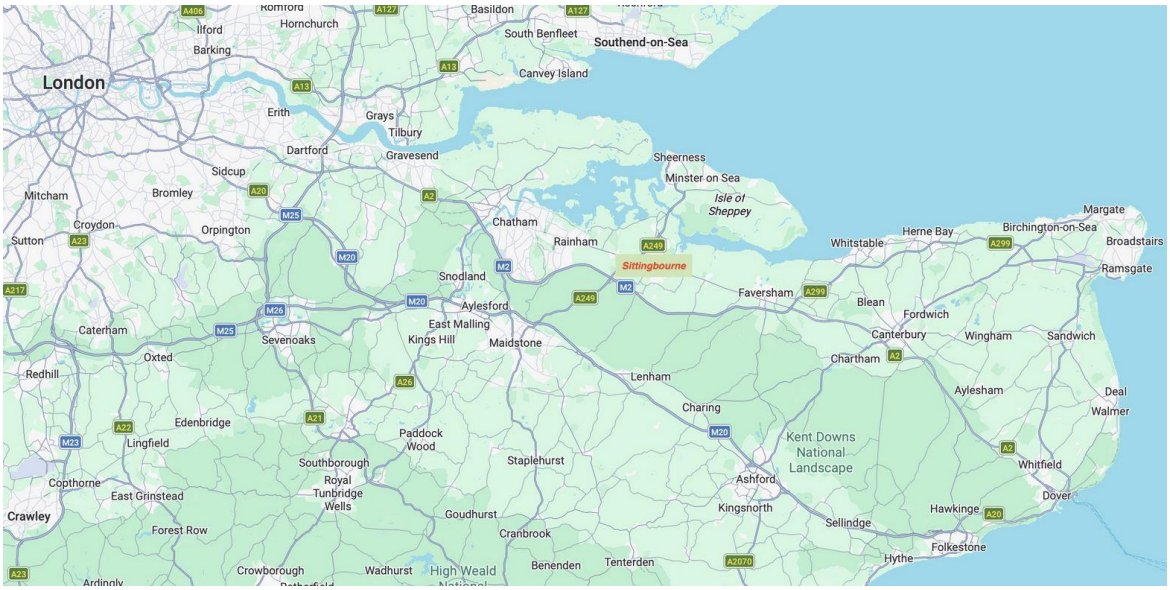
- a worshipping community
    a. with services that are rooted in tradition but are welcoming and inclusive to all
    b. with high-quality music that sings of God's glory
- a praying community
    a. everything we do needs to be underpinned by prayer
    b. we love prayer groups, bible studies & the novena
    c. we want to build on our popularity as a place for drop in prayer (we have noticed that when the church is open for any event, people come in to find peace, light candles and pray, but we do not yet have the capacity to respond to this)
- a community who reach out
    a. we want to build on our existing outreach activities: Place of Welcome, breakfast club, hosting FoodBank
    b. we must revitalise and build on our relationships with local schools (one primary head is keen to be more involved with St Michael's), Brownies & Rainbows
    c. we aspire to restart our Toddler group, leading to youth worship

The Vicar we need

We know that a new priest cannot possibly hope to achieve all of the above, and the spirit of St Michael's has always been collaborative and inclusive, with a community that seeks opportunities to put faith into action. We look for a leader who will inspire us, motivate us, direct us, teach us and include us. Any one of the wishes and aspirations above could be the starting-point for a new inspiration in our community.

We need our next vicar to be….
prayerful, willing to lead us in worship and prayer, and to open our hearts to ways in which we can be closer to God in our prayer-life;
courageous and honest, willing to speak truths that we might need to hear about ways in which our church life might need to be inspired;
kind and patient, recognising that people and communities have long-formed personalities, traditions and habits, which are nonetheless open to transformation in the face of a loving God;
rooted in and **respectful** of mainstream Anglican tradition, and **up-to-date** in thinking and practice;
equipped to deal with the demands of a busy and multi-faceted ministry
self-aware, collaborative and willing to work in a team.

The Parish of Sittingbourne



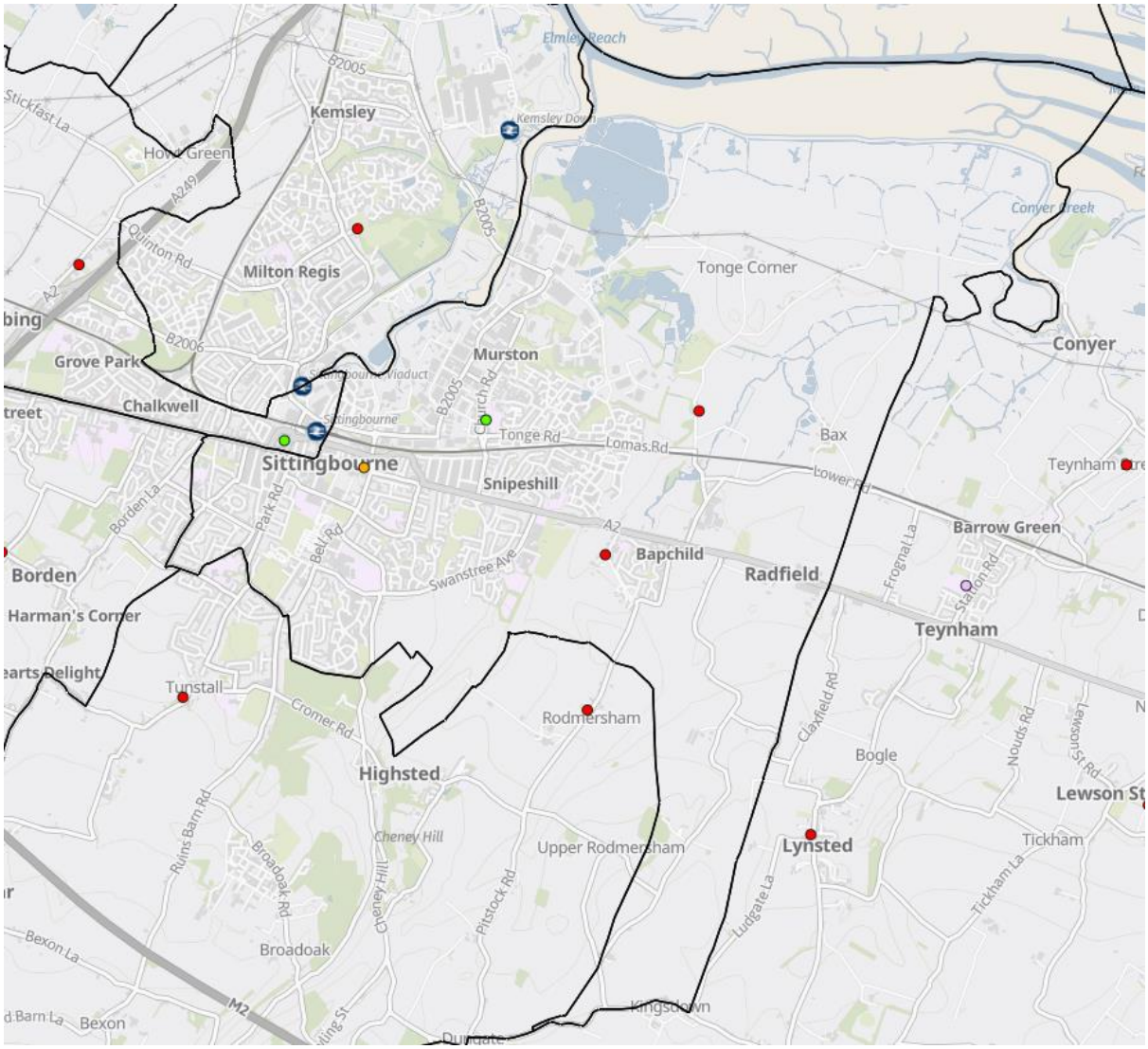
Sittingbourne is a town of about 60,000 people with a history going back to a pre-Roman settlement. It was only a small community until the 12th century, when the town centre grew as a place of rest and hospitality on the pilgrimage route to Canterbury. St Michael's church was built in the 13th century. The town hosted two English kings on their travels during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The Industrial Revolution changed Sittingbourne dramatically, enabling it to become an industrial town, with the local economy based largely on brick production. The agricultural economy also prospered with new transport connections.

The town faces many challenges in this post-industrial age of rapid change. St Michael's church is on the High Street, part of the main London-Canterbury route, and some of our parishioners remember the street being congested with lorries carrying fruit to Covent Garden in harvest season. All that traffic now bypasses the town at high speed, and Sittingbourne has lost some of its community rootedness and sense of identity.



The map below shows the parish boundary of our new benefice: Sittingbourne Saint Michael, with Murston, Bapchild and Tonge.



Source: Church of England Data Services team
Data sources:
1. Parish, Benefice, Deanery, Archdeaconry, and Diocese boundaries as of November 2025. Data supplied by the Church Commissioners. It is important to note that parish boundaries change over time so these data will eventually become out of date.
2. Church locations as of November 2025

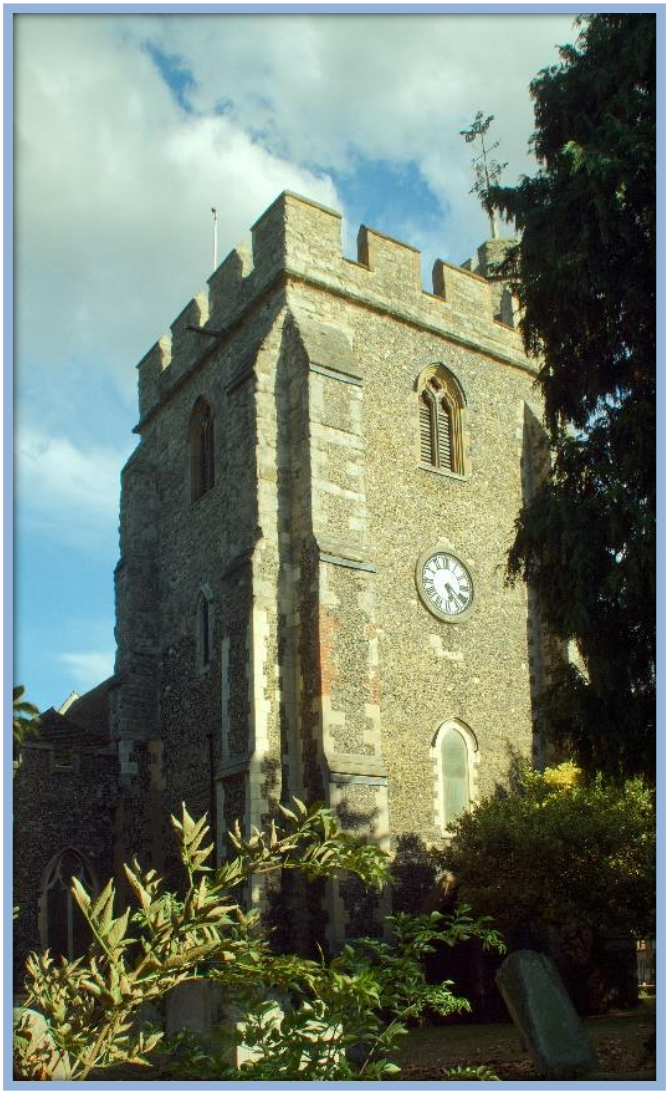
The population of our parish was 15,890 at the 2021 census, in 1.6 sq miles The parish deprivation index is 2,294 (out of 12,154 with 1 being the most deprived). There are 6,500 occupied households in the parish, of which 47% identify as Christian. 49% of population is in the 30-69 age group.

The Parish in Context

St Michael's is part of the Diocese of Canterbury, and the "Number 1 Cathedral" of the Anglican Communion is only a few miles away, about half-an-hour by car or train. Our train station is on the main line from London to the Kent coast, and fast trains serve London St Pancras and London Victoria in just under and just hour an hour respectively. The diocesan staff teams are based in Canterbury, too, so as our new priest, you should find it easy to be connected to our cathedral, our diocese, and the wider world. Living here means that the Kent coast and countryside are within easy reach.

Canterbury diocese is mainly rural, with only a few urban centres. Sittingbourne Deanery exemplifies the urban-rural balance of our diocese. Within a few miles of Sittingbourne are a number of ancient churches in deeply rural settings which face their own particular challenges.

St Michael's Church



The church itself has 11th century origins, with evidence of significant growth in the 13th & 14th centuries. The church had to be rebuilt in the 18th century; it housed the town's first public school from 1813, and changed radically in a Victorian restoration project which gave it the form it has today.

The church features a delightful sanctuary and high altar, classic Victorian choir stalls, two side-chapels, a spacious clergy vestry, a choir vestry at the base of the west tower. The tower houses a bell-chamber of 8 bells, and we have an active band of bell-ringers. In 2021, the south transept was equipped with a modern servery which enables us to serve food and hot drinks at services and other events. St Michael's is often used for deanery and archdeaconry events. The building has excellent acoustics, which makes it a joyful place to worship, and an excellent venue for live music.

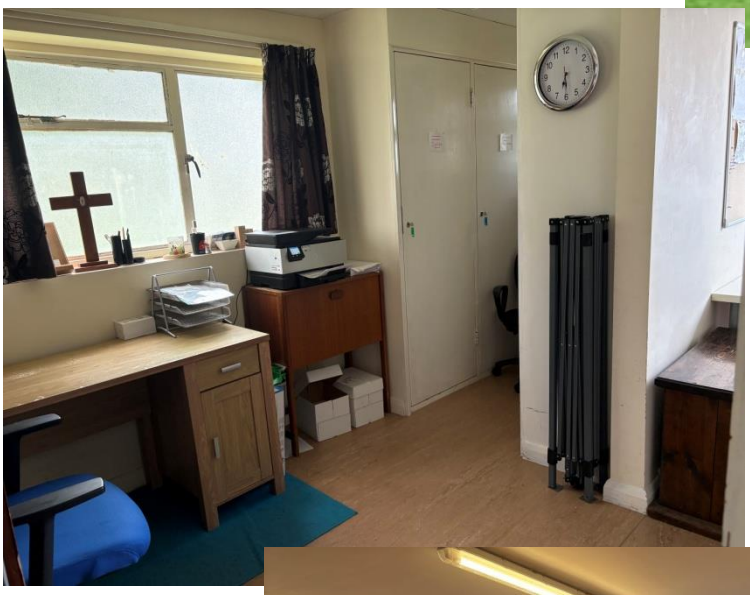
St Michael's has always had a prominent role in the town as the civic church. The town comes to St Michael's for significant events in community life such as the Proclamation of King Charles III and the Memorial for Queen Elizabeth II and regularly for the mayor-making ceremony and Remembrance service.



Other buildings and facilities

“**Church House**” is our convenient and well-equipped church hall in the churchyard grounds. It features a large room suitable for meetings and functions, a kitchen, an office, toilets and showers, washing machine and tumble dryers.









The Vicarage

St Michael's Vicarage is a large and pleasant family house, with a good-sized but manageable garden. It is well-equipped to serve as a vicarage, with a separate study conveniently separated from the main family areas.



The vicarage is at the junction of Albany and Valenciennes roads, in a pleasant residential neighbourhood next to Albany Recreation Ground.



The main entrance from the front drive leads to a lobby with a w.c. from which a door leads into the study, between the house and the garage. Another door gives access to the house itself, where a large hall with plenty of storage opens into the kitchen, and both ends of the open-plan L-shaped living and dining area. There is a downstairs toilet, and a useful utility room adjoins the large kitchen.

Upstairs there are five bedrooms, one of which has an en-suite bathroom, and a family bathroom. Four of the bedrooms enjoy views over the garden.







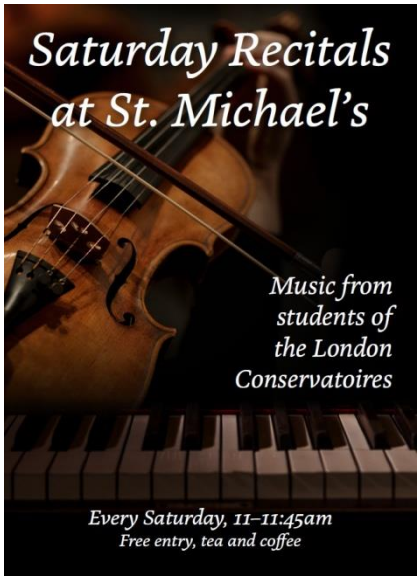


It is about fifteen minute's walk from St Michael's church (where there is parking for clergy and church officers), and about the same distance from the town centre with its shops, restaurants and cinema. There are 2 major supermarkets and 3 local supermarkets within 1 mile, and Swallows leisure centre is about 10 minutes' walk away across the Rec.

If you are interested in considering the possibility of living here and serving St Michael's in your ministry, more information and detailed pictures of the vicarage can be obtained from our Churchwarden Catherine Orton.

Community Life at St Michael's

Our community life is centred on worship, the pattern of which is listed below.



As well as Sunday Communion, the church is used for weekly **Saturday morning music recitals**, when an average of 35 people enjoy high-quality recitals given by students from London music schools.



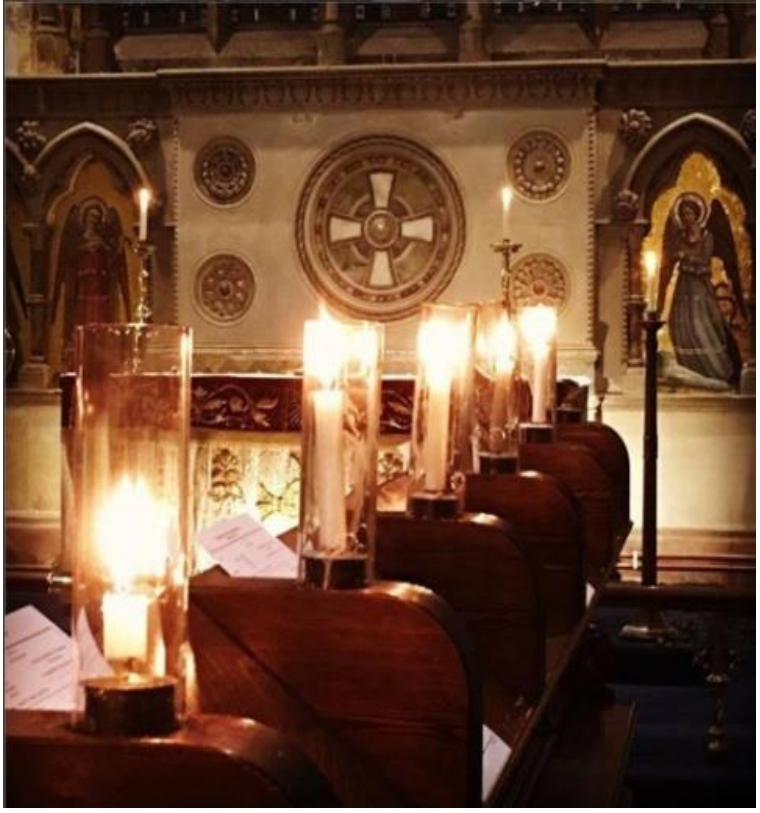
There is a midweek communion every Wednesday, followed by **Place of Welcome**, which is a chance to meet, talk, share food and enjoy craft activities and games.



Church House is used for **Breakfast Club** every Friday, originally part of the Warm Spaces initiative, and now supporting the **Food Bank** which follows it and which we are proud to host.
We hold our **Lent and Advent courses** here, as well as PCC meetings. It is also let out to **local community groups** including Brownies, Rainbows, Samara Art Group, Coffee Morning Group, Qi Gong exercise club and the Light & Life Church.



The **bell-ringers** ring at many local churches and practise at St Michael's every other Wednesday. They ring for choral evensong every month and occasional other services. We also welcome visiting teams several times a year.



Worship

At St Michael's we have a tradition of ordered worship and traditional music with pipe organ and robed choir.

On the first Sunday of the month we have a more informal service of Holy Communion with music led by our Junior Choir and the piano.

Our afternoon services are BCP Choral Evensong on the second Sunday of the month and Reflective Evening Prayer on the fourth Sunday.

We visit patients in the local hospital on request, take Home Communion to several of our parish and lead Holy Communion services at two of the many local care/retirement homes.

Our current pattern of services:

First Sunday of the month
10am All Together Communion
Junior Choir & Piano

Second Sunday of the month
10am Sung Eucharist
6.30pm Choral Evensong
Robed Choir & Organ

Third Sunday of the month
10am Sung Eucharist
Robed Choir & Organ

Fourth Sunday of the Month
10am Sung Eucharist
Robed Choir & Organ
4pm Reflective Evening Prayer (said)

Fifth Sunday of the month
10am Sung Eucharist
Robed Choir & Organ



Occasional offices
In the past three years, St Michael's has hosted four Weddings, 11 Baptisms and 25 Funerals.

Our policy during interregnum is to include baptisms as part of the main Sunday service, but in the past we have offered separate baptism services.

Music in worship
St Michael's has a Director of Music in post, Catherine Orton, who also leads our choirs. Catherine is a professional musician, who teaches privately and in schools, and has recently re-started our Junior Choir.



Our regular organist is Mr Nigel MacArthur, who plays on Sundays and supports the Director of Music in choir rehearsals and the development of music generally.

Music is very important in our worship and we often join forces with other choirs within the Deanery and across the Diocese for Choral Evensong. We also have a solid All-Comers choir who join us for the service of Nine Lessons & Carols at Christmas and Easter celebrations which range from Festival Evensongs to Stainer's Crucifixion or a service of music and readings.

Finances

Our Parish Share for 2025 has, regrettably, not been paid in full. With our previous incumbent's move in August 2025, our contribution level was increased to £67,681 for the year. We have paid £12,500 for the year and hope to be able to maintain at least this level for 2026. Regular givers for 2025 are down to 19 from 20 in the previous year. Of these, 7 have signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme so far. Overall income for 2025 through planned, online and voluntary giving is about £3,000 down from 2025 figures.

Water, Gas and Electric bills contracts are being renewed at the end of 2025. An increase in bills can be expected in 2026. We must, as always, remain vigilant on our ever-increasing costs going forward.

As part of the discharge of its duties, the PCC monitors its expenditure against budget on a regular basis and through figures supplied by the Treasurer.

St Mary's Church, Sittingbourne, which was part of our parish, closed in 2021 and was sold in 2026. Some of the proceeds are available for a specific mission related project for the new incumbent.

Living in Sittingbourne as our new Priest

The Diocese of Canterbury supports its clergy with the Canterbury Diet, which includes the offering of regular pastoral supervision, spiritual accompaniment, and ongoing ministry training. Further details can be found on the diocesan website at https://www.canterburydiocese.org/ministry/the-canterbury-diet/, where you will find an introduction and a link to the particular offering for incumbent clergy. The diocese also has resources to support clergy and their families in wellbeing, and you will find more information about this and other aspects of our diocesan life on the website.

Sittingbourne is a pleasant place to live with good public facilities. There are many great primary, infants and junior schools in the area. There are two local comprehensives, one of which has a grammar stream, a boys' grammar school and a girls' grammar school.

We hope that our parish profile helps you in your discernment of whether God is calling you to our parish. If you have any questions that are not addressed here, you are welcome to get in touch with:

- Churchwarden Catherine Orton, who can tell you about church life, the vicarage, and life in the neighbourhood. Telephone: *07796 953319*
  Email: *catherine@catherine-orton.co.uk*
- The Archdeacon's Office
  The Venerable Estella Last, Archdeacon of Maidstone
  Telephone: *01622 934449*
  Email: *archdeacon.maidstone@diocant.org*

We do not yet know you, but our community is praying for you, and we hope to meet you soon.



APPENDICES

Data and statistics from the Church Urban Fund, which uses data from the national Census and the government's measures of deprivation and maps them to parish boundaries.

Parish: Sittingbourne: St Mary and St Michael

Deprivation rank (1=most deprived, 12,154=least deprived)	2,294
Parish population (2021 census)	15,890
Parish number of occupied households	6,526
Area (square miles)	1.6
Population density (people per square mile)	10,010
% aged 0-4	5.8
% aged 5-19	19.1
% aged 20-29	12.3
% aged 30-44	20.8
% aged 45-69	28.6
% aged 70 and over	13.4
% Asian ethnicity	2.5
% Black ethnicity	2.5
% Mixed ethnicity	2.0
% White ethnicity	92.3
% Other ethnicity	0.7
% Buddhist	0.3
% Christian	47.1
% Hindu	0.6
% Jewish	0.0
% Muslim	1.5
% Sikh	0.1
% Other religion	0.4
% No religion	44.7
% Religion not stated	5.2
Rural/Urban classification	Urban
% Area urban	97.5
Parish code	560306
Parish local name	Sittingbourne: St Mary and St Michael
Parish legal name	Sittingbourne Saint Mary and Saint Michael
Benefice	Sittingbourne with Bobbing
Benefice ID	06/222BX
Deanery	Sittingbourne
Deanery ID	56205
Archdeaconry	MAIDSTONE
Archdeaconry ID	562
Diocese	Canterbury
Diocese ID	6
CUF lookup tool	More info

St Michael, Sittingbourne

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	**Building and setting:** Town centre location; Building with rich history and pews Toilet and kitchenette; Peaceful atmosphere Music, organ, adult & junior choirs; good concert venue Eco Church Bronze Award; church hall is well used Sittingbourne's Civic Church **People:** Small but dedicated team working together People with knowledge, experience and expertise and good links **Activities and ethos:** Good quality worship; concerts Mix of traditional and innovative Open, inclusive, welcoming; Place of Welcome; Breakfast Club
Weaknesses	**Building and setting:** Location at 'dead end' of High Street Cost of upkeep – both financial and human **People:** Low attendance which has been shrinking; Lack of young people Loss of ministry team **Activities and ethos:** Apathy; limited number of volunteers
Opportunities	**Building:** Make better use of space and facilities (eg Church House) Heating upgrade (Eco Church) Open Church more to the community **Church:** Work more closely with other Churches in the town through Churches Together, and across the Deanery **Community:** Links with schools: primary and secondary Develop civic links Develop Place of Welcome further (e visiting groups) Large town with much new housing; Multi cultural area
Challenges	**Building and Setting:** At 'dead end' of High Street **Church community:** Falling attendances and lack of volunteers; uncertain future Shortage of funds; wider Church decline; Parish Share **Wider community:** Secularisation – lack of support from the wider community

Summary Accounts

Parochial Church Council of St Mary and St Michael Sittingbourne

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2025

	Note				TOTAL FUNDS	
Receipts and Payments Account	1	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	2025	2024
RECEIPTS						
Voluntary Receipts:						
Planned Giving		15,787			15,787	16,860
Collections at services		3,805			3,805	3,342
Online giving		1,250			1,250	1,058
All other giving / voluntary receipts		1,575			1,575	2,889
Legacies			47,472		47,472	
CAF/GAYE						0
Gift Aid recovered		4,288			4,288	6,273
		26,705	47,472		74,177	30,422
Activites for generating funds						
Fund raising for Church	2	414			414	1,224
Fund raising for Charity	2	10			10	150
Investment income						
Dividends/Interest		889			889	463
Church Activities						
Fees Received (Gross)		6,118			6,118	2,067
Church House Income		4,922			4,922	7,132
Recitals		870			870	2,239
Other Income						
Grants received						2,400
Insurance Claims		4,486			4,486	
Bellringers Funds		90			90	5
Total Receipts		44,548	47,472	0	92,020	46,105
PAYMENTS						
Church Activites						
Parish Share		12,500			12,500	13,113
Clergy and staffing costs		726			726	968
Church Building Maintenance (Fabric) incl Insurance covered costs		5,211			5,211	4,172
Building Works						
Church running expenses						
- Utilities		5,860			5,860	7,746
- Insurances		7,936			7,936	7,792
- Consumables/Admin costs		1,668			1,668	2,669
- Music related costs		3,561			3,561	3,501
- Licences		450			450	758
- Maintenance/Testing		189			189	379
- Hospitality		106			106	555
- Training Costs						
- Phone and IT costs		1,042			1,042	744
- Cleaning		803			803	962
Other						

Fees paid (due) to Diocese	2,747			2,747	1,778
Mission giving and donations	999			999	1,463
Restricted Funds					
Ignite Costs		173		173	512
Warm Spaces Fund		253		253	
Flowers Fund					
Choral Grant repaid		2,400		2,400	
Costs of generating funds	43,797	2,826	0	46,623	47,112
Total Payments	43,797	2,826	0	46,623	47,112
Excess of Receipts over Payments	751	44,646		45,397	(1007)
Transfer between funds	0			0	
	751	44,646		45,397	(1007)

Cash at bank and in hand as at 1st January 2025	
Nat West 60-19-25 Acc 55826636	14,591
Nat West 60-19-25 Acc 65568265	27,791
Lloyds 30-18-06 Acc 00021228	1,227
Total Balances	43,609
Cash at bank and in hand as at 31st December 2025	
Nat West 60-19-25 Acc 55826636	11,098
Nat West 60-19-25 Acc 65568265	76,609
Lloyds 30-18-06 Acc 00021228	1,299
Total Balances	89,006

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	TOTAL FUNDS 2025	2024
The PCC of St Mary and St Michael						
Cash Funds						
Bank Current Accounts		12,397			12,397	15,847
Deposit Account		12,356	64,253		76,609	27,791
Cash		0			0	0
		24,753	64,253	0	89,006	43,638
Other Monetary Assets						
Estimated 2025 Gift Aid recoverable due		1,000			1,000	700
CCLA Deposit Funds						
- 13 High Street	CB3021415-001	1,556			1,556	1,489
- Mission Hall	CB3021418-001	1,218			1,218	1,165
- Taylor Bequests	CB3021421-001		6,256		6,256	5,985
CCL Fixed Interest Funds						
- 13 High Street	CB3021416-001	121			121	117
- Mission Hall	CB3021419-001	90			90	88
- Spicer bequests (Canterbury DBF fund)	CB3003527-001	376			376	367
		4,361	6,256	0	10,617	9,911
Investment Assets						
CCLA Investment Funds						
- 13 High Street	CB3021417-001	1,021			1,021	1,040
- Mission Hall	CB3021420-001	777			777	791
Santander Shares (121)		1,070			1,070	336
		2,868	0	0	2,868	2,167
Totals		31,982	70,509	0	102,491	55,716
Fixed Assets retained for Church use		Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Liabilities						
Other liabilities	2	3,413			3,413	
Fees due to Canterbury DBF Dec 2025		1,000			1,000	
Outstanding 2025 cheques		0			0	
		4,413	0	0	4,413	
Restricted Funds					70,509	
Designated Funds					548	
Sums due for 2025						
Gift Aid claim awaited (estimated) - see above						
Net Position						
Cash and Assets available to PCC (unrestricted)					**27,021**	
Other Funds Held on Account						
St Michaels Ringers						
Cash Account		3,413			3,413	3,378
		3,413	0	0	3,413	3,378

Restricted Funds as at 31st December 2025			**Notes**
Bank Current Acc and Deposit Funds and CCLA funds			
Taylor Bequest		10,836	
SHYN		3,645	
Place of Welcome		153	
Children/Flooring		907	
Ignite		-293	
Ray Anns' Bequest		1,000	
Buildings	(B Dade legacy)	37,472	
- Organ Fund		10,090	
Warm Spaces Fund		443	
CCLA and Dicoese Funds (bequests) for Vicar and Church Wardens' discretionary use			
Spicer Bequest	(CCLA Dep Fund)	6,256	
Total Restricted Funds		**70,509**	

Designated Funds as at 31st December 2025		
Church House Key Deposits	250	
Choral	298	3
Flower Fund	105	
Total Designated Funds	**548**	

Notes

1 The financial statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations using the Receipts and Payments basis

2 St Michaels Ringers funds

3 Choral fund raising