



Parish Profile

St Francis Church, Strood
Seeking a Priest-in-Charge - 2026

Welcome from the Archdeacon of Rochester



Thank you for taking the time to prayerfully consider whether God might be calling you to be the next Priest in Charge of St Francis, Strood.

This is an exciting time in the life of Rochester Diocese as we reflect on how we as a Diocese, and in different ways in each of our parishes, might Change and Serve and Grow so that God's Kingdom can be increased, and more people can come to know the love of Jesus. Our Diocesan vision and strategy prioritises parish ministry and we are committed to supporting our clergy and lay leaders in their mission and ministry in their local context. We have recently been awarded £11m of SMIBB funding (from National Church) to support this vision.

The congregation of St Francis is warm and welcoming and are looking forward to working with a new priest, building on existing strengths and developing the growing sense of shared mission and ministry. They are keen to continue to work to develop outreach and deeper connection with their local communities, especially in serving local schools, children, young people and families.

We are looking for an experienced, enthusiastic and pioneering leader who will bring their own gifts and skills, as well as being able to value, encourage and build upon the good work that is in place, who will value charismatic worship and will be guided by the Holy Spirit whilst leading in vision and mission.

Please be assured of my prayers as you discern whether you are the person the Holy Spirit is calling to join us in this next stage of mission and ministry in Rochester Diocese. I'd be delighted to have a conversation with anyone who may be interested.

With every blessing as you discern God's will.

Archdeacon Sandra

A Message to Applicants

Thank you for taking the time to read the story of St Francis Church, Strood. We are praying for a priest who will discern whether God is calling them to join a church that has been through a remarkable season of revitalisation and is now ready for its next chapter of mission.

The previous parish profile, written in 2022, told the honest story of a parish emerging from Covid, seeking stability, and looking for interim leadership. This profile tells a new story. By the grace of God, St Francis is now a growing, intergenerational, outward-facing church with a clear vision, a stronger leadership culture, a renewed building, deepening school and community partnerships, and visible fruit in people coming to faith in Jesus.

We are praying for a vibrant, missionally minded, evangelical, orthodox and Spirit-led priest — with a proven track record of growing churches — who can take St Francis into its next phase of mission: preaching the gospel clearly, leading courageously, motivating people, casting vision, building teams and developing leaders, while remaining deeply rooted in prayer, Scripture, sacrament, pastoral care and safeguarding.

We would be especially encouraged by a priest who is well connected to networks such as New Wine or the Evangelical Alliance, and who shares our charismatic, Spirit-filled understanding of church life.



Churchwardens of St Francis, Strood

Mick & Cathy

Contents

- 1. At a Glance**
- 2. Our Parish and Community**
- 3. Living in Strood and Medway**
- 4. Our Vision and Mission**
- 5. The Story of Revitalisation**
- 6. Worship, Discipleship and Stepping-Stone Ministries**
- 7. Children, Youth, Schools and Young Adults**
- 8. Community Outreach and Partnerships**
- 9. Leadership, Governance and Safeguarding**
- 10. Buildings, Resources and Finance**
- 11. About You**
- 12. Priorities for the Next Five Years**
- 13. What We Offer**
- 14. Final Invitation**

1. At a Glance

A revitalised parish church with a clear evangelical, charismatic and missional identity — local, practical, warm and Jesus-centred.

St Francis is a Church of England parish church in Strood, within the Diocese of Rochester. We serve a parish of around 16,500 people in Strood West, with a strong calling to make Christ known among families, children, young people, older residents, schools, and those who may not naturally cross the threshold of church.

70+ usual Sunday attendance — tripled since 2022	72% increase in regular giving after the 2024 campaign	700+ children reached at Christmas and Easter	£500k+ grant funding secured in 2025
--	--	---	--

Parish	St Francis Church, Strood, Diocese of Rochester
Location	Galahad Avenue, Strood, Kent, ME2 2YS
Parish population	c. 16,500
Context	Among the 20% most deprived Church of England parishes
Attendance	Usual Sunday attendance is currently around 70, having grown significantly
Electoral roll	55 (renewed 2025)
Leadership & team	c. 36 active servant lay members, 7 ministry leaders, and a core team of 13 on PCC, including 2 churchwardens, Treasurer, PSO and Missional Outreach Coordinator, plus an employed Parish Administrator
Growth & fruit	Sunday congregation has tripled through revitalisation; financial giving rose 72% after the 2024 campaign
Mission reach	Over 700 children reached through Christmas and Easter ministry, with deepening discipleship through weekly school partnerships
Tradition	Evangelical, orthodox and charismatic — identifying closely with the New Wine stream and the Evangelical Alliance Statement of Faith
Current strategy	Moving from SDF revitalisation into MDP funding and long-term growth and sustainability

2. Our Parish and Community

Strood sits within the Medway Towns, west of the River Medway, with Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham and Rainham nearby. The parish of St Francis is largely residential and occupies a broad triangle bounded by the River Medway, the M2 and the old A2. The church was planted from St Nicholas, Strood, and the building opened for worship in 1962.

The parish has no single obvious civic centre. It has grown through a number of housing developments, which can mean that people feel disconnected from one another. This gives St Francis a significant missional calling: to be a place of welcome, belonging, friendship, faith and hope.

Our parish includes three non-church primary schools — Elaine, Bligh and Cedar — as well as Leigh Academy Secondary School. We work among a mixed community, including families, older residents, children and young people, those affected by isolation, and those facing economic pressure.

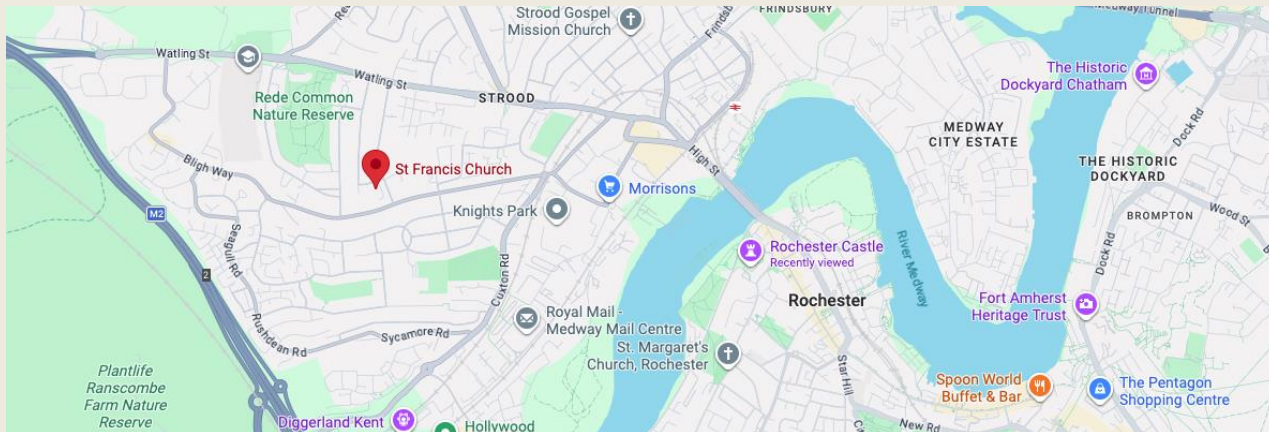
St Francis is positioned to be both a parish church and a community hub. We believe our calling is not simply to run activities, but to create pathways through which people are known, loved, invited, disciplined, baptised, confirmed, equipped and sent.



3. Living in Strood and Medway

Strood is a well-connected and increasingly affordable corner of Kent, on the doorstep of historic Rochester and the North Downs.

Strood railway station offers high-speed services to London St Pancras in around 35 minutes, with the M2 and A2 giving quick road access to London, the Kent coast and the Channel ports.



Across the river, Rochester offers its Norman castle and cathedral, independent shops, restaurants and year-round festivals. The wider Medway area includes retail parks, leisure centres, theatres and riverside walks, with the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty a short drive away.

Medway operates a selective education system, with several well-regarded grammar schools alongside comprehensive and academy provision, and universities at Medway (Greenwich, Kent and Canterbury Christ Church) on the Chatham waterfront. Housing remains notably more affordable than London and much of the Southeast.

Three things we love about living here:

The strong sense of community – Strood is full of real, down-to-earth people who care about their neighbours and look out for one another.

The rich mix of people and cultures – families, long-standing residents and those newly arriving all help make Strood vibrant, diverse and full of life.

Its location and character – with the River Medway, Rochester Castle and Cathedral nearby, good transport links, and both town and countryside within easy reach, Strood is a great place to call home.



RETAIL

SHOPPING PARKS, HIGH
STREETS & LEISURE
Across Strood & Medway



AD 604

HISTORIC ROCHESTER
ON YOUR DOORSTEP
Castle, cathedral & festivals



M2 · A2

LONDON · KENT COAST
CHANNEL PORTS
Quick access by road



35 MIN

HIGH-SPEED TO LONDON
ST PANCRAS
HS1 from Strood station

4. The Diocese, Deanery and Wider Context

St Francis is part of the Diocese of Rochester and shares in its Called Together vision:

“Seeking first the kingdom of God, we are called together to change, serve, and grow with compassion, courage, and creativity.”

This nine-year diocesan vision seeks to grow **missional churches, missional leaders** and **missional disciples**: churches that are growing younger, growing spiritually and numerically, making a positive impact within their communities, releasing resources for mission and planting new worshipping communities. At its heart is a commitment to a flourishing and well-resourced parish system in which churches and communities are renewed in faith, hope and love, and people are equipped to live and share the Gospel in their daily lives.



Within **Strood Deanery**, St Francis enjoys warm and supportive relationships with neighbouring parishes and clergy. We regularly share significant services with St Nicholas, Strood, and All Saints, Frindsbury, including Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day, Confirmation and Christ the King.

There are also friendly links with other local churches, including the Evangelical Free Church in Strood, Bread of Life and New Covenant Church, which worships in the St Francis church hall each Sunday.

St Francis is one of the Diocese of Rochester's **Missional Development Places (MDP)**. This is one of the three principal workstreams through which the *Called Together* vision is being delivered, alongside Missional Leadership Development, Children, Young People and Families, and Revitalise. Each workstream is shaped by a commitment to safeguarding, wellbeing, accountability, good governance and the development of safe and healthy church cultures.

The MDP programme provides targeted investment in 15 priority places to grow and multiply worshipping communities, develop sustainable models of mission and share learning with the wider Diocese. It includes investment in clergy and lay ministry posts, mission-focused leadership, buildings and long-term sustainability. Through this programme, the Diocese has committed significant multi-year support to St Francis, including five years of funding for the Priest-in-Charge post and funding for two part-time youth and young adult ministry posts.

This investment reflects the close alignment between the diocesan vision and St Francis' commitment to growing younger, developing missional leaders and creating new pathways through which people can encounter Jesus and grow as his disciples.



House of Bishops' Declaration

The PCC of St Francis, Strood, has not passed a resolution under the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.

5. Our Vision and Mission

“We seek to create and grow disciples of Jesus so that together we build the Kingdom of God in Strood West.”

We believe that God is at work transforming lives and communities through the power of His Holy Spirit. We are committed to Real Faith, Real Lives, Real People — bringing the Good News of Jesus to everyone, sharing life together, and seeking God in all we do so that, empowered by the Spirit, we build the Kingdom of God here in our lifetime.

Real Faith

Trusting in God, empowered by the Holy Spirit. We are committed to seeking God first in all that we do. We hope for a community where everyone is equipped to pursue a life in the Spirit, and we long to see people come to discover a real faith in Jesus.

Real Lives

Renewed lives that we share with one another. We are committed to sharing life's journey together, seeking renewal, forgiving and being forgiven. We practise hospitality in the same way God offers it to us, and because God has a special heart for the poor and marginalised, we work for justice in our lives and in our world.

Real People

Bringing the Good News of the Kingdom of God to everyone. We desire to see Strood West transformed by the news of God's Kingdom. We believe that having fun together is a serious part of following Jesus, and we value authenticity as a mark of God's Kingdom on earth.



6. The Story of Revitalisation

St Francis has moved from a post-Covid recovery phase into a season of growth, confidence and renewed mission.

Through diocesan support, SDF funding, the Estates Evangelist role, clear local leadership and the faithful service of the church family, we have seen a significant shift in culture and confidence.

When the current incumbent arrived in 2023, the church was fragile, both numerically and in terms of governance. Sunday attendance stood at around 21. There was no treasurer in post, and parish systems were underdeveloped. Since then, by God's grace, St Francis has experienced substantial renewal: the Sunday congregation has grown into the mid-70s, with a far healthier demographic of children, young people, young adults and families. The church has become younger, more outward-looking, more confident in its identity, and more intentional in mission and discipleship.

The change has not been cosmetic. It has touched worship, discipleship, building and fabric, governance, local schools, community outreach, leadership development, giving, and the church's confidence in the gospel.

- The Sunday congregation has tripled during the revitalisation period.
- Adults and young people have made commitments to Christ, with baptisms and confirmations giving visible signs of spiritual fruitfulness — including full-immersion adult and youth baptisms alongside our long-standing infant baptism ministry.
- Café Francis and Funky Fridays have become trusted stepping-stone ministries into deeper faith conversations and church life.
- Schools' ministry has expanded into regular partnerships, assemblies, clubs, seasonal services and pastoral connections — reaching around 750 children at Christmas and 400–500 at Easter.
- Children, youth and families are no longer peripheral to St Francis. They are central to the future shape of the church.
- The church building and hall have been significantly renewed for worship and mission, including new flooring, a new kitchen, redecoration, electrical work, lighting and hall and carpark/grounds improvements.

- A stronger leadership culture has developed, with active lay members, ministry leaders and emerging leaders being disciplined and released into service, worship, children's and youth work, hospitality and practical mission.

This next appointment matters because the foundations are now strong. The next priest will not be starting from nothing. They will inherit momentum, relationships, trust, missional credibility and a church that knows it is called to grow younger and to make Christ known in the community.



Full-immersion adult baptism, a growing and joyful part of church life at St Francis.

7. Worship and Discipleship

People need clear, accessible pathways into faith and into mature discipleship. We do not see community engagement as separate from evangelism — it is the front edge of mission.

St Francis identifies closely with the New Wine stream of the Church of England: evangelical-orthodox, charismatic, Spirit-led, Scripture-centred and missionally minded. Worship is contemporary and accessible, with a warm parish-church feel rather than a highly formal or ceremonial tradition. We value Bible teaching, prayer, testimony, evangelism, lay leadership and practical service to the local community, while holding a traditional and orthodox understanding of Christian doctrine, including the Church of England's received teaching on marriage and sexual ethics, with clarity and pastoral grace and would align itself with the Evangelical Alliances Statement of Faith.

Our weekly pattern

Sunday, 10am	Sunday Celebration — the main weekly gathering of the church family. Holy Communion on the second and forth Sundays.
Tuesday, 9am–12pm	Café Francis — community café and key front door into church life.
Tuesday 3pm – 4:15pm	After School Bible Craft/Gardening Club – Elaine Primary School
Wednesday, 10.30am	Bible Study — space for enquirers, new believers and growing disciples.
Wednesday, 6–7pm	SFS Boxing — stepping-stone ministry for young people.
Wednesday, 7pm	Infusion — worship, prayer and deeper discipleship.
Thursday 3pm–4:30pm	After School Bible Craft Club – Bligh Primary School
Friday (term-time)	Funky Fridays — toddler and family ministry.
First Friday of the month	The Sanctuary — Young adult's worshiping community.

Alpha is used intentionally as a pathway for faith exploration, discipleship, baptism and confirmation; and our afterschool clubs are intentional about discipleship.

The next priest will need to value both Sunday worship and the wider ecosystem of midweek mission — preaching the gospel with confidence, guarding biblical truth and theological depth, and helping new people take accessible next steps into the life of Christ and the life of the church.



8. Children, Youth, Schools and Young Adults

God has opened doors among children, young people, schools and families. This is one of the clearest signs of renewed life in the parish — and one of the most important areas for future investment.

We have active and developing relationships with Elaine Primary, Bligh Primary, Cedar Children's Academy and Leigh Academy.

- School assemblies, seasonal services and classroom/curriculum support.
- Crafty Fingers Bible craft clubs at Elaine and Bligh, with scope to develop Cedar.
- Muddy Fingers gardening and creation-care work at Elaine.
- Parent and carer café work, building bridges with families across local schools.
- Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) holiday clubs in partnership with MedwayGo and other local partners.
- SFS Youth and youth discipleship pathways linked to Sunday worship, confirmation and leadership.
- A boxing initiative for young people, creating a structured, relational and missional space for those who may otherwise be disengaged from church or community life.
- The Sanctuary young adults' community, with the aim of becoming a sustainable worshipping community by 2030.

MDP funding is enabling the next phase of this work through Missional Leader capacity for youth and young adults. The next priest will need to line-manage, encourage, integrate and spiritually guide this work so that it remains more than activity — gospel-shaped mission leading to discipleship, leadership and worship.



9. Community Outreach and Partnerships

St Francis is known locally as a warm, practical and reliable community presence. We want our community to experience the love of Christ not as a slogan, but through hospitality, consistency, courage, prayer and service.

- Café Francis, our Tuesday morning community café, offers conversation, friendship, prayerful presence and trusted relationships — a key front door into the life of the church.
- Funky Fridays, our toddler and family ministry, connects with young families and provides a natural invitation into the wider life of the church.
- Seasonal outreach includes a Christmas Market, Christingle, Easter services and clubs, summer clubs, harvest giving and community events.
- Partnerships include local schools, MedwayGo, Paramount Foundation, Medway Council, community police, social prescribers, Community Payback, the Royal British Legion and local foodbank and social-action work.
- Informal but warm ecumenical links with Bread of Life Strood, the Evangelical Free Church in Strood, and New Covenant Church, who use our hall on Sundays.
- Mission outreach beyond the parish includes financial support for educational sponsorship in the developing world, a Church Army Evangelist and funding towards a vicarage in Ghana.

We have learnt that mission in Strood West grows through trust. People respond when the church is present, consistent, joyful, prayerful and genuinely interested in their lives. The next priest will need to be visible in the community, willing to build partnerships, and able to help the church keep making clear invitations to Jesus.



10. Leadership, Governance and Safeguarding

St Francis has become less clergy-dependent and more confident in shared leadership. This is essential for the next phase.

We are developing a culture where people are not simply volunteers filling gaps, but disciples being formed for mission. The church currently has a PCC, churchwardens, a core leadership team, ministry leaders and a growing number of active volunteers. Lay ministry, children's and youth ministry, schools work, hospitality, café ministry, worship support and pastoral care are all being strengthened through local leadership. One of our Licensed Lay Ministers has also been released in a missional capacity to support other churches across the Diocese of Rochester during vacancies and interregnums.

The next priest will need to continue this leadership culture by:

- identifying and discipling emerging leaders;
- building healthy teams rather than creating dependence on one personality;
- developing a clear leadership pathway for service, growth and sending;
- supporting PCC members and churchwardens with confident governance;
- holding together mission, pastoral care, finance, safeguarding and buildings in a sustainable way;
- working well with diocesan officers, the deanery and local clergy colleagues.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is part of our culture of care and safety at St Francis, Strood. Our PCC has adopted and implemented the House of Bishops' safeguarding policy "Promoting a Safe Church" and the Parish Safeguarding Handbook, and the church has a dedicated Parish Safeguarding Officer. All leaders, staff and volunteers are required to complete Church of England safeguarding training appropriate to their role, alongside Domestic Abuse Awareness training for those in licensed, pastoral, safeguarding and PCC roles.

As the church has grown, we have worked to keep safeguarding practice current — recruiting safely, ensuring at least two people support any activity involving children, young people or vulnerable adults, and renewing DBS checks and training in a timely way as new families and volunteers join us. St Francis has signed up to the Diocese's Parish Safeguarding Dashboard, an online tool that helps the parish and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team track and maintain safeguarding administration. There are no current

safeguarding matters outstanding, and the noticeboard at the back of church displays clear contact details for reporting any concern.



**EASTER AT
ST FRANCIS**

11. Buildings, Resources and Finance

A distinctive, unlisted modern church building, a separate hall and office space — renewed in recent years as tools for mission.

St Francis has a distinctive modern church building (opened 1962; unlisted), a separate hall and church office space. The main church building has a flexible interior and can seat over 200, giving significant scope for worship, school services, community events and mission.

Over recent years the church and hall have been renewed as tools for mission, including a new kitchen, renewed flooring, redecoration, improved audio-visual provision, electrical work, refreshed worship space, hall improvements, sound treatment and an extended car park. Grants, trusts and local generosity have helped make this possible (c. £50k investment).

There remain building challenges and opportunities. The church has an ageing copper roof with leak issues, a main entrance door and windows needing attention, and a wider need to continue thinking about net-zero, accessibility, warmth, security and long-term stewardship of the site. Several faculty applications are in progress, including a new baptistry. These are not distractions from mission — they are part of making the buildings serve the gospel and the community well.

Quinquennial Inspection

Following the 2025 quinquennial inspection, St Francis has a clear programme for ongoing maintenance, supported by an established Church Repair Fund and planned regular contributions.

The renewed church hall, a key space for community ministry and mission.



LIFE IN ALL IT'S FULLNES



Housing

The parish's vicarage is currently let to tenants. Housing for the incoming Priest-in-Charge will be provided by the Diocese of Rochester; details will be confirmed with shortlisted candidates.

The Mission Development Parish (MDP) Project

St Francis is one of the Diocese of Rochester's Mission Development Parishes. Through the MDP project, the Diocese has committed significant funding to St Francis, including five years of funding for the Priest-in-Charge post, enabling the parish to plan and build for the long term with confidence rather than year-to-year uncertainty.

Alongside the Priest-in-Charge, MDP funding supports two part-time posts dedicated to youth and young adult ministry, working as a shared delivery team:

- **Missional Leader – Youth & Young Adults (Role A):** a strategic leadership and oversight post shaping the vision and discipleship pathway for SFS Youth and The Sanctuary, developing schools and community partnerships, and line-managing the Missional Minister post below. This post is currently being advertised, with the hope that it will be filled around the time this profile is released.
- **Missional Minister – Youth & Young Adults (Role B):** a front-line delivery post focused on the weekly running of SFS Youth and The Sanctuary, relationship-building with young people, and supporting schools and outreach work including our boxing initiative. This post has recently been filled.

The next priest will line-manage this small staff team, providing spiritual oversight and direction while trusting them to lead day-to-day delivery – freeing the priest to focus on the whole-church vision, preaching, pastoral leadership and strategic direction.



Finance

St Francis's finances are modest but healthy, and increasingly well governed. The parish's accounts for the year ending 31 December 2025 were examined by an Independent Examiner, whose report confirmed no matters of concern.

Total receipts (2025)	£84,274
Total payments (2025)	£77,641
Opening balance (1 Jan 2025)	£49,377
Closing balance (31 Dec 2025)	£56,010
General Fund (closing balance)	£24,617
Restricted & Designated Funds (closing balance)	£31,393

The parish has seen significant growth in giving, including a 72% increase in regular giving after the November 2024 stewardship campaign, and reserves have strengthened considerably from the position at the start of the current incumbency. In 2025, St Francis also received over £500,000 in grant funding for various areas of church life and mission, including the church floor and the next five years of MDP-funded ministry. External funding, grant applications, hall income and wise stewardship all remain important as the parish plans around parish share, staffing and the long-term sustainability of the MDP work.

The next priest does not need to be a buildings expert or finance officer, but they do need to be strategically alert, comfortable with grant-funded mission, able to work well with the treasurer and wardens, and committed to ensuring resources serve mission rather than drain it.

Digital Systems and Administration

St Francis operates primarily through modern digital systems rather than paper-based administration. The parish uses Microsoft 365 for email, documents, spreadsheets and day-to-day administration, alongside iKnowChurch as its secure online church database and management system. Both platforms can be accessed from any computer using the appropriate login details, giving the incoming priest a well-established and accessible administrative foundation from the outset.

Day-to-day administration is supported by a part-time employed Parish Administrator, based in our newly refurbished parish office. The Administrator provides a welcoming and professional first point of contact for members of the church and the wider community.



12. About You

The descriptions that follow have been arrived at carefully and prayerfully. It is unlikely that you fulfil them all, but with God's help you are on a journey towards them. Above all, we seek the person whom the Lord is calling to join us.

Your Personal Faith

You have a deep understanding and experience of God's love for you. Your public ministry is an overflow of your personal relationship with the Lord. You love Jesus, His Church, and His people.

You love God's presence and seek encounters with the Holy Spirit. You love God's word and devote time to personal prayer, intercession and ongoing growth in your relationship with the Lord. You understand the importance of sabbath and rest.

You uphold an evangelical, orthodox and Biblical perspective on Christian faith, including in matters of sexuality and marriage, and are aligned with the Evangelical Alliance Statement of Faith. You welcome and engage graciously with those whose perspectives differ from yours. You will have a sense of St Francis's story and share our spiritual DNA — evangelical, charismatic, missional and wholeheartedly dependent on the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Your Leadership and Ministry

You are a proven leader with a track record of growing churches numerically and spiritually, experienced in building a culture of identifying, growing and releasing leaders. You trust and empower your team, and you are unafraid of leading from the front and from behind the scenes.

You are missionally entrepreneurial — able to notice Holy Spirit opportunities, start things wisely, stop things when needed, and turn ideas into sustainable ministry. You are a vision-caster who can name where God is leading, communicate it simply, and gather people around it.

You are well connected to networks such as New Wine or the Evangelical Alliance, and you draw on that wider fellowship for encouragement, resourcing and accountability. You will foster healthy relationships with key leaders within St Francis, other local churches, diocesan staff and the wider community.

Your Pastoral and Practical Gifts

You are a pastor with warmth, humour, courage and emotional maturity. You are comfortable with estate and parish ministry, deprivation, complexity, pastoral messiness and slow relational trust-building.

You are able to manage staff, lay leadership and members, safeguarding, PCC governance, finance, grants and strategic partnerships without losing spiritual focus. You are committed to children, youth, schools, families and young adults as central to the next chapter of St Francis.

You are willing to collaborate with diocesan strategy while keeping local mission rooted in prayer and the needs of Strood West.

“...to equip the saints for the work of ministry...”

Ephesians 4:12



13. Priorities for the Next Five Years

The next five years are about consolidation, growth, leadership and sending. St Francis does not need a new vision so much as a priest who can strengthen the existing vision, sharpen the pathway, and help the church keep taking faithful next steps.

- Deepen discipleship so that new believers and long-standing members grow in biblical confidence, prayer, holiness, service and witness.
- Embed the MDP youth and young adults work, ensuring schools, SFS Youth, boxing, The Sanctuary and young leadership are connected to the whole church.
- Strengthen the Sunday worshipping community so that growth in outreach is matched by depth in worship, preaching, prayer and pastoral care.
- Develop and implement a simple leadership pathway, helping people move from attending, to belonging, to serving, to leading, to being sent.
- Continue to grow Café Francis, Funky Fridays and community ministries as stepping stones into faith.
- Strengthen school partnerships and the pathway from school contact to church community.
- Complete and prioritise key building projects that unlock mission, safety, warmth and welcome.
- Grow financial resilience through giving, grants, hall income and good governance.
- Prepare St Francis to bless neighbouring churches and wider mission through trained and sent leaders.

Our hope is that by 2030 St Francis will be a sustainable, growing, younger, more confident church with strong lay leadership, clear discipleship pathways, trusted community presence and a growing capacity to strengthen the wider Church.



14. What We Offer

We know that ministry is costly, and we do not expect our next priest to be perfect. We do, however, want to support them well and work with them faithfully.

We offer...

- A church family that has already embraced change and is hungry for growth;
- A clear vision that has been tested in practice and has borne fruit;
- A renewed and increasingly useful church site with hall and office space, and diocesan housing for the priest-in-charge;
- A supportive PCC, churchwardens, lay leaders and ministry teams;
- A strong platform of community trust and partnership;
- Significant diocesan investment through SDF and MDP funding;
- Growing children, youth, schools and young adult's ministry;
- A parish with real need, real openness and real opportunity;
- Permission to say no to some things in order to say yes to the mission that matters most;
- Encouragement to take rest, retreat, annual leave and family life seriously.
- All legitimate working expenses paid in full, and active support for continuing ministerial development, training, reading weeks and retreat.

There are no expectations placed upon the priest's spouse or family. We want the next priest and their household to flourish, not simply function.



14. Final Invitation

St Francis is not the same church it was in 2022. We are deeply thankful for what God has done, and we are expectant about what He will do next.

We have seen people come to Christ, young people step forward, discipleship that costs, families connect, leaders emerge, trained and released, buildings renewed, schools open their doors, and confidence grow across the church in the proclamation of the gospel.

There is still much to do. The parish still carries real need. The building still needs investment. The finances require wisdom. Leadership must be multiplied. Discipleship must deepen. Mission must continue and Jesus must be made known in our community.

We can testify that God is at work among us, and we are confident that “He who began a good work” in St Francis will carry it on to completion (Philippians 1:6). We are praying for a priest who will walk with us in courage, humility and faith—not simply as a leader, but as brother or sister in Christ and a true partner in the gospel (Philippians 1:5).

Could God be calling you to help St Francis make Christ known in Strood West?

Contact

Any queries, or to arrange an informal discussion with the Archdeacon of Rochester about this vacancy, please contact Fiona Porter by emailing fiona.porter@rochester.anglican.org

St Francis Church, Galahad Avenue, Strood, Rochester, Kent, ME2 2YS

Website: www.stfrancisstrood.org

Facebook: facebook.com/SFSTROOD

Instagram: instagram.com/sfstrood