

ST BARNABAS CHURCH MITCHAM



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Welcome from the PCC and Churchwardens

- Welcome, and thank you for your interest in the parish of St Barnabas Mitcham.
- St Barnabas is a warm and welcoming parish rooted in liberal Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England. For over a century the church has been a place where people gather for worship, prayer, and fellowship, and where the wider community finds support and hospitality.
- We are an inclusive friendly and faithful congregation who care deeply about our church and our community. We value reverent and prayerful worship centred on the Eucharist, and we seek to live out the Gospel through service and outreach. As we look to the future, we have a strong desire to grow our congregation, particularly by welcoming and nurturing more families with children, and developing ways for them to feel fully included in the life and worship of the church.
- Our parish enjoys strong connections with the local community and other churches. While there are no schools within the parish, a nearby primary school holds its nativity play in our church, which is a valued and joyful connection. We are proud of our traditions but also recognise the opportunities for growth and development as we look to the future.
- We are now prayerfully seeking a new Vicar who will guide us in the next stage of our journey. We hope to welcome a priest who will inspire us spiritually, encourage growth, and help us deepen our mission within Mitcham.
- We hope this profile gives a sense of who we are and what we value, and we look forward to meeting those who feel called to explore ministry with us.

The Parish and Local Area

- St Barnabas is located in Mitcham in the London Borough of Merton, south-west London. The parish has a population of 9,717.
- It serves a diverse urban community in North Mitcham, including parts of Graveney, Figges Marsh and Lavender Fields. The area is residential, with no defined town centre.
- Mitcham is well connected to central London and includes local shops, schools, parks and community facilities. Nearby green spaces include Figges Marsh and Mitcham Common.
- The parish ranks 145 out of 300, indicating an averagely wealthy area.
- St Barnabas seeks to serve the community through prayer, welcome and practical support



1. History

- St Barnabas Church Mitcham began as a small congregation meeting in a simple “Tin Church,” which quickly became a spiritual home for a growing community.
- A church hall was built in 1908, with services moving there in 1909. The present church was founded in 1913 and consecrated in 1914, and the parish soon became fully independent.
- Today, St Barnabas combines this heritage with a clear outward focus. Rooted in the Church of England’s Catholic tradition, it centres on worship, prayer and sacramental life.
- The parish is active in the wider community, including involvement with London Citizens, regular outreach through leafleting and banners, and hosting coffee mornings to welcome local people.
- St Barnabas seeks to build on its foundations with a forward-looking vision, offering opportunities to grow its mission, deepen community engagement and serve the needs of a diverse urban parish

2. Buildings

- St Barnabas is a beautiful Grade II listed Gothic-style church, combining historic character with significant investment in modern facilities. The building is well maintained and in good structural condition, following a major roof refurbishment in 2019.
- The interior includes a Lady Chapel featuring a painting by Henry Ossawa Tanner, *The Annunciation* (1898), which is an important focus for prayer and reflection. Fourteen Stations of the Cross line the nave and are used particularly during Good Friday devotions. A maintained pipe organ supports worship and is regularly tuned.
- Alongside worship, the church is also a valued community space, hosting meetings, events, and civic activities. It serves as a local polling station during elections, reflecting its role in the wider life of the area.
- **Facilities**
- The church accommodates approximately 150–200 people and benefits from ongoing investment, including:

Step-free access and ramp to the altar | Accessible toilets | Hearing loop system | Modern heating and lighting | Integrated sound system | Contactless donation facility | Small kitchenette | Dedicated children's area | Flexible seating arrangements

The Vicarage

- The vicarage is a spacious, well-maintained family home situated close to the church, offering generous and versatile accommodation. Upstairs, there are four bedrooms, a wet room, and a family bathroom. On the ground floor, the house includes two reception rooms—one with an open fireplace and the other with a wood-burning stove—a study, kitchen, and utility room. The property opens onto a patio and benefits from a large garden with mature trees and shrubs. Additional features include an outside toilet, a shed, rear parking, and side and rear access. Overall, the property provides a comfortable and welcoming environment, well suited to family life, hospitality, and parish ministry.



3. Worship and Liturgy

Worship at St Barnabas is rooted in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England, with the Eucharist at the centre of parish life. The principal Sunday service is at 11:00 am, preceded by the church bell.

Services include organ music, choir, and frequent use of incense. Congregation numbers have risen to around 60 in recent years, recovering from a post-COVID low of 50 (down from 85 in 2019). The parish currently has a few children attending but is eager to increase the number of younger members.

A midweek Eucharist is celebrated in the Lady Chapel using Common Worship liturgy. The parish observes the full church year, including major feasts and Holy Week.



4. Congregation

- St Barnabas Church Mitcham is home to an inclusive friendly, welcoming, and committed congregation that reflects the rich diversity of the surrounding parish in the London Borough of Merton. The church family brings together people of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds, creating a warm and inclusive atmosphere in which newcomers quickly feel at home.
- There is a strong and genuine sense of fellowship at St Barnabas. Members value their shared life together and play an active role in sustaining the church's worship and witness. Many contribute generously through volunteering, fundraising, and supporting a range of outreach initiatives that serve the wider community. This is a congregation that is not only welcoming but also willing—ready to offer time, energy, and gifts in support of the church's mission.
- The life of the church is enriched by a blend of long-standing members, some of whom have worshipped at St Barnabas for many years, and newer members who bring fresh perspectives and energy. This combination provides both stability and openness to growth, offering a strong foundation on which a new vicar can build.
- Above all, there is a deep sense of belonging and community. Visitors and newcomers are warmly received, and there is a clear desire to continue growing both spiritually and numerically. For a new vicar, this is a parish where relationships matter, where lay involvement is strong, and where there is real potential to nurture faith, deepen discipleship, and develop new opportunities for mission and engagement.



5. Church Life and Activities

- Music plays an active role in worship and parish life. It supports the principal Sunday Eucharist and major festivals through congregational hymn singing and choral settings. Music is also used to enhance seasonal services and special occasions, helping to create a reflective and welcoming atmosphere.



- **Choir**
The choir supports the principal Sunday Eucharist and major festivals, leading choral music and congregational singing. There is enthusiasm to expand the choir and further develop the musical life of the parish.



Mothers' Union

The St. Barnabas Mothers' Union branch runs key annual church activities, a free monthly community café, and themed workshops. They support children and major parish events, engage in social action such as the 16 Days campaign, and plan to grow membership and expand outreach to families and young people



Church Groups

Bible Study

- Weekly Bible study sessions explore scripture and theological themes including the Nicene Creed, iconography, and the Acts of the Apostles.

Fellowship and Community Outreach

- St Barnabas is committed to serving the local community.

Tea and Talk

- A weekly gathering providing companionship and conversation.

Be Well Hub

- Launching in 2026 in partnership with **South London Listens** and **Merton Citizens**, offering listening support and mental-health signposting.

Bereavement Group

- The Cypress Bereavement Group at St. Barnabas Church offered a free monthly drop in space for people experiencing loss to share stories over refreshments. As a secular peer support group, it provided community connection, comfort, and understanding. Meetings paused during the pandemic but are hoped to resume soon.

Christian Care Merton

- St Barnabas supports **Christian Care Merton** through Harvest food donations and Christmas toy collections for families experiencing hardship.

Community Events

Annual events include:

- Summer Fair
- Harvest celebrations
- Fireworks Night fundraiser
- Christmas Fair
- Parish seaside Away Day



7. External Partnerships

- St Barnabas is part of the Mitcham group of parishes and works closely with Churches Together in Mitcham, collaborating with Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Baptist and Free Church congregations.
- Joint life with other churches includes ecumenical worship and shared activities such as:
- A Christmas Day lunch for those who would otherwise be alone
- Good Friday and Christmas open-air services
- Shared Lent courses
- Joint Patronal and Confirmation services
- Regular prayer gatherings between clergy
- Joined-up PCC training
- We also supports Christian Care initiatives and the work of United Society Partners in the Gospel and The Children's Society.
- The Incumbents of the four Churches. St Marks Church, St Olave Church, St Peter & Paul-(Parish Church) and St Barnabas Church, meet once a month for Midday Prayer followed by lunch. They, also support the Patronal Festivals of each Church.

8. Civic Involvement

- The church maintains strong links with civic leaders and community organisations.
- Activities include:
 - Remembrance services at the Merton Civic Centre
 - Hosting a polling station during elections
 - Engagement with local councillors and MP
 - Liaison with local police



9. Finance

- The parish's finances are not sustainable in their current form, and reserves are expected to be exhausted within a few years if trends continue. The PCC is working urgently to reduce reliance on church funds and build a more sustainable financial future.
- Income is mainly from congregational giving, supported by occasional fundraising and contactless donations. The Diocese provides valued guidance and support, but day-to-day ministry depends primarily on local generosity. We are seeking a priest who can help lead with clarity, realism, and pastoral sensitivity as we address these challenges.
- **Current position**
- Income is largely from regular giving and modest fundraising
- Core costs are manageable but leave limited flexibility
- Reserves are being used to meet ongoing commitments
- Parish activities rely heavily on volunteers and limited funding
- **Priorities**
- **1. Strengthen congregational giving**
Encourage regular, planned giving through clearer communication, increased use of standing orders and Gift Aid, and focused appeals.
- **2. Develop additional income streams**
Explore modest opportunities such as room hire, small community initiatives, and targeted grants in partnership with local organisations.
- We seek a priest who can combine pastoral care with practical leadership, helping St Barnabas move towards a more sustainable and confident financial future.

10. PCC

- The Parochial Church Council works collaboratively, and responds well to gentle leadership in supporting worship, mission, and governance. Members have been trained as charity trustees and help guide the parish's direction and priorities for the future.
- The parish also offers one day a week of administrative support to assist with day-to-day organisation and governance.



11. Safeguarding

- At St Barnabas we are committed to ensuring that our church is a safe, welcoming, and caring place for everyone. We have an appointed Safeguarding Officer who is the first point of contact for any safeguarding concerns and ensures that all issues are handled sensitively and in line with national and church safeguarding policies.
- The PCC are DBS checked and both PCC members and churchwardens are trained in safeguarding, helping to ensure good practice across the life of the parish.
- We encourage all members of St Barnabas to remain vigilant, to care for one another, and to speak up if they have any concerns.

Congregation Engagement

On April 12, the Congregation met to consider and confirm what they wanted as key priorities for our church and what attributes they would like for the new Vicar



12. Congregation's Key Areas of Development

- **1. Youth, Children and Families**

- A clear priority is growth among younger generations. We want to develop regular provision—Junior Church, youth activities, school links, and social events—so that children and families can belong and thrive.

- **2. Community Connection and Outreach**

- We want a stronger visible presence in the community, with deeper links to schools, civic leaders, and local groups, and renewed connection with those who have historic ties to the church.

- **3. Communication and Digital Presence**

- Improved communication is essential. Priorities include a clear website, social media, streaming, accessible information, and simple digital giving.

- **4. Finance and Sustainability**

- There is a shared recognition of the need for financial stability. The congregation supports transparent, project-based fundraising and clearer communication around needs and giving.

- **5. Worship and Music**

- Worship is central to our life as a parish. We value our Anglo-Catholic tradition, particularly sung services and the choir, alongside openness to appropriate flexibility.

- **6. Buildings and Facilities**

- The church building is highly valued as a place of worship and welcome. Its upkeep is seen as part of our mission and hospitality.

13. Congregation's Top 6 Attributes for Our Next Vicar

- **1. Visionary Growth Leader**

Someone who can set a clear and realistic vision for growth, particularly in reaching younger generations, and help the parish respond confidently to declining attendance and long-term sustainability.

- **2. Engaging and Relatable Preacher**

A clear communicator whose sermons are rooted in everyday life—practical, memorable, and spiritually nourishing, offering encouragement and challenge that lasts beyond Sunday.

- **3. Warm, Approachable Pastoral Presence**

A Vicar who is visible, accessible, and genuinely present in parish life, offering care across all ages, including the elderly, housebound, families, and newcomers.

- **4. Enabler of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry**

Someone committed to developing structured, consistent ministry with children, young people, and families, and who can help the church become a place where younger generations truly belong.

- **5. Community Connector and Relationship Builder**

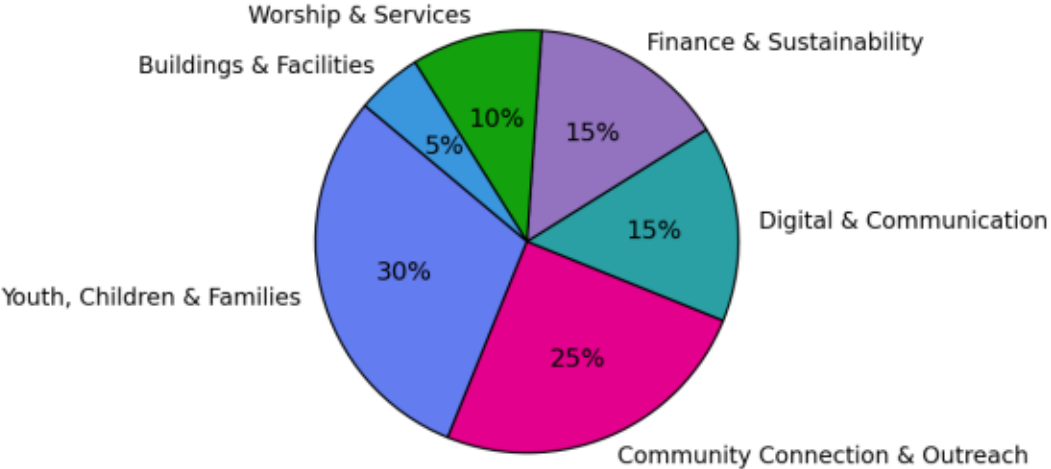
A leader who strengthens ties with schools, civic leaders, and the wider community, and helps the church become more outward-facing and visibly engaged beyond Sunday worship.

- **6. Confident Organisational and Stewardship Leader**

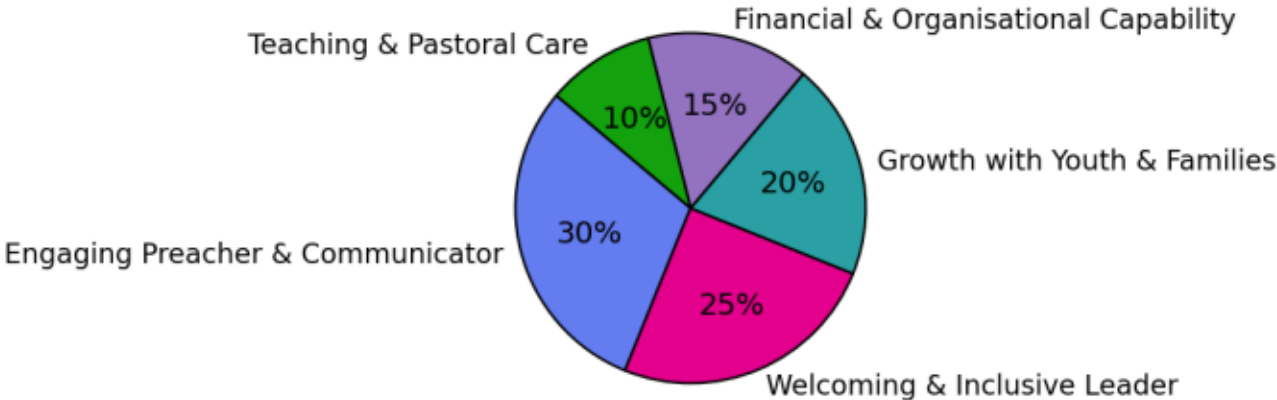
Someone comfortable with the practical realities of parish life—supporting financial sustainability, encouraging transparent stewardship, developing communication, and embracing digital tools as part of mission.

What the congregation said

Church Development Priorities



Qualities Sought in a New Vicar



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