

The Bexley Team Ministry

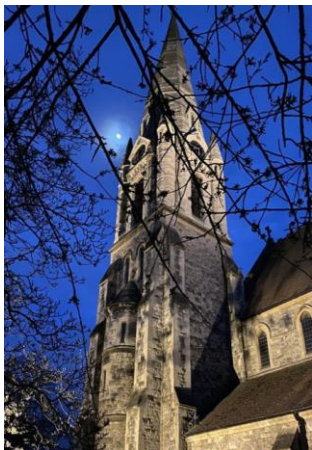
The Parish Churches of:



St Barnabas, Joydens Wood



St James, North Cray



St John the Evangelist, Bexley



St Mary the Virgin, Bexley

Bexley Team Ministry



Introduction

The Bexley Team consists of four churches, each within its own parish and each with its own distinctive style, traditions and engagement with the community it serves. Within the Team, this was the distribution of clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) up to August 2022, when the Team Rector retired:-

St Barnabas	One full-time Team Rector
St James	Team Rector shared with St Barnabas One Lay Reader (now PTO)
St John the Evangelist	One full time Team Vicar One LLM (now PTO)
St Mary the Virgin	One half-time Team Vicar (soon to retire) One LLM (soon to retire) One Licensed Funeral Minister.
Across the Team	One half-time, non-stipendiary Associate Priest One Curate, soon to finish his curacy.

The Team Rector had oversight of the whole team with particular responsibility for St Barnabas and St James. The team clergy work well together, but there is scope for building stronger relationships and greater cooperation between the churches, while maintaining their individuality. This is a role that would suit an experienced priest, who enjoys building relationships and working collaboratively with a team that includes both clergy and laity.

There is a prevalence of older people in the congregations of all four churches and, therefore, a need to encourage more young people into the churches and to inspire existing younger members to take a stronger role in both church ministry, community projects and outreach.

What We Seek in a Team Rector

We seek a new Team Rector who is:

- Someone with a strong, passionate faith and prayer life who will lead and support each of our Church Families as they grow in faith and who will nurture and encourage us.
- Someone who is caring and supportive of people, especially in a time of change in our individual churches
- Someone with a broad vision, who respects our traditions and styles of worship but at the same time embraces fresh thinking to promote church growth and enhanced engagement with the wider community.
- Someone who recognises potential in people and can both inspire and equip them to use and develop their individual gifts.
- A good communicator with an inclusive mindset, approachable and down to earth, with pastoral sensitivity, empathy and compassion. Someone who can manage the implementation of strategic decisions to the benefit of both our individual churches and the Bexley Team.

Thank you for taking the time to read our Parish Profiles, which aim to provide an insight into who we are and the direction in which God is taking us.

We hope it gives a true reflection of our parishes and what we are looking for from our new Team Rector, and that it helps you to discern whether this is the next role God is calling you to fulfil.

St Barnabas, Joydens Wood



History of the Parish

Joydens Wood is a pleasant residential area, with extensive woodland, that started to expand in the 1950s. Formal worship in the area began when St. Mary's erected a church centre in 1971, on a site ceded by Bexley Hospital, and St Michael's Wilmington established a worshipping community in the local community centre.

In 1979 it was agreed to merge the two worshipping communities, using the St Mary's church centre and the church became a conventional district within St Mary's parish. It was given the name St Barnabas to connect with an earlier mission church just outside the parish boundary.

In 1993 St Barnabas became an independent parish. Later, in 2015 we were joined with St James, North Cray, as a benefice and in 2018 the Bexley Team ministry was formed.

The Church Buildings

The church building is a well-designed multi-purpose building, including a hall, kitchen, toilets (including an accessible one), vestries, storage rooms and crèche. It is set up on Sundays for worship and the sanctuary is screened off during the week, when the building is used as a children's nursery or hired out to other organisations.

There is an electric organ and digital piano for musical accompaniment, and an electrically operated screen with mounted digital projector with input from laptops for hymn words etc. Behind the main building is a prefabricated building, previously used for Children's Church (King's Kids), Mother's Union, PCC etc. It is due to be replaced by a new extension to the main building which will provide a meeting room, some storage, mini kitchen and accessible toilet. We hope that this will be used more extensively for mid-week church and community activities. We have so far collected, through fund raising events and donations, more than £72,000 towards its build.

The church is set in pleasant natural surroundings, with a large grassed area and a large car park. There is a memorial garden where burial of ashes services are held and a memorial book within the church for inclusion in intercessory prayer.

The main building is in good condition and the recent quinquennial inspection has not revealed any major problems.

The vicarage, with attached garage, is on the same site. It is a 1970's house with 4 good sized bedrooms, family bathroom, lounge, dining room, kitchen, downstairs cloakroom and study. There is gas central heating, a log fire in the lounge, and it is double glazed. The medium size garden is mainly laid to lawn.

Licensed Ministers Working in the Parish

Following the Team Rector's retirement, church services and the general running of the parish have been handled by the curate (whose curacy is expected to be signed off in March 2023), assisted by the non-stipendiary priest.

Our Tradition and Style of Worship

Our style of worship is mainly liturgical; we have our own printed Holy Communion booklet which mostly follows Common Worship. We sing both traditional and contemporary hymns/songs, and also sing some parts of the liturgy. We have 2 talented musicians, one piano and organ, the other guitar. There is no choir (except for Christmas services) but we are enthusiastic singers and music makes an important spiritual contribution to our worship. We follow the lectionary readings, which are read by members of the congregation, who also prepare the intercessions. The monthly family service is more relaxed and has more interaction with the congregation, especially the children.

We are a friendly, inclusive church and many visitors comment on the warmth of welcome they receive both before and after the service, when visitors are encouraged to stay for refreshments.

Weekly Services Arrangements

There is a Holy Communion service each Sunday at 10.45am. On the second Sunday in each month there is a more relaxed family service, which in October, November, December, February and March is usually a parade service, attended by some of the local uniformed organisations, and therefore not a Holy Communion service.

There are 68 people on the electoral roll and the average attendance on a Sunday is about 30-35.

Since Covid Lockdown, King's Kids has not taken place during normal Sunday worship. However, the afternoon family service on the fourth Sunday of each month (Sundays@4) has continued to run. It is an informal service involving craft, games, refreshments and worship.

We have had services with prayer for healing and there is a prayer chain to support people with illness or difficulties. Home communion is taken to communicants who are unable to attend church and we have regular Baptisms and Funerals at the church.

The church family is organised into groups to give support to each other – in winter months called 'snow buddies' and in Covid times 'bug buddies'. The pastoral assistant organises home visits to the house-bound and the sick.

There are three house groups, meeting either fortnightly or monthly, one of which is an on-line group. There is a monthly 'Julian' prayer group. The men's breakfast group meets bi-monthly. There is a monthly meeting of Mothers Union; this is a joint group with St Mary's and the St Barnabas Ladies Club also meets monthly .

Finances

St Barnabas is in a stable financial state due to giving by church members and some legacies. Hiring out the church building contributes considerably to our income. Gift Aid and Easy Fund raising for on line purchases are encouraged. We employ a Hall Lettings Manager and a cleaning company.

Significant Outreach Areas in the Parish

There are three schools in the area; one infant, one junior and one primary school. We have good links with all of them and the curate takes assemblies there on a regular basis.

We also have links with Rainbows, Brownies, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, who join in parade services and also participate in the annual Community Fun Day. We view the Memorial Service, the Service of Remembrance, Christmas services and especially the Fun Day as important events that enable us to reach out to the local community.

We are part of the Churches Together in Old Bexley, which, as well as the churches in the Bexley Team, includes the URC, St John Fischer RC Church and two Baptist churches. We organise events together such as a joint lent course, carol singing and prayer walk in Bexley and some joint services such as the service for Christian Unity. We have close connections to charities i.e. Food Bank, Street Pastors and Home Start.

Our Mission View

Our Mission statement is "Grounded in Love, Rooted in the Community". Lockdown caused a lot of church activities, and in particular outreach initiatives, to cease and we want to see our outreach to the community grow again.

We have always been an inclusive church and will continue to welcome all, whatever their views, age, gender, race or sexuality. We would like to see more of the community coming to faith, wanting to be involved with the church and it becoming an important part of their lives.

We would like to find ways of worship that appeal to a wider range of the community. The provision for children and youth in this area is very much laid on our hearts. We would like to deepen the prayer life of our church and provide more opportunities for our congregation to share their faith and grow closer together.



Remembrance Day 2021

St James, North Cray



History of the Parish

The current building dates from 1852 when the church was last enlarged and rebuilt. The chancel was further enlarged in 1870 in memory of the Western Wood family and suffered damage from enemy action in WWII, which resulted in the replacing of the main stained-glass window at the east end of the church, along with those in the side chapels. The churchyard surrounding the church was closed by Order in Council in May 2000 and is now maintained by Bexley London Borough. The extended churchyard in Parsonage Lane (covering approx 2.5 acres) remains open for burials and interment of ashes.

The Church Buildings

Our small yet well presented church is a Grade II stone faced listed Victorian building, situated in a churchyard ringed by ancient trees within a conservation area beside the River Cray. Although the building itself is Victorian, many much older features have been transferred or incorporated into the fabric, giving the impression of a much older building. The church benefits from 3 Bells (refurbished and hung for dead ringing in 1999), electric heating and a traditional pipe organ. There is also an electronic Clavinova and a sound reinforcement system with an induction loop. The system provides radio mics and provision for various other inputs.

Major work is required to repair the spire and rewire the building, see finances for details.

A second Grade II listed building referred to as The Bothy was refurbished in the late 1990's to function as a Church hall with kitchen, toilets, gas central heating, garden area. The Bothy is available for hire but is currently underutilised in this respect.

Both buildings are wheelchair accessible.

Licensed Ministers Working in the Parish

The Church is currently served on a week by week basis by an Associate Priest, a Curate and a licensed Reader. Access to other licensed lay ministers and Clergy within the wider team, including the Scout Chaplain who has permission to preach and lead at St James.

Our Tradition and Style of Worship

St James can be described as broadly middle of the road, catholic liberal, in tradition. While we aspire to be friendly and welcoming, we are a fellowship that is content to allow each person to worship in their own way. It is a place where people's lifestyle and choices are a private matter. There are 68 people on the electoral roll

We are a congregation who enjoys traditional liturgical and sacramental worship but happily embrace our monthly all age worship services and seasonal services of the word. We love to sing and regret the loss of our former choir and organist, meaning that at present hymns are accompanied by CD.

Prior to COVID a regular musician played at the service both traditional and modern music (yet to be reinstated). Our music group will return to all age worship in 2023.

Weekly services arrangements:

Weekly Sunday Eucharist (9.30am) is replaced by all age worship (without communion) on the 2nd Sunday (also 9.30am), often attended by uniformed groups.

Midweek communion (10am) rotates amongst churches in the team, with St James hosting the 5th Weds.

Forest Church (3pm) meets once a month in the churchyard led by our curate and has a strong following from families across the team.

Finances

With a small but committed core congregation the church struggles to meet its financial commitments to the Diocese.

Money at bank: circa £23k

Church repair fund: circa £23k

Bothy repair fund: circa £9k

The Building Committee prepared a report in 2019 identifying essential works valued at £230,000 (incl VAT @ 2019 prices). Since then, it has become apparent that the nave roof tiling will also need replacing.

The main priority is repairs to the Spire for which we have raised approximately £3,800 of the £40k required.

The PCC has continued to carry out most urgent day to day repairs with a view to utilising scarce church funds as matched funding for a series of grant aided projects. A team of suitably skilled individuals is required to manage and deliver the same.

Significant outreach areas in parish:

There are no longer any schools, hospitals, GPs, pharmacies, or nursing homes in the parish.

All age worship enables engagement with local voluntary groups, (Guides, Scouts, Royal British Legion and Ratepayers Association). Forest Church is popular with young families. We host an annual Memorial Service and provide a Christmas Prayer Tree in the Community Centre.

Our monthly parish magazine moved on-line in recent years and is published on our website.

We support Bexley Women's Refuge with our Christmas Toy Service and our Harvest gifts go to the local food bank.

Hiring the Bothy provides opportunity to build new relationships, our primary hirer is the Yoga group which meets 4 times a week, it is also used for local elections, children's parties and quiet/away days.

Our Mission View

The church and its Vicar need to be more visible, to develop links with areas on the periphery of the parish. It is notable that the 'council estate' formerly designated as an Urban Priority Area, is the 7th most deprived area out of 90 areas within the Bexley Borough (as collated in the 2019 indices of multiple deprivation). There is also a high level of single parent families with children. We need to develop ways of taking the church to these areas of need and/or make the church more accessible to the broader community.

St. John the Evangelist, Bexley



@stjohnsbexley



/stjohnsbexley

www.stjohnsbexley.org.uk



History of the Parish

A proprietary chapel of St Mary the Virgin, St. John the Evangelist was built for the increasing population from new housing to the west of Bexley Village. It was consecrated in 1882.

Further housing development led to St. John's becoming an independent parish in 1936, with a daughter church of St. James, Blendon. St. James became independent in 1990 and some of St. John's parish was ceded to it. History has therefore placed St. John's at the Eastern parish boundary and more than a third of parishioners live closer to another Anglican church.

However, with good public and much private transport, about half the congregation are non-resident.

Bexley Team Ministry (St. John the Evangelist and St. Mary the Virgin) was formed in 2012 and was expanded in 2018 to include St. Barnabas, Joydens Wood and St. James, North Cray.



The Church Buildings:

The Victorian Gothic Revival style church, (grade II listed), has a painted apsidal chancel and stained-glass windows.

The East windows – call of the disciples, Gethsemane, crucifixion, resurrection and draught of fishes, like the Eucharist held beneath them begin with gathering in - a call to follow, and through body and blood a dying to sin and rising to new life, ending with sending out to fish for people, thus the journey of faith is always before the people.

The communion table is raised and set far back; whilst the high tie beam nave roof gives a strong vertical dimension thus imparting a sense of transcendence. (This is balanced by word and sermon often speaking of immanence.)

Originally with pews throughout, side pews have been removed to give space for a children's corner, Lady Chapel, an area for children's craft activities and seating for post-service refreshments. With chairs replacing the side pews the church can accommodate c350 people making it attractive for weddings and local school services.

We aim to be a sacred and spiritual space and are open daily for prayer, reflection and private commemoration throughout daylight hours. The church is often used by people not from the congregation.

The Memorial Garden, for the burial of ashes, abuts the North wall.

Church Hall

The hall, completed in 1998, is much used by the community for regular weekly groups, one-off meetings, children's parties and church social activities. It consists of a large hall, a small meeting room used for choir robing and parish office, kitchen, toilets and three storage rooms. The car park accommodates 16 cars.

Our Tradition and Style of Worship

Worship has moved toward a more Catholic tradition with genuflection to the sacrament and commingling, which reflects the priest's style.

Common Worship order 1 is used for all Eucharistic services. Readings follow the lectionary with related readings from NRSV. Sermons are preached at all Eucharistic services other than Family Communion where a talk is aimed at children.

Instruction for young choristers at the main service takes place in the vestry during the sermon.

Sunday School

Children leave church for the hall following the processional hymn. They return for a blessing and the closing part of the service, sharing what they have been learning and doing. Teaching and activities follow the lectionary.

Music

St John's has a strong musical tradition. The Henry 'Father' Willis Organ was built into the church in 1887.

We are proud of our robed SATB choir who sing at the main service, weddings, our special Choral Evensongs and Carol Service.

The mass setting for the main service is 'Bread of Life' (Rizza) and usually the Psalm is sung. St. John's uses Anglican Hymns Old and New.

Weekly Service arrangements

There are currently 107 people on the electoral roll.

Day	Time	Service	Mean Attendance Adults Children
All Sundays	8.00	Said Holy Communion	4 0
1 st Sunday of month	10.00	Family Communion	26 13
Other Sundays	10.00	Sung Eucharist	29 7
		Sunday School (school term only)*	2 11
1 st & 3 rd Wednesday (2 nd & 4 th at St Mary's; 5 th at St James)	10.00	Said Holy Communion 1 unaccompanied hymn (with St Mary's congregation)	9 0 (figures for St John's only)
Friday	am	Live Streamed Communion also posted on Facebook	—
Friday (school term)	14.00	Toddler Church	14 11

(Attendance figures are based on the period Advent 1. 2021 – Christ the King 2022)

* Sunday School restarted 11.9.22 Figures for services indicated below omitted from calculation to avoid misleading skew)

Special services

Special services are held for Ash Wednesday, Compline for Holy Week, Maundy Thursday (alternate years at St Mary's). Good Friday, Ascension Day (Whole Team this year), Nine Lessons and Carols, Crib Service, Midnight Mass and Christmas Day.

Choral Evensong services are held for Harvest and other occasional celebrations.

Occasional Offices

	No. of
Weddings	7
Baptisms (3 rd Sunday at noon)	19
Funerals in church	5
Funerals at the crematorium	6
Interment of ashes	3
Memorial Service	3

Toddler Church

This is a significant outreach attracting non-church families and very informally follows liturgical order. The story is accompanied by power point illustrations. It uses recorded music. Active participation is encouraged throughout, enabling children to be the church of today. The following activity is usually craft based.

Finances

Income

Planned giving £22000

Collections £3000

Other donations and Hall hire

Current funds

	as of Nov '22 £
General Fund	29551
Project Fund	21204
Church Repair Fund	24881
Hall Repair Fund	4471

Expenses

£6933 committed to repair, renovation and upgrade currently being undertaken.

We pay for an organist, a gardener and a cleaner.

Charity

Half of collections from Baptisms are given to Demelza Children's Hospice.

Other charities are supported by special collections throughout the year e.g.

The Children's Society

Bexley Foodbank

Ukraine

Significant Outreach Areas in the Parish

There are two primary schools in the parish:

Old Bexley: VC CofE.

From the Team, the Assistant Priest, Curate and Lay Funeral Minister take assemblies.

Hurst: Community school.

Clergy from churches close to it take assemblies.

Our Mission View

We are an Inclusive Church

The congregation does not work in the community under a church banner, but there are many individual examples of people serving their neighbour, these include support of:-

The Meeting Place

Cruise

Bexley Voice

Foodbank (St. John's is also a collection point)

The Winter Shelter

Interfaith Forum

The clearest indication of identity is our logo, encompassing all our purpose and affirming everyone's contribution.

Experience of God in worship overflows into outreach

Outreach welcomes others into fellowship

Through fellowship we nurture each other into deeper faith

experience, which in turn overflows.



St. Mary the Virgin, Bexley



History of the parish

St. Mary's lies within the outer London Borough of Bexley although, historically, its roots are in the County of Kent. The church is ancient (circa 1200) built on the site of a former Saxon church, with extensions and restorations through the succeeding centuries, particularly during the Victorian era. There are 45 names on the electoral roll.

The Church Buildings

The church building is listed Grade II* and is in a good state of repair although some work arising from the 2017 quinquennial inspection has been delayed by the pandemic. A new boiler was installed in July 2022 together with a new pump, pressurisation system and boiler controls.

The West end reordering project has recently received approval by the DAC for the insertion of a disabled toilet in the base of the tower and a reordered refreshment area and storage cupboards at the west end of the lady chapel. The Reordering Committee is managing this project and fundraising for it. The current approximate cost is £115,000 of which about half is available in the reordering fund.

The modern detached four-bedroom vicarage is in Hill Crescent, approximately 0.5 miles from the church. It has a bathroom with toilet upstairs and a large sitting room, dining room, study, kitchen, utility room and toilet downstairs. There is a garden back and front. The modern hall (built in 1984) is opposite the church in Manor Road and is run by a management committee. The hall is used by a pre-school group weekday mornings and is hired out some afternoons and most evenings. There is an office and a committee room that can be hired and is used for PCC meetings. There is a hall cleaner and a hall gardener. The money raised by the church hall helps to offset church expenditure.

Licensed ministers working in the parish

Team Vicar – half-time stipendiary

Licensed Lay Funeral Minister

Licensed Lay Minister (Team Vicar's spouse)

Tradition and style of worship

The main worship of the church is in the central tradition with organ, robed choir and a balance between word and sacrament. There are bi - monthly BCP Holy Communion services, a monthly Family Service and Messy Church every other month. There is a paid Director of Music.



Services arrangements

The worship mainstay is 10.00am Common Worship Holy Communion every Sunday except the 4th in the month.

Family Service at 10.00am on the 4th Sunday when the Clavinova electric piano and Lady Chapel are used and frequently a screen and data projector. Clergy do not robe for this service.

CW Holy Communion 3.30pm on the 4th Sunday for 7 months of the year

8.30am BCP Holy Communion 1st and 3rd Sundays, with congregation in the choir stalls.

10.00am CW Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel on 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month.

Finally Messy Church meets in the hall on 2nd Sunday of every other month at 3.00 pm

Life events – approximately two weddings, 12 christenings and 20 funerals per year.

Finances

Our general financial situation has been challenging in recent years. In the last three months of the 2021/22 financial year income exceeded expenditure by some £2,400.

There are a number of ring-fenced funds in support of church upkeep and development.

The PCC is updated at every PCC meeting regarding the financial position of the church and the response to individual appeals. Gift Aid is encouraged. There is a '200 Club' and

Easyfundraising enables us to receive cash donations as a result of online shopping. There has been a pleasing response to recent appeals and our annual summer fair and other fund-raising activities are an important source of income. The PCC is committed to giving 5% of income to Christian charities. The Summer Fair raises funds for the church and is a point of contact with the community.

Significant outreach areas in parish e.g., schools, homes, hospitals

There is a Church of England Primary School in Hurst Road, near to St. Mary's church. Clergy from the Team take school assemblies on Thursdays and see this as an important outreach to the younger community.

The Team Vicar, LLM and a parishioner give Home Communion. There is an informal network of support and care provided by the congregation.

How it sees its mission

The church longs to draw more people into its life, introducing or reintroducing people to the love of God and redressing the imbalance between younger and older worshippers. The mission statement of St Mary's includes the words '... reaching out to the community in the name of Jesus Christ'. We aim to do this by continuing our outreach to the local community whilst continuously reviewing and acting upon our evangelical and social success. This includes ensuring that the facilities at St. Mary's meet the needs of modern life, otherwise it will be unable to embrace all who seek the fellowship, worship and support that it so freely offers.

Further information

The Friends of St Marys raises funds in order to help preserve the ancient fabric of the church e.g., by a Christmas Bazaar, Quiz Night.

