

# Profile of the United Benefice of St Peter's Church, Ightham & St George's Church, Wrotham

Gathering in community - Growing in Christ - Going in service

[www.ighthamchurch.org.uk](http://www.ighthamchurch.org.uk)

[www.wrothamchurch.org](http://www.wrothamchurch.org)



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# Overview



We are seeking an energetic and creative, mission-minded incumbent. Someone able to balance the needs of families and young people - who enjoy informal worship and music at Breakfast@Church - with those parishioners who prefer traditional services, like Evening Prayer and Matins.

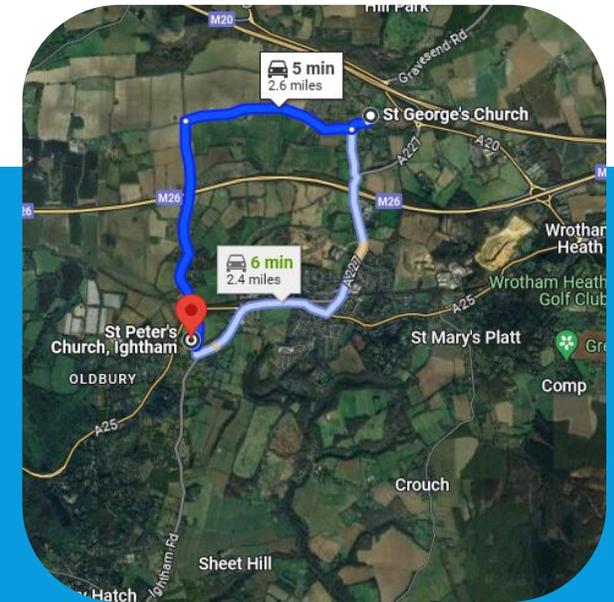


We are strengthening the close bonds formed across the Benefice, nurturing the growth of our congregations and seeing the church family thrive and grow within our local communities.



# Overview

Our Benefice was formed in 2022. It comprises two neighbouring parishes nestled at the base of the North Downs, a patchwork of houses, green fields and ancient bluebell woodland located within the Kent Downs National Landscape, within 30 miles of London and with excellent transport links.



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The lively parishes have the Grade I churches at the heart of their communities. Each has a population of approximately 2000 people. The communities have different demographics e.g. Ightham is more affluent and Wrotham has higher indices of deprivation within the village.

The Benefice offers opportunities to address the challenges facing many commuter-rural parishes of growth and age profile. There are no other places of worship in the Benefice.

# The Rector we are looking for



- **An innovative teacher of high-quality theology** with the enthusiasm to help us evolve and more effectively: Gather in community - Grow in Christ - Go in service.
- **Engaging** and able to connect with all ages, especially children and families, and will maintain the very strong links with the primary schools in both villages.
- **A compassionate listener** who offers a welcome to all and helps everyone feel part of the church family.
- **Community-facing** with a deep commitment to pastoral care for all and will enjoy joining in with village life.
- **Encouraging** and able to discern and develop gifts and talents in people, identifying opportunities for mission and connection, including prayer and study groups.
- **Someone who values music** as an important part of worship.

# Thoughts from our congregations



We are looking for an inspiring and mission-minded person; excited to work with and serve the whole community, share the Good News and grow the Church.

*"A good communicator who is committed to prayer and will proactively encourage more prayer"*

Church member



*"An encourager who can recognise untapped skills in people and encourage their development"*

Church member

*"Someone funny, kind and caring, who wants to be here"*

Breakfast@Church attendee,  
age 9

*"Celebrating the strengths and differences of each parish and using them to benefit the benefice"*

Church member





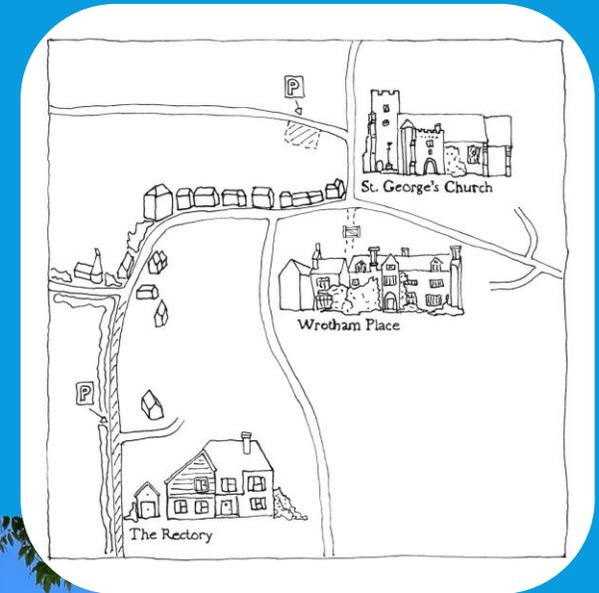
# What we can offer...



This is a full-time role with stipend.

The Benefice values the health, well-being and professional development of our Rector. We will pay in full all legitimate working clergy expenses, encourage them to take proper holidays and days off as well as supporting them to take time for training, personal development and retreats.

The Benefice Rectory is a few minutes walk away from St George's Church (and is 2 miles and 5-minute drive from St Peter's.)



# The Rectory in Wrotham

The Rectory is a 4-bedroom house built in the 1980s, with a study which can be accessed without entering the family home.



It has a spacious garden with a garage and off-street parking.



# Key members of our Church Family

The time and energy volunteered by many members of both congregations and the wider community is the mainstay of all our activities.



The Benefice is blessed with John (LLM), Michelle (lay reader) who are licensed for funerals as well as Chris, a retired member of the clergy. We are also grateful for the support of Max and Sandy who have both completed Hearing and Speaking God's Word courses.

The Benefice is kept organised by our wonderful Benefice Administrator, Jane, who works 4 mornings a week. We also benefit from Churchsuite to keep data secure and facilitate communication with members of the congregation and the wider parish.

Our experienced Church Wardens, Naomi (Ightham - left) and Trish (Wrotham - right) ensure services and other activities run smoothly with the help of our welcomers, vergers and sacristan.



# Teamwork

Both churches have dedicated PCCs who meet regularly usually in person and will get together socially at least once a year. The Benefice also has a Joint Standing Committee that meets several times a year either online or in person and will create cross-parish teams to focus on key tasks e.g. writing this profile.



Each parish has people focused on pastoral care, which includes Barbara - an Anna Friend licensed to the Benefice, as well as other teams for hospitality, flower arranging and cleaning the church buildings.

Ightham also has a Green Team who are working towards our Silver Eco-church award as well as co-ordinating churchyard tidy-ups and other activities and looking at ways to support Wrotham as well.



# Our Opportunities and Challenges

## Build on the success of our Breakfast@Church\* ministry

We would like to:

- encourage greater engagement with families and young people
- invite families to be more involved
- increase our capacity to be able to develop new initiatives such as Teatime Church
- build on our positive relationships with the local primary schools, Scouts and other community groups

*“Breakfast@Church is a really lovely way to start Sunday. It’s full of energy and chatter, modern worship songs and people of all ages.”*

B@C attendee



*“I like how Breakfast@Church brings new people to our services”*  
B@C attendee



\*Breakfast@Church is our Fresh Expression of church and takes place at 9am 3 times a month. A family service combining informal worship, eating together and craft activities.

# Our Opportunities and Challenges

## Progress sustainability: financial, environmental & volunteers

We want to find ways to progress our sustainability with the help of our small but committed band of volunteers and encouraging gifts and talents of others to grow that number e.g. working with the PCCs on finances and building on St Peter's Bronze Eco-Church Award with the Green Team.

Securing volunteers is challenging for more official roles such as church warden.



## Grow community engagement

The Churches are very much part of their communities, but our congregations are ageing. An important part of the role is to meet people where they are and building relationships with them to encourage their spiritual growth and involvement in the life of the church.

**We are open to change *as we evolve and grow.***

## A Week in the Rector's Diary

### Monday

Start the week with a trip to St George's Primary School to join 'Open the Book'. The children seem to love the bible stories led by our volunteers. Over to Ightham in the evening to chair the PCC meeting.

### Tuesday

Fairly quiet day, catch up with Trish (Church Warden) at St George's Coffee Morning before visiting parishioners and preparing for this week's services.

### Wednesday

Morning Prayers at St Peter's, then pop into Coffee Shop at the church centre for a slice of cake and to hear Ightham Primary School choir - their Andrew Lloyd-Webber medley is quite the spectacle!

### Thursday

My day off! A walk in the beautiful Kent countryside or a trip to London depending on the weather - maybe the quiz at the Rose & Crown in the evening.

### Friday

Catch-up with Jane, the resourceful Benefice Administrator, in the Church Centre: pew sheet, paperwork & planning!

### Saturday

Enjoy Men's Breakfast at the George & Dragon in Ightham then up to the churchyard to help with the tidy-up before lunch.

### Sunday

Drop into Breakfast @ Church at St Peter's (led by Michelle and Finn) then over to St George's to lead Holy Communion. Evensong at St Peter's in the evening - One of those Sundays when the benefice shows the range of worship it offers!

# Broader Context



**The Benefice Beginnings** - With the encouragement of the previous incumbents, the parishes chose to unite in 2022 due to their similarities and building on a history of collaboration in areas, such as bell ringing and periodic joint services.

The congregations have spent the last year adapting to a single incumbent and learning to support and compromise with each other through the Joint Standing Committee.

The churches have been at the centre of each parish for over 900 years and we hope to grow our connections and deepen our relationships with parishioners.

The future incumbent has a genuine opportunity to build on our effective working relationships and good practice as well as shape the Benefice and grow the church.



# Broader Context

The Benefice's approach to equity, diversity and inclusion comes from our desire and motivation to reflect Christ's love in our relationships with others and express that love through our mission to gather in community, grow in Christ and go in service. We want everyone to feel welcome in our churches.

(There are currently a variety of views on Living in Love and Faith within the Benefice family.)

*“I like the feeling of love and kindness, how everyone is welcome – and the activities encourage the young people to be part of Breakfast Church”*

Adult B@C Attendee



# The Diocese and Deanery



We are part of the Tonbridge Archdeaconry within the Diocese of Rochester, covering the areas of Medway, north and west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.

The Benefice falls within the Shoreham Deanery and we join in with the Deanery Ascension Day Service each year. There are good, supportive relationships between the clergy of the deanery.

There is an informal cluster ministry, with St Mary's Platt and the Church of the Good Shepherd in Borough Green. We worship together occasionally during the year, such as Ash Wednesday.

[You can read a message from The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Rochester here.](#)

*“You will be joining a very well-supported and supportive Shoreham Deanery Clergy Chapter that meets regularly for fellowship, prayer and mutual encouragement as well as some social events like our Clergy Christmas Lunch in January! As a Deanery, we share a lot in common in terms of our demographics, and because of our shared interests, we are able to unite and pull together well in our Deanery Synod gatherings. Shoreham Deanery is a friendly and welcoming place where we seek to help and encourage one another in any way we can.”*

Area Dean, Rev. Dr Chris Noble

# The Parishes within the Benefice



As well as being home to many commuters, both villages include a number of professionals working from home or running their own businesses. Unlike Ightham, Wrotham has a significant number of registered social housing properties.

Parish Statistics	Ightham	Wrotham
Residents (2021 Census)	2,036	1,960
Number on the Electoral Roll (2024)	102	71
<a href="#">Overall deprivation</a> (out of 12,178, where 1 is the most deprived parish)	11,842 (less deprived)	3,899 (more deprived)
Baptisms (2024)	4	2
Weddings (2024)	1	4
Funerals (2024)	13	4

- Ightham's churchyard is open for burials.
- Wrotham's churchyard is closed for burials but open for interment of ashes.

# Ightham

St Peter's Church is at the heart of the village, near the village square of half-timbered buildings and the George and Dragon pub.

There are also other pubs, two restaurants and a member's social club in the village as well as the Hutch Deli on the A25 and several businesses based in the village.



Ightham is surrounded by farmland and there are three plant nurseries within the parish. Ightham Mote, (a National Trust property) lies on the outskirts of the village and shares a number of historic ties with the church.

There are also National Trust woodlands at Oldbury and Kent Wildlife Trust maintains a small nature reserve in Ivy Hatch.

# Ightham



Ightham is an active village with a supportive parish council. Many groups and organisations meet regularly and hold events including a popular WI, active Tennis, Football and Cricket Clubs, energetic Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Venture Scout groups as well as classes and activities in the village hall from fitness sessions to the Horticultural Society.

Ightham Primary School is a one form entry primary school that has been graded as Outstanding by Ofsted. There is also an onsite nursery called Skips.

The village recreation ground is used for School Sports Day and other outdoor village events and includes a children's play area.



# Wrotham

Wrotham is an active, friendly village on the Pilgrim's Way. It boasts many buildings of special architectural and historic interest as well as housing association properties and more modern developments. The village has one shop, one hotel, a hairdresser, a clock shop, a few small businesses and two pubs. The Rose and Crown host a weekly quiz night.



The Voluntary Controlled C of E Primary School is a one-form entry school with a charity-run pre-school on site. It has 199 pupils and was graded as Good under the new framework by Ofsted in December 2022 and by SIAMS as Outstanding in 2018.

The community allotments are very popular. Wrotham has a very good and active Parish Council.

# Wrotham

Village life is never quiet with a host of events organised by various groups during the year, including concerts, garden safari, fireworks display and more. There is also the Wrotham Music Festival and three-day, biennial Arts Festival in the Church, which has now been running for 30 years and attracts artists and visitors from far afield.



The village hall is a venue for many clubs and activities including weekly fitness and yoga classes, as well as the children's ballet and dance classes. Other village groups include the Hartley Morris Men, the Wrotham Historical Society who meet monthly and often host very interesting talks open to the public, the weekly Bridge Club and the Wrotham Roses who have just celebrated their first year as the Wrotham branch of the Women's Institute.



The recreation ground is the venue for Walking Football every Tuesday as well as boasting a football and cricket pitch with a large pavilion and a playground for the younger children.

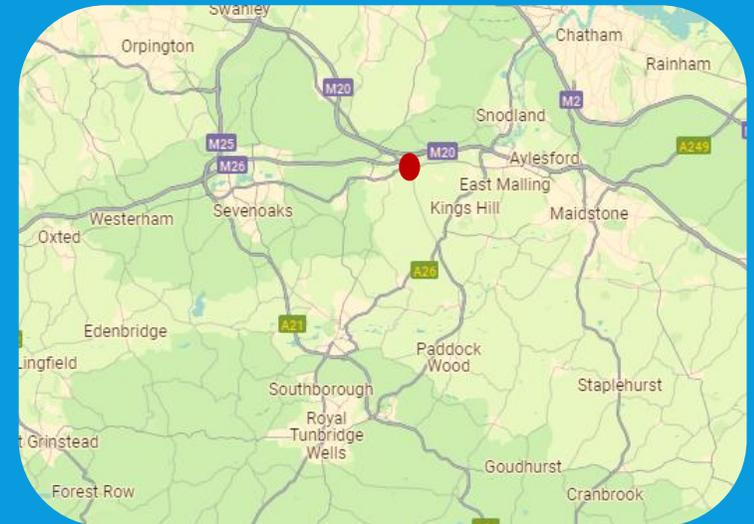
# Surrounding area

The Benefice enjoys easy access to London from Borough Green and Wrotham railway station and the mainline station at Sevenoaks. Bus services run through both villages. Their proximity to motorways offers swift routes to London, the south coast and beyond. Nearby towns include Maidstone, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells and Bluewater Shopping Centre is within easy reach.

There is a large medical practice, shops and a library in Borough Green.

There are leisure centres in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Larkfield as well as several local spas and gyms.

The Benefice is very well served by a variety of schools in the area: primary, comprehensive, grammar, special needs and independent.



# Worship



We currently offer a complementary pattern of worship across the Benefice which enables the services to be led by one Rector with support from the lay ministry team.

Sunday of the month	St Peter's Church, Ightham	St George's Church Wrotham
First Sunday	9am Breakfast@Church 6pm Evensong [Rector-led]	10:30am Holy Communion [Rector-led]
Second Sunday	10am Holy Communion [Rector-led]	9am Breakfast@Church 10:30am Service of the Word
Third Sunday	10am Service of the Word 6pm Evensong	8:30am Holy Communion BCP [Rector-led] 10:30am Holy Communion [Rector-led]
Fourth Sunday	10am Holy Communion [Rector-led]	9:00am Breakfast@Church 10:30am Sung Matins (BCP)
Fifth Sunday	United Benefice Holy Communion Service [Rector-led] (alternating between parishes)	

The main Sunday morning services in both churches are shared on Zoom. Additionally on Wednesday mornings at St Peter's, there is a midweek service alternating between Holy Communion and Morning Prayer.

# Worship

Both churches support their local community in many ways including marking key dates as a community. Remembrance Sunday services are held at the respective war memorials with wreathes laid by the local uniformed organisations, services for the bereaved at the end of October and a number of community celebrations at Christmas.

Communion is taken to the housebound at their request.



In general, children and families only attend Breakfast@Church and festival services.

Evensong at St Peter's, BCP Holy Communion and Matins at St George's have smaller but loyal congregations.

# Music

Music is an important part of the worship in the Benefice and we enjoy hymns at more traditional services with more contemporary worship songs used at Breakfast@Church. Both churches have small but enthusiastic choirs who combine for united services and the carol service at Christmas.

The Benefice benefits from Neil who is Director of Music / Organist for St George's; he leads the music and plays for most services as well as supporting the combined choir for united benefice services and events.



Ightham relies on recorded music or live accompaniment from guitar and saxophone - with energetic percussion from the congregation at Breakfast@Church.

The bell ringers in both parishes have been collaborating for over 20 years ringing for services, weddings and other events.

# Sharing faith in Christ

The Benefice offers a variety of study, prayer and fellowship opportunities, many online to enable more people to attend.

- Connect Group – an online study group that meets twice a month on Wednesday evenings
- Oasis – a ladies' fellowship and bible study group which meets weekly in members' homes during term time
- Prayer meeting – held weekly online



We run study groups for others to join during key seasons, such as Lent, or in response to a need in the Benefice e.g. Alpha course. Our 'Open the Book' volunteers perform bible stories in both primary schools.

St Peter's has a partner parish (Holy Trinity, Twydall) that St George's are getting to know and we enjoy worship and fellowship all together when we can, enabling us to support them and learn from their example of prayer and faith in action during challenging times.

# Community and Outreach

Both parishes publish their own parish magazines for which the Rector provides a letter. There are 10 editions of each published every year.



The Benefice has a monthly Men's Breakfast at Ightham's George and Dragon pub, where non-church attendees and members of the congregation enjoy a cooked breakfast and good company together. In February, the ladies are invited as well for the Valentines Breakfast.

Both churches have a thriving weekly charity coffee morning which meet on different days of the week and welcome both locals and visitors. This is a wonderful opportunity for the Rector to drop in, enjoy coffee, cake and meet parishioners.



# Community and Outreach

Ightham hold a weekly Toddler group in the church centre during term time as well as hosting meetings for community groups, including the Ightham School Governors, WI groups and the West Kent Autism support group. Ightham also hosts the Benefice Teddy Bear's Picnic and Churchyard Games in the summer, featuring the ever popular teddy bear zip-wire (weather permitting).

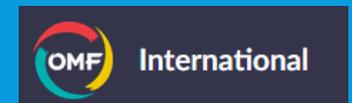


Both parishes regularly get involved with village events, collaborating with other village organisations like the WI, Friends of St George's, and the local primary schools. The events are important for the wonderful camaraderie they generate. Church members are involved in the bi-annual Wrotham Arts Festival and Music Festival and help organise an annual fundraising concert by the King's Men in Ightham.

# Community and Outreach

Both churches host a collection point for the local food bank in Borough Green and the Rector is a trustee of the Betenson Alms Houses Trust in Wrotham.

Each month St George's gives £160 to a different charity selected by the PCC annually. St Peter's also has a portfolio of charities supported through regular fundraising activities such as Christian Aid, St Mungo's and the Children's Society as well as 6 key charities we support through our outward giving (12.5% of our income in 2024) including The Princess Project, Starfish Malawi and our mission partners in China through OMF.



# Buildings

Both Grade I listed churches are over 900 years old and have pews in their naves with flexible spaces elsewhere. They have been updated with technology to increase their flexibility and St George's has a recently upgraded tea station in the north aisle with chairs and tables for Breakfast@Church, coffee mornings and parish functions.



St Peter's has a modern church centre (which is licenced for services) in the corner of the churchyard. The building incorporates a fully-equipped kitchen, the parish office and space for refreshments and parish meals. There is a patio area and French doors to allow events to take place outside in good weather. The churchyard contains a public footpath.

# Resources

Within the Benefice, our enthusiastic and supportive PCCs remain independent charities with separate finances for each church. The accounts are well managed and the Treasurers for both churches keep a close watch on expenditure and income generation. Benefice costs, including the salary of the administrator, are currently split equally between the two parishes. The main financial challenge is maintaining the fabric of an old, historic church.

St Peter's has more reserves and is in a slightly stronger financial position. However, most donations come from relatively few people so income may be significantly impacted if an individual stops giving for whatever reason.

Wrotham has higher indices of deprivation and is less able to rely on donations. Instead, we are blessed by the support of The Friends of St. George's, who fundraise tirelessly for ongoing projects and repairs. We have successfully fundraised and recently completed a major project to provide disabled access to the church.



# Parish Finances



Financial Year 2024	Ightham	Wrotham
General Fund Income	£115,879	£63,225
Restricted Income	£32,989	£69,037
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£148,868</b>	<b>£132,262</b>
General Fund Expenditure	£84,509	£68,291
Restricted Expenditure	£20,248	£64,324
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£104,757</b>	<b>£132,615</b>
Parish Offer paid	£39,724	£30,000
Annual Reports	<a href="#">Charity number 1136162</a>	<a href="#">Charity number 1177875</a>

# School Connections

*“We would like the Rector to regularly attend the school to deliver ‘Open the Book’ and collective worship/assemblies”*

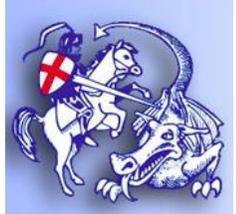


Both parishes have strong relationships with their local primary school. The Rector or church members regularly lead assemblies in each school and 2 teams of volunteers go in to share bible stories through ‘Open the Book’.

Although Ightham Primary School is not a church school, they hold services in church several times a year celebrating Harvest, Christmas and Easter. The children also hold Community Afternoons in the Church Centre twice a term and the school choir come and sing at the Community Coffee Shop several times a year.



# School Connections



Wrotham is home to St. George's Church of England VC Primary School which utilises the Church regularly for worship, meetings and events, as well as the occasional RE Lesson. The school has a monthly Monday family service in the Church (led by the school), as well as celebrating feast days.

The Rector and two further active church members are Foundation Governors of the Primary School. There is also a charity-run pre-school within the primary school grounds and the Rector has visited to read bible stories for them.



**Secondary school connections:** Cadets from Wrotham School read at the Remembrance Service each year. The pupils of Grange Park, a Specialist School half a mile away from St George's, also regularly visit the Church independently and to celebrate festival services.

We hope that the new incumbent will have the vision and energy to identify and progress the right opportunities for our benefice.

Do you feel called to be part of our church family?

*“Always being greeted with a warm welcome and big smile and feeling that you are part of the church family”*

*“A welcoming church with forms of worship to suit everyone”*



# Message from the Bishop of Rochester

Welcome to the Diocese of Rochester and thank you for your interest in this exciting role. Our parishes and congregations are the beating heart of the Diocese and are central to our desire for churches to flourish and God's kingdom to grow across all our wonderfully diverse communities.

## Our vision

As a Diocese we share the vision that we are Called Together **to change, serve and grow** the church across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley. Much work has taken place to understand what these three themes mean for the life of the Diocese and our priorities, and to define what and where resources will need to be allocated to deliver them. Through prayerful engagement and discernment, what has begun to emerge is an understanding that we are a community:

**Seeking first the Kingdom of God, and called together by God to change, serve and grow with compassion, courage and creativity.**

• **Change** is about the need for us to adapt in a changing world, so that our churches can play their full part in serving God and drawing people once more to faith in Jesus Christ.

• **Serve** is about the attitude we need to adopt if we are to earn and gain that cherished place in people's hearts and at the heart of our communities.

• **Grow** is about what God wants to bring about in us and through us, as people growing into the likeness of Christ, and as churches where people are being drawn to follow Jesus through our words and through our deeds.

# Message from the Bishop of Rochester

## Our objectives

Within this overall vision, our emerging key objectives are to grow *missional churches, with missional leaders and missional disciples*, that are:

- Growing younger and more diverse,
- Growing numerically, spiritually, financially and in impacting their communities, and in turn are
- Creating a safe and healthy culture for all

This is the latest phase in developing our strategic plans, which are vital to our seeking to grow the kingdom of God across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent, and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.

Central to these plans is sustaining and growing a flourishing and well-resourced parish structure, so as to enable our local churches to take their full and rightful place at the heart of their communities: serving God and serving the people, loving God and showing his love in and to our communities.

If this vision excites you and you believe God may be calling you to this role, then we would love to hear from you.

With my prayers and best wishes,

**+Jonathan**

**The Rt Revd Dr Jonathan Gibbs, Bishop of Rochester**

