

United Parish of St. Laurence, Church Stretton
with St. Michael and All Angels LEP, All Stretton
and All Saints, Little Stretton, Shropshire



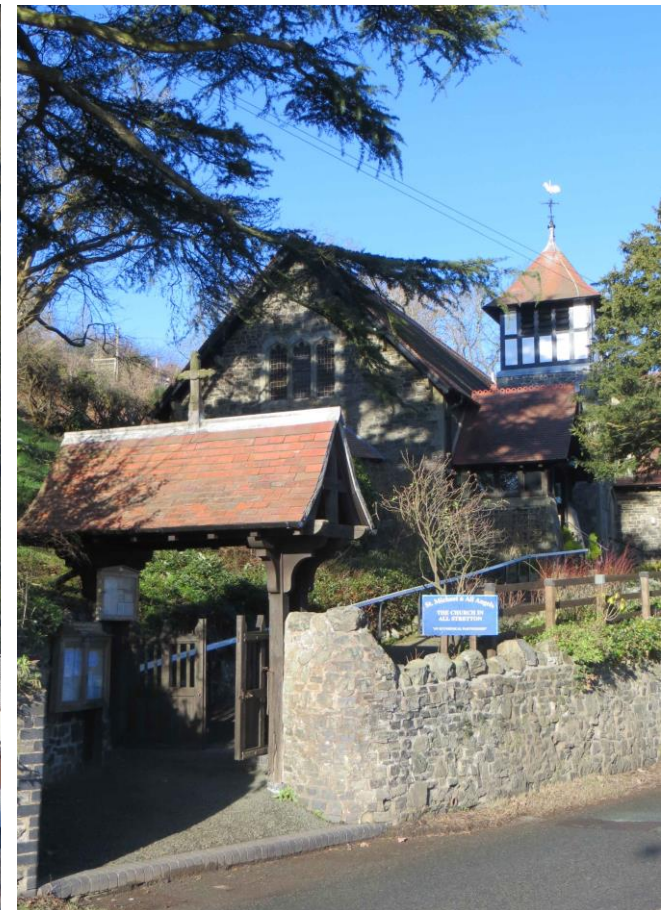
"Growing together in faith, hope and love; sharing the good news of Jesus with all"



All Saints, Little Stretton



St Laurence, Church Stretton



St Michael and All Angels LEP, All Stretton

PARISH PROFILE

strettonparish.org.uk

Parish Profile - Introduction



The Stretton Parish, situated in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is one of the larger parishes in the Condover Deanery within the Diocese of Hereford. There are three churches in the Parish - St Laurence, Church Stretton; St Michael and All Angels LEP, All Stretton; All Saints, Little Stretton. Each have established, vibrant congregations drawn from mixed Christian traditions, serving their communities through a wide range of activities.

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Message from the Rural Dean

Welcome to the Deanery of Condover



As Rector of the Strettons, you will be welcomed into a friendly and supportive team of clergy serving 6 Benefices stretching from Craven Arms in the south, up along the A49 through Church Stretton and Dorrington to Condover in the north. The large Benefice of Much Wenlock is located to the east and the villages which make up the Apedale Benefice are situated between Much Wenlock and Church Stretton. We are very well supported by a large number of retired clergy who are mostly based in and around Church Stretton. Twice a year we meet as a 'Wider Chapter' to which stipendiary, non-stipendiary and retired clergy are invited as well as both serving and retired Readers.

We are currently looking at ways in which the deanery can best serve its parishes and support and resource each other in our outreach, mission and ministry. The clergy and deanery synod have already started thinking around these issues alongside implementing current initiatives:

- The vacancy at Craven Arms is advertising for an intergenerational pioneer minister to revitalise the surrounding parishes as well as set up a new pioneering ministry in Craven Arms.
- The Apedale Benefice is working alongside the Much Wenlock benefice to bring a 'Butty Van' to rural communities where farmers can meet and be supported around a hot drink and bacon butty.
- There are two well attended 'Filling Stations' running on a monthly basis in Craven Arms and in the village of Leebotwood in the Dorrington Benefice which bring together people from surrounding parishes and have cross-benefice co-operation to run them.

We are in exciting as well as challenging times as we seek to implement the 3-fold Diocesan shared priorities of Growing disciples of all ages and backgrounds – spiritually and numerically, Serving the common good – transforming lives and communities, Sharing, developing and reimagining ministry for mission in the 21st Century.

We would love you to come and join us in this task.

Geoff Garrett, Rural Dean

Our Mission

Our Mission statement:

“Growing together in faith, hope and love; sharing the Good News of Jesus with all”



We achieve this through:

Prayer

Wide variety of worship styles

Pastoral care

Sharing our faith

Involvement in the local community

Our Mission - growing

There are various meetings and activities which are aimed at helping us grow in our walk of faith, including:-

Preaching – this is central to the spiritual life of our churches. [Sermons are available to download from the church website](#). **Prayer and Bible study** – this is the life blood of our church's life with a range of meetings being held throughout the week, as detailed in our weekly "Contact" notice sheet which can be downloaded from the [website](#).

Home groups – are held in people's homes and aim to bring people together in fellowship to study the Bible and pray and support each other. **Ladies' group** – meets every Friday at 9.30am in the Parish Centre, for Bible Study, prayer and fellowship. **Men's group** – meets every other Saturday morning during school term time in the Parish Centre, where the men of the church share in Bible study & fellowship together. Termly Breakfasts are offered where men are encouraged to bring along their male friends and neighbours to share in a cooked breakfast together and hear a testimony or guest speaker. **Lent Groups** – an initiative sponsored by Churches Together for churches across the town to come together for Lent Bible study.



Parish Weekend Away – is held once every two or three years and is held at a suitable venue for all ages to attend and to share a time of praise, fellowship, teaching and activities.

Banner Group - meets monthly on 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings, in the Parish Centre, to share fellowship working together on current projects, including banner requests from other churches, and planning new textile projects.

Summer Festivals – a number of our church family attend New Wine, Keswick, Spring Harvest, Spree (youth) and other events.

Alpha Courses – are run periodically, according to demand, and have been a great encouragement to those who have attended them. **Filling Station** – offers praise, Bible study and teaching in rural locations across the country.

Our Mission - sharing

There are a range of meetings and activities which aim to help share God's love to our community:-

Home communion – our clergy offer communion to people unable to attend the church services either in their own homes or, by arrangement, in residential care homes. **Care Home visits** – our Pastoral Team visit the local Residential Care homes by arrangement to offer help and support to residents, as well as visiting housebound parishioners in their own homes.

All Age Worship – an informal monthly service at St Laurence's aimed at all ages, from the youngest to the oldest. **Carols & tea** – this is held in St Laurence's church annually and is attended by local care home residents supported by members of the church.

Annual Outreach dinners – these are aimed at non-churchgoers and comprise a fully catered meal followed by a guest speaker. **Outreach & Festival services** – are again aimed at non-churchgoers and include Remembrance & Christmas services. **Harvest and Christmas lunches** - are arranged by All Saints Church, Little Stretton and the local village is invited. **Soup lunches and coffee & cake** – are arranged by St Michael's Church, All Stretton and the local village is invited.



[Parents & Toddlers](#) – this meets every Thursday morning in the Parish Centre during term time. The group provides an opportunity for parents and carers to come along with their children for informal games, fun, activities and relaxation. **[CAMEO](#)** – “Come And Meet Each Other” meets once a month in the Parish Centre with a time of praise and prayer followed by a speaker with an amusing and interesting story to tell. **[Mothers' Union](#)** – the local branch of the Mothers' Union meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, in the Parish Centre, when there is a talk and/or discussions followed by refreshments.

Mission partnerships – the **[World Mission Group](#)** keeps the church in touch with the mission activities we support both at home and overseas. A 10% tithe of our general giving is set aside to support mission work, both home and overseas.

Neighbours – welcome information is taken to new residents in the Strettons by church member volunteers. St Michael's Church, All Stretton, distributes Christmas cards to all village residents.

Our Mission - in the community



The churches make a major contribution to the life of the Strettons, supporting community initiatives, reducing social isolation and offering support to the needy. The parish organises various activities and provides facilities or financial assistance.

The parish helped finance the construction of the town's Health & Wellbeing Centre, offers financial support to the [Mayfair Community Centre](#) and hosts the CTS Food Bank in the Parish Centre. The Food Bank assists needy local families as well as those placed in Shropshire Council's emergency accommodation in Church Stretton.



The Parish Centre houses the Parish Office and the office shared by the Youth Worker and the Children & Young Families Worker. The Parish Centre's meeting rooms are available for hire by U3A, Good Neighbours and other community bodies; the Main Hall is hired out every week for Keep Fit, Slimming World, Line Dancing and Judo. All of these provide points of contact between the church and the local community.

All three church buildings welcome visitors and are kept open throughout the day. They are also used as concert venues, notably during the fortnight-long [Church Stretton & South Shropshire Arts Festival](#) when St Laurence's hosts three professional evening concerts and six free morning Coffee Concerts; Organ Recitals are given at both All Saints and St Laurence's.

[Stretton Focus](#) is an award-winning monthly community magazine which began life many years ago as a joint venture by the churches. Every month an article is included from each of the five denominations in the town as well as listings of all church services.



Members of the congregation play many active roles in the community, volunteering their time and expertise, notably in the [Mayfair Community Centre](#), with the local Ring & Ride service, with the National Trust and with Stretton Climate Care. A glance at the 'What's on' pages or the yellow page listings in a recent [Stretton Focus](#) gives some idea of the breadth of activities in the area; church members play a prominent role in many of these.

Many church members are active environmental campaigners; the churchyard is managed for wildlife, there are PV panels installed on the Parish Centre roof, the church roof is newly insulated and the PCC recently applied to become a pilot eco-church.

Our Mission - with young people



The Sunday morning children's teaching groups at Laurence's are called 'Bubbles', for 2 – 6 year olds and 'Splash' for 6 – 10 year olds. We base our sessions around the Scripture Union teaching resources but adapt them to include activities which are relevant to our children (Lego being a big hit at present!). Once monthly we hold a joint group memory verse and singing/worship time. There is also a crèche provided when parents feel the need. The Youth group, 'Dive-in', is held when youth are in attendance but at the moment this is very sporadic. One of our main aims is to encourage families to build faith at home by developing achievable Bible reading, prayer times and having conversations about God naturally in their everyday lives.

We have a very good relationship with the staff and children at the local C.E. primary school. Our youth worker, Sally Clilverd, works as Teaching Assistant there and she provides a vital bridge between Church and School, therefore, communication is good and improving. The Children's worker, Sarah Robinson, leads two after school clubs in the school: the older group being 'Guardians of Ancora' (using an SU Bible app) and the JAM Club (Jesus and Me) for the Key Stage 1 group. A team from Church run an 'Open the book' assembly each Friday afternoon and three church members lead two assemblies each week. One of the members of our church is a part-time Deputy Head of the School. We work together providing Seasonal Services and a Year 6 Leavers Service in the Church.

On Thursday mornings between 10am and 12 noon we run a Parents and Toddlers, Bumps and Babes session. This is fully manned by Church members and each week we pray for 15 minutes before the session. We have about 45 families registered, with an average of 18 families attending each week. Our aims are to make families feel at home by providing good listening ears, amazing snacks and drinks, warm relationships and help, if needed. We end each session with singing and story time. We have begun a Care for the Family 'Parenting Course' which we hope to continue once each half term, including a shared lunch.



Leading up to Christmas we hold a very popular contemporary Christingle service where, last year, 70 plus children and their families watched an amusing and informative original drama with a pumpkin being transformed into a Christingle! This forms part of the town's Christmas Lights-on celebrations. A Nativity service is held a week before Christmas and on Christmas Eve we have a Crib Service. Both have taken on many different styles over the years, but the Crib service is unique in that it is attended mainly by people that we do not see at other services.



Our Mission - with young people (cont.)



We hold Messy Church on the 2nd Monday of each month from 3:45 – 6pm in the Parish Centre. Around 25 children plus their carers attend each month and a fun time is had with lively crafts, games, food and fellowship. Since moving our session from a Saturday afternoon, we are seeing a regular ‘congregation’ attending and are building good relationships with them. We have an amazing team of helpers who enthusiastically rise up to the challenging tasks we ask of them; from cooking the dinner to playing with messy goop, or making a model temple. We are also fortunate to have a number of people who lead the worship time, using a wide range of methods and skills to tell the month’s story. The prayer meetings on the preceding Wednesday and the Monday morning focus on Messy Church and we also hold a team meeting and prayer time before the session commences. A future aim is to develop more ways for the families to meet over the month, as we grow our discipleship journey together.



The Pink Dinosaur Club is the youth house group, with 6 regulars, which meets at Sally’s house alternate Tuesdays from 6:30 – 8pm. We chat about what is happening in our lives, play games, link it all back to God and, of course, eat food. Previously, we have looked at some of the youth Alpha sessions, as well as used videos, music, drama and art to consider God’s relevance to them. The youth are typical and really seem to struggle with Sunday mornings! To try to encourage them to take an active part in church life, the all-age team think of activities, dramas or puppet shows that they might like to occasionally take part in during our monthly services, which we then rehearse or create during a Tuesday evening. It also now seems a bit of a tradition to create a completely unique video for the Nativity Service. And, if you want to know why we are called the Pink Dinosaur Club – well, you’ll have to come and ask us!

At present Sally leads 2 groups in the Secondary School during their very short lunchtimes. The Tuesday group is for Years 7 & 8 and currently about 8 youth attend each week, while the Wednesday group is for Years 9 & 10, where 4 boys are regulars. We share hot chocolate and Jaffa cakes, talk about their week, answer (most) of their difficult questions and relate God through all of this, using different media and creative ideas. The best thing is to be told “We missed you” when a club has needed to be cancelled.

Our People

Licenced Assistant Minister SSM (St Laurence's)

Licenced URC Minister (St Michael's)

Readers x2 (St Laurence's, St Michael's)

Retired clergy

Youth Worker (p/t, St Laurence's)

Children & Young Families Worker (p/t, St Laurence's)

Rector's PA (p/t, St Laurence's)

Churchwardens x2 (St Laurence's)

Deputy Churchwardens x2 (St Michael's, All Saints)

Treasurer (St Laurence's)

Deputy Treasurers (St Michael's, All Saints)

Music co-ordinators x2 (volunteers, St Laurence's)

Organists x5 (St Laurence's, St Michael's, All Saints)

Our Congregations



Our People - Clergy team



LOUISE MAGOWAN

I enjoy enormously serving as an SSM assistant minister and as a member of the Leadership Team in the benefice. I am married with grown up children and three wonderful grandchildren. Our family bring and give richness to our life. In past years I was a nurse and midwife. More recently I worked as a pastoral worker for a large church. It is a privilege to share the message of God's saving love through preaching and pastoral care.



ROBERT RAYNER

I have been a Lay Reader since 2012. I had two careers before retiring two years ago. Firstly, as a mechanical engineer working on new factory projects for two multi-nationals, then running a construction business specialising in listed building repairs and extensions. My main involvement in church life is with families and children through All Age Worship, Messy Church and school assemblies. I am keen on wider lay participation in services and imaginative use of audio/visuals to enliven worship.



HAZEL ALLEN

I have been in URC ecumenical ministry since training at the Oxford and St Albans Course in 2001. Whilst serving in Wiltshire I was also Associate Chaplain to the Military. Previously I worked for 22 years in secondary education including a time at sea on a schools cruise ship. It is a privilege to serve God through supporting and encouraging the people at St Michael's in their worship, faith, prayer life and outreach to the village. I am a member of the Leadership Team and work with Parents and Toddlers at St. Laurence's.



GILLIAN TAYLOR

I was licensed as a Lay Reader in September 2018. I attend St Michael's Church and take services there and at Stretton Hall Care Home and St Laurence's. I am a member of the ECC. In the 1980s I taught at Church Stretton Primary School before living for 18 years in NSW Australia during which time I served as a Licensed Lay Minister. I now work for Telford Christians Together as a resources officer, working with five Churches Together groups.

Our People - Churchwardens



Martin Benson

I became Churchwarden in April 2018 having previously served as Treasurer for four years. I am married to Margaret and we moved to the Strettons in 2012 from South Bucks. We have two grown up children and three grandchildren. I am a retired HR Director having spent my career working in the City of London. I am a member of the Hereford Diocesan Ministerial Development Review panel. Apart from enjoying the family, we both volunteer at a local National Trust property. I actively follow most sports, especially cricket & football, and am a member of the local croquet club.



Barbara Oakley

I have been Churchwarden for six years. I am married to Tim, and we moved to Church Stretton in 2010 from Northamptonshire following Tim's retirement from full-time ministry. We have two grown up children and six grandchildren. We were mission partners with CMS in Kenya in the eighties & I continue my involvement with them, working as a volunteer in the office. I have a passion for mission and am an enthusiastic member of the World Mission Group. In my working life I was a secondary RE teacher. Tim & I enjoy gardening, walking and visiting family & friends.



Christine Jones

I was appointed Deputy Churchwarden in March 2018. I was born in Cheshire one of six daughters, thankful that we were taught to love Jesus and to attend church from an early age. I am married to Roy and moved to the Green Dragon in the village in 1980 as licensees. Throughout those years and now in retirement I have held various posts at All Saints including Secretary and Treasurer. I enjoy playing golf and gardening.



Andrew Price

I have been Deputy Warden at St Michael's since 2014. I am married with two sons and two grandsons. I work half time as a Psychotherapist with an agency specializing in helping survivors of sexual violence and abuse. I believe the Spirit is working towards one inclusive Church that welcomes everyone. I would like to see closer relationships between the churches in the Strettons.

Our People – Lay staff

 <p>Sarah Robinson Children's & Families Worker</p>	<p>I am a primary school teacher. I am married to Alan, a farmer, have 3 grown up children and 3 grand-children. I enjoy singing varied music in a mixed voice choir. I enjoy sharing Jesus' love through fun and praying together with all ages.</p>	 <p>Sally Clilverd Youth Worker</p>	<p>I am a teaching assistant 3 days a week and help with assemblies. I am married to Mark and have 2 children. In Cambridge I was a pre-school manager and helped lead a Christian-based youth performing arts group. I enjoy making Jesus relevant to young people.</p>	 <p>Jo Aze Rector's PA</p>	<p>I have worked as our Rector's PA since 2011, working five mornings a week. I am married to Steve and we moved to Church Stretton in 2007. We have 3 grown up children. I head up the Open the Book team that goes into the local primary school every week.</p>
 <p>Graham Vince Treasurer</p>	<p>I have been Church Treasurer since 2018. I am married to Linda. I am an experienced charity treasurer and charity administrator. I serve on our World Mission Group Committee, Sound Desk & Food Bank teams.</p>	 <p>Henry Montgomery Deputy Treasurer (St Michael's)</p>	<p>I have lived in All Stretton for 22 years; when my children were young we went to St Laurence's and helped run the youth group. Since 2006 I have worshipped at St Michael's and was Deputy Warden from 2013-16. I have been Treasurer since then.</p>	 <p>John Bennett Deputy Treasurer (All Saints)</p>	<p>I am a keen golfer, a group singer and my wife and I love gardening together. I became a Christian at a Youth for Christ Rally in Cheltenham when I was 16 and my Church has been important to me ever since.</p>

Our Churches – St Laurence, Church Stretton

St Laurence's is a fine 13th century cruciform church which lies close to the heart of Church Stretton. While much of the original Norman building survives, it has been updated throughout its history, most recently in 2010 when the interior was reordered to make it more suitable for modern worship and in 2018 when the entire building was re-roofed at a cost of £490,000 – most of which was donated by the present congregation.

The seven banners in the nave illustrating Jesus' 'I Am' statements and a central sculpture in the form of a flaming gridiron are intended to provoke a response. The building's sensitive blend of the traditional and the contemporary – with good heating and lighting, comfortable seating and AV facilities set among mediaeval pillars, Jacobean carvings and stained glass – attracts many visitors as well as a very active congregation which, like the building, encompasses a variety of ages and styles.

Three Sunday services range from the traditional 8 a.m. Holy Communion through a semi-traditional 9.30 a.m. Holy Communion or Morning Worship service to an 11.05 a.m. Informal or All Age service; for youngsters there is Kidzone; there is also a monthly 'Healing & Wholeness' evening Communion.



Total Sunday attendance averaged 162 in 2018. A Thursday Holy Communion attracts another dozen or so each week. Two prayer meetings are held on Monday mornings and one on Wednesday evenings.

The community is invited to worship on Sunday morning by St Laurence's bells; the bell-ringers practise every Tuesday evening and ring on occasions of national celebration.

Singing plays a prominent role in our services, led at 9.30 a.m. by a small robed choir accompanied by a good pipe organ or by a keyboard as appropriate to the hymn or song. Worship groups are formed from a large pool of talented musicians to lead the 11.05 a.m. congregation in contemporary worship songs. A versatile sound system supports larger worship groups on Renewal evenings and enables all sermons to be recorded and published on the church website for future listening.

The Parish Centre Main Hall acts as a meeting point for the congregations from the two principal services when Coffee is served between 10.30 and 11 a.m. each Sunday. The Centre also provides the toilet facilities currently unavailable in the church building.

Our Churches – St Michael & All Angels LEP, All Stretton

The village of All Stretton lies just over a mile north of Church Stretton and is in an AONB. There are 250 homes in the village and the areas of Lower Wood, Womerton and High Park. Much of the surrounding area is pastureland and hills and popular with tourists. Village amenities are limited to a village hall, the Yew Tree Public House and Stretton Hall Nursing Home but there is a vibrant community of retirees and families involved in voluntary work, home based businesses or work in local towns.

St. Michael's, often referred to as All Stretton Church, is an Edwardian building in an elevated rural position above Shrewsbury Road. It is well maintained and the recently renovated vestry doubles as a kitchen and meeting room. There is an attractive wildlife friendly garden with memorial area. The church is open for private prayer during the day.

It is an Ecumenical Church since becoming an LEP with the United Reformed Church in 1994. There is a relaxed, friendly, welcoming fellowship enjoying a variety of styles of worship. The majority of members are from the village and many of the congregation will read the Lesson or lead Prayers in the services. The Ecumenical



Church Council is chaired by the Rector and there is a Deputy Church Warden.

The Sunday Service is held at 10.30 a.m. The 1st and 3rd Sundays being Morning Worship, with two Holy Communions, (C of E) on the 2nd Sunday and (URC) on the 4th. On a 5th Sunday we have a choir and are free to be flexible with BCP Communion, Songs of Praise, or other styles of Worship. The average congregation at regular services is 26 however, attendance at special services in 2018 varied from 45 to 79. There are 34 people on the Electoral Roll, 8 URC and retired clergy plus 4 others who regularly attend.

At 8.30 am on Fridays a group meet in church for prayer. A House group meets on alternate Mondays and a Bring and Share lunch is held in someone's home on the 1st Sunday each month. Activities designed to introduce people to the church include: 'Coffee and Cake' and Soup Lunches, opportunities for flower arranging and Christmas Wreath making. The congregation is very active in the local community for example in the Village Committee, [Mayfair](#), Ring and Ride, WI. Good Neighbours, Garden Club, the Rotary Club and the village Pantomime.

Our Churches – All Saints, Little Stretton

All Saints Church serves the village of Little Stretton with the hamlets of Minton, Marshbrook and Hamperley. The southern part of the parish is deeply rural with 11 farms. The church was built in 1903 from a mass produced Manchester flat-pack and given a mock Tudor style exterior and thatched roof. An extension was built in 2012 to provide a fully fitted kitchen, disabled toilet and loft storage facility. The church is open during the day throughout the year and attracts many visitors, especially holiday makers coming to the Stretton AONB.

An appropriate feature in the church for a sheep farming area is a “Shepherd’s Trail” based on Psalm 23 using photographic narrative pictures for each of the six verses. A traditional service using BCP or CW Order Two is held each Sunday, attracting local residents and those from the wider parish who seek the traditional form and language of worship. The church is fortunate to have the assistance of local retired clergy, providing pastoral support and a monthly Holy Communion service at the Residential Care Home in the village. During Lent a local study group is held for members of the congregation.

Bi-monthly committee meetings are held and chaired by the Rector.



Although the church does not have a choir it does have the use of a digital organ. Retired professional musicians act as church organists. Music plays a significant role in worship. At the Harvest Festival and Christmas Carol Services, the services are preceded by a cooked lunch in the village hall – always well attended. During the annual Christian Aid week a Soup and Pudding lunch is held in the church as part of fund raising for the charity.

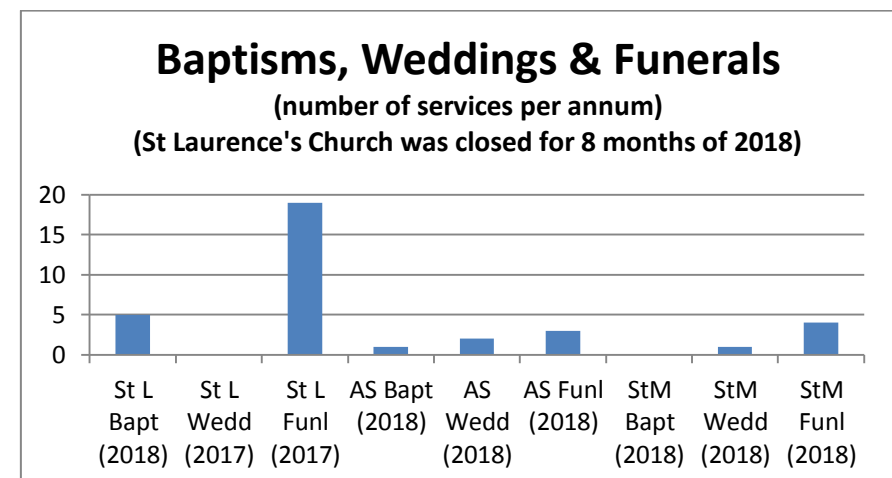
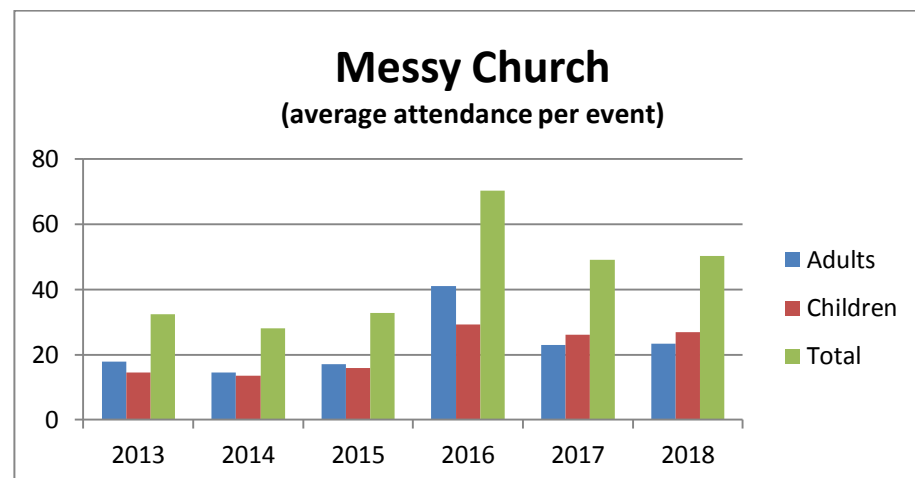
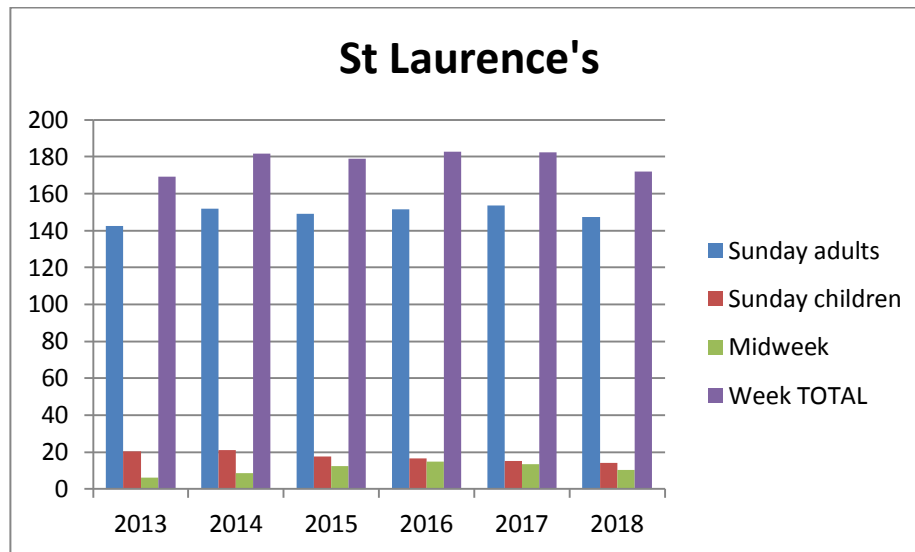
An annual event which involves members of the church, people in the village, pubs and surrounding area entitled, “Teas to Please,” is held in the church garden during the three afternoons of the August Bank Holiday. It takes the form of home-made refreshments, stalls, games and musical entertainment. This is well known and a major fund raising event having been held for many years. Average proceeds have been in the range of £3,000 to £5,000; of which half is given to church and half to secular charities. All Saints Church though small is a humble, homely abode with a caring community sharing love and fellowship with God and one another.

Our Services - Monthly pattern

	8:00 St. Laurence's	9:30 St. Laurence's	11.05 St Laurence's	10.30 St. Michael's	11:00 All Saints	3:00 All Saints	6:00 St. Laurence's
3rd March Sunday before Lent	<i>HC (CW – Order Two)</i> Greg Forster	<i>HC (CW)</i> Greg Forster Romaine Thompson	<i>All Age Worship</i> Robert Rayner & AAW Team	<i>Morning Worship</i> Valerie Morris		<i>EP (BCP)</i> Fane Conant	
10th March 1st Sunday of Lent	<i>HC (CW – Order Two)</i> Tim Bryan	<i>HC (CW)</i> Tim Bryan Deb Battersby	<i>Informal Worship</i> Tim Bryan Deb Battersby	<i>HC (CW)</i> Louise Magowan	<i>HC (CW – Order Two)</i> Paul James		
17th March 2nd Sunday of Lent	<i>HC (CW – Order Two)</i> Louise Magowan Robert Rayner	<i>HC (CW)</i> Louise Magowan Robert Rayner	<i>Informal Worship</i> Louise Magowan Robert Rayner	<i>Morning Worship</i> Robin Trew	<i>MP (BCP)</i> Martin Benson		
24th March 3rd Sunday of Lent	<i>HC (CW – Order One)</i> Robin Trew	<i>Morning Worship</i> Robert Rayner John Daniels	<i>Informal Worship with Communion</i> Robert Rayner John Daniels	<i>HC (URC)</i> Hazel Allen	<i>HC (CW -Order Two)</i> Valerie Morris		<i>Healing Service</i> Greg Forster John Holden
31st March 4th Sunday of Lent Mothering Sunday	<i>HC (CW – Order Two)</i> Louise Magowan	<i>HC (CW)</i> Robin Trew Louise Magowan	<i>Informal Worship</i> Chris Hargraves Louise Magowan	<i>Morning Worship</i> Robert Rayner	<i>HC (CW -Order Two)</i> Mike Bourke		

Our Services - Attendance

Average weekly attendance for our three churches

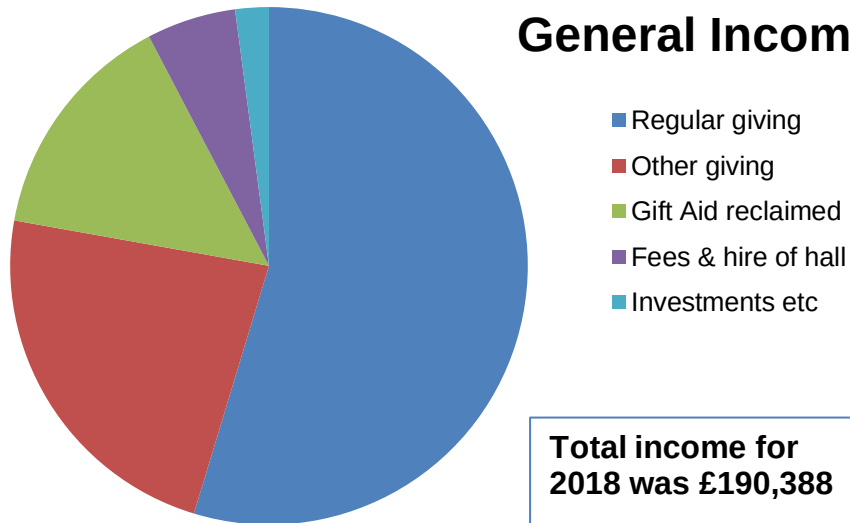


Our Giving - Parish Finance

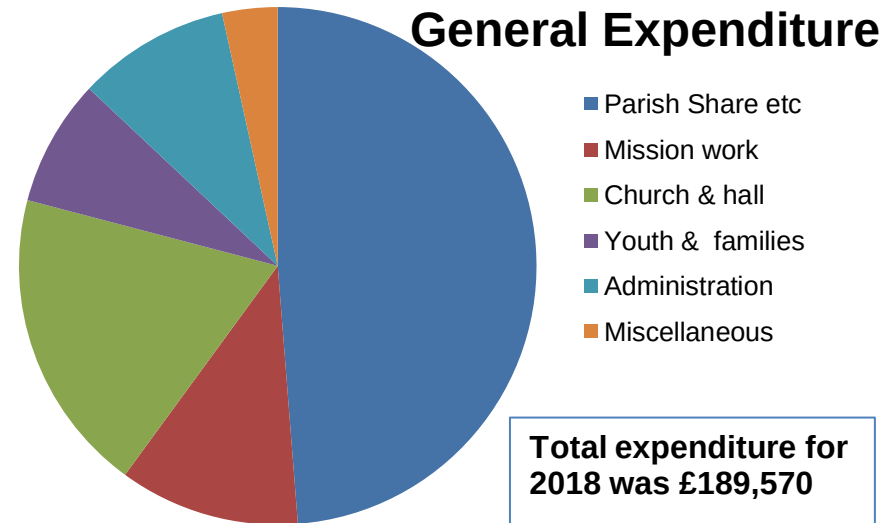


During the recent Quinquennial inspection it became very clear that the roof of St Laurence's Church needed urgent repairs, as the roof tiles were in a poor state of repair, having last been replaced in Victorian times. A local architect was commissioned and a specialist conservation contractor was appointed to replace almost all areas of the roof inside and out with new tiles, battens and plaster secured to the existing oak rafters with rust resistant fittings. The opportunity was also taken to include a layer of insulation between plaster and tiles, to renovate the gutters and downpipes and to repair faulty pointing in the masonry of the church tower. The total cost of the project was £489,000 and the work started in March 2018 and finished in November 2018. There was £163,000 available from reserves to start the fundraising and all of the balance of the funds needed was raised from gifts from the congregation and the local community, apart from £38,500 received from three external trusts.

General Income



General Expenditure



Our Environment - Town & Countryside



The Strettons nestle beneath rolling farmland and steep-sided hills, about twelve miles south of Shrewsbury and at the heart of the Shropshire Hills AONB. The parish is centred on the picturesque market town of Church Stretton but includes two sizeable villages - All Stretton a mile to the north and Little Stretton a similar distance to the south - as well as smaller hamlets and isolated farms. Settlement largely follows the NE-SW line of the Roman Watling Street, now the A49, as it makes its way through the Stretton Gap but over the past century has spread across the valley floor and onto surrounding slopes.

There is much local evidence of Iron Age and Roman occupation as well as a mention in Domesday Book, but Church Stretton mainly developed as an agricultural centre and market town after granting of a market charter in 1214. Tourism arrived here in the

18th century; the opening of the railway in 1852 stimulated the area's development as a Victorian spa resort with The Long Mynd Hotel, Swiss chalet-style tea rooms in Carding Mill Valley, elegant housing for wealthy residents and a mineral-water bottling plant which all survive to this day. The natural beauty and accessibility of the area continues to attract large numbers of visitors; this is also a delightful place in which to live and many visitors return here to retire. During WW2 the town was a centre for the work of St Dunstan's with servicemen and -women who had lost their sight. Today a number of residential and nursing homes cater for the needs of older residents. Although most parishioners live in the town or villages where they enjoy good communications, excellent facilities and a variety of services, many are still keen to support the traditional forms of agriculture which preserve the rural landscape in this part of Shropshire.

Our Environment - People & Social

Church Stretton is often stereotyped as a town of white, active middle-class pensioners. According to the 2011 Census, nearly two-thirds of the population is aged over 45; while only one-third is over normal retirement age, many residents have moved into the area on early retirement from managerial, administrative or professional backgrounds. Many are educated to degree standard and the vast majority own their homes, enjoy good health and can expect lives longer than the national average. Residents are overwhelmingly white native English speakers and the majority declare themselves Christian, with a tiny number from other faiths. Half of all households are occupied by long-term couples, with or without children, but one fifth are occupied by elderly people living alone and many elderly people are confined to nursing homes.

However, contrary to stereotype, a tiny - but growing - number are from non-white ethnicities and one quarter of the population declare themselves to have no religion. The parish is worse than the national average for employment opportunities; nearly one quarter of the working age population has no qualifications, 5% of residents receive out-of-work benefits and 3% of residents are long-term unemployed. About one-fifth of families are single-parent households. The proportions



of residents in social rented houses and children in poverty are both above the national average. While the parish is one of the least deprived in Hereford diocese - with good housing, services, education and living environment - there is a shortage of both affordable housing for young families and leisure activities suitable for young people and teenagers. The large proportion of older 'incomers' largely determines the range of activities provided and draws attention away from families growing up in the area. Away from the town and villages, farmers live isolated lives with narrow roads and few facilities.

Industry has never played a large part in the local economy, but bottling of mineral water continues at the 'pop factory' and there are a number of light industrial and motor repair businesses. Scientific research is carried out at Agilent's Polymer Laboratories. The principal sources of local employment are in retail, professional services, tourism and hospitality, healthcare and care for the elderly, farming and agricultural services. Many local residents commute to work in Shrewsbury or in the Birmingham conurbation; some travel further afield, weekly commuting to work in London or south-east England. A growing number take advantage of broadband internet connections to 'remote work' from home.

Our Environment - Services & Facilities

The Strettons benefit from exceptionally good services and facilities for a community of fewer than 5000 people.

There are two thriving schools in Stretton: [St Lawrence CE Primary School](#) - of which our Rector is *ex-officio* a governor - and [Church Stretton School](#), an academy school for pupils aged 11-16 years, which draws from a very wide area outside the Stretton valley. Older pupils attend 6th form colleges in Shrewsbury, Ludlow and Hereford accessible by bus or train. For younger children there are various playgroups and the St Lawrence Nursery attached to the primary school.

Medical provision is outstanding; a fully staffed [Medical Centre](#), a Health & Wellbeing Centre, two dental practices and an optician serve the town while the [Royal Shrewsbury Hospital](#) is just 15 miles away. The [Mayfair Community Centre](#) is a thriving centre run by a small paid staff but reliant on volunteers.

The town has a modern [Sports Centre](#), with a 20m swimming pool and outdoor tennis courts. More tennis courts are available in the Town Park which has facilities for croquet, bowls and crazy golf alongside the usual play area for children; playing fields nearer the town centre benefit from a recently built pavilion. These facilities are all managed by Church Stretton Town Council, which also runs the [Silvester Horne Institute](#).



The town's Library and Visitor Information Centre is well used and is now expected to remain in its current central location following several years of uncertainty about its future and strenuous local campaigning. There are widespread concerns in the community about the survival of facilities like the library as government funding dwindles and services are withdrawn from rural communities; we still have a Post Office but only one bank now remains in the town. Various civic societies and community groups work to provide and defend local services and to protect the environment, but dependence on cars, changes in farming practice and inappropriate development are perceived as serious threats to the area.

Communications are excellent. The railway line through the valley connects Manchester and South Wales with regular connections to London and the West Midlands; more than 20 trains in each direction stop at Church Stretton Station every weekday. The Ludlow to Shrewsbury bus service calls at Little Stretton and All Stretton as well as Church Stretton, with an hourly service throughout the working day. For motorists the A49 gives access to the dual carriageway A5 south of Shrewsbury and thence to the national motorway system, but this busy road and the railway line separate the eastern slopes of Church Stretton from its town centre facilities.

Our Environment - Shopping & Relaxing

Many residents do all their food shopping within [Church Stretton](#) as the town is very well provided with two butchers, a bakery, a delicatessen, a confectioner and a wholefoods shop among the variety of locally owned businesses in addition to the two supermarkets. The Thursday market includes a popular greengrocery stall as well as fishmonger and bakery stalls. Dress/menswear shops, hardware stores, pharmacists, hairdressers, gift shops, a florist, a bookshop and a newsagent meet other needs. Even our pets benefit from two veterinary practices and a dog grooming parlour. The town centre is compact, with most shops close to Sandford Avenue and the High Street. An outdoor shop, several special interest shops and a large Antiques Market attract tourists and there are a number of guest houses and B&Bs in the area. A small industrial estate with several garages and a petrol station lies close to the A49 junction. Inexpensive car parks are located near Sandford Avenue and there is ample free short-stay roadside parking. While there is little which cannot be found on sale in Church Stretton, when needed the larger centres and retail parks of Shrewsbury, Telford and Ludlow are all easily reached by car or by public transport.

[Church Stretton](#) and its surrounding villages form an excellent base for the country lover and sportsperson at all times of the year, whether hiker, horse rider, mountain biker or naturalist. The Long Mynd is renowned for gliding, hang gliding and paragliding, and boasts the second highest golf course in England. The National Trust's base in [Carding Mill Valley](#) attracts huge numbers of visitors to the beautiful countryside featured in the books of Mary Webb, A E Housman, and Malcolm Saville and many local residents are energetic walkers. For the less energetic, local or visitor alike, there are numerous cafés, teashops, restaurants and hostleries. Most facilities are concentrated in Church Stretton, but the villages of All Stretton and Little Stretton retain their own well-patronised village pubs.

While the town no longer boasts a cinema, there are regular 'Flicks in the Sticks' screenings in the School and in village halls. Lectures, plays and live music, both amateur and professional, are presented in a variety of town venues. A host of sports and hobby clubs meet each week and cater for a wide variety of interests ranging from archery to wildlife.



Our Environment – Other Churches



Through **Churches Together in the Strettons** (CTS), five Christian denominations in the Strettons share in a number of projects throughout the year. Joint Lent Study Courses are held in most years; every year there is a programme of Events for Christian Unity, a World Day of Prayer and a joint Good Friday programme including a Walk of Witness and a service in the Market Square. CTS organises a local Food Bank which opens once a week and is generously supported by townspeople; in recent years it has also organised visits of refugees from St Chad's Sanctuary in Birmingham. CTS holds coffee mornings and often has a presence in town festivities. The local ecumenical Taizé Group is an associate member of CTS.

The following denominations all have flourishing congregations in Church Stretton:

The Methodist Church in Watling Street South, in the Shropshire and Marches Circuit.



St Milburga's Roman Catholic Church in Watling Street North, in the Diocese of Shrewsbury.



Church Stretton Quaker Meeting in Committee Room 1 of the Sylvester Horne Institute.



The United Reformed Church in the High Street



Many people living in surrounding parishes choose to travel to worship in churches in the Strettons. Likewise, a number of Stretton residents worship in the churches of neighbouring parishes or participate in 'Filling Station' outreach events held in other parishes. Some travel further afield to worship at churches such as Shrewsbury Baptist Church, St Chad's Church, the Barnabas Community Church and the Orthodox Church in Shrewsbury.

Our Rectory

House
frontage



Rear garden



Kitchen



Study



Lounge



Master
bedroom

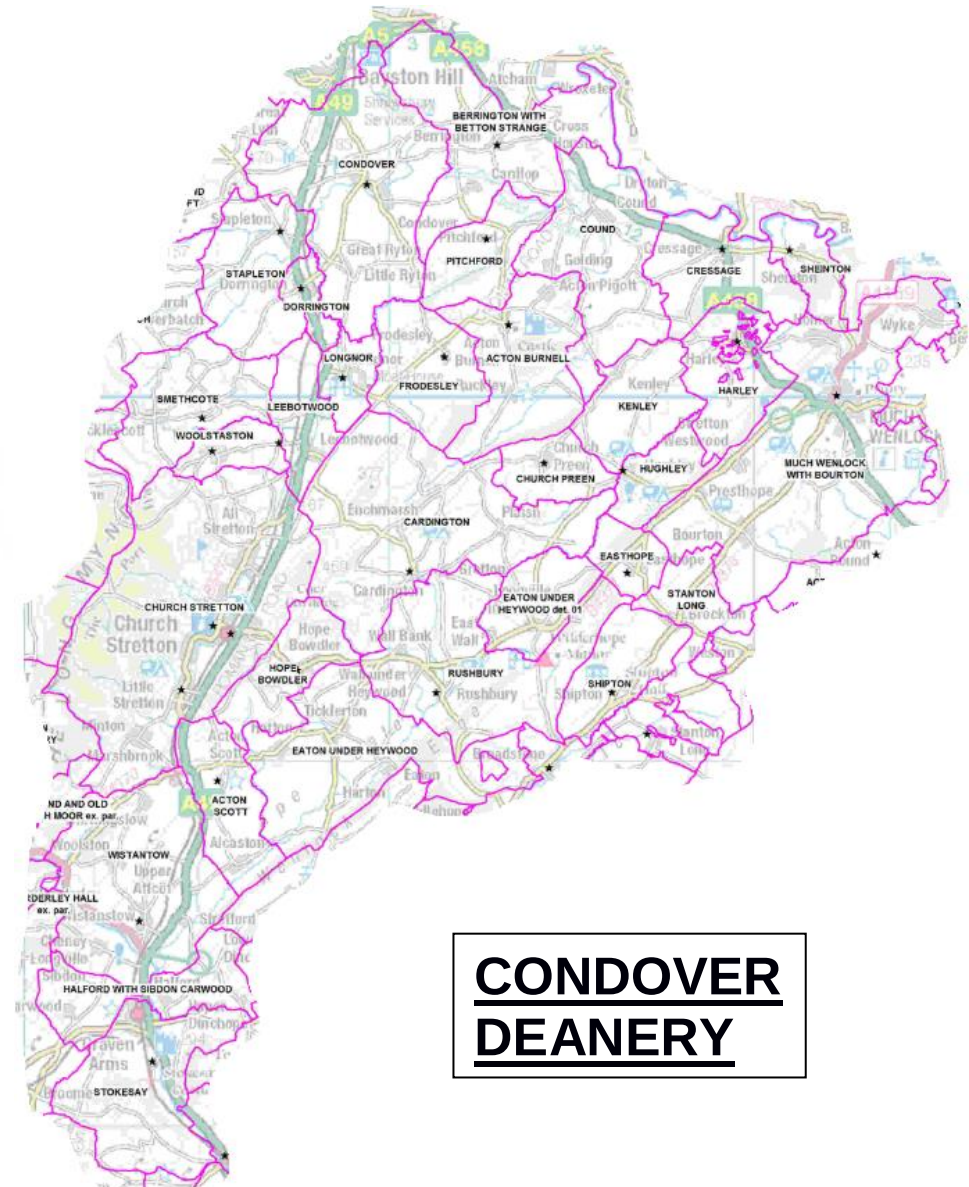


Our Rectory is a well presented and spacious 4 bedroom detached property situated near Carding Mill Valley within walking distance of the Church & Parish Centre. The property benefits from double glazing, gas central heating, parking, large gardens and garage.

The accommodation comprises:

Entrance porch, Study, Guest WC, Inner Hallway, Sitting Room, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility Room, Downstairs WC, 4 Double bedrooms, Bathroom, Shower room. EPC Rating D

Maps



Statement of Needs & Person Profile

We have used this time of Vacancy to reflect on our present situation and our hopes for the future as well as to consider the person we are seeking as our new Rector to take us forward as a United Parish. Our Vacancy Consultation meeting was well attended and the output from this has helped shape our Statement of Needs.

Where we are now

Our strengths

Our weaknesses

Our challenges for the future

Growing

Sharing

We believe our new Rector should be

A Person of Faith

A Leader

A Pastor

Statement of Needs

Where we are now

We see our strengths as...

- ◆ being a church that values and is founded on prayer, and which offers itself to be a witness for Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;
- ◆ our preaching which is Bible-based and focused on Jesus through the illumination and power of the Holy Spirit;
- ◆ our encouragement of each and every member of our church family to be involved in the life and worship of our churches;
- ◆ being a welcoming and vibrant community with a sense of warmth, fun and laughter as well as an expectancy and excitement at God's plans for us;
- ◆ being blessed with a number of retired clergy who enhance our worship and teaching;
- ◆ being outward looking and actively engaged with both the local community and the wider world in issues that affect us all;
- ◆ encompassing a wide range of services & worship styles from BCP through Messy Church to New Wine;
- ◆ our range of small group meetings for fellowship, Bible study, prayer & pastoral care;
- ◆ our strong pastoral care team working actively within our church community;
- ◆ our dynamic engagement in youth and children's work, embracing a particularly close relationship with our local church school through established links including Open the Book, and with the adjacent [Church Stretton School](#) (secondary);
- ◆ our strong finances come from the wide acceptance of the principle of tithing, to support the church's mission and the ongoing care of our buildings;
- ◆ our internal ecumenism and the many church traditions and experiences to be found within our congregations.

We see our weaknesses as...

- ◆ being less effective in winning people to faith than in welcoming existing Christians into our fellowship;
- ◆ at risk of being too busy in too many diverse areas at the same time;
- ◆ lacking a clear vision of what we hope to contribute in certain areas while being involved in a wide range of activities;
- ◆ failing to exploit the opportunities of a tourist area as well as we might;
- ◆ having limited success in attracting teenagers and young adults.

Statement of Needs (cont.)

Our challenges for the future

- to fulfil our Mission: “Growing together in faith, hope and love; sharing the good news of Jesus with all”.

Growing together in faith, hope and love: we need...

- ◆ to continue to grow in prayer as a foundation for mission activities;
- ◆ to be challenged by the Bible and led by the Holy Spirit;
- ◆ to allow God to set our agenda, and to be empowered by the Holy Spirit for service;
- ◆ to help everyone in church to develop their gifts and put them to use;
- ◆ to continue actively to welcome newcomers seeking faith in Jesus Christ;
- ◆ to develop our knowledge and love of God;
- ◆ to continue to be a caring church home for growing and established Christians;
- ◆ to review what we currently do, so as to ensure our effectiveness in mission;
- ◆ to offer creatively engaging services to meet the needs of everyone, both young and old;
- ◆ to build on our internal ecumenism to grow our relationship with other churches across the Strettons.

Sharing the good news of Jesus with all: we need...

- ◆ to review, reshape and implement our Mission Action Plan;
- ◆ to be resolutely outward looking; to serve and reach out to the local community and beyond, with a special concern for the farming community hereabouts and for tourists visiting this popular area;
- ◆ to be a bold presence in our community, using Alpha and other evangelistic initiatives to lead people to faith and see lives changed;
- ◆ to continue to find innovative ways to share God's love with people who have never been part of a church through Messy Church, Men's Breakfasts, Soup Lunches, Harvest Lunches, Carol Services and other outreach events;
- ◆ to increase contact with families in our community through our youth and families ministry and our outreach work in local schools so as to see more people of all ages finding faith;
- ◆ to have a heart for the marginalised and to love and care for people around us through active involvement in the local Food Bank, [Mayfair Community Centre](#), [The Shrewsbury Ark](#) and other charities/organisations;
- ◆ to be a safe place of refuge and love for those in need;
- ◆ to continue to care for each other and to keep better track of those who drift away;
- ◆ to resource God's wider church through our Mission Partners both domestically and overseas.

Person Profile

We believe our new Rector should be

A Person of Faith, who...

- ◆ has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, expressed naturally and enthusiastically;
- ◆ is prayerful, reliant on the Holy Spirit and expectant to see God working in his/her life;
- ◆ has a deep knowledge of Scripture;
- ◆ can help us understand what it means to live as people of God in contemporary society;
- ◆ can help us listen to what God is saying and discern where He is leading our three churches in the future.

A Leader, skilled in...

- ◆ demonstrating proven leadership as well as a good sense of humour and emotional intelligence;
- ◆ Bible based preaching and able to adapt teaching to the needs of different congregations and groups;
- ◆ discerning, communicating, and sharing a bold vision for the next stage of our church life and developing strategies to move us towards that vision in partnership with the Leadership Team and PCC;
- ◆ helping us to consolidate and build on existing initiatives;
- ◆ mentoring and developing current and emerging leaders within the congregation;
- ◆ encouraging and empowering each of us to identify and to use our God-given gifts;
- ◆ demonstrating perseverance and courage in leadership and care for the congregation;
- ◆ listening to people within the church and outside;
- ◆ inspiring us to act with courage and vision to learn how to share Jesus' love with a changing world;
- ◆ helping us to create services and environments in which people with no faith history can find community and encounter God;
- ◆ representing the United Parish on external bodies as necessary and in consultation with the PCC
- ◆ liaising with the local community, particularly through the [Town Council](#), [Mayfair Community Centre](#), Churches Together in the Strettons, [Church Stretton Arts Festival](#) and other organisations as necessary.

A Pastor, committed to...

- ◆ working with the Pastoral Team in caring for all ages through whatever life brings us;
- ◆ building bridges with the local community and supporting community activities, taking part where appropriate;
- ◆ offering care home and home communions as required in conjunction with our licensed and retired clergy;
- ◆ continued ministerial development.