

Parish Profile 2023

“Valuing All, building one another up in faith, and sharing the love of Jesus.”

Parish Profile

The Parish and Church Building

Since 1956, St. Justus Church in Rochester has continued to serve as a hub of religious and community activities. The post-war period brought changes and challenges, but the church adapted to the evolving needs of its congregation. The Church building present today, and the third in the short history of the parish was built in 1990-91. It comprises, under one roof, the Worship Area with movable seating, a Baptistry Pool for the option of full-immersion Baptisms, a large hall, a well-maintained kitchen, lounge room, smaller quiet room, a sensory room, church office and smaller rooms upstairs linking to the AV area.

The surrounding area was originally built of Local Authority housing for rent, however in the 1980s, due to the right to buy scheme, a significant number of buildings were purchased into private ownership. In recent times there have been new housing developments within the parish in a number of locations.

The church's vibrant community outreach programs, including charitable initiatives and social events, have further solidified its role as a pillar of support and unity. St. Justus Church has remained steadfast in its commitment to nurturing faith, fostering community bonds, and offering solace and guidance to its parishioners. Today, it stands as a beacon of hope and a symbol of resilience, welcoming all who seek spiritual solace and a sense of belonging.

The population of the Parish is 8621. (*Church Urban Fund statistics <https://cuf.org.uk/parish/310138>) The parish is described as being 'relatively deprived' compared with other parishes in the country.*

Within the Parish are seven schools:

4 Primary Schools: Crest Road Nursery and Infants, Delce Academy, Warren Wood Academy and St William of Perth (RC).

3 Senior Schools: Thomas Aveling Secondary, Rochester Grammar School and Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School.

The church has maintained good links with all the schools with several visiting for religious and community events.

Within the parish the largest employer by far is BAE, with whom St Justus has had links in the past and continues to do so within the Cluster.

There are two care homes, Friston House and Valley View Nursing Home, and a Hospice within the parish which St Justus has firm links with.

The Vicarage

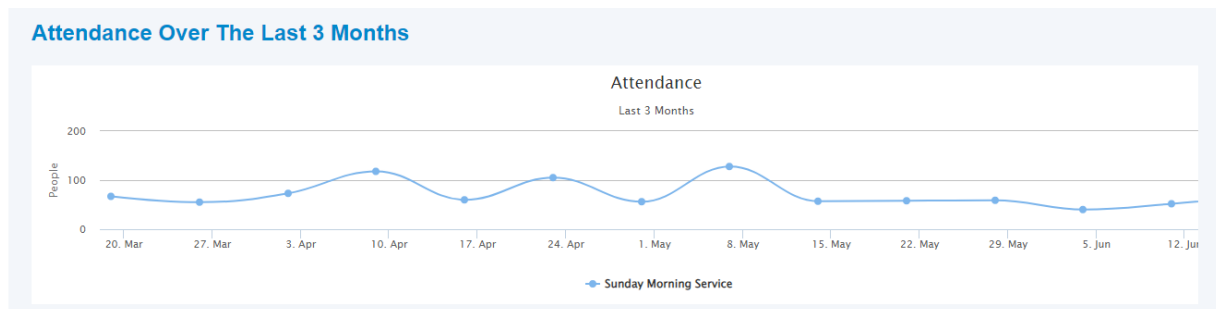
The Vicarage is adjacent to, but not connected to the Church building, and is a 4 bedroom detached property in good structural condition and decorative order. There is access from the vicarage back garden to the grounds of the church.



Parish Life

The Electoral Roll currently numbers 110.

Sunday morning attendance figures:



The current pattern for services is:

1st Sunday 10.30am Holy Communion

2nd Sunday 10.30am Morning Worship with Kids Club

3rd Sunday 10.30am Holy Communion with Kids Club

4th Sunday 10.30am All Age Worship led by Children's team

5th Sunday 10.30am Morning Worship with Guest Speaker from mission partner

During the summer months a 6.30pm Evening Service also takes place.

2nd Tuesday each month – Dementia Service 2.30pm (cluster churches take turns to lead)
Yearly – Bereavement service in November to remember those we have loved and lost.

Robes are worn at Holy Communion only.

St Justus is part of the Rochester Mission Cluster along with the parish of Rochester St Peter & St Margaret and the parish of Borstal St Matthew. Cluster Churches often worship together, study the bible and pray together. Cluster Co-ordinators meet to plan social and outreach events. The respective incumbents and 2 representatives from each parish also sit on the Without Walls Charity, which raises money for local charitable projects.

Our Cluster is one of 3 Mission Clusters in the deanery. The others are Chatham and Walderslade. In the deanery there are 10 parishes and 14 places of worship (including the Cathedral). Our hope is that the new incumbent will engage with the life of the Mission Cluster and the Deanery, building strong relationships in our local area.

Worship

The style of worship at St Justus is best described as "open evangelical". We have a mixture of live music and/or pre-recorded music within our worship. There is a small children's choir that perform at a few events during the year. We are used to engaging with creative ways of worship.

We have use of audio-visual, pro presenter, and power point to enhance effects.

Morning Prayer

During Covid-19 pandemic we started to meet together for Morning Prayer via Facebook live. This was very popular regularly having 20+ participants, and provided support and encouragement during this difficult time. This format of Morning Prayer continued after 'lock down' and up until interregnum. We are looking to reinstate this when we have a new incumbent.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an integral part of the life and ministry of St Justus. We are committed to maintaining environments that are safe for all children, young people and adults and to creating nurturing, caring conditions within our church.

Written policies and procedures are reviewed annually. We have a Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) who is also the lead recruiter. We have adopted the House of Bishops' "Promoting a Safer Church; safeguarding policy statement".

Group leaders manage volunteers' day to day and notify any concerns to the PSO. The PSO is responsible for contacting existing volunteers when their DBS is up for renewal. Our focus is on making sure that volunteers are up to date with the relevant training.

We consider the role of the Incumbent to be critical in leading by example to ensure best safeguarding practice.

Day to day management

We use the iKnow church suite to manage hall bookings, rotas, church membership, statistics at services and other events. We also have a good social media presence on Facebook and Instagram. An online newsletter is produced weekly via Mailchimp.

Life Groups

There are currently no small Life Groups meeting since Covid-19, however this is an area we are keen to restart. We have completed several whole church courses, such as; the prayer course 'unanswered prayer' and 'spiritual gift' bible study. We are keen to

continue to use a variety of methods, face to face, Zoom, Facebook live, to meet together for encouragement and support, and for our Christian growth and walk, to suit our diverse congregation.

Sustainability

We believe that sustainability and eco-friendly practices within our church are important to inspire and lead our community towards a more sustainable future. For us, 'Valuing All' also includes the World and the community around us. By adopting eco-friendly practices, we demonstrate our commitment to stewardship of the Earth, aligning our actions with the values of compassion, care, and respect for creation. Embracing sustainability within the church promotes environmental awareness and encourages responsible resource management. It sets an example for congregants and encourages them to integrate sustainable practices into their own lives. Moreover, eco-friendly initiatives can reduce the church's ecological footprint, conserve energy and water, minimize waste, and promote biodiversity. By embodying sustainable values, our church plays a vital role in preserving the environment for future generations and embodying a holistic approach to faith that encompasses both spiritual and environmental well-being. We are wanting to build on the foundations that have been laid, and to become more eco-friendly aiming for renewable energy through installation of solar panels, using environmentally friendly cleaning products, signing up to Medway Plastic free initiative, and continuing to do community litter picks regularly.

Activities and ministries within St Justus

Ministry Leadership Team

The Ministry Leadership Team currently meets every other month to prayerfully think about the direction the church is going in with regards to sermon series, study groups (such as Test of Faith, Romans Bible study and Unanswered Prayer to name some recent ones), Parish Weekends and large Church events. It reports to the PCC and is a place where new ideas and current activities may be discussed and evaluated. The team currently consists of the incumbent, church wardens (during interregnum), two LLM's and Reader.

Mission and Outreach Group

This group is independent of but reports to the PCC and has responsibility for distributing approximately 10% of total giving, to causes and individuals they prayerfully discern would benefit from financial help, to increase their effectiveness in the Mission field.

This Away Giving is mainly to groups or individuals working overseas, but not entirely, and always with a sound Christian base.

The Group regularly update the congregation on their work through presentations of ongoing projects and feedback from recipients of aid.

Our overseas mission partners are:

St Matthew's Church, Rofati, Kondo, Tanzania

https://kondoa.anglican.org/Groups/263392/Rofati_Parish.aspx

Mike Campbell Foundation, Zimbabwe

<https://www.mikecampbellfoundation.com/>

Prayer Ministry

This ministry team provides a small group of people to pray before each morning's service to ask for God's guidance, strength and protection for those giving and those receiving His Word. The team is available to pray for individual needs after the service.

An active prayer chain, open to all members of the congregation, is accessed by telephone, text or email, at any time, for transmission of prayer requests by anyone with a need for urgent and sustained prayer.

Pastoral Group

Meets regularly and seeks to provide pastoral care quietly and effectively to individuals and families within the church. The team is led by Wendy Swatridge and comprises of people drawn from various ministries within the church bringing skills, experience and a genuine heart for this sensitive yet vital ministry.

Tods

Meet twice a week in term-time, for children from birth to school age, with their parent/s, grandparent/s or childminder. The aim is to provide a safe and friendly environment where the love of Jesus may be shown through care for the family, listening and taking helpful interest in the things that are important to them. The groups run on Monday 1pm to 2.30pm and Thursday 9.30am to 11am. We have implemented a booking system for the Thursday group as this session is very popular. The group also has their own Facebook group.

Messy Church

Messy Church is a short informal service aimed mainly at families with children up to the age of eleven who do not normally attend other church services. It has been running as Messy Church since September 2019 on the first Sunday of the month at 3:45pm. Since Covid-19, we have been running the session mainly at tables, with craft, action songs, Bible story, at least one active game away from tables and prayer time; followed by a hot meal. Attendance varies from month to month, but overall has a reasonable number of 'core families'.

Kidsclub

We run a Kids club on the 2nd and 3rd Sunday of the month during the 10.30 am service (term time only). At present children from age 2 to 9 go out to Kids club where they listen to Bible stories and participate in related activities. The children return to church to join the Eucharist to take communion or receive a blessing. The children share what they have done with the congregation just before the end of the service.

Wonderzone +

This is a new group that is being trialled for 11 – 18 year olds. They meet bi-monthly on a Saturday 10am to 4pm. (Previously the group was known as Blend 45 and met on a Sunday afternoon for an hour.)

Wonderzone holiday club

This is a type of Holiday Club which we trialled last year and it was very well received, so it is running again this year. It runs for three days 10am – 12 noon and families with children up to eleven years old attend together. Activities are available for the children to do as they gather in the worship area. Two lively songs open the session followed by an introduction to theme for the day (all three days have a common theme with a specific one linked to it for each day) from the leaders. There is an interactive talk on a Bible story, usually involving a science experiment to illustrate the main points. There may be drama or a video of the story to embed the take home message. A carousel of activities follows involving craft, active games, quiet thinking time and another activity with drink and biscuits provided. Families then return for prayer time in groups, challenge time then final song.

Craft Club

Meets once a month during our Wellbeing Cafe on the 3rd Thursday of each month, 2pm to 4pm. Various craft activities for adults with a social element.

Alpha

We aim to run an Alpha course at least annually and also offer discipleship courses such as; 'Test of Faith' and 'Forty days with Jesus.'

Cafe Plus

A community cafe which meets on a Tuesday 10.30am to 12.30pm for social interaction and to build friendships. Games, bingo, quiz, karaoke, and refreshments available. It is open to all ages.

Wellbeing Cafe

A social group with a wellbeing focus. Meets on a Thursday 2pm to 4pm. In partnership with 'Medway Health Walks' a walk is led by a member of their team on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month. We also have a community garden project growing vegetables and flowers for use within the church. Other activities have included cooking on a budget, guest speakers and involvement with Medway Voluntary Action and other health professionals.

Sensory room

We are lucky to have a sensory room within our building for the use of the community. Sensory rooms can aid the development of young children and support the wellbeing of

older children and adults with learning disabilities, autism and dementia. Sessions are booked via the church office.

Hall hire and outside groups

There are many groups who meet regularly within our building. There are various sized spaces which we can offer for hire are, some regular users include; Brownies, Children's dance and music groups, Karate, Adult disco dancing exercise group, the Multiple Sclerosis Society and the Medway Lupus Group.

Foodbank

The foodbank is managed by the Trussel Trust, this is open on a Tuesday 10.30am to 12.30pm. There are a group of volunteers who support with the management and running of the foodbank.

Warm Space

During the Winter months we run a 'warm space' for the local community one day a week. A space for all ages to come into the warmth, socialise, work (free WiFi), or sit quietly. Light lunch; soup and roll are provided along with tea, coffee etc.

Parish Weekend

Yearly we hold a parish weekend with activities for the whole congregation.

St Justus staff and statistics

Current staffing levels:

Reader: Sidney Mennie.

LLM: Christine Ireland and Hayley Usmar.

Foluke Gabriel holds the Bishops Licence Certificate.

Pastoral assistants: Pat Lowrey, Shirley Verral, Wendy Swatridge, Jenni Dawson

Currently employed:

Parish Administrator on part-time basis – 10 hours per week (Mon, Tues and Thurs)

Cleaner on part-time basis – 10 hours per week (Mon-Fri)

Statistics for Occasional Offices

8 Baptisms in 2022, 13 so far this year (4 by immersion)

27 funerals in 2022, 10 this year so far

1 Wedding in 2022, 0 this year

What we offer

We can offer an able and competent set of people to actively support the individual who we would seek to value and encourage in their Ministry, being particularly mindful of the needs and welfare of them and their family.

We have a reputation for a warm welcome and hospitality which is well-founded and much-practiced, but please be advised the congregation and the PCC do have a sense of humour!

What we seek in an incumbent

We are seeking a dynamic and spirit-filled individual to join our parish as a Vicar. The ideal candidate will possess the following qualities and attributes:

1. **Intergenerational:** The candidate should be able to connect and communicate effectively with individuals of all ages, recognising and valuing the diversity present within our parish community.
2. **Inclusive:** An inclusive mind set is essential, with the ability to foster an atmosphere of acceptance, embracing individuals from all walks of life and backgrounds.
3. **Mission and Community Engagement:** The candidate must have a strong belief in the mission of the church and a passion for community engagement. They should actively seek opportunities to connect with and serve the wider community, nurturing relationships and finding innovative ways to share the love of Jesus beyond the church walls.
4. **Environmental Awareness:** An interest and commitment to environmental and eco-friendly practices are desired. The candidate should have an understanding of the importance of stewardship of creation and the role of the church in promoting environmental responsibility.
5. **Valuing All:** The candidate must uphold our parish statement of valuing all, treating each individual with respect, dignity, and love, while recognising and appreciating the unique gifts and contributions they bring.
6. **Small and All Church Groups:** The candidate should have an appreciation for the diverse range of church groups, from small intimate gatherings to larger congregational events. They should possess the ability to engage and inspire individuals across these various settings.
7. **Go-Getter Attitude:** A proactive and motivated approach to ministry is essential. The candidate should demonstrate enthusiasm, initiative, and a willingness to take on new challenges with a positive and determined outlook.
8. **Collaborative Leadership:** The candidate must have the ability to lead an experienced and competent ministry team in an open and collaborative manner. They should value the input and ideas of others, fostering a culture of mutual respect and cooperation.

9. Gift Discernment: The candidate should have a genuine interest in helping individuals realise their potential and the gifts that God has bestowed upon them. They should be able to provide guidance and support in helping others discover and utilise their talents for the greater good of the community.
10. Cluster and Deanery Support: The candidate should be willing to collaborate and support other churches within the cluster and deanery. They should actively participate in collective efforts and initiatives aimed at promoting unity and cooperation among neighbouring parishes.
11. Prayerful: An individual who values the importance of prayer and recognises its power in their personal life and in the life of the community. The candidate should actively encourage and promote a culture of prayer, both individually and corporately.

We are seeking a visionary and compassionate leader who can inspire and guide our parish in living out our values. If you believe you possess the qualities and attributes outlined above, we invite you to apply for the position of Vicar at our church.

Financial

We have generally been able to meet the Stipend requirement and Parish Offer obligations.

Contacts:

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Parish Reps: Mrs Jenny Blanshard jennyblanshard@gmail.com

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