



Parish Profile 2024

**PARISH OF
SOUTH
GILLINGHAM**

Building community

Nurturing faith

Growing disciples of Jesus Christ

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WELCOME

to the Parish of South Gillingham



The South Gillingham Team Ministry brings together the four churches of Wigmore, Parkwood, Bredhurst and Hempstead, in the county of Kent. Following the retirement of our present incumbent, we are looking for a new Team Rector, to work alongside our ministry team and volunteers, to oversee the running of our large and varied parish.

It is our desire to see the Parish of South Gillingham (PSG) grow both spiritually and numerically, and we are looking for a minister who is able to gently lead us forward, deepen our walk with the Lord, and to help us to fulfil our aims to 'build community, nurture faith and grow disciples of Jesus Christ'.

In recent years, the parish has experienced a significant reduction in staff due to illness and retirement. However, we believe this challenge presents an opportunity for us to prayerfully reassess the current situation and for us to explore new directions that God may be leading us in. As the parish continues to evolve, there is a sense of anticipation for what God has in store.

We are prayerfully seeking a minister who will help us to fulfil our mission to build a community in which people can grow in faith and fellowship, and to reach out to those among whom we live to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ, that others may come to a living faith.

With a focus on engaging with children, families and the wider community, we are committed to making the church a relevant and accessible place for all.

If you are passionate about serving others and nurturing spiritual growth, we would love to hear from you!

We are excited about what God might have in store for us



Building community

Nurturing faith

*Growing disciples of
Jesus Christ*

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

We know that there is huge, untapped potential for PSG as we enter a new chapter in our church life.



- 1** We have a large number of people come through our doors every year who do not yet know Christ
- 2** There are 'fringe' members of our congregations who remain hesitant about getting 'stuck in' and unsure about going deeper in their faith
- 3** We need younger adults in our church
- 4** We need to develop further ways of working together across the Parish
- 5** There is a growing awareness of the need to change and adapt to attract and accommodate younger generations and families
- 6** We need to ensure church activities are more intentionally missional, where Jesus is named and people encouraged to explore faith
- 7** We need to be more visible in our communities

WE ARE LOOKING FOR



SOMEONE WHO...

- is an encouraging team leader with a desire to see God's Kingdom flourish in South Gillingham
- will lead us into a deeper understanding of God's message and life lived in all its fullness
- has a heart for reaching out to the community, to help us to engage in a relevant way
- will have relevant experience to help us reach out to all age groups, including children, young people and families and grow our congregations
- is a people person with good pastoral skills, keen to be involved in people's lives and be a positive presence in the community
- communicates well and can relate to people of all ages and backgrounds
- is confident building on our work within schools, and in taking assemblies and RE lessons
- is comfortable leading, participating in and encouraging a range of worship styles
- is intentional about prayer and will help us to deepen our prayer life
- is a skilled enabler with the ability to identify, encourage and release gifts amongst us
- will be spirit-led and servant-hearted, seeking God's will for us as a church and in the world
- has resilience, self-confidence and a sense of humour
- can challenge us, as well as nurture and empower us; someone who can lovingly encourage us out of our comfort zone!
- will help us seek God for a fresh vision for our churches

WHAT WE OFFER



IN RETURN WE...

- provide a supportive and friendly living and working environment
- are a welcoming community, ready to learn and embrace change
- have potential for growth and development within the parish
- are committed to developing the ministry of the whole church across the parish
- offer administrative assistance including a church administrator, parish office and parish treasurer
- have a dedicated ministry team including team vicar, licensed lay ministers, readers and church wardens
- will pray for and support you (and your family) practically
- have good links to a wide variety of community groups and schools within the parish

The PCC is currently investigating funding opportunities and grants to employ a paid youth/children/family outreach worker to strengthen this area of ministry





WHO WE ARE



THE BENEFICE

The Team Ministry was formed in April 1990, bringing together the four worshipping communities in South Gillingham with the Team Rector overseeing the work of team vicars in each of the churches within the parish. We have recently seen a significant reduction in staff due to illness and retirement which has impacted the life of the church and we are grateful to the present clergy and lay ministry team for taking on more services, embracing the pastoral, teaching and visionary work that parish life encompasses.



Each congregation and building have unique characteristics and strengths, allowing us to cater to the diverse needs of our community. While we meet separately each week for Sunday morning worship, we come together for parish services, and for special services and events.

We have been richly blessed by the ministry of the present incumbent whose enthusiasm for promoting more informal worship coupled with good humour, fellowship and friendship has helped bring our four churches together as one parish.



Although we are four individual churches, it is our aim to continue to build together to be one church family meeting in four locations across the parish, and to serve God and our community well in South Gillingham.

WHO WE ARE



TEAM MINISTRY

The Rector leads the Team Ministry and is chairperson of the Parochial Church Council (PCC). Each Church has its own District Church Council (DCC) which reports to the PCC. The Rector leads the Parish in its mission and ministry.

The Team Vicar works closely with the Team Rector to serve the needs of the parish, and historically has had substantial responsibility for the day to day care of the St Paul's congregation.

The Parish Administrator, together with administrative assistants, are based in the Parish Office within St. Matthew's and are the first point of contact for booking marriages and baptisms.

Parish finance and all Gift Aid administration are managed centrally and church accounts are managed locally.

The PCC represents the parish and is made up of Church Wardens from each of the 4 churches, Team Vicar, Deanery Synod representatives, Treasurer and Secretary and elected members. The PCC currently meets bi-monthly.



WHO WE ARE



SERVICES

The parish offers a range of Sunday services in each of the four churches, from formal Eucharist to informal all-age worship. The services start at 10.30am. There is also a fortnightly 8.30am BCP Holy Communion service.

Our four churches work together for twice monthly FAMILY FUN on Sunday afternoons at St Paul's from 3-4.30pm, and at 5pm there is an informal, contemporary 'cafe style' service which gathers most Sunday evenings at St. Matthew's, which has included hosting Alpha, The Bible Course and The Romans Course. A quiet Evening Service is held once a month at St. Peter's at 6.00pm.

We hold a Parish Service on the fifth Sunday, encouraging our separate congregations to join together around the parish.

Mid-week worship opportunities include morning prayer on Tuesdays and a short service of Holy Communion on Wednesdays, both at 9.30am.

Building *community*
Nurturing *faith*
Growing disciples of
Jesus Christ



WHO WE ARE



CHILDREN'S WORK

Within our parish we are committed to engaging with children and families, aiming to introduce them to the love of Jesus. We have established some excellent connections with the primary schools in our area and are keen to maintain and further develop these links.

Clergy are actively involved in schools, serving as governors and leading assemblies and RE lessons. Classes from our local schools attend **Experience Easter** and **Experience Christmas** events at the church, and 'It's Your Move' sessions help Year 6 pupils to prepare for the transition to secondary school. Local uniformed groups attend our **Remembrance Day** services, and **Christingle** services always attract large numbers from the parish.

While we welcome a significant number of children and families throughout the year, and recognise that there is huge potential, we struggle to retain their engagement with church beyond an annual visit. We are therefore actively seeking better ways to engage and build lasting relationships with those that are currently outside the church, and we welcome ways to make church more relevant and accessible to all members of our community.



Within our benefice we have a number of primary schools with whom we have made some excellent connections.

WHO WE ARE



CHILDREN'S WORK

Although the number of children attending morning services is small, it has been a real joy to see those that do come regularly grow in their understanding and faith in Jesus as they engage with the Bible through stories, discussion, crafts, and games. We were privileged to witness four of these youngest members being confirmed at a recent confirmation service in the Deanery.

As well as Sunday Services, **Family Fun** - an informal fortnightly family service - and **Holiday Club** provide sessions of games and activities further exploring God's word, for those with primary school aged children.

139 Coffee Morning, Play and Chat and **Sunbeams** are our weekly toddler groups, reaching families that have little or no contact with church and leading to lasting friendships and support being formed with the church.



WHO WE ARE



CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

We are blessed to have within our lay ministry team an **Anna Chaplain** who, together with the support of two Anna Friends, works to oversee the spiritual care of many elderly people within our community. The Ministry Team make regular visits to local nursing and care homes, taking communion to residents, and providing prayerful and spiritual support, they ensure that elderly members of our congregations and community feel supported and valued.

In addition to the spiritual care, there are a range of weekly and monthly groups which cater for the social side of life for older members of our community, such as the very popular **Thursday Club**, whose activities include visiting speakers, musical performances, and trips out, **Monday Hub**, **Film Club**, **Knit and Natter**, and **Carer's Coffee Morning** - though of course these are not reserved exclusively for the older members of our congregation!



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WHO WE ARE



CHURCH GROUPS & ACTIVITIES

There are a wide range of weekly and fortnightly activities that take place within the parish. As well as those already mentioned, we host **Place of Welcome**, local community hubs, including **Inside Out Church** which also provides an opportunity for the community to cut down on waste, by refilling bottles with cleaning and washing products and buying sustainable goods. **Food for Thought** provides the opportunity to enjoy a light lunch together, which often follows a short Bible-based reflection or visits from community groups and speakers. These all help to foster a sense of community, enabling individuals to connect, build friendships, and find support within the church family.



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WHO WE ARE



HOME GROUPS

There are a few Home Groups that meet regularly for Bible study, fellowship and prayer. These small group gatherings allow individuals to delve deeper into the scriptures, discuss matters of faith, and share their spiritual journey together.

PRAYER MEETINGS

Prayer is fundamental to our Christian life and growth and there are many small groups that meet regularly to pray together. We also encourage the church to unite in corporate prayer, including our Tuesday **Morning Prayer** and monthly **Prayer and Praise**. We have recently introduced a **Lunchtime Prayer** group which has seen higher attendance and accommodates those that are unable to attend early morning or evening meetings.

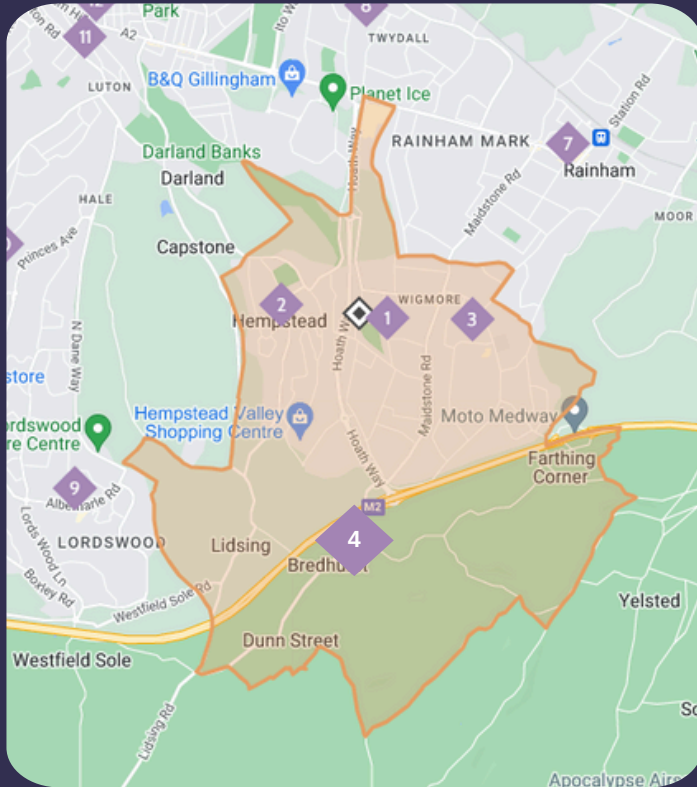


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WHO WE ARE



OUR CHURCH BUILDINGS



St. Paul's
Parkwood



St. Matthew's
Wigmore



St. Peter's
Bredhurst



All Saints
Hempstead



1. St. Matthew's, Wigmore
2. All Saints, Hempstead
3. St. Paul's, Parkwood
4. St. Peter's, Bredhurst

"One church family meeting in four locations"

STRENGTHS

- A welcoming, friendly and generous community
- Hard working and committed lay ministry team
- A culture of caring for, praying for, serving and loving one another
- A thriving community of older, long established parishioners with a wealth of experience, understanding and expertise
- Four great locations, including four churches and two community centres

CHALLENGES

- Building a church whose age-range reflects our communities
- A shortage of able and available volunteers and having to rely on a small and very dedicated number, without over-burdening them
- Strengthening our love and cooperation in order that we might communicate God's love more effectively
- Retaining those who come to our services and then fall away, especially younger people, and families
- Accepting that for some there are historical ties to a particular church building or a particular churchmanship

THE AREA



THE ENVIRONMENT

The Parish of South Gillingham is located on the edge of the Medway Towns in North Kent. Nestled partly within the picturesque landscape of the North Downs. South Gillingham is mainly suburban, offering a pleasant living environment with easy access to both urban amenities and areas of outstanding natural beauty.

South Gillingham is less than an hour by train from London and easy access to London and the Kent Coast makes it a convenient location for commuters.

The parish is a diverse community with a mix of modern estates and individually designed houses.

While predominantly modern, the village of Bredhurst adds a touch of historical charm, with its roots dating back to medieval times. Medway, with its rich military, naval and historic heritage, adds to the area's cultural significance.

Plans have been submitted by developers to build 2000+ homes in the Lidsing Area (west of Bredhurst) which will fall within the parish.

With a current population of around 22,000 the parish is varied in terms of age and social background, and while fairly affluent by Medway standards, the parish still has pockets of need, with individuals facing both financial and social challenges.

There are five primary schools within the parish, and a good range of secondary and grammar schools only a short distance away. For higher education, the universities of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church, Greenwich, and colleges associated with Mid Kent College are all within easy reach.

Access to public transport is excellent, with easy reach to Bluewater and Lakeside shopping centres, as well as major motorways including the A2, M2, M20 and M25. Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre is located within the Parish.

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

GILLINGHAM DEANERY



Rochester Cathedral



The Diocese of Rochester is served by the Bishop of Rochester, assisted by the Bishop of Tonbridge. Rochester Diocese is divided into three Archdeaconries (Bromley and Bexley, Rochester and Tonbridge.)

Within the Rochester Archdeaconry there are six Deaneries and ours is overseen by the Area Dean of Gillingham. Gillingham Deanery comprises twelve churches - four of which belong to the Parish of South Gillingham.

Gillingham Deanery clergy are very supportive of one another and the Deanery seeks to ensure that all churches are both informed and supported in their ventures as they seek to minister to the circa 106,000 people who live there.

The Parish is within easy reach of both Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals



Rochester Castle

ACCOMMODATION



4 DREWERY DRIVE, WIGMORE ME8 ONX

The Rectory is situated between St. Matthew's Church and Fairview Primary School. It is within walking distance of community shops, a local library and parks.

The house is well maintained by the diocese and has four good sized bedrooms, two reception rooms, study, kitchen, bathroom, separate shower room, and downstairs cloakroom. There is a garage and space for two cars on the driveway.



ACCOMMODATION

The Rectory has a mature, spacious, private and secure garden with a border of trees and shrubs. Ideal for hosting garden parties and barbecues!



OUR TEAM



Team Vicar
Rev. Pat Dickin



**Licensed Lay
Minister & Anna
Chaplain**
Jennie Spalding



Licensed Lay Minister
Dave Till



Parish Administrator
Viv Fuller



Church Warden
Jim Gilbourne



Church Warden
Mike Gurr



**Children & Families
Worker**
Tracey Gurr



Lay Reader
Colin Brown



Lay Reader
Geoff Hufton



Lay Reader
Val Thompson



PCC Vice Chair
Andrew Mann



Church Warden
Alan Wainwright



Church Warden
Paul Bellerby



Parish Treasurer
Stephen Manning

OUR FINANCES

We encourage you to contact the Parish Office by email to request a copy of the 2023 Annual Report and finances



1

We have four very different, well maintained church buildings in a good state of repair; they all have a modern loop and sound system, and three of them use screen /projector for Sunday services

2

Our parish share is double, paying for two full time stipendiary posts, and we are on track to pay the full agreed amount in 2024

3

Each church chooses a small number of charities/missions each year to support financially

4

The parish runs a well stocked charity shop in Bredhurst

5

We have a parish companion with Wekense (Tanzania) that is supported financially and through friendship

6

We support missionaries through Interserve

7

The PCC is currently investigating funding opportunities and grants to employ a paid youth/children/family outreach worker to strengthen this area of ministry across the parish

LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH



The Parish (in each of the four churches, the Greater Team meetings and homegroups) have had some teaching on the Pastoral Principles and Living in Love and Faith, and the Parish holds a variety of views in generous love, embracing the presence of God in others (Romans Chapter 14).

The Parish is 'making every effort to keep unity of the spirit through the bond of peace' (Ephesians 4:3)



CONNECT WITH US

Parish Office



Phone

01634 231736



Mail

southgillinghamparish@outlook.com



Website

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/benefice/31-181BW/>



Address

St. Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive,
Wigmore, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0NX



Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/southgillinghamparish>

