



## Parish Profile



### The Parish of South Gillingham in the Diocese of Rochester



St. Matthew's Church, Wigmore ME8 0NX



St. Peter's Church, Bredhurst ME7 3JZ



St. Paul's Church, Parkwood ME8 9PN



All Saint's Church, Hempstead ME7 3QG

If you have any queries or questions regarding this profile, please contact either the Archdeacon or Incumbent and/or visit our website: [parishofsouthgillingham.co.uk](http://parishofsouthgillingham.co.uk)

#### **Archdeacon:**

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#### **Incumbent (Team Rector):**

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## Parish of South Gillingham



1= All Saints 2 = St Matthew 3 = St Paul  
4 = St Peter

The area to the South of the M2 is predominantly rural.  
The rest of the parish is suburban.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

South Gillingham is a large and varied Parish of more than 22 000 people

The South Gillingham Team Ministry was established in April 1990. All Team Vicars are licensed to the Parish of South Gillingham but normally have special responsibilities for individual churches.

The Rector has special responsibility for St. Matthew's Church.

**Our Vision** is to have a Parish in which everyone who lives or works within it has the opportunity to experience the good news of Jesus Christ and serve others in his name. We are currently engaged in phase 2 of an extensive Vision Project.

## **Parish of South Gillingham**

**Our Mission** is *"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."*

Although we are 4 individual churches we aim to work together as one Parish.

### **2. WE ARE SEEKING A TEAM VICAR WHO:**

- Is a Team Player, committed to collaborative ministry.
- Is a people person, able to relate to people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Has enthusiasm and skills in working with families, schools and young people.
- Embraces a breadth of musical tradition.
- Has a love for Jesus, a heart for evangelism, and a passion for growing disciples.
- Has strong pastoral gifts.
- Is committed to working in both inherited and fresh expressions of church.
- Is open-minded, flexible and generous.

It is expected that the new Team Vicar will, initially at least, have a substantial responsibility for the day to day care of the St Paul's congregation, as well as general responsibilities within the parish as a whole.

#### **In return we will:**

- Provide a supportive and friendly environment in which to live and work.
- Encourage and support your personal and spiritual development.
- Continue to develop our increasing lay involvement with worship and outreach in the Parish and the Team.
- Pray for and support you (and your family) practically.
- Work hard to develop the ministry of the whole Church across the parish

### **3 THE ENVIRONMENT**

The Parish of South Gillingham is a large, mainly suburban (though with some rural) area on the edge of the Medway Towns in North Kent. It is a pleasant place to live, being partly within the North Downs area of outstanding natural beauty. It is also convenient for London and the Kent coast. It is one of the easternmost parishes in the Diocese of Rochester. Rochester and Canterbury Cathedrals are both within easy reach. Medway has a rich military, naval and historical heritage.

The parish itself has a varied nature, comprising both modern (mainly private) estates and individually designed houses. It is for the most part a fairly modern place although the village of Bredhurst, in the southern part of the parish, has a history going back to medieval times. The population of the parish is varied in terms of age and social background. There are schools and retirement homes, scout (etc.) groups and clubs for older people. The churches in the parish seek to address the needs of all parts of the diverse and varied community, with regard to their spiritual welfare and in respect of at least some of their social needs.

## **Parish of South Gillingham**

South Gillingham is less than an hour, on the train, from London, to where significant numbers of people commute and 20 minutes from the high speed train links to Europe. Access to public transport is good. Within a short drive are the Bluewater and Lakeside shopping centres and access to the A2, M2, M20 and M25. Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre is home to over 50 popular retailers and within the Parish. There is attractive countryside and parks nearby and the varied Kent coast is very accessible by car.

The Parish is well served by a range of Primary schools. Transfer to secondary education at age 11 is either to High Schools or, by selection, to Grammar schools (after successfully achieving the pass level in the Medway or Kent 11+ tests, entry to which is optional). There are two single-sex high schools on the borders of the parish – both within walking distance. Grammar schools are slightly further afield and range from co-educational to single-sex schools.

The Universities of Kent, Canterbury Christ Church, Greenwich and University College of the Creative Arts have campuses in the Chatham Maritime area.

There are three clergy houses in the parish, in Wigmore, Hempstead and Parkwood. The Diocese is currently seeking to replace St Paul's Vicarage with a suitable property in the Parkwood area of the Parish.

### **4. GILLINGHAM DEANERY**

The Deanery is mostly within the Authority of Medway and consists of eight parishes. For practical purposes, Gillingham Deanery is divided into a northern and southern half; the South Gillingham Team Ministry belongs to the south, along with St. Margaret, Rainham.

Although the Deanery, for practical reasons is seen as two parts, the 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 106,000 people who live there. The Deanery Chapter is well led by the Area Dean, Rev'd Ann Richardson, and is mutually supportive.

### **5. HOW OUR TEAM MINISTRY WORKS:**

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.

Over the years our four churches have developed their own unique approach which enriches our Worship and gives people living in the Parish greater choice. We share common ministries and activities, which our weekly notice sheet reflects as the outer pages are unique to the individual church and the inner pages are shared Parish wide. We have recently renewed a link with the parish of Wekense in the Diocese of Kondoa, Tanzania.

## Parish of South Gillingham

The combination of strong local churches with which people can identify and a supportive structure is the model we aim for in South Gillingham.

### **Administration:**

The Parish Administrator is based in the Parish Office within St. Matthew's and is the first point of contact for booking marriages and baptisms. Amongst other duties, the Administrator also compiles the parish notices, prints the notices and special service sheets and manages all the administration associated with occasional offices.

Spiral (our parish magazine) covers church activities across the parish.

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

The PCC represents the parish and is made up of Church Wardens from each of the 4 churches and their clergy, Deanery Synod representatives, Treasurer and Secretary and elected members. The PCC meets bi-monthly in January, March, May, July, September and November.

## **6. THE TEAM**

The current team consists of: the Team Rector, 1 Team Vicar (Stipendiary), 1 Team Vicar (Self Supporting) and 1 Associate Priest (House for Duty). There is a Self Supporting Curate (part time) and a Parish Administrator.

We have 6 Readers, 1 PTO Reader, 1 Licensed Lay Minister, 2 Pastoral Assistants, 1 Evangelist and two people who hold the Bishop's Certificate. All members of the Ministry Team serve across the whole parish.

We have four Church Wardens representing the whole parish.

## **7. STATISTICS**

The Electoral Roll of the Parish stands at 315.

### Occasional Offices:

Baptisms	31
Weddings	10
Funerals	30
Interment of Ashes	7

### Average Sunday Attendances:

All Saints	22
St. Paul's	47
St. Peter's	56
St. Matthew's	72

## **Parish of South Gillingham**

### **8. CHURCH PROFILES:**

#### **All Saints Church Hempstead**

All Saints' Church was built as a Mission Church in 1911. It can hold up to eighty congregants, though average Sunday attendance at the main service at 9.30am stands now at only 22 adults with a few children occasionally attending with their parents.

An All Age Eucharist is the main service at four of the five Sundays in a month, but the fourth Sunday is always a less formal non-Eucharistic service at which children remain in church throughout. A family service entirely led by puppets on a seasonal theme ("LiveWires") is held on the first Sunday of each month at 11.00am. The music used in our services combines both traditional and more modern hymns and worship songs.

Hempstead has a population of about 6,000, many of whom commute to London for work and many others of whom are retired from the professions. The character of Hempstead is therefore largely middle-class and reasonably affluent, reflected in good quality private housing, a good Infant and a good Junior school, a Library, several large green spaces for recreation and ready access to a large shopping complex (Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre.)

The church welcomes forty or so toddlers ("Sunbeams") and their parents in two sessions of song and dance on Tuesdays. There is a monthly Lunch Club held in the church. Church members are central to the organisation of a very popular May Fayre and Christmas Fayre for the village.

All Saints' reaches out in a spirit of service to the wider community. Its witness to Christ is broader in its reach than might be suggested by the small numbers who attend Sunday services. We would like to see more young families attending on Sundays, given that most church members are now elderly and retired.

#### **St. Matthew's Church - Wigmore**

Wigmore is a middle class and mostly affluent suburban area, with a local park, several areas of woodland, a scattering of local shops and a large Community Primary School where the Team Rector is a Governor.

St Matthew's Church was built in 1965 in a distinctive style, to replace an earlier building nearby. It is the largest church in the parish, with a good community centre attached, and the Parish Office is located within the complex. There is a parish Garden or Rest on the St Matthew's site.

The average age of the congregation of St Matthew's has increased in recent years, and although attendance is fairly stable, there is a growing awareness of the need to change and adapt to accommodate younger people and families.

## **Parish of South Gillingham**

Services now range each month from a formal Eucharist to informal All Age Worship, with both a small robed choir and a music group regularly involved. We are beginning to see a small number of families attending.

A monthly Dementia Friendly Service is part of our pattern of worship. Several Home Groups meet regularly for Bible Study, fellowship and prayer. There is a Mothers' Union, a Thursday Club for older people, and the adults and babies / toddlers group.

Looking outwards, St Matthew's supports the Medway Food Bank, the Medway Winter Shelter for homeless people, and a number of Mission agencies.

## **St. Paul's Church, Parkwood**

St Paul's Church is at the centre of the Parkwood community adjacent to a large car park and is situated close to Parkwood Green, a large open area with mature trees. A shopping precinct is close by and this includes a health centre. Parkwood also has several local schools and St Paul's continues to develop links with these schools.

There is one other church close by – Parkwood Christian Fellowship (PCF) which is affiliated to the Baptist church and they also sponsor and run the local cafe 3.16 (John's Gospel). We maintain good links with PCF and have the occasional joint services with them.

The church originally met in 1978 in the converted garage of the two townhouses the Diocese had purchased for a minister, followed by the local community centre and then at local schools until it secured its own building in 1998. It celebrated its 20th/40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2018.

St Paul's is a multi-functional building used for a variety of activities. These include for children, two parent and toddler groups ("Play and Chat"), two Brownie Packs, and on three occasions during the year special "Crafts and Laughs" afternoons.

Eight years ago, and with Parish support, a drop-in - the Monday Hub - was created. St Paul's provide the hospitality for the club and the church provides a safe place for people, particularly those who are retired and lonely, to meet, make new friends, play games and enjoy "foodie" events. An Alzheimer's Cafe also meets regularly and is flourishing.

On one Sunday each month we hold our All Age worship service (SPACE) which is specially designed to attract families. A dedicated team run this service.

We recognise that our congregation is ageing, and that we must reach out more to the community and give people who may not want to attend our services the opportunity to meet with us more informally. In many ways the name of the outreach event we hold on the grass outside the church on the first Friday of each month sums up our aim – to be an Inside Out Church.

## **Parish of South Gillingham**

### **St. Peter's Church, Bredhurst**

St. Peter's, Bredhurst, is part of a small village community, although members of the congregation come from all parts of the Parish of South Gillingham and beyond. The village has around 150 houses, a local pub, several small businesses, a village hall and a playing field. It also has a voluntary controlled Church of England Primary School with good links with the church. The church has stood on the site since the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, and is an attractive and popular venue for weddings.. The old churchyard that surrounds the building is closed, but across the lane is the new parish churchyard, Garden of Remembrance and a Prayer Walk, which are maintained by a dedicated group of volunteers.

We have a congregation diverse in age, Christian experience and background, which is reflected in our services – from BCP Holy Communion to less formal All Age Worship, and reflective evening services. Activities for the children consist of Time for Tea, for families with children aged 0–7, with crafts, songs, stories, and 'bring and share' tea; Explorers, for children aged 5-11, who go exploring in the woods, and The Crew also for children 5-11.

Members of the congregation are involved in pastoral work alongside licensed lay ministers and the Team Vicar. A prayer ministry team offers prayers for healing formally on the third Sunday and less formally between times. Two Home Groups are well attended and members of the church are involved in both Prison and Hospital work.

St. Peter's runs summer and Christmas Fetes, a Harvest Supper and a Village Hub and hosts occasional concerts in the church. Volunteers run a Charity Shop at the side of the Village Hall twice a week.

Our aim is to grow a congregation who will share the love of Christ in the community of Bredhurst and beyond, and who will play a full part in the life of the wider Parish of South Gillingham.

## **9. FINANCES**

As a Team Ministry each of the 4 churches has a treasurer who is directly responsible for the finances of the church which includes dealing with all income and expenditure matters relating to that church. All financial decisions are delegated by the PCC to the individual DCC's with the exception that any planned expenditure exceeding £1000 requires PCC approval first.

The PCC finances are managed by the Parish Treasurer who is responsible for the Parish income and expenditures not related directly to any one of the individual churches. This includes incomes from weddings and funerals, parish advertising and expenditures such as clergy stipends and expenses, housing costs and contribution to the Parish Share. The PCC also manages the finances for all parish-wide events.

## **Parish of South Gillingham**

Each church and PCC operates the same financial recording and banking systems and it is therefore possible to produce five identical end-of-year summaries and then create consolidated accounts acceptable to the Independent Examiner and the Charity Commission.

The latest set of accounts can be made available by e-mailing parish123@tiscali.co.uk. All enquiries will be treated in confidence.

## **10. ADDRESSES**

**Parish Office:** St. Matthew's Church, Drewery Drive, Wigmore, Gillingham, Kent, ME8 0NX Tel: 01634 231736 e-mail: parish123@tiscali.co.uk

**All Saints Church:** 169 Hempstead Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 3QG

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

**St. Paul's Church:** Long Catlis Road, Parkwood Green, Gillingham, Kent ME8 9PN

**St. Peter's Church:** Hurstwood Road, Bredhurst, Gillingham, Kent ME7 3JZ

## **11. APPENDIX**

**Parish Website:** <http://parishofsouthgillingham.co.uk/>

**A Church Near You: South Gillingham**