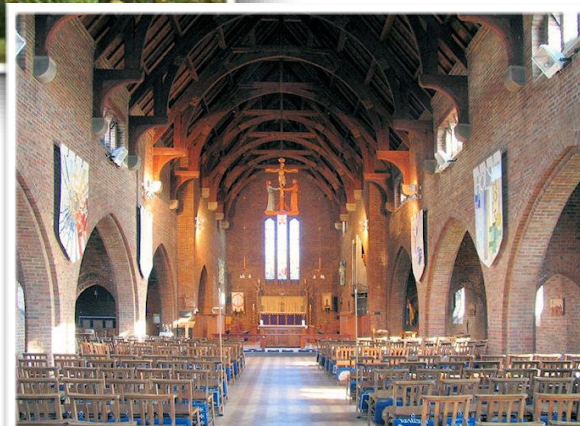


# The Parish Profile of St Francis of Assisi

Petts Wood, Diocese of Rochester



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## Introduction and Summary

St Francis of Assisi Church in Petts Wood is located in the Borough of Bromley in south east London. Located in Zone 5 of the London transport network, it borders the county of Kent and benefits from a frequent train service to London and an extensive bus network. The church sits within the Orpington Deanery, as part of the Archdeaconry of Bromley & Bexley, within the Diocese of Rochester.

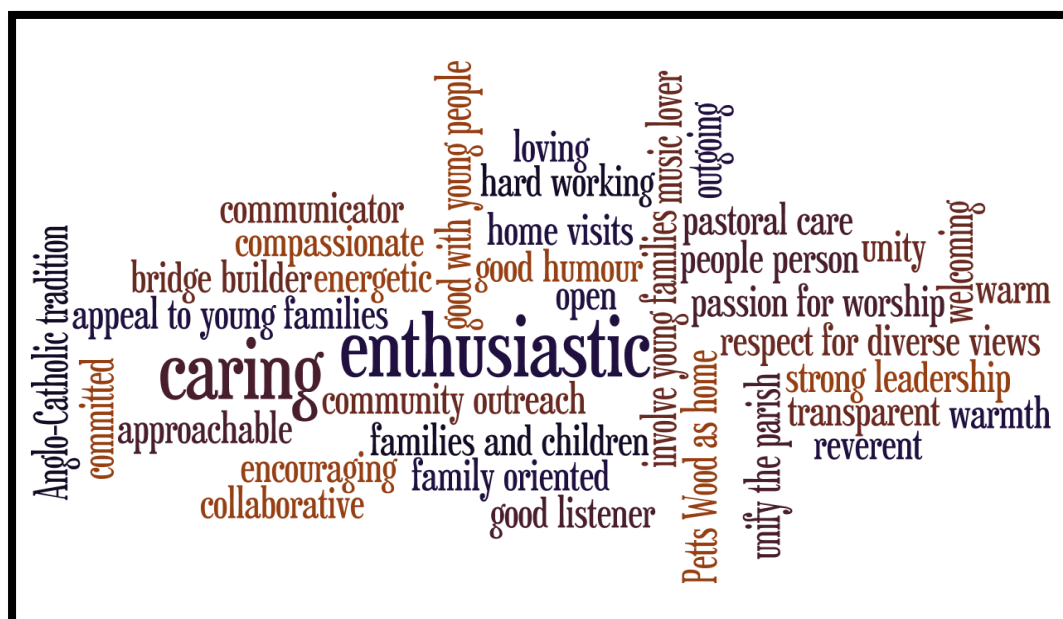
The parish church is the only building in Petts Wood to be listed in Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's "The Buildings of England".

*"Bricks and mortar of this church are just part of the story; for the hearts and souls of faithful parishioners shine out across these pages. It is they who created the church, who constructed a life with Christ at its centre. In peace and in war they brought hope and fulfilment to society around them."* - A History of St Francis Church Petts Wood (1985) by Fr. Horobin, a previous vicar of this parish, to celebrate 50 years of the church.



One of our beautiful banners depicting the Blessed Sacrament

Please find below a word cloud which represents some of the qualities which our parishioners would like to see in our new incumbent:



**In return, we will promise:**

- to support you and pray with you
- fellowship and friendship
- to be honest and open with you
- to respect your family time and space

The St Francis Church website – [www.stfrancispw.org.uk](http://www.stfrancispw.org.uk) – has been professionally designed and provides many details of the church, its services, activities and parish functions.

There are no gender considerations regarding the role and, since 2018, we have regularly welcomed women priests to celebrate at our services. We are seeking a vicar who recognises and respects our diversity of views.



# Part 1: The Church



A front-facing view of St Francis, taken shortly after construction was completed

## Humble Beginnings

St Francis Church started out as a wooden building that was constructed in 1931 on the site of the current Church Hall.

## St Francis Church

The main church was built alongside the wooden structure and the building was consecrated on the 5th January 1935. On the 19th April 1952, the church held a dedication service for the newly-built hall. It was hailed, by the then Bishop of Rochester, as: “One of the finest parish halls in the diocese.” In January 2025, we celebrated our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with three main services, a parish lunch, a Big Band concert and a fireworks display!



North-west aspect of the front of St Francis

## Through The Keyhole

Since its consecration, the church has remained largely unchanged and consists of a conventional cruciform layout. The high altar is situated on the east side underneath beautiful stained glass windows, which shine light to all corners of the church. There are many who never fail to be in awe when entering the church and beholding the beauty of the light shining through these windows. In the early 1990s, a nave altar and communion rails were constructed and these are now used every Sunday for our 10:30am sung service and other major services in the church calendar.

On the north side lies the Lady Chapel where our Sunday 8am traditional Holy Communion and mid-week services take place. It houses several smaller stained glass windows as well as the tabernacle, aumbry, and a baby grand piano.

There is also a statue of the Virgin Mary located between the nave altar and the Lady Chapel; this statue was moved from the original wooden church built in the 1930s.

The “stations of the cross” are carved in wood and located on the south and north sides of the church. The original stone font is situated north of the main entrance to the church. To be more inclusive, a portable wooden font is now used and is located near the nave altar.

More recently, a number of additions to the fabric of the church/Hall have benefited the worship and use of space at St Francis and its adjacent Hall:

- a) Following discussions, design and fundraising, an Access Toilet and separate Tea Station were completed in August 2019. They are located immediately on the right as one enters the church. These facilities have helped greatly in the community life of the church, including social functions and concerts which are regularly held in the building.
- b) In 2021 (after the start of the pandemic), high definition cameras were installed in the main church and in the Lady Chapel. These are still used to livestream the main church services via YouTube.
- c) In November 2023, sixteen solar panels, an inverter and battery were installed on/in the Church Hall. In May 2025, we doubled the solar panels on the Hall roof so that the church could benefit from the additional energy generated.
- d) In 2024, a beautiful stained-glass window depicting St Francis was designed, built and installed to the right of the Nave Altar.

### **The Sound Of Angels**

Behind the nave altar sits the choir stalls and organ. We operate a rota of highly skilled organists who enjoy playing at St Francis. We have a church sound system including several microphones/speakers which help us to broadcast services and to help the congregation. The choir sings during the 10:30am and seasonal services. In addition, a recent initiative has started to expand the choir by offering a monthly Choral Evensong to skilled singers.

## **Come Outside**

The church is surrounded by beautiful gardens and grounds which are maintained by a contractor. It is populated by trees which are a remnant of the original Petts Wood. The grounds are not consecrated for burial, although a section is used for the interment of ashes. This is situated next to the “daffodil cross” which is on the flat area, north side of the church.



## **Home Is Where The Heart Is**

The detached Vicarage (60 Willet Way, BR5 1QE) is located very close to the church and was built in the late 1930s. It has five bedrooms, a large living room, dining room, study and downstairs cloakroom. In 2017, the Diocese funded the refurbishment of the kitchen, main bathroom and other rooms.





## A Community Hall

The Church Hall (adjacent to the main church building) underwent extensive refurbishment and modernisation in the early 2000s. It adheres to all health, safety and electrical standards, and also offers disabled access.

The Hall is hired out to sixteen regular hirers and brings in much-needed income. During term-time mornings, and some afternoons, it is let to a pre-school group, Bright Beginnings. The Hall is also regularly hired out during afternoons, evenings and weekends. Our very successful Repair Café meets in the Hall on the last Saturday afternoon of the month and children's parties are organised for the other Saturdays in the month. Occasionally, Charity Quiz Nights and Ceilidhs are held on Saturday evenings. Other hirers include three martial arts clubs, two WI groups, many dance / keep-fit / Pilates groups, and a Muslim prayer group. Hall income (c.£32,000/year) makes a positive contribution to the finances at St Francis.



We all love a BBQ!



Petts Wood Repair Cafe

“Repair, recycle and reuse”

## Weekly Worship & Annual Celebrations

As well as the 8am Said (traditional) Eucharist and the main 10:30am Sung Eucharist, we hold Bubble Church (every third Sunday and between the adult services). We also have Said Eucharists at 9:30am every weekday and Saturday. Monday has, normally, been the Vicar's day of rest. Due to the Interregnum, these weekday services have been suspended; however, we would like to re-introduce them. The Sacrament of Confession is offered at St Francis on request. On some Sundays we hold a Family Service which offers a more child-friendly setting for the 10.30am Sung Eucharist.

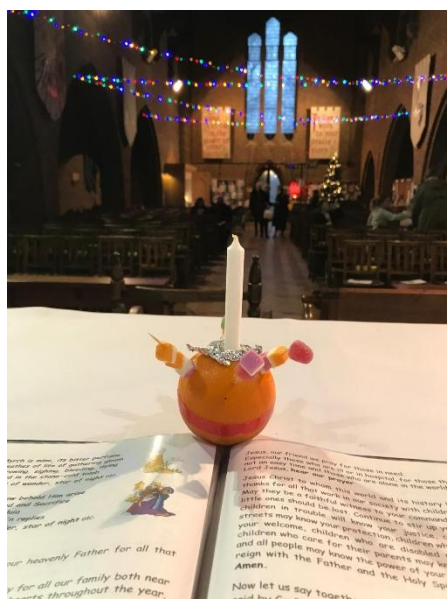
Since 2017, during the last interregnum, a retired Priest has assisted in the Parish. He provided holiday cover for the previous Vicar and, otherwise, preached and celebrated about once a month. On other Sundays, when not required to cover in another Parish, he concelebrated at the Sung Eucharist. He is conducting the majority of services during the current interregnum.

## Church Festivals

St Francis hosts a variety of Christmas services and events. This starts with our annual service of Nine Lessons and Carols on the last Sunday before Christmas Eve, followed by our Crib Service and Christingle at 4pm on Christmas Eve. This is, by far, our most well-attended service in the calendar, regularly attracting over two hundred people! Traditional Midnight Mass is then celebrated, concluding with the normal services on Christmas Day.



*Carol Service 2024*



*Crib and Christingle Service 2024*



*Post Carol Service 2024*



In the run up to Easter, the following occurs:

- a) St Francis extends its normal Bible Study group to include a Lenten Course
- b) Holy Week is celebrated, commencing with Palm Sunday, followed by the Easter Triduum of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday with Stations of the Cross, Liturgy of the Word and Veneration of The Cross.
- c) We continue on Saturday evening with the Solemn Vigil and the Service of Light, which is followed by a party with refreshments.
- d) The following day we celebrate the Mass of Easter Day, both at 8am and 10:30am.



Palm Sunday procession from the hall to the church.

Adjacent to the North side of the church is the consecrated land on which our special “cross of daffodils” is planted

St Francis, being one of the largest churches in Petts Wood, hosts the Royal British Legion every other year (alternating with nearby Christ Church) for its Annual Service of Remembrance. The Remembrance Sunday service is attended by members of all Petts Wood churches, as well as the members of the Legion, Scouts, Guides, Girls Brigade, and other organisations, resulting in over 300 attendees.

## Working & Worshipping Together

The church electoral roll at present consists of 70 members, most of whom take an active part in church life, whether attending Services or participating in various church-led groups, including (in no particular order):

- ECO Group & Repair Café
- Bubble Church
- Bible Study & Lent Group (ecumenical group meeting in a parishioner's house)
- Bereavement Help Point (located at the Methodist Church and run with other churches)
- Choir
- English Language Classes (for Ukrainians and other nationalities)
- Mothers' Union
- Church Cleaning Team
- Flower Arrangers
- Servers, Readers, Sides People, Coffee Rota

In addition to the above, we have close ties with two Women's Institute groups (with 180 members between them!) which meet in the Hall every month.

St Francis has an active WhatsApp Fellowship group and this has proven to be very effective in communicating with each other, especially with so many active groups within St Francis.

Please note that we have quite a few elderly parishioners at St Francis as well as some people suffering from mental and physical health conditions. The parish priest, our Anna Chaplain, and volunteer helpers are committed to giving support and solace to those in need.

The vast majority of our parishioners are committed to the stewardship of God's creation and one can see this working in practice across many of the activities and initiatives at St Francis. For example, our ECO Group is committed to reducing the carbon footprint of the church. In 2024, we were proud to have been awarded Rocha's Silver ECO Church Award. We believe that the Gold Award is achievable when we complete our ECO Heating project in the church. This entails changing our current oil-fired boiler and hot air / convection system. The new system will probably involve many "dark" infrared chandeliers and some wall-mounted infrared heaters in the Lady Chapel. We have recently been awarded a Diocese Demonstrator Project grant for this project and have just started the consulting, specification and funding process.

The philosophy of ***Together for the Common Good*** has underpinned and acted as the catalyst for many of our initiatives, especially our ECO ones.

St Francis belongs to Petts Wood Churches Together (PWCT) which includes local Roman Catholic, Methodist, United Reform, Baptist and Lutheran churches. Our priest has chaired this group and has strongly promoted its activities

In addition, we support many charities including Orpington Food Bank, the Children's Society, Bromley Welcare, and Christian Aid.

Finally, but not last, St Francis has ten active members of the PCC who meet regularly to discuss all aspects of working and worshipping together. Our finances are in good order and we contribute fully to the Diocese of Rochester to fund not only our full-time priest but also the Diocesan Support Costs. During the interregnum, the PCC has planned to continue this level of funding. Please note that this does not include the proposed share of the wider Diocesan Mission costs.

### **Quotes from some of our Worshippers**

*"The most welcoming church I have ever been a part of. Everyone is so supportive of each other and we help each other out in so many ways...if I ever need help, advice or an item to borrow my first point of call is the St Francis WhatsApp group."*

*"St Francis is my spiritual home. I have worshipped here all my life and, at the ripe old age of sixty-six, I feel blessed to have received so much support, love and fellowship. I have made life-long friends here and will always have St Francis in my heart."*

*"I've felt very welcomed, love that children are not seen as a burden, the first time I saw the children area it had a sign that said not to worry as a church with children is better than a church without them. I also felt when I tried to speak with someone they would always make a bit of time to listen and being part of St Francis has helped me find a bit more of a home away from home, to the point that if I were to move, I would try to stay in the area."*



*“The comment I hear most often from visitors and newcomers is how warm and friendly we are. This delights me. I have been in too many churches that are neither!”*

*“Children and families are made to feel very welcome at St Francis. My son loves the puppets (and croissants) at Bubble Church. Children can use a little play area during family services and are valued as part of the community. In addition, it is lovely to be part of a church which takes music so seriously.”*

*“My first Sunday at St Francis was two years ago and just one week after moving into the area. I received a warm welcome and made to feel very much at home. Everyone has been so helpful and friendly.”*

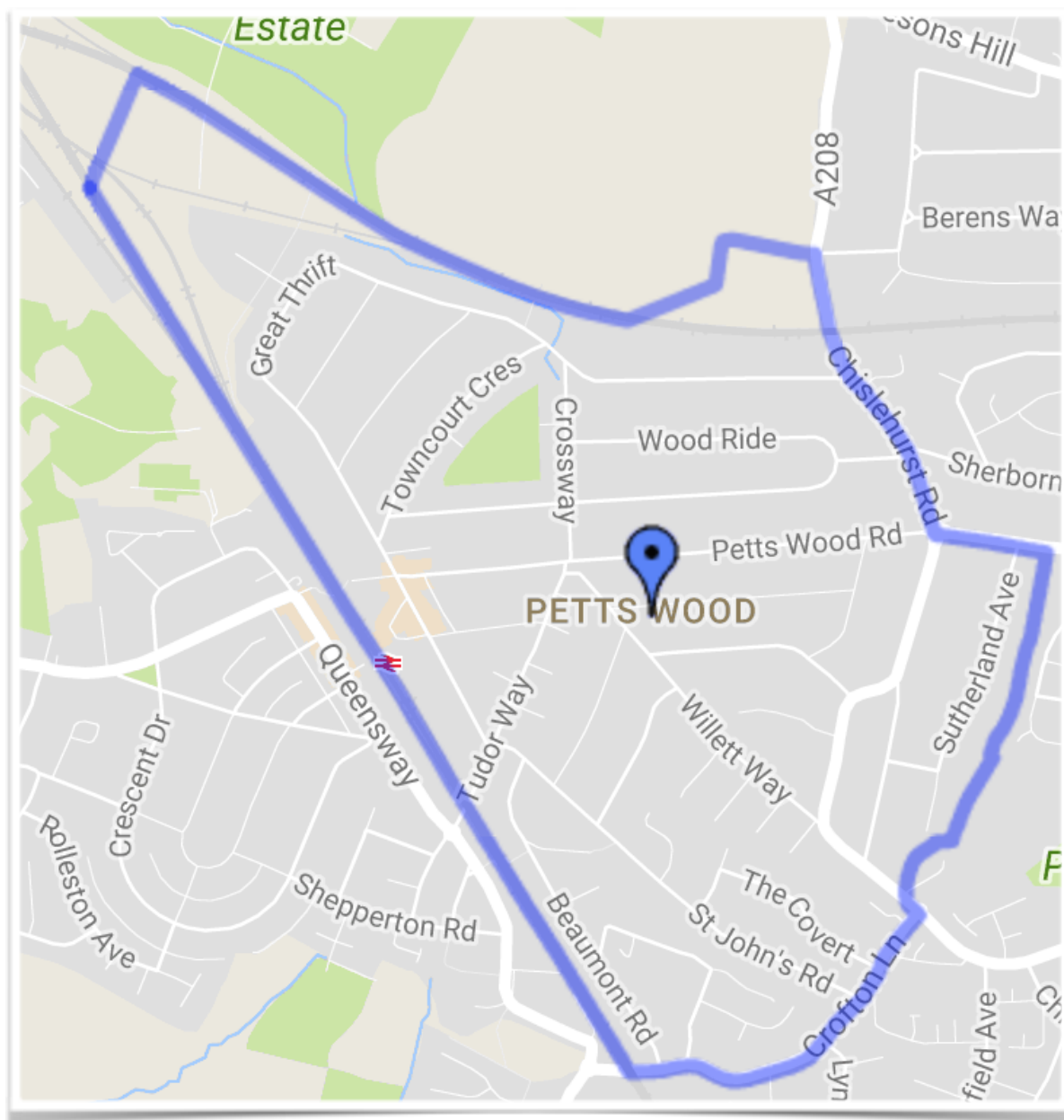
*“My late husband felt at home the minute he stepped inside St Francis of Assisi. Subsequently, its church leadership, its liturgy, its music but, above all, the warm embrace of its church community - whom I now look on as friends - did much to sustain and strengthen his faith and support us both through several years of gruelling medical treatments. St Francis became our lifeline and beacon of hope bringing us peace, and moments of genuine happiness too, in otherwise dark times, and which continues to support me today.”*







## Part 2: The Parish and Wider Area



A view of the parish with its boundaries. St Francis is marked by the blue pointer.

Located on the eastern side of Petts Wood, St Francis has a parish that is approximately two-thirds of a square mile in size, and is comprised mainly of suburban housing. The boundary (as shown above) is defined on the northern and western sides by the railway line.



Whilst the town's high street (Queensway) falls outside this, the town's other centre, Station Square, is within the boundary. This houses the Grade II listed pub, The Daylight Inn. It was built in 1935 and named in honour of Petts Wood resident and promoter of Daylight Saving, William Willett.



The Daylight Inn in Station Square

A memorial sundial dedicated to William Willett is placed within Petts Wood and Hawkwood Woodlands, around 338 acres<sup>1</sup> of National Trust woodland situated just on the northern boundary of the parish.

The woodland forms the scenic backdrop to the annual Petts Wood 10K, run by the Petts Wood Runners Club, which takes place every year at the start of October. The run starts in Petts Wood Recreation Ground (next to Towncourt Crescent), and sees approximately 1,000 runners taking part across a very picturesque route.



The woods in Petts Wood

There are three supermarkets situated in Petts Wood. There are also many restaurants serving Mediterranean, Indian, Chinese, Spanish and Mexican food, as well as takeaway restaurants, coffee shops and cafes. Recreationally, the town has a 24-hour access gym, library and a snooker hall. Petts Wood also has a petrol station, three pubs (including an award-winning micro-pub), and the Petts Wood branch of the Royal British Legion. The Willett Recreation ground is very popular and is the venue for bowling, cricket, six tennis courts and a play area for children.



There are no schools within the parish itself; however, there are a couple of schools based on the boundary, including Crofton Infants and Junior Schools, home to pupils in Reception all the way up to Year 6. Both schools are rated “Outstanding” according to the latest OFSTED reports. Traditionally, our vicar has maintained close links with this school and hosts visits to the church by the children. There are many excellent secondary schools in Bromley, the nearest being Darrick Wood Academy and Bishop Justus Church of England School. Please note that two of the UK’s top single-sex secondary schools are walking distance from Orpington station (4 minutes from Petts Wood station), namely St Olave’s Grammar School for Boys and Newstead Wood School for Girls.

As in many town parishes, St Francis attracts people from outside its own parish who like our tradition of worship. Other members of the congregation choose St Francis because it is their parish church or nearest Church of England church. We need to serve them all and we believe that our present tradition and liturgy enables us to do this.

## Neighbouring Towns

Further afield are the neighbouring towns of Orpington and Bromley, both of which have recently undergone (and continue to undergo) redevelopment works. Orpington has a seven-screen Odeon cinema, whilst Bromley has a nine-screen Vue. Both locations offer a wide variety of shops, restaurants and hotels. Nearby, we also have the Nugent shopping centre and many DIY shops and factory outlets on the Orpington Bypass. Like Petts Wood, all local towns have good transport links (bus and rail) into the heart of London and are within easy reach of the M20 and M25.

Close by are three hospitals – Princess Royal (in Locks Bottom), Queen Mary's (Sidcup) and Orpington Hospital.



Orpington High Street with War Memorial in foreground



Bromley Churchill Gardens looking towards the main town centre



## Part 3: The Incumbent



The view to the pews, looking from behind the nave altar



Some of our Bubble Church volunteers

The St Francis Parish members are diverse; however, we believe that the love of God is bringing us together to worship and undertake Christian work at St Francis and within the local community. Most feel that our Anglo Catholic tradition should be maintained, but some would prefer a less “high” church. The recent Bubble Church initiative has proved to be successful and has already attracted more young families to St Francis. Bubble Church is held once a month and is a Sunday service targeted to attract such young families. It's a puppet-packed, Jesus-centred, coffee-and-food-fueled, 30-minute adventure for kids and families. It's set in the main church building on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month between 9.15am and 9.45am.

Our main objectives are: to grow the congregation; to care for, support and respect one another; to welcome more people to our church; to provide excellent pastoral care; and to attract and retain more young people and families.

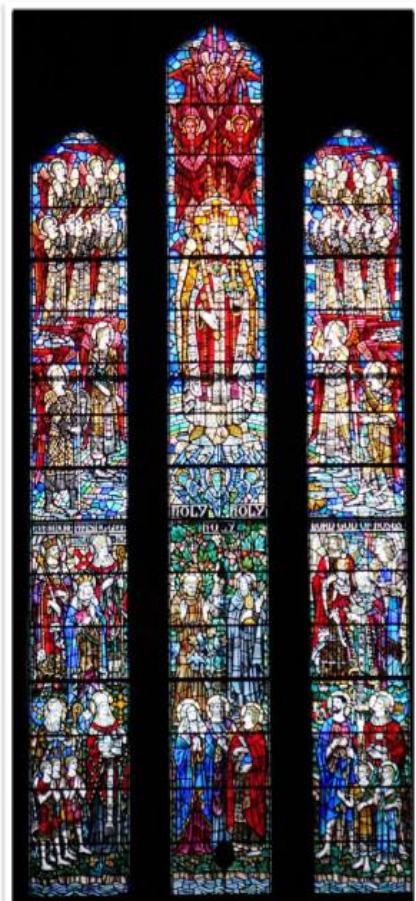
We would be blessed if our next priest was a wise, kind and holy person who had a love of music and understood the importance of ECO matters. St Francis has always tried to maintain a strong commitment to traditional church music and we would hope for an incumbent who is sensitive to, and supportive of, this. We need a leader who is committed to our parish and supportive of its various initiatives, including visiting the sick and elderly.

We are keen for our next priest to bring new ideas of how to improve God's work in Petts Wood and to give leadership/support to any project we decide to embark on e.g. managing the exciting and demanding ECO Heating Project (see Part One).



The high altar

# Part 4: The Future



The high altar stained glass windows

We hope that our profile has given you a taste of St Francis of Assisi Church and its surrounding area. We are keen to look ahead and help all within the church's worshipping community and those who are not committed regulars. We see our future as one where we will continue, and improve, our efforts to serve everyone in the Parish and to meet the needs of the next generation, especially through initiatives like ECO Church, Repair Café and Bubble Church. We look forward to welcoming you for a tour and an interview.



A happy Church Family celebrating Fr Stephen's 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday!



# Appendix: Financial Summary

## INCOMING RESOURCES

	* 2025	2024	2023
	£	£	£
<b>Voluntary Income</b>	<b>55,212</b>	<b>110,431</b>	<b>70,637</b>
<b>Activities for Generating Income</b>	<b>16,360</b>	<b>14,054</b>	<b>12,685</b>
<b>Income from Investments</b>	<b>6,870</b>	<b>5,290</b>	<b>1,614</b>
<b>Church Activities</b>	<b>31,866</b>	<b>29,004</b>	<b>26,370</b>
<b>TOTAL INCOMING REOURCES</b>	<b>110,308</b>	<b>158,779</b>	<b>111,306</b>

## OUTGOING RESOURCES - COST OF GENERATING VOLUNTARY INCOME

	* 2025	2024	2023
	£	£	£
<b>TOTAL COSTS OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>127,178</b>	<b>106,859</b>	<b>102,692</b>

## NET INCOMING RESOURCES

	*2025	2024	2023
	£	£	£
<b>TOTAL NET INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	<b>(16,868)</b>	<b>51,920</b>	<b>8,614</b>

**CASH AND RESERVE BALANCES**

	<b>*2025</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>HSBC CURRENT ACCOUNT</b>	<b>18,607.78</b>	<b>16,948.19</b>	<b>13,782.00</b>
<b>CCLA INVESTMENT ACCOUNT</b>	<b>128,773.94</b>	<b>147,478.33</b>	<b>102,187.35</b>
<b>Contingency Reserve Fund</b>	<b>21,032.43</b>	<b>18857.15</b>	<b>15,316.53</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>168,414.15</b>	<b>185,283.67</b>	<b>131,285.88</b>

**\*Notes:**

1. The 2025 Accounts have not yet been audited.
2. The church received no legacies in 2025. A legacy of £51K was received in 2024.
3. The parish invested £15K on solar energy during 2025