

St Mary's and Christ Church Hendon

Our strengths and
aspirations

Building our vision
for the future





St Mary's

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Christ Church

Introduction

The Parish of St Mary's and Christ Church Hendon is seeking a new Vicar.

We have two active churches in the cosmopolitan community of Hendon. We support a wide range of groups and events.

When we look to the future, we hope to be a beacon of Christian love and welcoming inclusion for our parishioners and the community.

We are seeking a priest who will minister to those attending both our churches and who will continue to deepen our faith and help us to walk more closely with God. He or she will lead us to reach out to our neighbours in Hendon and beyond.



The Parish of St Mary and Christ Church Hendon

Our history

The Parish is in the leafy Borough of Barnet in North London. It falls within the West Barnet Deanery, under the Bishop of Edmonton. St Mary's has been a site of Christian worship since 957 and at one time the parish spread over a vast swathe of Middlesex.

As the population grew and neighbourhoods were defined, new areas became parishes with their own churches. Christ Church was built as a Chapel of Ease. In 1923 it became a parish in its own right.

The parish now

The two churches are united once more as one parish, although each church has its own character and congregation. We join together for some festival services and many parish activities.

We are of an open or liberal catholic tradition with **an electoral role of 279** and **average Sunday attendances of 100-150** across all services. Our congregations are culturally diverse, with a mix of backgrounds and a wide age range. Music is a vibrant and important part of our services and our parish life.

The neighbourhood

Hendon is a busy suburb with easy access to central London, yet close to the green belt. It has a mixed and diverse population and areas of both wealth and deprivation. There is a wide spread of cultural and faith backgrounds, with a significant and active Jewish community (slightly more than 30% of the population).

Over the last ten years, there has been significant residential development. This is set to continue in the years to come, bringing many new residents to the Parish.

Worship

Our main Sunday service at both churches is a sung Eucharist. We use Common Worship Order I in contemporary language. Vestments are worn and incense is used. The Sacrament is reserved. The collect and Eucharistic Prayer are usually sung by the celebrant.

We have a team of altar servers and eucharistic ministers to assist the priest. Readings and intercessions are done by members of the congregation on a planned rota.

Welcomers greet people as they arrive and all are encouraged to stay for refreshments after the service for a chat and fellowship together.

At St Mary's the music is led by a robed choir and is of a high standard. People are called to worship by our bellringers. A bell also calls worshippers at Christ Church.

At both churches Sunday School is run, with the children re-joining the congregation during communion. Each church has an area to take younger children to during the service.

Normally at St Mary's, we have an 8 am BCP communion service and a weekly Choral Evensong which follows the order of Evening Prayer with a sermon. The Choir lead the music which excellent and uplifting.

In the parish we aim to hold an annual confirmation service.



Our faith and our services

Sunday services

St Mary's

08:00 Eucharist (Book of Common Prayer)

10:00 Sung Eucharist

18:30 Choral Evensong

Christ Church

11:15 Sung Eucharist

NOTE: During the Vacancy, the times of our services have changed. St Mary's no longer holds the 08:00 service and the Parish Eucharist is now held at 09:30. The Christ Church Parish Eucharist is now held at 11:30.

Weekday services

Mondays

19:00 Eucharist at Christ Church

There is a Healing Eucharist on the first Monday of every month. A Requiem Eucharist is celebrated on the last Sunday of the month.

Tuesdays

09:00 School Eucharist at St Mary's (Term-time only)

Wednesdays

12:00 Eucharist at St Mary's

There is a Healing Eucharist on the third Wednesday of every month.

Thursdays

12:30 Eucharist at Christ Church

Morning and Evening Prayer is said daily.

Sunday School – St Mary’s

The Sunday school has about 40 children on the register, with an average attendance of about 6-10 children per Sunday. The ages range from nursery to juniors.

We meet on most Sundays in Church House during term-time.

The children start in church and process out after the choir. The Sunday school often follows a program using material from “Lamps” and “Candles” by David Adam. They return to church during the Eucharist in time for a blessing.

Sometimes they show the results of their activities during the notices at the end of the service.

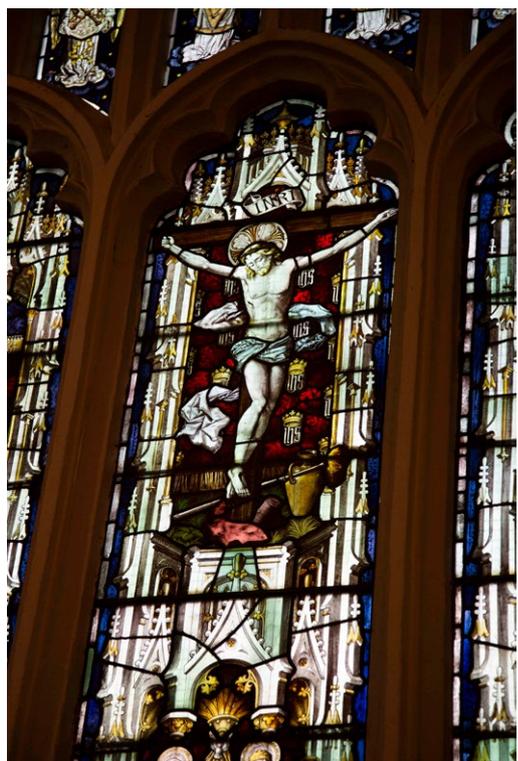
The children participate enthusiastically, and enjoy making art and discussing Bible stories.

Sunday School – Christ Church

Sunday School at Christ Church has been part of church life for many years. We were without a Sunday school for a few years, but restarted it in March 2017. Since then, we have an average of four children attending, however sometimes we have as many as eight.

We share a story with the children which is in line with the teaching the congregation is receiving using the same books as above. The story is then followed by a discussion and activity relating to the story. After which there is an activity sheet for the children to complete.

On some occasions what has been done in the Sunday school is presented to the congregation.



Schools

St Mary’s and St John’s school is an all through Church of England school based on three campuses. A successful and established primary school, we were asked by the local authority and diocese to expand into an all through school, and welcomed our first year 7 cohort in 2014. We have continued to expand rapidly, and are very excited to launch our new sixth form in September.

In our recent SIAMS inspection we were rated ‘outstanding.’ The inspector commented on effective leadership, and the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. The report highlighted our positive partnerships with our churches, which strengthen and enrich our whole school community.

Currently, clergy help lead collective worship across all three campuses, and we work collaboratively with the parish by supporting the same charities and contributing to parish life. We are very committed to ensuring that students attend Eucharist services regularly in the church, and all of our students are familiar and comfortable with the clergy from both churches.

The school has a performing arts specialism and we have recently worked together on creative projects such as Noye’s Fludde and a staff/parent choir.



The school would like the new incumbent to be committed to helping further embed and develop the school’s Christian distinctiveness,

to be a pastoral presence in the community and to work with us to meet the spiritual needs of our students and staff.

The school envisages that the new incumbent at St Mary’s will be a pivotal figure in our school community, and we are very much looking forward to working together.

Our Groups

Music and the choir

Music plays a major and vital part in the life of the parish. Richard Morrison has been the director of music for 40 years.

The St Mary's Choir has, at its largest, over 40 singers ranging in age from 7 to over 70. Members of the choir provide music for both the Sunday morning service and for a full choral evensong every week. The repertoire of anthems and mass and canticles settings ranges from the Renaissance to specially written new pieces.

The choir also mounts several concerts each year. In the past two years alone these have included Handel's Messiah, Bach's St John Passion, Mendelssohn's Elijah and (in a large-scale production with SMSJ school) a full staging of Britten's Noye's Fludde.

We have mounted several major productions over the years, many of which have been written especially for the choir. These have included a three-day cycle of The Mysteries, a full-scale pantomime, Pilgrim's Progress and Baboushka.

The choir frequently acts as ambassadors for the church, singing in cathedrals all over the UK, and touring internationally across Europe and to New York.

As well as carol services for Advent and Christmas, the choir also presents an extensive festival of music during the May bank holiday weekend.



Bell ringing

Hendon has a long tradition of bells and ringing, dating back to the 17th century. We have eight bells – the oldest from 1638, the two newest bells from 1959, augmenting the Ring to an octave and cast to celebrate the Church's millennium.

The ringing chamber is at ground floor level, visible and open to the body of the church, which is unusual and helps us to integrate the congregation and the ringers. We ring the bells to summon the faithful to worship, and to remind those in the community of the continued presence of the Parish Church today. The ringers enjoy a close association with our parish clergy, and a priest often says the prayers before ringing on Sundays and chairs our ringers' AGM.

We ring for services almost every Sunday for the main Eucharist and occasionally for Evensong, as well as for special services such as Christmas, weddings and to mark national events such as Remembrance Day, the Jubilee or royal weddings.

We ring Peals and Quarter peals for local circumstances (see picture of peal board) or as part of our association with the Middlesex County Association & London Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers (MCA&LDG). Details of our ringing and the Guild activities are available on the website www.bellringing.london/hendon-stmary

Our local band consists of about eight regular ringers with occasional visitors, ranging in ages from 14 to over 70. Practices are on Wednesday evenings and are open to all interested. We go on outings in the summer (see photo) to local areas to ring in other churches, often in association with other local towers or as part of the District outing.



The Wednesday Group

The Wednesday Group is a social group open to all members from both St Mary's and Christ Church. We have always been supported by the incumbent and curate who also attend our meetings. The group began in the seventies as a Young Wives' Group. It evolved over time into a Woman's Group and in more recent years, it has become the Wednesday Group, open to all.

We meet on the third Wednesday evening of the month from September until June in Church House.

At our AGM in September we choose our programme. We try and have a varied programme throughout the year. We have a Christmas Party in December, a Lent talk and a summer outing in June. Our speakers are drawn from our congregation, as well as invited outside speakers.

We have covered topics including lace making, local archaeology, WaterAid, play readings, bell ringing demonstrations, journalism, Lost Chord and cookery to mention just a few.

Usually between 10 and 20 people attend our meetings. We occasionally organise a meal at a local restaurant. Our most ambitious activity in 2017 was a Burns' Night held in the Church which was attended by about 80 people! Attendees are charged a small amount for refreshments and any money raised is either donated to charities or given towards an item required for the church.

Middlesex County Association & London Diocesan Guild St. Mary's - Hendon		
A Peal of 5040 Grandsire Triples On Friday 3rd March 2017 in 3 hours 4 minutes Composed by S Bruerton	Ruth Margaret Foreman 24/1/1931 - 19/2/2017 St Mary's, Hendon Member 1952-2017 Ringing Master for 48 years Responsible for augmentation of the bells to an octave in 1959	A Peal of 5152 Plain Bob Major On Sunday 9th April 2017 in 3 hours 5 minutes Composed by J M Hadley Hunter
Justin M Baker Tubtle 1 Martin D Clode 2 J M Hadley Hunter 3 David E. Rothera 4 Stephen G J Johnson 5 Ian W Biale 6 Stephen S Ross 7 D J Richard Morgan Tenor Conducted by Stephen G J Johnson	Middlesex County Association and London Diocesan Guild Member for 65 years Master of the Northern & Western Districts Association, Secretary, Master & President Honorary Vice-President and Life Member	D J Richard Morgan Tubtle 2 Fiona E Clode 3 J M Hadley Hunter 4 P Wendy Campbell 5 Ian L C Campbell 6 Richard J Chandler 7 Hans Rashbrook Tenor Martin D Clode Tenor Conducted by J M Hadley Hunter
Ringing hall installed after the service of thanksgiving for the life of Ruth Foreman. 2, 4 and 8 were taught to ring by Ruth on these bells.		Ringed by current and past Hendon ringers to celebrate the life of Ruth Foreman. 1, 2, 4 and 8 were taught to ring by Ruth on these bells. Circled towers: 1.



Kids' Café

Kids' Café is a free, after-school activity club, held in St Mary's church on Tuesdays from 15:30- 17:00 in term-time. We provide food and fun activities and welcome children and parents from the local area. Kids' Café has been running since 2010.

An enthusiastic team of volunteers runs it and provides refreshments. Many people from the congregation and our wider community run different activities for the children. Numbers of children vary – some weeks we have about 30, at other times we have had more than 50. Families come from many of the local schools and the aim is to provide a warm and welcoming environment in our church. Parents or carers stay with their children and can have tea or coffee. Many of them join in with the activities and sometimes run them. The activities are very varied; some have a Christian theme, but not all of them.



Over the years we have had a huge variety of activities, many with a food theme. We have had Christmas banquets, feasts of African food to celebrate International Day of the African Child, South American food and many birthday parties. On several Shrove Tuesdays we buried chocolate Alleluias, celebrated Purim and have had several teddy bears' picnics.



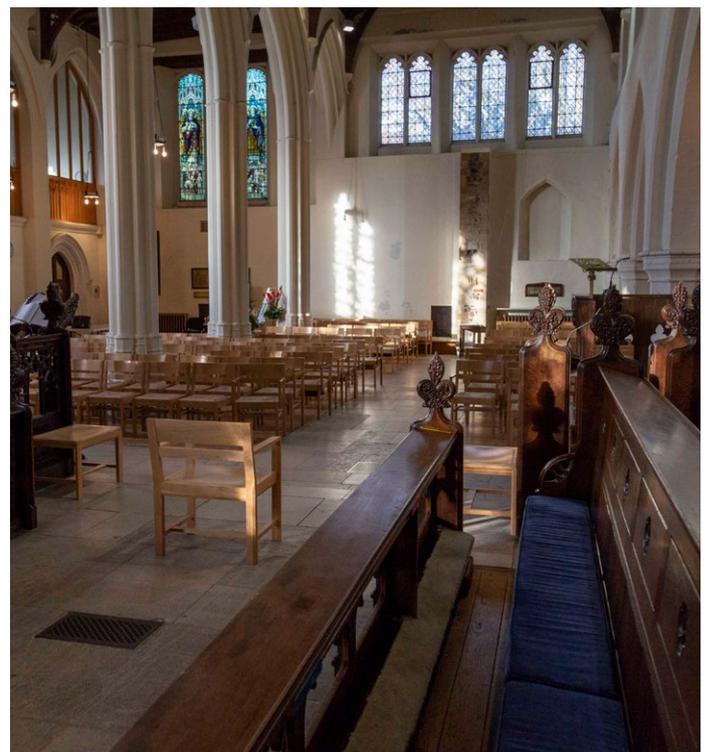
Twice we have elected a boy bishop, we have learnt about bees and tasted their honey and released prayers attached to helium balloons for Ascension Day. We dressed up for All Saints' Day and wore unusual hats for National Hat Day.

Last Christmas we performed a production of Baboushka and for the two Christmases before that, we did nativity plays. Our local police team sometimes comes to visit us and the fire brigade have brought their fire engine for us to explore. SMSJ invited us to see their Prayer Space and we visited their Science Fair. One of their teachers ran a drama session for us. We have had Lego afternoons and even held a sleepover in church.



Other children's activities in the parish

The Scout Hall adjoins Church House, and beavers, cubs and scouts meet regularly. We do not currently have any brownies or guides. Although Parade Sundays were a regular feature, and there is potential for this area to grow.



Flower arrangers

We have band of ten regular flower arrangers who decorate St. Mary's Church with beautiful flowers each week during Epiphany and Trinity. For the major festivals of Christmas and Easter and Patronal Festivals we have welcome our occasional flower arrangers' extra help.

As well as the services, during the year the flower arrangers are often asked to make displays for family celebrations and anniversaries such as Baptisms, birthday, funerals, weddings as well as memorials.

We also make flowers displays for special occasions such as Harvest Festival, Mothering Sunday, the various music festivals and the Votive Mass for Curates.



At St. Mary's we have a range of equipment for our arrangers to use which is stored in cupboards at the back of the church.

At Christ Church we have a group of people interested in learning the skills of flower arranging. We are in the process of organising demonstrations for them as well as buying extra equipment for their use.

Recent parish events and activities

We hold many parish events and festivals throughout the year, including concerts, recitals, an annual music festival and an annual Christmas Fayre. Last year we held a very successful Burns Night. We also host community-based projects, such as our recent production of Noye's Fludde, which involved hundreds of children from SMSJ and other schools, a large orchestra of professional musicians, children and adults, and a cast of 80!



The Gardening Group

St Mary's beautiful and extensive churchyard is cared for by a dedicated group of volunteers. The group has about 15 regular members as well as eight additional people who come occasionally, with a general attendance of eight to twelve people.

We meet on the second Saturday of the month from 10.00 – 12:00 with a default to the third Saturday in case of rain. The coffee break at 11.00 increases the social aspect of the meetings and the fellowship this provides extends to several members who are not members of the church per se. We continually look out for new gardeners, as various people have left the parish.



The group's remit is particularly to maintain the Memorial Garden, the garden in front of the church and alongside the wall by The Greyhound, and to tidy the graves.

The Parish employs two professional gardeners to cut the grass all around the churchyard, and one private gardener who is also an active member of the group, who ensures that we concentrate our efforts in the most necessary areas at any one time. She regularly gives updates on the state of the churchyard, and looks after the hedges and fences.

We have faced challenges, both from nature, with the loss of two of our listed cedar trees, and from determined thieves who have targeted tools and plants. However, we continue to work to maintain our lovely churchyard.



Walsingham, June 2017

In June last year about 50 (adults and children) of us went on a weekend Pilgrimage to Walsingham. We travelled by coach and car and arrived at 8.00 pm after having fish and chips on the way.

We all stayed in wonderful accommodation ranging from ancient cottages to more modern rooms.

It was a beautiful sunny weekend. After taking part in the Stations of the Cross the children were taken on a trip to the seaside by train. Other Pilgrims explored Walsingham village and visited the Slipper Chapel. In the evening we all met to take part in the Procession of our Lady of Walsingham and Benediction. Later on in the evening after having supper together we had a lovely social evening enjoying the beautiful grounds and evening sunshine.



On the Sunday morning we walked to St Mary's to take part in their Parish Mass. That afternoon we took part in the Laying-on of hands and anointing. Then we had the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament. After having a wonderful lunch together we returned back to London by coach.

This weekend was a lovely spiritual retreat and a good opportunity for us all to get to know one another better. Many people have expressed their desire for our churches to take part in another weekend to Walsingham as soon as possible.



Parish charitable activities

In the parish of St Mary and Christ Church we are committed to living out the Good News of Jesus Christ to the very best of our abilities as members of the Church of England. We do this through a variety of means; through prayer, the celebration of the Eucharist and through giving.

We collect clothes and other appropriate items for Homeless Action in Barnet, based at Finchley. We also ask for donations of food which are taken fortnightly to the Food Bank at Trinity Church, on Graham Park, Colindale. Our Harvest festival food is divided between these two charities.

There is a box to collect stamps and postcards in aid of Leprosy and we have held an annual appeal for funds.

The Wednesday group asks a charity to one of their meetings during the year to talk about their work. Past charities have included WaterAid.

Each year we ask for contributions for Christian Aid week and we take part in the MacMillan coffee morning.

Around Christmas time we take part in the Shoe Box Appeal by sending parcels to needy children in Eastern Europe. Part of the profit from the Christmas Fayre is given to a local charity.

Until recently, we collected for nominated charities regularly after services.

Churches Together in Hendon

Churches together Hendon and Colindale is an ecumenical standing committee which brings together Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Salvation army and United reformed churches to organize several joint events throughout the year; these include the walk of witness, songs of praise and Christmas carol singing (raising money for local charity).

Our vision is to be a strong witness for Jesus by serving the community in which we live. We will do this by fostering cohesion and Christian unity by praying together, being open and encouraging of one another and taking part in team building activities.

We also encourage the membership of youths and, as of September 2018, have elected both a new chairman and honorary secretary, both of whom are young and very energetic.

St Mary's

St Mary's stands at the top of Greyhound Hill. When floodlit at night, it stands out as a beacon for Christ. It has a large and historic churchyard and is situated beside beautiful Sunny Hill Park. Even though Hendon is densely populated, the church sits in a peaceful, green space, which feels almost rural. The surrounding neighbourhood is tree-lined and residential. The church is opposite the Middlesex University campus, and close to local shops and businesses.

Christ Church

Christ Church occupies a prominent position in Brent Street, one of Hendon's main shopping thoroughfares. It is well signposted for passers-by.

Our place in the community

We are fortunate to have close links with St Mary's and St John's School (SMSJ), a Church of England School which has pupils from nursery right through to (next year 2019) A-Level. The schools are situated near to St Mary's and Christ Church and pupils and staff attend regular services in the church. We engage in community projects and theatrical productions in partnership with the school, and would like to do even more.

We also offer support to Millbrook School in Mill Hill, a new Church of England school within the parish. Several other schools in the parish come into the churches for special services. Middlesex University, our near neighbour, also uses the church for concerts. We would like to build closer links the university and with other schools in the parish, including Hendon School, Sunnyfields School, Hendon Preparatory School, Dollis Junior School and Bell Lane School.

Our challenges

We face challenges as a parish and within our neighbourhood. In Hendon, as in much of London, we see poverty and affluence side by side. While there are very well-off people in the area, there is also significant deprivation. As housing has become more expensive, many young people are unable to afford to move into the area. There is a lack of sheltered housing for the elderly. As a church community, there is much we can do to help those in our neighbourhood who are struggling emotionally or financially, and who need kindness, support and compassion.

Personnel and support

The churches are supported by:

- Four Church Wardens – two in each Church
- A part-time Parish Administrator, based in St Mary's Church
- Treasurer
- Professional Accountant – the accounts are independently examined each year
- The PCC – 17 members

Mission Action Plan

As a church that has been in Hendon for over 1000 years, we want to communicate more effectively using the opportunities and resources that have been given to us and the skills we share. We will be more confident in speaking and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ and in sharing the story of our faith with others.

We are aware of the poverty around us in Hendon and the fact that our city can be a lonely place to live in. We want to be a welcoming home for all as we seek to serve our wider community. We will be more compassionate in serving our community with the love of God the Father as we strive to strengthen what we are already doing and as we seek out new initiatives.

To help us continue with the growth in our Parish and to serve the wider community around us our word cloud shows the areas of opportunities that are available to us.

We have already put a plan in action for being part of a night shelter. We also wish to offer lunch after Sunday services every few months. With the leadership of our new Priest we hope to continue with the growth and the opportunities here in Hendon and reaching new people and places with the love of God the Father.

We are beginning to look for volunteers to open St Mary's Church for an hour at lunch times. We are in the process of once again allowing our allthrough-school to use the lower churchyard for outdoor activities.

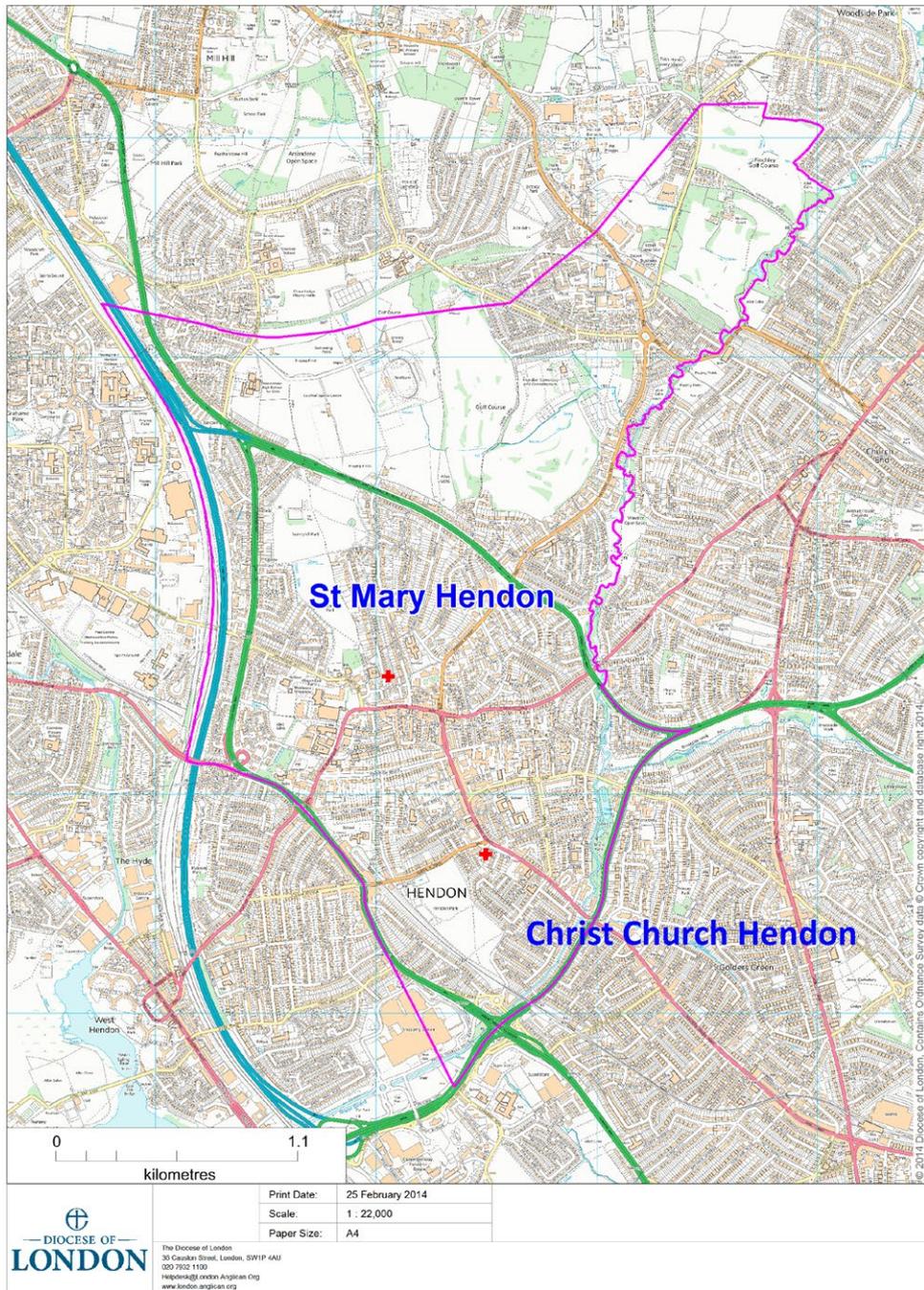
We hope to engage more creatively with those who need to hear the message of God's love, sharing our faith in different ways, including music, art or drama. We want to grow our community, especially through our work with young people.

The PCC involved our congregation in reviewing our parish for this profile. The word cloud to the right shows the most common words used to describe the opportunities we see for the future.



Parish Boundaries

1501 Hendon Parish



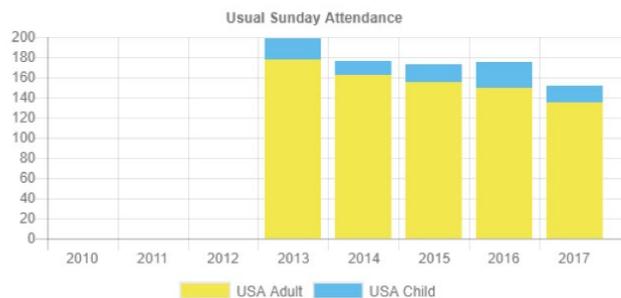
Parish statistics

Community figures

Worshipping Community

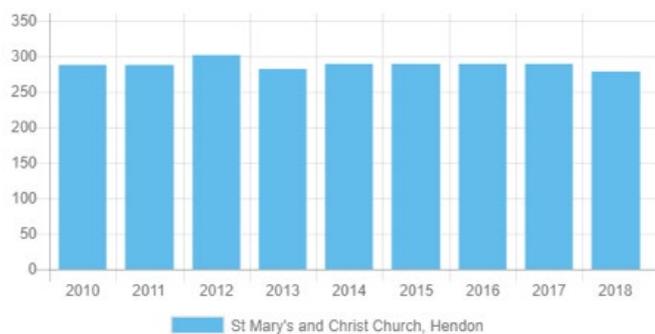


Usual Sunday Attendance

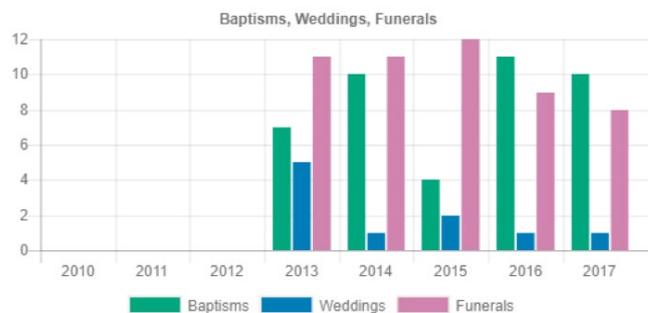


Electoral role & events

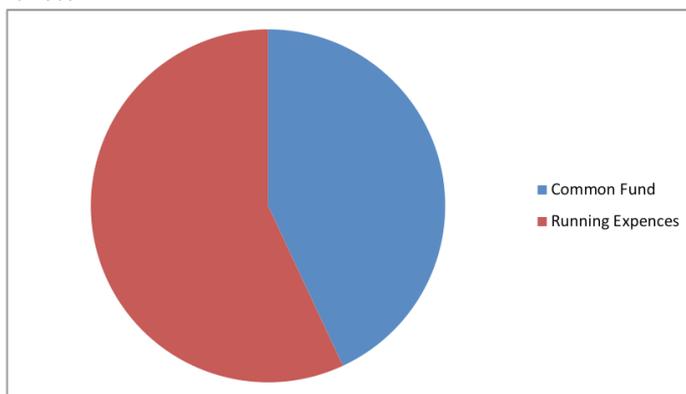
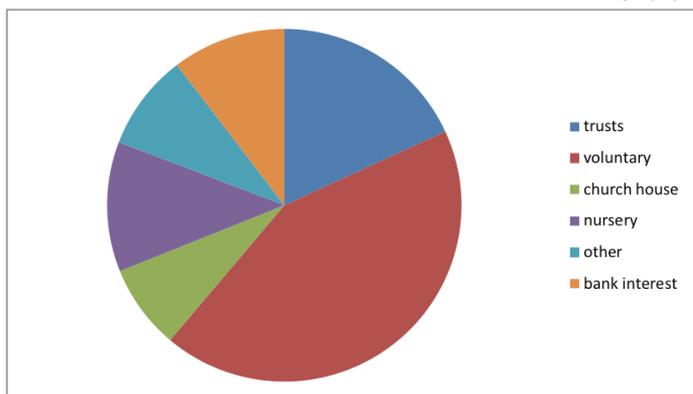
Electoral Roll



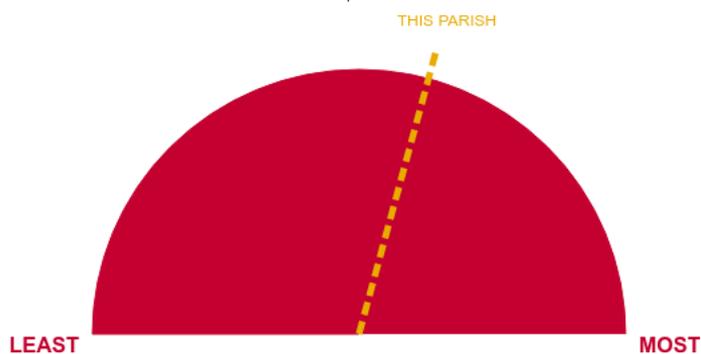
Baptisms, Marriages & Funerals



Church finances



Level of deprivation



Our buildings

These are the resources that God has given us to aid our worship and mission.

St Mary's

The Church is Grade II listed, with several listed monuments in the churchyard. The northern part of the building is Medieval including an extension with new altar designed by Temple Moore in 1917. The original Norman font is still in use.



Christ Church

Christ Church was built in 1881 and originally a Chapel of Ease within the Parish of Hendon, then an independent Parish, and now, in this century, is part of the combined Parish. In 1896 a rood screen dividing the nave and chancel was added by Temple Moore, the architect who was later to extend St Mary's.



The Vicarage

This is a beautiful, Grade II-listed regency property. It has a large living room and dining room, study and kitchen. There is also a downstairs cloakroom, small utility room and access to the garage. Upstairs, there are five bedrooms and two bathrooms. The house has a cellar, garage and a very large garden. The off-street driveway has space for 3 cars.



St Mary's Cottage

This is a three-bedroomed, detached house adjoining the church yard. It was previously used as curate's accommodation and is now let commercially on a fixed-term contract.



The Parsonage

This was formerly the Christ Church vicarage, and was recently used as a curate's house. We are awaiting the diocese's decision on its future use.

Church House

This locally listed building was extensively refurbished in the last two years. It has disabled access throughout. There is a large hall upstairs, seating up to 60, with a newly fitted catering kitchen. Downstairs there are two smaller rooms, cloakrooms and baby changing facilities.

Church House was refurbished with contributions from the Vicar and Churchwardens' Accounts and the Greyhound Trust.

It is administered by the New Church House Charity (which in future will comprise the Vicar, St Mary's Wardens and PCC members).

The building generates income from regular lets to Middlesex University during term time, as well as to other groups. We believe there is scope to use Church House much more extensively, both to generate income and as a community hub. The Scout Hut stands behind Church House, on land also owned by the New Church House Trust.



The Greyhound Inn

Part of this old building was once the church meeting room. After Church House was built opposite the church, the 'meeting room' became a pub, owned and administered by a Parochial Charity, The Greyhound Trust.



The pub is currently let to Young's Brewery. It adjoins the churchyard and is a convivial meeting place after choir practice and church events. It is also frequented by students from the University and regulars from the community.

St Mary's Churchyard

The churchyard contains many interesting and historic graves and monuments. Several are listed, and two were recently restored with the help of Historic England. The lower churchyard was cleared some years ago for school use and works as a large field.

Our historic trusts

The New Church House Charity

The fixed asset of this trust is the Church House building. The trust earns its income from rentals to Middlesex University and several private clients who use the building for classes and events. Church House holds contingency funds for repairs, and also contributes to the salary of the Parish Administrator.

The Greyhound Trust

The fixed assets of this trust consist of the pub building and St Mary's Cottage. The trust has been supported by bequests over the years, and earns income from the pub rental (Young's Brewery), as well as the occasional commercial rent of the cottage, and nominal interest on savings. The trust contributed towards the refurbishment of Church House and we hope to use more of the resources in mission and outreach.

Both of these trusts contribute considerably to parish expenses.

We plan to appoint a School Chaplain for SMSJ, who would also work part time in the parish.

Our next Vicar

We are looking for:

- An experienced and committed Pastor of the eucharistic tradition with strong vocational vision to maximise the potential of our financially stable Parish which is hungry for spiritual growth.
- A Priest who will foster and champion our musical strengths.
- A Priest who is able to encourage and strengthen the links between the parish, SMSJ, other schools in the parish, the local university and the wider community.
- A Priest who will be a team leader and encourage the congregation to take an active role within worship and mission.
- A Priest who is able to respect the diversity of our worshippers and our two congregations of St Mary's & Christ Church while encouraging closer links and collaboration across the whole Parish.
- A priest who seeks to encourage family and youth with innovations in worship and informal activities whilst preserving our traditional services.
- A Priest who will preach the Gospel of our Lord to new people in our community and energise our present community to live out our Christian faith in word and deed.



Appendix

Christ Church, Hendon – a Churchwarden's view

'Let us praise our Maker, with true passion extol him.' These opening words from W H Auden's 'Anthem' express the ideal, for which we strive at Christ Church. This Church, originally a Chapel of Ease within the Parish of Hendon, then an independent Parish, and now, in this century, part of the combined Parish of Christ Church and Hendon, has its own character different from that of St Mary's, perhaps because it is smaller.



On Sundays there is a congregation of between 30 and 40 people including about half a dozen children. Many of the young people are servers, and there

is also a Sunday School held in the Parish Centre at the rear of the Church. There are also Eucharistic Ministers, Readers, and Intercensors. After the Eucharist members of the congregation meet in the Parish Centre for coffee, cakes, biscuits and sherry.

Sometimes there is a birthday cake after everyone has sung 'happy birthday to you!' at the end of the Eucharist. Once there was the Polish equivalent, 'Sto lat! sto lat! Niech



zyje, zyje nam!', roughly translated as 'May we live a hundred years!', when there were visitors from Poland, and one of the Churchwardens can speak that language.

Such visitors with a Roman Catholic background are occasional, but not exceptional, and the story illustrates that the congregation is cosmopolitan. People have connections with many countries, particularly with West and South Africa, but there are others. The food at Parish celebrations, particularly at the Festival of Christ the King, is international and delicious.

There are, however, no other events specifically at Christ Church, so people participate in activities at St Mary's Church or in Church House. During the week the Parish Centre is therefore available, and it is let to a Nursery School. The Nursery School staff clear a space on Fridays, so there is easier access to the Church and there is space in the Parish Centre.

Although the Nursery School operates on weekdays, there have been said Eucharists in Christ Church during the week, particularly at midday on Thursdays and at 7.30 pm on Mondays. These have not been held during the Vacancy, when we are searching for a new Vicar for the combined Parish.



There is therefore just the Sunday morning Sung Eucharist held at 11.30 am, although before the Vacancy it started at 11.15 am. The style is in many ways formal and there is incense,

but the words differ from the ones used at St Mary's Church. There is no choir, so people must sing, and we are helpfully led by the organist. There is of course 'the Peace', and because



the congregation comprises 30 or 40 people, the exchange of handshakes is very warm, and everyone can greet most, if not all, the others. At the time the Notices are proclaimed, the formality similarly is relieved from time to time by birthday greetings and the like.

This warmth is an important part of Parish life, summarised by Emily Brontë's 'Last Lines':

With wide-embracing love
Thy Spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Peter Walker
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St Mary's and Christ Church Hendon



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