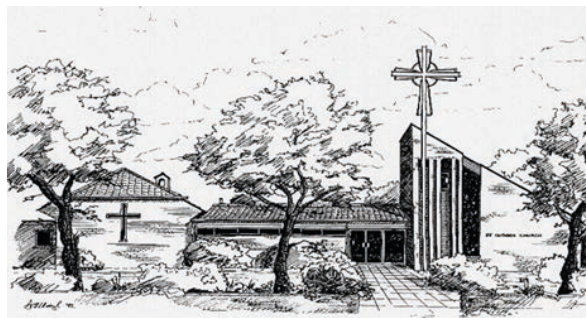


# CHURCH PROFILES

st aidan's church



St Laurence  
and All Saints  
Eastwood

FEBRUARY 2023

# st aidan's church



## OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

- To worship and serve God
  - To be a community of faith and fellowship at the heart of the parish
  - To nurture and grow
- 

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We believe that we have the potential to grow our congregation to strengthen our position as the spiritual centre of the community.

We are praying for a vicar who recognises that potential and wants to look for innovative ways to fulfil our mission.

*“We are here to worship God and nurture faith. We are also here to welcome our local community and serve you as best we can.”*

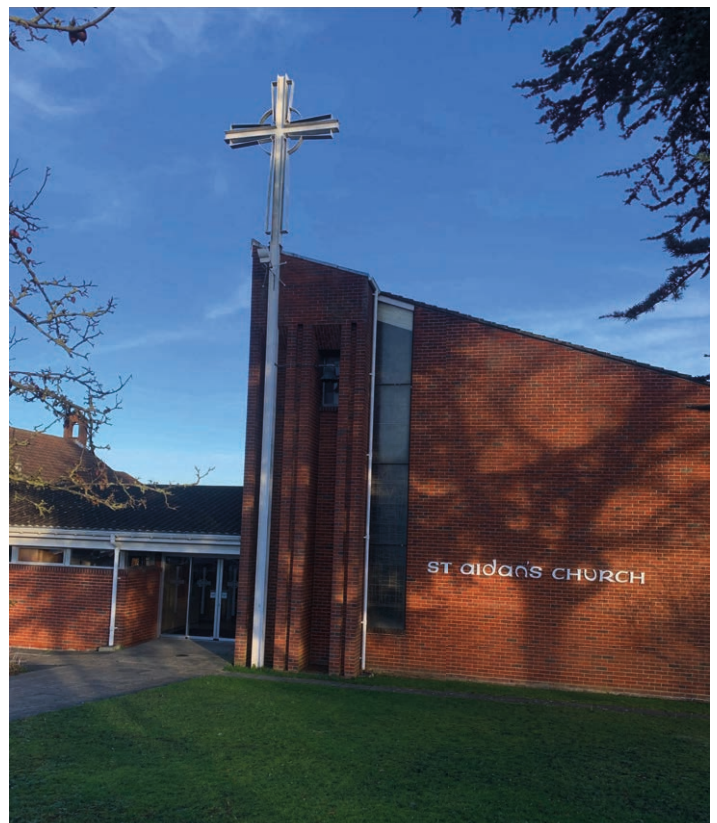
We believe there are opportunities to reach out to work with young and old, the local primary school (our neighbours), many hall users and beyond.

Our priest is valued and cared for, ensuring that holidays and days off are always taken.

As a church we have a welcoming ethos that we believe embraces everyone. Sadly, the pandemic has meant that some of our links have weakened over the past few years, but are still there.

Our mission to provide friendship and support for older people continues and grows through our Friday Drop-In Centre, an Armchair exercise group and after service coffee.

We recognise that our congregation is predominantly an elderly one and we need a vicar who can help us to nurture the next generation so we will grow as a family of faith, moving into the future with hope and excitement.



## OUR CHURCH TRADITION

- Christ centred
- Bible focused preaching
- Sharing of the Sacrament

The sacrament of Holy Communion is pivotal to our worship.

Services are a combination of traditional and modern woven together. We have a group of volunteers who play a part in services through reading, serving and leading intercessions.

Sermons are scripturally centred and form the basis of our spiritual learning.

As a congregation we are keen to grow in our Christian faith, ready to embrace new ideas and are looking for innovative ways to develop our worship.

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## OUR LOCATION

- Close to the sea
- Close to a nature reserve and woodland
- Good public transport links

The church is situated on a main road in Leigh-on-Sea, a suburb of the City of Southend. Geographically, St. Aidan's is a small parish which has porous boundaries in relation to electoral roll numbers.

The majority of the housing is privately owned bungalows and houses with two small areas of social housing. There are a variety of shops within walking

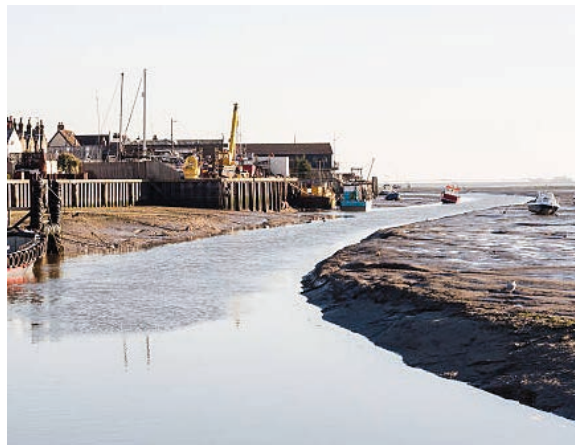


distance as well as a doctor's surgery, pharmacy, dental practice, a pub and a park restaurant.

The Thames Estuary is 3 miles away, with the historic fishing area of Old Leigh at the western end of the town and then several miles of beaches and seafront as far as Shoeburyness. In the middle is the famous pier, the longest pleasure pier in the world.

Belfairs Woods are within a few minutes walk, with a nature reserve, riding stables, golf course, tennis courts, bowling green, cafés and a woodland centre.

London is a 45 minute train journey away, using either the C2C line from Leigh or the Greater Anglia service



from Rayleigh. A local bus route runs past the church going to the centre of Southend.

The main road to London, the A127, is at the end of The Fairway and this road connects to the M25.

Our neighbours are Fairways Primary School, which also has nursery facilities.

Southend has a wide range of secondary schools, including well established grammar schools, and opportunities for further education at local colleges and Southend University.





## OUR BUILDINGS

- A modern church building
- Well maintained
- Attractive hall facilities

Our Church is fifty years old and is a light, modern space which many people comment on as a place of peace and spirituality. We have a Lady Chapel which is used for Bible study and for smaller mid-week services.

The church was re-ordered several years ago which now makes it versatile, with a moveable altar, altar rail and chairs. It is used by the school for productions and celebrations and has also been used for concerts.



We have a large hall which is well used throughout the week by a variety of groups, including uniformed organisations and the U3A. It has a kitchen, a meeting room, our reprographics room and a stage. It also has a toilet with disabled access. We have a defibrillator in the hall and training was given when it was installed.

The hall is linked to the church by a short corridor.

The vicarage is a large four bedroomed detached house next to the church. It has a study, a garage, a large back garden plus off street parking on the front driveway for several cars.

All our buildings are on one site in the centre of the parish.





## FELLOWSHIP

- Strong
- Warm
- Welcoming

Fellowship is one of the cornerstones of our community. We strive to make St. Aidan's a place of welcome and warmth.

Many organisations use the church hall during the week: the church runs a gentle exercise class and our Friday Drop-In centre is enjoyed both by people from the congregation and by people looking for company. This has been running for many years and has offered support and friendship to many in that time.



We look for opportunities to bring the wider community in. We recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of our church building and held a flower festival to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee.

We also hold regular events such as an annual bazaar, coffee mornings and this year held our first rummage sale for several years.

As a congregation we share coffee after services and a lunch is held after our APCM and Harvest Festival. We enjoy the opportunity to be together beyond our worship.

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## OUTREACH

- Community Links
- Local school
- Opportunities

As a church we host a Friday Morning Drop-In Centre offering companionship with a cup of coffee and refreshments.

There is a small group of individuals who visit the housebound and the lonely and communion is taken to members of the congregation who can no longer get to church.

We have a website which we are keen to develop as a possible tool for outreach and home worship.

Our hall is an asset in several ways: it provides a source of income but more importantly it enables us to build links with groups in the community who use it.

We have worked hard over many years to build a strong link with our neighbours at Fairways School and pre school groups and although the pandemic meant visits had to be curtailed they, and we, are keen to return to more regular contact. In the past, we have been involved in assemblies through the scheme 'Open the Book'. We welcome the children and their parents/carers when they use the church to celebrate Christmas and Harvest.

The Southend Sikh Community have recently returned to meet monthly in the hall for worship and then they share a meal together.



## OUR WORSHIP AND MINISTRY

Currently our services are:

**SUNDAY:** 10am. Holy Communion. Average attendance of 35-40.

There is a small children's area with resources and toys available. For celebration services, such as Remembrance Sunday, Harvest, Mothering Sunday, a family service takes place and the Uniformed Organisations are invited and often take part by doing readings and prayers.

On these Sundays we then hold a 6pm communion.

A Messy Church group meets to celebrate significant church festivals on Sunday afternoons.

**WEEKDAY:** A weekday service is held on a Wednesday at 10am.

Prior to the interregnum, it was a communion service but at present, we alternate morning prayer, taken by our LLM, and Holy Communion taken by a visiting priest.

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## BIBLE STUDY

The group meets on the First Tuesday of the month.

We also hold a Lent course using resources such as the York Courses.

We also have a group of parishioners who subscribe to a monthly devotional scheme to support home study and prayer.

We have the services of an accomplished organist and a group from the congregation have formed a small choir to sing at festivals and celebrations.

We have a range of technology, including a loop system, projector and screen and a digibox.

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## FINANCE

Currently, we are in a strong financial position due to several legacies. For many years we have been able to pay our Parish Purse in full. We run a regular giving envelope scheme as well as some members committing to a direct debit scheme.

The hall provides a significant income from lettings.

We run a variety of fundraising activities throughout the year, including a bazaar and coffee mornings.

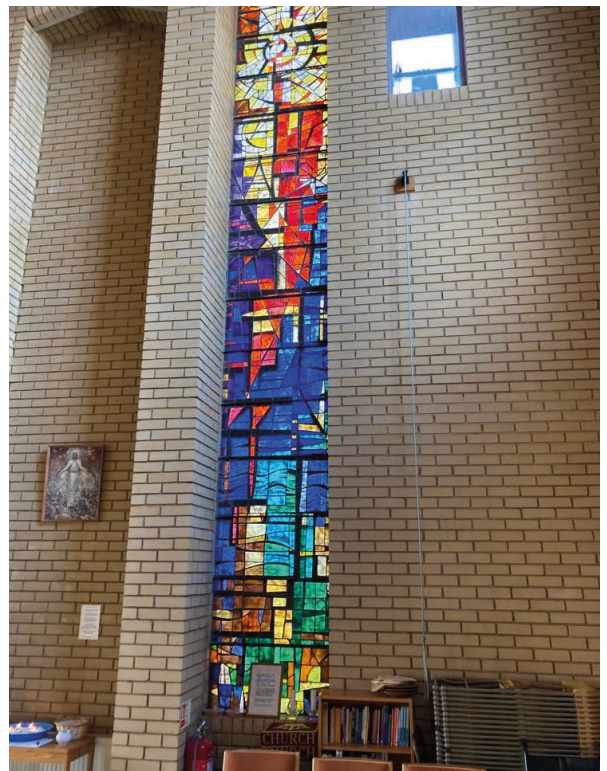
The congregation are generous in their giving to those in need. We have collections for specific appeals as well as a Charities committee which meets twice a year to distribute an annual quota of church funds.

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## ADMINISTRATION

Our PCC meets bi-monthly. The Church Wardens meet regularly with the priest. We also have committees responsible for premises, charity giving and catering.

We print a weekly pew slip which is then put on the church website.







A photograph of a Gothic Revival church, likely St. John's Episcopal Church in New York City. The church features a prominent steeple with a cross on top. The main body of the church is constructed of light-colored stone or brick, with a large rose window on the right side. The roof is covered in red tiles. In the foreground, there is a cemetery with several large, weathered gravestones. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

Recent years have been very difficult as we moved from a clergy vacancy to the appointment of a new Priest in Charge and within 3 weeks we were into the first lockdown caused by the covid pandemic. Throughout the lockdowns the PCC worked to maintain contact with the vast majority of our church

We are not a wealthy parish but always paid our family purse in full before covid closed our church hall and denied us the fundraising opportunities and income from lettings which it provided. Last year we were able to begin to raise our contributions and expect to continue this.

We want to continue the journey we have begun, led by the Holy Spirit, as we encourage and care for one another and for our community.

ABOUT THE PARISH

Eastwood is a friendly suburb of the city of Southend-on-Sea in Essex. This urban parish to the north-west of the city is divided between two civil parishes. The southern half is within Southend City boundary and the northern half is in Rochford District.

All the housing, two sheltered housing complexes and three schools, are in the Southend part of the parish. There are also two supermarkets, a banking complex, the Len Forge Football Development facility and a small commercial area.

All the London Southend Airport Buildings and most of the airfield, commercial and industrial area, two hotels, a car sales village and Westcliff Rugby Club are in Rochford district.

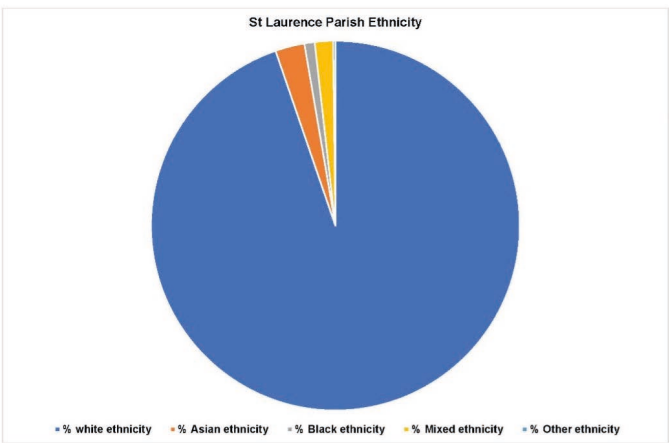
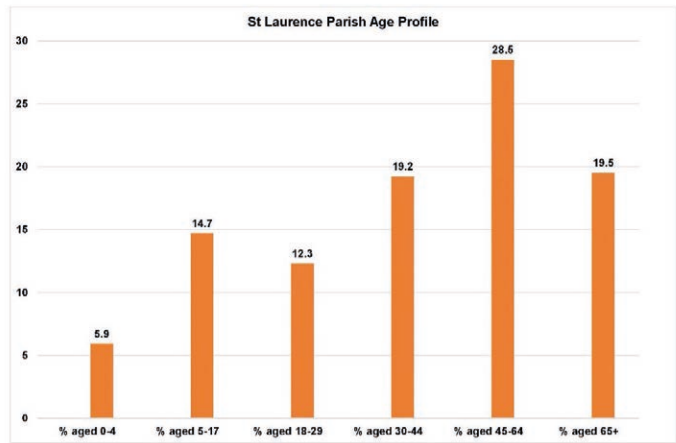


Cherry Orchard Country Park is also in this area and is a 200 acre area of woodland, a lake and open grassland providing habitat for a huge range of animals and plants.

Bus routes to Southend City Centre, Rayleigh and Southend hospital are frequent. London Southend airport and its train station are nearby.

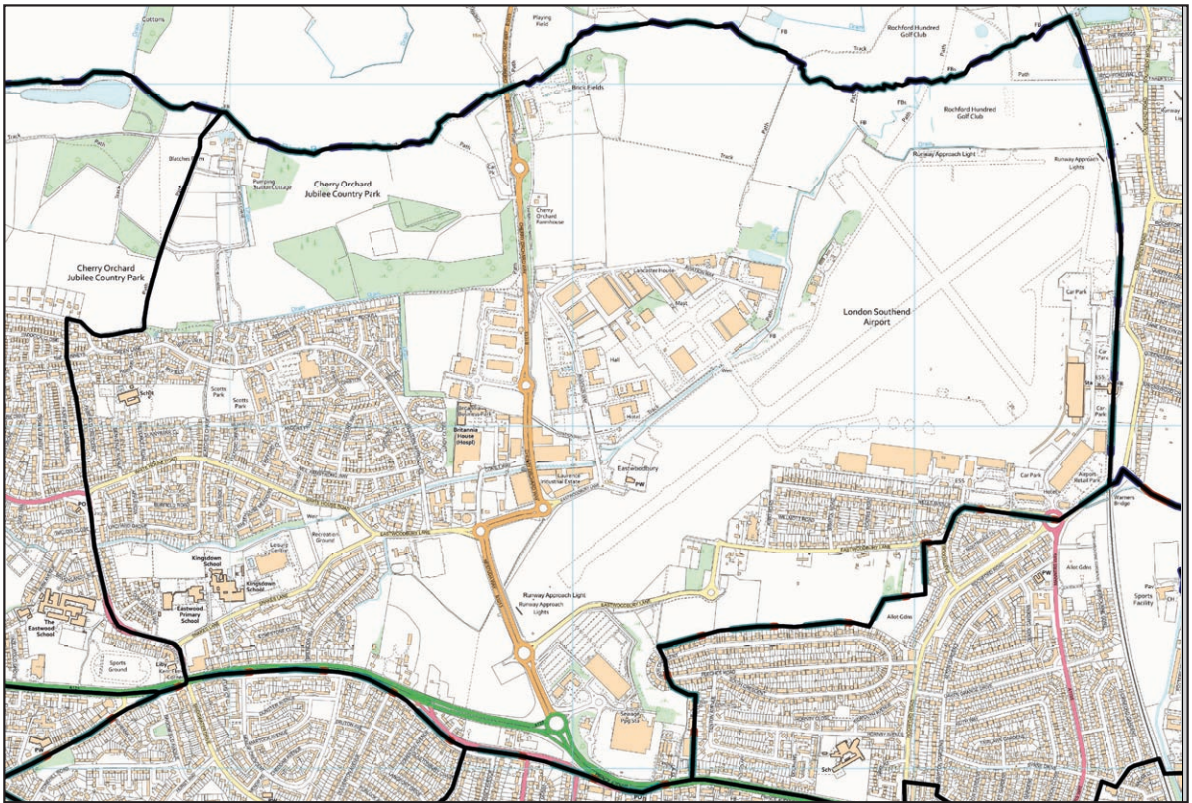
There is a large commercial and industrial development taking place in the northern part of the parish. It is planned that this development will employ up to 6000 people when complete.

The population of the parish is 5400 of which 60% of the population are Christian and 30% have no religion.





## PARISH MAP



## ABOUT THE CHURCH

*"In the new year we joined the congregation of St Laurence and were immediately surrounded with a loving welcome. Everyone here cares about others, it is a totally loving community, worshipping with joy."* DOROTHY AND DAVID

The people of St Laurence and All Saints are a welcoming and caring community sharing fellowship and friendship both in and out of church.

Worship is central to our church life and we try to ensure that our gathered times are meaningful attempts to connect with God, creating a space for people to come to know and love Jesus through God's Word. We want everyone to feel the warmth of St Laurence's and our leadership team are constantly looking at ways to improve the welcome at our services and events.

The PCC is currently made up of 15 members meeting bi-monthly. In alternate months the members meet as sub-committees allowing greater discussion on particular issues. Each sub-committee reports back to the full PCC for their approval of any decisions.

The Buildings and Finance Team monitors the financial position of the Church and sets the budget. They also consider the needs of the church building and the church hall.



The Fundraising Team plans fund raising events for church and charity and these take place throughout the year.

The Pastoral Team considers ways in which they can support and develop the caring ministry to the church and the parish and pastoral concerns and needs are identified.

The Mission and Ministry Team continues to consider ways to develop the mission and ministry work in the parish.



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## THE CHURCH AS A WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY

Our church offers two services on a Sunday, both usually with Holy Communion. Our 9am traditional service from the Book of Common Prayer is attended by older members of our congregation, whilst at our 10.30am Common Worship service there is a broader range and we aim to involve families in our monthly 10.30am family service.

During the clergy vacancy we have been extremely well supported by two local retired clergy who were already worshipping with us regularly. Members of the congregation are lesson readers and intercessors as required and lay members assist with communion and provide home communion for those in need. We also have an Ordinand in the final year of her training who is involved in services.

Throughout the church year we also offer a number of special services. Easter Day is popular, and during Lent, we join with St Aidan's for our Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday services. Remembrance and Harvest services are regular dates on our calendar.





We have the usual Christmas services, Nine Lessons and Carols, Midnight Communion and Christmas Day and pre-covid these were particularly well attended by members of our local community. Christingle services were also incredibly popular and attracted a large number of children and families each year and we saw some increase in the number of families returning last Christmas.



As we approach Christmas we host services for the children of our local schools – Eastwood Primary, Kingsdown Special School and Heycroft Primary and for our local scouts group.

St. Laurence's has a long association with the 1312 Squadron Air Cadets based at the nearby airport and until recently our vicar has been their Padre. They hold their Enrolment and Carol Service annually in the church and the cadets assist with maintenance activities in the churchyard as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Awards.



The Occasional Offices are part of the gift of this church, giving us the opportunity to engage with some who would otherwise not come to church. Having an open churchyard leads to many funerals and burials taking place, a lay member has been managing these since 2017 and has a good rapport with funeral directors and families and the necessary arrangements.

## THE CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES

We are passionate about building on our children's services and youth ministry.

Honeybees is our baby/toddler group meeting once a week during school term time and is run by teams of volunteers from the church. Soft play and lots of toys provide a friendly and caring environment for parents, grandparents and carers while their little ones play in safety where we can interact with families to become a presence in their lives.

It provides an opportunity to invite these families to other church activities. Numbers each week average between 15 and 20 children. Donations from the families support a child in Rwanda through 'Compassion UK'.



Messy Church is led by two members of the congregation who are well supported by others. This began as an after-school club at a local primary school but as this did not attract parents to stay with their children we started again and it is now held bi-monthly on Saturday and is an area we would like to develop further. Since restarting in 2022 we are building attendance back with new families as well as past participants.

Our contact with the three schools in the parish is mainly at Christmas and Easter, with assemblies taking place in schools at other times of the year and these children also come to church as part of their school projects. We have tried to maintain our contact and to provide support throughout the pandemic and clergy vacancies and we are beginning to arrange visits to the schools and for the schools to come into church.



*"Thank you for your message. The children had the most wonderful time and were made so welcome. I have attached a couple of pictures which are fine to use."* ANDREW PALMER HEADTEACHER, HEYCROFT PRIMARY SCHOOL



Caring for the needs of the adult population both in and out of our church is one of our strong commitments, prompted by the demographics of the area.

The weekly Coffee Morning in the church hall is a great success creating the atmosphere for lively chat and banter for people from inside and outside the church.

Monthly Bingo and Beetle Drives, a fundraising event, are aimed at the retired population who might otherwise spend Saturday alone. The

afternoons have proved to be hilarious, good fun and are thoroughly enjoyed by all. We have also hosted Dementia Friends talks which have provided valuable information and time to discuss ways in which we can support families.

St Laurence churchyard is a place of tranquillity and beauty and is well maintained by a willing gang of volunteers who have a connection with their church, although not necessarily for Sunday services. They meet on a Tuesday morning to ensure that the pathways and grave areas are kept neat and tidy and there is an area put aside for wildlife. Our churchyard is an open one and still has space for interments. We have a lot of visitors to the churchyard to tend to loved one's graves and the churchyard brings together many communities that have connections to St Laurence. Eastwood has a long history of Romany families who are part of its heritage, they are baptised, married and buried here and one family worships here regularly. We also have seating spread around for people to sit in quiet reflection and contemplation. Tuesday morning the church is open to visitors and a member of the church is always on hand to meet and greet anyone who wishes to come in and pay us a visit.



*"A quaint and cherished church which is a resting place to many of our Romany Gypsy ancestors since the 1700's. It has been exceptionally cared for and run, by its wardens and extended support teams, providing clubs, social events and fundraising for all interests. The churchyard is maintained regularly by the Friends of St Laurence and also from the families whose loved one's rest there. The church gives a feeling of togetherness, whether that's attending a service or while laying flowers. It is a "constant warmth", bringing a feeling of contentment for the Eastwood parish and one which all locals have supported and fought for, in times of need."* AMANDA



We have strong connections with Southend Airport created in the past when they wanted the church to be moved in order for them to extend the runway. The problems were resolved by a compromise and the good relationship continues.

At St Laurence we acknowledge the importance of reading and studying the Bible in order to maintain our connection with God through His written Word. Small study groups led by lay members meet regularly to study the Bible in an interactive setting where we encourage each other and discuss the Bible's application in everyday life. We publish a monthly prayer diary which identifies a group of people with long-term prayer needs and also includes every street in the parish during the year, church activities and groups, church hall users and sports facilities and industries throughout the parish. The weekly news sheet also lists that week's part of the diary and is published on our website and Facebook page.

The church supports a local foodbank throughout the year with a particular emphasis during Lent, Harvest and Advent when we also donate new toys for them to distribute for Christmas.

*"Thank you so much for your regular donations of food and for your recent financial donation. Due to your generous donation we were able to provide 60 families with hampers to help them over the half term week."* STOREHOUSE

We also have a tradition of supporting the annual Shoebox appeal, the Leprosy Mission and support two children through 'Compassion UK'.



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## THE CHURCH BUILDINGS AND RESOURCES

*"The building we know today developed over the 12th to 16th centuries and has been described as 'one of the finest and most important small medieval churches in South Essex and of exceptional architectural, archaeological and historical significance'. The site itself is also of 'considerable, possibly exceptional, archaeological significance'."* CHURCH BUILDINGS COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



The building is Grade One Listed.

There is a ring of six bells, two of which date from 1380. The bells are rung every Sunday.

There is a pipe organ which is in working order with some minor faults but we do not have an organist. Music is provided by a computerized audio-visual system with a loop system for those needing it.

We are proud of our church's heritage and are very aware that we are custodians of this important ancient building and ongoing works are required to both maintain the condition of the building and to keep up with Health & Safety legislation and Energy best practice for future generations. With that in mind we are in the early stages of a major renovation project. As part of our Forward Maintenance Plan for the sustainability and repair of our Church we have started the process by agreeing a fee with our architect to provide professional services and for him to recommend a suitable partner to carry out the works.

This will involve repair of the internal plasterwork and redecoration, replacement of the electrical installation, new heating system and new lighting.

Our main income comes from a core of committed givers, mainly the congregation, many of whom give on a regular basis through bank standing orders or the gift aided envelope scheme.

Other sources of income are Gift Aid Tax and the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme.

Our major item of expenditure is our Parish Share which until the Covid pandemic we were able to meet in full each year. Unfortunately, we were not able to meet 100% for the past two years. However, we have recently been issued with a reduced assessment for 2023 which we are confident we will be able to pay.

Our financial state is regularly monitored by our Buildings and Finance Team who report to the full PCC Meetings.

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## CHURCH HALL

Our Church Hall is well used and the rentals from this go a great way towards helping us to maintain our finances on an even keel.

It is a great venue and hosts church activities and outreach and organised events too which are very popular. These events include our popular parents and toddler group "Honeybees" and our regular Thursday coffee morning which is well attended.

Our Church Hall is a busy hub hosting many clubs and activities including Mencap Music Man Project and their drama group, a local Scout Group, Diddi Dance and an array of exercise classes.



Our facilities have a large stage which caters for our amateur dramatics hirers. It is sought after by local families for children's parties for which we have very positive reviews and hosts wedding receptions and family events.

The hall has excellent ample parking facilities and there is a paddock alongside where many of our summer events are held. We are proud of our modern facilities and the popularity of our venue.





# A message from the Area Dean

The Hadleigh Deanery is the most southerly within the Diocese of Chelmsford and is situated on the Northern Bank of the Thames Estuary. It embraces Canvey Island in the South and stretches up to London Southend Airport in the North East.

The Deanery currently serves a population of some 131,906 (2018) though significant growth in numbers is anticipated with planned housing developments. It encompasses urban, suburban, rural and coastal areas with a diverse demographic and socioeconomic profile.

Hadleigh is possibly one of the UK's most diverse deaneries with a broad spectrum of ecclesiology, theology and transitions ranging from Anglo-Catholic Inclusive to Evangelical Charismatic. Although this diversity is a source of richness, variety and celebration it does present some challenges when it comes to effective co-operation between churches.

With a new Area Dean in post we are hopeful that increased collegiality with closer partnerships and mutual support will develop. The new Incumbent will be responsible for overseeing an SSM Curate and we hope that we will be able to develop creative ways for her to engage with the Chapter too.

The members of Deanery Chapter and Synod look forward to welcoming a new individual to our number and anticipate developing a close working relationship as we journey together as a Deanery and Diocese.

**Revd Peter Hillman**  
*Hadleigh Area Dean*