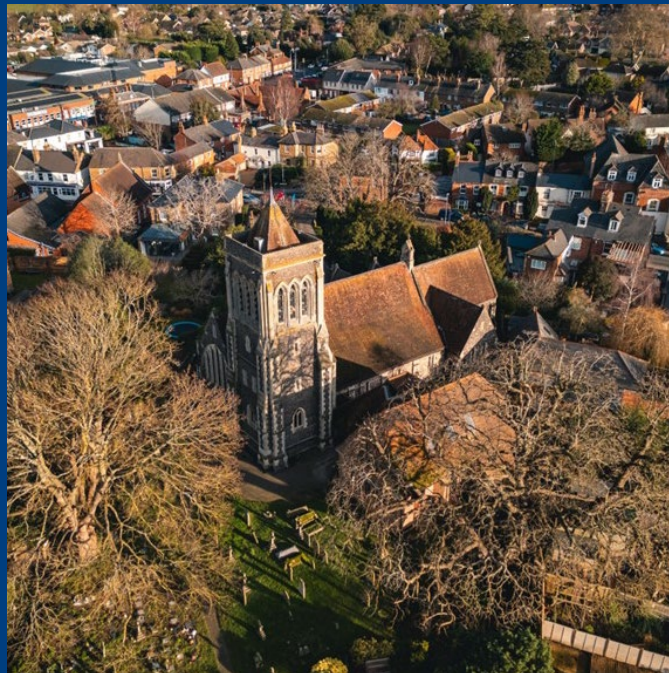


Parish Profile

St Mary's
TWYFORD

St James'
RUSCOMBE



St Mary's
TWYFORD

St James'
RUSCOMBE

Commendation by Ven Stephen Pullin, Archdeacon of Berkshire

“This is a great parish!

Ruscombe and Twyford’s commitment to mission is seen in both its words and in its actions. The parish has a track record of innovative outreach and welcoming worship.

That is, worship which joyfully adapts to the needs of everyone. The parish has a clear understanding of its purpose and is adept at structuring its life and ministry accordingly.

The area dean has set out some of the opportunities and challenges in the following section, and I would echo his sentiments. These are not churches which need to be persuaded to do the right thing – they get it and are looking to pick up the pace again after a vacancy which has been extended by the inevitable timescales imposed by pastoral reorganisation.

The good news is that the slimmed-down benefice is much better placed to give time and attention to what really matters rather than being distracted by the demands of holding the previously larger benefice together.

We are looking for someone who combines strategic clarity, focus, and warmth, with a leadership style which is enabling and encouraging. The people are excited about welcoming a new leader who will help them flourish in their love and service of Jesus, and in the task He’s called them to.

Are you willing to hear their story, to work with them to discern how their missional enthusiasm can best be deployed, and to prayerfully turn aspiration into impact?

If you think this might be you and want to find out more, I would welcome the opportunity for a conversation.

The Lord be with you in your discernment as you consider where God might be calling you to.”

Ven Stephen Pullin
Archdeacon of Berkshire
archdeacon.berkshire@oxford.anglican.org



Commendation by Rev Richard Lamey, Area Dean (Sonning Deanery)

“The role of Vicar of Ruscombe and Twyford (between Reading and Maidenhead) fascinates and intrigues.

A Deanery reorganisation in 2011 put the two Churches into one benefice with St Nicholas, Hurst. It worked fine, overall, and was never close to being at the point of crisis. But when the previous incumbent left in 2022 the PCCs of the Benefice made the courageous and faithful decision to separate, allowing for the appointment of a Full Time Vicar at Ruscombe and Twyford and a House for Duty priest at Hurst. Not only would it have been easier to stick with the status quo, but this will also require an increase in giving, which the PCC are very much up for.

There is a lot to recommend the post. Quite apart from the desirability of living in Twyford these are congregations who work well together, seamlessly, supportively, warmly. Both of the church buildings are in good shape and there are several employed members of staff who share the work of ministry in the parish. There are a

number of committed and talented volunteers and lay leaders, an expectation of engaging and complimentary worship and an openness to trying new things. Worship at St Mary’s, especially, is meant to be fun just as the preaching is meant to be deep. The Deanery is friendly and welcoming and supportive, and in good heart, while the Diocese is well-resourced and the Area Team is really strong and well-balanced.

There will perhaps be some things to work through around the separation of the benefice (more in terms of emotion than practicality, where things are mostly in place). There will be the need to focus on finance quite soon and there is some rebuilding to be done around the congregations’ clarity of purpose and confidence in mission. The last few years have seen a lot of mutual support and care within the congregations.

Overall, it feels as if the congregations are eager for new ideas, new passion, new commitment. They are waiting to be

inspired and energised by a new Vicar who will listen carefully to what they have been through in the last five years, relish exploring their new identity with them and then, directed and inspired by the wind of the Spirit, will help them set course for adventure. It is time for these faithful people to be buzzing again, for the Church of St Mary to be full again, for the Church of St James to reach out to its neighbours again, for joy and excitement and possibility to flourish again.

A lot of churches say that they are committed to outreach and mission. These churches really are. And if all of this feels exciting to you then that is more than echoed by the excitement we feel at the moment. Let’s go.”

*Rev Richard Lamey
rector@spauls.co.uk*



Twyford and Ruscombe Parish Profile

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Foreword

Welcome to our Parish Profile. You'll find an overview of our area and community, our two churches and URC local ecumenical partner, our aspirations for the future and the supportive resources we can offer.

We also undertook a forward-looking consultation with our congregations and local community as part of our process, and insights from the responses are included within the Profile.

We are looking for someone with vision, energy and enthusiasm to lead us forward in faith and mission, as we anticipate that our newly restructured benefice will allow us to focus all our energies on our calling to serve the communities of Twyford and Ruscombe.

We have identified some potential directional areas for growth within the Profile but would also welcome fresh ideas to nurture, challenge and reinvigorate us after an extended vacancy period and parish restructuring.

In return, we can offer supportive congregations with volunteers who are ready to work hand in hand to achieve our mission to **“support and encourage one another in growing our faith and sharing God’s Love.”**

If, having read the Profile, you have questions or would like more information on specific aspects, please do not hesitate to email us at office@thru-christ.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you and hope that you will be inspired to apply

Lucy Bowley, Simon Farrar and John Porter
Church Wardens



About St Mary's and St James'

Our two churches, St Mary's in Twyford and St James' in Ruscombe, form the parish of Ruscombe and Twyford, which is part of the diocese of Oxford and Sonning Deanery. There is a real sense of unity between our two churches.

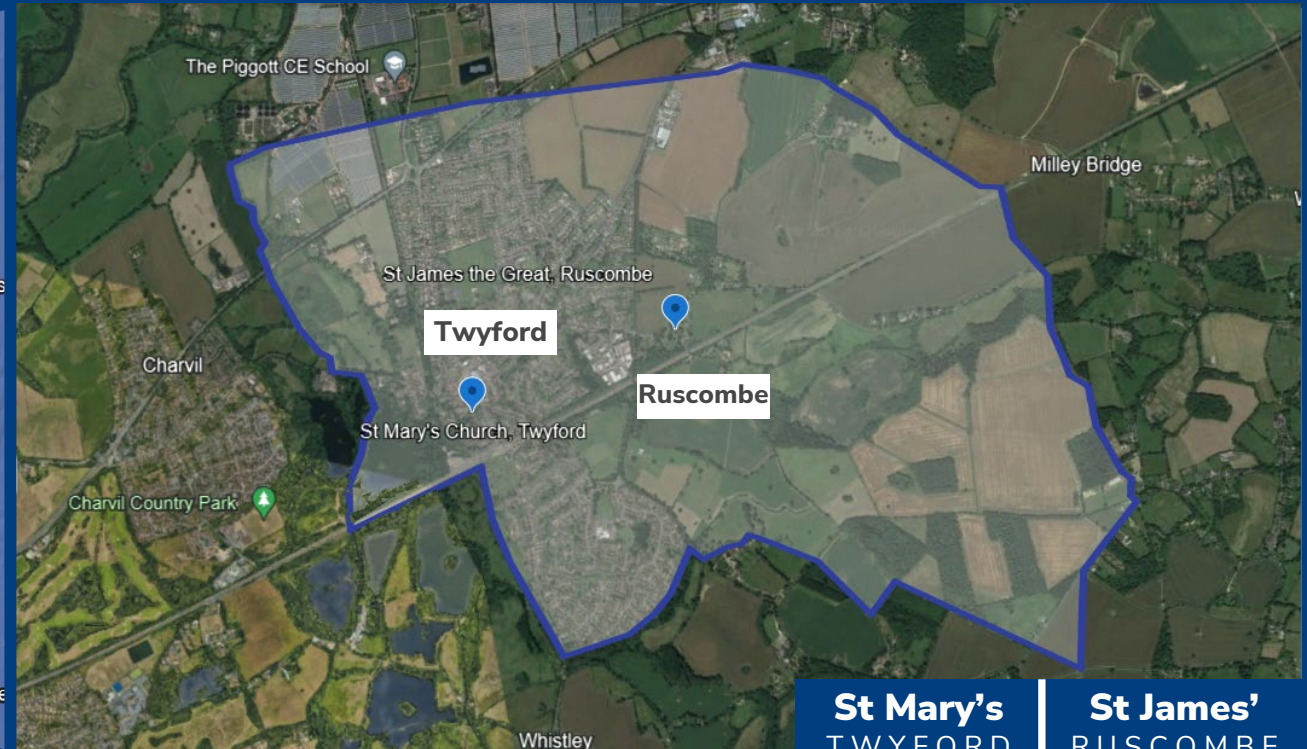
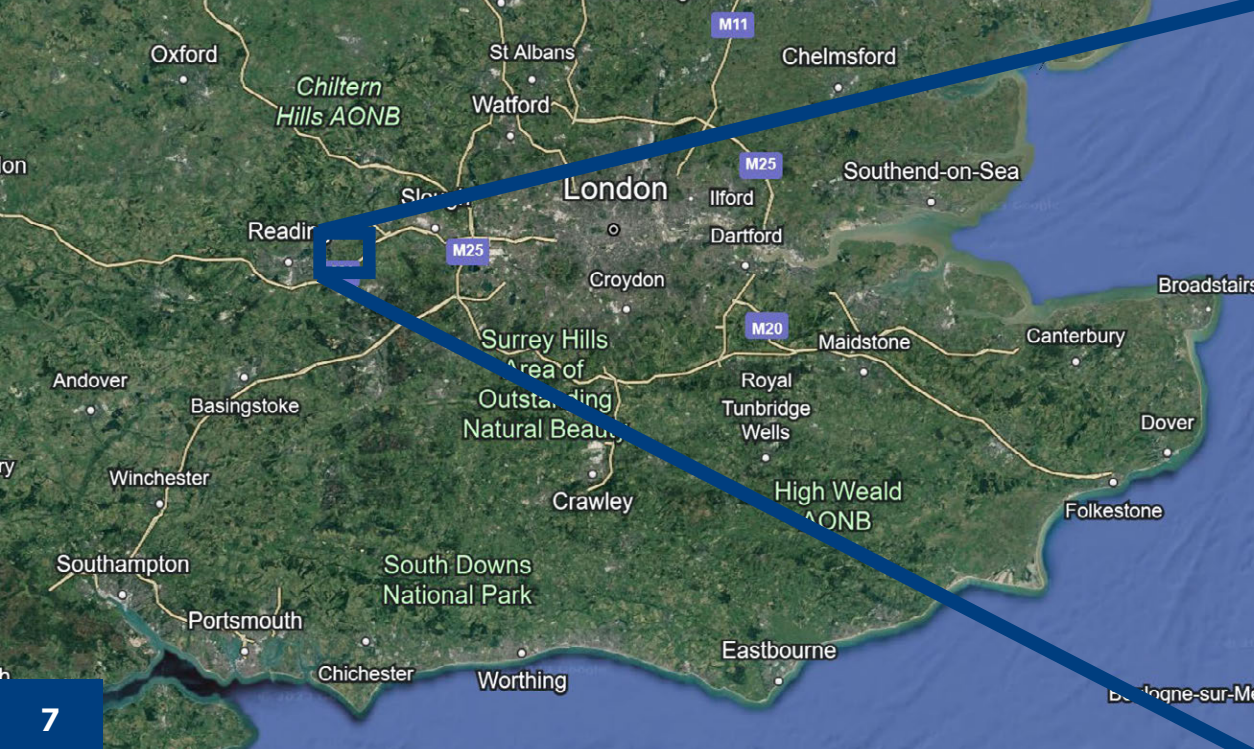
We also have a strong relationship with the Twyford United Reformed Church which stands adjacent to St. Mary's. Together we form an active and supportive Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP).

The journey we have been on to restructure our benefice has been an opportunity for us to prayerfully consider how we can best serve the Kingdom of God, resulting in a clearer sense of calling to focus on the needs of the unique and distinctive community in which we are placed.

As the churches in our parish, we want to be welcoming and share God's love with all in our community in Twyford and Ruscombe. As followers of Christ, we want to learn more about Him and encourage each other on our journeys of faith.



One Parish, Two Villages, One Community



Twyford and Ruscombe

Twyford and Ruscombe are more than just two villages in Berkshire. They are a single community, within a single postcode district, sharing a common heritage and history dating back to Anglo-Saxon times.

The villages share much, including a community centre, GP surgery, local magazine, cricket club, and even a local history society – all for Twyford and Ruscombe together.

“Our Mission is to support and encourage one another in growing our faith and sharing God’s Love.”

The unity across the churches of the parish of Ruscombe and Twyford reflects this collective sense of identity.

While St Mary’s and St James’ churches are distinct and different, we have a shared mission, vision and set of aims which we seek to enact within the community to which we belong.



About Twyford

Twyford Village is a large village in the Thames Valley enjoying the benefits of a semi-rural environment. It is attracting a growing population, many of whom are commuters using the new Elizabeth line through to London and Reading, and there is a wide variety of employment opportunity in the local region.

Recent developments have introduced several older persons' residences, while the increased housing has brought more families.

Two primary schools and one secondary school are within walking distance of the village centre and the village has a range of shops and restaurants, and amenities including a library, dentists, two sports fields, a bowling club, snooker hall and more.

Twyford is a very friendly small town, with a strong sense of community and was recently identified as the Best Place to Live in 2024 (see [Appendix 5](#), on p43).

St Mary's Church is in the centre of the village. The Grade 2 listed church of St. Mary the Virgin, is a Victorian church whose tower contains a ring of 8 bells with an active band.

The all-age congregation enjoys a range of worship styles and a diverse congregation reflecting the growing level of ethnic diversity and mixture of social backgrounds within the village.

The modern Parish Centre with offices and hall stands beside the church and is shared with our Local Ecumenical Partnership church, neighbouring Twyford United Reformed Church (URC), with its own halls and facilities.

Our position in the heart of Twyford has very much influenced our own sense of calling towards the community that surrounds us.





About Ruscombe

The leafy village of **Ruscombe** lies immediately adjacent to the east of Twyford.

Ruscombe is more rural, with residential areas bordered by farms, a Business Park, a public house and a wine estate. It has a smaller population, and much of the housing connects to developments in Twyford.

Historically, it was a centre of industry boasting an iron foundry, a rod stripping business and a brick works.

There is no sign of any of this now, but the Business Park is landscaped to suit the environment and is a short walk from Twyford. Stanlake Park Wine Estate is one of the oldest wine producers in England.

St James the Great Church is a much loved and architecturally important grade 1 listed building, which exudes peace and spirituality as well as warmth and intimacy.

Most of the 30 strong congregation have lived in the area for over 30 years and value being able to enjoy a more traditional style of worship.

The newly refurbished vicarage overlooks a conservation area surrounding St James', a church which still has an important role to play within our community.

Our Mission and Vision

In 2018 we kick-started a process to define our mission and vision with a representative team who led strategic thinking and communication across the parish. Despite Covid-19, our mission and aims were adopted and shared widely across the parish in 2021.

Our agreed Mission statement:

“Our Mission is to **support** and **encourage** one another in **growing our faith** and **sharing God’s Love.**”

Our strap line to summarise our intention

“Shaped, trusting, growing in Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit”

Our adopted aims are to:

- **Be followers** of Christ journeying together
- **Build up** our church Community
- **Build out** into our local community and the world beyond
- **Be inclusive** sharing God’s Love with all.
- **Be creative** in responding to our Mission
- **Be a welcoming** Church

Our aspirations for the future

To develop our readiness for the journey we believe God has planned for us, we have identified these ambitions:

- We seek to be a **vibrant, supportive, growing** community of believers.
- We **aspire to be an inclusive church** but recognise that we have further to go to fully comprehend what inclusivity means and ensure everyone feels they belong to a church family.
- We have a real desire to strengthen personal faith through **engaging sermons** and through learning together and fellowship in **small groups**.
- We are **passionate about children and young people** and would like to have provision to support and grow their numbers within the church and their influence in the local community.
- We have a **heart for the local community** and believe there are both new activities we can undertake and former activities we can resume to bring more people to know the Love of God.
- We **want to be more outward looking** to the wider world and to have closer relationships with our Mission Partners.





Our journey is beginning

During our period of vacancy and change, we have recognized the importance of **knowing and supporting each other better and deepening our faith** so that we are prepared for the path ahead.

To **strengthen our relationships**, a set of diverse activities called **THRU-Meets** focused on fellowship, fun and food have been held regularly through 2022 and 2023. These have helped to rebuild connections that had been difficult to maintain during the pandemic.

To **deepen our faith**, in March 2023 we held a **Parish Weekend Away**. Fifty members of the parish, drawn from both churches and the URC, went to Bournemouth for a weekend programme of spiritual growth and fellowship.

These initiatives have revitalized our ambition to become a **more outward looking church** and we're **ready to move forwards together**.

We are looking for a Leader to join us in our journey, who can inspire and lead us forward in these aspirations and take us to the next stage of becoming more Christ-Like day by day.

Who are we looking for?

“Our Mission is to support and encourage one another in growing our faith and sharing God’s Love.”

We are searching for a pastor

who can **challenge** and **guide** our church community so that we might be more **equipped** to **support** and **encourage** one another

We are seeking a leader

who can **harness** our **skills** and **talents** so that we may **grow** in our **faith**, and be more **empowered** to **share God’s Love** with our **village** community



What can you bring to the team?

We are looking for a leader to join us in our journey, who can inspire and lead us forward to the next stage of becoming more Christ-Like day by day.

A grounded faith

- You are rooted in the Bible, and seek to continue to learn and grow
- You prioritise maintaining your own faith and prayer life
- You have a desire to lead others to become more Christ like

Outreach and worship

- You have a passion for mission and outreach into local communities
- You are happy with a variety of styles of worship
- You have a heart for people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives

Flexible and adaptable

- You take on new challenges with enthusiasm
- You are inspired by new ideas
- You are energised by the idea of working in a Parish with more than one church and part of a really positive Local Ecumenical Partnership.

Leadership

- You're ready to help us embrace the new opportunity to refocus on growing God's kingdom in Ruscombe & Twyford
- You are a facilitator who can engage across age groups, develop lay leaders and release skills and talents of others
- You model effective time management

Pastoral care

- You will be able to draw alongside and nurture our church community after an extended period of vacancy and change
- You care for those facing personal tragedy or life-threatening illness
- You desire to be a 'presence' in our schools and community

Caring for all

- You are willing to lead us to become a fully Inclusive Church, in all its forms.
- You have a passion for stewardship of God's world and its resources
- You have experience of working with children and young people in church and schools

Church and Community



Our worshipping community

Our welcoming church family is rich in diversity as people from a wide range of traditions and backgrounds have found their home here.

St Mary's open evangelical style is evident in its weekly services with a variety of informality and CW based liturgy, including monthly Holy Communion.

Our Children and Families Worker leads an all-age Family Service on the first Sunday of the month, and children's groups on Sundays, supported by a team of volunteers.

St James' uses CW liturgy with a range of services, including Holy Communion twice a month. There is no evening service at present, but this has been a pattern in the past that we would like to consider returning to.

Service attendance is good and stable in both churches and there is a degree of flow between the two congregations.

Music is important at both churches with a lively band and singers in St Mary's and a restored organ that accompanies traditional hymns in St James'.

Both congregations are comfortable with lay-led worship and several lay preachers are included on the rota. Members of the LGBTQ+ community and their families are involved in leading our church.

Three of our leaders have moved on to ordination training in the last year. Our close working relationship with the URC also allows for joint services on some occasions.





Prayer Life

The prayer life of the parish centres around a regular monthly prayer diary which goes to all members of the congregation. This focuses on local activities and residents as well as the wider world and current issues.

At least once a month at St. Mary's, prayer ministry is offered to everybody in the congregation as an opportunity to pray with someone.

Feedback from the consultation process showed the appreciation of the quiet stillness of St James' for prayer but there is no suitable space for prayer ministry.

Both churches respond to requests for prayers, and these will be included in the prayer diary when appropriate.

A number of people have prayer partnerships.

Learning and growing

There is a genuine thirst for learning amongst both congregations, and our Home Groups play a central role in the life of our parish community and have done so for many years.

Currently there are **8 Home Groups** with a membership of around 75 people who meet weekly or fortnightly and include one youth group.

They provide an opportunity for fellowship and for study and discussion with the aim of growing as disciples of Jesus. Everyone is encouraged to join a Home Group but there is scope for growth in membership.

Parish Away Days are another opportunity to learn and grow in faith. We have aimed to run at least one each year although Covid-19 has disrupted the pattern.

However, early in 2023 a very successful study and fellowship Weekend Away attracted 50 people from across the age groups, including several families, from all three churches in the LEP.

A strength of all our study opportunities is that they also run across both CofE congregations and include our friends from the URC, with whom we also jointly covered the LLF material last year.

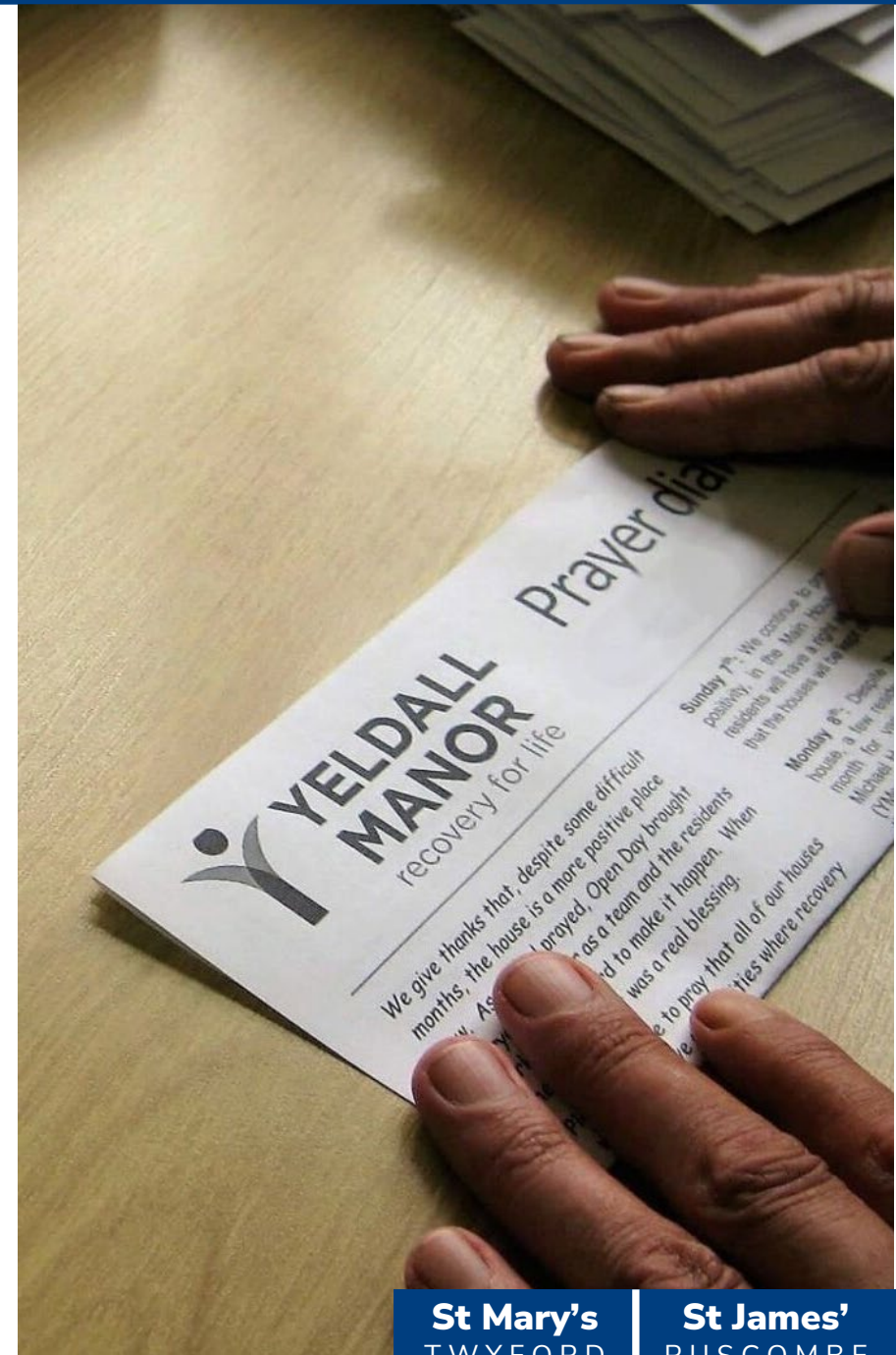


Mission Partners

Another important part of parish life is our long-standing prayer and financial support for our four mission partners, which are a mix of local, national and international Christian organisations.

- **Yeldall Manor**, a local Christian rehab centre
- **Christians Against Poverty**
- **The Church Army**
- **Christian Aid**

Each mission partner is invited to preach once a year.



Community Engagement

As the parish churches of Ruscombe and Twyford, we sit at the heart of the local community. We are well established and well known within our villages and aim to grow the connection further over the coming years.

Church at the heart of the village

Christmas and Easter services are popular with people who otherwise have little connection with the church. Ceremonies of commemoration take place at both our churches on Remembrance Sunday. Local people also seek us out for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

We host community events within St. Mary's which draw people into church. These have included Christmas Tree Festivals pre-pandemic, and more recently Nativity Displays with live Christmas jazz during the Twyford Christmas Fayre and hosting celebrations of national events like the King's Coronation and the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth.

St. Mary's also provides a suitable venue for concerts given by local choirs and music groups.

School connections

We have strong links with both primary schools in Twyford and take assemblies, host end of term services in church and lead prayer journeys for Year 6 pupils. Polehampton Infant & Juniors and Piggott Secondary Schools are Church of England Voluntary Controlled Schools.

Several members of our congregation serve on school governing bodies and at times of Harvest and Christmas we join the schools to mark the occasion.

We also have good relationships with the early years' providers in our local area and they too come into church once a year. All these links provide a strong background for growth in this area.



From the youngest...

Our Children and Families Worker runs a play group called Tots on Tuesdays with good volunteer support.

This has proved popular with parents who enjoy some fellowship; some do ask questions about the church and belief in Christ.

Last year, this led to an increase in the number of baptisms.



... to the oldest ...

At the other end of the age range, we have a very active Singles group drawn from older members of our church and community.

With several older persons' residences in the area, we have run services for them and taken Holy Communion to those who wanted it, but the vacancy has made this difficult recently.

Once again there is scope for growth in this area.



... and everyone in between!

We ensure we have a presence at annual village events like the Donkey Derby where we have a stall with activities for children and a prayer wall for everybody.

We have a stall every year at the Village Christmas Fayre, and at the Family Fun Run in October we help in practical ways.



The online community

Recognising the importance of the on-line world, we have recently updated our website and run a Facebook page for church members and contribute to the Village Facebook information.

During Covid-19, we ran services on-line on a regular basis.



Outreach

We have run outreach courses from time to time, for people in the community to discover and explore the Christian faith.

We ran an Alpha course a few times before Covid-19 and in recent years a short course in a small group called “4 x 4 Adventures”.

We are keen to have more such courses in future



Community opportunities

Although much of our community engagement has continued post-pandemic and during our vacancy, two other regular activities have fallen away and there would be a welcome return for them.

At the end of the school summer holiday, we have run a summer camp called ‘Chattabox’ for primary age children which some of the older young people helped organise. We would like to re-start this.

After a gap, a new pastoral care team is in the process of forming.



ACTIONS: Children enjoy taking part in the singing session

Chattaboxes have fun in the field

TWYFORD was feeling tropical last weekend, thanks to a summer holiday club.

Thru-Christ hosted its first-ever

St Mary's
TWYFORD

St James'
RUSCOMBE

Resources

We are seeking a leader with **vision** to help us **channel all our resources** into the needs and aspirations of our churches and locality.

We are not looking for someone to do all the work, but a **leader who can help us recognise and develop our own gifts** and fulfil our potential to the glory of God.

The following pages set out the key assets we have available to achieve this.



Local Ecumenical Partnership

Our Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) with Twyford United Reformed Church is unusual as we have maintained separate buildings. Our partnership is a real strength.

Most weeks we hold services in all three churches, coming together for united services approximately 12 times a year.

We have shared LEP team leadership meetings and cooperate in all decisions for planning and mission. The Church of England and URC ministers work together as a team along with our Children and Families Worker.

We retain our pastoral responsibilities, but the Ministry team are all able to take services in all three churches, including presiding at Holy communion. (See [Appendix 5](#))

Refurbished Vicarage

The vicarage which stands opposite St James' church in Southbury Lane, Ruscombe is a substantial modern building. It was fully refurbished to a high standard in 2023.

It has three reception rooms, fully re-fitted kitchen, utility room, downstairs cloakroom, four plus one bedrooms, upstairs bathroom and ensuite master bedroom.

Twyford Railway station with fast direct links to London, Reading and Oxford is less than 20 minutes walk. There is a garage, gravel driveway with parking for several cars and large front and rear gardens. (See [Appendix 4](#))



Church Wardens

We currently have **three Church Wardens**, two serving St Mary's and one for St James' supported informally by members of the congregation.

Staffing

Rev Helen Charlton (SSM) is licensed to the Diocese due to her role as part of the DDO team. She is available to assist with ministry in the parish.

We have **part-time salaried staff** in the Parish office covering **administration** (20 hours per week) and **book-keeping** (5 hours per month) and a **salaried Children and Family Worker** (12 hours per week).

Lay Leadership

Four Licensed Lay Preachers contribute regularly to the rota, and many volunteers contribute to our services.

There are also many volunteers who contribute to both the social and spiritual life of the parish and the maintenance of the churchyards.



Safeguarding

Our members have embraced the **collective responsibility** to keep everyone safe.

All paid and volunteer staff are recruited through the new **safer recruitment practices**, have DBS checks as needed and take relevant **safeguarding courses**.

Our very experienced Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) is in regular contact with the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser and runs local Deanery PSO meet ups.

All incidents and concerns are investigated promptly and reported to the diocese or other bodies as appropriate.

PCC and governance

Our **PCC has a full membership** who have active oversight of parish affairs and hold responsibility for review of our policies and procedures.

In addition to **secretary, treasurer, and PSO** we have representation from both CofE churches and the **URC**, and **diverse membership** in terms of age, gender, race and sexuality.

Three PCC members also sit on **Deanery Synod** and regularly report back to the PCC.

A **steering group** meets quarterly for matters affecting the **LEP** specifically.

Fabric and Finance

Our PCC Fabric and Finance committee meets quarterly.

Both churches have had recent Quinquennial Inspections (QQIs), and the committee is working on implementing the recommendations.

In parallel, a **fundraising team** has been established to support the work and is engaging with a fundraising consultant to develop a plan.

Finances

Our Treasurer reports that the parish is in reasonable health despite the last few challenging years, and we have continued to consistently **pay our full Parish share** as well as **fund our Children and Families Worker**

As is often the case, we have an uncomfortable proportion of our stewardship income from a disproportionate share of the congregation. Reserves are good but face significant challenges in maintaining and improving 2 listed buildings.



St James' Church

Situated in the conservation area opposite the vicarage, the Grade 1 listed church's chancel dates from the 12th century, while the nave and tower date back to the reign of King Charles 1st. The base of the tower houses the vestry.

Plans have been developed for a re-ordering project to add a mezzanine in the tower, a toilet and a small refectory, to increase the utility of the building for worshippers and the local community in the 21st century.

Initial funding has been set aside for the project, but work is paused while we develop a more holistic approach that will also incorporate recommendations from our recent quinquennial inspection.

The church's traditional pipe organ has been refurbished in recent years. A churchyard with burial ground surrounds the church.

Due to space constraints a submission has been made which will close the churchyard to new burials, although it remains open for the interment of ashes and burials into existing family graves, where space permits.

St Mary's Church

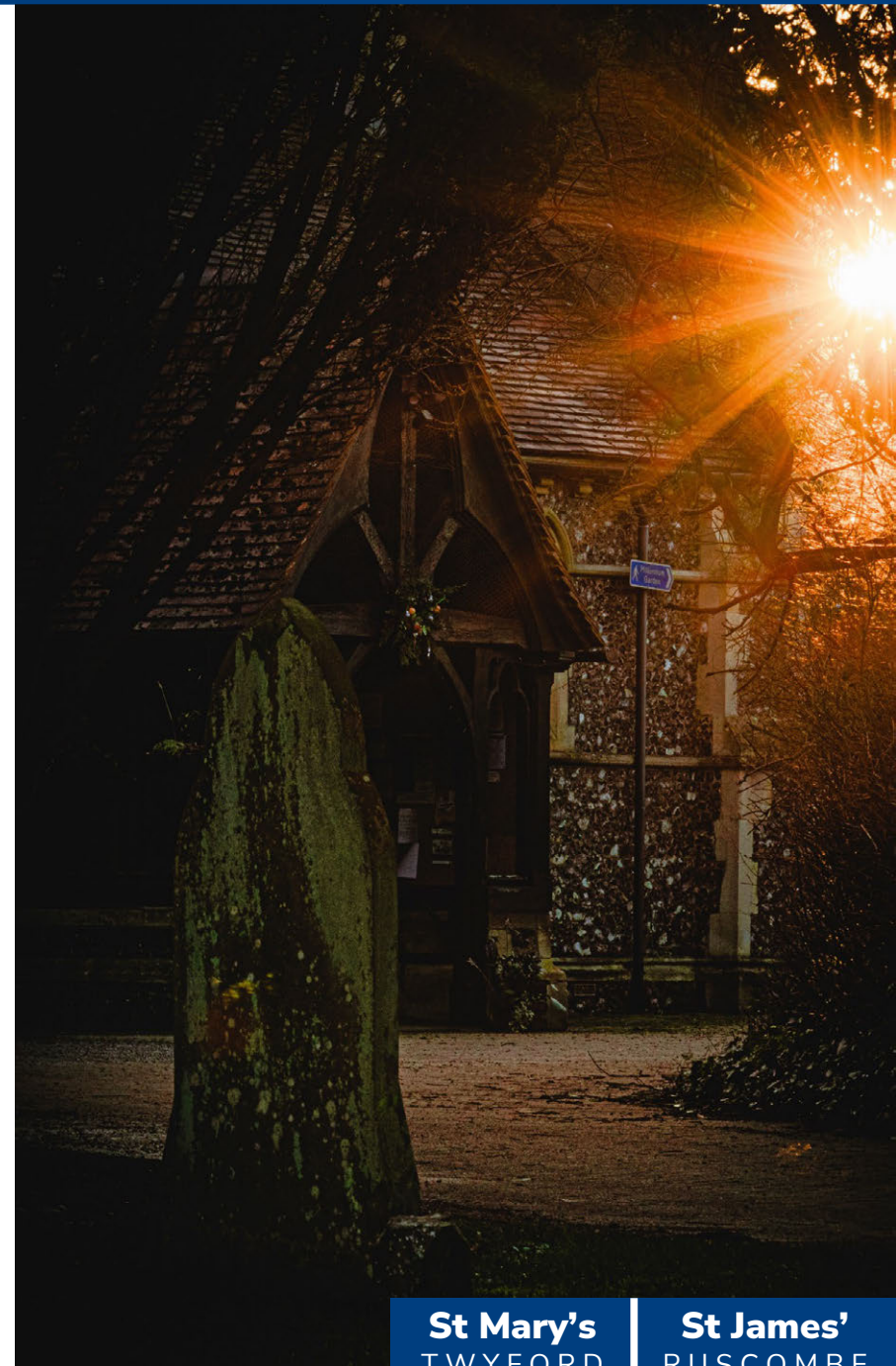
The Grade 2 listed church was built in 1846 with a nave, chancel and west bellcote. In 1882, the north aisle, north transept, north porch and vestry were added. A peal of 8 bells was hung in the tower in 1913.

The pipe organ has been removed and the organ chamber converted to a meeting room. Music is now provided by keyboard and worship band. Very recently, large screens have been installed in the nave and a fourth movable screen provided to increase options for visibility, accessibility and general usage of the church building for multiple purposes.

The village war memorial is on the eastern boundary of the churchyard and the main part of the churchyard lies to the southwest of the church with burial grounds and a garden of remembrance. The churchyard has many mature trees. St Mary's churchyard is no longer open to new burials (although the adjacent civil parish burial ground on the site is available).

Parish Centre

Constructed in 1994, and connected to the church, the ground floor contains a hall which can be divided into 3 sections and there are lavatories and a kitchen. A central octagonal staircase leads up to the church office and two meeting rooms as well as storage.



An aerial photograph of a residential town, likely Ruscombe and Twyford, with a prominent church spire in the foreground. The image is overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent layer containing text.

Listening to our communities

The themes and priorities within this profile have been shaped by input from members of our churches, our young people, and others in Ruscombe and Twyford who were asked for their thoughts on our churches, their hopes for the future, and aspirations for our new vicar.

Emerging themes from our surveys

Community

All groups value the church as a place of **community**, where they can **connect** with each other, enjoy **social activities**, and participate in **worship**.

They also appreciate the **support**, **kindness**, and **fellowship** of the church members and the **cooperation** among the different churches in the **LEP**.

Vicar

All groups have similar expectations for the new vicar, who they hope will be **friendly**, **wise**, **spiritual**, **experienced**, and able to **communicate well** with everyone and **commit to the whole LEP**. They also mention specific qualities, such as **being rooted in the Bible**, **welcoming and inclusive**, happy with both **young and old**, **energetic**, **inspirational**, **empathetic**. Our youngsters hope for someone **fun**, **entertaining**, who **speaks well**, and is **brave and talented**.

Growth

Many have expressed a concern about the **sustainability** of the church and the **need to attract more young people** and more people in general.

They also mention the importance of **engaging with the wider community** and **social action**.

Balancing traditional and contemporary

Tradition is particularly important at St James', where people value the **reverent and spiritual atmosphere**, the **organ music**, and would like a return of **monthly evening communion** or **evensong**.

Some in both churches express a desire for more **traditional hymns**, and **messages**. Others, particularly in St Mary's, have stressed the **importance of adapting to the needs of our people in our church** and our **communities**.

Diversity

St Mary's particularly celebrates the **diversity** of the church, such as **LGBTQ+** and **disabled** people, and the support they offer to them.

Members from both churches also celebrate the **individuality** and the **diverse membership** of the churches across the **LEP**.

Innovation

Across the groups, there is a suggestion that **the church needs to adapt to the changing needs and preferences of the people**, and to balance tradition and innovation.

They also mention some specific improvements, such as better facilities, including a **WC**, **refreshment capabilities** and a basic **sound system** for **St James'** or restoring the **'breakfast club'** for teens at St Mary's.

Our young people



“What we love....”

The 10 to 12 year old boys told us they enjoy their group because it is a place of **fun**, where they can **hang out** with their friends, have **food** and **drinks**, and play on the **trampoline** and they also value the **boys-only** environment.

“What we think would make it better”

They would like to see some improvements in church, such as more **treats** like **doughnuts**, a return of the popular **breakfast club** for teens, and for more **people** to join the church and **donate** to the poor

“We think church is special ...”

... because it is a place of **community**, where they can **connect** with each other, enjoy **social activities**, and participate in **worship**. They also like some specific aspects of church, such as the **church band**, the **kids group**, the **family service**, the **space to run around**, the opportunity to participate in **important jobs** like **welcoming people to services** and lots of **fun activities**.

“We’d like to see our new vicar....”

... be someone who is **happy**, **friendly**, **kind**, **understanding**, **fun**, **entertaining**, and **good at explaining stuff**.

They also care about the vicar’s **voice** and their ability to use **powerful words** and they would like them to be **brave** and **talented**

Feedback from St James' in Ruscombe

“What we love....”

Members of our St James' family told us they love that it is a place of **peace, friendship, and tradition**, where people are **welcomed** and can worship in a **reverent and spiritual** atmosphere, and enjoy the **support, kindness and fellowship** of the **community**.

They also value the way that all the churches in the LEP **work together** and the way that this allows for **different styles of worship** in the different locations



When asked **what they'd like to see in 3 years' time**, the prevailing feedback was that St James' needs to **grow** and **attract** more **young people** to sustain the church, and to **engage** with the wider **community**.

Many also would like to see investments made to **improve** the **facilities** including a **WC, refurbished refreshment capabilities**, as well as adding a basic **sound system** for services and events like weddings.

There was a strong desire to return to a pattern of **at least one service each Sunday** and **restoring** monthly **evening communion**. Some people love the **organ**, and others have a desire for **hymns** that are easier to sing!

The church family in Ruscombe told us our new vicar should be **friendly, wise, spiritual**, and **experienced**, and able to **communicate** well with everyone and **commit** to the whole LEP.

Many felt that the new vicar should be a **team builder**, who can **recognize our skills** in and **inspire and encourage us** and **share our vision** for the community.

People had different ideas of attributes they'd like to see, wanting the vicar to be **rooted** in the Bible, **welcoming** and **inclusive, energetic, inspirational**, and **empathetic**. Understandably, the community at St James' want a vicar comfortable working with **older people** as well as **the young**.



“What we love about St Mary’s”

People in St Mary’s told us they love that it is a place of **inclusivity, welcome, and community**, where people can feel **valued, supported, and loved**.

The **social events, home groups, music, fun activities**, and sharing **communion** together are important to them, and they appreciate the **work** of the church **across the village community**.

They also celebrate the **diversity** of the church, such as **LGBTQ+** and **disabled** people, and the **support** they offer to them

“We’d like to see the new vicar....”

There are many hopes for the new vicar, who they’d like to be **spiritual, friendly, approachable**, and a **good communicator**. It seems important that they are **community-focused, open-minded, diverse, diplomatic**, and a **leader** who is **charismatic, forward-thinking**, and **not afraid** to take the church on a **journey**.

Some told us that they would like to see someone who **wholeheartedly believes in, practices, and defends** the **Christian truths**. Others are seeking someone who is **competent, able to get things done** and a **good listener**.

Many hope to see someone with an **encouraging and nurturing spirit**, and a **joyful heart** who can **encourage discipleship, fellowship, friendship, prayer groups**, within the congregation. To some, a **heart for mission and scripture** is important, others called out that they should be **seen around the village** doing **normal things**.

They should also be **inclusive** and **supportive** of the **diversity** of the church, such as **LGBTQ+** and **disabled** people, and **love** them where they are.

“What we should do differently...”

The main theme is that the churches need to **adapt** to the changing needs and preferences of the people, and to **balance tradition** and **innovation**.

Some people suggested **celebrating** the **individuality** and the **diversity** of the churches across the LEP.

Some expressed a **desire** for more **traditional hymns, services, and messages** while others said they were **happy** with the current situation, or that they wanted to see more **improvements** and support to **St James’ church**

Feedback from St Mary’s in Twyford

“In the future, we hope for...”

Looking to the future, people in St Mary’s want to focus on **God, kindness, and family**, and on **supporting** each other and the **community**. They also want to **inspire** the **young people**, and to **engage** with the **village**.

Some want to **spread** the **Word** without **oversimplification**, and **practice** what they **preach**, and **providing** for **all ages**



Our village community

We extended our survey to the village community Facebook group. The number of responses was small, but it was interesting to read what people who appeared to have had some prior connection with the churches had to say.

“What we like about the churches....”

The main theme was that St James’ and St Mary’s are perceived as **friendly** and **welcoming** places of **worship**, where people can find **meaning** and **connection**.

People also appreciate the **different approaches** to worship, the **beautiful atmosphere** and **history** of St James’, and the **modern music** and **children** at St Mary’s.

“In the future you should focus on...”

There is a hope that the churches focus on **being welcoming** to the **community** and **involving** them in the church in **whatever way they can**. We should also focus on **evangelism**, **reaching the lost** in the local community with the **good news of Christ**. It is important that we focus on **reaching out** to **all sectors** of the community, and making the church a **welcoming place for all**, not just **families with children**

“We would like you to consider...”

Suggestions included that the churches need to **improve** their **communication**, **teaching**, **music**, and to **balance** the **traditional** and the **contemporary**.

Some people suggested having more **classical music** and **biblical teaching**, and more **focus on evangelism**. Others suggested being more **21st century**, **letting the community know** about the church, and **meeting people where they are**.

“We’d like to see the new vicar....”

... be **friendly** and **interested in people**, be **good with local schools**, and able to **integrate with the whole Twyford community**.

They want the vicar to **close the gap** between the **accelerating cultural changes** and the **current style of C of E**, so that **younger generations** don’t feel **alienated**. They should also be **deeply rooted in the Bible**, with a heart for **evangelism and mission**.

Appendices



Appendices

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Children and Young People

We share a Children and Families Worker with Hurst Parish Church, who works 12 hours a week for each church. Until recently we also employed a youth worker who has now gone forward for ordination, and we hope to reconsider appointing a successor in future.

Church activities include

- Trailblazers – our Sunday school for ages 4-10yrs
- A home group for boys in school years 6 – 8
- Communion before confirmation sessions, subject to demand
- All Age Services 1st Sunday of the month plus Christmas and Easter services
- The hosting of School services on feast days and end of term days

Community Outreach

- Active involvement in both Primary Schools including delivering regular assemblies a yearly prayer journey and ad hoc sessions.
- School Governor roles
- Tots on Tuesdays – a weekly baby and toddler group for expectant mothers up to pre-school aged children
- Presence at local community events.

Future aspirations

- Broaden and strengthen our volunteer base
- Active involvement of children in services
- Outreach and engagement through social media
- Greater presence in community initiatives
- Introduce thanksgiving services as an alternative for baptism
- Expand existing summer events / fun days
- Employ a youth worker again

Local Information

Transport

Twyford station is on the “Crossrail” Elizabeth Line across London and has fast train links that can arrive at London Paddington within 26 minutes.

[The Trainline - Twyford](#)

Local Schools

[The Colleton](#)
Primary School

Ofsted

Good

[Polehampton C of E](#)
Infant & Junior School

“Legacy
Outstanding”

[The Piggott School](#)
Senior School
(C of E Academy)

Good

About the Villages

[Trip Advisor Twyford Page*](#)

[Twyford Together](#)

[Twyford Village History](#)

[Ruscombe Village History](#)

[Best Places to live 2024](#)

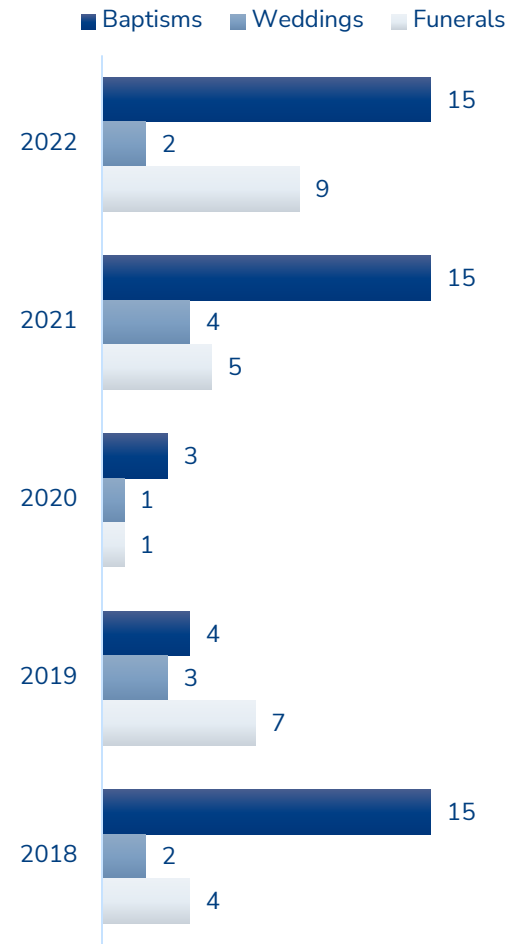
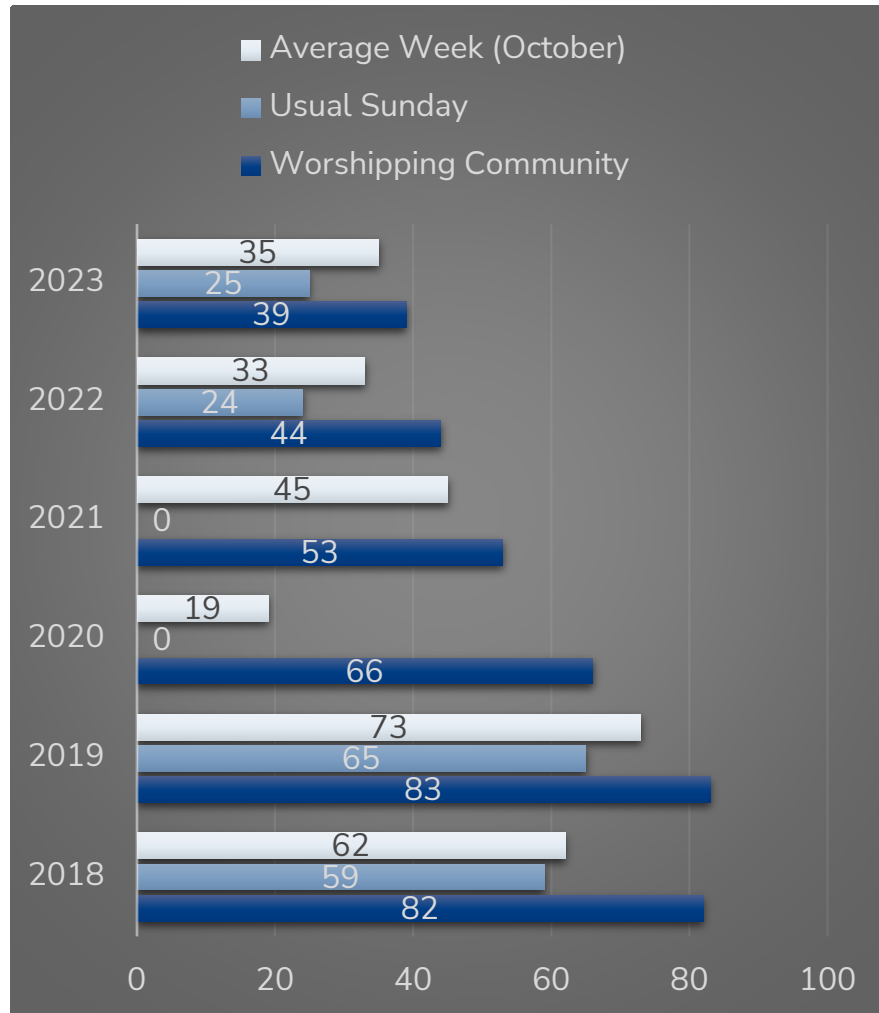
*TripAdvisor links to the wrong St Mary’s!



St Mary’s
TWYFORD

St James’
RUSCOMBE

St James' Ruscombe Numbers



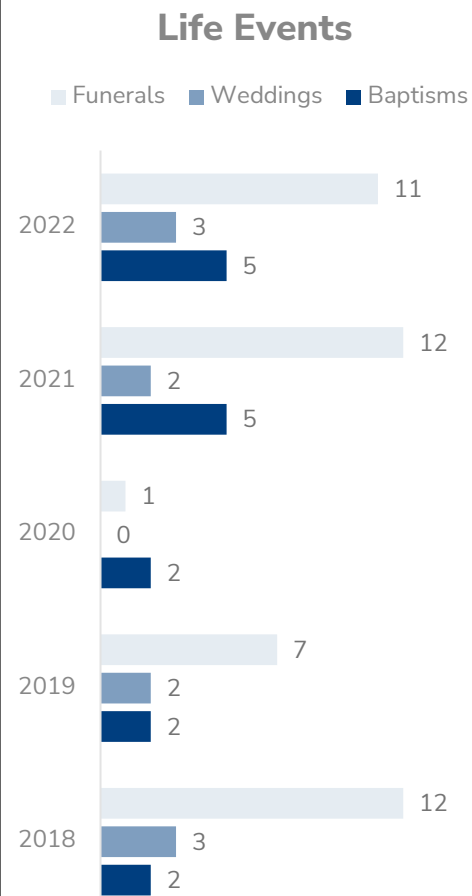
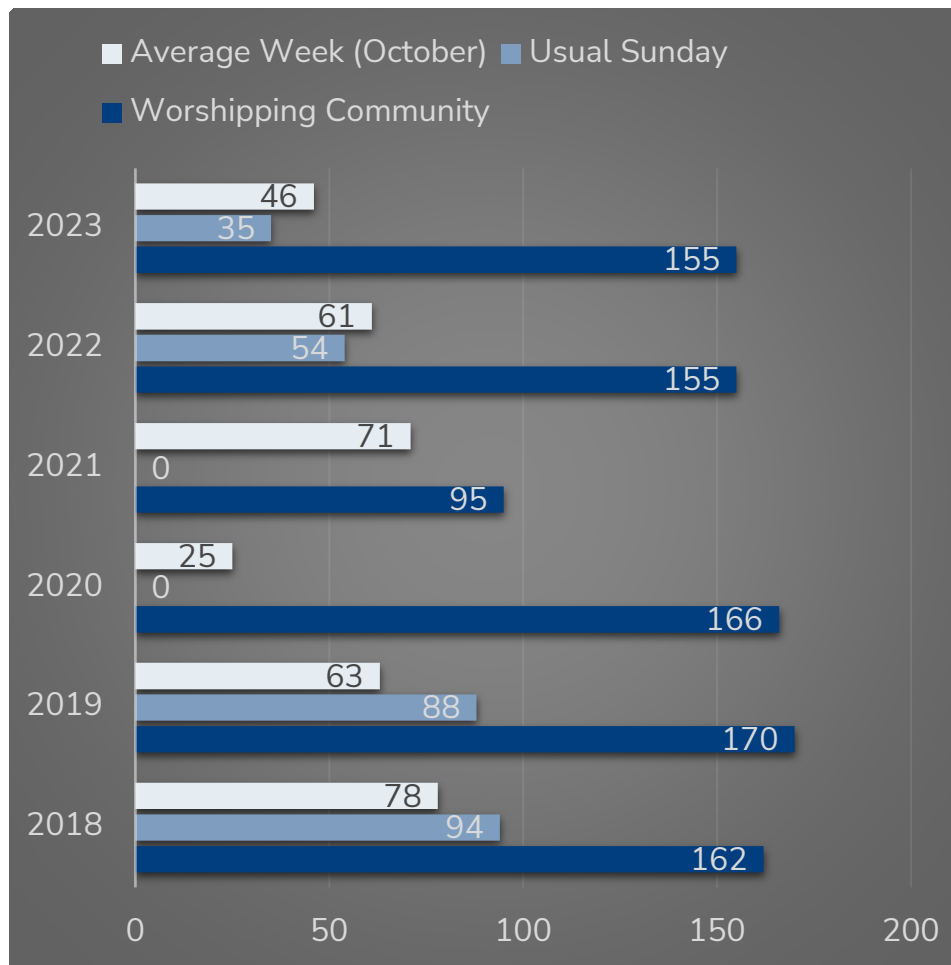


St Mary's Twyford Numbers

Our 2023 Usual Sunday and Average Week Statistics have been under-counted during the vacancy for several reasons.

- One service a month has been held at Twyford URC to help manage volunteer workload without an incumbent
- The local fun run takes place on a Sunday in October when many of our congregation are participating in outreach.
- Monthly Messy Church attendance statistics are not recorded, because these take place in Hurst

Our 2022 numbers are more representative, and our electoral roll and worshipping community have remained stable.



Vicarage

The vicarage is on Southbury Lane in Ruscombe, in a semi rural setting opposite St James the Great, yet within a mile of Twyford railway station and St Mary's church.

It is a substantial modern building which was fully refurbished to a high standard in 2023, with three reception rooms, kitchen, utility room and cloakroom downstairs. Upstairs are four plus one bedrooms, upstairs bathroom and ensuite to the master bedroom.

There is a garage, gravel driveway with space for several cars, and large front and rear gardens.



Typical Monthly Service Pattern

We have a monthly rota across all three churches in our LEP.
Lay leaders play a significant role in all services

Ruscombe and Twyford LEP Church Services			
	St James' Ruscombe	St Mary's Twyford	URC Twyford
Sunday	9.00 am	10.30 am	10.30 am
1st		Family Service	Morning Service
2nd	Holy Communion	Worship for All	Morning Service
3rd	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion	Holy Communion
4th	Holy Communion	LEP Service with St Mary's	



1. Twyford, Berkshire – A home fit for a queen

Top of this year's ranking is Twyford, a picture-postcard village in Berkshire sandwiched between Bucklebury, the Princess of Wales's childhood home, and her royal residence in Windsor.



Twyford's pristine, pollution-free air and low crime rate propelled it to 15th place in the wellbeing category, while its fast train links to central London via the Elizabeth Line, coupled with the quality of its schools, high broadband speeds and proximity to high-paying jobs lifted it to 30th place in the schools, employment and connectivity category.

Best Place to Live in 2024

Garrington Property Finders were delighted to name **Twyford** as the Best Place to Live in 2024, after data analysts identified and rated more than 1400 cities, towns and villages across England and Wales

<https://www.garrington.co.uk/best-places-to-live-2024/>



Twyford is regarded as an attractive place to reside, offering residents a blend of peaceful countryside living with convenient access to amenities and transport links to London, making it a favourable choice for both families and professionals.

BEST
PLACES
TO LIVE

IN 2024



Next Steps

If you wish to apply, find out more information or have an informal conversation about the role, please email or call at

office@thru-christ.org.uk

Office: **0118 934 4792**

Archdeacon of Berkshire: Ven. Steven Pullin

archdeacon.berkshire@oxford.anglican.org

Area Dean (Sonning): The Revd Canon Richard Lamey

rector@spauls.co.uk

Benefice & LEP web site: <https://thru-christ.org.uk/>

(*Web site updates are pending after benefice restructuring)

