



St.Mary's, Kennington

**Parish Profile
September 2009.**



1. Summary

The parish of St Mary's Kennington is seeking a new Priest-in-charge to follow on from Rev'd Yvonne Murphy's five-year ministry here.



The Parish is situated to the North East of Ashford, some 2.5 miles from the town centre: the 'old village' could be contained within the triangle formed by the Canterbury Road (A28), The Street (B2164) and Faversham Road (A251): the parish church stands proudly but very slightly outside of this area in what was probably the centre of the village before the plague. From the 1960's there has been much housing development outside of this area, and the one time village is now a sprawling suburb of Ashford. The population of Kennington has been increasing rapidly in recent years due to the government policy of housing expansion in the Ashford Borough, and now stands at around 12,000.



Past legacies and the efforts of parishioners together with valuable contribution from The Friends of St Mary's have all helped to maintain our fine medieval building to a high standard of repair. Within the church building, in recent years, an improved heating system, new sophisticated lighting system, re-carpeting of the Lady Chapel and refurbishment of the Baptistry area have all served to enhance the previously well maintained interior.

Adjacent to the church is our much valued social / administrative resource - built some 12 years ago, providing toilets, kitchen, hall, meeting room and parish office. Further afield, in the Bybrook area of the parish stands St Mary's Community Centre – built in 1960 and currently undergoing major extension and refurbishment to expand its use for less formal worship and a local community centre.

2. Our Mission

"To proclaim the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the people of Kennington, by word and by action"

Therefore, we seek a Priest who will, under the umbrella of "Mission and Ministry":

- Develop our spirituality, prayer life and biblical knowledge.
- Continue and enhance all-age worship, offering both traditional and modern forms of worship.
- Support and further encourage our well developed Lay Ministry, Pastoral Visiting, and Healing Ministry teams.
- Retain and further develop links with our local schools.
- Rekindle a team for developing teaching skills to run Emmaus or similar courses.
- Explore the development of effective Youth Ministry.

3. Person Specification

We seek someone with a generous heart, grounded in the love of God who is:

- An experienced leader – having humour, drive, integrity, discernment, and compassion; filled with joy, enthusiasm and inspiration; having the stamina to cope with a large and demanding parish and the ability to convert ideas into action.
- A person who is a good communicator, delegator, and encourager, with an open heart for all and a desire for mission.
- A teacher and preacher – spiritual, charismatic, Gospel-based, prayer driven, and able to relate to people of all ages.
- Someone with vision – able to interpret and carry forward the diocesan mission plan ‘Towards 2020’

4. Our Strengths and weaknesses

4.1 What we do well...

Working with us we very much hope that our new Priest will find that we work well together in a variety of different teams and scenarios all working for the glory of God and the furtherance of His Kingdom in this place.

In particular.....

- We have a reputation for friendliness, friendship and compassion resulting in a lasting welcome to our worship and activities. We respect people for who and what they are.
- We enjoy a wide range of ages, creating a family atmosphere that provides inclusiveness and experience, especially for young families.
- Our style of worship is mainly traditional, but with less formal services as we extend our appetite for fresh expressions of worship both at the Church and at St Mary’s Community Centre.
- We have a fine choral tradition with robed choir, but also a Music Group for the less formal occasions.
- We have well attended mid-week services.
- We seek to be led prayerfully into outreach, mission and continued involvement within secular groups, especially the local schools.
- Our minibus is one of our greatest assets, ferrying our less mobile folks to and from services, social, cluster and deanery events, all the while proclaiming the Gospel. Its clientele extends well beyond parish boundaries.
- Socially, we provide a varied range of events, specialising in excellent catering and innovative entertainment.

We hope for a priest who would value our support and friendship. People within the church have many administrative, pastoral and nurturing skills and wish to be used.

4.2 What we feel could be improved...

- Youth ministry where little or nothing exists at present.
- Expansion of the use of St Mary’s Community Centre – newly extended and refurbished.
- Regular services in our local residential homes for the elderly: currently carol singers visit three homes at Christmas and Home Communion is taken monthly by members of a lay team to one of the homes.
- Re-establishment of overseas support links.

5. Geography of the Parish

The Parish straddles the A28 road from Ashford (2.5 miles) to Canterbury (15 miles), and the A251 to Faversham. There are regular bus services to and from the town, the local hospital Canterbury and Faversham: from the Ashford International Station regular services run to Canterbury and to London, with the recently introduced High-speed Rail link taking just 35 minutes. London is 57 miles by road and 60 minutes by regular rail service. We are 25 miles from Dover Harbour and 20 miles from the Channel Tunnel giving us excellent links with the Continent. The M25 is a mere 25 minutes away, with Gatwick Airport accessible within the hour and Heathrow in less than two hours. Eurostar currently links Ashford with Paris and Brussels.

The Parish is divided into several distinct areas:

The ‘Old’ Kennington which comprises principally the ribbon development housing along the Canterbury and Faversham Roads, the Burton estate (1950s) – mostly council with some private homes, and the Tritton Fields estate (late 1960s) – all privately owned. Downsview Infants and Kennington CE Junior schools serve these areas.

Bybrook & Bockhanger to the west, which comprises Bybrook Road, Rylands Road, Belmont Road and Nine Acres, with a mix of private homes and council estates. The Phoenix Primary School serves this area.

Grasmere Estate – another extensive (1970s) development of private housing.

Little Burton – stretching from Canterbury Road to the railway - a modern (late 1990s) housing development mostly of 4/5 bedroom detached housing, but with some Housing Association accommodation.

Trinity Estate – in the north-west of the parish - another late 1990s housing development with a mix of owner occupied and rental property. Trinity Road marks our boundary with Westwell parish. Still under development is a small commercial sector, but further on lies the now well-established Eureka Park which encompasses a cinema, fitness centre, various fast food outlets and a motel.

Commercial outlets - the main factory sites in the parish lie on the Willesborough Road to the south-east of the railway and comprise the factory formerly known under the ‘Batchelors’ brand and a perfume factory: these two are now gathered under the ‘Givaudan’ flagship. Opposite these factory sites lies the Julie Rose Stadium, an olympic standard athletic arena owned and operated by the Local Authority which also has banqueting and conference facilities. The former Police Training College at Grosvenor Hall (Bockhanger Lane) is in the process of being converted to the Kingswood Centre – an adventure centre for young people on a par with the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme.

Local Schools include:

Downsview Infants School (ages 4 – 7)

Kennington CE (cont) Junior School (ages 7 – 11)

Phoenix Community School (ages 4 – 11)

Ashford Enterprise College (ages 11 – 18)

Ball Lane Kennington

Ulley Road Kennington

Belmont Road Kennington

Faversham Road Kennington



6. Buildings

St Mary's Church

The Church of local ragstone and Caen stone was built on a hill in Norman times between the years 1100 and 1154 with just a nave and the square chancel. In about 1270 the chancel was extended to its present length. This is offset to the nave. The east window is typical of Edward 1st reign, 1272-1307. In about 1300 a small chapel was added on the south side. An arch has been cut through at the head of the nave.

In about 1400 the tower was built and the nave extended a few feet. The font dates from the 15th century. The brilliant east window with its nine scenes from the life of our Lord dates from 1877. There are 2 "Kemp" windows, the "Mary Magdalene", and "the Raising of Jairus' Daughter".

In 2002, new oak doors were fitted on the outside of the porch: these replaced cast iron gates. The oak doors on the inside wall of the church, which were part of the original screen, were removed and now hang on the west wall either side of the bell tower window. New glass doors were fitted to replace the baize-fronted doors from the porch to the church. In 2007, the Baptistry area was refurbished and a year later, the nave ceiling was painted and a new lighting system installed.

The history of the Church is well documented on our website at www.kennington-st-marys.org.uk



St Mary's Church Hall adjacent to the church, built in 1997 and attached to the south east entrance of the church by a covered way, the 'new building' comprises a lobby and toilets, main hall and small kitchen on the ground floor, and on the first floor, a committee room / small meeting room, parish office and storage in cupboards and ashlar. The office is manned by our parish administrator four mornings per week. (Each week day except Tuesday).

The Churchyard is closed and maintained by the Local Authority. Regular grass cutting is undertaken by the Borough Council from March to October, but maintenance of the boundary walls and pathways is something of an ongoing battle. There is a detached Burial Ground some half mile away in Ball Lane which also incorporates our current Garden of Remembrance.

St Mary's Community Centre (Rylands Road) originally built in 1960, has over the years been modified and improved for regular informal style worship. It has also been home to a Parent and Toddler group, a WI (one of two in Kennington) and numerous other Community groups; a major extension in 2009 to provide a much needed larger community facility is now close to completion (artist's impression pictured right) and incorporates an extensive hall area, excellent kitchen facilities (for community lunches etc), and conversion of the original hall facilities into counselling rooms, offices etc for social and other community based services. This exciting project provides for wide use both sacred and secular and is a major element in our outreach.



7. The Vicarage



Built in the 1960s, the Vicarage is a detached, four bedroom property situated on the Faversham Road at a busy crossroads, about half a mile from the church. The study is separated from the private living rooms: double glazed windows have been installed in recent years. The property is well maintained, has gas-fired central heating and relatively modern kitchen and bathroom. There is a large secluded garden, mainly down to lawn grass and shrubs with ornamental pond and fruit trees.



8.1 Patterns of Worship

At Church: **Sundays each week**

8am - Holy Communion	(Said - traditional language)
10am - Family Communion	(Sung – modern settings)
Last Sunday – 10am Family Service	(Relaxed, child-friendly followed by Holy Communion)
Wednesday (weekly) 10.15am	Holy Communion (said with Hymns)
1st Wednesday (monthly) 6pm	Six O'clock Special – 'Fresh Expressions' - young children's activities and family fellowship

At St Mary's Community Centre:

Sundays

10am (weekly) Morning Worship	Relaxed and informal led by MLT members
(third Sunday each month)	Holy Communion

Average Attendances:

		2007	2008
Sunday	- 8am	20	18
	- 10am adults	70	70
	- Children	9	11
Wednesday am:		24	22
SOS:		16	16
SMCC:		14	12

8.2 Lay involvement in worship

We have a Reader who, as a member of the Ministry Leadership Team, serves on the rota for leading the informal worship at St Mary's Community Centre.

Other Lay ministry includes:

Servers in the Sanctuary: administering the Chalice: reading lessons: leading intercessions

Pastoral Care teams: Healing Ministry team

Home Communion to The Grange (Residential Home for the elderly), the sick and housebound

Ministry Leadership Team – takes responsibility for worship at St Mary's Community Centre and the monthly Family Service in church.

ALM (Worship Leader) – able to devise and lead non-eucharistic worship.

ALM (Pastoral Care) – who works alongside the Pastoral Care teams.

Children's ministry - Sunday Fun Club for children aged 4 – 11 (+ under 4's chaperoned).

Organist & Choir master: robed choir.

Music Group for less formal services.

Bellringers who ring regularly both here and elsewhere for main services.

8.3 Occasional Offices

	2007	2008
Baptisms:	43	47
Weddings:	9	18
Funerals(church)	16	9
Funerals(cemetery/crematorium)	33	26

8.4 Special Services during the year (in house or with Cluster Churches)

Advent & Lent Meditations
 Harvest Festival
 Remembrance
 Service of Light (Memorial Service)
 Friends of St Mary's Annual Evensong
 Christmas – Carol Service, Crib Service, Midnight Mass, Christmas Day.
 Christingle Service, Schools carols/crib services, Community Carol Singing,
 Residential Homes Carol Singing
 Ash Wednesday
 Easter - Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Day
 Ascension Day
 Corpus Christi

9. House/Study Groups

There are 2 weekly and 1 monthly Bible Study Groups, which meet in St Mary's Hall and St Mary's Community Centre, and the third in the host's residence.

10. Other pastoral groups

- ❖ Healing
- ❖ Baptism
- ❖ Marriage
- ❖ Bereavement
- ❖ Sick/housebound (Social visit and/or Home Communion)

11. Other Ministry Responsibilities

Our current policy is that divorcees may marry at St Mary's Kennington after discussion. We hope and pray that our new incumbent will be prepared to subscribe to this policy.

After five years' experience of a female priest-in-charge, we also hope and pray that our new incumbent will honour women's ministry

12. Organisation

- The incumbent chairs PCC and Standing Committees.
- A Church Warden chairs the Fabric Committee.
- Lay persons chair the St Mary's Community Centre, Social/Events and Catering Committees.
- Lay persons represent St Mary's on Churches Together in Ashford, and Kennington Forum,

The PCC meets six times a year and currently comprises two churchwardens, 12 elected members and two co-opted members, one of whom is the PCC Treasurer. The Reader and 3 Deanery Representatives are ex-officio members. Our Parish Administrator acts as PCC Secretary.

13. Giving and Money

We hold a Stewardship Renewal of Commitment every year, with a full Stewardship Appeal every 5 years or so. Currently we have 114 regular givers, of whom 79 are able to give tax efficiently, providing an income in 2008 of £57,200. £10,900 of this related to tax recovery under the Gift Aid scheme. Total income in the General Fund in 2008 was £90,500 and costs £92,100. Parish Share at £56430 was just slightly less than planned giving: our General Reserve stood at over £4000.

It is the policy of the PCC to encourage responsible giving which members are asked to review once and only once a year. Fund Raising is minimal – usually restricted to 2 events a year, whilst Social Events, although frequently returning a small profit are designed to be *Fun* rather than *Fund* Raising.

Through prudent accounting policies in the past we have sums set aside (some £90,000 in total) for maintenance / future investment in almost all of our peripheral activities; these reserves have been built up over the years from profitable activity in hall rentals, magazine sales and adverts, and fee income from weddings for use of our skills and resources such as bells, organ and flowers.

Past legacies are now almost all absorbed in investing in our future; our well used minibus was bought from a parishioner's legacy, and the remainder has in the current year been poured into the St Mary's Community Centre Extension project; the project managers have thus far not invited the congregation to contribute, but that may be necessary to ensure completion as the credit crunch has adversely affected so many of the grant making bodies and charitable organisations.

We have a small restricted fund (£17,000) for fabric repair and maintenance.

Every year the PCC gives away to other charities and worthy causes 10% of it's annual pledged income. We regularly support in this way USPG, the diocesan Poverty & Hope appeal, our local Hospice, the Phoenix School breakfast club, Crisis, Shelter or other homeless charity (especially at Christmas) and many others

14. Life of the Church

Electoral Roll - Our Electoral Roll currently stands at 198

Sunday Fun Club - Sunday morning fun, songs and activities in St Mary's Hall for children while (in theory) their parents are in church. Children join the service in Church at The Peace and leave to complete their work after a Blessing at the communion.

SOS (Six O'clock Special) - our Fresh Expressions service once a month at 6pm for parents and children involving some songs, teaching, discussion and activity during which parents have opportunity for a cup of tea and chat.

Drop In - our weekly gathering of 'older' folks for tea, chat, cards, bingo and knitting.

SMCC - local organisations of many kinds hire our community centre. It is popular for children's parties as well as regular activities such as Women's Institute, Weight Watchers and Bee Keepers!

Choir – some 20 choristers practise regularly on a Friday evening for services, weddings, occasional cluster events and the annual RSCM festival in Canterbury.

Minibus – widely used within the church family for transporting folks to and from church and the centre for services, Drop In and 'outings' (invariably with a cream tea or similar); we also offer this resource to other parishes within the cluster and deanery and to one secular organisation for the elderly. Fitted with a hydraulic tail lift, we are equipped to cope with the less mobile.

Parish Magazine - our window to the world. Some local organisations and societies contribute copy and local businesses support through advertising. An extensive team of people edit, print, collate and distribute each month to approx 300 homes.

Parish Administrator – Lynne Lucas is employed 4 mornings per week (Monday to Friday except Tuesday). She acts as secretary / PA to the incumbent, deals with initial bookings for occasional offices, prepares and prints the weekly news sheets, service sheets and booklets, and other printing tasks as required. She also acts as Secretary to the PCC, preparing and disseminating Agendas and Minutes of PCC meetings, and collating and printing the Annual Parish Review.

15. Care of St Mary's

We have teams which regularly:

- service the minibus with driver and carer for each trip
- clean the brass
- clean the church
- clean St Mary's Hall
- arrange flowers
- provide coffee after the 10am services.
- care for the gardens, paths & gutters
- maintain and control our Church library
- care for Ball Lane Cemetery



16. Other Community Links

- Leaflet drops (Christmas, Easter & Harvest) to nearly 5000 households in the parish.
- Parish Website – regularly maintained – gives details of current and past activities.
- Pilgrims from the L'Arche Community Group passing on their way to Canterbury are hosted overnight once a year.
- Friends of Kent Churches annual Sponsored Cycle Ride supported both by participants and as hosts.
- Harvest – distribution of gifts from schools and parishioners to local 'causes'.
- Samaritans Purse (Shoe Boxes filled with gifts & distributed for Christmas).
- Gifts from St Nicholas' Service taken to our Residential Homes.
- Surestart – a government initiative in the Family Centre at Phoenix School, to help 800 needy children under 5.
- Regular visits to all three of our primary and junior schools for assemblies.
- Schools services in church at Christmas, Easter and at other times in their curriculum.
- Kennington Fayre – the annual 'village' Fete at which the Church has a major interest.
- The Children's Society via Christingle purses.
- Breakfast Club at Phoenix Community School.

Links with the wider world and the wider church

- Hope Now Organisation – support for people of the Ukraine.
- USPG
- Poverty & Hope (1% of our annual Pledged Giving)
- Disaster appeals

17. Plans for the Future

Complete the St Mary's Community Centre project
Quinquennial work (last QI July 2009)

18. Pastoral Issues & concerns

Continuing expansion of designated residential areas of Kennington.

19. Friends of St. Mary's

The Friends of St Mary's, with a membership of 120, organise various fund raising events during the year, including Coffee Mornings and Bingo. Their monthly soup/ploughman's lunches are popular and raised almost £750 in 2008. The Friends contribute to projects relating to the fabric of both the Church and St Mary's Community Centre buildings.

20. Ashford Deanery Perspective

The Ashford Deanery consists of 20 parishes, grouped into 3 main clusters/benefices. The deeply rural periphery is organized in two Combined Benefices; to the north and west lies the G7 group, and to the south and east there is a second group known locally (and as yet unofficially) as the 'Super 6'. Set geographically between the two, and underpinning Ashford's rural history as a market town lies the Urban Cluster, made up of the town centre parish of St Mary's, and the South Ashford parishes (now a combined benefice) of Christchurch and St Francis: conjoined with these are the outer ring of sub-urban parishes of Gt Chart, Kingsnorth, Willesborough and Kennington – all formerly villages, but now sucked in to the urban sprawl resulting directly from central government policy to create 30,000 new homes in this area. There is still a long way to go to meet this target, and to the south and east, Kingsnorth will see yet further development and Mersham may well be drawn, in due course, in to the central cluster. Kennington - according to the 10 year plan - still has some further housing development and potentially a trunk road link to the motorway networks.

Some years ago the Ashford Deanery pioneered its own Bidding Scheme for the allocation of Parish Share. St Mary Kennington, in wholeheartedly supporting this scheme whereby those who can afford to pay more should support the poorer parishes, has from the outset been a role-model in sacrificial giving – undertaking to pay more than would otherwise have been due had the Bidding System not been in place. For the 2010 Parish Shares, the deanery is 'going back to basics', reviewing, renewing and re-vitalising the underlying principle that, as individuals in our parishes, so as parishes in the Deanery, we give joyfully, generously, wishing only to support continued ministry here in Ashford. We know that in the long term, in order to remain solvent, the deanery must reduce its stipendiary ministry, but given the continuing governmental housing expansion, it is difficult to see where cuts may be made, or where non-stipendiary ministry is to be found.

Through the formation of a new Deanery Mission Plan, the deanery is also currently looking at ways in which parishes might support each other in spreading the Gospel here in the Ashford area.

21. The Diocesan Perspective: Growing Forward Together - Towards 2020

Summary: An encouragement to parishes, deaneries, and the diocesan groups to reflect on their priorities and strategies in mission. In all that we do with and for God we shall seek to be:

- loving
- collaborative
- flexible
- prepared to take risks
- generous
- wanting to say 'Yes'

Growing with God - a holy people

Our priority will be to make our relationship with God active, vibrant and exciting. So we are looking for SPIRITUAL REVIVAL and RENEWAL

- **that is personal**
- **and corporate**
- **.... bringing new enthusiasm, commitment, and vision**

Growing as disciples - a learning people

Our priority will be

- **that we should be a learning people, committed to understanding our faith and able to relate it to our life in the world**
- **to call out, train and nurture ministers both lay and ordained**

Growing in the world - a missionary and evangelistic people

Our priority will be to become a Church that is involved in, with and for the World

- **in our daily lives**
- **in our worship and prayer**
- **in our mission**
- **in our social action**

Travelling Light

Our priority as a pilgrim people will be to seek

- **to hold on to all that is important**
- **to let go of what holds us back**
- **to have sufficient resources for our journey**

It is a good time to be in Canterbury Diocese! There is so much God is doing among us that brings encouragement and hope!

I have a real sense that under God there is greater confidence, a stronger vision, and even greater numbers. Clergy and laity are learning the benefits of working more collaboratively, parishes are valuing their work together in clusters, minsters, and deaneries. All of us are realising that we need each other, and our need to grow in love for each other and for God.

This summary should be received as an encouragement not as an additional burden. It sets before us four main challenges for our pilgrimage together into this brave new century. As an individual, ask yourself how you measure up to the values outlined above.

Be honest! What is holding you back? What is driving you forward? What help do you need? Ask yourself the same question about your parish. As we look at our meetings, agendas, spending priorities - could we not travel lighter, or differently? What do we know about our neighbouring parishes? Do people see us as part of the same enterprise? ...and what about the diocese, or deanery ... or even our family? It is my prayer that, as we explore these challenges (and the presentation etc that lie behind it), we shall be set free to be God's missionary people as we learn to be Growing Forward Together with God and with each other.

+ **Stephen**

For more information see

<http://www.canterbury.anglican.org/growingforwardtogethertowards2020/index.htm>