



St John's Church, Felbridge

'Gather, Grow, Go' as followers of Jesus Christ

Parish Profile 2024

WELCOME



Welcome, and thank you for taking the time to consider becoming the Vicar of St John's, Felbridge, a single church parish. We hope that this profile will give you a sense of who we are and help you to discern whether God is calling you to apply to serve as vicar of the parish, to help us in our desire to become more like Jesus. We long to be more obedient disciples of him, in our witness to his love and grace, and as we take the Gospel to those in the parish and beyond, in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads us.

We are a Bible-teaching, all-age-friendly, evangelical Anglican church in Felbridge, a growing Surrey village on the outskirts of East Grinstead, West Sussex. We seek to know Jesus and to make him known in Felbridge and the surrounding area. We need a vicar to help and lead us as under shepherd in the mission of the church. We would love to see more residents of the growing parish population in membership at St John's, as well as more younger families, children and young people. The church buildings and spacious vicarage are located within easy reach of East Grinstead town. The village and town are well served with local schools, hospital, station, theatre, cinema, sports clubs, recreation grounds, supermarkets, shops and surgeries.

We believe there are challenging as well as exciting times ahead. The PCC recently resolved to joyfully affirm the Church of England doctrine that marriage is between one man and one woman, as well as the beauty of singleness and celibacy, recognising the goodness of both Biblical positions. The PCC informed our diocesan Bishop that we would not be offering prayers of blessing for same sex couples following the General Synod's decision in November 2023.

We look forward to the arrival of a new Vicar to help us to develop our vision as members of Christ's church serving him in the parish and area. We pray that God will extend Christ's kingdom in our parish, and throughout the world, as the message of the Bible is explained, and the Gospel proclaimed. We love to see people respond to the good news by putting their faith in Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life. We have sought to provide a balanced profile below, but we encourage you to also have a look at our website – www.stjohnsfelbridge.com – where more information is available.

We pray that we will keep in step with the Spirit and be obedient in playing our part in God's mission to the world. If you feel that God is calling you to apply to be our Vicar, please don't delay in doing so. Thank you.

Philip Tadman & Christopher Bowes, Churchwardens

ST JOHN'S CHURCH/The Church family

The parish of St John the Divine Felbridge, has a long tradition of having a local church with a strong emphasis on teaching the Bible, stressing the authority of Scripture in all matters of faith and conduct. We believe in the truth of the Bible and seek to apply it in the 21st century, even when this is contrary to current UK culture and other pressures. The Bible is the written Word of God and continues to speak directly to individuals, the church and society today, through the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit. As an Anglican parish church, we therefore adhere to the historic teaching of the Church of England, as summarised in the thirty-nine Articles of Religion.



St John's is a single church benefice focussed on disciple making. We take our responsibilities as a local church and parish seriously. We are members of Churches Together in East Grinstead and the Sussex Gospel Partnership, as well as being part of the Tandridge Deanery. Through prayer, we seek to discern God's will and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all we undertake as a local church. We expect that a new Vicar will be well supported in changes they may be led to make.



WE ARE PRAYERFULLY SEEKING:

- A person who loves and trusts Jesus Christ and who is committed to serving him in word and in action
- A conservative evangelical who believes that the Bible is the Spirit-inspired word of God and who places a strong emphasis on the importance of preaching the Word in church meetings
- A Biblical expository preacher with the ability to expound and apply the message of the Bible to individuals, life and current situations in the 21st century
- A gifted communicator who will relate well to the variety of people and organisations in the parish and locality
- A person who has a heart for evangelism and mission and is good at helping individuals to come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- A pastor who works well with others and is able to build on the growth and development of church members to strengthen the local body of Christ
- A person with experience of leading a staff team as well as working with volunteers
- A person of prayer who will teach and lead us in the necessity of prayer and will encourage and develop the prayer life of the church family
- A person who promotes mutual discipling within a church family and who has a proven ability to encourage every member in their ministry



OUR VISION FOR ST JOHN'S

GATHER

- To be a friendly and welcoming church open to everyone, showing Jesus' love for all people through prayer, worship, word and deed

GROW

- To be challenged by God through sound Biblical teaching and worship
- To be open to the work of the Holy Spirit in and through us for God's glory
- To encourage the church family to become more like Jesus day by day
- To be equipped to serve as loving followers of Jesus wherever we are called to serve him

GO

- To be obedient and confident in sharing the gospel with our neighbours, friends, relatives, networks, communities and parishioners
- To be open and responsive to the needs of others, whether practical or spiritual
- To support and pray for those called to serve in the mission of the church in other parts of the world



OUR STRENGTHS

- We aim to be a warm, prayerful, welcoming church family
- Most age groups are represented
- We have a clear, challenging, practical Biblical exposition at all services, with teaching from the Old and New Testaments
- We have an able staff team, a Reader and members who are willing to share in leading services, in the teaching ministry, in small groups and in leading the music
- We have a strong lay pastoral care team
- We are united in our desire and prayer for the growth of Christ's kingdom in our outreach to the parish and beyond
- We have a deep commitment to local and global mission, with various overseas links
- We have well-led and well-supported children's and youth groups
- We have good links with the local Felbridge Primary School and Lingfield College
- We offer various services and activities for older members of the church and parish through our Connections Group
- We have excellent technical expertise and equipment which enables us to enhance our in-church worship and offer livestreaming of services
- We have well equipped hall facilities and a church building offering flexible arrangements to suit our different styles of services, youth activities and community events



OUR CHALLENGES

- Our long-term vision needs to be developed
- We need to deepen the corporate prayer life of our church
- We have a number of people on the fringe of the congregation who we would love to see committed in fellowship and in love with Jesus
- Although we desire to be an all-age church, some age groups are less evident than others. We have room for more, including young adult members, youth and children
- We need to be bolder in sharing our faith, and in inviting our friends and neighbours to join us to hear and be challenged by the good news
- We wish to increase our contact and outreach with the local community and to better utilise the capacity of the hall and church building
- In some areas, we tend to be over dependent on some core members to take on responsibilities, many of whom are close to becoming, or are already, seniors
- We are aware of our need of the Holy Spirit to strengthen, guide and empower us
- We need to acknowledge the priesthood of all believers and encourage each other to play our part in the life of the church



OUR REGULAR CHURCH SERVICES

Over 100 adults and over 25 children and young people regularly attend weekly Sunday services and groups. Many services follow the Common Worship pattern of A service of the Word with Holy Communion when indicated. We sing a range of contemporary and more traditional songs and hymns, with music provided by a talented voluntary team of musicians. We use up-to-date technology to make our services more accessible, and we provide livestream options for some of our services. At present our Sunday services are held in church at 10am, when the average adult attendance is around 75 (plus those joining via the livestreaming), and at 6pm, a more informal service with around 40 adults in attendance.



There are groups for children on Sunday mornings and for youth on Sunday evenings. In addition, there is a weekly gathering for seniors on Monday afternoons, including a monthly Holy Communion service on the second Monday, and a praise service including traditional hymns, Bible reading and a talk on the fourth Monday each month.

OTHER CHURCH GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

St John's Online

We have an online ministry group on Mondays at 8pm, which provides online fellowship, prayer, bible study as well as opportunities to attend online courses such as Alpha online, Fruitfulness on the Frontline, and the course on Romans, recently produced by the Bible Society.



Small groups

Small groups are an integral part of life at St John's. Our church members are encouraged to find a group that they can be part of so that we can encourage one another in faith and life as we grow to be more like Christ. The groups spend time in the Bible, often following the sermon series on a Sunday, and prayerfully support each other.

We have eight small groups that meet in person or online, either weekly, fortnightly or monthly, in the evening or in the daytime.

There are groups, some with a range of people, and some focussed groups, such as the women's group, young adults group, and some for seniors. Our young adults group also has a special needs focus with approximately half of their members having special educational needs.



Courses

Alongside our regular small groups we have run various courses over the years. Intermittently, we run the Christianity Explored course, which is held in the church building or in the local pub (The Star). In the past, we have run Alpha and Hope Explored courses, and also courses covering topics such as Dementia or Parenting, which aim to support church members in individual circumstances but are also open to the local community.



Men's and Women's Ministries

Our men's ministry has been running for a while whereas our women's ministry is new, having started in autumn 2023. Both offer opportunities for men and women to share testimonies of God's work in their lives and encourage one another in their spiritual journeys.

Connections Group

Our Connections group is part of our Monday ministries. A range of events are held on Monday afternoons, including Holy Communion, social activities, praise services and a quarterly community lunch. The events are aimed at seniors but are open to all.

CHILDREN and YOUTH

This section has been primarily compiled by the leaders of the ministry amongst children and young people, so includes input from the children and young people. We believe that ministry for children and youth is vital and that God speaks through His word to all ages. Our children's programme includes activities on Sunday mornings. The youth activities happen on Friday and Sunday evenings. There are also termly and annual events. There is a monthly All-Age Sunday service at 10am offering interactive elements to engage people of every age.



On Sunday evenings the youth (ages 10-18) meet between 5.30 and 7.30 pm. This group is the primary teaching for the teenagers and includes a light meal, games, activities, and Bible study in smaller groups appropriate to their ages. The youth group meeting coincides with the Sunday evening service, which the youth lead occasionally.

There is also a Friday night youth group (Verve) in church for ages 10-14 which is primarily aimed at providing a space for teenagers to easily invite friends. There is free time with plenty of games and activities, followed by a short, evangelistic talk, and then a large group game.

We are currently reimagining what a group for older teenagers could look like, having previously run a Bible study on a Friday night tackling big questions and cultural issues.

There are regular social events for all the young people each term, as well as an annual youth weekend away and two summer Venture camps for ages 10-14 or 15-18. There is also the opportunity for one-to-one discipleship for those youth for whom that would be beneficial.

For children ages 3-10 there is a weekly group running alongside the Sunday morning service. The children meet in their groups in the hall for Bible teaching, activities, games, and appropriate application of the Bible passage for their ages.

There is a creche for ages 0-2 supervised by parents/guardians during the Sunday morning service. The creche room is between the church and the hall. There are children's books and toys available, plus a livelink to the service. There are also termly events for families.

We run an annual Holiday Club, usually around the Easter school break, and regular socials for children, particularly in the school holidays.

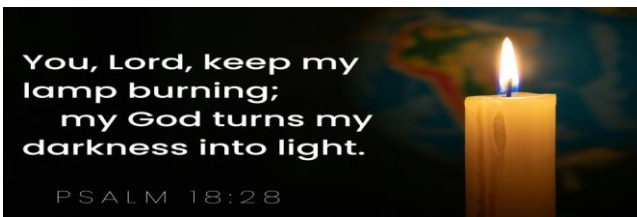
We have strong links with the local primary school. We run a lunchtime club (XTB) every week during term time teaching Bible stories to children, and there are regular opportunities for assemblies and sometimes RE lessons.

Other activities

We also support CPAS/Ventures through camp attendance by our youth members, and also through our Associate Pastor (Youth & Children) who leads a Venture. We hold annual church events, such as a recent 'St John's at Home' weekend and a church BBQ. A group of church members often attend the Bible by the Beach annual event in Eastbourne each year. Details at: [Bible by the Beach - Bible by the Beach](#) .



Other activities held in the St John's church hall, which are often open to all, include the Watercolour on Wednesday group, the East Grinstead Flower Club and some U3A meetings. Some private hiring is possible at times for birthday parties etc.



Most members of St John's receive our online Weekly Newsletter, which keeps them informed of all planned services and activities.

PRAYER

We believe that prayer is a vital part of church life and our monthly prayer meetings are where we gather as God's people to pray for our world, community, and church. There is a weekly 'prayer chain' email with requests for personal prayers from congregation members and a prayer ministry team that provides the opportunity for prayer after the morning service once a month. Prayer is an essential part of our small groups and we also offer the opportunity to join in prayer themes via the PrayerMate app.

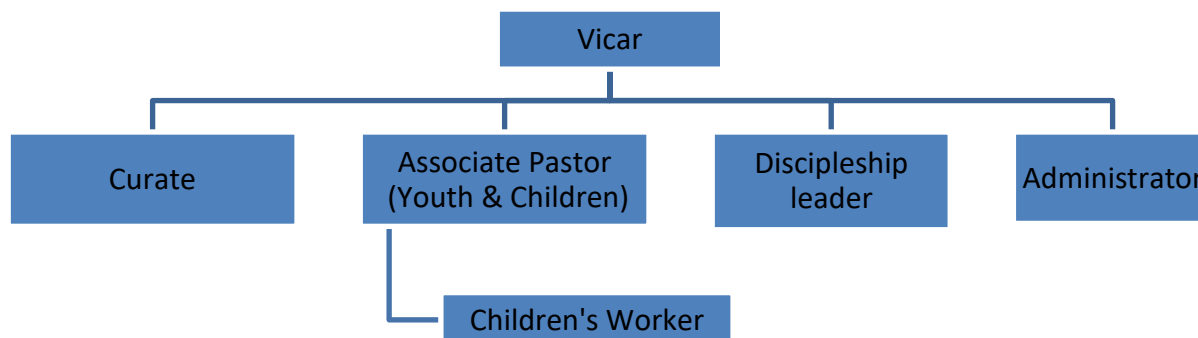
MISSION

We have a strong commitment to local and global mission. This includes particular support for several people, projects and mission agencies. Full details of the individuals and organisations we currently support can be found on our website. In addition to occasional special mission events, an annual World Mission Gift Day (WMGD) has raised considerable funds, which are distributed to the charities and mission organisations that we have focussed on during the WMGD. In recent years, small, self-funded groups have travelled to visit and support our mission partners in Uganda, Cambodia and Haiti.



OUR METHOD OF WORKING

In addition to the ecclesiastical and statutory duties and responsibilities that are undertaken by the Vicar and Churchwardens, St John's is a registered charity, number 1132388. All the members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) are the trustees of the Charity. The Vicar is the Chair of the PCC and the Charity. The trustees/PCC, who have governance responsibilities, meet at least six times a year. The PCC consists of the vicar, the curate and those elected at APCM: two churchwardens, four deanery synod representatives, nine PCC members and the licensed Reader. At present the PCC employ four staff, a full-time associate pastor (youth and children) and three part-time staff, a discipleship leader, an administrator and a children's worker, as shown in the chart below.



What the Curate and PCC staff do and what they are hoping for in the new vicar:

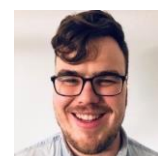
Curate – Rob Hindmarch:

As I am in my second year, I am looking forward to welcoming the new vicar into this wonderful church family. My prayer is that, as my new training incumbent, you will help me to build on an enjoyable start to my curacy and assist me to continue to gain experience and competency across a range of ministerial tasks; to support me to deepen my faith, spiritual life and discipleship to equip and sustain my ongoing ministry as a priest; and to continue a sustainable pattern of ministry including the setting of good boundaries, patterns of work and self-care.



Associate Pastor (Youth and Children) – Luke Markham:

I would value a strong leader who will teach the Bible faithfully with conviction, encouraging us to be devoted to God in all of life, with whom I could soon establish mutual trust, and who will have a particular commitment to engaging with and drawing in young families.



Children's worker – Roxi Cole:

As children's worker I am keen that our new vicar will support our desire to grow our families' ministry and inspire myself, and others in the church, to grow in our love for God and live out his word.



Discipleship leader – Miriam Markham:

As the Discipleship Leader I would appreciate a leader who faithfully teaches and lives out God's word through their life, encouraging others to live the radical life of a disciple that Jesus calls us to in his Word.



Administrator – Lindsey Saunders:

I am hoping that our new vicar will have a passion for communicating the gospel, an appreciation of their own need for God's grace, as well as an ability to understand my strengths and weaknesses, and patiently and lovingly encourage and admonish staff to fulfil their potential in Christ in their roles.



Wellbeing of Clergy and PCC Staff

The PCC were glad to receive the 2019 Church of England Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing. The PCC seek to be vigilant and active in their support of the welfare of ordained ministers and employees of the PCC. We believe that congregation, clergy and PCC staff should support one another as fellow disciples of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who cares for his sheep. In addition to prayer for the clergy and staff, there are regular meetings between the vicar and churchwardens, and monthly meetings between the clergy, churchwardens and PCC staff. The annual budget agreed by the PCC includes support for reimbursement of expenses, retreats and appropriate courses. The PCC review salaries annually, and more often if necessary. The vicar has regular reviews with staff and provides regular updates on staffing at PCC meetings. The churchwardens endeavour to ensure clergy and staff use their holiday entitlements, and take days off regularly.

PCC volunteer Task Teams

Most of the activities at St John’s are organised through the following nine teams:

Services; Music & Audio; Discipleship; Youth & Children; Pastoral Support & Prayer; Catering; Buildings & Finance; Mission Support; Digital & Communications

FINANCES



We are grateful for the generous financial support of members to enable the current activities, commitments and staffing. We are also grateful to the many members who carry out a wide range of tasks and activities voluntarily. More information about the finances of the parish, including copies of the statutory annual report and accounts can be found on the website. An annual budget is prayerfully agreed by the PCC and we aim to keep the church family informed about the church finances. We seek to

be good stewards of resources entrusted to us and encourage members to give regularly and tax effectively as appropriate and possible. A focus on biblical teaching about giving is included in the annual programme, as we thank God for his provision.



SAFEGUARDING

St John’s has a strong and dedicated team made up of a Parish Safeguarding Officer and Assistant PSO under the overall leadership of the Vicar. The team respond quickly and appropriately to any issues brought to its attention, ensuring confidentiality at all times. DBS checks and safeguarding training are kept up to date on a three-yearly rolling basis. In addition, the team holds an annual training event to support all volunteers on the PCC, Children and Youth Team, Pastoral Team and Small Group Leaders.



BUILDINGS

The vicarage is located across the car park from the church buildings and is a spacious, well-appointed, modern, comfortable, fifteen-year-old house, built to the high standards required by the Diocese of Southwark. It has four bedrooms and includes a double garage and garden. There is a lovely rural outlook to the east of the vicarage across fields that are unlikely to be built upon in the foreseeable future.



The main church building was opened in 1865, and a church hall added in the 1965. The hall was upgraded and refurbished in 2012. The two buildings connect via a few internal steps. In 2016, the interior of the church building was reordered to remove pews and unnecessary 'clutter'. This resulted in a more open, flexible space, enabling a variety of layouts to suit different services and activities.



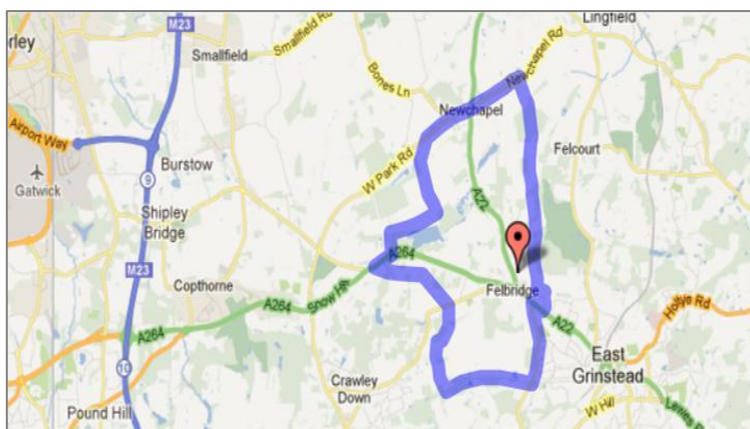
The church building is not in the centre of the village, but it is prominently located on the A22 and has the advantage of a good-sized car park. The hall is available for hire for family and other occasions during vacant times. The buildings have been well maintained and the next Quinquennial survey is due in April 2024. Our PCC budget allows for annual contributions toward Quinquennial costs.



THE PARISH

The parish of St John the Divine, Felbridge is situated in the south-east corner of Surrey, close to the borders of West Sussex and Kent, and is the southernmost parish of the Diocese of Southwark.

Felbridge itself is part of Tandridge District, is close to the neighbouring village of Crawley Down and is conjoined with the adjacent town of East Grinstead, due to the northwards extension of the latter. Despite the encroachment and assimilation that has taken place, many Felbridge residents are proud of their village status, and it still retains many of the features of a separate community



with the traditional quartet of a village school, church, pub and shop! Although the current population of Felbridge is only around 1,800 adults living in 1,000 properties, the “catchment area” is much larger. (East Grinstead approx. 26,400; Crawley Down approx. 5,800). The local population is growing, with a number of new dwellings having been built recently in the vicinity, along with proposals for more. There are some service and light industries in the parish and area but Felbridge and adjacent districts are essentially dormitory communities for those who commute to work in London, Croydon and the nearby Crawley/Gatwick Airport conurbation. At present there are no significant ethnic minority groups or areas of deprivation within the parish.

There is a thriving community in Felbridge, with groups including guides, scouts, WI, bowling, cricket, football and tennis clubs, along with the horticultural society and history group. It shares borders with East Grinstead town and Crawley Down and Copthorne villages.

Hedgocourt Lake, accessed off the Copthorne Road, is the largest lake in Surrey, where there is a local sailing club. The lake is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and the woodland to the west of the lake is a Nature Reserve managed by the Surrey Wildlife Trust. There is a Village Hall on Crawley Down Road with play, sports and leisure facilities. St John’s has used the village hall for some events.

East Grinstead is well served by a rail service to London, and the proximity of Gatwick airport provides excellent national and international travel links. The countryside around Felbridge is known for its natural beauty, with the Ashdown Forest lying just south of East Grinstead and the South Downs well under an hour away by car.

More information about Felbridge can be found on the excellent village website: www.felbridgevillage.co.uk.

We have a link with Whittington College, located across the road from St John’s. Some of the residents have attended St John’s for many years – see <https://www.mercers.co.uk/almshouses-sheltered-housing>



We also have links with the College of St Barnabas. Some members of the college community have regularly attended services at St John's Felbridge whilst in residence, including the late Rev. Dr John Stott. For more information, go to: [The College of St Barnabas | Holistic Care in a Christian Community \(st-barnabas.org.uk\)](http://st-barnabas.org.uk)

In addition to our church website, other useful sites with a wealth of local information are:

Felbridge and District History Group: www.felbridge.org.uk

Crawley Down Village: www.crawleydownvillage.co.uk

Visit East Grinstead: www.visiteastgrinstead.com

East Grinstead Town Council: www.eastgrinstead.gov.uk

Thank you for reading our parish profile. We do hope it will help you to discern if God is calling you to serve him as vicar of our parish. We look forward to welcoming the next Vicar of Felbridge.