



Parish of Mortlake with East Sheen

Team Vicar
St Mary's Mortlake

Diocese of Southwark

Overview

The Team Vicar of St Mary's has special responsibility for St Mary the Virgin Mortlake.

The Mortlake with East Sheen Team Ministry consists of three churches St Mary's (1543), Christ Church (1863) and All Saints (1929). Each church has a Vicar, of incumbent status, sharing the cure of souls with the Team Rector (based at Christ Church) who is the legal incumbent and leader of the team. The parish is a member of Inclusive Church.



There is one PCC, with centralised finances, maintaining overall governance. There are two parish wardens. Each church has at least two churchwardens and a treasurer who maintains general and donation accounts. The parish has a number of rooms which may be let. Each church has a director of music and robed choir, with various other musical provision enhancing the worship of God and divine services.

Each church has a Consultative Group (similar in structure to a DCC), which is responsible for the day-to-day management and mission of their church and area of the community. The clergy team work together across the parish, regularly taking services at all three churches. The parish comes together for patronal services, Palm Sunday and Remembrance, but principally the Team Vicars minister to their own congregations and area of the parish.

There is currently an appetite for more explicit partnering within the Team, this would be a new development to be discussed as the new Team assembles.

There are opportunities for the creative development of new services and initiatives, with the enthusiastic support and collaboration of the Team both lay and ordained, always following planning and discussion.



St Mary the Virgin, Mortlake

Open doors, open hearts, open minds

These are increasingly anxious times across all ages and walks of life. In our immediate area there are many who need to find that they have a spiritual home at St Mary's and become part of our community and where the presence of God is real.

We are looking for a Vicar who:

- is a pastor who will love, pray for and nurture the current church community which values tradition but is open for change
- is eager to reach new generations and build our congregation through a new sense of mission and presence in the local community
- will develop worship patterns to meet the needs of people who are tentatively on the fringes of the church to enable them to feel it is their spiritual home
- will be energetic, outward looking, happy to work with other churches to develop Christian outreach. Specifically, seeking to engage missionally with attentiveness and relevance to the mixed local demographic of Mortlake.
- will be a force in Mortlake watchful of the signs and opportunities for the promoting of Christian values where anyone can come for help, hospitality and friendship
- will lead the Mortlake area of the community to a place where the presence of God is not just hoped for but a reality, felt and touched by all who are searching
- will update and help to realise fundraising and the current Mission Action Plan

We seek to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of Heaven, we treasure the transformative love of God that is at the heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we show this love in our pastoral care for people in the parish – but we need to look afresh at how we communicate to the world around us so that we connect effectively and fruitfully, in faith.

Worship



Currently, the sole Sunday service is at 10.00am, a Common Worship Eucharist. Vestments are worn and there is a robed altar party. The service is livestreamed for people no longer able to attend. Historically tradition at St Mary's was considered the lower of the three churches, there is the potential for new worship patterns reflecting their broadly relaxed approach to worship, maintaining the centrality of the Eucharist on a Sunday.

There is Play Church for young children in term time and Tower Half Hour for 10+ children once a month. On the third Sunday the service is a shorter, simpler

all-age format 'Worship for All', with the St Mary's band and chorus. We would value a Vicar who had energy to develop and support this fresh expression of music.



Baptisms are within the Sunday morning service and an opportunity for the laying-on of hands for healing every two months. On Tuesdays there is a small and very informal Eucharist at 10.00am followed by coffee and chat. Each November, there is a Memorial Service to which we invite the families of those for whom the Ministry Team has taken funerals in the previous year.

The priests move across the three churches, but the services are quite similar, so there is no real movement across traditions. The Team has no fixed house style when it comes to presiding at the Eucharist, but aims to be consistent. Clergy are encouraged to preside as they are most comfortable, working with the churches and the parish celebrates the breadth of Common Worship and the lectionary.

The congregation at St Mary's is noted for its warmth and friendliness – to each other, and to everyone who comes into the church for any reason. It has a good spread of ages and diversity of people who attend regularly. Coffee after the services on Sunday and Tuesday is an opportunity to mix and chat.

St Mary's has an awareness that Sunday morning is not always the best time for people to come to church, particularly those with sporting or work commitments. We have previously introduced provision to accommodate families and children on Sunday afternoons, but are ready and willing to explore new avenues under the leadership of a new Vicar.

Music at St Mary's

Music plays an integral role in worship at St Mary's. The church has a small but able and loyal robed choir. St Mary's Band plays at the monthly all-age Worship for All services, and St Mary's Chorus leads the singing. The Director of Music and organist is currently in vacancy. We do not anticipate recruiting until the new Vicar arrives or is appointed.



At Worship for All services, the band accompanies the hymns (a mix of traditional and modern) and the mass setting, and plays an instrumental piece during communion as well as music before and after the service. St Mary's Chorus leads the singing of the hymns and sings an anthem or song, and is an opportunity for families to sing together, for less confident singers and those who would rather not commit to sing every week.

Our vision is that music should enhance St Mary's presence in the community by recruiting from the congregation, and by developing existing links with local schools and community groups. We hope that music will draw people to St Mary's for the spiritual refreshment that so many find that music can provide.

St Mary's Church

The church is open from Monday to Thursday for private prayer. It is surrounded by a churchyard closed for burials and in the care of the local authority. A monthly working party of members of the congregation maintains the churchyard which is well used by people who value it as a calm oasis in the middle of a congested area.



We host a number of annual events enjoyed by both churchgoers and the local community: the Shrove Tuesday Pancake party (supported strongly by the Guiding and Scout groups), a quiz night with fish and chip supper, the Summer garden party with cakes and music held in the churchyard, and a barbecue at Harvest. Another popular annual event is Boat Races Teas, as Mortlake marks the end of the annual Oxford and Cambridge Boat Races.

Two nurseries hire space at St Mary's, providing community links and income.

While there has been a church by the river at Mortlake since 1348, the oldest surviving part of St Mary's, the tower, was built in 1543 – making St Mary's one of the earliest post-Reformation churches. There is a fine and historic ring of eight bells, some from the 1690s, which are rung most Sundays. We would like to expand our ringing team, there are opportunities to partner with towers across the area. Visitors are invited to climb the spiral staircase to see the bells as well as the splendid views over the Parish and beyond. The 15th-century font, a gift from Archbishop Bouchier, comes from an earlier church in Mortlake and is still used for baptisms.

Most of the church was rebuilt in the late 19th century and, following reordering in the 1970s, provides an attractive and light space which can be used flexibly, both for worship and for social events. There are plans in progress to extend the kitchen and replace the dividing doors between the church and the St Mary's room to the north of the church. It is desirable that the new Team Vicar has experience in and enthusiasm for project management as St Mary's embarks on the next chapter.

The Team Ministry

The Parish of Mortlake with East Sheen is mixed, with social housing in Mortlake all the way through to large, detached houses near Richmond Park. It is in a busy part of south-west London with good transport links.

Mortlake is bordered by the river to the north, divided from East Sheen by the railway running from Waterloo to Richmond. East Sheen, in turn, is bordered by Richmond Park to its south. The railway is something of a wall between Mortlake and East Sheen, compounded by the level crossing at Sheen Lane which is frequently closed.



The South Circular Road (two lanes only) runs through the middle of East Sheen and traffic along the Upper Richmond Road and Sheen Lane is heavy much of the time, particularly as Hammersmith Bridge is closed. East Sheen is the main shopping centre in the parish with a number of independent shops and with numerous cafés.

The parish is in the Richmond Park constituency, represented by LibDem MP, Sarah Olney. There are two LibDem and one Green councillor in Mortlake.

Four state primary schools (one is Roman Catholic) and one private school for boys serve the many families with young children living in the area. At secondary level there is a comprehensive school in East Sheen, a Church of England comprehensive between East Sheen and Richmond, and the Royal Ballet School at White Lodge in Richmond Park.

Whilst St Mary's is accessible parking is tricky, so events for the elderly tend to take place at All Saints and Christ Church. We seek to concentrate mission efforts to provide for those in walking distance, and on the bus routes (419, 533, 209). The Parish runs a holiday at home club for older people and enjoys about eight community venture lunches a year, bringing together the Church community.

The Sheen Lane Centre accommodates a health centre, a public library, and areas used by voluntary associations including Citizens Advice and FiSH. FiSH is a neighbourhood care organisation dedicated to Friendship, Independence, Support and Help, mainly working with elderly people; it was originally set up by members of the church congregations of this parish and continues to have an important relationship with the parish. An occasional service is held at the Sheen Lane Centre, led by the ministry team of the parish. There is one small care home in the parish.

Mortlake Crematorium and the Fulham and Mortlake Cemeteries are situated within the parish; and Putney Vale Crematorium and Richmond and East Sheen Cemeteries are nearby. Their proximity, together with the three local funeral directors, means the ministry team receives a greater number of funeral enquiries than for many similar London parishes.

Ecumenically, we are part of the Richmond Sunday lunch scheme. The parish is twinned with St Mary Famona in the link Diocese of Matabeleland, Zimbabwe.

Groups active within the parish include a Contemplative Prayer Group, Julian Group (a second silent prayer group), a Cursillo group, a Mothers' Union branch, and a Progressive Christian Network group. The parish is a signatory of Inclusive Church. St Mary's and Christ Church both have the Eco Church bronze award. We have recently begun a bi-monthly parish newsletter which is emailed to the congregations.

Mortlake

Mortlake, situated between the Thames to the north and the London to Richmond railway to the south, faces social and economic challenges. It is one of the most deprived wards in the Borough of Richmond upon Thames, with few shops and social facilities. It contains a mix of social and private housing including blocks of flats, and modest Victorian maisonettes and houses. The large housing development planned for the site of the former Stag Brewery means Mortlake will change considerably in the coming years. This development will open up access to the River, but local residents are campaigning for a smaller development with more affordable and social housing than the one planned.



The thriving Mortlake Community Association (MCA), originally a parish initiative, serves the local community with groups, activities and outings, and a weekly lunch that started in response to the cost-of-living crisis. The MCA Community Development Manager shares the parish office and works closely with St Mary's. Most MCA activities take place in Mortlake Hall, of which the Team

Rector is an ex-officio trustee. The two charities are working towards merging so that MCA has a centre and Mortlake Hall will better serve the community.

East Sheen

To the south of the railway, East Sheen is very different. It is one of the most prosperous areas in the borough with the majority of housing privately owned, ranging from mansion flats, three-bedroomed terraced houses, and larger detached or semi-detached properties. Proximity to Richmond Park makes it an attractive place to live. Sheen Common and Palewell Common are both large, open spaces with tennis courts, cricket and football pitches and other sporting facilities. Many of the residents of East Sheen work in the professions, the City, and the media. It is a friendly area and many people are involved in voluntary activities. There is widespread recognition of the part the churches play in the local community.

The Team Churches

Christ Church

Christ Church has a 'central' church tradition. The main Sunday morning service is a Sung Eucharist at 10.00am. There is a monthly 8.00am service of Holy Communion, and a monthly 5.00pm service of Choral Evensong – both according to the Book of Common Prayer (BCP). A service of Holy Communion according to the BCP held weekly on Wednesdays at 10.30am attracts an average of 20 older people in the parish who enjoy staying on for coffee and cake. Each Monday afternoon in term time after school, there is Messy Church.

All Saints

All Saints is the newest of the parish's churches, built in 1929. Its worship is in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. The main service is a Sung Eucharist at 10.00am with an 8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) and a short, less formal Service of the Word at midday.

Facts and Figures across the Parish

The average Sunday attendances for 2023 were:

St Mary's: 55 adults and 10 children
Christ Church: 54 adults and 3 children
All Saints: 70 adults and 2 children, 10 at Family Service

The parish's electoral roll stands at 277 (St Mary's 75, Christ Church 87 and All Saints 115).

Baptisms: 2 (SM), 13 (CC), 13 (AS)

Communion before Confirmation: 8 (SM), Confirmation: 2 (CC) Marriages: 2 (SM), 3 (CC), 2 (AS)

Funerals in church: 3 (SM), 5 (CC), 5 (AS) Funerals at crematorium and cemetery: 26

St Mary's: Carol Service 150, Christmas services 278, Easter Day 129

Christ Church: Carol Service 190, Christmas services 659, Easter Day 186

All Saints: Carol Service 290, Christmas services 691, Easter Day 262

The current Ministry Team

Clergy

Revd Jonathan Haynes, Team Rector at Christ Church

Revd Alex Barrow, Team Vicar at All Saints, also Area Dean

Revd Sylvie Collins-Mayo, part-time Assistant Curate based at All Saints

Revd Olwen Williamson, Priest with PTO based at Christ Church

Revd Peter King, Priest with PTO based at All Saints

On grounds of theological conviction, Peter is unable to receive the sacramental ministry of women bishops or priests. He has ministered graciously alongside female clergy in the parish, notably so with Canon Ann Nickson, the former Team Rector.

Readers

William Arnold based at All Saints

Paul Russenberger based at Christ Church

Southwark Pastoral Minister

Deirdre Munro, based at Christ Church, but ministering mainly in hospital chaplaincy

Directors of Music

Vacancy (Director of Music at St Mary's)

Vacancy (Director of Music at Christ Church)

James Cryer (Director of Music at All Saints) Edward Buxton (Organist at All Saints)

Parish Wardens

Brenda Morris (Christ Church)

Kate Woodhouse (St Mary's)

The stipendiary clergy meet for Morning Prayer each weekday, and on Wednesdays for a staff meeting. Periodically, the ministry team meets for lunch or an awayday.

Administration

There is a single PCC for the parish with two Parish Wardens and a Parish Treasurer who work across the parish. Each church has two Churchwardens and a Church Treasurer who deal with the day-to-day running of the churches, and an elected Consultative Group.

There are three sub-committees of the PCC:

- Finance and Property
- Planned Giving
- Mission, Peace and Justice (with a remit to charitable giving and partnering)

Each of the three churches is represented on these committees. The stipendiary clergy attend the Finance and Property.

The parish employs an Administrator, based at the parish office at St Mary's. At present she works in the parish office for two days a week and from home for three days a week.

Despite being a relatively wealthy parish our finances are under pressure. The parish is sustaining a high level of giving to the Parish Support Fund and is paying for half the cost of one of the Team Vicars (this post). Since 2020 Planned Giving has not risen in line with our costs, and the cost of energy has increased significantly. Our budget deficit for this year (£20,000) has been covered by a generous, anonymous one-off donation but we cannot rely on this happening again. We are thankful for the generous legacies that have enabled work to the fabric at St Mary's and Christ Church, but we recognise that these legacies mean donations to the parish's Planned Giving scheme are lessening as new donors can seldom give as generously as those leaving the scheme. A newly-formed Financial Strategy committee, reporting to the Finance and Property committee, has been established to address this situation.

Stewardship and generous giving plays an important part of the preaching and teaching of the ministry team.

The Vicarage, 170 Sheen Lane, SW14 8LZ

The Vicarage, a detached house dating from the 1930s, sits at the centre of the parish at the corner of Sheen Lane and Penrhyn Crescent with windows facing East, South and West.

Downstairs there is a hallway, a breakfast room, a kitchen, a sitting room, a dining room, a study and a cloakroom; upstairs there are five bedrooms and a bathroom; outside there is a spacious garden and off-street parking for two cars. The Vicarage was extensively refurbished with a new kitchen and bathroom over the summer of 2024.



St Mary's is twelve minutes' walk from the Vicarage; Mortlake railway station is seven minutes' walk; with local amenities and shops close by. Richmond Sainsbury's superstore is a short drive away. The Sheen Lane Centre is four minutes' walk; and Richmond Park (at Sheen Gate) is twelve minutes' walk.