

# ST NICHOLAS CHURCH

*Parish Profile*

July 2024

## OUR VISION

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**'...building a family that knows and reflects the love of Christ...'**



# ARCHDEACON'S WELCOME

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Thank you for taking the time to prayerfully consider whether God might be calling you to be the next Rector of St Nicholas, Chislehurst. This is an exciting time in the life of Rochester Diocese as we reflect on how we as a Diocese, and in different ways in each of our parishes, might Change and Serve and Grow so that God's Kingdom can be increased, and more people can come to know the love of Jesus.

St Nicholas' is a church which is at the heart of 'village' life and is committed to loving and serving the people of Chislehurst. This is a busy parish church with lots going on, and a growing ministry with children, young people and families. St Nicholas' is an inclusive and welcoming church with an engaged PCC and congregation.

This is a Church and community with much to offer and lots of potential and I am excited to see where the Holy Spirit is leading in this next stage of life and ministry at St Nicholas'.

St Nicholas' is part of the Bromley Deanery, in the London Borough of Bromley at the Western edge of the Diocese of Rochester. This is a great location with easy access to central London, and just a short drive or bus journey to Bromley where all the shops you might need can be easily found.

Please be assured of my prayers as you discern whether you are the person the Holy Spirit is calling to join us in this next exciting stage of mission and ministry in Chislehurst.

**Ven. Allie Kerr, Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley.**



South entrance screen

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are seeking an enthusiastic Rector, able to reflect the leadership of Jesus Christ through Faith, Hope and Love, to provide support and prayerful leadership to our Church congregation of all ages and to the ministry team.

## **Churchmanship**

They will be theologically and scripturally thoughtful, passionate and enthusiastic in their Christian faith and the Anglican tradition. It is also vital that they support and lead our ambition to be a fully inclusive Church. They should understand the context of St Nicholas Church and be sensitive to the particular needs of the congregations at all services offered, confidently leading us in a variety of worship styles.

We need an articulate preacher who can present the Gospel engagingly and relate its teaching to everyday life. They will also facilitate others to deepen their spirituality and become effective advocates for the Gospel through regular bible study groups.

## **Pastoral Care**

We have a wealth of compassion, kindness and talent amongst our congregation. It is vital that we have a Rector who will recognize, encourage and nurture these many gifts allowing us to grow in our individual ministries. They should relate well to people of all ages and understand the challenges of family life and the issues surrounding work/life balance. We are an ever-changing and diversifying community, and we need a pastoral leader who will work to unite diversity within the congregation.

Our new Rector must also meet the pastoral and spiritual needs of our wider community, not just those who come to Church. Weddings, funerals, and baptism ministry feature strongly in our parish life, and we see this ministry as a means of strengthening the community. We need them to champion Safeguarding and help maintain and build on our good work in this area.

## **Leadership**

We need a prayerful, visionary, energetic and well-organized leader with experience in team building and outreach. Our existing relationships with local schools, businesses and the community need to be maintained and developed. The Rector is an ambassador for our Church in the wider community and should be a full and active participant in its activities. This will lead mission and growth, both spiritually and numerically.

*'...Above all we need someone who truly loves and cares for all people....'*



# THE PARISH

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## **St Nicholas.**

St Nicholas is the original Parish Church of Chislehurst, historically in West Kent, in the London Borough of Bromley. Today it is one of three CoE parishes within Chislehurst, offering a variety of worship styles. The Ascension, on the High Street, is a Traditional Catholic parish under the Extended Episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Richborough, Christ Church is a Charismatic Evangelical parish. This variety enables us to work well together. The church is 11 miles from London Bridge, with excellent rail links to London and across the UK and Europe, with access to all London airports. Chislehurst has an unusual layout which spreads across three separate shopping and dining areas, all of which are separated by beautiful woodlands and ponds, consisting of Royal Parade, the High Street and Belmont Parade. There are many local volunteer groups who keep Chislehurst looking its best and groups who contribute to making it a wonderful place to visit and live.

## **The People of Chislehurst.**

From the census held in 2021, Chislehurst is considered as a "Commuter Suburb", with following demographics:

Total Population: 15,569 (51.6% female and 48.4% male). Average Age: 43 years. Households: 6,085 There are 542 in communal living. 53% of the population is married and 82% is white. Being a commuter suburb 66% of 16-74-year olds are employed. 8% of residents are in education and 16% of residents are noted as retired. There are excellent schools and shopping facilities on our doorstep or within a 10-minute drive. Our website <https://stnicholas-chislehurst.org.uk> gives an indication of what we are about, and to find out more about living in Chislehurst <http://www.visitchislehurst.org.uk> run by the Chislehurst Business Group is a good source of information. The Church is a vital part of, and is well connected to the Chislehurst community. We would encourage the next Rector to continue and grow these connections.

The population of the Parish is estimated to be around 3,500 living in 1,500 households and retirement accommodation.

## **Electoral Roll.**

There was a total of 232 on the electoral roll I January 2020. This was made up of 75 who live in the Parish, 81 who live outside the Parish but in Chislehurst with the remaining 77 living outside Chislehurst. The roll numbers are increasing year by year and we currently have 265 people registered.



Centre Common

## The Parish setting.

We are blessed that the Parish retains a rural aspect with farms, National Trust land, common land and ancient and managed woodlands, a large nature reserve, all whilst being located in a suburban area of Greater London.

Within the Parish there are a number of retirement home establishments (care homes and assisted living), six schools including St Nicholas Church of England primary school, two state secondary schools, one independent school, a special-educational needs school and an Islamic school. The school population is in the region of 4,000.

We have a thriving business community, largely made up of independent operators, with many shops and restaurants serving the community.

Our nearest main large town is Bromley which is around 3 miles away.



Royal Parade





# MINISTRY TEAM

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St Nicholas parish life is very full, with two Church Wardens, a very large and active PCC, a part-time parish administrator and many committees looking after the needs and requirements of the parish buildings and people.

The new Rector will need to work collaboratively with the ministry team which currently includes a Curate (Priested September 2023) and one assistant priest who has PTO until 2026. There is a busy and varied ecclesiastical tradition here at St Nicholas and they will need to build this team to continue growing our ecclesiastical and pastoral mission.

With a successful tradition of curates in the parish, and the present one in post since 2022, we also hope the new Rector will be able to undertake the role of Training Incumbent and will nurture and support lay vocations.

# ECCLESIASTIC WORSHIP PATTERN

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The Parish Church of St Nicholas has a varied worship pattern and a very long history reflecting classic Anglicanism and is a Eucharistic Church. Over the last few years, the pattern of worship, using Common Worship and Book of Common Prayer, has changed to reflect a changing world. Whilst many of our services are Eucharistic, we do offer non-Eucharistic services to suit all requirements.

We hold annual confirmation classes and have permission from the Diocese to allow children from the age of 8 to be prepared for admission to receive Holy Communion. We feel that this is an important aspect of the emerging ministry on offer at St Nicholas.

Our variety of services are valued by our congregation. Our service pattern has been maintained by our Curate during the Interregnum, and we would hope to maintain the same level of services from our new Rector.

## Pattern of Worship at St Nicholas

### Weekday services

- Monday - Thursday** 9am Morning Prayer said in the Scadbury Chapel
- Wednesday** 10am Said Communion (BCP)



**B**  
Everyone is welcome here  
We are **Companions** along the Way  
Direct your children onto the right path,  
and when they grow up they will not leave it.  
Proverbs 22:6

The Village Hall

### 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday

- 08:00 Said Eucharist (BCP)  
09:30 All Age Worship (Village Hall)  
18:00 Choral Evensong (BCP)

### 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday

- 08:00 Said Eucharist (BCP)  
09:30 Holy Communion (CW Sung)  
15:00 Baptism Services

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday

- 08:00 Said Eucharist (BCP)  
09:30 Family Service with Holy Communion (CW)  
11:15 Choral Matins (BCP)

### 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday

- 09:30 Holy Communion (CW Sung) Usually a *special* service which has recently been a service of Wholeness and Healing, Celtic Communion, Narrated Communion.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals are held throughout the year. Totals for 2023 were 11 Baptisms, 8 Weddings and 18 Funerals. Major festivals are celebrated with sung Eucharist in the evening. There are also services held in local retirement homes monthly including services of the Word and Holy Communion.

Home Communion is shared monthly to housebound parishioners in their homes, as well as those in hospital or who are temporarily unwell away from home.

Regular attendance at all our services has been growing with approximate numbers for our main services being:

- 8am BCP - 10  
10am BCP - 12  
Holy Communion - 80/90 (inc. children)  
Choral Matins - 24  
All Age Worship - 90/100  
Choral Evensong - 24



## CARE HOMES & RESIDENTIAL HOMES

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Fairlight Care Home Monthly Service  
Prince George Duke of Kent Care Home

– Service of Word with Hymns  
– Monthly Service Holy Communion / Service  
of Word with Hymns

Shepherds House Residential Home  
Cedarmore Court Residential Home 4 x per year  
Faulkner House Residential Home 4 x per year

– Monthly Bible Study  
– Service of Word with Hymns  
– Service of Word with Hymns

## ADVENT & CHRISTMAS WORSHIP

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**(plus normal Sunday and weekly services)**

4 Week Advent Bible Study (daytime and evening)

Advent Carol Service

9 Lessons and Carols

St Nicholas Day Service for St Nichols School

Christingle Service

Nativity Tableau

Midnight Mass

Christmas Day BCP Said Eucharist 8am

Christmas Day Holy Communion

St Stephen's Day BCP Said Eucharist – 10am

St John the Evangelist BCP Said Eucharist – 10am

School Carol Services x 2 for St Nicholas Primary School

School Carol Services x 1 for Marjorie McClure School

All Souls memorial service

Christmas Memorial Services x 2 for Funeral Directors



The High Altar

## LENT & EASTER

**(plus normal weekly services)**

6 week Lent Bible Study, daytime, and evening sessions

### **Holy Week**

#### **Monday – Wednesday**

Compline

#### **Thursday**

Maundy Thursday Supper and Communion

Night Watch

#### **Good Friday**

Walk of Witness with Churches Together

3 Hours at the Cross Service

#### **Easter Eve**

Service of Light

#### **Easter Day**

BCP Said Eucharist

Parish Eucharist

## REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

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As the Parish church of Chislehurst, St Nicholas holds the Remembrance Day Communion service in Church with the representatives from the Mayor's office and then leads the parade to the War Memorial for a formal Civic service of Remembrance, attended by local community and business groups – Scouts, Guides, Salvation Army, Church Army, Rotary clubs, members of the Armed Forces and many others representing and supporting the local community.





The Churchyard

# CHURCH FINANCES

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The finances of St Nicholas church are in a moderate state. Ongoing income is about £200,000 of which about £120,000 comes from regular planned giving. We also receive increasing donations via card and text giving.

Stewardship campaigns take place every five years and tend to improve finances. The next campaign will begin in February 2024.

We are proud to meet our indicative parish share offer of £76,500. A 15th century church does require considerable care and attention, costing on average £30,000 per annum, which we plan to meet over a 5-year period by generating surpluses in quinquennial repair years without diminishing our Mission and Charitable giving.

The latest set of accounts can be provided on request.

## OUR BUILDINGS

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### **St Nicholas Church**

Was built in the 15th century, and enlarged in the 19th, though a church has been on the site for over a thousand years. The Norman font is still in use. It is a Grade 2\* listed building and is situated within the Chislehurst Conservation Area. Nikolaus Pevsner remarks upon its 'tall, shingled spire, quite a landmark'. There is an on-going program of up-keep to this building with the next Quinquennial due in 2026. We are pleased that the church is open every day during daylight hours, and, in the future, we hope to improve the facilities in the church. We have a property management committee, which the new Rector would be encouraged to join.

### **Churchyard:**

The Churchyard is well cared for by our monthly working party, with a contractor keeping the grass well-trimmed. There are approximately 650 graves in the churchyard, dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. There are Commonwealth War Graves, as well as the graves of several famous local notables. St Nicholas continues to offer burials for parishioners, and we also have a beautiful memorial garden.



**The Rectory**

## **Village Hall**

This is situated across the road from the Church and is used by the Church Family as well as the local community, anchored by the Montessori pre-school who reside throughout the school year on a regular and ongoing basis.

A new kitchen was fitted in 2019. Although heavily booked, time is set aside in the Hall diary for church use.

Most importantly, we are fully engaged and committed to the development of a new ‘...hall for all...’ project. In early 2024 we plan to submit a full planning application for a new two-storey multi-function community building, which will include two residential dwellings for private and Church employee occupants. We need to raise £2.5million to build the scheme.

The ministry team are fully behind the project, and we see this being a key part of the new Rector’s role – a true community building project.

## **The Rectory**

This five-bedroomed Georgian style detached house is located in a small desirable residential close in the heart of Chislehurst, a 10-minute walk from the church. It has a double garage, off street parking and substantial garden. The property is in a fair state of repair.

## **Curate’s House**

This is a three bedroomed town house, owned by the PCC, located in a different residential location to the Rectory. The house is currently occupied by our Curate and her family.

## **Parish Office**

This is located with the Village Hall and is staffed by the Parish Administrator 5 days a week 9am till 1pm. Our administrator is a great help to our ministry team, supporting and enabling them to fulfill the various services and roles., taking hall bookings, producing service booklets, helping with the hall maintenance activities and supporting the Curate in day-to-day activities.

‘We should speak to others with respect.  
And we should also listen. We should not  
denigrate, patronise or ignore the honest  
views of fellow citizens, but seek to respect  
their opinions and their votes.’

**The Bishops of The Church of England**



**THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND**

## **Called to grow.**

Along with other churches in the Diocese, St Nicholas has a Called to Grow program looking to continue the growth of the church as part of the community.

A recent review found that St Nicholas church is successful in many activities. There are challenges in some areas, including activities involving the teenage population, nurturing established members by translating some from attenders to church volunteers and developing our external communications.

We have strong links with the Chislehurst Conservators, the Scout Association, the Rotary Club and local businesses. As part of the Diocese's Called Together vision, to encourage and equip churches to consider the whole life of their church community, and what God may be asking of it, the ministry team as St Nicholas are seeking to deliver this by prayer and leadership adaptable to any setting.

“...It is our prayer that we will encounter the Holy Spirit working in all sorts of unexpected ways as we pray and ponder, prioritise and plan...”

*(Rt Rev Simon Burton-Jones, Bishop of Tonbridge  
former Rector at St Nicholas, Chislehurst)*



# MUSIC

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Music has an important place in the life and worship at St Nicholas. A professional organist leads a robed choir for regular choral Eucharists, monthly choral Matins and Evensong, as well as special events such as the Christmas Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

The organist and choir along with the bell ringers are available for weddings and have had a busy time over the last few years. A separate, more informal “Third-Sunday Choir” leads the congregation at the Family Eucharist each month. Music is also central to the monthly Breakfast Praise in the Church Hall, with a mix of traditional hymns and modern worship songs.

One of our priorities is to grow the youth choir here at St Nicholas. We would hope that the new Rector would take an active part in this, and help to grow and develop the musical traditions we enjoy.

## **Bell ringers.**

St Nicholas has a strong and growing group of bell ringers of all ages, a service and tradition that we intend to maintain and increase. We would hope that the new Rector would support and nurture this group, as we feel it is a key part of a Parish Church offer, and does provide an audible link to the surrounding community.





# CHURCH FAMILY LIFE

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St Nicholas Church is a family that prides itself on inclusiveness and diversity. We support our Church family and encourage individuals and families to get involved with church activities. We have an eclectic compassionate congregation who are proud of the St Nicholas family.

Life at St Nicholas is not just focused on the calendar of weekly services. It is a busy, thriving community, with a wide and varied range of activities. Groups of volunteers engage with vital practical tasks from church and hall cleaning and maintenance, to bell ringing and maintaining our famous clock!

## **Societies and groups**

Our annual report of church activities (available on request) carries reports on all active groups either within the church or those supported by the Church.

St Nicholas also reaches out into the wider local community through a number of regular and seasonal activities. Our Curate has been running Alpha Courses, Advent and Lent Bible Study groups as well as Monthly Bible Studies in the Residential Homes. These outreach activities are a key part of the life and worship here at St Nicholas, and we would like the new Rector to be actively involved in this work.

The Christmas Fair and Lychgate Christmas Tableau (1,100 attendees in 2023) are always popular community events, and the St Nicholas ministry team, choir and congregation lead over 2,000 people at the Act of Remembrance at the Chislehurst War Memorial each year – a tradition that we wish to maintain and strengthen with the new Rector.

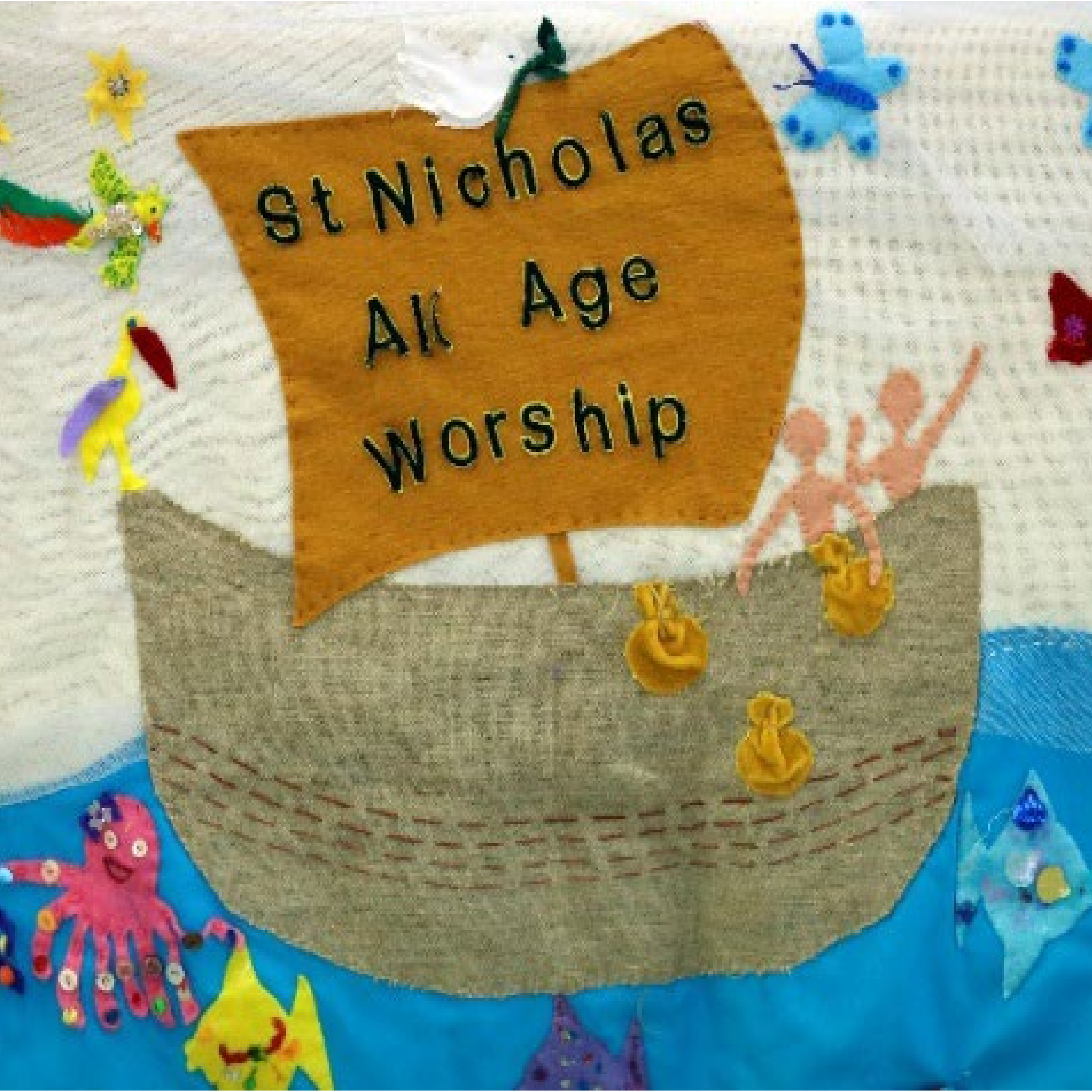
## **Children & youth.**

Children are a vital part of St Nicholas's ethos and family. The thriving community of young families, historically a key feature of our church, diminished somewhat over the Covid years but is now steadily rebuilding. New families continue to join us and all are encouraged to worship and take part in Junior Church and Breakfast Praise. Junior Church is successfully led by a dedicated and enthusiastic team and there is a strong mission within our church to grow the ministry to children and young people.

It is held in the Village Hall every 2nd and 4th Sunday from 9.30am. The children then return to Church to share in the final part of the Communion Service. We also have a dedicated Children's area within church where children are welcomed and encouraged to be part of our services.

***'...Developing youth involvement at St Nicholas is a key area of growth that we seek from our new Rector...'***

St Nicholas  
All Age  
Worship



### **School links (St Nicholas, part of the Aquinas Trust)**

The Church maintains strong links with St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, the original Chislehurst village school which is an academy within the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust, which stands just across the Common from the church. [www.stnicholasprimary.co.uk](http://www.stnicholasprimary.co.uk). We hold school services in the church every term, which include Communion services for each year group, and there is a clear connection between the St Nicholas Church Family and the strong spiritual ethos of the school. Along with the Rectors of the three other Church of England Churches in Chislehurst we lead Collective Worship, and our Curate is a member of the School Board of Advisors and teaches a weekly lunchtime class. Our Curate is a Trust member of the Aquinas Advisory Council and it is expected our new Rector will also take on a role in the AAC.

We have strong links to Coopers secondary School and the Marjorie McClure SEN School in Chislehurst which has led to us holding yearly services for Easter, Harvest and Christmas together.

### **All Age Worship (Breakfast Praise)**

On the first Sunday of every month we hold a non-Eucharist All Age Worship in the Village Hall. Aimed at our large number of families with young children, this is an extremely popular and well-attended gathering. The craft, music, readings and other content is planned and led by clergy, with plenty of opportunity for family involvement.

### **The Young at heart.**

The elders of our family provide a special group within our family. Nearly a fifth of our congregation refer to themselves as retired. They are a very important part of church life. The older members of our family are strong influences throughout many groups and activities within the church family.

The Knitting Club meets at The Bull's Head pub each Tuesday where refreshment, we are promised, is tea and coffee.

Our Soup lunch Club is held in the church hall on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month and provides a soup lunch and a chance for all individuals who could be isolated or just unable to go out to be taken by volunteers and friends to catch up on the latest news.

**CHRISTUS**

**THE LIGHT**

**OF THE**

**WORLD**



# OUTREACH

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## CHURCHES TOGETHER

St. Nicholas Church is one of eight churches forming 'Churches Together in Chislehurst & Bickley (CTCB)'. It is expected of the new Rector to be an active member of the Churches Together project, which heads up our Two's Company and a Debt Management service.

We are keen to maintain a Christian presence at community and civic events and would hope our Rector would be a visible presence at such events, including the Chislehurst Summer Fair and Carol Singing at the Chislehurst Christmas Fair.

St. Nicholas is the oldest of the three Anglican churches in Chislehurst. The others being The Church of the Annunciation, a Traditional Catholic church in West Chislehurst and Christ Church, a charismatic evangelical church.

CTCB organises a Christmas Card widely distributed in the area, listing all the Christmas services at our churches. CTCB organises an annual United Service for all the churches, The World Day of Prayer event, and a Walk of Witness on Good Friday.



## WHITECHAPEL MISSION

We collect donations throughout the year to support the Mission. In 2024, the ministry team will seek to restart the regular volunteering at the mission. The new Rector would play a key part in making this happen, as the congregation view this as a valuable element of community work.



## CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

We provide support via our Christingle Service, and this is an opportunity for alternative worship and outreach.



This is what we do, and in many cases have always done and ‘...THIS IS US...’ at St Nicholas Church, Chislehurst. We look forward to continuing to change and adapt to the world in which we live, with our new Rector on the journey with us.

We hope that this Parish Profile gives a picture of the wide and vibrant life of our church which is been well supported and has flourished through the years.

The PCC of St Nicholas Church, Chislehurst.  
July 2024

## HOW TO APPLY

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### **St Nicholas, Chislehurst.**

If you believe God might be calling you to join us in sharing the love of God with the people of Chislehurst and to play your unique part in building the Kingdom of Christ as Rector of St Nicholas we'd love to hear from you. Application details are available of the Diocese of Rochester website at [www.rochester.anglican.org](http://www.rochester.anglican.org)

If you'd like an informal conversation about this vacancy please contact Fiona Porter (EA to the Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley) on [fiona.porter@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:fiona.porter@rochester.anglican.org)