

**Welcome to the Parish Church of  
St Peter & St Paul, Edenbridge, Kent,  
where you will find a friendly congregation  
awaiting**



**[The Parish Profile](#)**

## **Tonbridge Archdeaconry**

I am delighted to commend this profile for the Benefice of Edenbridge as you discern God's call to serve here as Priest in Charge.

You will see from the profile that this is a parish with a long history of effective Christian presence, and today it offers a breadth of worship and ministry that is rich in history alongside a keen desire for further mission into the future.

The Church is well known and well established in the market town of Edenbridge on the edge of the diocese. It is a place keen to explore how it can grow whilst seeking to maintain its valued and loved traditions. As well as the support of those in the church and community, as Vicar here you will also have the support of Deanery colleagues within the Tonbridge Deanery, one of six that lie within the Tonbridge Archdeaconry. The Archdeaconry is one of three within the wider Diocese of Rochester.

The Diocese as a whole is home to some 1.3m people, which is set for significant growth (of around a further 300,000 over the next 20 years). Whilst growth is inevitable, much of Tonbridge Archdeaconry retains its rural identity, with urban centres found in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, and Paddock Wood, and around the Aylesford area.

Tonbridge Archdeaconry shares its life together under the canopy of the Diocesan strategy, Called Together, through which we are seeking together the Kingdom of God – called to change, to grow and to serve. Together, across the Archdeaconry, and across the diocese, we are working to grow missional churches, leaders and disciples that are younger and more diverse across the many different contexts into which God has placed us.

With prayers for you as you discern God's call to this place.

Ven Sharon Copestake

Archdeacon of Tonbridge

# Contents

1	Summary	4
2	Qualities we are looking for in our new Priest	5
3	About the parish	6
3.1	Our Mission Statement	6
3.2	The vicarage	6
4	About the church	7
4.1	Ministry	7
4.1.1	Mission and Nurture	7
4.1.2	Community	8
4.2	Worship	9
4.2.1	Regular Services	9
4.2.2	Special Services	9
4.2.3	Attendance	10
4.3	Baptisms, Confirmation, Weddings & Funerals	10
4.4	Music	11
4.4.1	Choir	11
4.4.2	Bellringers	11
4.4.3	Handbells	12
4.4.4	A Capella	12
4.4.5	Instrumental Group	12
4.4.6	Concerts	12
4.5	Governance	13
4.6	Church & Grounds	14
4.7	Finance	15
4.8	Challenges and Opportunities	16
	APPENDIX	17
	Ecumenical Links	17

# 1 Summary

## *GREETINGS FROM THE CHURCHWARDENS & MEMBERS OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL*

Welcome to Saint Peter & Saint Paul's Church where the community have come together to love and worship God for more than nine hundred years.



The Parish is in the Deanery of Tonbridge within the Diocese of Rochester. The ancient building is Grade 1 listed, with parts dating from Norman times with many restorations, extensions and major works being carried out over the centuries reflecting the prosperity of the town.

It is located just north of the River Eden not far from the Roman Road that is the main street through the town. It is a small but growing town, with a population of about 8,700 situated on the Kent borders with Sussex and Surrey, with two stations providing good transport links for commuting to London.

The primary school is the largest in the area. Those aged 11 and over travel to secondary schools in the neighbouring towns of Sevenoaks, Oxted, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and East Grinstead.

There is a strong community feeling with some long-established families in the area alongside new residents moving into the extensive housing estates springing up around the town.



A new medical centre opened in November 2023, just ten years after the building of a new library and community space. The town has a well-equipped Leisure Centre and many green open spaces and playgrounds which are maintained by the Town and Sevenoaks District Councils. There are also more than eighty societies and organisations in the town, so most interests and hobbies are catered for in some way.

The parish is on the west border of the Diocese of Rochester, our nearest parish neighbours being the benefice of 'Three Spires' (Mark Beech, Hever and Four Elms), Crockham Hill and Westerham. We currently have 157 names on the Electoral Roll.

We look forward to welcoming a new priest and working with them as we start a new journey together.

## 2 Qualities we are looking for in our new Priest

We are looking and praying for someone who will:

- Both respect our existing liturgical and music traditions sensitively, and work with us to explore how to develop these as we move to growth
- Be prayerful and pray for the congregation and community
- Encourage people in identifying, nurturing and using their gifts in God's service
- Seek to increase discipleship and spiritual life through a pattern and commitment to prayer and bible study
- Be warm, compassionate, with a good sense of humour and ready to listen
- Have a strong commitment and develop leaders, working with the Ministry team as they use their gifts in God's service
- Have strong organisational skills
- Enable us to fulfil our wider mission by being approachable and well integrated into the wider community
- Have energy and enthusiasm to build on the good foundations that are in place
- Strengthen the ecumenical links within the Edenbridge Churches in Covenant
- Develop our work with children, young people and families and work with the Eden Christian Trust Youth Worker
- Help us to develop a vision for growth
- Be a missional leader to help us move into our next chapter

## 3 About the parish

### 3.1 Our Mission Statement

We endeavour to know what God's mission is, and to work out how He wants us to be part of it:

- Enable ourselves and others to **love** and **worship God**, which includes **serving Him faithfully** in how we live; recognising that weekly worship is required
- Equip ourselves and others to **learn more of Christ**, from God's Word and His work in this world, so that our relationship with God develops and grows
- Encourage one another to **witness boldly** to what God is doing in their, and our, lives
- Engage with people to **work for justice, compassion and healing** – both here and elsewhere
- Find, encourage and nurture the ministries that each of us has, for God's purposes, both lay and ordained ministry, including potential candidates for ordination.

This involves:

- **Proclaiming** the good news of God's Kingdom
- **Teaching, baptising** and **nurturing new** believers
- Responding to human need by **loving service**
- Seeking to **transform unjust structures** of society
- Striving to safeguard and **care for the world** that God has created
- **Building bridges** with other parts of the Christian Church in Edenbridge, through the **Edenbridge Churches in Covenant**.

### 3.2 The vicarage

A good sized four bedroomed house with large garden and parking for four cars comes with the position of priest in charge. It is approximately 500 yards from the church, off the main road into the town.



A large garage leads directly to the back garden, with well-established shrubs, trees and a pond - all securely fenced in. The property has two reception rooms, kitchen, living room, downstairs cloakroom with four bedrooms and a family bathroom upstairs.

The property is undergoing some refurbishment and updating. There is also plenty of loft space above the offices and bedrooms. The house is heated through oil fired central heating, has UPVC windows throughout and patio doors at the rear. There is an extension to the right of the original building containing the Parish Administrator's office and the Vicar's office.

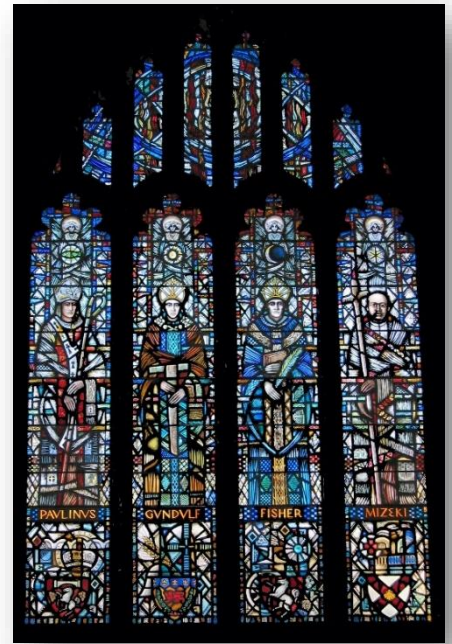
# 4 About the church

## 4.1 Ministry

Our Ministry team currently consists of three Lay Readers, two Pastoral Assistants, an Anna Chaplain, Safeguarding Officer and Churchwarden. Our Ministry is well supported by our Choir.

Weekly pew sheets are distributed by email to those on the Electoral Roll who wish it, edited by the Parish Office Administrator. Those unable to attend services can watch on YouTube and receive pew-sheets and Worship at home leaflets via the Anna Chaplain who makes regular contact personally and by telephone.

Holy Communion is taken to a local care home, Edenbridge Manor, on a monthly basis and as requested to people in their own homes. We work hard to keep in touch with the congregation providing Lenten and Advent booklets and cards for those not able to attend regularly.



### 4.1.1 Mission and Nurture

Through links with various ecumenical organisations (see Appendix – Ecumenical Links) we are able to look outwards. BRIDGES offers opportunities to build relationships and invite young people to church activities. Eden Christian Trust provides excellent 1:1 faith-building experiences for young people. The Pilgrim Course is used to nurture enquirers and as preparation for confirmation candidates. An annual service is held in May for bereaved families for whom St Peter & St Paul has provided funeral ministry. Our donation to CMS continues, though our link missionary has retired, so we are beginning a prayer partnership with a local couple going to Thailand with WEC. Orders for BRF notes are coordinated by a member of the congregation. The ecumenical Inter-Church Fellowship and Bible Study Fellowship are available for anyone who wants to join.

## 4.1.2 Community

St Peter & St Paul is a town and community church and we hold services of national significance including services to commemorate events such as the death of the Queen, the King's Coronation and an annual Royal British Legion service of remembrance.



As part of our fundraising we hold events such as coffee mornings, fetes, quiz nights, Coronation and Jubilee lunches, open days, flower festivals. We reach beyond our congregation and open the church to the wider community. We partner with Scouts, Rotary and ECT at some of these events.

The church is open daily for private prayer and it is well used by town residents and tourists as well as members of the congregation.



## 4.2 Worship

### 4.2.1 Regular Services

The following services are held weekly:

#### Sunday Services

8.00am Said Eucharist (Common Worship)

9.30am Sung Family Eucharist (Common Worship) Broadcast on YouTube – followed by refreshments

6.30pm Sung Evensong (BCP)

**Wednesday** 10.30am Said Holy Communion 1662 (BCP) - followed by coffee which is much enjoyed by the attendees

All Age Worship, provided for young children and their families, is held on the first Sunday of the month at 11am. The focus is on key topics such as Advent, Mothering Sunday, Harvest, ECO, with craft activities, videos, worship instrumentalists and simple, age and topically appropriate songs. The Youth Worker will support at some of these services.



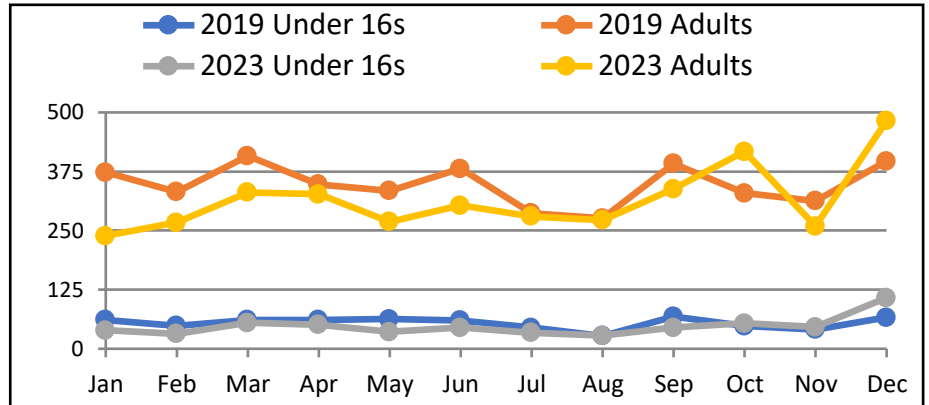
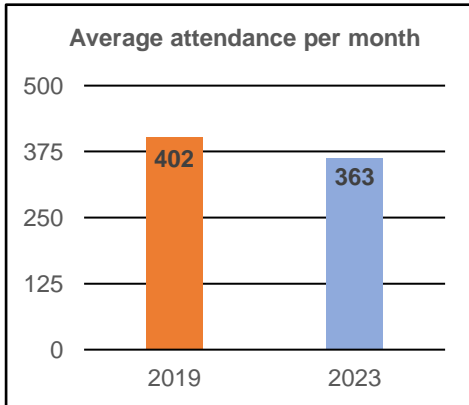
### 4.2.2 Special Services

Over many years, worship has been enhanced by the development of rich, varied and seasonal liturgy. Our services celebrating the main festivals attract members of the congregations of other churches as well as our own. These include services such as Advent Carols, Christingle (a big event in the year which is well attended by the community), Nine Lessons and Carols, Midnight Mass, Epiphany Carols. During Lent there is Compline and Stations of the Cross and in Holy Week Compline, Maundy Thursday Mass and Good Friday Liturgy.



### 4.2.3 Attendance

Comparing 2019 (pre-Covid) with 2023 and looking at our congregation attending the 9.30am Eucharist, we have a very loyal congregation with fairly consistent attendance levels throughout the year. Also, looking at the average attendance for the 9.30am Eucharist, we have been able to sustain a similar attendance week on week with only a small reduction in numbers following the pandemic.



### 4.3 Baptisms, Confirmation, Weddings & Funerals



Our Baptismal team liaise with families before and after their infants have been baptised, with cards sent on their first birthday and on the anniversary of their baptism. In 2023, the church held eight Baptism services at 11.30am on Sundays for these families. We also baptised one adult during the 9.30am Eucharist.

In September 2023, we hosted the Bishop who confirmed seven candidates and baptised an adult with a full capacity congregation present.

The church welcomed three couples as they were married last year and also held a service of blessing for a recently married young couple and their family.

The church held 23 funerals in 2023, with some burials in the cemeteries beyond the churchyard walls, or at the natural burial ground nearby, or taken on to the crematorium at Tunbridge Wells or Crawley.

## 4.4 Music

### 4.4.1 Choir

We are fortunate to have an active and dynamic Director of Music to lead our 4-part SATB (soprano, alto, tenor, bass), robed choir. The Director of Music coaches junior and senior singers at a weekly Choir Practice. The Junior Choir follows the RSCM Voice for Life Course and is steadily increasing in numbers. Every week the choir sings a motet during the 9.30 am Eucharist service and an anthem at Choral Evensong. At Festal Evensongs the choir also sings the preces and responses and canticles to a variety of settings from its extensive music library. They sing a 'work' on Palm Sunday - in 2024, Stainer's Crucifixion. Although there is currently no resident organist, we are well served by a team of excellent local organists who play regularly for our services on the two fine organs in the church. The choir visits a local cathedral to sing Evensong each year (the picture below is from their visit to Guildford Cathedral in September 2023).



### 4.4.2 Bellringers

We have a regular band of Bellringers who ring every Sunday morning. They practise weekly and ring for weddings as requested. They often ring quarter peals and support other special occasions - most recently ringing a peal for the King's Coronation.

We have a number of visiting ringers who use our bells too.



### 4.4.3 Handbells

A group of ringers use the church for Handbell ringing practice every week.

### 4.4.4 A Capella

A group who usually sing unaccompanied, both sacred and secular music. They perform for charities at local events and use the church to rehearse on Sunday evenings.

### 4.4.5 Instrumental Group

A group of string, keyboard and wind instrumentalists who get together on an ad hoc basis to play at All Age Worship.

### 4.4.6 Concerts

We are very lucky to have links with Edenbridge Music and Arts Trust (EMAT) who hold regular concerts in church. The Church Choir and the Town Band have also performed concerts in the church.



## 4.5 Governance

Our Churchwardens work closely with the PCC and the various teams of volunteers. We employ a Parish Administrator who works from the office in the vicarage and from home, on a part-time basis (18 hours per week) and provides significant support to the Incumbent and Churchwardens.

The Parochial Church Council, consisting of 15 people, meets six times a year to discuss all matters that affect the church, its congregation, the wider community, funding and maintenance. It is chaired by the Incumbent or a Churchwarden. The PCC operates through a number of Committees as follows:

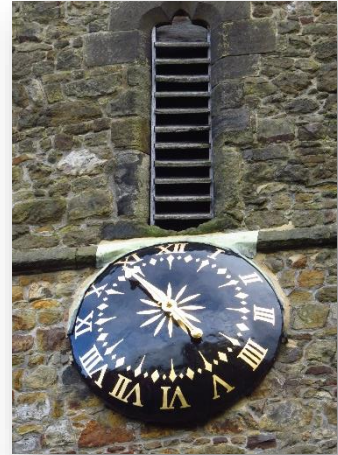
- ❖ Standing Committee / Finance and Stewardship (meets between PCC meetings)
- ❖ Worship
- ❖ Fabric
- ❖ ECO Group
- ❖ Fundraising
- ❖ Edenbridge Churches in Covenant
- ❖ Deanery/Diocesan Synod
- ❖ Safeguarding Officer and Advocates
- ❖ Health & Safety

The PCC also has the responsibility of owning a church building on the edge of the town, which is now used as a hall hired out to a dance school and a pre-school nursery. It is managed by a sub-committee which report to the PCC.

In addition to our formal governance structure, we have more than 100 people who undertake voluntary work within the church – sacristy, flower arranging, cleaning, bell-ringing, gardening and maintenance, sidesmen, servers and many more! They are very much part of our church family and without them St Peter & St Paul would not be the place it is.

## 4.6 Church & Grounds

Prayer has been offered at St Peter & St Paul for more than 900 years, evidence of which can be seen with medieval wall paintings and glass, Jacobean font and pulpit, stained glass windows, and a circa 300 year old clock with a single hand.



In 2020/21 we undertook some major works on the church. We managed to entirely redecorate the church interior and exposed a c14th St Christopher Mural which was beautifully restored. We also made some significant improvements to the porch to improve access for those with mobility issues.

There are two chapels at the East end of the church. The Martyn Chapel is used for Compline and Evensong to provide a more intimate atmosphere. The chancel has been developed as a quiet space for prayer and contemplation. There are prayer resources and candles for people to light.



We attained the A Rocha Bronze Award in 2017 and worked hard to achieve the Silver Certificate by December 2019.

Since then, the ECO Group have strived to introduce small but significant changes to help offset the climate change occurring on our planet.

Most light bulbs have been replaced with LED units, the floodlights in the churchyard have been turned off, and timers put on the pathway, porch and lychgate lights to save money but still offer a safe passage along the public walkways.

As there has been no grave digging activity in the churchyard since 1992 when the Council took over the burials in the cemeteries, we have been able to cordon off an area to start a wild garden. Wild flower seeds have been strewn, small shrubs to attract butterflies planted, bug hotels constructed, pollinating insects encouraged and bird boxes built.

The introduction of compost bins and water harvesting have improved our eco footprint, along with the recent installation of two re-cycled plastic benches donated in memory of loved ones.

Edenbridge was the first Fairtrade Town in Kent and we are accredited as a Fairtrade church as we serve fairtrade coffee and tea and endeavour to use eco products in the kitchen and cleaning areas.

## 4.7 Finance

The Treasurer is supported by an Assistant Treasurer, who is also the Generous Giving Lead.

Finance is dealt with during regular Standing Committee meetings and a Treasurers report is made to every regular PCC meeting.

A stewardship report is usually made annually. The majority of regular giving is done through standing order. Currently, there are 87 planned givers of which 77 use standing orders. A card reader is available for donations when the church is open, and we also have a CAF Donate account for those wishing to use credit card or PayPal.

### Summary of 2023 Fund totals (submitted for Independent Examination)

<b>FUNDS</b>	<b>INCOME £</b>	<b>EXPENDITURE £</b>	<b>DIFFERENCE £</b>	<b>RESERVES (excluding non-investment fixed assets) £</b>
<b>General</b>	106,926	113,532	(6,606)	24,174
<b>Designated</b>	22,445	40,486	(18,041)	220,407
<b>Restricted</b>	39,095	33,370	5,725	64,006
<b>TOTAL</b>	168,446	187,388	(18,922)	308,587

### Our Challenges

- The General Fund is not coping with expenditure year on year.
- The PCC has also agreed a deficit budget for 2024.
- In addition, we have not paid our full Diocesan contribution for a number of years.

This situation has arisen following the pandemic restrictions and the subsequent hard financial situation that both the church and its congregation find themselves in.

### On the positive side

- We are fortunate to have designated funds which we are using to bolster General Fund reserves and pay for unbudgeted expenditure.
- The land including the church hall in the north of the parish makes a small profit and ground rent is collected on a portion occupied by a community snooker club.
- We are blessed with a Friends Trust which has the benefit of a substantial invested legacy from which it makes grants to enable larger fabric projects to proceed such as quinquennial repairs and the recent complete redecoration of the church.

*A copy of the Full Examined Accounts 2023 will be available on request.*

## 4.8 Challenges and Opportunities

We recognise that despite the positives we cannot be complacent and fully recognise that we have challenges which we need to address. But with challenges come opportunities!

We have an aging congregation and know we need to find a way to attract more young families into the church. Currently the town is growing in numbers but we are not seeing very many new people join the congregation. We hope that we can start to build links into the new estate and welcome new families into the church.

We are building some tenuous links with the Primary School through Christmas Services and it would be good to see how we can encourage these 'musical' links more.

We are aware that there is deprivation in some areas, but we don't believe that we are sufficiently supporting, engaging and sharing the Gospel with these people.

Although, we have a good number of volunteers, we need to grow this volunteer base to include younger members of the congregation. This would help us to offer a wider range of activities and outreach.

Financially, we are not breaking even year-on-year and although we have financial reserves, we fully recognise that we need to find ways to increase our income and to do this we need to grow our congregation.

However, we also strongly believe that with the right Priest in place we can turn these things around!

Website: [www.edenbridgeparishchurch.org](http://www.edenbridgeparishchurch.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ssppedenbridge](https://www.facebook.com/ssppedenbridge)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/@sspandp](https://www.youtube.com/@sspandp)



## APPENDIX

### Ecumenical Links

The church has a long and significant involvement in ecumenical partnership with local churches of other denominations. The Edenbridge Churches in Covenant (ECC), signed in October 1982, was probably one of the first in the country to include all four denominations of Anglican, Roman Catholic, Baptist and United Reformed Church. It has expanded since then and now includes nine church congregations, including local villages and Grace Community Church. Services are held in each other's buildings and we participate in joint events throughout the year - Walk of Witness (Good Friday), carol singing, Christian Unity week of prayer and joint activities during Lent.

There are three Christian charities operating in the town which are supported by all the local churches.

**BRIDGES** (reg.ch.1029169, [www.bridgescentre.org](http://www.bridgescentre.org) ) was established in 1993 by lay members of the ECC, as an outreach for the town. BRIDGES' purpose is to demonstrate Christian faith in action through service and outreach, hosting specialist groups and activities such as mental health support, AA, NA, Art Therapy, Debt Advice, Folk Music, Place of Welcome. The popular Community Café is run by 50+ local volunteers under the guidance of the Centre Manager. St Peter & St Paul currently provides three Trustees and about 1/3 of the volunteers.

The **Eden Christian Trust** (reg.ch 1001969, [www.ectyouth.com](http://www.ectyouth.com) ) is a stand-alone charity, employing a full-time Youth Worker, who works with local churches and schools to support them in all areas of youth work, encouraging an understanding of Christian faith among young people. The Youth Worker seeks to provide activities, residential courses and opportunities that will bring young people together and encourage 'community' across those with or without faith.

The **Edenbridge Foodbank** provides invaluable help to those who use it. It is managed by Grace Community Church, with all local churches supporting it, including St Peter & St Paul.