

Whitefriars Church

Parish Profile

Last updated: Feb 2025



We are a church where lives are being transformed by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Christ.

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To give you a real flavour of our church, we recently asked church members to write about what they like most about Whitefriars and what we want in our new vicar. These comments can be found throughout the document.

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Whitefriars is not too formal and there is not too much
liturgy. It embraces all ages.

”



Welcome to Whitefriars! You'd be very welcome to visit and join with us in worship here. In fact, you might need to come along to appreciate that we're a little unusual as the Church of England goes. Truth is, we rather like being different.



We meet in a local school, Whitefriars Primary School, with whom we are very much in partnership, and we appreciate the community engagement that this brings. We have little in the way of religious attire and limited liturgy, and we like the general hubbub and liveliness that comes with a congregation that's a fifth under 18s. We're also used to trying new things and taking some risks – like 'stepping out' once a month to meet with the wider community instead of meeting as a whole church.

We love our diverse, friendly, down-to-earth church, but in recent months we have also become conscious that we are in a season of change. Through prophetic words, Church and individual prayer times this verse has become important:

**See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.” (Isaiah 43:19)**

We are praying for a vicar who is visionary and keen to lead our church into new territory; someone who welcomes a challenge, who isn't averse to taking risks and is passionate about sharing the gospel with our unchurched community. We want our new leader to be a role model who will show us how to put Bible-centred teaching into practice through the power of the Holy Spirit. We have a lot to give in terms of support and energy and are eager to learn.

“

**I love that there is lots of enthusiasm, different ages,
amazing variety of worship & willingness to participate.**

”



Whitefriars is one of the newest parishes in the Diocese of Peterborough, and was formed at the start of 2008, having originally been planted 33 years ago from St Mary's Church as a holiday club for children on the estate. This has now grown to be a lively, all-age worshipping congregation, with children and young people at its heart.

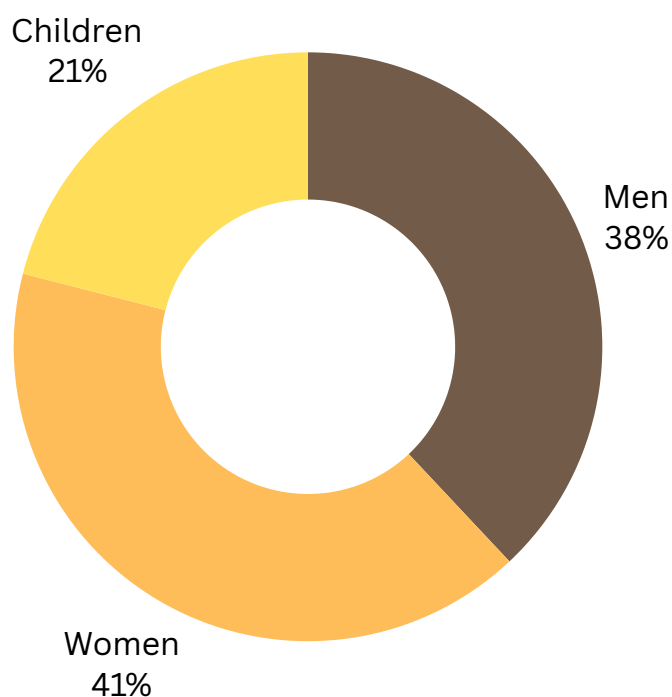
“

We like the friendliness of the people. Come as you are.

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We are a very informal church without an historical church building. On Sunday mornings we pop-up in a school hall and our service is based largely around contemporary worship with minimal liturgy. We want unchurched visitors to feel they can fit in and understand what's going on. The freedom our children and young people have, and the way they shape our services, can be a challenge in terms of creating a worshipful atmosphere, but it makes God more accessible for busy families.

Whilst having children and families at our core, we are a diverse congregation in terms of age and situation. In contrast to many churches, we have a large number of men attending regularly, who are actively involved in supporting each other and serving within the church and the wider community. We also have a growing number of single members, a ministry which we would like to develop.



We are also diverse in other ways – a large minority of our members do not come from Anglican backgrounds. We have members who range across the church spectrum – a few conservative evangelicals, a significant minority of more liberal-leaning Christians and some

charismatic evangelicals. We value the diversity that our church holds and know that one size does not fit all.

Of course, as with all churches we are keen to make sure everyone feels welcome to come and explore a life with Jesus, regardless of their background or situation.

“ I love that our church is a bit messy and imperfect. We’re all different, and we’re all learning together what it looks like to follow Jesus and love each other really well. It’s family. ”

We have close links with Whitefriars Primary School, where we hold our Sunday service. The school hall has at times constrained our ability to grow numerically in our Sunday morning services, so we remain open to God’s leading for the future of our ministry.

We want to reach out and see the Kingdom of God grow. Alongside many regular activities during the week, once a month we stop our Sunday service to participate in Stepping Out, an initiative started in June 2011. Church members have established a number of these missional communities taking the gospel out into the parish and beyond.



You can find out more about Whitefriars church on our web site at <https://www.whitefriarschurch.org.uk/>



Bearing in mind the diversity of our theological backgrounds, there are some key beliefs that we hold as of paramount importance, as set out in our Statement of Faith (which can be found on our web site [here](#)).

What this looks like for us:

Relationship with God - We believe that a personal relationship with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit defines who we are, as loved children of God. We are looking for a leader who is a role model that will help us individually and corporately to go deeper in this relationship.

The Bible - God's Word is of paramount importance; the Bible is our guide to following Jesus in the whole of life. We seek to hear Him speak to us on a regular basis. We are looking for someone who has a passion for unlocking the Bible, preaching and teaching in a way that is relevant to our diverse congregation.

Prayer - It is crucial that we talk with our heavenly Father. Prayer is the prime expression of our total dependence on God's loving grace and sovereign power in all things. In practice we need help to be better at this and would love to see our church with a more thriving prayer life.

Evangelism - God wants us to urgently communicate the gospel to the lost world around us, through our own words and lives - and the communication of His word and love. We have willing hearts, but many of us would like support to be better equipped at making this a reality.

Worship - We seek to worship God with all of our lives, not just in song. Church members are from across the religious spectrum. Conservative evangelicals worship side-by-side with those who place great value on prophecy and other supernatural signs of God's blessing. We are working to develop new expressions of this worship together.

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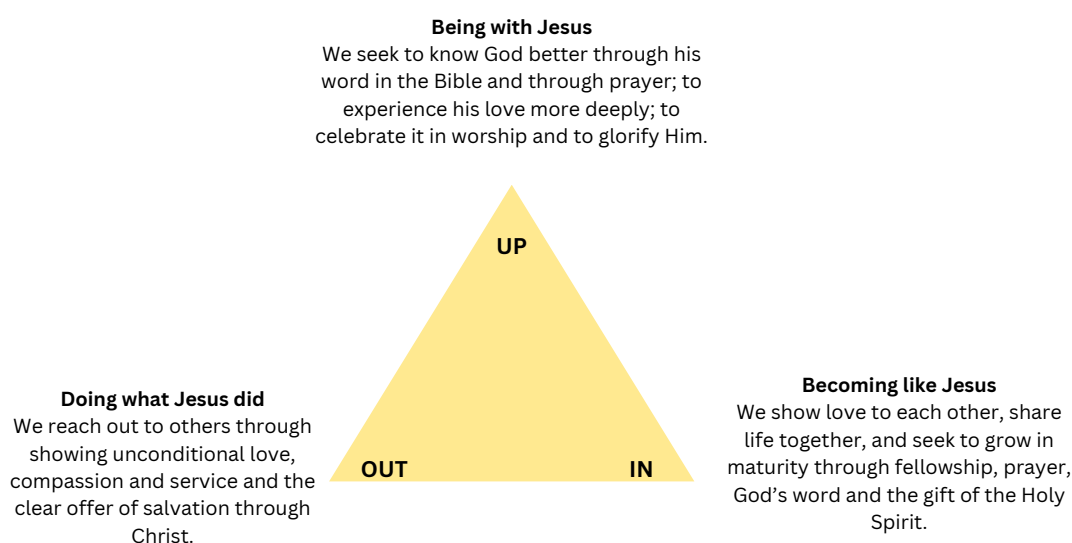
I like the sense of family and community that it provides for my family. I like much of the sung worship. I like the sense of home it gives and the opportunity for my children to be grounded in the Christian story.

”



We want to see the Kingdom of God grow through revival in the local churches – lives being transformed as we become true disciples of Jesus who make other disciples, showing radical love to our local community.

For a number of years we have been focused on an UP IN OUT model of relationships. This has informed much of the change within Whitefriars over the last 5 years, and much of our fruitful growth has come from this.



We feel that we have reached a natural point of wishing to review this vision and are seeking someone who can help us to drive this forward, keeping in mind the “new thing” that we feel God has in store for us.

We also prayerfully seek someone who can protect and further our core values:



Families - We want to pass the Good News about Jesus on to following generations. Whitefriars has always seen youth and children's work as a high priority and we want that to remain an important aspect, both internally and in the wider community. However, we also recognise that engaging whole families can be more effective than outreach just to the younger family members.



Unity - In summary, we want to see more people of all ages make a personal commitment to Christ and live as His witnesses in this community. With this in mind, we would also like to see greater interaction and cohesion between the different demographic groups within the church, so that we can learn, grow and serve together.



Welcome - When visitors come to our church, we want them to be warmly welcomed, to be able to join in through using accessible language and activities and to feel that they want to come back again and find out more as they develop genuine relationships. Most importantly, we want them (and us) to meet with Jesus and be encouraged on their faith journey. Our aspiration is to demonstrate our faith through authentic Jesus-shaped lives and generous engagement with the wider community - always ready to explain what Christ has done for us.



Disciples making Disciples - God wants us all to be disciples who make disciples – rather than just churchgoers. Culture change takes a long time, so we're looking for someone who can lead us forward into the next part of our development.

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Our family are welcomed and loved.

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Some of our challenges



- We want to refresh our strategy to take the Gospel out of the church into the wider unchurched community.
- We are all not yet disciples who are making disciples.
- We have no obvious church presence in the northern part of the parish.
- The capacity of the school hall constrains us and we are looking for other spaces in our parish that we can use for mid-week ministry - we are seeking where God is leading us in new ways, though as yet have no firm direction for this.
- We need to sustain our strong relationship with Whitefriars school.
- We want to hold together in unity the rich diversity of ages and backgrounds that make up our congregation.





We are looking for an Evangelical leader who:

Role:

- will teach Biblical truth and tell the gospel in a relevant and contemporary way to all ages, being inspired by the Holy Spirit to lead us all into a deeper intimacy with God
- will help us to reshape our vision to grow stronger and larger as a congregation and lead us to share the Gospel with people in those parts of the parish we haven't yet reached
- will encourage us to become disciples who make disciples, in order to multiply the Kingdom of God, and will personally model this
- will gather and lead a team, empowering and investing in them to help them reach their full potential
- will ensure the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults
- will nurture and develop existing outreach links in the community, particularly strengthening our relationships with Rushden churches and Whitefriars Primary School e.g. by being a school governor

Person:

- is a disciple of Christ who has an infectious passion for Jesus, a dependence on prayer and a desire to see lives transformed by the Gospel, modelling what living the Gospel message looks like today
- is servant-hearted and will raise up, equip, empower and release others to use and develop their spiritual gifts and natural abilities in ministry and leadership
- is a people person who takes an active interest in the lives and wellbeing of those within our church and parish, with a heart for pastoral care – helping us to relish the diversity we enjoy together

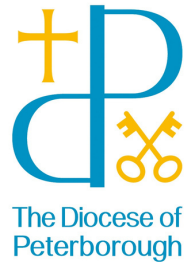


There are no PCC resolutions, specifically, regarding the House of Bishops' Declaration made on 19 May 2014 regarding a statement of needs and Theological conviction under the house of Bishops' Declaration regarding the ministry of women. Our PCC has engaged positively with the LLF discussion, and a majority would seek to appoint an incumbent who is orthodox in this area. The PCC recognises, however, that the congregation of Whitefriars comes from a wide range of theological standpoints, and we acknowledge that we as a church have a need to explore the LLF discussion in more depth.



Rushden sits within East Northamptonshire, on the border with Bedfordshire and within 15 miles of both Northampton (M1) and Bedford. The A14 that links the M1 and A1 is 8 miles away. The nearest railway station is 5 miles away in Wellingborough with very frequent mainline connections south to London and north to the East Midlands and beyond.

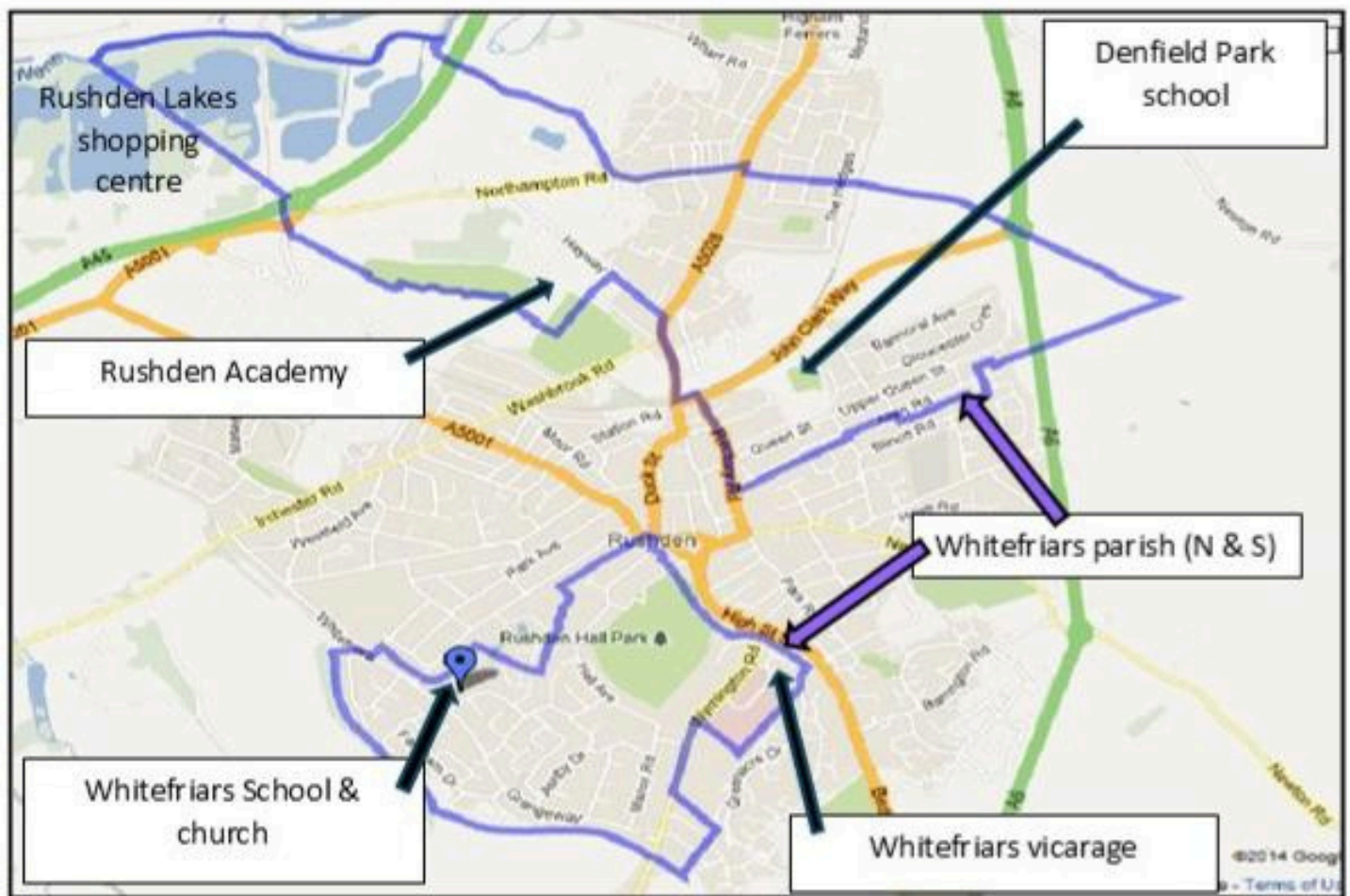
In terms of the Church of England, Rushden is part of the Higham Deanery of the Peterborough Diocese and the town comprises three Anglican parishes which work together relatively independently within a Group ministry. The Bishop of Peterborough, Bishop Debbie Sellin, began her role in 2024. The Deanery of Higham has a relatively new rural Dean, Revd Nicki Hobbs, who combines this with her roles as Rural Dean of Kettering and Rector of St Andrew's, Broughton.



Whitefriars' parish has a population of approximately 10,600. It is split into two separate areas – one in the south of Rushden around Whitefriars Primary School, the other in the north which includes the town's secondary school, Rushden Academy. The parish also includes Denfield Park Primary School.

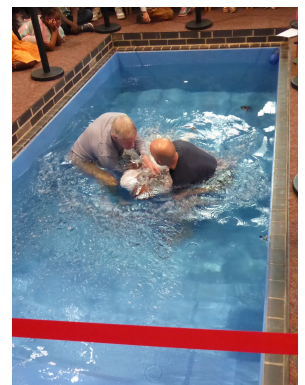
Rushden is not very ethnically diverse, having a few people of colour (mainly of African and Asian ethnicity), plus small but growing Turkish and eastern European communities.

Rushden is around 32,000 in population and merges with Higham Ferrers in the north. Together they have a population of around 40,000. Rushden is a town which grew rapidly in the 19th and 20th centuries due to the expansion of the boot and shoe industry. Most of that industry has now gone, and employment locally is in retail, on small industrial estates, service industries, small businesses, and distribution. The area benefits from Rushden Lakes, an out-of-town retail and leisure development which opened a few years ago. The population is likely to increase within the next 10 years because part of the planned Rushden East development of 2000 homes east of the A6 - largely outside our parish.



Within our parish there are a mixture of low-income families (and socially isolated individuals) and more affluent, middle-class areas. The church has strong links with two care homes for the elderly, where we do services once a month plus one other that we visit a few times a year on a rota basis with the other churches in Rushden. These services are led by a Licenced Lay Reader who is a member of Whitefriars. There is also a rota to cover assemblies in all 7 primary schools in Rushden.

There is a remarkable degree of co-operation between the churches of different denominations in the town. There are a number of ecumenical services throughout the year e.g. Pentecost and Easter, as well as joint services with the other Anglican churches in the Deanery. The ministers of the churches in Rushden and Higham Ferrers meet monthly and there is a Council of Churches with 2 reps from each church that meets 4 times a year to organise events. We do not have our own church building and so we tend to use St Mary's building for weddings and Park Road Baptist church building for total-immersion baptisms.





Services and Other Meetings

Sunday morning worship (starting at 10.15am) at Whitefriars is informal, with minimal liturgy and contemporary sung worship led by groups of musicians (or sometimes recorded music videos).



Our services are centred upon faithfully teaching the Bible and effectively worshipping God. The vast majority of us believe that 'All Scripture is God-breathed' (2 Timothy 3:16) and strive to communicate His intended meaning from each passage. We want everyone to meet with God in a personal way, rather than just get information about Him. As a church, we have a desire to go deeper in our Sunday services and are looking for someone with passion who can inspire us to connect fully on Sunday mornings, equipping us to live out our faith fully throughout the week.

We expect the vicar to set the themes and teaching series for our services, but not do everything themselves.

To support the vicar, we have teams of people used to leading the services, preaching, leading worship, praying intercessions, welcoming, preparing refreshments, setting up church and putting away.

On the second Sunday we meet in 'Stepping Out' communities instead of our normal morning service – where the church members are encouraged to do things in the wider community in order to form relationships with non-Christians. On the fourth Sunday of the month we hold Holy Communion, based on Form H of the Common Worship Communion Service.

“

You almost wouldn't know it was the Church of England.

”

We occasionally hold shared lunches after the Sunday service, normally to coincide with a special event such as a Harvest service.

While there was an incumbent, Morning Prayer was said at 9.30am on Monday mornings at the Bridge as part of the staff meeting.

Members of the congregation visit 2 elderly care homes regularly to take a service of singing, Bible reading and prayer to the residents.

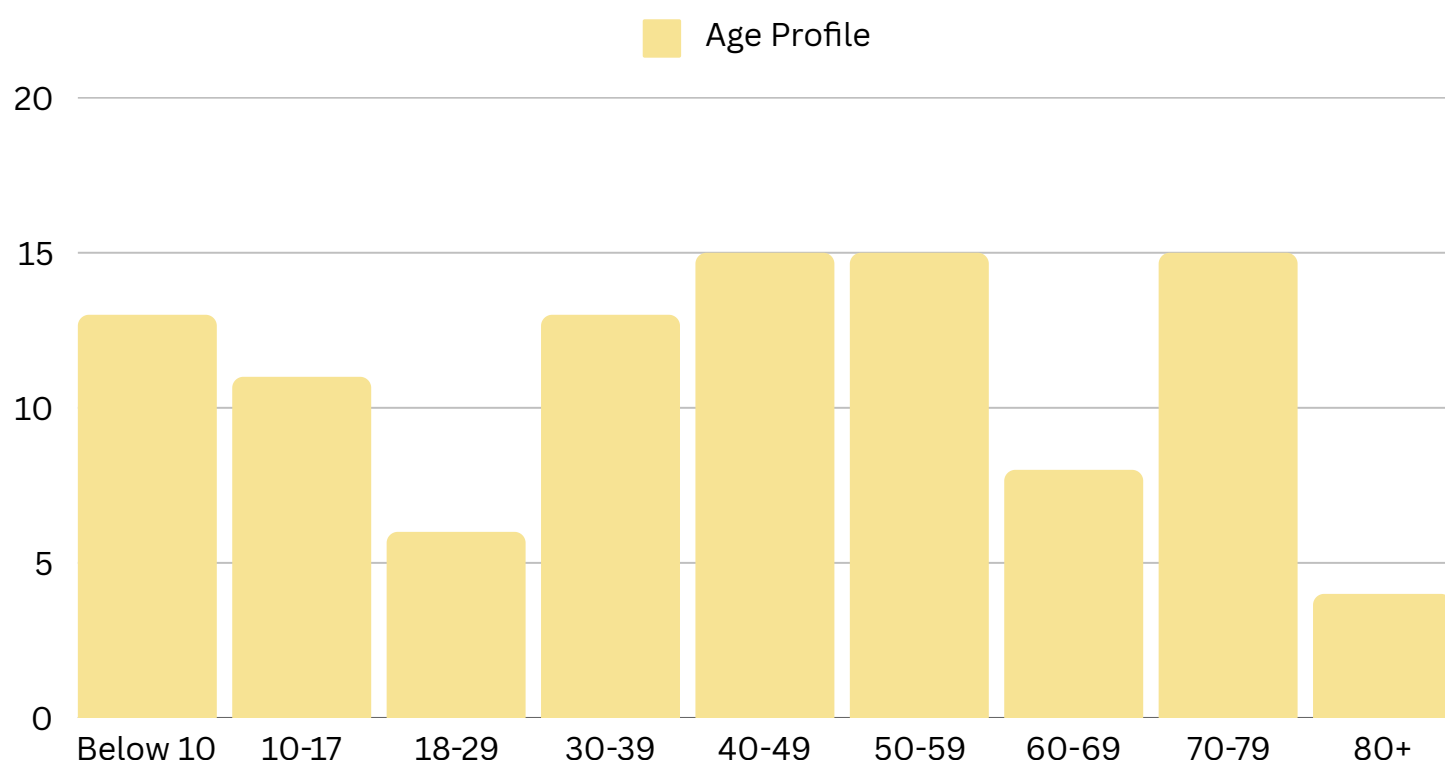
Discipleship groups meet during the week in peoples' homes, for Bible study, prayer, fellowship and to promote outreach. We want each group to have UP, IN and OUT aspects, but this initiative has not taken hold in all groups yet. Our previous incumbent was working with group leaders to change the culture of the church through the Discipleship group leaders, but culture change takes a long time.

Occasional Offices: We hold infant baptisms and blessings during Sunday morning services, and adult/youth baptisms by total immersion in a local Baptist church. Confirmation services are held on demand as a Deanery event. Funerals are normally held at St Mary's church &/or Wellingborough Crematorium. Although weddings are legally allowed in the school, these are normally held at neighbouring churches (around 1-3 per year) although we do have the appropriate registers and banns are read during Sunday worship.

People

Our congregation comes from a wide range of backgrounds, in many cases non-Anglican. We have nearly 100 adults on our electoral roll. When everyone is in church the school hall is getting cramped, so as we seek to grow numerically, we will need to find space for more people – either in additional services or buildings.

The number of people attending on Sunday mornings is typically 50 – 60 adults and 15 – 20 children. The statistics and graphs on this page only detail the demographics of the core Sunday morning congregation.



Approximately half of our members are in mid-week Discipleship (small) groups, each of which has led a Sunday morning service during the summer holidays after the loss of our clergy.

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Our discipleship groups are helping and encouraging each other to grow in faith and to pastorally care for each other.

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Whitefriars is not the same church as it was before Covid. Numbers on a Sunday have largely recovered and we have a wide range of gifted church members engaged on rotas to lead various up-front aspects of our Sunday church services and children's age-appropriate groups. We have seen a number of new committed members and we now need a new leader with passion, who can continue to enthuse us.

There are many members of the local community who are involved in the weekly life of the Church who are not regular attenders on Sunday morning, including teenagers and young adults who are closely associated with the Church, and have a growing faith, but are not Sunday morning worshippers.

Children and Young People



Children and youth are absolutely at the heart of our church family. It is paramount for our young members to feel that they belong, are safe, accepted and an essential part of the Body. Emma, our Children and Families Minister, heads up a fantastic team of volunteers who work with our children on Sunday mornings, giving them opportunities to explore and use their gifts and skills, as well as having lots of fun, as they personally walk their own discipleship journey. This is developed through events such as Child of God days, small group faith basics courses and short residential. As a church, we are continuing to explore how we can grow and learn together intergenerationally. Emma also leads the Parenting for Faith support network for our church families.

During our normal Sunday morning services, our children explore the Bible and faith through the following groups:

Jack in the Box – from birth to Reception year

Energize – school years 1 to 4

Refuel – school years 5 to 8



Whitefriars has a relatively small but vibrant youth ministry, where we have around 18 young people who are part of our church family. Our youth group, Ignite, meets on Sunday evenings and is a safe space for its members to grow in their faith and develop secure relationships. Over the past few years we have had the privilege of welcoming new members and sharing in their faith journey as the group has grown and people have invited their friends to join.

At Whitefriars, our young people are an integral part of our church community, leading worship, planning services, running the sound desk, delivering Jack in the Box sessions for our younger children and organising fundraisers. For a number of years, we have taken the group on various residential where it has been fantastic to see them growing in their love for Jesus, and stepping into their giftings – some of our students have even started a Christian Union at the local secondary school as a response to this. The youth ministry is run by a dedicated team of volunteers, and we would love to welcome an incumbent who is passionate about working with us to encourage and support our wonderful children and

young people even further. We would like to explore appointing a paid Youth Minister in the near future, as this has been something we have benefited from hugely in the past.

Emma our Children and Families Minister leads Child of God days for the primary aged children and takes them on 1 weekend residential a year.

Emma also leads the Parenting for Faith support network for our church families.

Partnerships

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It's important for our new vicar to maintain a good relationship with Whitefriars school, but also to be open to considering how we make space for growth.

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Whitefriars Primary School

We have a good relationship with Whitefriars Primary School (which has recently joined the TOVE Learning Trust), where we meet on Sundays and the Whitefriars incumbent is expected to be a Governor. The Whitefriars school head teacher will expect to meet applicants invited for interview and express her views to the parish reps.

We partner with Whitefriars Primary School in lots of ways, aiming to serve the children and the wider community. Our weekly Sunday morning services meet there. During the week members of our staff team help with RE lessons, take assemblies and are available to support children, staff and families.

From the Headteacher

Whitefriars Primary School is a large two-form entry school (60 pupils in each year group) which is well regarded locally. We have a very good reputation within the community and visitors regularly comment on the 'family feel', the politeness and excellent behaviour of our children and respect shown for others. Our motto is, 'Learning for Life Together' which reflects our desire to work together with all members of our community.

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RESPECT, INTEGRITY, COURAGE, RESPONSIBILITY & COMPASSION are our core values which, we believe overlap with fundamental Christian values - and we make sure that these values are lived through our daily lives at school.

Despite not being a church school, we are linked very closely with the Whitefriars Church who have continued to meet in the Junior school hall since they began 30+ years ago... We regularly rely on support from members of the church and congregation to help us – for example, using The Bridge (church office) for meetings, pastoral support, providing school uniform and other practical support for our families as well as hosting clubs such as, 'Happy Club' and 'The Moral Maze'. We value this connection for its mutual support.

We feel strongly that the church and school together are family friendly and determined to serve our community.

General schools' work

Whitefriars church staff take assemblies in a number of local schools - Whitefriars Primary, Denfield Park Primary schools and Rushden Academy Secondary school. In one year, that can impact some 2,300 young people! The aim is to help them reflect about how loving God and our neighbours makes a difference in the world. Each year, the church team runs transition events for Whitefriars and Denfield students starting Year 7, including the 'It's Your Move' transition workshop, and a Golden Ticket reunion event. The staff team are also involved in other weekly activities in Whitefriars Primary and one-off events such as the Christmas and Easter Experiences. Church members are governors at Whitefriars Primary School, and our previous incumbent was a governor at Rushden Academy.



One member of Whitefriars church is part of the (Christian) Ethos team, who provide mentoring and holistic education in Rushden Academy, our local secondary school. Whitefriars Church staff work closely alongside the Ethos team to deliver their programme, mentoring and teaching RE lessons. Whitefriars church provides free bibles to all children (years 3 – 6) in both Whitefriars and Denfield Park schools, as well as transition support for those in year 6. All 3 schools in the parish have been rated Good by Ofsted.

Local Christian charity

The charity Encompass is based in Rushden. It started out as the East Northants Faith Group and is an ecumenical Christian charity that runs various local food banks, homeless hostels and Recovery House – which is a residential rehab for men with drug and alcohol addictions. An additional rehab is being considered for women. One Whitefriars member is a trustee of the Encompass charity and several members of our congregation work for Encompass –as volunteers. As a result, some of the recovering addicts attend Whitefriars church services on Sunday mornings.

Many members of our congregation are part of local community projects as part of their service of others.



There is no church building in the traditional sense: Whitefriars Church meets in Whitefriars Primary School on Sunday mornings. The school was licensed as a public place of worship in 2010 and accommodates about 140 people.

For many years the school hosted 'The Bridge', a portacabin that served as our church office and community space. Over the years the bridge became more and more of a community space, hosting regular church activities such as Sparklers, Ignite, the Retireds' group and mid-week communion, as well as facilitating school meetings, acting as a polling station and hosting parent contact meetings.



As of March 2025, due to the local authority's decision to build a much-needed SEND unit in the school grounds, the Church will no longer have this space available to us. As a result, we are currently seeking alternative options to use as a base of operations for activities outside of Sunday mornings.

Whilst this poses a big challenge for us as a congregation, we see this as an opportunity for potential growth and are excited to see how God might lead us into something new.

The church owns a 17-seater Minibus, which is used both by the church and hired out to local community groups.



The Vicarage is a modern detached house (about 30 years old) in a quiet and friendly cul-de-sac just under a mile from the church site. It comprises four bedrooms, study/office, lounge, dining room, kitchen, family bathroom, downstairs toilet, and integral garage. The garden is a good size and is mainly laid to lawn.



Lounge



Kitchen



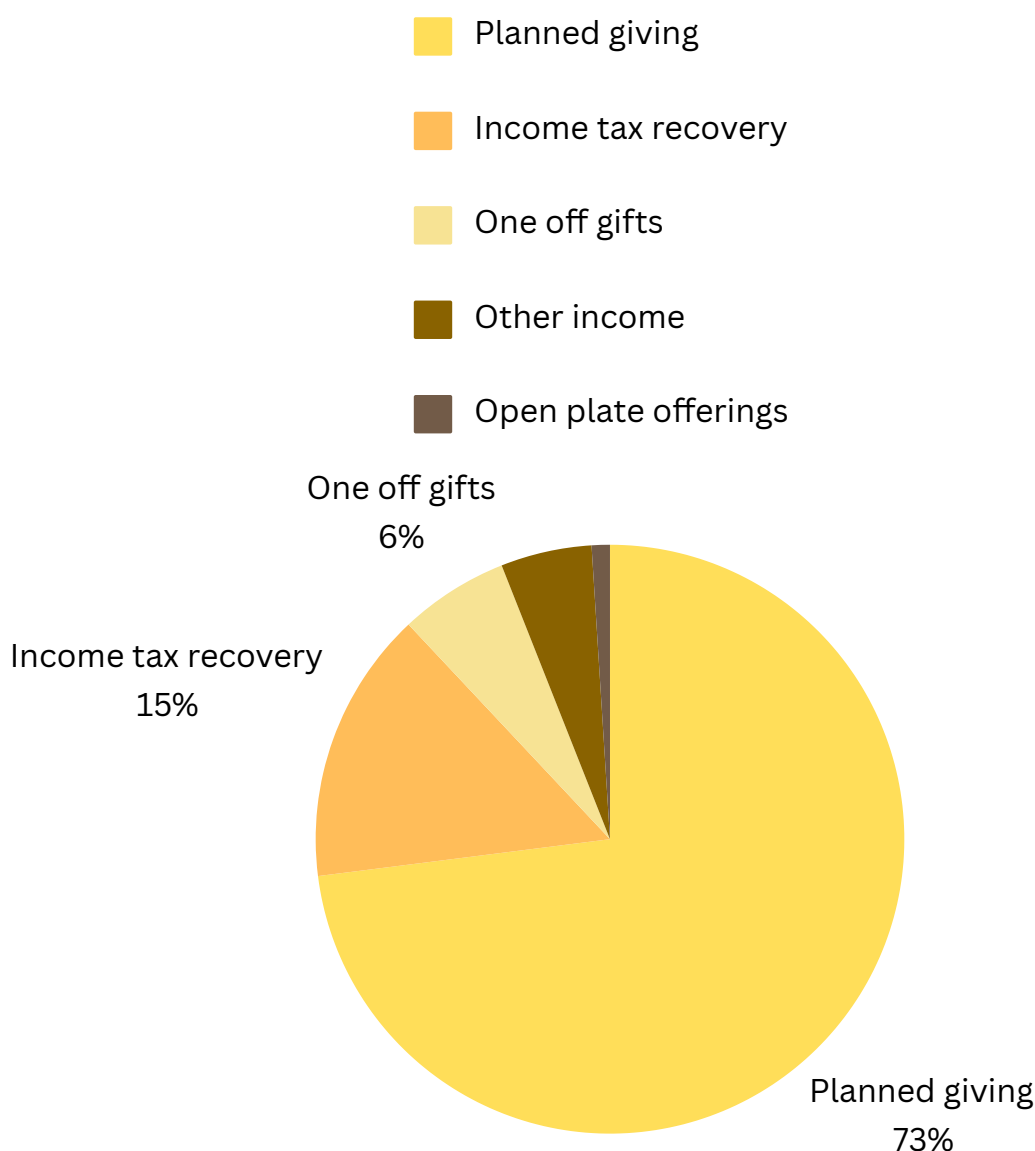
Back garden (below patio)

It sits on a small quiet modern estate just the other side of Wymington Road from Hall Park, which is ideal for children and dogs.

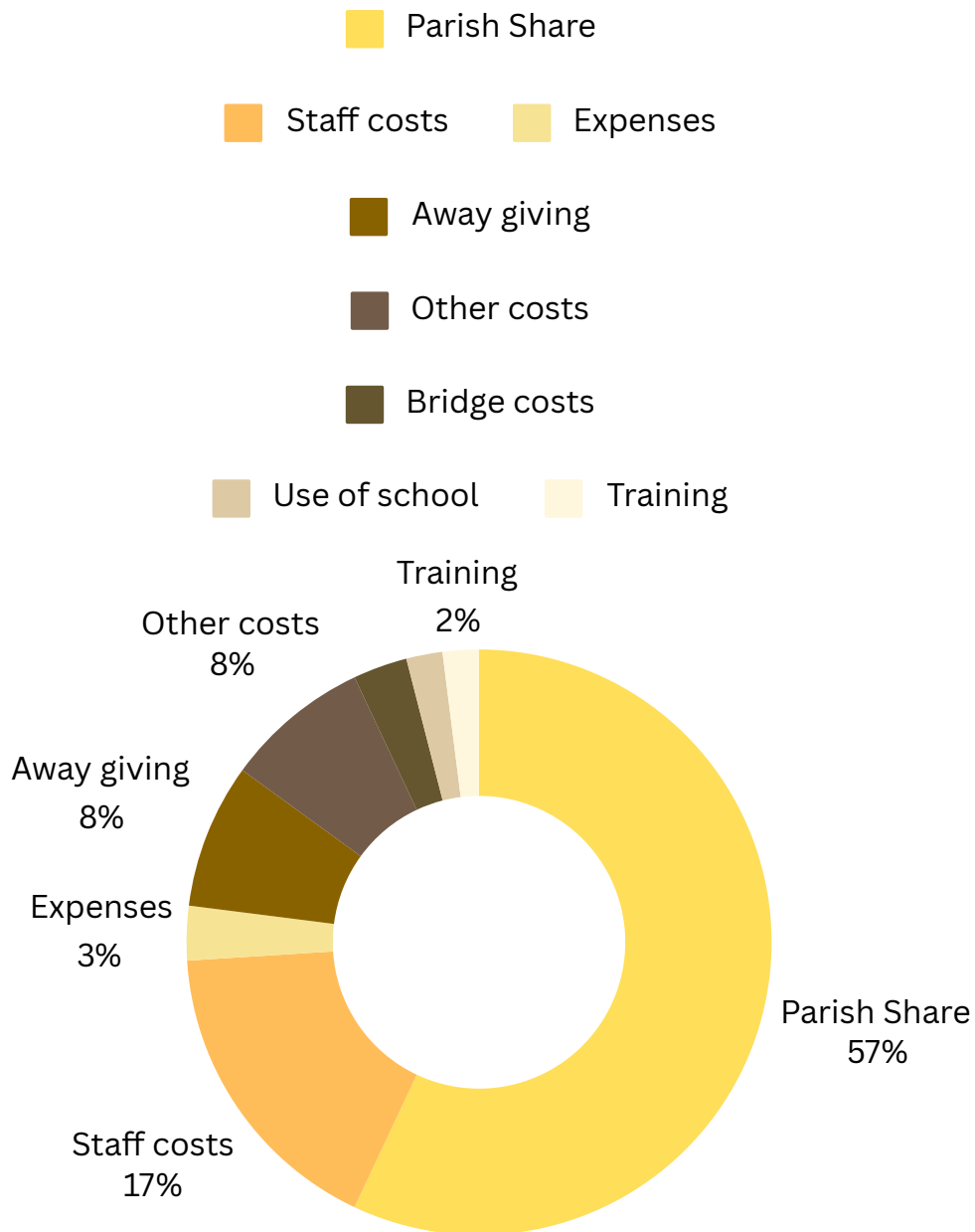
Rushden is a low-crime area where the police station was closed a few years ago.



Whitefriars Church is primarily funded through direct giving from the congregation, with Gift Aid also being an important source of income, income for the year 2023 was approx. £125K. More than 70% of our direct giving income is through PGS, the Diocesan planned giving scheme, as illustrated below. The levels of income and expenditure have been sustained through 2024, with reserves due to show a marginal increase at year-end 2024.



Whitefriars Church is a busy church that has always been able to meet its Parish Share and clergy expenses in full. The biggest item of expenditure is the Diocesan parish share, followed by staff costs, as illustrated below. It is our policy to give away 10% of last year's income to other Christian charities engaged in mission and aid – some overseas and some more local (see later).



The Lord has been very good to us and members gave even more generously last year.

Our reserves policy is to have 3 months' salary and 2 months' other expenditure in our bank account.



Whitefriars Church currently has 2 churchwardens, a PCC and 2 paid members of staff:

1. Emma is the Whitefriars Children's and Families Minister and has three key areas of her work.

- Church based Ministry: Co -ordinating and leading the Sunday morning young people's ministry. Preparing children and families for baptism/dedication. Facilitating a support network for families as they encourage Faith at Home and part of the service leadership team.
- Outreach Ministry: Leading Sparklers Community (toddler) group for families with children under 5, building positive relationships, parenting support, encouragement and to share the Gospel. Leading outreach initiatives for families including activities in the park and seasonal events. Building steppingstones between families in our community and our church family.
- Schools' ministry: leading assemblies at both Whitefriars and Denfield as part of the town-wide clergy team across all primary schools in Rushden. Emma has built a close working relationship with Whitefriars and Denfield schools leading additional lessons, Christmas and Easter experiences, lunch club with yr6 and Transition workshop and Golden ticket as well as Action for Happiness after-school club at Whitefriars.

2. Sara, the Ministry Resources Manager works 3 mornings a week and provides administrative support for the incumbent + staff team, purchasing items for them, booking courses and accommodation when required. She ensures that the details of church members and rotas are kept up to date on our ChurchSuite database, as well as sending out emails and letters to church members. Sara is the Whitefriars H&S officer, keeping the church website up-to-date and overseeing bookings and all aspects of Bridge and minibus management – getting quotes for work and materials, overseeing contractors, setting agendas for the Bridge Management Committee, etc.

There are 4 Licensed Lay Ministers currently: Melvyn, a Lay Pastoral Minister is licensed by the bishop to take communion to the sick, house-bound and elderly using consecrated bread and wine. Matt is a licensed Evangelist. Emma (our Children and Families' Minister 1. above) and Nisha are Licensed Lay Ministers. Karen is a licensed Lay Reader. All are excited to see their ministry grow.



We have established active mission partnerships with the following organisations and initiatives, which we support through prayer, visits by church members, invited guest speakers and financial support. We allocate 10% of Whitefriars church's previous year's giving to these:

- Care for the Family: Provides holistic care for families.
- CPAS: Our Patron, supporting church leaders.
- Encompass: Local food banks, homeless shelters and Recovery House rehab for those with addictions.
- UCB: United Christian Broadcasters run 2 radio stations and publish The Word for Today devotional.
- MAF: Connect with otherwise isolated communities in Africa.
- My Child (Uganda): Support for children through school in Uganda.
- Open Doors: Supply of bibles/intermediary support in non-Christian countries.
- Senegal Church: Support for evangelical church run by Pastor Albert in Senegal.
- Urban Saints: Resources, groups and summer camps to reach children with the Good News.
- WEC Harpist: Christian harpist who spreads Good News through her music in Japan.
- Bibles for Children: providing free Bibles for Children at Whitefriars Junior School and Denfield Park Primary School.

In addition to this giving, our children, men's group, and individual church members sponsor 25 children through the Compassion charity.



In June 2011 Whitefriars stopped holding morning worship on the second Sunday of each month and launched a mission initiative called Stepping Out. As a means of reaching out to members of the community, a number of different activities provide ways of sharing God's love and word outside of the church environment in a nonthreatening way. The effectiveness of these groups needs to be reviewed, as we have not seen much fruit, with regard to church attendance, although that's not the only important metric.

Church members have established a number of Stepping Out groups, which currently include:

- Books 'n' More: Reading and discussing a wide range of books in a local coffee shop.
- Countryside Walks: A walking group exploring the countryside around Rushden.
- Stepping Up – a café-style church service that is accessible to the unchurched and helps them find a relationship with God.

Aside from Stepping Out, members of our church and community are involved in a wide range of activities and groups, including:

- An 'Illuminate' evangelistic initiative took place in 2024, led by an ecumenical steering group, for the LZ7 Christian rock band to come to 5 senior schools in the local area to reach pupils. This was initiated by 2 members of Whitefriars, who met LZ7 at The Big Church Festival. Follow up sessions and a youth group were set up after the event, resulting in an ongoing ecumenical ministry to approximately 25 unchurched youth who continue to meet on a weekly basis, learning about the Gospel message. Future evangelistic events are also planned.
- Retireds' Group: Guest speakers, activities, refreshments, and friendly chat. Around 30 people meeting on the first Friday each month. A mix of church and non-church people.

