

Christ Church Southborough



Parish Profile

Christ Church Southborough

2026

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Our Church

We are known as being a friendly and welcoming church – all are very welcome. We operate under CPAS guidance and are of evangelical tradition, being members of the Evangelical Alliance. We are fairly informal and our services are friendly, with a relaxed feel.

We believe that the Gospel is for everyone - God's good news of forgiveness and new life for all who will turn and trust in Jesus and we seek to advance this:

- by a love for the Bible and a desire to live faithfully according to its teaching;
- by prayer as we rely on the Holy Spirit to guide and inspire our life together;
- in working together to serve the church family, the people of our parish and the town of Southborough, and our various mission partners around the world.

We long to grow in our love of Jesus together, and see the world transformed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are seen as an asset by the community which is shown through the support they give us through events during the year.

We aim to care about our local community and we want to grow followers of Jesus from every walk of life and every stage of life.

We have been without a Rector for over a year but we are still progressing, growing and thriving – although we are missing an overall Leader!

Our Teams

Leaders and Preachers



Rev. Jim Stevens

Retired - PTO



Sheila Syms

Licensed Lay Minister



Jamie Roddy

Children and Families'
Pastor



Angie Wright

Permission to Lead



Kevin Clare

Permission to Lead

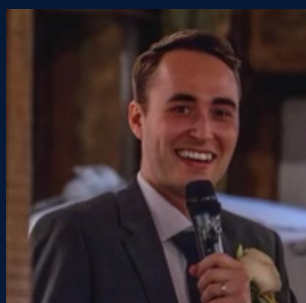


Les Padfield

Permission to Preach

Although we haven't had a curate for 2 years, we are known as being a training Parish.

Our employees



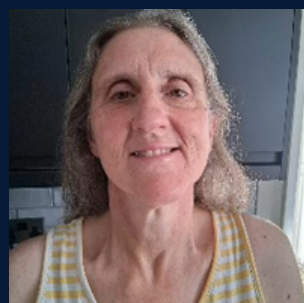
Jamie Roddy

Children and Families'
Pastor



Sue Shrubbs

Administrator and
General Factotum



Clair Tighe

Cleaner

Pastoral Care

We look after our congregation and where people have been unable to come to church, members of the staff team have visited to provide communion or prayer. Many lifts are provided either to church or medical appointments. However, we don't always get this right and it is an area we are looking to strengthen.

Prayer

We seek for prayer to be fundamental to our Church and be at the centre of all we do. We hold monthly men and women's prayers, staff prayers are held every Monday, after the Sunday services there are always 2 people assigned to pray with people in need, there is a monthly Prayer & Praise service in the evening, small prayer groups or triplets also meet for prayer. Prayer is also very much part of our life groups. We have just introduced a prayer meeting after the 4th Sunday service to pray for everything during this vacancy – including who is God calling to serve at Christ Church! This has been attended by about 50% of the congregation.

A monthly prayer diary is distributed to members of the congregation with prayer items of local and international interest.

Worship and Music

Our worship style is generally informal and varied using a screen for visuals and videos. The importance of worship is that it is based on the desire to honour God and that the focus is on Him. We have a small music group who lead a mixture of traditional hymns and new worship songs with an electric piano, violin and guitar and a number of singers.



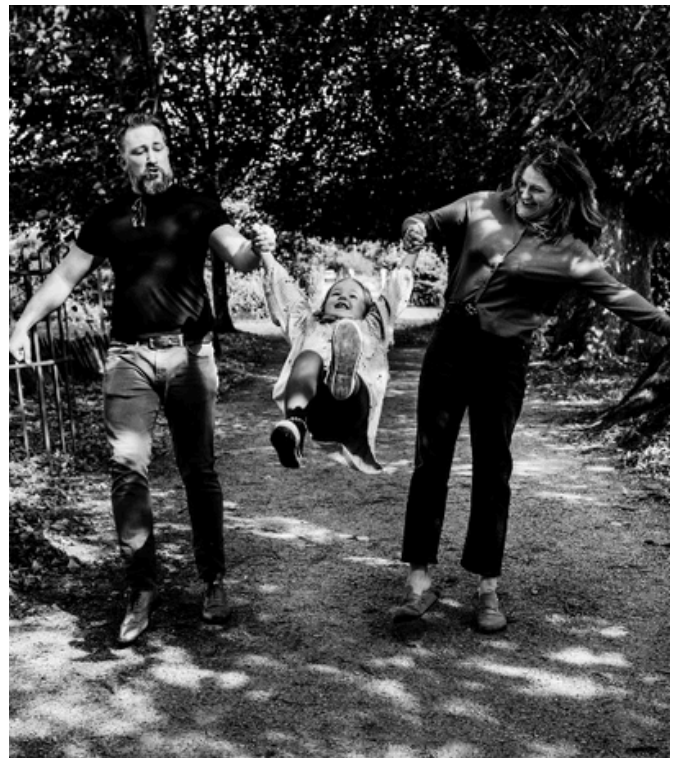
Safeguarding

We believe that the care and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in church activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the church family. Our Safeguarding Officer – Rita Morland – is the first point of call for all safeguarding issues and ensures all DBS clearances & training are up to date. We follow the House of Bishop's safeguarding policies and ensure records are up to date by the use of the Diocesan Parish Dashboard.

Our Vision

Over the next 5 years, we aim to achieve:

- Younger age profile
- Further outreach into the community
- To be more prayerful as a church
- To encourage greater engagement with prayer meetings from church members
- Everyone of every age grows in love for Jesus
- Growing & Discipling Leaders – Life Group Leaders/Service Leaders/Preachers
- Sustainable financial situation in terms of giving (stewardship)



Our New Rector

As we are currently a parish in suspension, because of the change of Rectory, we will initially be appointing a Priest in Charge. In a short period of time we anticipate that this role will become our Rector.

What we think we need!

- A Pastor who can minister to and lead our congregation
- A Visionary who will be able to develop and drive our long term vision forward
- A Team Builder, someone who wants to work with and utilise people's skills

In addition we seek someone who:

- Is an enthusiastic Bible-believing person who lives, teaches and preaches based on biblical principles and is open to the leading of the Holy Spirit
- Can demonstrate success in pastoral care and organising a pastoral team
- Can empathise with all ages in the congregation and community
- Is able to nurture and develop spiritual growth in individuals, and identify their spiritual gifts
- Has the ability to work with primary school children and build on our children & youth work
- Has a passion to know God and make him known in the community
- Be willing to act as foundation governor at the local primary school
- Possesses a sense of humour and sense of fun!

Rectory



After our previous Rector moved to become an Archdeacon within the Diocese, the decision was taken to sell the original 1870's Rectory which was located next door to the church. The newly acquired Rectory is a 1930's detached family home set back from the road and is approximately 5 minutes walk (0.3 miles) from the church.



The ground floor has a dual aspect feature and bay window living room, and a second reception room with open working fireplace and conservatory. Double doors open from the conservatory onto the garden. At the rear of the house is the kitchen with solid wood cabinets and sleek granite worksurfaces and breakfast bar. From the kitchen is a utility room with space for a washing machine and dryer. A downstairs cloakroom and study complete the ground floor.

On the first floor are four bedrooms and family bathroom. The master bedroom has an en-suite shower room and plenty of fitted wardrobes. The further three bedrooms are all good sized double rooms and have ample space for wardrobes and additional bedroom furniture.



Completing the first floor is the family bathroom with a bath and shower over, WC, and wash basin. Outside there is a patio which leads onto the main lawn area. Leading along the side of the house and at the rear is a further garden area with a large shed. There's also a large garage with an electric door and driveway in front, offering generous off-road parking.



Our Analysis

After discussions, our PCC have identified our key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as shown:

Strengths

-
- Welcoming & friendly
 - Community Larder – Community Volunteers & Community Interaction
 - Employed Children & Families Pastor & Administrator
 - School Links
 - Building, Facilities & Property Portfolio
 - Communications & Team Work
 - Teaching/Preaching
 - Good Financial Management
 - Taking initiative to do things – reaching out
-

Weaknesses

-
- Age Profile of congregation and pool of volunteers
 - Growth will need finance and people to staff new or larger activities
 - Lack of structured pastoral care
 - Prayer – congregations' engagement with prayer meetings
-

Opportunities

-
- Links with Church of England School
 - Increased presence in wider community and working together with local churches
 - Life Groups
 - Unchurched people who are in contact with church
-

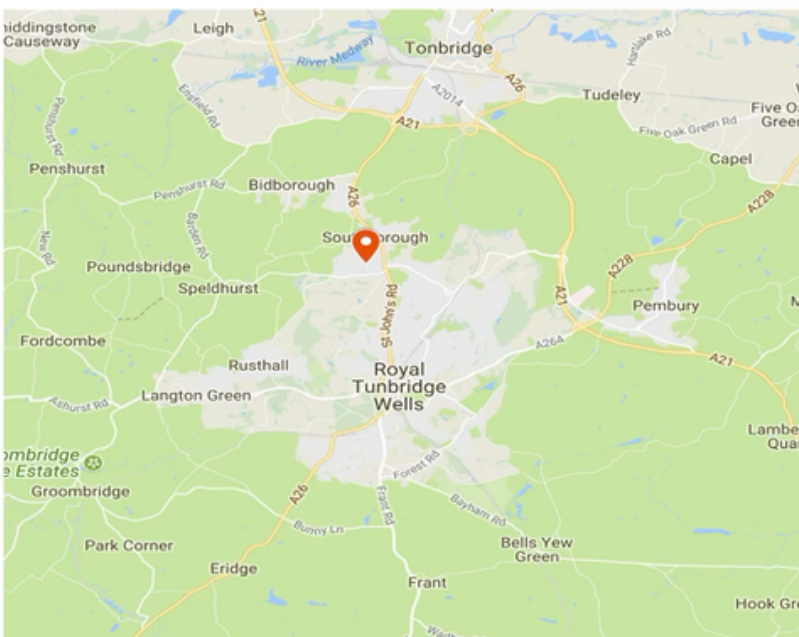
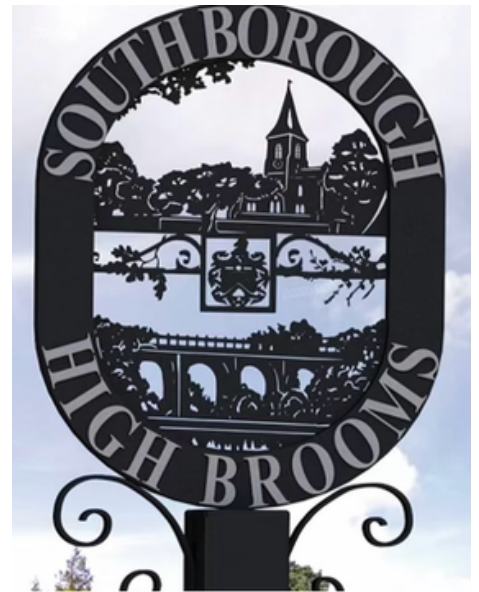
Threats

-
- Finances
 - Comfort/Complacency
 - Demographics ie ageing congregation
 - Other commitments/pulls on family life at weekends
 - Over-stretching current volunteers

Our Parish

Southborough lies immediately to the north of Tunbridge Wells in West Kent, near the East Sussex border. It is a town of approximately 12,000 within the Borough of Tunbridge Wells but it retains a strong sense of independent identity. Southborough has a small, High Street with local shops including convenience stores, butcher, cafes, wine merchants, and a variety of food outlets.

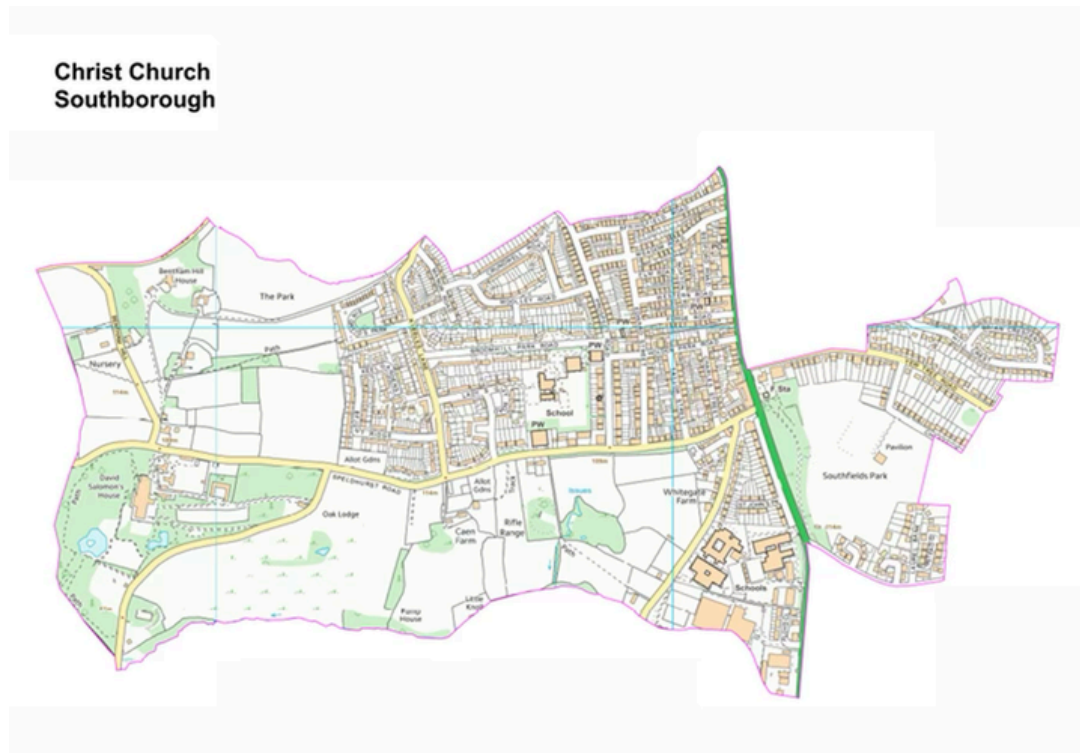
The recently built civic centre, known locally as 'The Hub', provides a central meeting point for the residents of Southborough with a weekly Saturday market. It also houses the library, the medical centre and other health related services and has provided a number of residential apartments. It's also the location for Christmas celebrations where Christ Church has provided refreshments to the community and led carol singing.



Other amenities include 71 acres of woodland and Common with a cricket pitch, play parks and recreation grounds. Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre & Swimming Pool and the Knights Park Leisure Centre, including tenpin bowling and a multi-screen cinema, are close by.

Transport links are good with easy access to the A21 and M25 , the Kent & Sussex coast is 30 miles away. Central London can be reached in approximately 50 minutes from our nearest mainline railway station, High Brooms, just over a mile away.

Our local hospital based at Pembury, is part of the Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust and is rated above average, ranked 6th out of 118 based on cancer, A&E and backlog metrics.



Our Schools

Christ Church is directly next door to Southborough C of E Primary School and we have a strong relationship with them through visits from our Children & Families Pastor leading collective worship and visits to the church for year group services, leavers service and teaching year groups on faith & the church. Members of our congregation are Foundation governors.

There are two church secondary schools in Tunbridge Wells. St Gregory's Catholic Comprehensive, which lies within the parish boundary, and Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, within walking distance.

Our Children and Families' Pastor assists with the Christian Union at St Gregory's alongside our supported mission Crossteach.

Additionally, Kent still retains its state grammar school system and there are two boys' grammars and one girls' grammar school within walking distance of Southborough.

What happens on Sundays

Our morning services are varied and include a monthly all-age service, morning worship and Holy Communion.

- 1st Sunday 8.45am Holy Communion
10am All age service
- 2nd Sunday 10am Morning Worship
6.30pm Prayer & Praise
- 3rd Sunday 10am Holy Communion
- 4th Sunday 10am Morning Worship
- 5th Sunday 10am Holy Communion

Children and adults meet together then our youngsters go to their own groups for age-appropriate teaching. Our average congregation is 71 adults and 15 children. There are 244 people attached to the church, a large proportion of our members fall into the “older” category. Live streaming takes place for all Sunday morning services, with the exception of the All Age Service, which allows for children to be more involved without being on camera.

Our morning service is always followed by refreshments and an opportunity for fellowship together and approximately termly we have Sunday lunch together cooked by a team of volunteers. There is also an evening prayer and praise service once a month, at present led by lay people.

Since Covid we have had a few baptisms, and we have recently had two church family weddings. There have been a number of church held funerals, as well as those taken at the crematorium.



Seasonal services at Christmas and Easter are well attended both by the congregation and our surrounding community. These include an evening of favourite carols, Christingle, Nativity service, carols by candlelight, and all age communion Christmas day service. Easter services include an interactive Good Friday all-age service and Easter day celebrations.

Other services during the year are our Harvest Festival with the produce being donated to the Community Larder and Nourish food bank. This is also our annual Mission Gift Day. On Mothering Sunday posies of daffodils are distributed to the ladies in the congregation. Remembrance Sunday is observed both in church and by a clergy led service at the Southborough War Memorial.

Our children and youth groups meet every Sunday with the exception of the All-Age Services. (See Youth & Children Section).



What happens between Sundays

Life Groups are an integral part in the life of our Church and there are currently 5 groups. They are held every fortnight during the day or in the evening to enable people to worship and pray together, explore their faith, ask questions to gain a greater understanding of both the Bible and Christianity and form a closer relationship with God and each other. Many life groups also have social meetings during the year.

A small men's study group meet on a Saturday morning twice a month and women meet once a month for prayer.

Over recent years we have run Alpha groups and Hope Explored which have been open to church members and to our community.

Our church, hall and annexe are in use every day of the week, whether that's for church events and activities, or hired out to local groups or individuals.



The local community very much see Christ Church as “their church” regardless of whether they attend services or not. This is borne out by the number who attend the community larder, started in the pandemic lockdown, or our Tea & Toys groups for parents and toddlers, Friday lunch club for the older folk, the Christmas fair, harvest quiz or barn dance, or other events.

Other church events are:

- Light party – a hugely popular alternate to Halloween – over 400 attended last year
- During the summer we hold a three-morning holiday club for under 11s
- Coffee & chat group
- Men's monthly curry evening
- Women's Advent evening
- Youth weekend away
- Women's weekend away
- Men's trips out – the latest being to "Secret Nuclear Bunker" and T20 cricket at Canterbury
- A quarterly Sunday lunch together



Youth and Children

We consider our youth and children to be an integral part of the life of our church and employ a full-time Children and Families' Pastor – Jamie Roddy – who co-ordinates the work with youth and children, supported by a dedicated team of volunteers.

On Sundays, this includes groups for key stage 1 and 2 which meet in the annexe and the youth group that meets in the hall.



Christ Church Kids

Christ Church Kids Junior sees a regular attendance of 3-4 youngsters in key stage 1 and approximately 10 youngsters in key stage 2 (Christ Church Kids). They have a together time with singing, game and memory verse and then split into the two teaching groups. During the August school holidays, when leaders have a well-earned rest, children attending services are provided with “Busy Bags” containing activities to do during the service.

In August we run a three-morning holiday club for both church and community youngsters. This is followed up by a holiday club service to share the experiences with the congregation. We have a robust relationship with the local Church of England Primary School and this includes leading weekly collective worship at the school, termly RE sessions and termly year group services in the church plus an annual Year 6 Leavers Service.



Christ Church Youth

Our youth group, Christ Church Youth, approximately 6 youngsters, meet in the hall for their own teaching on Sundays. We have links with Unite (Tunbridge Wells Youth for Christ) and some of our young people attend Unite services and music events during the year.

Our midweek youth group, Acts 29, meets for Bible study and attracts youngsters from church, but also those who don't attend on a Sunday.

They also have an annual Weekend Away at West Watch (see picture).

Our youth group also take part in The Noise, a Church Youth Community Project, hosted by different churches in the area.



Community Links

We run a number of events that are aimed at our local community and these include:

Friday Lunch Club

Our lunch club runs every Friday with members of the congregation providing the catering from the church kitchen. The activity is aimed at the elderly in the Parish. The lunches exist for fellowship for the elderly but also to minister to those in their latter years as many attendees are not members of the Sunday congregation. Volunteers provide transport to allow people to attend. There are around 20/23 people who regularly attend.

An ex-member of our congregation whose mother regularly attended and loved these Fridays donates a regular amount to be used for prizes towards a raffle/bingo.



Southborough Church of England School

(More details under Youth & Children's Ministry)

We have two members of our congregation who are Foundation Governors (plus the incumbent!) and a member from another CofE church is also a Foundation Governor.

Community Larder

Our Larder, which was started during Covid in November 2020 as a 6 week project, is still required in the community with the need and number of users constantly rising. We operate a free café after the larder where people can chat to each other or church members. Many of the larder guests have been invited to various functions over the years.

The Larder receives many grants both from official organisations but also from local members of the community.

Many volunteers help at this event either by manning the tables on a Thursday, providing refreshments in the café, or being involved in one of the many pick-ups from supermarkets that are necessary to provide this service to the community and whilst many of these volunteers are members of our congregation we also attract a number of volunteers from other churches and the wider community.

On Thursday mornings the Larder queue can be seen from 10.30 – an hour and a half before the doors open!

After the Larder a couple of volunteers take the left over bread and pastries and set up outside the school – known as the “bread run”.



Tea and Toys

Our term-time toddler group allows parents and carers to bring their pre-school children to play in a friendly and safe environment. This provides fun activities with lots of toys and opportunities to sing songs and listen to stories.



Our Outreach

We support 5 main missions both financially and through prayer:

- Education for Life in Kenya
- Sovereign World Trust
- Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)
- CrossTeach
- Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS).

People from these missions attend church services about once a year to update us on their work.

A number of smaller charities are also supported throughout the year on an ad-hoc basis. Mission Gift days are held every October raising money for our 5 mission partners.

At Christmas we make a collection for Education for Life for a specific need they have at that particular time. In 2024 the money raised was put towards a project to recommission a house previously used for rental to become a stand alone nursery.

During 2024, two members of our congregation moved to Kathmandu in Nepal to work for KISC (Kathmandu International Study Centre) whose mission is “to be living witnesses of Christ’s love through excellent education.” During the devastating floods in the country in October, which killed over 200 and left many people without homes, KISC was able to assemble and distribute 160 relief packages which Max & Genevieve were actively involved in.

We are a drop off point for the Christmas Shoebox Appeal organised by Samaritan’s Purse.



Our Statistics

Electoral Roll

Our Electoral Roll stands at 109 after the 2025 revision. Approximately 70% live in our Parish and 30% outside – caused by two things – firstly the edge of our Parish is only about 500 yards from the church and secondly many of our congregation who have moved away for various reasons still opt to come to our services.

Age Profile

27% of the people attached to our church (receiving communications from us) are over 70.

Sunday Attendance

Our average Sunday attendance during 2024 was 71 adults and 15 children. Live streaming takes place for all Sunday morning services, with the exception of the All-Age Service, which allows for children to be more involved in the service without the fear of them being on camera.

In addition, about 30 people watch the services from home and four members of the congregation are predominantly “Church at Home” worshippers.

27%

of people
attending our
church are over 70

70%

of attendees live in
our Parish

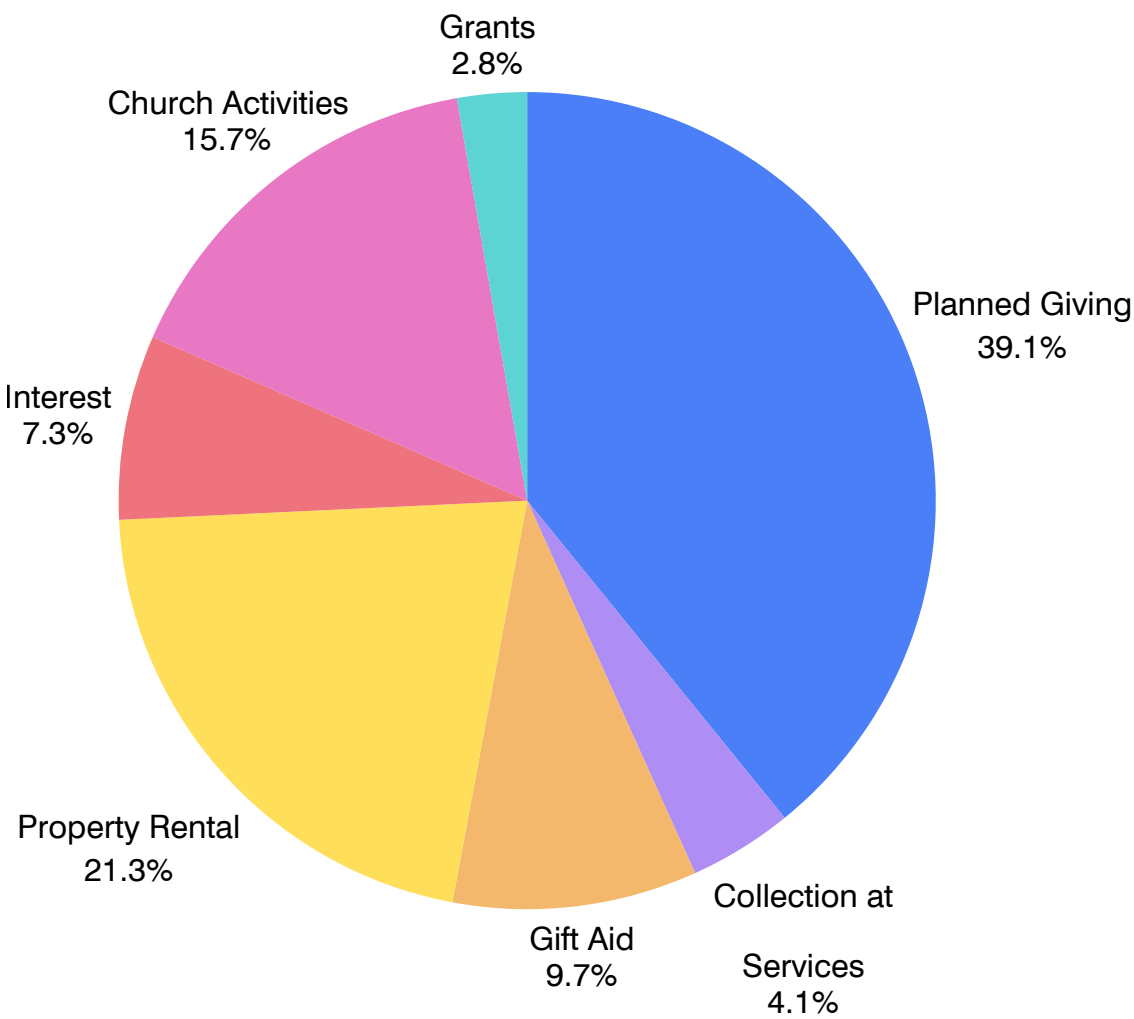
17%

of people
attending are
children

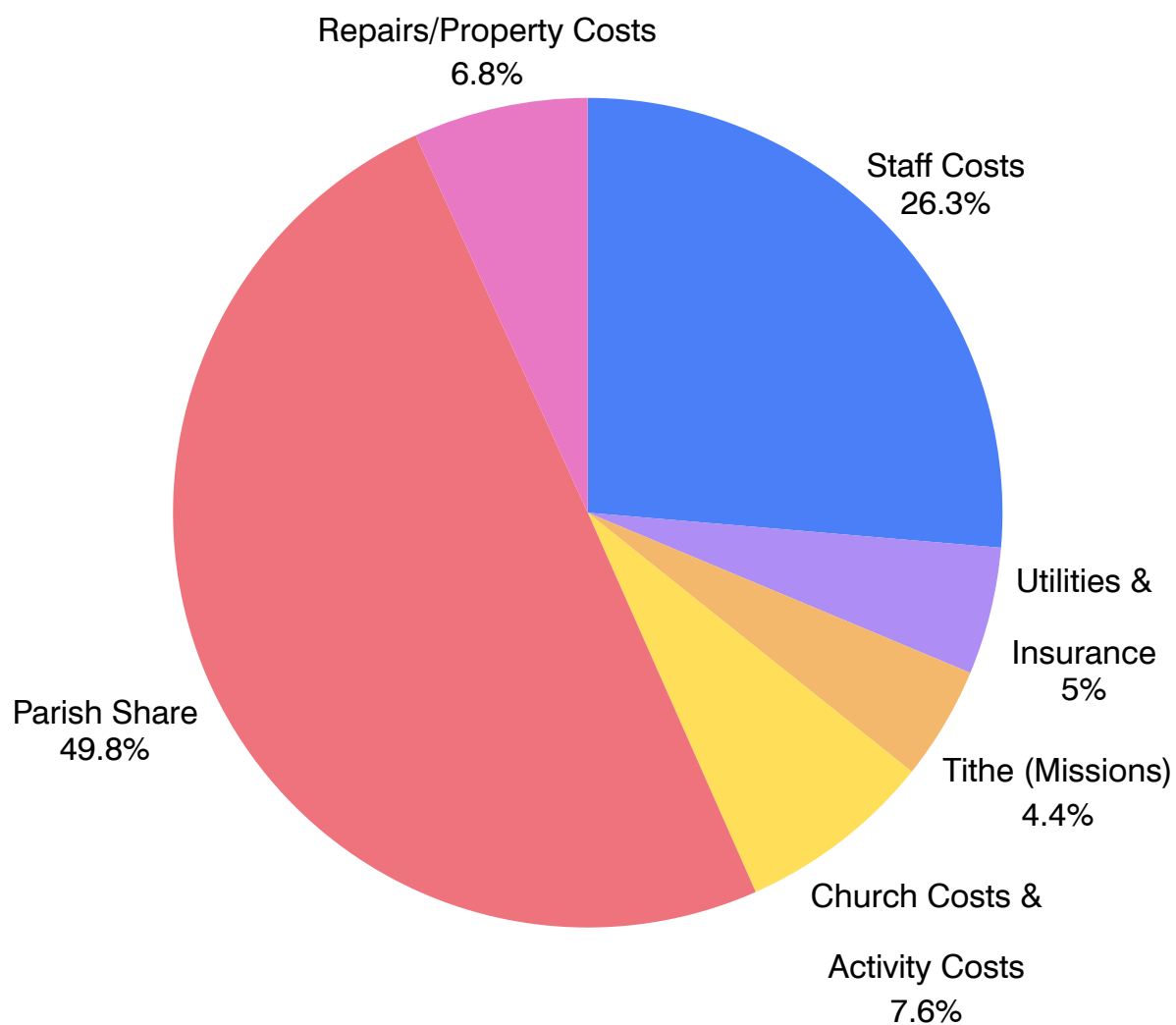
Our Finances

Unrestricted Income (2024)	Unrestricted Expenditure (2024)	Surplus
£150,816	£140,589	£10,227
Note that the surplus is not as good as it looks because over £6,000 of this amount is designated for the Community Larder.		

Income



Expenditure



- The majority of regular givers use the Parish Giving Scheme.
- Payroll is operated through Sage for our three employees – a Full-time Youth Pastor, an Office Administrator (13 hours pw) and a Cleaner (5 hours pw).
- Mission – we put aside 10% of our regular giving for missions – we mainly support 5 missions who receive 15% of our tithe each, plus we use 15% of our tithe to support local missions and allocate 15% for emergencies/disasters.

Good News

- Fixed Assets of £671,000 – two rental properties and a 70% share in a house which is frequently used to house a curate.
- The rent from the properties is used towards paying for the Youth Pastor.
- The Church Hall & Annexe have many regular hirers.
- We were blessed a number of years ago by a legacy from a lifelong member of the congregation, from which we purchased the 2 rental properties and have a substantial amount set aside for upgrading the lighting in the church and upgrading the audio/visual system.
- We are continuing to pay a substantial amount of Parish Share throughout our vacancy.

Bad News

- Many of the people who are regular givers are over retirement age with a number in their 90s.
- Regular giving is reducing both as a percentage of overall giving and in “real” financial terms.
- For a number of years, we have been making a loss and therefore reducing our reserves.
- How do we encourage younger people to give regularly?

Our Buildings

Church

Built in 1870/71 to accommodate the poor and working people of Southborough (the gentry went to St Peter's!). The local population and congregation is now very mixed, but the ethos of accommodating those in need continues to this day which can be seen by our Community Links.

It is now a Grade II listed building and originally cost £2,400 to build. The building is cross shaped. The pews were removed in 1980 along with the pipe organ and preaching point and the church was carpeted. Throughout its history, Christ Church has always maintained a "low church" style of Church of England worship.

The Church can be cleared of chairs and is therefore a very flexible space for various events (eg, Christmas Fair, quiz evenings) or just for café style services.



The Church Hall

Located at the back of the Church, the Church Hall was for many years used by Age Concern for five days a week. More recently, it is used to hire to the local community or various events such as the Community Larder.

There is a sliding door between the Church and the Hall so that in the event of a very large wedding or funeral we are able to open the screens and extend the seating area of the church. The Hall has an industrial kitchen plus three toilets.

The last Quinquennial Inspection was in 2023 with no major issues reported.

Annexe

Situated at the south side of the church on Prospect Road. It is a very light, bright space which can be divided into 2 sections, has underfloor heating and a small kitchen. After many years of considerable fund-raising by the congregation, the long-awaited Annexe appeared in 2017! The Annexe is in use almost every day and is extremely popular for rental.



Rental Properties

We are blessed to own 2 properties for rental outright and have a 70% share in a property which has historically be used to house our curates. When there is no curate attached to the Parish (as at present!), the house is commercially rented.

The properties we own – 32B London Road, Southborough and 38 Azure Court, Tonbridge – are both commercially rented and help to fund the employment of our Children & Families Pastor. Both are managed through local Estate Agents, Wood & Pilcher. They inspected all our rental properties during 2024 and reported that all are in good order.

Re-ordering Plans

We have been making plans to upgrade the lighting (which in the Church is in desperate need of renewal) and to upgrade our audio/visual systems and have set aside significant funds for this purpose.

Other Bits & Bobs

Other Churches

In addition to the neighbouring Church of England churches of St Peter's and St Thomas's, our neighbours also include St Dunstan's Church (Roman Catholic) and New Life Church (Open Doors Network).

The CofE churches formed Anglican Churches Together in Southborough (ACTS) and have in the past worked together although opportunities recently have been limited. We have shared hosting a Light Party with the New Life Church for several years.

History/Overview

Christ Church was built in 1871 as a daughter church to St Peter to serve the needs of the working classes at that end of the town. The parish of St Peter with Christ Church continued until in 1992 a team was created with St Matthew, High Brooms comprising a Rector, Team Vicar and Curate. In 2002 a new Team was created when St Lawrence, Bidborough became the fourth church in the Team and posts of Team Vicar were established both at St Matthew and St Lawrence. In 2018 the four churches had all grown and had become distant, and it was decided to disband the team and Christ Church became a parish in its own right. St Lawrence and St Peter became a parish together and St Matthews a parish in its own right.

Communications

During lockdown we started livestreaming our services on our YouTube channel and this has continued since. It offers an opportunity for those now unable to get to church to continue to feel a part of what is going. It's also a window for non-church goers to see what happen in our services before maybe attending in person.

We publish our services and special events on "A Church Near You" and locally on the Southborough Forum Facebook page, and our own Facebook page.

Our website (www.christchurchsouthborough.com) has information about our church, activities, contact information, safeguarding resources and information about hiring our facilities.

We use Churchsuite to contact our members and to send out notice sheets, rotas, prayer requests, monthly prayer diary, event information etc hard copies are printed for those without internet access.

Contact Details

Phone



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Facebook



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