



St Mary's Plaistow, Bromley

Diocese of Rochester
Archdeaconry of Bromley & Bexley
Deanery of Bromley
63 College Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 3QG

<https://www.stmarys-bromley.org.uk/>
<https://www.facebook.com/stmarysbromley>



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1. Archdeacon's Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to consider prayerfully whether God might be calling you to be the next Vicar of St Mary's Plaistow, Bromley. 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 Mary's is a church with great potential for growth, here you will find a congregation who are engaged in all aspects of church life and are ready to be led by their new vicar and by God into the next phase of mission and ministry in this part of Bromley. There is potential for developing the existing relationships with the local church school and the new pre-school and for growing the community engagement of the church.

We are looking for a collaborative leader with a missional heart. This post would be suitable for someone coming to the end of a curacy or at any stage of ministry.

St Mary's is part of the friendly and supportive 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 the vicarage is a 10 min walk from Bromley Town Centre 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 Bromley.

Ven. Allie Kerr, Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley.

2. Mission Statement

St Mary's is a learning, growing and caring church seeking to love God wholeheartedly, living lives of love and service, following the example of our Lord Jesus.

3. What does St Mary's have to offer?

- A Parish with just one Church.
- A talented, diverse and dedicated group of Christians able to offer support and skills in maintaining and building the Church family.
- A loving, caring community.
- Support for the wellbeing and work life balance of our vicar, helping them to settle and feel part of our Church family.
- A team of Churchwardens providing assurance of ongoing leadership support.
- An opportunity to develop our work with children and young people.
- Potential to enhance community engagement within the Parish.
- A congregation ready to engage with and to be inspired by new initiatives.

4. Who are we looking for?

- A person of strong personal faith and deep compassion, to encourage us in our mission.
- Someone to lead, guide, teach and be a companion on our different journeys as we seek to live in faith.
- Someone who will enable us to build a warm, welcoming and inclusive community, and to share the good news.
- Someone to lead us in caring for God's creation.
- A creative, enthusiastic and innovative leader of worship, able to encourage our individual and collective development.
- An effective communicator, organiser and team player to direct our common life.
- We welcome applications from all backgrounds.

5. The Parish Setting

St Mary's is located in the northern part of the London Borough of Bromley, about nine miles from central London and close to the M25. There are currently 92 people on the electoral roll. The parish is well served by road, rail and bus services and there is a vibrant shopping centre close by, as well as good local shops, schools, pharmacies, other medical services, sports facilities, two cinemas and two theatres.

The Borough provides a wide range of local services described on, and often accessed through, its website: <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/>

The parish sits within the electoral ward of Plaistow, which has two local councillors - Alisa Igoe and Tony McPartlan; information about their engagement with the area can be found on their website <https://plaistowcouncillors.org/>. Alisa attends many of St Mary's services and celebrations in her capacity of councillor.



Map to illustrate location of Key buildings within Plaistow, Bromley

In the 2021 census the population of Plaistow parish was 6,135 people in 2,603 households, spread over a compact 0.4 square miles, although some worshippers come from further afield. Housing is mixed, ranging from large, detached homes to Housing Association flats and sheltered accommodation. Incomes and occupations vary, with many parishioners working in London. On average the population of Plaistow is less deprived than the national average. Ethnicity was categorised as: White 71.3%, Black 9.5%, Asian 9.2% and Mixed 6.9%. 23% were aged under 20 and 10% were aged over 70. In the census 48.2% categorised themselves as Christian, with 43.5% expressing no religion or not stating their belief.

6. Worship and Congregation

The style of worship is currently traditional and 'middle of the road'. In a month there are typically three Family Communion services at 10.30 am on Sundays. On the second Sunday of the month there is a Family Service of the Word. We are hoping to increase the number and styles of weekly services on offer.



The south transept is arranged as a Family Zone, equipped for a range of activities, where younger children and their parents sit during the services. In term time we have Sunday Club sessions during Family Communion services, which take place in the narthex or Kids' Zone, or outside during fine summer weather. In the holidays a leader is usually present and provides activity sheets. Some families come very regularly, others less so. There is potential to expand and develop the ministry to children and their parents. We would love to see more families attending.

The music on Sundays is provided by a robed choir and organist. There is interest in expanding the range and variety of our music.

Throughout the year St Mary's has many special services and worship events such as Lent courses, Compline, Harvest Festival, Christingle and celebratory services with Parish School. At Harvest Festival the congregation and the pupils of Parish School give generously to Bromley Borough Foodbank.

Christingle is always a much-loved service, well attended and beautiful by candlelight



Usual Sunday attendance varies between 40 and 70 and up to 200 for special services and celebrations. The congregation is made up of a mixture of ages, with a slowly increasing number of younger members. Each service is supported by a team including service assistants, readers and communion assistants and most services are live-streamed to allow those at home to join us for worship.

Following each service, refreshments are provided and many of the congregation stay to enjoy the social, relaxed environment and take the opportunity to catch up on news.



We are a warm and welcoming Church, with a strong history of and interest in social engagement, supporting local projects and charities. We are an inclusive community with an interest in becoming more aware and more inviting.



The exploration of Living in Love and Faith, started recently, is an indication of interest and the PCC will be following this introduction with the structured course.

We are also going to complete the 'Diversity and Inclusion Audit for Churches' and identify what more we can do to be welcoming and inclusive.

St Mary's has a study group which is held weekly, mainly by Zoom but with face-to-face meetings once a month in members' homes. This is a valuable forum for discussing the coming Sunday's readings, but the group has also taken various books as the basis for discussions.

Following Covid there is now scope for outreach activity to pick up again.



Currently we have the voluntary services of a retired priest and former Prison Chaplain, Alison Tyler, as part of the Worship team. Alison has been in the parish since 2019 and remains with us here during the vacancy.

St Mary's typically conducts around 3 baptisms, 2 weddings and 10 funerals per year.



7. Key People, Committees & Groups

Churchwarden Team

The Churchwarden Team was elected in September 2023, consisting of six individuals who have each committed to three years of churchwarden duties. Each year, two of the six are admitted to office while the additional four provide support. Clem Sutton and Maria Staines are the two current appointed churchwardens. This arrangement of current named individuals will run until 2026.

The Churchwarden team plus the Treasurer form the **Standing Committee**, which meets to action urgent items between PCC meetings.



Clem Sutton Maria Staines John Beale Anthia Page Paul Knight Sylvia Chance

Licensed Lay Ministers

St Mary's has three Lay Ministers with Permission to Officiate, one is also an Anna Chaplin, all have funeral licences and experience of all the services held, thus far, at St Mary's. All have had Ministry experience outside of St Mary's, two have served on the Chaplaincy team at Rochester Cathedral and one of these has also shared long term service with the Chaplaincy team at the Princess Royal University Hospital. We also have an authorised Pastoral Assistant.



John Cox



Mike Eames



Keith Nye

Parish Administrator

St Mary's has an excellent Parish Administrator, who is also the Church House manager/administrator. Atlanta Topham manages a wide range of administrative duties from room and hall bookings in Church House to monthly magazine printing and rota organisation.



The PCC

The PCC is the governing body of the parish church, meets bi-monthly and comprises an enthusiastic and multi-talented team overseeing the life of the church.

House and Hall Committee

St Mary's is fortunate to have a large Church House and hall which contains flats let out to tenants, offices let to local companies and rooms and halls let to community, exercise, dance, music and youth groups. The maintenance and general running of this building is managed by the House and Hall Committee.

Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee



The F&GP meets approximately 10 times per year to consider church finances and oversees planned and routine maintenance of the church building and fabric. St Mary's treasurer, Jill Atkinson, has been expertly maintaining spreadsheets, creating reports and keeping finances on track for many years.

St Mary's is stable financially, thanks in part to rental income from the house and hall complex. Members of the congregation also make regular payments to the church by standing order, using gift-aid wherever possible.

Members also give generously to specific needs, notably recently in raising £67,000 for the restoration of the murals and for a multitude of other causes including the Queen's Green Canopy. Historically St Mary's has been in the receipt of generous legacies, and some of these are held in funds restricted to specific purposes, including the repair of the church roof and the spiritual education of the parishioners. Many also give freely of their time and expertise.

For several years now we have made a Parish Offer to the Diocese of a minimum of £60,000, and in 2022 we gave 40% of all our unrestricted expenditure. We have traditionally supported a range of national and local charities.

The PCC's annual reports and financial statements can be viewed on the Charities Commission website under registered charity number 1132142.

Safeguarding and Health and Safety Committee

Lisa Morris is St Mary's named Parish Safeguarding Officer and leads a well-informed and dedicated team to ensure our church is a safe place for our children, young people and vulnerable adults. The St Mary's Safeguarding and Health and Safety committee meets every 4-6 weeks committed to looking after the physical and spiritual wellbeing of our church and our church community.



Sunday Club Committee

The Sunday Club Committee is responsible for the provision of the Sunday Club sessions for children and young people during term time and for preparing children to receive Holy Communion before Confirmation. Special services and events, such as, the Nativity Family Service and the end of year breakfast in July are planned and led by committee members. The current committee is led by Nina Arcuri and Frances Boyden.



The Pastoral Team

The Pastoral Team, currently comprising the Pastoral Assistant, the Associate Priest and six other volunteer members, meets weekly on Tuesday mornings on Zoom.

After saying Morning Prayer (attendance optional) the team reports on issues concerning the welfare of Church members. Regular contact, home visits and prayer support are offered, plus commemoration of any significant events of which we are made aware.

The team also prays together for those on the Intercessions List, having contacted people beforehand to ask for their prayer requests.

Website and Communication Team

Trine Hevezi leads St Mary's Website group which meets to discuss and review content, design and performance of the St Mary's website and our page on 'A Church Near You'. These are updated regularly with all the coming events at St Mary's. The St Mary's page is frequently used by the parishioners and the public, as shown by the viewing figures. It is a valuable tool for communication, providing information about the Church as well as the calendar and details for highlighted events.



St Mary's has a monthly magazine published online and in print which has a rotating team of editors. A weekly newsletter is populated with news and events and is emailed to subscribers and the St Mary's Facebook page live streams Sunday worship and provides communication to our wider community followers.

Mothers' Union (MU)

St Mary's MU has 35 members and is one of the most lively and active groups in the Rochester Diocese. The group meets three times a month and holds several fund-raising events, coffee mornings and plant sales each year to support a wide range of charities, as well as contributing to baptism work and the Grace Café.

Our companionable knitting group produces large quantities of items for charitable projects, and knits teddies and blankets for baptism babies. We are heavily involved with Mothering Sunday by making posies for the service, and in decorating oranges for the Christingle service, which raises money for the Children's Society. Sadly, the pandemic caused the closure of the Baby and Toddler group and the Communion lunches, but we hope these activities will be re-introduced.



Flower Arrangers



St Mary's has a long-established flower arranging tradition, with a dedicated team of regular flower arrangers which are supplemented when needed. Flowers are provided for all Sunday services except during Lent and Advent, and for all the larger church festivals, as well as for special occasions.

St Mary's has good connections with the Guild of Church Flower Arrangers strong links with Bromley & District Floral Society.

We intend that flower arranging will continue to flourish at St Mary's and enhance the worship of the church.



The Choir and Music at St Mary's

Music is a vital part of worship at St Mary's and a robed choir, which is affiliated to the RSCM, joins the organ at most services. The singers come from a variety of backgrounds and we are always looking for new members. Their friendliness and camaraderie along with the occasional chocolate, help with producing a coherent vocal sound to encourage the wider congregation to sing.



The building has an excellent acoustic and we periodically host excellent concerts by local groups including the Bromley Boy Singers <https://bromleyboysingers.org.uk/> who also use the church and hall for rehearsals.

The Bromley Symphony Players, a chamber group formed by members of the Bromley Symphony Orchestra. With a first-class organ on the premises, virtuoso organists also give recitals to appreciative audiences.



8. Community Engagement

Parish School

The Parish Church of England Primary School on London Lane has a long history of association with St Mary's Church. In September 1986 the school transferred, along with the pupils and staff of St Mary's Church of England Primary School, to a renovated eighteenth-century mansion known as Plaistow Lodge. This is a listed building which stands in its own grounds. More about the school can be found here <https://www.parishceschool.com/>

Previous incumbents have taken on active roles with the school, attending assemblies, meeting with the headteacher and pupils and hosting annual school services at St Mary's including Harvest Festival and Thanksgiving services.

The Parish School is part of the Aquinas Trust <https://www.aquinastrust.org/> and the Incumbents of St Peter and St Paul Church and St Mary's Church both sit on the Aquinas Advisory Council of Parish School.

Headteacher Rachel Coleman is keen for the links between St Mary's and the Parish School to continue, and for the next incumbent to have an active role in the worship of the school and continue to provide pastoral visits and care. The school had a very successful inspection by Ofsted in 2023 and by the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) in January 2024. Ofsted noted that "staff use the school values well to foster a sense of community" and SIAMS said "Parish Primary's Christian vision is a subtle heartbeat that gently shapes and directs the school's nurturing ethos".



Sunny Kids®



We are excited that a new pre-school will be opening its doors to the community in September 2024, they will be operating from the Warwick Hall of St Mary's Church house. Jo Godbold, owner of Sunny Kids will be working with us over the coming months to prepare for the opening. Involvement from the new vicar in the form of visits, pastoral care and integration into the church family has been requested. This along with Jo's vision of fostering community will be a great step forward in our mission to engage more with families and young children in our local area.

Grace Café and Afternoon Tea Events

St Mary's holds a weekly drop-in café on Wednesday mornings, enjoyed by members of the Church and the local community. It has a welcoming feel with free cake and refreshments. In the warmer months, there are more elaborate afternoon teas in the church porch.

Art shows, flower festivals, sales and fundraising events are also periodically held in the church and church hall. There is scope for more community engagement events such as Summer and Christmas fairs and musical productions, and to make more use of our stage for amateur dramatics and film nights.



College Road neighbours

College Road is a friendly community of neighbours who enjoy annual celebrations within the grounds of the church. Many attend services throughout the year and during Advent the road holds an 'Advent Window' event; the church porch traditionally hosts Window No 24 with a creative festive display for the community.



Uniformed Groups



St Mary's is home to long-standing and active Brownie and Guide units, and a more recently established Ranger group, making it the only Anglican church in the vicinity to offer Guiding to girls between the ages of 7 and 18.



Members mostly live in the parish and many are past or present pupils of Parish Primary school, giving the opportunity for further connection with families who have no other links with the church.

18th Bromley Cubs and Scout groups are very popular at St Mary's and regularly attend parade at church services. To date, the incumbent has taken on a role as Chair and Trustee for the group.



9. St Mary's Church and associated buildings



St Mary's is a beautiful Victorian Church standing in its well-kept grounds set back from the main road. Notable architectural features include magnificent stained-glass windows, beautiful Chancel murals and a superb and ornate pipe organ. The PCC is currently in the process of exploring listed status for the church building to enable us to access grants to maintain our building.





If you are interested in reading more about the history of the building, a short guide can be found [here](#)

The organ

In 1882 William Hill and Son built a two-manual and pedals organ for St Mary's, replacing a previous four-stop single manual organ. The organ was enlarged to a three-manual organ in 1892. There was a rebuild in 1953 by Rushworth and Dreaper, which incorporated a detached console in the north transept. In 1993, F.H. Browne of Canterbury undertook major repairs and restoration, including the addition of new stops.



Church House

Church House is a large house and hall adjacent to the church. The hall is hired out for community activities and several local social activity clubs. It has a functional stage area and suitable kitchen facilities.



The parish office is situated on the ground floor, along with two rooms and the Hall that are available to hire. The first floor has offices which are rented to local businesses. The first and second floors contain two residential flats which are privately rented. The church also part owns a three-bedroom semi-detached house in Fairfield Road which is let to tenants.

Recent engagement with a local amateur dramatics society resulted in a very successful evening 'Night at the Musicals' event. Community feedback indicates more events like this would be welcomed, with such good stage facilities and local demand, this is something that St Mary's would like to pursue.





The Vicarage is a large and attractive five-bedroom detached house with a spacious garden, situated less than five minutes' walk from the Church. There is a single detached garage (with inspection pit!) and off-street parking for three cars.

The Vicarage building has been well maintained, all windows are double glazed, and the loft insulation has been recently upgraded. There is gas central heating throughout, and friendly neighbours on either side.



The large south-facing rear garden is mainly laid to lawn with mature trees and shrubs and has been used for summer garden parties.



The front-facing drawing room within the vicarage has been used as an office and meeting space. It is a light and airy room with two large built in bookcases.

Floor Plan



Total area: approx. 209.7 sq. metres (2257.6 sq. feet)

This floorplan is for illustrative purposes only. It is not drawn to scale. Any measurements, floor areas, openings and orientation are approximate. Drawn By Proctors Estate Agent Bromley
Plan produced using PlanUp.

10. How to apply

If you believe God might be calling you to join us in sharing the love of God with the people of Bromley and to play your unique part in building the Kingdom of God as Vicar of St Mary's, we would love to hear from you. Application details are available of the Diocese of Rochester website at www.rochester.anglican.org

If you would like an informal conversation about this vacancy, please contact:

Fiona Porter (EA to the Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley) at
fiona.porter@rochester.anglican.org

