

# St Mary and St Hugh, Old Harlow

## PARISH PROFILE



Deanery of Harlow,  
Episcopal Area of  
Barking

Serving God through  
Service to One Another;  
Serving the Community;  
Serving the World



# FOREWORD

by the Bishop of Barking



The Diocese of Chelmsford calls its parishes and leaders to be a Transforming Presence in the communities they serve. The parish of St Mary & St Hugh, Old Harlow most certainly fulfils that commission and offers an exciting and challenging missional leadership opportunity for its next incumbent.

The next vicar will find a strong Gospel foundation to build on and a loving and supportive church family who wish to continue to thrive and grow through good biblical teaching and varied and lively worship.

Following the encouragement in and passion for community engagement under the previous incumbent, the new housing developments within and around the parish give even more opportunity to serve a growing population and point them to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I commend this parish profile for your consideration and the vision and challenge in Christ it describes for its next vicar.

+ Peter Barking

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# WELCOME

A warm welcome from us at St Mary's as we explore together the right person to lead us forward over the coming years. We hope and pray that as you read our Parish Profile, you feel the warmth, support, challenges and excitement that await you in this single church benefice in the heart of West Essex.

As you explore the pages, we have tried to give you a glimpse into who we are, what we're like, what we do and the person we believe God is calling to this place.



May you know His presence and guidance as you seek His will for the next chapter in your ministry. If you want to know more please contact Simeons Trustees, our Patron initially by email at: [ann.brown@simeons.org.uk](mailto:ann.brown@simeons.org.uk).

# OUR VALUES

We are a loving, caring and welcoming church with a heart for the community. The sense of family is very much at the centre of St Mary's.

We are blessed with a number of people who serve in lay ministry roles such as leading services, preaching and leading our sung worship. We are committed to being Word-fed and Spirit-led.

## We value the...

- importance of scripture-based teaching to encourage and inspire us to grow in our faith and discipleship.
- pursuit of Spirit-led worship for bringing us into the presence of God.
- collaborative working with the wider body of Christ, using our links with other churches within Harlow, including those of other denominations, in shared mission and ministry.



# OUR VISION

Our vision for St Mary's is to bring God's abundant blessing to the people of Old Harlow and beyond.

We want to:

- **be a visible and welcoming family** to all those moving into the new developments within our parish, with a desire to see more young families join us.
- **encourage and disciple newcomers** to the church in their faith.
- **develop and extend our outreach activities**, becoming more mission-focussed with a spiritual impact, to grow the body of Christ.
- **be a prayerful body of Christ** where our individual and corporate prayer life is central to supporting each other and the wider community.
- **be a nurturing church** and develop our house groups further.
- **see a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit to increase and deepen personal relationships with Jesus**, to equip us to serving each other and sharing the gospel.
- **deepen our knowledge of the Bible** through good teaching, so that we have a better understanding of what we believe.

We asked our 10.30am congregation to think about our church in the future...

*"I truly believe that St Mary's has shaped me into a better person, even though I'm still only 15.*

*Through Kingdom Kidz, and now Je?us youth group, I found out how to put my faith into practice, and I'm learning what it really means to be Christian. St Mary's has allowed me to explore who I am as a person, and especially who God wants me to be.*

Jodie



# OUR NEW INCUMBENT

This is an exciting time to join St Mary's church and the team in Harlow Deanery. There is already a significant partnership between Christian churches, across town and villages. "We believe that God is equipping and leading us as we seek to take the increasing and many opportunities to be salt and light through mission and evangelism in the wider community."  
(Harlow & Villages Mission Deanery)

The Harlow Deanery mission vision for 2025 specifies the key priorities for a new incumbent to focus mission outside the walls of the church. As Parishes are grouped together the vision of the Deanery is very much that clergy will have the heart and eyes that look beyond parish boundaries and that the gifts you bring will help take forward the vision and mission of the wider church in Harlow. Specifically, we envisage that St Mary's will work closely (as a Mission & Ministry Unit) with Church Langley LEP and with St Mary Magdalene, Potter Street.\*

A desire to work strategically and collaboratively at all levels, ecumenically within the Deanery is essential. You will also need to foster lay ministry and enable Christian learning to equip us as a church and individuals for ministry and mission.



St Mary's church is in view of new housing developments and as a church family we have a positive approach to seeking and creating mission opportunities within our Parish.

To help us make our vision a reality we are looking for a new incumbent who will:

- **provide strategic leadership** to grow our congregation and increase the number of families and children attending
- **encourage and equip individuals** to grow in their faith and use of spiritual gifts, especially new believers
- **be an inspiring preacher and teacher, rooted in Scripture**, trusting its authority
- **be nurturing** to help develop new and existing leaders within lay ministry
- **lead with passion and discernment**, with a **heart for pastoral care**
- **be relational in nature to join** us in being a community-loving and community-loved church
- **be collaborative** in their approach for partnering with ecumenical churches within the Deanery

Could you help shape and contribute to the vision and ministry of the wider church in Harlow?

Do you have the gifts and qualities to nurture and lead St Mary's as part of the wider mission for Harlow?



# OUR PARTNERSHIPS

We are used to working together with the community and other churches within the town. For the last ten years, we have co-ordinated and hosted the monthly Heart 4 Harlow (H4H) Prayer Service, where Christians from various denominations meet to pray and worship together. Worship and the prayer times are led by people from different churches. This has helped to bring Christians together throughout the town and partnerships have developed in different charities and ministries. These include Foodbank; Maybury Open Door; Street Pastors; Hope 4 Harlow (working with homeless), Harlow Healing Rooms.



## Heart Harlow

Heart 4 Harlow has been central in impacting the deanery vision for supporting 5 areas of partnership and engagement across the town:

- Commerce (shops and Business)
- Civic (Local authority and councillors, MP, police and fire services)
- Art, Culture and Education (schools, college, arts associations)
- Health and well-being (charities and community groups, NHS and the care sector)
- Churches and chaplaincy.

The Walk of Witness through the town centre on Good Friday and a Carol Service in the Harvey Centre are other opportunities for us to worship together.

We work well with the local Baptist Church for a joint children's outreach called Kidz Klub, including a week's holiday club during the summer holidays where in the past few years, there have been an average of 100 primary school children attending. There are also a series of joint Kidz Klub 'Fiesta's' throughout the year to maintain contact with these children.



St Mary's bell ringing team assist other churches for weddings and this in turn is reciprocated. Local bell ringing teams often visit us since the bells have been retuned and re-set making them easier to use and several quarter peels have been rung.



# ORGANISATION

Our PCC is made up of 14 members (three of whom are deanery synod representatives) who meet bi monthly. Each coming from quite differing backgrounds, there is always lively debate, plenty of humour, honest and open questioning and a deep sense of togetherness and unity. Over the past years we have grown together, facing many challenging and exciting issues around ministries and our buildings. Occasional Away days have enabled focused times on key topics.

Our Parish Administrator works 24 hours a week supporting the administrative life of the church and dealing with day to day enquiries. Our Parish Office is open 4 mornings a week. Additional hours are given to the office for social media / website support enabling an easy to use shop window into our church life and activities.



The Ministry Leadership Team, including our 2 churchwardens (set up 5 years ago) meets monthly, supporting our incumbent and taking on board selected areas of church life and direction

*“ Whilst it cannot be guaranteed, we hope to be able to secure some additional strategic mission funding to enable the appointment of a pioneer lay / ordained minister to work in this area of new housing.*

**Vanessa Herrick  
(Archdeacon of Harlow)**



# CHALLENGES

*“ We see new housing estates growing up all around us... so we need to develop a Christian presence in and for every community.*

**Stephen Cottrell  
(Chelmsford)**

We want to deepen our individual and corporate relationship with Jesus and grow our spiritual gifts. We are excited at the opportunities for making Jesus known in our community.



## What are the challenges to make this happen at St Mary's?

- We already organise lots of activities that have the potential to be successful mission-focussed ministry, but we need to be strategic and realistic in our planning with the resources available. Although we have started to deliver welcome bags to new residents, the engagement with new housing will be a huge priority for several years.
- To improve channels of communication to our local community e.g. to further develop our website.
- The age range of our congregation is not representative of the population within the parish. We would love to see more families and especially young people.
- The different teams that facilitate our fellowship, worship and care for each other need to grow in numbers; development of pastoral support would bring care to more church members.
- Only around half of the congregation are actively involved in housegroups which provide opportunities for fellowship, prayer, pastoral support and discipleship.
- The relationship with the local Church of England school needs nurturing.
- We want prayer to become a church family-wide priority and essential to cover all of family life and outreach.

# OUR WORSHIP

There are three services each Sunday

Time	Type of Worship	Average attendees
08:00	Morning worship – Piano / organ accompaniment; lay lead based on NT Wright's Lectionary readings. 2nd Sunday - Communion.	<b>12</b>
10:30	Evangelical / charismatic style worship with songs led by various worship groups. Testimony slots included. Children very welcome. Kingdom Kidz for primary age children meet during the service in the adjoining hall on 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Sundays. 2nd Sunday – baptism when required – Full immersion baptisms arranged on specific Sundays during the year. 3rd Sunday - Family Communion. 4th Sunday - Café style 'All Age Worship'. 5th Sunday – Morning worship	morning attendance: <b>92</b> Children (under 16): <b>16</b> Adults: <b>76</b>
17:00	3rd Sunday only – Come Closer. Joined by other congregations for a time of meditative worship and individual prayer.	<b>20</b>
18:30	1st Sunday – Informal evening worship including communion 2nd Sunday - Informal evening worship. 4th Sunday – Heart 4 Harlow (H4H) service – Prayer for Harlow, coordinated and hosted by St Mary's, but led and attended by people from a range of churches across the town. 5th Sunday – contemplative prayer soaking service, where people can write their own poems, prayer requests, record prophetic words, give prayers of thanks giving amongst a background of soft music with different themes; and a multisensory opportunity to allow reflection and a time to rest with the Lord.	evening attendance: <b>21</b> H4H - Average number of churches represented: <b>13</b> People: <b>41</b>
4th Tuesday Midweek service 10:30	Occurs during coffee shop – some people choose to join the service in the transept; others continue to enjoy refreshments, chatting and playing games. Services vary to include: Communion; songs of praise; morning worship.	<b>14</b>



The Church welcomes our local schools (Churchgate Primary (C of E aided); Harlowbury Primary; St Nicholas Independent School; Mark Hall Secondary Academy) for services at Christmas and Easter and for special events e.g. around Remembrance Sunday; ISingPop and for teaching such as mock weddings.



There are joint services with Harlow Baptist Church for Kidz Klub.

We also have special services throughout the year – e.g. Pentecost in the Vicarage Garden; Christingle and a memorial service for families who have lost loved ones.

Joint outreach occurs with Harlow Baptist Church with carol singing in The Crown Pub and there is also liaison with the local Traders Association in Old Harlow arranging carol singing in the High Street for turning on the Christmas lights.

*“ My wife and I have been regular and committed worshippers here at St Mary's for over 60 years. During this time we have seen many changes; all of them good. God is building His church here as He promised, and there are exciting times ahead as we move on under His unfailing guidance and love.*

**Norman and Mildred**

# MISSION: SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Mary's has a passion for mission to share the love of Jesus and encourage others with their faith journey. We have a Mission Action Partners (MAP) team, which advises the church on support for and provides links with overseas and home mission.

**Starfishes** – is our popular toddler group which meets weekly during term times, providing opportunity for chatting and supporting parents, grandparents, child minders as well as getting to know the children. Festivals such as Christmas and Easter are celebrated.

*"Starfishes is such a lovely friendly group. My son loves coming – what are we going to do next week when it's not on?"*

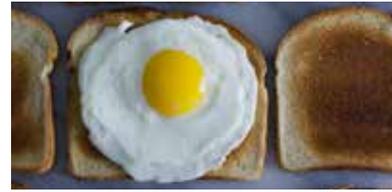
Parent



**Pre-School**

**Little Fishes Pre-School** – is open for morning sessions in the hall during term time. The children bring their parents to church to watch them participate in services several times a year. Quite a few of the parents drop into Coffee Shop and Starfishes when taking their children to Little Fishes.

**Coffee shop** – provides opportunity for young and old alike to have a chat and /or play games. Members of the community provide plants, local produce, bake bread, make jams / chutneys which are sold and the proceeds are presently going to Streets2Homes which support local people who are homeless.



**Men's breakfast** – Food is important to the men's group which meets monthly for breakfasts and a variety of activities including speakers - sometimes from within the fellowship, other times guest speakers. The group also goes for walks and gets involved in other activities such as going to watch the cricket. Men are encouraged to invite people from outside the fellowship. Occasionally other members of the family are invited to join them e.g. for the legendary **family breakfast!**

**Night Shelter** – (Hope4Harlow) The church and the local community work together to provide hot food and accommodation on Saturday nights during January and February across 7 different churches in Harlow.



**Questions Group** – We found that we had some new members of the church who were asking questions about the Christian Faith. They did not want a formal group, just to be able to ask questions in a safe environment. The Questions Group was set up at Church on a Tuesday lunchtime, where we have a bring and share lunch and Bible based chat about faith and what they have been reading or what has challenged them in services.



**House of Prayer** – representatives from 5 churches have met at St Mary's for lunch and prayer monthly for the last 6 years.

**Baptism and Marriage Preparation** – are organised and led by lay teams when required. See Further Information.

**Garden Party** – The Annual Garden Party last year was held in conjunction with the Queen’s Head Public House and was very well supported by the community. The money raised is used to support outreach work for Kidz Klub (a joint initiative with the Baptist Church which is held for a week in the summer holidays and also half day sessions on occasions through the year for primary age children.)



**Messy Church** – 2 sessions of Messy Church occurred last year. This was a new venture for the church and proved to be very popular, with 34 and 43 attendees. We have a new leader who has stepped up to continue this, so we are looking forward to extending this outreach.

**Fitzwilliam Court afternoons** – Fitzwilliam Court is a supported housing complex. A team from church go to chat, take refreshments, organise a quiz and build relationships with the residents on a fortnightly basis. This is well received.



**New Homes Outreach** – We have started distributing welcome packs to Gilden Park (one of the new local developments). This is an ongoing commitment and we also want to take welcome packs to the latest New Hall development, which comes within our parish boundaries. The number of homes in the parish will double in the next four years.

## SERVING ONE ANOTHER

**Welcome Team and Sidespeople** – provide a warm welcome to the church

**Housegroups** - provide pastoral support for those within their group, as well as giving opportunity for discipleship and for people to develop their gifts and confidence in leading in a ‘safe’ environment. They also encourage building up of trust and prayer networks. There are 7 housegroups presently.

**Flower Group and Banner Group** – aid our worship by enhancing our church building.

**Prayer Ministry** – is available after services. Special days and nights of prayer are arranged on occasions.

**Home communions** - there are a team of people who will take communion to people who are unable to get to church.

**Church socials** – e.g. walks; dances; picnics

**Kingdom Kidz / Je?us Group** - Our Sunday School is called Kingdom Kidz. We have had on average 8 children each week, although more recently this has increased to up to 18. The teenagers meet once a month as the Je?us group. We have a small group of teenagers who get involved in ministries in the church on the weeks when there is no Je?us group - including being part of the worship group; managing the computer for services; helping with the children’s work; PA.



## SERVING THE WORLD

St Mary's is continuing the tradition of nurturing, sending and supporting mission partners. The MAP team distributes prayer focus news from the 7 individuals / families that the church support financially or in prayer and assists in hosting and organising events when mission partners visit us.

We support several mission agencies, including Tearfund; Trans World Radio, Church Mission Society, Mission Direct and other organisations such as Fairtrade (we are a Fairtrade Church and have a stall several times a year); Christian Solidarity Worldwide; Christian Hope International; Compassion (several members sponsor children including the Je?us Group who communicate with and pray for a child.

The church contributes to individuals going on short term mission trips abroad with different agencies and several members of the congregation have been involved with this.

The Samaritan's Purse Shoe Box appeal is very popular and last year 130 boxes were sent.



## WHAT WE CAN OFFER THE INCUMBENT

A beautiful detached house built in the 60's with huge garden and 5 bedrooms. Together with your input we would want to help you decorate and refurbish before you arrive. Many a football game and outdoor services have taken place on the hallowed lawns. It has its own drive and garage nestled in a secluded estate within Churchgate village, the house is just a short walk from the Church although not obvious that it is the vicarage.

Our Parish Administrator will provide you with ongoing support and is able to deal with daily Parish issues.

We offer a monthly hospitality allowance and a yearly book allowance.

We would want to protect your days off and encourage very much that you take your annual leave entitlement.



# TOWN AND PARISH

Harlow is a rapidly developing town. It is a great place for business, education and to call home.

- The town has a rich history of innovation, culture and entrepreneurship.
- There are good road and rail links to London, Cambridge and Stansted Airport. Preliminary works to the new junction 7A to the M11 are now in progress.
- There is a good choice of schools within the town, including our local church school. The college has a good reputation nationally.
- Public Health England (PHE) is re-locating to Harlow creating around 2,500 new jobs.
- Harlow has been recognised as an Enterprise Zone – focusing on life sciences.



- Harlow has beautiful green wedges through the middle of the town, making it a very pleasant place to live. The River Stort provides chances for kayaking, and the canal paths offer opportunity for walking, cycling and fishing. The Town Park is landscaped with facilities for children, has Pets Corner and events such as a free Firework display and concerts in the summer. The Lee Valley Regional Park and Hatfield and Epping Forests are within 10 miles.
- There are good sporting facilities – with a new rugby club; football club; Leisurezone; tennis facilities; cricket club; golf course; table tennis and several bowling greens. There is an outdoor pursuit centre with a climbing wall and opportunity to do open water swimming at Redricks Lane.
- Harlow Playhouse allows varied performances in the main auditorium and the studio. There are also several small theatres for local productions around the town and 2 multiplex cinemas.



# HARLOW

# THE PARISH

Churchgate Street is a picturesque village on the outskirts of Old Harlow, with a popular village shop, pub and 2 schools. The church provides a meeting place and is well used for community use. The congregation work well with the local Residents Association, who have socials in the church. The annual 'Garden Party' is held in and around the church and organised jointly between the church and The Queen's Head Pub.

There are close ties with the Alms Houses (Godsafe) next to the church and with Fitzwilliam Court, which provides supported living for more senior residents.

The parish is a rapidly developing area with two new areas currently being built – New Hall and Gilden Park. The proposed Harlow and Gilston Garden Park would also be within our parish.

The schools currently within the parish are:

- \*Mark Hall Academy (secondary);
- \*Harlowbury Primary,
- \*Fawbert and Barnard Primary
- \*Churchgate C of E Aided primary
- \*St Nicholas Independent School.



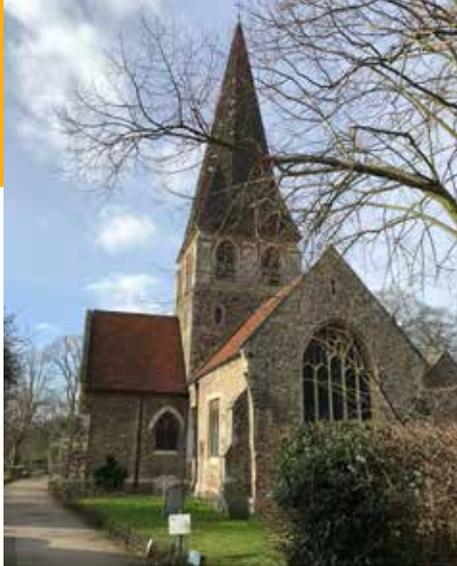
There is also a new primary school on New Hall which opened in September 2018 and another primary school planned on Gilden Park.

Around 50% of the congregation live outside the parish. We have a few young families, but the majority of the congregation are more senior in age, although young at heart!



# BUILDINGS

Our main church building dates back to the 12th century and is situated within a large, well maintained churchyard. The latter includes a large number of graves, with recent permission to re-use some of our grave areas. The peaceful and attractive site is well cared for by volunteers, including our local Payback Community Team, together with a paid part time gardener. A recent tree survey has flagged up considerable work to be done which is now being completed.



Within the gardens we have created a Garden of Peace for those wanting to come and spend time remembering loved ones who have passed away.

We added a large hall, toilets, entrance lobby in 1987 and recently refurbished the kitchen and a comfortable upstairs meeting / activities room.

In 2011 we had a £500,000 “makeover” which has now given our main church building a warm, welcoming and multi user feel. The work included removing all the pews, a new heating system, new

flooring, an additional small kitchen, disabled toilet / nappy changing area, sound desk and a complete re-decoration. This total project has enabled the space to be used for a variety of purposes including school services, concerts, musical evenings, film nights, outside training and large-scale family suppers.

Wi Fi is available throughout all our buildings.

Through a series of gifts, grants and church family donations our bells and bell chambers were totally restored, cleaned and repaired in 2016.

The Parish office is located in the converted original church hall within the churchyard. It has also an upstairs room that can cater for groups up to 10-15.

The Parish owns 2 three-bedroom properties in Old Harlow. These are currently rented out through a local estate agent. All of our buildings have been well maintained and are in good repair. Most of the key tasks arising out of a recent Quinquennial report have been actioned including new stonework and parts of the roof have been repaired.

# FINANCES

**At St Mary's we are privileged to have friends and a congregation who continually give so generously.**

Over the last few years there has been a surplus in the General Fund. The PCC has given and is giving more Parish Share to the Diocese than has been requested. In 2018 approximately 14% of our total expenditure (excluding Little Fishes Pre-School costs) was Mission and Charitable Giving. In 2017 it was approximately 16%.

The last approved accounts are available on the Charity Commission website (See Further Information below)

# FURTHER INFORMATION

	2018	2017	2016	2015
Baptisms	10	27	13	24
Thanksgiving	1	2	0	0
Weddings	4	3	8	7
Funerals in Church	4	7	2	7
Funerals at the Crematorium	5	7	4	7

*Notes: The baptism figures are the number of individuals, not the number of services.*

### For more information about Harlow

- <http://www.discoverharlow.co.uk/story>
- <https://www.harlow.gov.uk>
- <https://www.essexhighways.org>

### Church website:

- <https://www.stmaryschgate.org.uk>

### Information on accounts:

- <http://beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?subid=0&regid=1131774>

**\* Additional information will be sent to all applicants.**



**St Mary's**  
OLD HARLOW

*building a mission community*