

# DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS

Archdeaconry of Hertford Stevenage Deanery

## The Benefice of Holy Trinity, Stevenage

### Parish Profile

2012



**Holy Trinity Church**  
High Street  
Stevenage SG1 3DB



**The Church of Christ the King**  
Filey Close, Symonds Green  
Stevenage SG1 2JW

[www.holytrinity-stevenage.info](http://www.holytrinity-stevenage.info)





## Our Vision Statement

"We the Church in Holy Trinity and Christ the King  
 exist to work for the coming of God's Kingdom  
 by offering worship to God,  
 showing the love of God through Christ,  
 supporting and serving everyone in the whole Parish and beyond;  
 in order to develop awareness of ourselves and others,  
 to grow together in faith,  
 to encourage others to know God."

## THE BENEFICE

The Benefice has become vacant on the retirement of the priest-in-charge. It is a single parish with two churches (Holy Trinity and Christ the King).

## LOCATION

The parish is located towards the northern end of the Borough and comprises a significant part of the old town of Stevenage and the newer neighbourhood of Symonds Green.

**Holy Trinity church**, a Victorian building of traditional design, stands at the south end of the Old Town High Street, a short walk to the New Town centre. The High Street has a variety of small shops, restaurants and public houses and it is still possible to see its roots as a traditional High Street.

**Christ the King** in Filey Close, Symonds Green, is a Local Ecumenical Partnership managed by a Joint Church Council consisting mainly of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. The church, a modern functional building, shares facilities with the Local Authority-run Symonds Green community centre. It is near a shopping precinct and close to a public house.

Stevenage has **excellent transport links**. A comprehensive network of cycle tracks helps ease the journey to and from work. The rail journey to London being less than 30 minutes away makes Stevenage ideally located for daily commuting. Trains also run to the North, Cambridge and Ely. The A1 (M) passes west of Stevenage, making road access very good. The Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban and the Diocesan office in St. Albans are easily reached. The nearest airport is London Luton; Heathrow and Stansted airports are about an hour away.

## COMMUNITY

Stevenage Old Town developed along the A1 (Great North Road) as a staging post for stagecoaches travelling between London and the North. The High Street, no longer part of the A1, includes many buildings of historic interest. It is made up of small, traditional shops and businesses with Waitrose being the main retailer. Recently a Tesco Metro has opened.

**Planning for the development of Stevenage West** (an area west of the A1 (M) motorway) began in 1994. In 1998 plans to build 3,500 new homes were published. The majority of these will be in our parish. Since then there have been Public Enquiries, several changes to the plans and numerous legal battles. The full details, and information about the latest situation, are available online: <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning/stevenage-west/>. Should this development go ahead, Christ the King would be the nearest church. Parish Boundaries have been re-defined to include the area within the parish. **Our future involvement in this project is essential to ensure a Christian presence from the beginning.**

Stevenage Borough Council plans a major redevelopment of the New Town shopping centre, the first town shopping centre built for pedestrians only. There are also out of town retail parks.

In the Old Town, the mix of businesses and homes is changing as commercial areas are redeveloped to provide more residential accommodation. Symonds Green remains more static providing a mix of private and social housing and care homes.

The population covers a wide range of occupations and professions.

Within the parish, there are several groups of dwellings for old people; of these Stevenage Abbeyfield home is near to Holy Trinity. Scarborough House, catering for those with special needs, is close to Christ the King.

Many people from the parish are involved in Christian and non-Christian community and charitable work across the Borough. Parishioners are involved in Bridge Builders (promoting Christian education to schools), Street Pastors (supporting revellers after closing time), The Haven (refuge for the homeless), The Living Room (day centre with counselling provision to help people with a variety of addictions) and the YMCA Space project. Bridge Builders and Bunyan Baptist church join Holy Trinity in providing childrens' activities such as the Old Town Church Trail and **the Easter Journey at Holy Trinity**.



We also host the Stevenage Christmas Tree Festival.

Organisations unconnected with the Church use the Parish Room at Holy Trinity, thus building our links with the community. Sometimes the church itself is used when the room is not large enough. Similarly, Christ the King is put to good use when not being used for worship. The adjacent Community Centre (about twice the size) is also available for use.

## **EDUCATION**

Stevenage is very well served with more than 75 schools including nursery, pre-school, infants, junior, secondary and special needs schools. There are also private schools nearby. North Herts College is in the New Town and the University of Hertfordshire is a short journey down the A1 (M) in Hatfield.

Within the parish there are three primary schools. We have links with a RC secondary school just outside the parish. The outgoing priest-in-charge was a governor of one of the primary schools. One of our Readers is a governor at another and a member of our congregation is governor at St. Nicholas (C of E) primary school, outside the parish. The relationship between schools in the parish and the church is good; sometimes ministers lead assemblies and laity help out with school activities. Schools visit the church for special services.

## **LEISURE AND RECREATION**

Sports facilities in the town include swimming, cricket, football, bowls, ten-pin bowling, golf courses, tennis, rugby, athletics, netball and hockey. The Stevenage Leisure Centre is home to the 500-seat Gordon Craig Theatre and also provides a wide variety of sports and pastimes. The Leisure Park has a multiplex cinema, restaurants and nightclubs. Stevenage Football Club is an up-and-coming Football League club. Fairlands Valley Park, set in extensive parkland, has a sailing lake and is a well-used facility.

**Uniformed organisations** such as Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts are well represented in the town. A church-sponsored Rainbows group meets regularly at Christ the King.



## WORSHIP

### Services at Holy Trinity

#### Sundays:

8:00am **said Eucharist**, average attendance: 18.

9:30am **sung Family Eucharist** with Sunday school for children and crèche facilities, average attendance: 107 including 13 under 16. The service is followed by Parish Breakfast.

6:30pm **BCP sung Evensong** (first Sunday of each month), average attendance: 16.



#### Weekdays:

8:30am **Morning Prayer** (Monday to Friday), average attendance: 4.

5:30pm **Evening Prayer** (Fridays), average attendance: 2.5 (Monday to Thursday evening prayer services have been suspended during the vacancy).

7:30pm **Eucharist** (Wednesdays, healing service and a service of requiem monthly), average attendance: 6.

9.30 pm **Street Pastors** and prayer support (Saturday evenings). Average attendance: 8.

### Services at Christ the King

#### Sundays:

11:15am **Sung Eucharist** (except for the first Sunday in each month when a non-Eucharistic **“Praise Together”** service is held). Average attendance: 25 including 4 under 16.



#### Weekdays:

10:30am **Eucharist** on a Thursday Average attendance: 13.

**Lay participation in worship** is encouraged. Laity leads the daily office. We have a rota of people who read the lessons and assist the clergy by leading intercessions. Licensed lay assistants administer the chalice and take Holy Communion to the housebound. Holy Trinity has a robed choir and servers at all major sung services.

## Special services

We hold, on an annual basis, special services on **Mothering Sunday**, at **Harvest**, **All Souls Requiem**, **Remembrance Day** and a **Christingle** service. The Deanery **Ascension Day Eucharist** alternates between Holy Trinity and St Andrew and St George.

Holy Trinity hosts the annual **Lister Hospital memorial service**; the **Age Concern** carol service and various **school harvest and carol services**. A well-attended **Messy Church** is held six times a year.

There is a range of daily services and activities during Holy Week. Some involve all Christian denominations present in the town, including an ecumenical **Good Friday walk of witness** from Holy Trinity to the war memorial. The **Service of the Day** alternates between Holy Trinity and the RC Church of the Transfiguration. In recent years, Ecumenical Lent Courses have been held hosted by a different church each week.

Last year there were 30 baptisms, 9 weddings, 13 funerals in church and 3 funeral services held at the crematorium. We also provide preparation classes for baptism and marriage (marriage preparation classes are arranged on a deanery-wide basis led by the Holy Trinity deacon and involving Relate-trained laity). We have a team of bereavement visitors.



## Worship styles

Although our Eucharistic services are based on **Common Worship**, the style of worship and music is somewhat different at both churches.



**Holy Trinity** is considered traditional C of E, with a **strong musical tradition**. We have a **two-manual pipe organ, robed choir and servers**. We use Hymns Ancient and Modern and Hymns Old and New. Musical Eucharistic settings used include those by Rutter, Aston, Wiltshire, Murray and Appleford. The choir sings an anthem every Sunday. The parish is a member of the Royal School of Church Music. The choir, led by an organist/director of music, currently comprises adult ladies and gentlemen. We try to recruit boys and girls for the choir but find that there is severe competition from Sunday morning sports and other youth activities.

Our liturgical tradition includes vestments in seasonal colours, including use of chasubles and, occasionally, a cope. The reserved Sacrament is held at Holy Trinity to take to people who are sick or dying.

**Christ the King** offers a much wider range of worship. Its foundation is the same liberal catholic theology as at Holy Trinity. The church building lends itself to more **informal styles and an adaptive approach** to the services provided. A variety of music is offered using piano, the **Christ the King Band**, and music from CDs.



The services at Christ the King have enabled new and contemporary ideas to be trialled, which then find their expression in other parish- wide activities such as “Messy Church”.



Messy Church Crafts



Messy Church Teaching



Messy Church Party

## PASTORAL AND ECUMENICAL

This is a parish full of opportunities to Live God’s Love and show it in so many ways. We have an enthusiastic team of ministers and laity with diverse talents. The laity plays a big part in activities such as prayer and care, home communion, bereavement and sick visiting. Individually, people are very active in pastoral work and much is offered quietly and faithfully. However, there is scope for a more co-ordinated and focused approach which could target the areas most in need. Retreats are organized most years.

The **Christ the King partnership** started with involvement from the Anglican, Roman Catholic and United Reformed churches. Unfortunately the United Reformed Church no longer holds services or takes any part in the running of the church. Recently, the Immanuel Evangelical Church has started hiring the church for regular Sunday afternoon services and this provides an opportunity for further inter-denominational activity.

The **Ministers Fraternal** (North Stevenage Cluster of Churches) has instigated many joint initiatives which have greatly enhanced inter-denominational relationships.

The town-wide **Churches Together in Stevenage** is very active with member churches including Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, United Reformed Church, Baptist, Elim Pentecostal Church, Community Churches, Longmeadow Evangelical Church, Quakers, Coptic Orthodox, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist and Vineyard Fellowship.

## LEADERSHIP

**The PCC** currently consists of licensed ministers, 18 lay members including four Deanery Synod representatives, twelve elected members and two churchwardens. The age range of

members is from the early thirties to beyond retirement age who work in a multi task-team structure. The PCC, which meets bi-monthly, alternates both venue and worship between Holy Trinity (a said Eucharist) and Christ the King (a contemporary non-Eucharistic service).

**The Churchwardens** are heavily involved in most sub-committees of the PCC and place particular emphasis on pastoral well-being and the care of the fabric of Holy Trinity. They are active Trustees of the Friends of Holy Trinity.

**The Standing Committee** (priest-in-charge, churchwardens, PCC secretary and Honorary Treasurer with power to co-opt) meets bi-monthly a few weeks before each PCC meeting.

An annual **PCC Away Day** is held which concentrates on longer term parish planning. It is most recently engaged in the Diocesan initiative of *Living God's Love*.

## **MINISTERIAL TEAM**

We have a **self-supporting curate** with full-time secular employment who has completed his training; and a retired priest who has permission to officiate. Between them, they have been able to preside and/or preach at most Eucharists on weekdays and Sundays during the vacancy thus far.

We also have a retired **Distinctive Deacon**, two **licensed Readers** and a **Reader** nearing the end of his training who has given great encouragement to the Christ the King Band. Our parish administrator gives support to the ministry team, laity and parish.

The whole ministry team are all very active and between them they cover most weekly services as well as baptisms, weddings and some funerals as well as preparation for baptism, marriage and confirmation.

On the odd occasion when we cannot provide service cover in-house, there are many priests and curates within the deanery, some retired, who are willing to come to our aid.

For the past twenty-five years we have been a **training parish** but do not have a stipendiary curate at present.

## **ELECTORAL ROLL**

The Electoral Roll stands at 226 (HT = 196, CtK = 26 HT & CtK = 4).

108 members (48% of those on the roll) live outside the Parish boundary.

## **ORGANISATIONS**

Holy Trinity has a **robed choir and servers**.

**Sunday Schools** are provided during the main Sunday service at both churches.

We run a Wednesday morning **Coffee Bar and Craft Group** and a Saturday morning **Coffee Bar** in the Parish Room.

We hold a regular **Bible study** group.

**Christ the King Band** leads worship regularly, holds an annual concert (raising funds in support of a CMS worker in Tanzania) and also leads a Christian Aid "Big Christmas Sing". This year a large Christmas Choir was formed which we hope will lead to a new Community



Choir being formed, not as a specifically church-led group but, nonetheless, providing another asset for the area.

Members of the congregation run **Rainbows** and a **NCT Mother and Toddler** group in our Parish Room. Other organisations using the parish room at Holy Trinity are a **Chess Club**, **Women's Institute**, **Rainbows and Toddlers' Group**.

## **BUILDINGS**

### **Holy Trinity**

The church is an attractive **Victorian building**, Grade II listed, with integral Parish room, kitchen and toilet facilities. The original church was consecrated in 1862. Seating is largely on **movable wooden pews**, providing flexible seating arrangements.

Key features of the church include:

**Stained glass East window** with an attractive stone and marble reredos; a **pipe organ** installed in 1977, but built in 1890, which includes a soundboard and pipe work dated circa 1740 and made by one of the greatest organ builders of all time, John Snetzler; an **external and internal Clock** installed in 1886 and still serviced by Gillett and Johnston of Croydon; A 14th or 15th century Font retrieved from the South Transept of Great Bedwyn Church and which originally came from the private chapel of a ruined castle near Bath.

In 2008, extensive external stone repairs; re-leading of the old East window; replacement of our heating installation; alterations to kitchen and toilets and internal redecoration of the nave and Parish Room were carried out. There were, therefore, no category 1 items on the last Quinquennial inspection report (2009).

The **churchyard** was extensively renovated as part of the church's Millennium project when **floodlighting** was also installed.

A regular working party maintains the church and churchyard under the guidance of the churchwardens. Our Parish Rota includes those who are regular church cleaners.

The church is **open to visitors** during daylight hours on most days of the week. Many visitors comment on the peace they find in our church.



The High Altar at Holy Trinity

### **Christ the King**

This modern building dates from 1982 and is attached to the community centre. It shares toilets and a very large kitchen and provides a very **flexible and useful worship and community space**. The building is managed and maintained by a Joint Church Council (currently chaired by one of our Readers).

## The Vicarage

The detached brick-built house with integral garage (built in 1970) is in Letchmore Road, a few hundred metres from Holy Trinity. On the ground floor the entrance lobby leads to a **study** (with cupboards, bookshelves and housing the parish computer and photocopier) and the main house hall. Off the hall are a **cloakroom, sitting and dining rooms, and kitchen**. Off the kitchen is a **utility room with internal access to the garage**. Upstairs are **four bedrooms** (all with fitted cupboards, one with wash basin), bathroom and separate toilet. There is a moderately-sized garden.

## Curate's house

The Curate's house is a **well-built, three-bedroom, mid-terrace house, attached garage** and small garden in Scarborough Avenue just a few hundred metres from Christ the King.

## FINANCE

Accounting for Holy Trinity and Christ the King is combined in the PCC accounts. Extracts from the last audited accounts reveal a total parish income of £120k and expenditure of £126k leaving a deficit for the year of £6k paid from reserves. The PCC actively encourages **Stewardship Planned Giving** (£22k in weekly envelopes and £33k by bank standing orders). Gift Aided Income Tax recovery added another £13k. The PCC has a number of **Mission projects** with major support being given to CMS missionary, Dr Ruth Hulser, operating a family clinic in Tabora, Tanzania (£1200) and Bridge Builders, Stevenage (£1200). Volunteer aid is given to Stevenage Haven for the Homeless and to other local projects. Other income arises from Parish Room bookings, the Parish Magazine and from various fund raising/community events held throughout the year (more than £7300). **Parish Share** of £59k was paid in full.

**Friends of Holy Trinity** is an active fund-raising group who raise money to enable us to repair the building and to improve facilities for the congregation and community users of the church and grounds. Support from this group is expected to continue going forward. The PCC donates **10% of its planned Stewardship giving to charity**, recommendations for which are made by a sub-committee and ratified by PCC approval.

## EXPENSES OF OFFICE

Expenses claims of £5k were met in full in the previous financial year. Wherever possible, approved items of expense that can be identified are paid direct by the PCC. The PCC operates a small administrative office complete with computer, photocopier, telephone and part-time secretarial support. For the last 30+ years, successive incumbents/priests-in-charge have been pleased for this office to operate from the front study of the Vicarage.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The **monthly magazine *Trinity*** (circulation 180) is a valued outreach to the wider Parish and is funded entirely from subscriptions and local business advertising. The **Sunday Bulletin**, together with the Sunday readings, is distributed to congregations of both churches at main Sunday services. A Communications officer, a member of the PCC, keeps the press advised of news and events in the parish.

## STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

### What are the strengths to be found in the Benefice?

**A deeply committed ministry team** with diverse strengths and experience

**Friendly congregations which welcome new members**

**Two differently-styled churches** with broadly similar liturgy

**A strong core of worshippers** who actively exercise their time and talents

**Strong and different musical traditions** at both churches

**Good ecumenical relationships** with opportunities to work together with schools and youth

**A growing willingness to experiment** with ways to bring new people into church

**Continuing significant outreach opportunities**, both within the parish and in the wider town

**A sound, attractive and well-designed family Vicarage home**

### What are the challenges the Benefice faces?

To **develop a more prayerful awareness and openness** to the work of the Holy Spirit within the Church and wider community

Reaching out to **attract new people into church**. The parish needs to **find innovative ways of encouraging children, teenagers, young adults** and families to love and serve the Living Lord by offering more varied forms of worship and activities.

Communication and **integrated involvement** between congregations

A more co-ordinated approach to **pastoral care**

**More opportunities for learning and discipleship**, including baptism preparation and follow-up, Bible study groups and outreach activities

Encouragement and greater **involvement of new members** in task teams, working parties, organising events and so on

**Greater involvement in both local communities** and a review of what is being done there to ensure effectiveness such that energies may be directed appropriately

Developing **new worship patterns and musical innovations to add to present practices**

**Continuous challenge** of matching income to all competing projects

## FUTURE PRIORITIES

To **prioritise and tackle** the challenges listed above.

2012 sees the start of Holy Trinity's **150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of Events**.

## NEW INCUMBENT PROFILE

We are looking for someone who will be:

**A passionate and prayerful spiritual leader with a heart for the Gospel, a deep faith and the enthusiasm to innovate;** committed to teaching, challenging and inspiring others to develop their relationship with God

**A good communicator** who will listen to people of all ages and backgrounds; share knowledge freely; and help to build relationships between congregations

**Approachable, compassionate** and able to demonstrate God's love through empathic pastoral care – a true and gentle Pastor with time for people, especially the outsider

Someone with adaptability - **able to facilitate, lead or encourage** and with the ability to **discern which approach to take**

Able to maintain a **sympathetic balance between tradition and innovation**, encouraging diversity and flexibility in worship while valuing existing traditions and music at both churches

**Committed to training** newly-ordained clergy and encouraging both ministry team and laity to explore their response to God's generosity and use of their talents

**Energetic, organised and able to focus on parish priorities** to enable us to Live God's Love in the world

Able to build on the existing **work with young people** in church, schools and the community

Able to maintain and **develop relationships with other churches**, the community and mission partners

Someone with **skill, tact and good humour**, especially when **enhancing our strong ecumenical connections**

### In return, we offer

The Parish of Holy Trinity Stevenage offers **two very different churches** in design, worship styles and musical approach. The successful candidate will work with a **talented Ministry Team** and **adaptable people with an enduring faith, offering friendship, fellowship and a mature sense of community to everyone**. We are an inclusive, approachable, caring and diverse family. We offer strong connections with schools, other churches and the local community. The Parish is still growing, offering **opportunities to train, lead, teach and expand**.

You and your family will receive a warm welcome right from the start. We look forward to working with you in **advancing God's Kingdom in Stevenage**.