

Local Ecumenical Partnership of Christians from Anglican, Methodist, & Roman Catholic Congregations

“The Christian Community in Great Parndon is clearly determined to show a united face, and they give a good example of denominations working together to spread God’s Kingdom. There will inevitably be differences in approach, but Great Parndon has shown a determination to minimise these.”

A quote from a Local Preacher (Methodist Area) & occasional preacher in Great Parndon

We have a Vacancy in Great Parndon for an Anglican Team Rector following the retirement of the previous Rector. We hope in this brief introduction to give an impression of our complex Parish, and that you will find it sufficiently interesting to want to find out more. Facts and figures are contained in the appendices, and a photographic portrait can be found on the Parish web site [here](#)^[1].

Our Mission Statement

Through the three way partnership of Anglican, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches and recognising that Jesus Christ is to be found in each one of us, it is our understood and shared aim to foster a community where life is lived according to Gospel values and the teachings of the Church, and within which each member of that community is afforded every opportunity to realise his or her full potential, which is to be a true imitation of Jesus Christ who himself said, **"Love one another as I have loved you."**

Who are we ?

We are firstly **Christians** – although from different backgrounds. Although basically ‘middle of the road’, our Church family includes a wide range of churchmanship. Congregations are a rich mix, from babies to the experienced ‘rock of ages’, from those born within the town to those born overseas, from those with learning disabilities to Doctors of Philosophy. We have discovered over more than 35 years of working together that those whom God calls into service are Children of the same Heavenly Father, and that our many talents multiply greatly as we share them with each other in service of our Lord.

The Churches of Great Parndon have been shared in an Anglican / Methodist LEP since 1968 and over time it became possible for the worshippers to be members of both the Church of England and the Methodist Church. Many members of these congregations now have dual membership, and are seldom concerned about the differences. As a result, these congregations have become indistinguishable over the years, and were joined at St James’ Church by the local Roman Catholic congregation from St Luke’s Church in 1991. Although Anglican / Methodist and Roman Catholic congregations cannot yet share the Eucharist, we do share many other activities such as Prayer Groups, Passion / Nativity musical presentation of Gospel stories, and so on.

Where are we ?

Harlow is situated on the southwest corner of Essex on the Hertfordshire border (map from StreetMap [here](#)^[2]) and has a population of about 80,000. It is no longer a ‘New Town’, but still has the ‘look and feel’ of one. The Parish of Great Parndon occupies the southwest quadrant of the town, and is home to more than one third of the population (29,000), 2 shared Churches, 5 other Churches and places of worship, the Harlow Crematorium and the Nature Reserve (lists of relevant places can be found in Appendix 3).

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The Harlow environment is typical of the (ex-)new Towns, with housing estates of distinctly different styles and plenty of green wedges. Within the Parish the housing is a mix of council and private housing estates. It has three of the most exclusive housing areas and also three out of the six areas of severe social deprivation. There is even a temporary housing complex in the grounds of Sherards House, and one third of the Parish is a Sure Start area. There are many starter homes, and families move readily as their housing needs grow.

The Parish Church is St Mary's which was founded in the 15th century and a hall is being considered for the underused area on the south side of the Church. Planning for this is at an early stage. A daughter church of St James was built in the 1960s and extended 1991 to include a Hall and improved facilities. At this time the Roman Catholics joined the LEP and the Church became known as St James' with St Luke's Church. A photographic portrait including both Churches can be found on the Parish web site [here](#)^[1].

How do people describe us ?

We asked people who know us to describe the Christian Community in Great Parndon.

They said - "[You] smile and welcome with open arms", "warmth of atmosphere and love as you walk through door", "very approachable", "friendly", "non-judgemental", "caring", "praying", "open", "mature".

But they also said - "small in number", "[of some of us] young at heart if not in body", "busy but not too busy to have no time for people [We always find time for people]", "fluid because of changing younger population".

In summary we are "not a congregation of individuals but [an extended family] who have gathered together to worship".

Whom do we serve ?

In preparing this profile we discovered that much of the service that is provided by our congregations is given humbly and with little recognition. We find it helpful to think of three areas – the Church, our families and workmates, and the wider community.

At first sight service to the Church community might be taken as those who attend services. However in Great Parndon 'The Church' is much wider than this. Our Clergy and Readers take services throughout the West Essex Methodist / URC United Area (Circuit) and we welcome into fellowship many from the Area who lead our worship. Our staff have a substantial load of Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals, which, on some estimates, enables them to speak of God's love to 15-20,000 people a year.

For our families and workmates, service is mainly by example, by caring, and by listening. Few of us are openly evangelistic, yet Jesus' love for people around him shines through in our everyday interactions with those around us.

In the wider community we find members of our congregations in many diverse places – in the Hospital, in our Pre-School and Mums & Toddlers groups, in the shops, mending computers, listening with open ears, preparing candidates for Baptism or Marriage, helping the bereaved, and much more. In all places we can see a distinctively caring / loving approach to our brothers and sisters in Christ – even if they haven't heard the call yet.

How do we serve ?

Firstly there is, of course, the Ministry Team. We are currently seeking a Team Rector, but there are two other posts. The Rev Mrs Jennifer Ragan is in post as Team Vicar, and there is a third post which is kept open but not being filled at this time, although we hope to be able to do so in the medium term. There are three Anglican Readers assisting, and a trained Worship Leader. As part of the West Essex Methodist / URC United Area, we have Local Preachers who lead some services, two of whom worship at St James w. St Luke.

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Amongst the Laity there are many talents in service to our Lord. Some serve on our various committees – which are unlike most Church committees by being full of laughter and the presence of our Lord. Others serve as Sidesmen, Stewards, Vergers, or Prayer Group Leaders. Others serve by providing music during Services or as a part of CHANNELS – our Music & Drama group that presents Passion & Nativity Musicals in the Church to audiences totalling about 400. Some serve as leaders in Kids’ Club and Prospectors (teaching for young children during services) or as Cub & Scout leaders. Some serve as Governors in our Church School, others mentor head teachers in stressful placements.

Above all and no matter how busy we are, we always find time for people and their problems.

Areas we need to work on in the future

There are some areas where we feel there is a need for improvement:

- The effectiveness of the Methodist input to the LEP. The West Essex Methodist / URC United Area has had difficulties due to shortage of Staff, and may split into its original organisations, thus restoring the Methodist Circuit.
- Bible based teaching. We are weak in understanding rather than just reading the Bible. We also need to fill the gap after Baptism or Confirmation.
- The development of ‘attenders’ into ‘doers’ and a realistic understanding of Stewardship.
- We need to continue to develop our ecumenical events, and see where we can share preparation (e.g. for Baptism or Marriage).
- Youth work especially in the teenage years.
- Ministry of Healing used to be a regular part of our worship life, but is now expressed one-to-one. We have had several requests to include healing in our regular worship cycle.

We are sure that the new Team Rector will be able to identify other areas on which we should work together.

List of Appendices

1. Services, Church Groups etc
2. Numbers of Confirmations and Occasional Offices
3. Parish Details
4. Finance & Accounts

[1] The Parish Web site is at <http://www.gtparndon.org.uk/> and the Photo Portrait can be found at <http://www.gtparndon.org.uk/parish/portrait/>

[2] A map of the Harlow area can be found at <http://makeashorterlink.com/?R20A528C3>

Alternatively, you can go to <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/> and enter Harlow as a GB Place in the search box.

What characteristics would we like to see in the new Team Rector?

Some broad characteristics can be identified from our knowledge of how the Parish operates today:

1. **The Team Rector must accept the role and ministry of women priests.** Rev Mrs Jennifer Ragan is in post as Team Vicar, and the Methodist Church also ordains women. Over recent years the Parish has greatly benefited from the ministry of women priests, and we are grateful for this.
2. **We would hope that the Team Rector is more of a ‘Teacher’ than an ‘Evangelist’.** We see the need to teach the existing congregations the fundamentals of the Christian Faith and to enable us to spread the word without arousing resentment.
3. **The Team Rector must be comfortable working in several teams at once** – the Anglican Team, the Methodist ministers, the Roman Catholic priests and the respective hierarchies, the Lay teams in the Parish, and the various Church Councils.
4. **The Team Rector must be able to balance the need for Leadership from the front with standing back to allow the Laity to get on with things.** We have built up strong Lay participation in many areas, but find that often people lack confidence in their abilities and need nurturing into effective leaders.
5. **The Team Rector will need strong inter-personal skills.** Getting the best out of three Church organisations, to say nothing of the Parish itself, requires both knowledge of the way each works, and the ability to foresee and avoid issues that will cause particular problems to others.
6. **It would be helpful if the Team Rector had a focus on the teens and twenties age range,** as we feel that we have not been effective in getting the message of God’s Love to them.
7. **We hope that if the Team Rector has a spouse, he or she will participate in the life of the Parish,** but do **not** seek to find ‘two for the price of one’. A stable home life is important for the well-being of staff in what can be a very stressful role.
8. **With the growing emphasis on email and computer use within the Diocese and Parish, we think it desirable that the Team Rector be able and willing to use computers in support of Ministry.** Expertise is not necessary as we have considerable skill and experience within the Parish.

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Appendix 1

Services, Church Groups etc:

St Mary's Church:

Sunday: 9 am Holy Communion each week
10.30 am: monthly cycle (Morning Worship, Holy Communion, Parade, Baptism)
4 pm (2nd Sunday) Baptism

Quarterly: 6.30 pm: Evensong

Christmas: Christingle. Carol Service, Christmas Eve 11.30 pm Holy Communion

Lent/Easter: Ash Wed, Maundy Thurs – 8 pm Holy Communion
Good Friday – 12:00 – 3:00 pm Three Hour Service

Other Festivals: 8 pm Holy Communion as appropriate.

Other regular annual services: Pet Service, Battle of Britain, Remembrance.

There are good links with the RAFA. The Air Training Corps cadets normally attend the Battle of Britain service.

There is a short service at the village War Memorial on Battle of Britain and Remembrance Sundays.

Bi-ennial Flower Festival (usually early summer)

Common Worship is used in the majority of services.

The Book of Common Prayer is used at 9 am Communion, 1st Sunday of month and at Evensong services.

St James' w St Luke's Church:

Sunday: 11 am. monthly cycle (Holy Communion, Morning Worship, Baptism, Morning Prayer)
N.B: the 4th Sunday is usually filled by the Methodist Area.
4 pm (1st Sunday) Baptism

Weekday: Wed 9.15 am Holy Communion

Christmas: Christingle, Carol Service, Christmas Eve 8:00pm / 11.30pm Holy Communion (alternating)

Lent/Easter: Maundy Thurs – 8 pm Holy Communion
Good Friday – 11:00 am Family Service

Other Festivals: 8 pm Holy Communion or Worship Service as appropriate.

Common Worship is used in the majority of services.

Roman Catholic Mass:

Sundays: 9 am.
Weekdays: (Mon, Tues, Thurs) 9 am

Ecumenical groups: Mon evenings CHANNELS(when rehearsing)
Wed 7.30 pm Centering Prayer
Friday 8 pm Prayer and Praise Group

The following Annual Services held alternately in St James' and St Mary's:

6.30 pm: Memorial Service for families for whom we have conducted Funeral services.
4 pm: Renewal of Baptism Vows for families of babies baptised and church members.

Junior Church.

The Kids' Club (St James') and Prospectors (St Mary's) use lectionary based teaching materials.

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Lay Ministry Teams:

Administration/ Office hour: A lay team assists the administration of the Occasional Offices (see Appndx 2) of Marriage and Baptism.

Baptism Preparation/ visiting: 2 teams led by one of the Readers.

Marriage Preparation: Lay assistants in training

Church Membership: (Electoral Roll/Methodist Roll)

All members are able to have dual Anglican and Methodist membership.

It is normal practice for candidates to be received into Methodist membership at Confirmation.

a) **Electoral Roll/Membership List**

Residents: 104 Non Residents: 32

b) **Average attendance at services:**

St Mary's Church: 9am – 20: 10.30am – 30

St James' w St Luke's Church: Sun 11am – 40; Wed 9.15am – 10

Mothers' Union: Branch members include men, meet monthly on Wednesday evening, varied programme. Members from each denomination.

Cubs and Scouts: Church sponsored.

Women's World Day of Prayer Movement: is supported in the town and parish, currently the Harlow Branch Leader is one of our Readers.

Readers: Mrs M.Hale, Mr R.Parsons, Mrs O.Landers, (PTO, as retired)

Worship Leader: Mrs Margery Collier

Methodist Local Preachers who are members: Messrs J.Green, G.Lee

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Appendix 2

Numbers of Confirmations and Occasional Offices

Confirmations:

1998: 10 1999: 2 2000: 4 2001: none 2002: 5

Weddings: (mainly at St Mary's Church)

1998: 40 1999: 36 2000: 39 +1 at St. James' 2001: 29 2002: 42

Funerals:

1998 106 + 5 with Church Service

1999 100 + 2 with Church Service

2000 122 + 5 with Church Service

2001 125 + 7 with Church Service

2002 90 + 10 with Church Service

Baptisms:

	St Mary's	St James
1998	46	33
1999	43	23
2000	31	21
2001	49	27
2002	48	19

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Appendix 3 Parish Details

HOUSING:

The housing is a mix of council and private housing estates. It has 3 of the most exclusive housing areas (Burnett Park, Rye Hill Road, Rectory Field) and also 3 out of the 6 severe areas of social deprivation. There is a temporary housing complex in the grounds of Sherards House. One third of the Parish is a Sure Start area.

CHURCHES:

St. Mary's: 15th century building, Toilet and kitchen added in 2000. It has the ex Victorian village school as church hall with a joined house. The living accommodation is currently let out on a short term lease.

St. James' with St. Luke's: built in the 1960s, extended 1991 to include a Hall and improved facilities.

SCHOOLS:

Infants and Juniors

St. James' Church of England Primary (I+J)	St. Luke's Roman Catholic (I+J)
Peterswood Infants	
Kingsmoor Infants	Kingsmoor Juniors
Jerounds Infants	Jerounds Juniors
Abbotweld (I+J)	Katherines (I+J)
Paringdon Juniors (Fresh Start)	Water Lane (Fresh Start)
Harlow Fields Special Schools	

Senior Schools

Passmores	Stewards
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SHELTERED HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY

Goldsmiths (residential)	Sumners Farm Close (full time resident Wardens)
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Daily call by warden who is in some cases resident + Call line:

Katherine's House	Sheppards
Hallyday House	Hintons
Tylney Croft	Woodwards
Partridge Court	Morris House

'Care units' and residential units for Special Needs

Berecroft	Keefield	Pyenest Centre (Day Centre)
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OTHER CHURCHES & PLACES OF WORSHIP

The Salvation Army	Kingsmoor Community Church (Pentecostal)
The King's Church (Free Evangelical)	Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, Staple Tye
Gateway Fellowship (House Church, now building own church near St. James' W. St. Luke's Church)	

SHOPPING CENTRE: Staple Tye

Local shops: Pollards Hatch, Katherines Hatch, Coppice Hatch, Maunds Hatch
Sherards Hatch, Sumners Hatch

INDUSTRY:

Light industry area at Staple Tye
Glaxo Smith Kline – New Frontiers Science Park – South Side. On Parish boundary

MEDICAL CENTRES

Lister House	Barbara Castle Health Centre
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OTHER

The Crematorium and Cemetery	Parndon Wood Nature Reserve
Risden's Wood	Burnetts Wood
Hospital Wood	
Cycle Tracks and footpaths	

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Appendix 4

Finance & Accounts

GENERAL:

1. An envelope giving scheme is in operation.
2. Clergy are paid expenses in full.
3. The Family Purse for 2003 is £32,112 and has always been paid in full.

SUMMARY ACCOUNTS for the Year 2002 (unaudited and subject to minor changes):

PLEASE NOTE: This presentation of the accounts has been edited to save space. Full accounts are available on request.

Financial Statement for the Year Ended 31 December 2002

General Fund Receipts & Payments Account

Income	2002	2001
Incoming resources from donors	35676	35669
Other voluntary incoming resources	146	987
Income from investments	3336	4447
Income from charitable & ancillary trading	12245	10662
Other ordinary incoming resources	199	100
Total Receipts	51602	51865
Payments	2002	2001
Grants	2200	2000
Activities directly relating to the work of the church	43999	49679
Fund-raising and publicity	0	505
Church management & administration	280	675
Total Payments	46479	52859
Excess of receipts over payments	5123	
Excess of payments over receipts		994

Restricted Funds

S. James' Development Fund

Receipts	2002	2001
Incoming resources from donors	214	56
Income from investments	234	230
Total Receipts	448	286
Payments		
Total Payments	0	0
Excess of Receipts over Payments	448	286
Balance C/Fwd	6641	6193

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S. James' Loan Repayment Fund

Receipts	2002	2001
Incoming resources from donors	0	1192
Income from investments	0	72
Total Receipts	0	1264

Payments

Total Payments	0	3846
Excess of Payments over Receipts		2582
Balance C/Fwd	0	0

S. Mary's Development Fund

Receipts	2002	2001
Incoming resources from donors	1862	5824
Income from investments	86	178
Total Receipts	1948	6002

Payments

Major repairs/replacements etc.	0	8219
Excess of Receipts over Payments		1948
Excess of Payments over Receipts		2217
Balance C/Fwd	2430	482

Parish Tithing Fund

Receipts	2002	2001
Incoming resources	2200	2000

Payments

Grants made:	2170	2030
Excess of Receipts over Payments	30	
Excess of Payments over Receipts		30
Balance C/Fwd	100	70

Specified Charities Fund

Receipts	2002	2001
Incoming resources from donors	1694	3572

Payments

Payments to designated charities	1679	3470
Excess of Receipts over Payments	15	102
Balance C/Fwd	15	173

Midnight Son Fund.

Receipts	2002	2001
Total Receipts	0	0
Total Payments	0	0
Balance C/Fwd	0	0

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Flower Fund.

Receipts	2002	2001
Incoming resources	1941	1999
Payments		
Floral arrangements	1546	1695
Excess of Receipts over Payments	395	304
Balance C/Fwd	1458	1063

Clergy House Redecoration Fund

Receipts	2002	2001
Designated from General Fund	0	0
Investment Income		3
Total Receipts	0	3
Payments		
Transfer to General Fund	0	400
Excess of Payments over Receipts	0	397
Balance C/Fwd	135	135

Flower Festival Fund

Receipts		
Designated from General Fund	0	0
Payments		
Transferred to Festival Committee	0	0
Balance C/Fwd	0	0

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Statement of Assets and Liabilities

Account	General Fund	Clergy House (D)	S. James Developm't (R)	S. Mary's Developm't (R)	Parish Tithe (R)	Specified Charities (R)	Flower Fund (R)	Total
Cash in hand	22							22
Covenant (TSB)	1013							1013
Current (TSB)	1183		176	114	100	15	1458	3046
Deposit (TSB)	92							92
Central Bd. Finance	8595		6465	2316				17376
Barclays Community		1						1
Barclays Premium		134						134
Total	10905	135	6641	2430	100	15	1458	21684
Liabilities								
None								