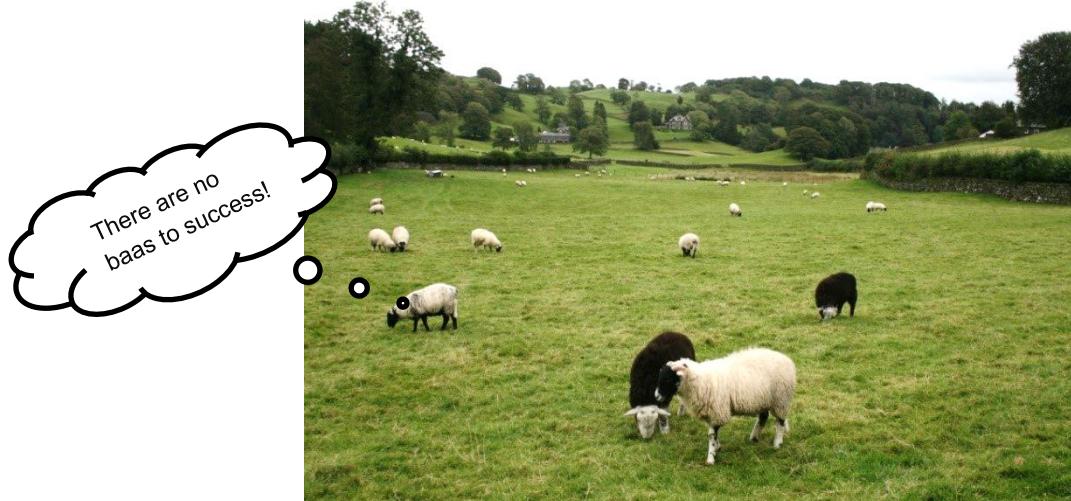


Three contrasting flocks seek one good shepherd

Come to our Benefice and help us make a real difference.

- a fabulous area***
- diverse worship***
- a fun calling amongst great people***



Whetting your appetite.

An exciting and challenging opportunity for an enthusiastic shepherd in semi-rural East Hertfordshire - many lost sheep to be found, good grazing and great walking. Substantial four bedroom shepherd's hut with a large pasture included. A great area to be, with good meadows, schools, shops and transport links.

If you relish a challenge, have ideas for growth and possess drive to set us alight, then turn the page and read on

Benefice Profile

The two Parishes of Stanstead Abbots and Great Amwell with St Margarets, in the Diocese of St. Albans

Contents

**Section 1 - the flock
Section 2 - our dreams
Section 3 - lovely pastures
Section 4 - our ideal shepherd
Section 5 - what we offer you**

The detail: -

**Section 6 - personal qualities needed
Section 7 - electoral roll, attendances, services
Section 8 - lamb links
Section 9 - St. Andrew's
Section 10 - St. John's
Section 11 - St. Mary's (known usually as St. Margaret's)
Section 12 - shepherd's hut and outbuildings**



1. The flock

"We celebrate with each other in happiness and we support each other in sadness."

- Love people
- Foster friendship
- Eat cake
- Embrace tradition and change
- Involve all
- Offer welcome and warmth
- Love our churches
- Support our communities

We have three congregations with three different styles of worship. Our new shepherd will need to embrace this diversity and work with it.

2. Our dreams – help us to regain our spiritual mojo!



Make disciples of younger age groups.

Swell our flock, living God's love.

Achieve sound financial footings.

3. Lovely Pastures

– “In pastures green he leadeth me, the still waters by” - Psalm 23

We are located in picturesque villages in the Lea Valley and in a leafy corner of East Hertfordshire, near the historic towns of Hoddesdon and Ware, by the New River, about 20 miles north of Central London. There are good road, rail and bus connections plus plenty of tractors.

4. Our Ideal Shepherd

We pray for: -

- A people person
- An energiser
- A collaborative team builder and leader
- Someone to help spread the gospel and make new disciples
- Someone to enable us to grow younger

Are you the person God is calling to us? “...only hold fast to what you have until I come” –
Revelation 2. 25



5. What we offer you

For a person who really loves a challenge: -

Opportunity to grow the flock leads to **satisfaction from achievement**.

Friendly atmosphere created by great sheep means **enjoyment of the job**.

Willingness to try new ideas gives **scope to succeed**.

Hobbies - bell ringing, organs, choral, flower arranging create **added interest**.

A part-time administrator, an Accredited Lay Minister and two Readers **lessen your burden**.

No sheep shearer employed!



6. Personal Qualities Needed

Leadership

A clear approach to teaching and ministry to help us engage with the scriptures.

Able to motivate, delegate and empower others.

Pastoral and Community

Approachable, a good communicator and listener.

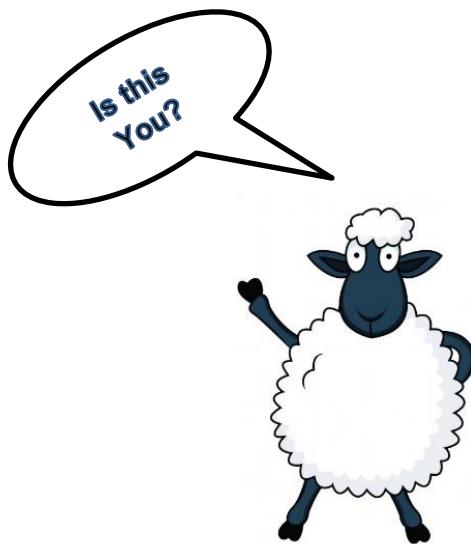
Gets parishioners pulling together.

Builds good relationships with our local church schools and non-church persons.

Attitude to people is inclusive.

Worship Services

Conducts joyful and attention-holding services that encourage and inspire.



And now for the boring bit! Here is the detail.....



7. Our Electoral Rolls, Attendances, Services

2019	St. Andrew's	St. John's	St. Mary's
Electoral Roll	33	12	16
Usual Sunday attendance	24	19	19
Remembrance Service	200	105	22
Crib Service	34	57	35
Marriages	2	2	0
Thanksgiving for Gift of a Child	1	0	2
Baptisms	1	0	2
Funerals	5	6	2
Burials (inc. ashes)	6	5	3

Current normal worship patterns

	St. Andrew's	St. John's	St. Mary's
Sunday 1	8.45 Holy Communion 10.15 Celebration	9.00 Sung Eucharist (Traditional)	10.30 Morning Prayer
Sunday 2	10.15 Morning Worship	9.30 Family Service and Sunday school	11.00 Holy Communion (Traditional)
Sunday 3	8.45 Holy Communion 10.15 Holy Communion	9.00 Sung Eucharist (Contemporary)	10.30 Holy Communion (Contemporary)
Sunday 4	10.15 Morning Worship	9.00 Sung Eucharist (Traditional) 6.30 Choral Evensong	10.30 Family Service
Sunday 5 (as needed)	Benefice Communion, at each church in turn, at the normal service time for the venue		
Thursdays	There is a weekly communion in the community - at Willowthorpe and Belmont View care homes, the Folly Community Room or the Wilshire Hall. Times vary.		

8. Lamb links - Our Schools

"Train children in the right way and when old, they will not stray" –Proverbs 22, 6.



- (a) St John the Baptist Voluntary Aided Church Of England Primary School
Hillside Lane, SG12 9SE

Pupils attend services in the church for all festivals and at the ends of terms, as well as new starters' welcome services. The older children come to church for information days, getting to know more about the fixtures and fittings, the bells and the history. The vicar and members of the Benefice attend School on a regular basis and help with assemblies. Ofsted rating good – 200 pupils.

- (b) St Andrew's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School.
Mill Race, SG12 8BZ

School services take place St. Andrew's twice per term. Weekly common worship in the school is led by the vicar and lay people. We have national curriculum RE days in the school or in the church. Ofsted rating good – 230 pupils.

More effective links

We want to build them with both schools, and we feel we have yet to realize the full potential of our relationships – another challenge for the right shepherd!



9. St. Andrew's

Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbotts, SG12 8BU

New Year, New Leader, New Beginnings!

Spelling

To keep things interesting, the parish is spelled “Abbots” (the historical ecclesiastical way) whilst the accepted spelling for most other purposes is now “Abbotts” - our new shepherd will need to remember this!

Vision Statement and MAP Summary

Then the Lord answered me and said, “Write the vision, make it plain, so that a runner may read it” – Habakkuk 2.2

As Christians, we try to demonstrate, in prayer, words, and actions, that we are God's people and His servants in the community.

Our MAP summary details some the practical things we have been doing which include: -

- building the family feel of the church
- praying for our community
- collecting for the Hertford food bank
- hosting the fortnightly Benefice Bible study and monthly Benefice men's breakfast, part of our desire to help appreciate our faith.

Priorities and Opportunities

Our priority at St Andrew's is to see spiritual and numerical growth in our fellowship.

Our buildings are in reasonable repair, although we are aware of some relatively minor maintenance and health and safety work that is required to be done in 2020. We have ideas for more costly longer-term improvements.



About the churches

"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the Church of God" – Acts 20.28

There are two churches in the parish. St James' Church, dating from the 12th century, is now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust and managed by the Friends of St James' Church. It was the parish church of Stanstead Abbots for at least 700 years until St Andrew's church was built nearer the centre of the village at the end of the 19th Century. St James' has a largely untouched 18th century interior. The east window of the Baeshe Chapel contains the stained-glass coat of arms of Queen Elizabeth I who visited Stansteadbury on three occasions.

St James' is open on Sunday afternoons during the summer and for about five services each year including a very atmospheric Advent Carols service in early December.

<https://www.stjamesoldchurch.org.uk>

The parish burial ground surrounds St James's church and is the responsibility of Stanstead Abbots PCC.

St. Andrew's Church is the largest of the four churches in the Benefice. Alfred Waterhouse was the architect, who designed many buildings including Manchester Town Hall and the Natural History Museum in London. The church was consecrated 1881.

The Wilshire Hall, opened in 1995, is attached to the church and is a centre for meetings and parish activities.

Finance and Financial Trusts

In recent years, we have seen diminishing numbers and an ageing congregation, with more retirees. Our giving has not kept up with the financial demands being made on us. We are fortunate to have a number of historic trusts, which support areas of ministry, including our local mission and the maintenance of the parish graveyard at St. James'. We are looking at the potential for securing additional trust income. We do not like to use trust money to pay our parish share and we are behind with our payments for 2019.

Worship, Fellowship and Outreach

"For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me"
– Matthew 25.35

Style of Worship – Usually, we follow orders of service based on Common Worship and these are flexible and informal in style. Often, we follow a biblical theme for a series of sermons and sing a mixture of traditional hymns and more modern songs. We have a wonderful organ and a small music group who help to lead the singing. On the first Sunday of the month, we hold a Celebration service aiming to draw in the younger families. Fellowship over tea and coffee follows each Sunday service, a good time for welcoming newcomers and for exchanging news. We are encouraged to pray for one other church member - chosen at random.



We are usually a small congregation but have some very well attended services. Occasional services include a Maundy Thursday supper / service and a Christmas 'Carols by Candlelight' service.

Despite encouragement, we find it hard to keep welcome / baptism families and wedding couples engaged. We hosted 'Messy Church' for several years until numbers declined.

Mission and Ministry

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" – *Philippians 4.13*

Our PCC has sub-committees for mission support, social & outreach and finance. We support five missions on a regular basis – Jews for Jesus, Scripture Union, All Nations Christian College, Overseas Missionary Fellowship and Open Doors. Our worship planning team meets monthly. We have a thriving card making group.

We appoint trustees to Stanstead Abbotts Parish Hall and maintain strong links with groups in the local community including Evergreens, Stanstead Abbotts Local History Society and SAPH Table Tennis Club.



*Community Spirit –
History Society
cleaning War Memorial*



10. St. John the Baptist

St. John's Lane, Great Amwell, SG12 9SR

Come, shake us up, turn us round and eat cake!

About the Church - a fabulous house of God in which to worship

"How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts": Psalm 84

The church, a Grade II* listed building, stands close to the New River. Sir John Betjeman wrote that St. John's is an 'attractive country church' in a picturesque setting. It is a small church of great antiquity. The 15th century limestone and flint tower complements the 11th century nave and chancel. It has a tree-lined churchyard, home to wonderful spring flowers and the resting place of the athlete Harold Abrahams, about whom the film 'Chariots of Fire' was made
.... and very much more of interest.

What we do well and where we need to do better

Our Mission

Our mission – joy and happiness! "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation": *Isaiah 12.3*

We serve others, we seek help to lead a Christian life, peace and a sense of belonging.

Our vision

To make the church a more attractive place for worship.

To see younger people joining and later, taking positions of responsibility in the management of the church.

Worship & Fellowship – "and there are varieties of service but the same Lord": *1 Corinthians 12.5*

St. John's enjoys traditional and joyful Christian worship practised since the Reformation but now presented in a lively easy to follow form. The monthly family service and Sunday school embrace a more modern approach. Every Sunday with our after-service refreshments, we eat cake in fellowship.



Other services at St. John's include Good Friday and Patronal (both choral): Benefice Memorial and Harvest services both in October: Remembrance in the church and at the village's war memorial: Carol service, Crib service and Midnight Mass.

Other activities include bellringing, flower arranging, Summer madrigals, Sunday teas in the high summer, national event celebrations, carol singing, the quiz evening in the spring; supporting Evergreens and the food bank.

Priorities and Finance – *“For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?”: I Timothy 3*

The main focus for the year has been to continue to offer a wide variety of services and activities, to do so within significant financial constraints; and to continue ministry and support for the local population at times of need, as well as keeping up with essential maintenance of church land and buildings.

We have some reserves but we made a loss of £ (9,000) in 2018 and expect to do so again this year. A balance has to be struck between funding projects from reserves and covering the deficit on the current account in order to keep the church open for worship. Financial discipline is very strict indeed. Outward giving depends on any surplus on the current account at the end of the year, except for certain services' collections which go to charities chosen by the regular congregation.

Challenges and Opportunities - Increasing the flock

“For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, “Fear not, I am the one who helps you.””: Isaiah 41.3

Dwindling financial resources and earning capability, the lack of volunteers to become church officers and the high ages of the majority of the regular congregation and givers.

Encouraging and enabling schoolchildren and their parents to attend Sunday services.

Winning back some of those who have stopped attending the church in the last decade.

Projects- *“I can do all things through him who strengthens me”:* Philippians 4.13

In March 2019, the vestry, built in 1836, was refurbished and modernised at a cost of £29,500, principally to improve hygiene and funded from a legacy.

We are raising money currently to meet the £ 112,000 cost of repairing the tower.



11. St. Mary's - known as St. Margaret's

Hoddesdon Road, Stanstead St. Margarets, SG12 8EG

The hamlet of Stanstead St. Margarets is served by St. Mary the Virgin church (always known as St. Margaret's by its parishioners).

Help us grow younger!

Our Vision

We wish passionately to see our church thriving, with all ages joining us.

Challenges we face

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths" – Proverbs 3:5-6

Dwindling financial resources, lack of volunteers to become church officers, the age of our current congregation.

The church

St Mary's is a Grade II listed building, which houses a unique William Allen barrel organ. The church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is recorded c1300.

Mission

"Seek the Lord and his strength. Seek his presence continually" – 1 Chronicles 16:11

Our church seeks to serve the community practically and spiritually, in God's name, in continuity of faith and worship, bringing God's hope to all.

Worship

St Mary's congregation values traditional Christian worship but is also open to lively, modern alternatives. Our family at St Mary's is welcoming of everyone and we value everyone's opinions and contributions.

Our main focus has always been to offer a variety of services and activities.

Fellowship and Outreach

"Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ" – Galatians 6:2

We continue the ministry and support for the local parishioners at times of need.

Children take part in all services. They ring bells, lead prayers, bang a tambourine, assist with the collection. We welcome all families to the monthly family service.



Other Activities and Hospitality

"This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you" – John 15.12

We offer a Sunday school, Remembrance, Good Friday 3 hour vigil, Easter Sunday, Patronal service in August, Advent service, Christingles, Nativity, Nine lessons and carols, Christmas morning service held in St Mary's for the Benefice. During Advent we have a "Missing you tree" in the church.

There is always great hospitality shown at St. Mary's with coffee mornings on Saturdays, concerts of varying kinds, flower festivals, talks and suppers and harvest lunches. The concerts in the summer and at Christmas take place in the church, staged for the community by the local women's choir, which is also available to sing at weddings and funerals in all three churches.

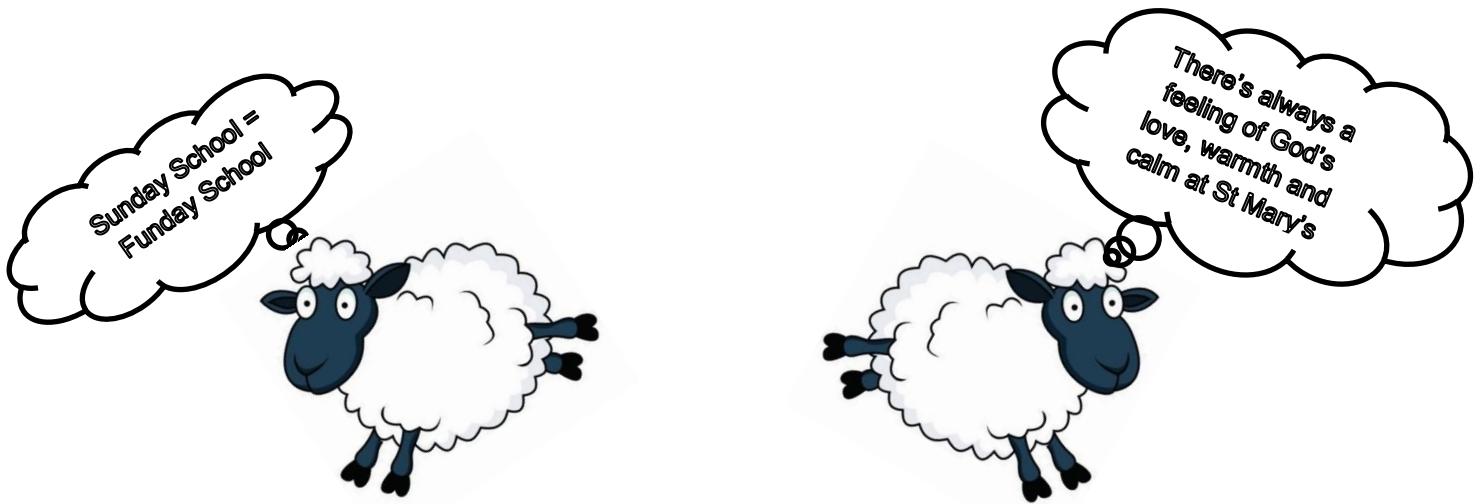


Quotes

"I don't attend church services but I really do enjoy the fellowship of others at the coffee morning."

"Since joining St Mary's my faith has deepened. The church and the congregation are both respectful and welcoming and it has always felt like home to me."

"St Mary's is always so welcoming, reminding me that so many over the centuries have worshipped here; it is the centre of my community."



Financial situation

"With upright heart, he shepherded them and guided them with skilful hand" – Psalm 78

At St Mary's, we have very little in the way of reserves and although we have never made a loss, we have much room to improve our stewardship.

Projects

"The heart of man plans his way. Let the Lord establish his step" – Proverbs 16.9

Over the past 30 years much work has been done to both the exterior and to the interior of our church, funded mainly through donations and fundraising (an ongoing key project). Our most recent Quinquennial Inspection in April 2017 is up to date as far as works carried out are concerned. Our churchyard is loved and cared for and contains a natural wild area and an arbor for quiet contemplation.

12. Shepherd's Hut and Outbuildings

The Vicarage – the Shepherd's Hut

Hoddesdon Road, Stanstead St. Margarets, SG12 8EG

Spacious house, with garage, which will make a lovely family home. Four large bedrooms, bath, shower, two toilets, study, lounge, dining room and kitchen, with a large garden, used sometimes for church activities and backing onto the picturesque New River.



.....and in addition to the Wilshire Hall: -

St. John's Parish Hall

Hillside Lane, SG12 9SE

The P.C.C. owns and is trustee of the Great Amwell Parish Hall. It is administered by a management committee, which is a legally constituted sub-committee of the P.C.C. and which includes the vicar and a lay P.C.C. member.

Stanstead Abbotts Parish Hall

Roydon Road, Stanstead Abbotts, SG12 8EZ

The hall is the venue for many community activities and meetings.

Nigel Copping Community Building

Hoddesdon Road, Stanstead St. Margarets, SG12 8EQ

Situated opposite St. Mary's is the Nigel Copping Community Building that the church may use. Nigel is a member of our P.C.C.

Imagine being with us – you'll feel great!



***Don't miss this fantastic opportunity.
Like the Preston Guild, it doesn't come very often!***

**See more on our website at
www.3churches.net**

See below for pictures of the local area Stanstead Abbotts High Street, Hoddesdon Road and Great Amwell; and the churches – St. Andrew's; St. James', St. Mary's; St. John's on the next page:

"As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep and I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds" – Ezekiel 34.12





There are approximately 6500 people living in the Benefice. Less than 1% come regularly to church. Room for growth?

For further details of the demographics and the parishes, refer to: -

Spotlights (latest 2014)

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/320156-Stanstead-Abbots.pdf>

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/320136-Great-Amwell-w-St-Margarets.pdf>

Mission Action Plans (posted 2015)

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/our-church-maps/search/stanstead-abbots-st-andrew/>

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/our-church-maps/search/great-amwell-st-john-baptist-2/>

<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/our-church-maps/search/st-margarets-st-mary-virgin-2/>

Church of England Statistics

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/research-and-statistics/resources-publications-and-data#na>