



THE PARISH OF ST MARY & ST EANSWYTHE WITH ST SAVIOUR, FOLKESTONE

PARISH PROFILE 2019

Our Mission Statement:

"The Church of St Mary & St Eanswythe with St Saviour exists to make Jesus Christ known in Folkestone through its worship, its fellowship and its mission. It looks to encourage its members and the people of the community of which it is a part, to realise their full potential as children of God."

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BUILDING ON 1400 YEARS OF SERVICE

The Church of St Mary & St Eanswythe is in the heart of Folkestone. Christian worship has been offered on or near the site since 630 AD.

The present church was founded and dedicated to St Mary & St Eanswythe in 1138. The relics of St Eanswythe - an Anglo-Saxon Princess and Abbess, who founded the country's first nunnery close to the present church in 630 AD - were translated from the old building to the new, which now forms the basis of the current Chancel, on the 12th September that year, the date we still keep as our Patronal Festival. St Eanswythe's relics, assumed lost at the time of the Reformation, were rediscovered in 1885 and are kept in a niche behind a brass grill in the north wall of the Sanctuary at the High Altar. The Finding Eanswythe Project funded by a National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant is currently engaged in discovering as much as possible about our patron, her life, relics and heritage, under the leadership of Dr Lesley Hardy from Canterbury Christ Church University.

St Eanswythe served in ways that were new for her time and we want to follow her example. We want to use our resources for everyone in our parish. Our parish was expanded northwards with part of the former parish of St Saviour and we need to better be the church for that part of Folkestone so that we can continue to serve all people and make God's love a reality for them, as Eanswythe did for those around her.

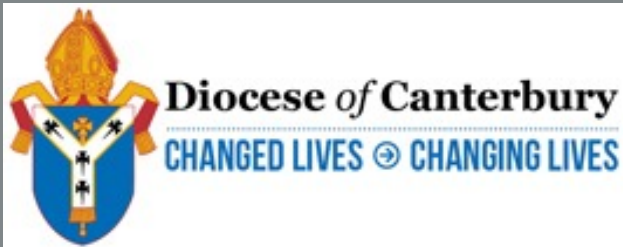


The St Eanswythe Window depicting two of her miracles



St Eanswythe ministering to the poor

SOME CONTEXT



Founded in 597 by St Augustine, Canterbury Diocese is the oldest diocese in England and has a special place in the life of the national and worldwide Church. With its iconic Cathedral it forms a focal point for the life of the whole Anglican Communion, offering a spiritual home and place of pilgrimage for people from every nation and walk of life.

The County of Kent is renowned as the 'Garden of England' and this rural heart is core to our identity - yet the communities we serve are very diverse. Situated in East Kent, our Diocese stretches from

Maidstone to Thanet, from the Isle of Sheppey to the Romney Marsh. We have 350 miles of coastline with historic ports and seaside resorts, alongside rural communities, market towns and commuter-belt urban developments. Affluent areas often sit alongside pockets of major deprivation, offering an exciting and challenging mission context.

At the heart of all we do is a vision of transformation for ourselves and our communities: no one can encounter God and remain unchanged. In the Diocese of Canterbury, we want to increasingly become a Christian community transformed through encounter with Christ, growing and overflowing to transform and bless the families, homes and communities we serve in East Kent: Changed Lives > Changing Lives.

THE PARISH

The parish stretches from the sea front right up to the top of the North Downs. To the east is the parish of St Peter; to the west, Holy Trinity and to the north west is the parish of St John.

Approximately 13,800 people live within the parish, which is the 321st most deprived out of 12,000 in the country.

The church is situated in the town centre with virtually all shops lying within the parish. To the east is the Bayle area where the forerunners of the present church were situated.



We are part of the community in Folkestone, playing a full part in the life of the town and the wider church.



Folkestone

Folkestone is a port town on the English Channel, in Kent, south-east England lying on the southern edge of the North Downs at a valley between two cliffs. It was an important harbour and shipping port for most of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The town of today has a population of some 48,000. It is served by the four major supermarket chains, a department store and the usual mix of national and local shops. Folkestone has a good selection of schools and excellent leisure facilities. There are good transport links with the M20 motorway and London is less than an hour away by train. The Channel Tunnel and the Dover ferries (only 7 miles away) link us to the continent and Canterbury is only 16 miles away.

The Harbour area has undergone considerable regeneration in the past few years with the Creative Quarter being a focus for artists. The harbour arm has been reopened for leisure and 1,000 dwellings are due to be built on the sea front over the next 15 years, most of these being in our parish, giving a great deal of scope for increasing our numbers.

The Elham Deanery

The benefice of St Mary and St Eanswythe with St Saviour is in the Elham Deanery which places an emphasis on each parish being the primary unit for mission and the need for each church to take responsibility for its own vision. Each parish is requested by the Deanery to have its own Mission Action Plan, or similar. The Deanery is there to support the local church and recognises the importance of communication, co-ordination and collaboration through the deanery structures (e.g. Mission and Ministry Committee, Synod and Chapter).

OUR WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY



Our 10.30am Sunday Sung Eucharist is based on Common Worship. This pattern of worship has enabled us to maintain a loyal core congregation - the majority from outside the parish boundary. At all celebrations of the Eucharist the celebrant is fully robed and incense is used on major feasts including our Patronal Festival in September. The small adult choir sings at the 10.30 Eucharist on Sundays - held in the Nave - and at weekday evening celebrations. The weekday evening Sung Eucharists take place in the ancient chancel flanked by the Lady and St Eanswythe's Chapels - both special places of prayer used during the week.

A regular weekday Holy Communion service is celebrated at 10.30 a.m. on the fourth Thursday in each month (reduced from weekly during the interregnum) In addition, there are weekly Sung Eucharists on Red Letter days. Extended communion to those who are housebound or ill is an important part of our ministry.

Stewardship campaigns encourage our congregation to offer their time, talents and abilities in building up our church as our mission statement makes clear. There are Discussion Groups during Lent and parish lunches after the Sunday Eucharist are held on two or three occasions during the year.

We actively support mission at home and abroad and our Mission Centre in the south aisle displays relevant up-to-date information including the Folkestone Rainbow Centre and Operation Sunshine.

The church is open for visitors on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10.00am to 12noon during winter time and 11.00am to 3.00pm for the rest of the year. Refreshments are served on the fourth Saturday each month from 10.00am - 11.30am. Church welcomers are at hand and visitors can write prayer cards in St Eanswythe's chapel.

The Electoral Roll now stands at 62. During the past year there have been 17 baptisms and 7 weddings and numbers are rising. There have also been 7 funerals, 4 of which were in church. There is a planned giving scheme. A copy of the 2018 accounts is available from the Churchwardens by calling 01303 252947 during Parish Office hours: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30am-12.30m.

Rendezvous, the church's monthly magazine is distributed to parishioners and some local businesses.

We are also involved with the local Rainbow Centre and Winter Shelter.

THE FRIENDS OF ST MARY AND ST EANSWYTHE

This group was established in 2014 with the constitutional objective of: 'the restoration, repair, maintenance, improvement and beautification of the Parish Church of St Mary & St Eanswythe and of the monuments, fittings, fixtures, stained glass, furniture, ornaments and chattels in the church and churchyard, belonging to the church'.

THE BUILDINGS

St Mary and St Eanswythe's church is in a reasonable external state of repair. Damage caused by water ingress is still in need of attention. The internal decoration and stained glass are acknowledged as some of the finest examples of Victorian craftsmanship created by leading specialists of the era. The church has the only full ring of bells in town and an active team who ring on Sundays before the Eucharist and on other festivals and special occasions. The church also has a fine three-manual well-maintained pneumatic action organ by Hill dating from 1894. There are no plans to reorder the building.

St Augustine's church, the former church hall of St Michael's church which suffered war damage has a chapel and meeting room downstairs and a large hall and other rooms upstairs. The chapel is shared with the Greek Orthodox community but has no regular Anglican worship. The rooms are hired to various organisations and the building is managed by a Trust of which the Incumbent and Churchwardens are ex-officio members.

The Vicarage, built in the mid 1960s, is in good repair with gas central heating and fine views of the sea. The property has five bedrooms, two reception rooms, kitchen, bathroom, downstairs cloakroom and study. There is a cellar and an underground garage with parking space on the access slope. A garden gate leads directly into the churchyard.



SCHOOLS



The parish is blessed with two church aided schools, St Mary's and St Eanswythe's, of which several members of the PCC and congregation are directors. The recent OFSTED inspections of the schools were positive and encouraging with St Eanswythe's being rated as Outstanding. The children are welcomed to church regularly for major festivals, including the Christmas Carol Service, and at the end of the summer term. The older children from St Eanswythe's attend and serve at regular fortnightly Eucharists at 8.55am on Wednesday mornings. All children are welcomed to our services and a children's corner has recently been established.

OUTREACH



The annual Civic Service, attended by the newly elected Folkestone Town Mayor, is held in church, before which he or she is sworn in at the historic Town Cross situated in the churchyard.

The church is happy to welcome other organisations for special occasions such as the Town Mayor's Carol Service for Year six pupils, the Harvey Grammar School Carol Service and visiting groups of Pilgrims and students.

The parish is a member of the East Folkestone Ecumenical Project reaching out into the local community where levels of deprivation are some of the highest in Kent.

For eleven years the church has hosted the Sacconi Chamber Music Festival curated by the Sacconi Quartet. The 2020 Festival takes place from 17-20 May.

The church, in partnership with Bayle Music, hosts a regular series of Sunday Afternoon concerts at 3.30pm. The seventh season began in September 2018. Performers include a mix of national and international professionals and young musicians all of whose talents and enthusiasm bring vibrancy to the church and town. The Festival and concert series contributed over £4,500 to church funds in the year ending December 2018.



For the past three years there has been a Living Advent Calendar with various doorways featured with some small event as the door is opened. Each year our church door has been the venue for Christmas Eve, drawing over 100 people to hear the choir sing carols and to enjoy mince pies. This is in addition to our traditional Christmas Eve Crib Service and Midnight Eucharist.

We also host exhibitions from the Folkestone Arts Society showcasing local work. The church has developed a positive relationship with the town's Creative Quarter - an initiative which has seen the renaissance of the Old High Street as a centre of artistic endeavour. The church hosted an installation for the 2011 Folkestone Triennial, which turned out to be the most visited and now hosts the Creative Quarter's annual carol service.

We have used our building well for outreach locally and there is scope for more. We now need to find ways to take our faith out to the whole parish.

ST EANSWYTHE

Following the rediscovery of the relics of St Eanswythe during the work to install the alabaster and mosaic reredos to the High Altar in 1885, the alabaster work was altered to give access to the relics.

The Finding Eanswythe Project, a lottery funded partnership involving Canterbury Christchurch University and Canterbury Archaeological Trust has been raising awareness of St Eanswythe nationally and locally through workshops, lectures and archaeological investigations.

They are currently excavating part of St Eanswythe's Water, one of her miracles said to have brought water to the nunnery site, seemingly uphill. We are in the process of obtaining a faculty for a full investigation into the relics and reliquary, the only surviving Anglo-Saxon saint's remains in the country.

A Saxon pilgrimage route, *The Royal Saxon Way*, is also being developed linking us with Lyminge, where Eanswythe's aunt, Ethelburga, founded a nunnery in 633 and Minster in Thanet where Eanswythe's niece, Ermenburga, founded a nunnery in 670. The inaugural walk of the route takes place at the end of August 2019.

These exciting projects will make St Eanswythe known more locally and nationally and have the potential to attract even more visitors to our church - and provide opportunities for us to share our faith, and the faith that inspired Eanswythe, with them.



OUR VISION

- To build on the foundations laid by previous generations, to continue growing the congregation and welcome people of all ages;
- To enable all members of the congregation to grow in the understanding of our faith;
- To rejoice in each other's talents;
- To join in fellowship around the altar and at social gatherings;
- To celebrate our history and heritage, especially with the increasing awareness of St Eanswythe and opportunities of pilgrimage;
- To recognise the many opportunities for mission and ministry to each other, to our parish population and to the church in the wider world so that we can realise our full potential as children of God;
- To be an inclusive church with a thriving congregation of all ages;
- To reach out to those who don't know Christ whilst maintaining our eucharistic and musical heritage;
- To reach out to those who have left primary education;
- To develop our pastoral care, creating teams who can undertake visiting, bereavement care, support for single parent families and a healing and wholeness ministry of listening.

COULD YOU BE OUR NEW PRIEST?

We are looking for an experienced priest, a clear preacher who would uphold our liberal Anglican Catholic tradition, someone

- with a vision for St Mary and St Eanswythe's church to be a thriving hub of the community and with a heart for the people of Folkestone;
- with an evangelistic outlook for the town of Folkestone - meeting physical and spiritual needs of the town and the Creative Quarter;
- with a passion for education, to maintain strong links with our parish schools St Eanswythe's - 220 children St Mary's - approx. 420 children;
- with a love of children and an ability to relate well to them;
- who is enthusiastic and a team player, developing the ministry of the whole church;
- with a pastoral heart for their congregation and the staff, pupils and families within their schools;
- who is keen to work with neighbouring parishes and other denominations in the local area taking a leading role in specific events that further the Mission and Ministry in the area;
- The new priest-in-charge would have the active support of the Churchwardens and PCC in all matters of ministry and personal development including study leave and sabbaticals.

THE ARCHDEACON OF ASHFORD WRITES...

Over the last few decades Folkestone has been on something of a rollercoaster in its fortunes. It has seen the loss of the cross-channel ferries, struggled with an economic downturn, and sees the same issues of coastal deprivation that are seen in towns around the country's coast. Recently, there has been much investment in the town - not least from the Roger de Haan Charitable Trust - with leisure facilities being developed around the harbour, new housing being planned, and the 'Creative Quarter' being revitalised.

The parish has in many ways reflected this rollercoaster ride. The congregation is also looking forward to its own 'revitalisation' and is open to new ways of taking the faith to the community, built on its tradition. There is a willingness to embrace mission but the people need direction and encouragement. The Diocese wishes to encourage the parish and its new priest by providing a Mission Grant of half a stipend for five years. This is designed to give some financial stability for the parish as it explores what the next chapter of mission looks like. The grant has some areas that the Diocesan Mission Resources Group would like the priest and parish to work in. Each area has some *metrics*. These are not targets to be met but rather measures to help everyone involved gauge progress. I thought it might be helpful to set these areas and their metrics in this profile:

- To work within the Liberal Catholic and musical traditions of the parish to explore new ways of expressing our faith and engaging with the entire parish community to attract new Christians.
 - Metrics: new services and events, increasing congregation numbers.
- To build up the congregation of St Mary and St Eanswythe's numerically and in discipleship, to better enable local mission by the whole church.
 - Metrics: vocations to varieties of ministry, lay engagement in mission initiatives, increasing congregation numbers, increasing ability to meet financial responsibilities.
- To engage with local schools, especially the two Church Schools, in order to provide pastoral support, to lead in worship and be a resource for the Christian faith. With the Church Schools, to deepen the existing partnerships in the Gospel.
 - Metrics: number of engagements in local schools and school services/visits in church. Possibly: confirmations or admission to communion before confirmation.
- To engage with the civic life of Folkestone, enabling St Mary and St Eanswythe's to play a full part in the life of the town.
 - Metrics: partnerships with civic and other bodies, use of church for civic and town events, use of church and churchyard as amenity - and opportunity to tell the Christian story.
- To engage with the redevelopment and renewal schemes in Folkestone and the Creative Quarter to ensure the Church plays its part. With respect to the Creative Quarter, St Mary and St Eanswythe's is placed well to take a prominent role in the creative life of Folkestone, building on the current cultural life of the church.
 - Metrics: use of church for events, opportunities for clergy and the wider church to participate in events in the town, engagement with developers (voice into provision, understanding of wellbeing), welcome packs into new properties.
- To develop the spiritual and evangelistic role of St Eanswythe as a unique feature of the parish, building on the resurgence of pilgrimage in the nation and exploring ways of best presenting Eanswythe and her faith to today's society.
 - Metrics: provision of explanation of St Eanswythe and facilities for prayer, numbers of visitors/pilgrims, engagement with other pilgrimage parties, continuing work with *Finding Eanswythe* project.
- To work collaboratively with colleagues in the wider mission to East Folkestone, especially with the parishes of St John and St Peter.
 - Metrics: projects or services crossing parish boundaries, joint services, exploring joint social Gospel opportunities.

I very much hope that any potential parish priest would be encouraged by this investment and support in the ministry of the parish. Should you wish to know more, please do not hesitate to contact me (01233 712649 or darren.miller@archdeacashford.org).





The Parish of St Mary & St Eanswythe with St Saviour
St Mary & St Eanswythe's Church, Church Street,
Folkestone, CT20 1SW
01303 252947
www.stmaryandsteanswythe.org
sainteanswythe@yahoo.co.uk