



# St Bene's

CAMBRIDGE

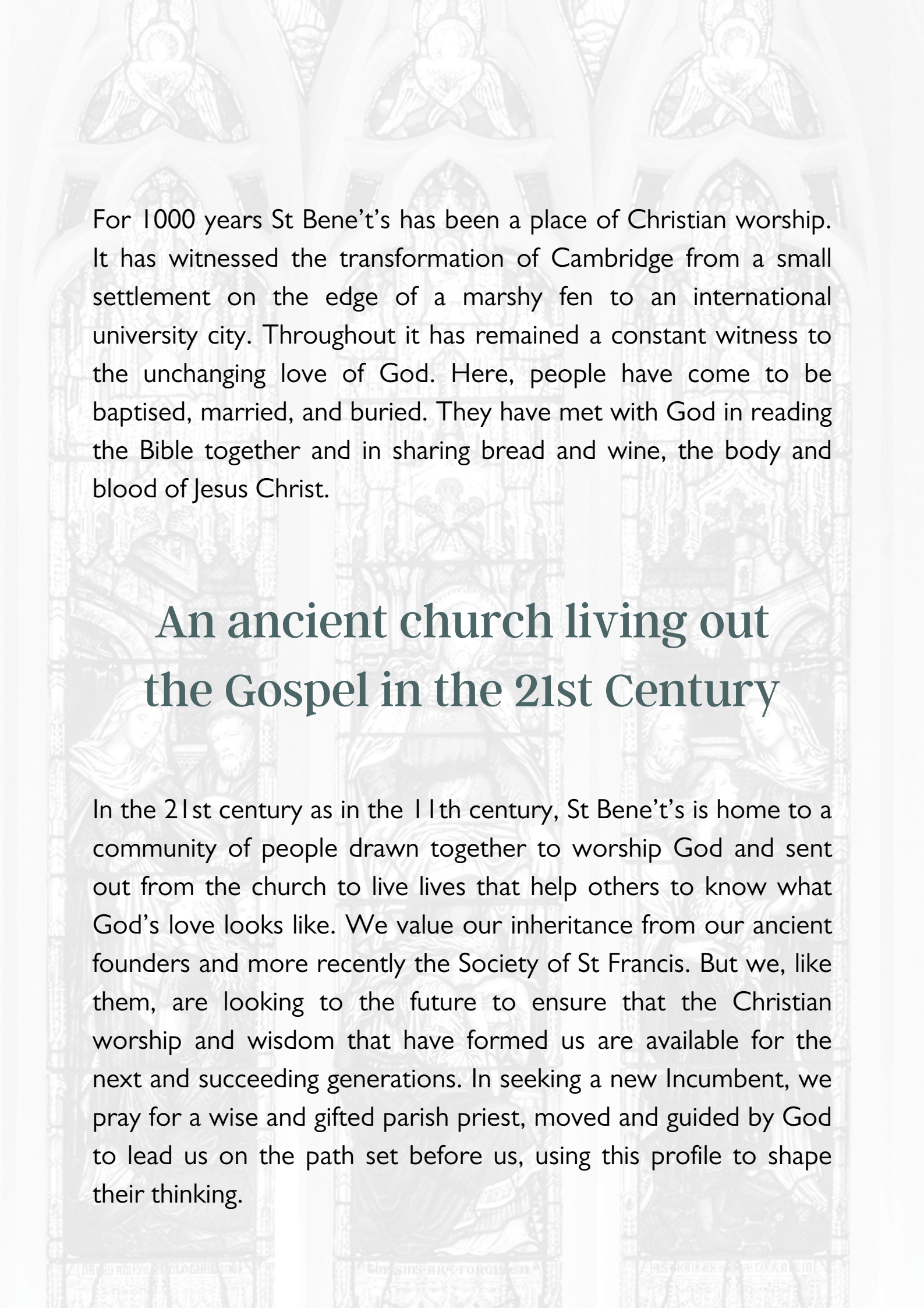


## Parish Profile

January 2024

[www.stbenetschurch.org](http://www.stbenetschurch.org)





For 1000 years St Bene't's has been a place of Christian worship. It has witnessed the transformation of Cambridge from a small settlement on the edge of a marshy fen to an international university city. Throughout it has remained a constant witness to the unchanging love of God. Here, people have come to be baptised, married, and buried. They have met with God in reading the Bible together and in sharing bread and wine, the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

## **An ancient church living out the Gospel in the 21st Century**

In the 21st century as in the 11th century, St Bene't's is home to a community of people drawn together to worship God and sent out from the church to live lives that help others to know what God's love looks like. We value our inheritance from our ancient founders and more recently the Society of St Francis. But we, like them, are looking to the future to ensure that the Christian worship and wisdom that have formed us are available for the next and succeeding generations. In seeking a new Incumbent, we pray for a wise and gifted parish priest, moved and guided by God to lead us on the path set before us, using this profile to shape their thinking.

## How this profile was produced

The sudden and tragic death of our previous vicar, the Reverend Anna Matthews, in March 2023 was a traumatic shock for the congregation, leaving us with a deep sense of loss and sadness. It has been a difficult and complex time for many, yet the overarching response has been faithful trust in God's love. As we write in January 2024, we are looking forward to the future in faith which we see as a testament to Anna's building and nurture of a resilient and caring congregation, centred on the love of Christ, and to the workings of the Holy Spirit among us.

To arrive at this profile, we conducted a collective discernment process – asking the congregation for their written comments and holding group discussions. St Bene't's is fortunate to have a highly engaged, thoughtful and creative congregation. The process engaged the whole congregation, whose collective prayer and individual wisdom provided the ideas underpinning the document. This information was collated by the Wardens and widely used by the PCC to inform the content of this Parish Profile.

## Structure of the profile

We open with four narrative sections on life at St Bene't's, accompanied by a description of the priestly ministry we are looking for in our next incumbent. We then describe practical details about the Church.

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The ministry of St Bene't's church has grown significantly in recent years, with increased attendance, a new reflective service, a growing study and formation programme, and an increased reach through our website and other media. At the heart of St Bene't's life and community is a desire to show God's love to the world around us and to each other.

## I. An Open Sanctuary

We seek to be an actively inclusive and diverse community, and to put into practice St. Benedict's Rule:

**“All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35)’.**

The church is open to all from early morning until 6.30pm every day. The silence and peace of our beautiful building offer a holy place for visitors, the marginalised, local workers and students and all who pass by to explore our heritage, seek refuge, to spend time with God and each other, or simply to find some stillness in their busy lives in the midst of a busy city.

The Eucharist is celebrated every day, at (currently) varying times to suit respectively early risers, those in town during the day and those who work away from Cambridge and need an evening service. Evening Prayer is said daily at 6pm in church, led by a team of clergy and lay volunteers. It is joined online by those at home, those who are travelling or members of the congregation living abroad. This Covid legacy, together with livestreaming of the 10am Sunday Eucharist, helps extend our open welcome. The links for both services are available on the church website [www.stbenetschurch.org](http://www.stbenetschurch.org).



*Parish communal lunch in rear churchyard garden*



*Refreshments after 10am Sunday Eucharist*

Physical openness is mirrored in our openness to everyone. People come to St Bene't's from a range of backgrounds, with different gifts and experiences, and we rejoice in the diversity of people who follow God's call. We seek to provide a sanctuary for all, and to value everyone, taking pride in all their characteristics. We aim to be a safe haven for people of all backgrounds to worship, pray, visit and be themselves as accepted members of a loving and caring community. We practise this through active welcoming and encouraging people to become engaged to the extent each person wishes, and we provide pastoral care (from the clergy and laity) that is sensitive to the needs and circumstances of each member of the congregation. All this is done under rigorous safeguarding procedures.

We seek to provide a warm welcome and hospitality to new people and visitors, with a strong culture that this is the whole congregation's responsibility. Refreshments are served after the 10am Sunday and 10.30am Tuesday Eucharists to enable people to get to know one another and to give newcomers entry points into the life of St Bene't's.

The social committee extends our welcome through events such as bring and share lunches, teas and suppers, parish walks and picnics. A parish communal lunch is held on the south churchyard lawn on our patronal festival.

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*We are seeking a priest who will lead St Bene't's in being an inclusive church by:*

- Being open, approachable, and welcoming to all, showing generosity, empathy and compassion to others*
- Recognising and ministering to all, including those who may be vulnerable and those marginalised by society*
- Supporting a congregation that is moving forward while still grieving*
- Ministering to people from a wide range of backgrounds and ages with cognitive, emotional and spiritual intelligence*
- Providing leadership which affirms and grows our nature as an inclusive community. This includes being in sympathy with ongoing discussions to permit same sex blessings and weddings in the Church of England*

## 2. A Faithful Community

Prayer and intercession remain at the heart of who we are, as we seek to respond to the God who in Christ has already reached out to find us.

We are a gathered church with few long-term residents in the parish (see section 6). The congregation is multi-generational. It ranges from many families with young children, university students and early-career young adults, through middle-aged working people, to those retired but very active, and the older age group still strong in spirit. This brings a mix of enquiry and vitality, wisdom and experience to the congregation which is reflected in the services and activities. A key part of our pastoral work is keeping in touch with elderly and lonely people in our congregation.



*Young Children's Group meeting in the Ramsey Room during 10am Eucharist*

St Bene't's is an inclusive and deeply sacramental church where people from a wide range of church traditions can feel comfortable (from Orthodox and Roman Catholic to Methodist). Social justice is at the heart of our values and mission. The Christian life is one of ongoing discipleship in community, and regular groups meet for Bible study throughout the year, especially in Lent and Advent, to explore aspects of the faith, or to grow in the practice of prayer (there is a weekly group for contemplative prayer). We have a range of study mornings, often in collaboration with Little St Mary's and led by visiting speakers, and also reading groups to help each of us on our spiritual journey. In recent years we have held quiet afternoons and weekend retreats at Launde Abbey with an invited external leader.

A particular strength of St Bene't's is the work with children, youth and young adults. We have:

- A thriving children's group, using some of the principles of Godly Play, that meets during the Sunday Eucharist
- A youth group (age 10 upwards) which meets during the Sunday Eucharist following a structured programme led by our 20s and 30s young adult group.
- A young adults' 20s and 30s group which meets weekly to discuss all aspects of faith and Christianity, complemented by social events and volunteer activities.

The work of the latter two groups in ministering to the 'age transition', when young people often drift away from church or find it difficult to find an entry point, is a particular joy that needs continual nurturing and building. Baptised children are admitted to communion after appropriate instruction, and a tailored Credo course is available for those interested in finding out more about Christianity or preparing for confirmation.

The spiritual culture of St Bene't's has nourished many in experiencing a vocational call that has led them into training for ministry. Their contribution, and also that of ordinands attached to the parish as part of their training, has enriched the life of the church, especially in growing the youth and young adult work. Continuing St Bene't's as a training parish for both ordinands and curates should be a ministry priority for the future.



The Youth Group after leading a Sunday Eucharist 2022



20s and 30s Group meeting in North Aisle

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We are seeking a priest who will grow and deepen the faith of our community by:

- Using their prayer life to seek a deeper relationship with God
- Affirming the Catholic tradition to deliver authentic ministry and leadership that welcomes a wide range of theological and ecclesiastical traditions and embraces ecumenical outreach
- Being readily available for pastoral care, and a good listener for those who need to talk
- Guiding and mentoring ordinands on placement in the parish and consolidating our close connections with the Theological Federation in Cambridge
- Encouraging and nurturing both vocations and lay ministry when appropriate
- Embracing admission of baptised children to communion and being fully supportive of women's ministry, lay and ordained

### 3. A Liturgical Rhythm of Worship

Our worship is centred on the Eucharist: it is celebrated daily from Monday to Saturday and twice on Sunday (8am, traditional language; 10am, contemporary language with hymns and a sung mass setting). This regular pattern comes from the Franciscan tradition (priest members of the Society of St Francis were vicars of St Bene't's from 1946 until 2005), which continues to be valued, along with the use of silence and the contemplative approach in worship and prayer. Several members of the congregation have strong links to the Franciscan religious order, providing an enduring connection.

There is an emphasis on the liturgical season, its variations and rhythm, and on high quality (intelligent, thoughtful, challenging) preaching, usually closely linked to the Lectionary, informed by good theology and nourished by contemplative prayer and intercessions. The congregation highly values sermons to deepen faith and Christian understanding. We engage with social and moral issues and aim to make sermons and teaching accessible to all. Sermons are preached at both Sunday Eucharists and published on our website, with homilies at some midweek Eucharists.



*10am Sunday Eucharist: Proclaiming the Gospel*

Current practice at communion services is for the presiding priest to wear an alb and chasuble. The sacrament is reserved in an aumbry, and incense is used at the 10am Sunday Eucharist on major festivals and saints' days. An important part of the 10am Sunday Eucharist is the singing of the hymns and the liturgy by the congregation. There is no choir; the psalm is sung by a lay cantor. *Ad hoc* choral groups are formed under the direction of the organist to sing anthems and motets for festivals and special occasions. Joint services are held with Corpus Christi College several times a year (Candlemas, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday) and with Little St Mary's Church (Feast of Corpus Christi).



Lay participation in the Eucharist for readings, cantoring and intercessions is much valued by the congregation; on occasions these roles are taken by members of the youth group, alongside serving in the chancel. The talents, spirituality and creativity of the congregation are a source of encouragement and nourishment to many. These are expressed during special services (e.g. reflective services during Holy Week); this includes contributions for Advent or Lent with written reflections, poetry, and music composition.

Children and young people are central to our communal worship, not peripheral to it. We take the spiritual needs of children seriously and treat them with the same respect and responsibility as we do adults. We aim to give them access to a wide range of Christian tradition (biblical narrative, liturgical patterns, spiritual disciplines and interaction with the contemporary world) which can help them in their journey of faith. Our aim is to distil theology, not to dilute it. We use accessible language, but do not simplify or eliminate mystery. At Christmas and Easter, we have all-age services following a pattern of stations, when children and adults celebrate these great mysteries together.

Baptism is normally administered in the context of the 10am Eucharist. There were an average of four baptisms per year over the last four years. Over the same period, there have been 13 candidates for confirmation, three weddings, three marriage thanksgivings, six funerals and three cremations.



*A video-link enables those at home or travelling to join Evening Prayer, said in church every evening.*

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*We are seeking a priest who will uphold the worshipping tradition of St Bene't's:*

- Recognising the centrality of the Eucharist, the value of liturgy, and our patterns of worship and prayer*
- Continuing St Bene't's reputation for excellent preaching and teaching which helps us see connections between scripture, theology and current events*
- Working collaboratively with the laity and other clergy to unlock the talents of others, to sustain our current offerings and to grow new ways to share our worship of God*

## 4. A Sharing of God's Grace

For many years St Bene't's has had a particular ministry to the homeless, marginalised and vulnerable. We actively support the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project (CCHP) and the Besom (a local charity supporting those on the margins of society). During the winter we host a Warm Space, as part of a wider Cambridge response to the cost-of-living crisis and this is continuing in 2023-24.

We have a tradition of engaging local businesses, including offering them homemade biscuits at Christmas. In recent years we have partnered with a local restaurant, *Bread and Meat*, during the summer to allow their customers to eat in the churchyard garden. A portion of the takings is given to a local charity (e.g. CCHP) through St Bene't's, and it increases the footfall of visitors.

Our wider outreach is mainly through charitable giving. St Bene't's tithes its income, giving 10% to missions and charities working with the needy and marginalised in the UK and abroad.

- 70% of our tithe is split between two overseas projects with a 3-year commitment of funding. We have supported projects in Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan and Zimbabwe, and are developing a link in Kenya.
- The remaining 30% is split on an annual basis between three local or UK organisations.

Occasional collections and (before Covid-19) a Bene't's Fair raise additional funds to supplement these donations or contribute to emergency appeals. There is an opportunity to develop deeper relationships with the recipients, to become more engaged and develop more effective and committed partnerships.



*Supporting Cambridge Churches Homeless Project and the marginalised in Cambridge*

Rich though the life at St Bene't's is, we have identified many opportunities to develop what we have:

- a) We have ambition to expand our Study Days so that St Bene't's becomes a centre for Learning and Formation for Central Cambridge (probably in partnership with other local churches).
- b) Before Covid, our numbers had grown to the point where we were reaching the limits of space in the building, so we were considering additional services and other ways to accommodate growth. Numbers are now showing signs of returning to those levels and there will be a need to revisit these issues and find practical solutions that keep us coherent as a congregation.
- c) We embrace the Franciscan commitment to care for the natural world. We have improved the sustainability of our building (we are currently installing solar panels to decarbonise most of our current power consumption) but there is more to do to become an Eco-Church.
- d) We must ensure that our inclusiveness covers all who may feel excluded or marginalised and consolidate this commitment by considering joining the Inclusive Church Movement.
- e) Pastoral care is good but there is an aspiration to use the caring talents of the congregation more by establishing a broader pastoral team.

There are many signs of hope and, with God's help, we can grow his kingdom in central Cambridge.

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*We are seeking a priest of vision who is ambitious for the church in the world by:*

- Having a strong sense of mission and social justice*
- Working strategically by galvanising the gifts of others to bring about the greater good*
- Providing vision, energy and discernment to help us determine where our mission priorities should lie in this next stage of our community life and so guide the development and implementation of our Development Action Plan*

## 5. Development Action Plan

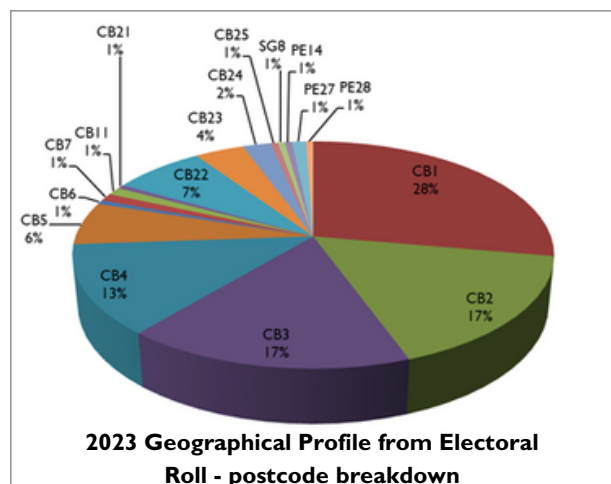
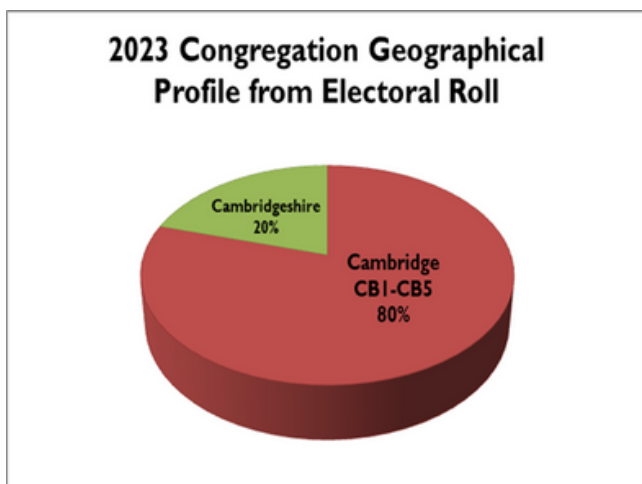
The plans and aspirations for putting the ministry, mission and outreach of St Bene't's into action are encapsulated in our Development Action Plan (DAP). This was drawn up in 2018 by the PCC following extensive consultation and discussion with the congregation. It is based around the three pillars of the Ely Diocesan strategy: Deepening our commitment to God, Engaging with need and Growing God's Church, using five Levers of Change (Nurture, Develop, Serve, Re-imagine and Target) to inform and focus the plans. The DAP and a spreadsheet summarising potential projects and timelines can be viewed at these [links](#).

The implementation of the DAP was disrupted by Covid-19 in 2020-22. Some of the plan was well underway, while other areas had not been started. As we returned to worshipping and meeting in person in 2022, the PCC decided to re-visit the DAP. By February 2023 the PCC had again consulted with the congregation and discussed the 'Deepening our commitment to God' section of the plan; the results of this phase are summarised [here](#). However, the process was put on hold in March 2023 and the remaining two pillars have not yet been re-visited. There is therefore good opportunity for the new incumbent to lead on this process of re-examining the DAP and working with the PCC to modify it in the light of current circumstances and their own preferences and insights.

## 6. The Parish and the St Bene't's Community

St Bene't's is a city church in the middle of Cambridge; the parish comprises mainly shops, offices and university departments. At present the only members of the congregation who live within the parish are students, who tend to be present only during term time.

We are a gathered congregation, with people choosing to come to St Bene't's from inner Cambridge to as far away as 20 miles from the city. As stated above in section 2, the age range of the congregation is very broad, from young families to those retired but very active and the older age group. The demographics of the congregation by home location are illustrated here.



Given our position in a city with two universities and local high-tech industry, there is a good mix of worshippers from all over the world. There is a committed core of long-term members of the congregation which is richly augmented by those who live and work in and around Cambridge for just a few years. As we are in the city centre, there are a number of homeless people and some with mental health issues amongst our immediate neighbours. Between 3000 and 4000 people work in the parish during normal office hours and thousands of visitors from across the world pass down Bene't Street on most days of the year. There are no schools, care homes or day centres within the parish; there are two GP practices and a dental surgery.

The church bells are rung on Friday evenings and Sunday mornings by members of the Cambridge University Guild of Change Ringers and there are visiting teams of ringers from time to time. The Ramsey Rooms in the South Aisle are available for groups to use by arrangement.

## 7. Church Life

The 2023-24 Electoral Roll has 185 members, 100% of whom live outside the parish. The distribution of where they live is given in the previous section. Details of services and average 2023 attendances are:

### Sunday Services

Time	Service	Form of service	Attendance 16+ years old	Attendance <16 years old
8 am	Eucharist	Common Worship, Traditional language	14	0
10 am	Eucharist	Common Worship	110	30
6 pm	Evening prayer	Common Worship, In Church + online	10	0

### Other Services

Average attendance = 10 people

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Eucharist	7 pm	10:30 am	12:30 pm	12:30 pm	8 am	9 am
Evening prayer	6 pm	6 pm	6 pm	6 pm	6 pm	6 pm

### Principal Feasts

	Attendance	
Christmas	Journey to Bethlehem (all age)	40
	Midnight Mass	72
	Christmas Day 8 am	6
	Christmas Day 10 am	74

Unlike 'residential' parishes, attendance is often lower at Christmas and Easter as many people are away

	Attendance	
Easter	Easter Sunday 8am	15
	Easter Sunday 10am	156

Hymns are mainly selected from the New English Hymnal, supplemented by additional hymns on sheets, and are chosen by the vicar or a member of the clergy team. The ordinary of the Mass is sung in unison by the congregation to two settings which alternate according to the liturgical season. At the 10am Eucharist a cantor leads the singing of the psalm to a simple plainsong chant with the congregation responding in alternate verses. There is no music during the distribution of Communion which takes place in silence. We have an excellent organist and a number of good deputies. There is no choir though at major festivals music appropriate to the season is provided by a small group of singers, coordinated by the organist, who is an experienced director of music. Home communions vary according to the number of sick and housebound.

In Holy Week, typically there are reflective services on Monday to Wednesday, with a guest preacher to lead us through the Triduum from Maundy Thursday to Easter Eve and to preach on Easter Day. At Christmas an outdoor Carol Service is held in the front churchyard, with brass band accompaniment, to encourage participation by tourists and shoppers passing along Bene't Street at this busy festive time and orient them towards the real message of Christmas.



*Community Christmas Carol Service in Front Churchyard and Bene't Street*

## 8. The Building and its Upkeep

The building is dated to c.1020 and is considered to be the oldest building in Cambridge. We celebrated a Millennium of worship in 2020. The Saxon tower and interior arch with their distinctive “long and short” stonework are notable features. The north aisle of the church has no pews and serves as a space for meetings and other events (and is where refreshments are served after the 10am Eucharist on Sundays). The two Ramsey Rooms are smaller spaces for teaching (on Sundays the children and young people gather here) and meetings.

The south churchyard (between the church and Corpus Christi College) is not accessible to the general public. It is a lawned area where ashes may be interred; it is also used for social events. The north churchyard (between the church and Benet Street) is the main approach and is surrounded by railings with a gate which is locked at night. A smaller area of churchyard to the north-east leads from Free School Lane to the vestry. The churchyard is cared for by the gardeners of Corpus Christi College. There are no other buildings owned by the church.



*A view of St Bene't's from the altar*



*The Ramsey Rooms – a quiet space for young people's groups and private meetings*

## Maintenance and Upkeep

The most recent quinquennial inspection was carried out in July 2023. This reported that the church was in good order and identified only minor repair and maintenance items with an estimated cost of £11,500. These items will be actioned by mid-2024, with their cost covered fully by the Giddy Fund - an endowment restricted to repairing and maintaining the fabric of the church. This fund currently stands at £1.06m so the church is in the very fortunate position of not having to raise funds to maintain the beautiful, historic building. The PCC's approach is to use this fund responsibly, not only to keep the building in good order, but to enhance the fabric of the church where this fits with our ministry and community goals.

Disabled access to the church had been an issue for some time and to celebrate our Millennium in 2020 it was decided to commission a large project (£750k) to re-structure the entrance area, installing a curving sloped pathway to enable step-free wheelchair access and a new glass main door with push-button operation. In addition, the old lighting system was replaced by a multi-spot LED system, which sheds light more evenly through the building, enabling it to be focused on small areas of the church when appropriate; this has reduced our electricity consumption by 35%. New biodiverse planting has taken place throughout the churchyard. Renovation of 17th century Benefactor Boards was also part of the project. Together the project improved the utility and sustainability of the building for the current congregation, opening up the building to more people, and enhancing the fabric for future generations.



*New automatic glass door with bronze pelican handles installed as part of the 2020 'Millennium Project' to improve disabled access to the church.*

The Fabric Committee have been working on a number of projects for future upgrades, notably to restructure the organ/kitchen area to install an accessible toilet and some re-ordering of the stone floors in the chancel, nave and St Anne's Altar area to improve disabled access within the church. All of this work is on hold until a new incumbent is appointed.

## The Vicarage

The current vicarage is located in St. Bartholomew's Court, Riverside, Cambridge and is within two miles of St Bene't's Church.

Note from the Ven Dr Alex Hughes, Archdeacon of Cambridge: The diocese is seeking to replace the vicarage for St Bene't's. A search for suitable properties has begun and the search team will work with the churchwardens to secure a suitable property ready for a new incumbent. If potential applicants have any questions about this process, please feel free to contact the archdeacon: [archdeacon.cambridge@elydiocese.org](mailto:archdeacon.cambridge@elydiocese.org)



## 9. Finance

We encourage planned giving. The number of tax-efficient planned monthly givers in November 2023 was 73 (56 via the Parish Giving Scheme and 17 via bank standing order). We also have a small number of planned quarterly givers and a few regular envelope givers. We also receive donations via the JustGiving link on our website (mainly from members of the congregation) and via our card payment machine inside church (mainly from visiting tourists and passers-by). Our income is occasionally buoyed up by significant legacies, although of course this is unpredictable.

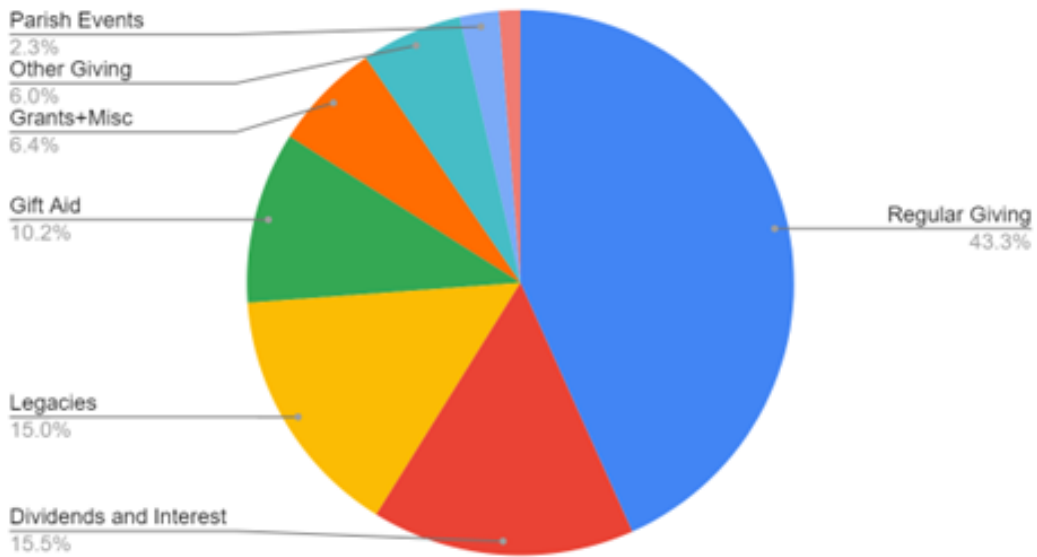
Despite this solid base of regular giving, in recent years we have struggled to cover our annual operating costs, running a small deficit of typically £7,000. Our income in 2022 was £128,425 and our expenditure was £135,967, with a net deficit of £7,542; a similar loss is expected in 2023. The origins of this date back to 2019 when the position of vicar moved from half- to full-time, with a consequent 50% increase in Parish Share. Increased planned giving and growth of the congregation have covered most of this increase but the disruption of Covid-19 in 2020-21 and the influx of new people post-Covid, without a strong emphasis on joining planned giving given the economic climate, has meant that reducing the deficit has stalled. The giving potential of the congregation is there and the PCC is taking measures to stimulate this in order to redress the situation, including increasing awareness of Christian Stewardship principles. The deficit is not a cause for major concern, given our significant assets and strong balance sheet (£172,776 is held in the unrestricted General Fund), but cannot be sustained indefinitely.

We are in the fortunate position of holding significant investment funds, with a total value of £1,545,170 at the end of 2022. Our most notable fund is the Giddy Endowment Fund (value £1,065,773), restricted to expenditure relating to the fabric of the church. In addition to the 2019 Millennium project, in 2022 we used this fund for essential repairs to the North Aisle roof and in 2023/4, we are using it to install photovoltaic solar panels on the South Aisle roof. We also use the Giddy Fund to pay for fabric related costs such as buildings insurance, gas and electricity bills. Our investments are also a valuable source of dividend income and there is £77,194 in an accumulated income fund.

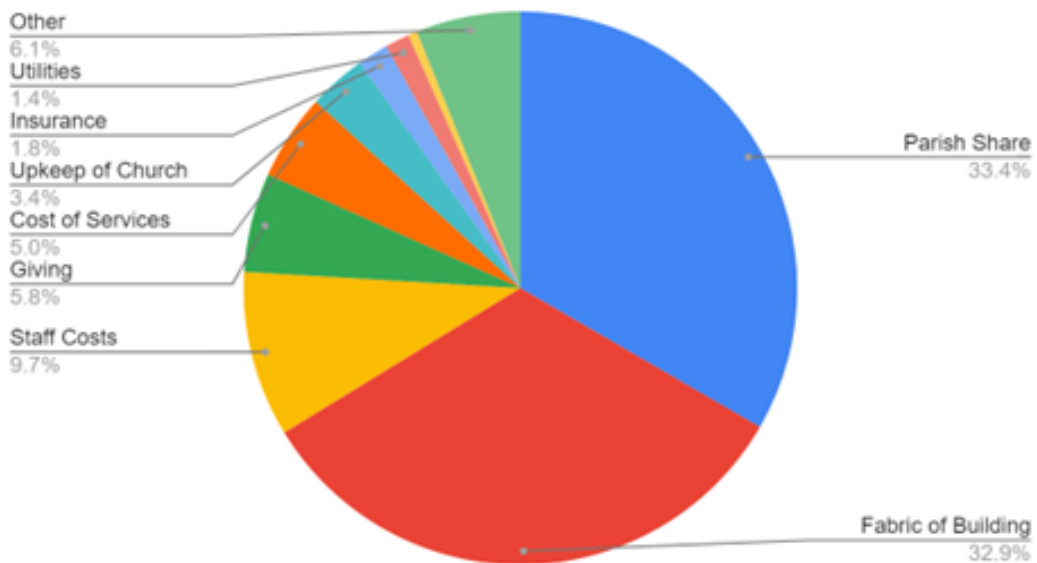
The Church holds a number of other restricted funds: the 'Millennium Ministry' Fund, the balance of which is currently £172,396; the Bilton Fund (education) holds £50,980 and we have £6,051 in other small funds - the fabric refurbishment fund, the Vicar's wish list fund (donations for specific items needed for the church such as candlesticks and linen), the bell fund, the flower fund and the children's work fund.

The charts below categorise our total 2022 income (£200,122) and expenses (£229,214):

### 2022 Income



### 2022 Expenditure



St Bene't's has always fully funded its Parish Share commitments, which amounted to £78,136 in 2023. We tithe 10% of our income and give particular financial and practical support to the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project. Additional funds are raised for other local charities via occasional events.

The PCC pays for a parish administrator to work 17 hours a week and the incumbent's expenses (travel, office, communication, hospitality etc) are fully covered. The immediate challenge is to at least break even on our regular operational and ministry costs but given the blessings of the Giddy Fund and our other investments, we aspire to do better than that.

## 10. Organisation

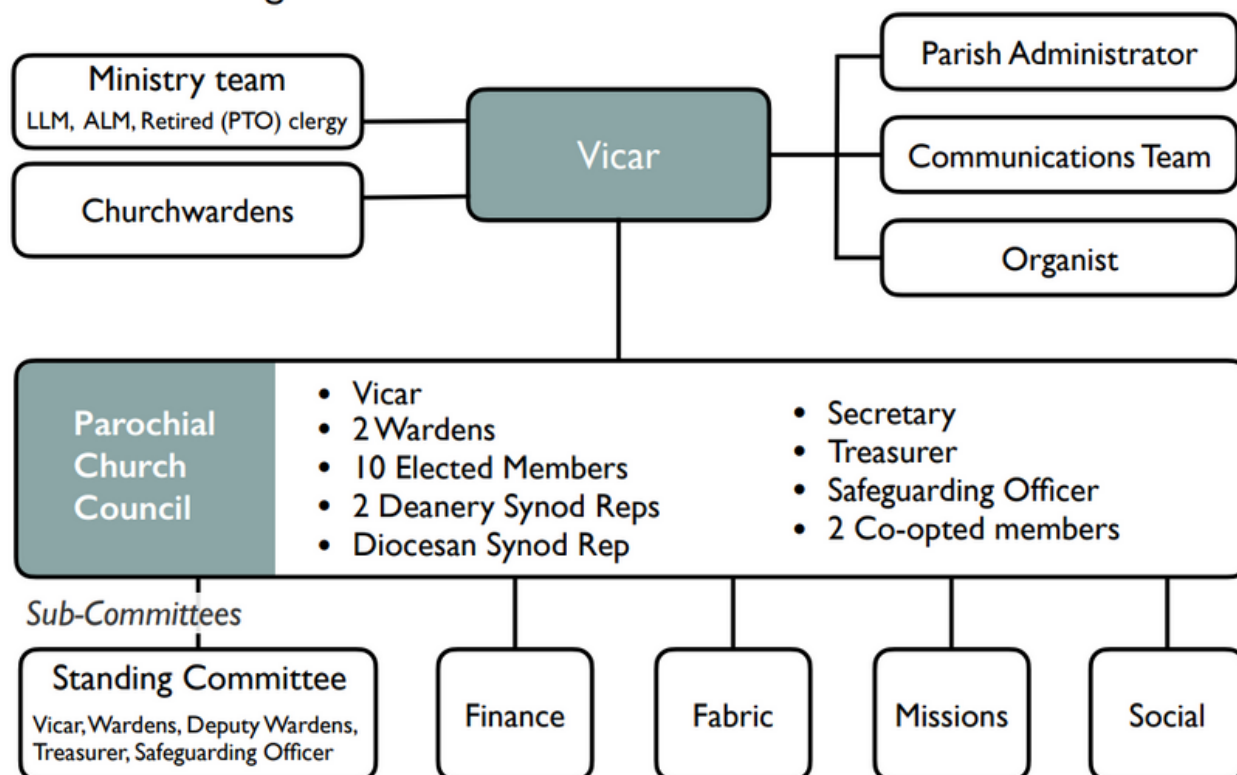
The patron of St Bene't's is Corpus Christi College. As well as overseeing the appointment of incumbents, the college is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the chancel in St Bene't's. There is a close relationship with the college, particularly through the Dean and Chaplain, who offer regular assistance including by presiding at weekday Eucharists. As stated above, joint services starting in the college chapel and processing to St Bene't's are a witness to our faith and are held on the Feast of Candlemas, Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday. The Chaplain was particularly supportive during the months following Anna Matthews' death, both pastorally and in taking services. The college gardeners help look after the churchyard and the porters' lodge is the first port of call for emergencies, including roof alarm incidents. We wish to maintain and grow the close links with the college and explore the potential for greater collaboration in areas such as installation of decarbonised heating (by aiming to join future inter-college initiatives on heat pumps, for instance), high quality internet access and music.

We currently benefit from an interim Priest-In-Charge, Revd Dr James Gardom, who is also the Dean and Chaplain of Pembroke College, Cambridge. James will be completing his term of office at St Bene't's in July 2024. Also on our current ministry team are Andrea Harrison (Licensed Lay Minister), the Revd Canon Richard Ames-Lewis (retired with PTO), Revd Caroline Brownlie (retired with PTO) and Janice Moore (Authorised Lay Minister in pastoral care). We also benefit from a number of clergy within the city of Cambridge who regularly preside at our daily Eucharist. In the very recent past, we have served as a training parish for those ordained who are completing their curacy, as well as being a placement for ordinands from both Ridley Hall and Westcott House.

We have two church wardens, two deputy wardens, a PCC secretary who is also church administrator, a treasurer, and a safeguarding officer who, along with the parochial church council, are elected annually. Within the parochial church council, we have a standing committee, a financial planning group and a fabric committee. Other committees that support church activities, both within St Bene't's and beyond, include the social committee and the mission committee. We have several paid roles, including church administrator, communications officers, organist, and cleaner. An organogram for St Bene't's governance is given below.

We are further strengthened by our team of committed and skilled volunteers, including sacristan, deputy sacristan and servers, with daily Evening Prayer also volunteer-led. At the Sunday 10am service, there are volunteer sides-persons, readers, intercessors, bellringers and, not least, coffee-makers. We also have a small team of committed volunteer group leaders for the children's group and the young people's group that meet on Sundays and for the 20s and 30s group that meets during the week in term-time. This includes three designated people responsible for children's and youth work (one of whom is an LLM). The PCC implements child protection requirements and publicly displays its Child Safeguarding Policy and reporting contacts.

## St. Bene't's Organisation



## II. Communications

Communication to the congregation and the wider world is an important part of St Bene't's outreach. We employ a communications officer to coordinate and deliver this. We have an active website with a distinctive branding and house style: <https://www.stbenetschurch.org/>. This provides information about services, forthcoming events, and links to Evening Prayer online and the 10am Sunday Eucharist and special services via livestreaming. Amongst other things, the site also gives access to Teaching and Learning materials, including sermons, talks given at the Study Mornings and, in recent years, reflections for Advent and Lent produced by members of the congregation.

A weekly update email is sent out every Saturday from the vicar to all on the electoral roll and our wider mailing list, and a pew leaflet (Tidings) is produced every Sunday to include the readings, hymns and names of those leading the worship that day, along with current notices, events and regular activities. Term cards of weekly activities are produced for the youth group and the 20s & 30s group. Information about the church, its services and events is also distributed through social media.

Information available in the church for visitors includes a history of St Bene't's ('The Story of 1000 Years', <https://www.stbenetschurch.org/history>) produced for the Millennium anniversary, guide leaflets to the church and prayer cards. There is a series of eight banners describing the evolution of the church over 1000 years to inform visitors and direct them to areas of interest.

## 12. Message from the Priest-in-Charge

It was a great privilege to join St Bene't's in mid-July to assist with the interregnum as Priest-in-Charge, following Anna Matthews' sudden death in March. I am grateful to Pembroke College for releasing me on secondment. It was good to come back into parish ministry after a number of years of chaplaincy.

I had heard about the response of the St Bene't's community in the immediate weeks after Anna's death. At a time of shock, dismay, and an outpouring of grief, really good pastoral and teaching work was done by clergy connected to the parish, and by those within the community who led the "Conversations about Anna" sessions in those early weeks.



I did approach my time at St Bene't's with some anxiety. Anna had had an extraordinary impact at St Bene't's – would her death be followed inevitably by decline, and disappointment? There were significant undercurrents of grief, anger and incomprehension. Would this lead to a divided church, and an inability to plan and to think for the future? Many key people had worked amazingly hard to keep things going. Would they stop, switch off, or drift away as soon as it was safe to do so? For very good reasons, the size of the ministry team decreased in the first few weeks of my time at St Bene't's. Would we be able to keep the rich liturgical and prayer life of the church going?

I have been met, uniformly, with welcome, hopefulness and a desire that St Bene't's should continue to grow in faith and commitment. The Wardens have been excellent in their teamwork, and their guidance of the community. The PCC has been united and effective, looking constructively at the problems and good possibilities facing St Bene't's. Local clergy have assisted generously with the daily Eucharist and with occasional Sunday preaching. Filling rotas has been demanding but not impossible.

Because of this, we have chosen to continue with nearly all the projects and ministries of St Bene't's, and they have been maintained and have flourished.

I believe that St Bene't's is in a good position to face the future under a new incumbent. They have great gifts of Faith and Hope and Love. I wish to affirm the picture of the Parish given in the Profile – a living and hopeful parish which should be a very rewarding context for ministry.

*James Gardom*

## Appendix I: Congregational Consultation

The writing of the St Bene't's Parish Profile followed a period of congregational consultation. This included a survey to which there was a very positive response – see below. There was also active engagement in a range of face-to-face meetings with the children's group, the young people's group and the 20s and 30s group. Other groups that gathered included those who regularly attend evening prayer, the mid-week Eucharist and the Sunday Eucharist. All congregational responses have been gathered and used by the Parochial Church Council to inform the writing of this parish profile.

### A. How I describe St Bene't's



### B. What I value about St Bene't's





## Appendix II: Priest Description

Here we collect together the information provided at the end of sections 1 to 4

We are seeking a priest who will lead St Bene't's in being an inclusive church by:

- *Being open, approachable, and welcoming to all, showing generosity, empathy and compassion to others*
- *Recognising and ministering to all, including those who may be vulnerable and those marginalised by society*
- *Supporting a congregation that is moving forward while still grieving*
- *Ministering to people from a wide range of backgrounds and ages with cognitive, emotional and spiritual intelligence*
- *Providing leadership which affirms and grows our nature as an inclusive community. This includes being in sympathy with ongoing discussions to permit same sex blessings and weddings in the Church of England*

We are seeking a priest who will grow and deepen the faith of our community by:

- *Using their prayer life to seek a deeper relationship with God*
- *Affirming the Catholic tradition to deliver authentic ministry and leadership that welcomes a wide range of theological and ecclesiastical traditions and embraces ecumenical outreach*
- *Being readily available for pastoral care, and a good listener for those who need to talk*
- *Guiding and mentoring ordinands on placement in the parish and consolidating our close connections with the Theological Federation in Cambridge*
- *Encouraging and nurturing both vocations and lay ministry when appropriate*
- *Embracing admission of baptised children to communion and being fully supportive of women's ministry, lay and ordained*

We are seeking a priest who will uphold the worshipping tradition of St Bene't's:

- *Recognising the centrality of the Eucharist, the value of liturgy, and our patterns of worship and prayer*
- *Continuing St Bene't's reputation for excellent preaching and teaching which helps us see connections between scripture, theology and current events*
- *Working collaboratively with the laity and other clergy to unlock the talents of others, to sustain our current offerings and to grow new ways to share our worship of God*

We are seeking a priest of vision who is ambitious for the church in the world by:

- *Having a strong sense of mission and social justice*
- *Working strategically by galvanising the gifts of others to bring about the greater good*
- *Providing vision, energy and discernment to help us determine where our mission priorities should lie in this next stage of our community life and so guide the development and implementation of our Development Action Plan*





St Bene't's  
CAMBRIDGE

*Sunday Eucharist*  
8:00 & 10:00 am

*Evening Prayer*  
Daily at 6:00 pm

*Weekday Eucharist*

Monday: 7:00 pm  
10:30 am  
Tuesday: 12:30 pm  
Wednesday: 12:30 pm  
Thursday: 12:30 pm  
Friday: 8:00 am  
Saturday: 9:00 am

[www.stbenetschurch.org](http://www.stbenetschurch.org)