

All Saints Staplehurst

Parish Profile 2011



<http://www.allsaintsstaplehurst.co.uk/>

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PART 1: SUMMARY

Vision and Values

Our *vision* for All Saints is to grow as a faith-community which

- seeks the unveiling of God's love through inspiring worship;
- welcomes and values all who come and nurtures their faith and ministry;
- enables a connection between God's love and the wider community.

The *values* by which we aim to fulfil our vision and live our common life are summed up in our *mission statement*. This forms the structure for our PCC meetings and is our benchmark in matters of both faith and practice:

- All Saints' Staplehurst is an Inclusive Church* - everyone is welcomed.
- We encourage participation in all aspects of Church life whilst respecting the choices of those wishing not to participate.
- We seek to take our faith outside our church building.
- We aim to bring our whole selves to God through worship, praise and prayer. We bring our skills and personalities to offer to God's purpose.
- We seek to listen to God and act in response e.g. in issues of peace and justice.
- We want to grow in our faith and to help all others (including the young) to do so.
- We respect the past, respond to present challenges and prepare for the future.
- We work together with other churches in the Weald Deanery.
- We acknowledge the attributes of all Christians and value the diversity of other styles of worshipping God.
- We will work with the other Churches in Staplehurst towards the furtherance of Christianity in the local and world community.



* In 2005, our PCC passed a resolution assenting to the *Inclusive Church* Declaration of Belief. All Saints was listed on their website as a church which affirms that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is Good News for everyone, and that the diverse gifts and ministries of all members of the body of Christ should be celebrated, regardless of their gender, race or sexual orientation. We reaffirmed this resolution in 2008.

Ministry and Mission

The life, vision and values of the faith-community at All Saints are expressed in *ministry and mission* in interconnected ways:

- *We worship...*

...because we seek to be, first and foremost, people who help each other to discover, grow in and express our faith. At the heart of our worship is the Eucharist, because it expresses the very root of our spiritual life. Here, we are embraced both by God and our companions in our journey. It is the foundation of our common life.

Yet there is variety, too. Our wide array of services and styles reflect differing pastoral needs, diverse tastes and the progression and rhythm of the seasons. They enable different people to worship and the same people to worship in different ways.

And our worship is not just for us. Harvest, Plough, Rogation, Remembrance, Bereavement, Christmas, Christingle, Easter and Occasional services are all valued by farmers, families, children and those who are dealing with significant life-change. And All Saints church is an ancient sacred space we keep open for the many who drop in to be quiet, reflect and pray.



- *We belong...*

...because we believe we are called to express God's life and character in our common life. We stimulate one another to learn and grow in faith. We support and care for one another in difficult times. We co-operate with one another to get things done. We value and encourage each other's contribution. We have fun together in both great social events and more personal friendship networks.

Often we disagree, sometimes quite strongly. But we remain committed to one another; to working out our differences; to moving beyond our hurts and to constantly rediscover the root of our unity in worship.

But we do not believe that our common life is just for us. We seek to actively include newcomers in our common life so that they, too, can feel they belong and join us in our shared spiritual journey. But we might need help to do this better.

- We are rooted in our village and the wider community...

...because we belong there, too, and we aspire to express our spiritual life there. Some of our programme and activities are for the village community, like our work with parents, children and schools, and much of our worship. Our social responsibility committee has a limited programme which we're keen to have help in developing.



But we're also involved as partners in countless aspects of village life, sometimes as a congregation, but often as small groups or as individuals. Pubs, fêtes, celebrations, community organisations, schools, nursing homes, shops – we're everywhere; trying to listen and to demonstrate spiritual values in what we say and do.



And we try to make an informed response to wider issues of peace, social justice or mission through preaching, discussion, giving and other support.

So we are looking for...

...someone who is dedicated to...

Communication

- showing an ability to communicate effectively, be at ease in this Inclusive church and enable it to fulfil its mission;
- wanting to develop ministry amongst young people and to further the mission of the church to children and young adults;
- being able to connect the Bible to everyday life in a contemporary, imaginative and creative way;
- encouraging people to serve God and one another;

Collaboration

- a life rooted in prayer and the Eucharist;
- respecting the very broad and diverse liturgical tradition of this church and, at the same time, supporting development and change to reflect the needs of the worshipping congregation;
- working with our ministry team and encouraging all (lay and ordained) to use their skills and talents in the service of God;
- training candidates for ordained and lay ministry;
- promoting an active relationship with other local churches;

Community

- being involved in the day to day life of the village and its many organisations and societies;
- encouraging and developing the ministry of the Church in the Community.

A Common Vision

Our focus on an integrated approach to Worship, Community and Mission resonates closely with current diocesan initiatives to redefine its priorities by developing interconnected Frameworks for Ministry & Training, Resource Management, Local Church Development, Communities & Partnership and Education. We, too, aim to work with our deanery partners to inspire, train and resource our members to build up our church and serve our community.

Our diocesan and deanery lay representatives help us to remain aware of wider initiatives and to ensure we play our part in them. For, example, we are fully participating in this year's diocesan initiative, the Year of Discipleship. In this, we are very fortunate that the deanery Lay Chair is a member both of our church and of the Archbishop's Council.

PART 2: APPENDICES

Appendix 1: More About Mission

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges

Strengths

- Inclusive;
- Strong sense of community/family;
- Ministry team with wide range of gifts;
- Fostering collaborative ministry;
- Strong pastoral care;
- Broad liturgy/inspirational worship;
- Music;
- Well equipped kitchen and toilet with disabled access;
- Newly extended Churchyard open to whole community;
- Ecumenical links;
- Bellringers;
- Awareness of social responsibility;
- Magazine.



Weaknesses

- Can't attract children between 5 and 18 years;
- Despite large number of baptisms and a thriving toddler and parent group, we do not attract families to services;
- Ageing congregation;
- Not good at reviewing and revising planned giving;
- The Parish Room is old.

Opportunities

- St George's Chapel can be used as a smaller and more intimate area for worship;
- Largest building in the village – can be used for concerts/ activities;
- The large roof could be used for solar panelling to make us more environmentally friendly;
- Village has a large number of organisations;
- Networking our church community with the larger community can be developed.

Challenges

- As the congregation ages, pastoral visiting will become harder;
- Pension income reducing and so giving is likely to decline even further;
- Maintaining a Grade 1 listed building;
- Making the church more comfortable: heating and seating;
- Providing audio-visual facilities;
- Free Church will have new purpose built building for use for village activities and so Parish Room may no longer receive income from community groups.

Unfulfilled Potential

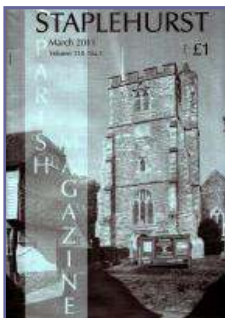
When our Youth Ministry Coordinator was appointed in 2006, our hope was that one outcome of her work would be that families and children would become fully integrated into the life of our church.

We hadn't expected that her mid-week work with parents and under-5s, MiniSaints, would be so extraordinarily successful and we are extremely proud of her and what she has done to provide both an invaluable service to the community and a connection to Christian faith within that group.

However, the particular aim that new families and children become integrated into the life of our church remains unfulfilled, and we hope that our new incumbent will help us with this.

Community links

- MiniSaints, our mid-week group for parents, grandparents or carers with children under 5 years old is mainly used by non-churchgoers;
- The ministry of our Pastoral Team to the sick, the bereaved, people with family problems and those who just need a little company is highly valued;
- Our magazine makes connections right through the community;
- Regular Communion and Carol services in three nursing homes;
- Drivers and wheelchair-pushers bring disabled people to services from Sobell Lodge;
- Our Social Responsibility committee looks for ways to work in partnership with the wider community. For example, they have been exploring with the Parish Council the possibility of providing land for allotments in the village;
- Our band of bellringers are a mix of churchgoers and non-churchgoers;
- Our excellent Choir often sing at weddings and funerals. They take part in concerts and hold Musical Evenings for couples planning to marry to help them choose music for their wedding;
- We participate in community Carol services;
- The Village War Memorial is in the St. George's Chapel;
- Our members are involved in countless community organisations. This may not be formal 'mission', but its effect should not be underestimated
- Finally, the connection with our farming community is both ancient and strong. The church is so vital a part of their way of life that they have asked for specific input into the parish profile ... *see the next page ...*



Brattle Farm Museum



From the farming community in Staplehurst parish:

There can be nothing more traditional than tilling the soil or tending to plants and animals. We may use modern equipment but our raw materials are very basic God-given commodities.

Perhaps this is one reason why we feel so comfortable with time-honoured, traditional forms of worship, especially at festivals. It is on these occasions that the farming community try to set aside special time to join together in a collective group to ask and thank God for all we have and all we do. There are many times during a farming year when disease and bad weather could completely destroy a year's income; there is nothing we can do about it. We have, consequently, much to pray for together. We do not see tradition as a bad thing, then, but rather as a comforting sense of stability, endurance and sincerity.

During the past few decades farming has changed so much. Forty years ago there were many workers on each farm making little communities of their own. Now there are typically one or two people running each farm. This has had the effect of fragmenting and isolating each one of us to the extent that in fact farming represents one of the highest suicide rates of any profession. It is very easy to become insular and reclusive when working on your own every day.

Most of us in this parish have worked and lived here for many generations. We are not a transitory work force and as such are fairly static – and some may say 'old fashioned'. If nothing else, we like to think that we are consistent and reliable – not exciting or inspirational, perhaps, but hopefully steadfast in our faith and our lives. Our feet, our families and our past are firmly embedded in the Staplehurst clay!

These are all reasons why we would appreciate a rector who could identify with our needs and ways and would feel 'at home' in a rural parish. We fully understand that the needs of all parishioners are very diverse and we do not expect 'special' treatment – just an understanding of who and what we are. More than anything we desire a rector who wants to be here, in our midst, listening and understanding, teaching and supporting us.

Nurture and evangelism

Evangelism arises naturally from our friendships, community links and occasional offices. However, our stipendiary Curate is planning to start a Youth Emmaus course for 11-15s. Nurture as *teaching* is aided by study groups which meet during Advent and Lent; this year we will be participating in the diocesan *24/7 Discipleship* course. Nurture as *relationship* is certainly aided by those groups, but happens more naturally through inclusion in our many social events and opportunities to work alongside others.



Schools

There is no church school, but our Stipendiary Curate is a member of the Governing Body of Staplehurst Primary School and our Youth Ministry Coordinator leads assemblies, assists with RE classes and gives support to 'Early Years'. Pupils visit the church for RE lessons and for their own school Carol service.

Our Self Supporting Curate is the Chaplain at Dulwich Preparatory School in Cranbrook.



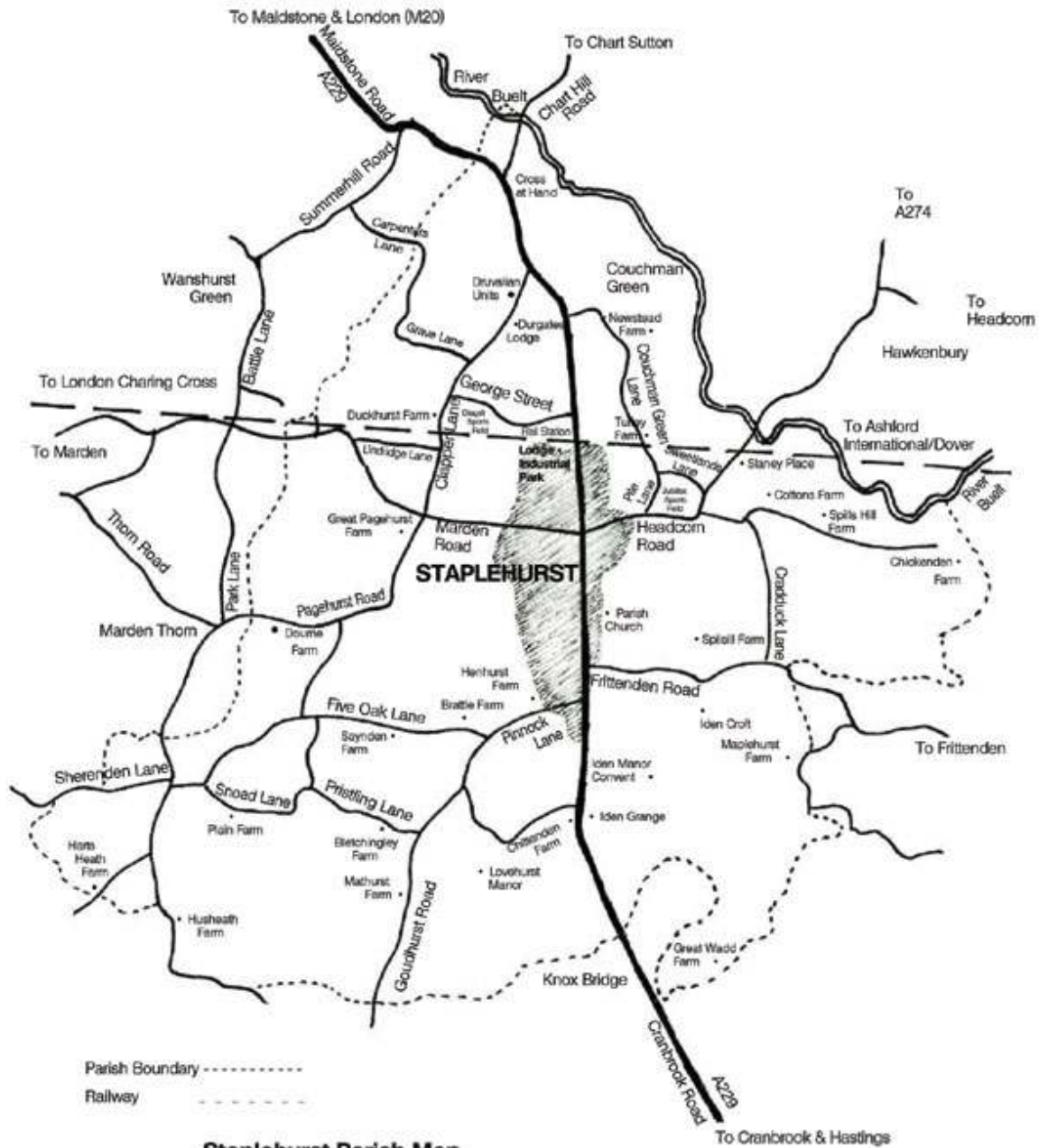
Person Specification

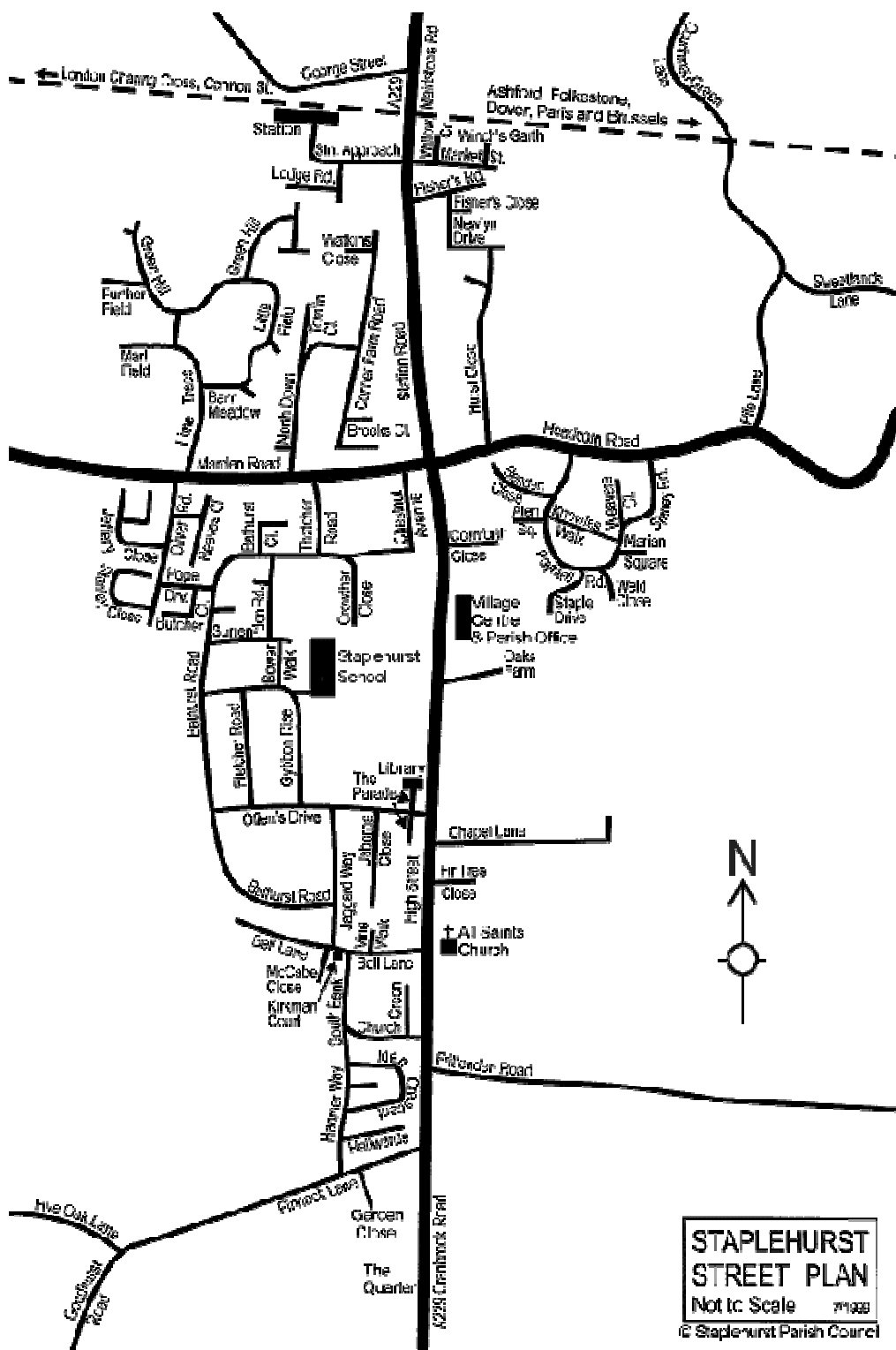
Knowledge	<p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dynamics of leading and managing a ministry team. • How to encourage and resource individuals to develop their faith and ministry. • A wide range of liturgical approaches. • The relationship of theology to social issues and pastoral care. • Effective budget and project management <p>Desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to develop effective social mission.
Experience	<p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least three years parochial experience. • Responsibility for training and overseeing the work of others. • Facilitating community ministry. <p>Desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for a parochial congregation. • Training and managing curates. • Partnership in community projects.
Skills & Abilities	<p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication with a range of audiences and in a variety of settings. • The ability to help people think about, take responsibility for and grow in their faith. • Willingness to seek and receive honest feedback and to learn from experience. • A collaborative, consultative, responsive and facilitative management style. • The ability to recognise, encourage and enhance the contribution of others. • An appropriate balance between empowerment, support and challenge. • Confidentiality. • Liturgical adroitness and creativity. • To be able to engage in partnership with community leaders and organisations. • Effective prioritisation and time management. • IT capability.
Personal Qualities	<p>Be...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • able to work within and nurture an inclusive environment in which everyone is welcomed and valued regardless of their gender, race, disability or sexual orientation; • able to embrace a wide variety of traditions, both old and new; • careful to tend a rich spiritual life of their own.

Appendix 2: Wider Context

The Parish

(Maps used by agreement with Staplehurst Parish Council)





Transport links:

On the A229 between Maidstone to the North (10 miles), and Cranbrook (5 miles) and Hastings to the South. A regular Arriva bus service plies this route.

Mainline rail service from London (Charing Cross, Waterloo East, London Bridge and Cannon Street all served) via Ashford to Dover. From Ashford there are connections to Canterbury, and, via Eurostar, to Paris and the Continent.

Social Geography

There is an active Parish Council which has undertaken various initiatives for the improvement of life in Staplehurst. These include an emergency committee set up after a recent major fire in the village in order to learn the lessons and to ensure that we respond well to any future incident within our community.

The Parish council has also undertaken a recent "Healthcheck" (Interim report March 2010), which is an analysis of current issues of concern in the community, and an assessment of a survey of residents' aspirations for future change – the web address is:

www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/uploads/Staplehurst/documents/35/337.pdf .

There is a newly developed medical centre, with an active 'Friends of the Medical Centre' group, who work with the medical staff to assist in outreach advice on managing medical needs.

The shopping centre (The Parade) has a library, funeral director, sub-post office, baker, butcher, pharmacy, small supermarket (Spar), newsagents (Martins), hairdressers, off-licence, bank, gift shop, betting shop and various estate agencies. There are also a number of takeaway shops in the village (including fish and chips, Indian and Chinese takeaways) and another newsagent near the station. There are four pubs in central Staplehurst, two of which serve meals.

There is a great range of village societies:

- Aerodance;
- Community Centre for Debt Advice;
- Diagrif Golf Course;
- Girlguiding (Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers);
- Paddock Wood and District Lions Club;
- Royal British Legion;
- Scouting (Beavers, Cubs, Scouts);
- Staplehurst Access Group;
- Staplehurst Arts Festival;
- Staplehurst Bridge Club;
- Staplehurst Carnival and Fete;
- Staplehurst Cricket and Tennis Club;
- Staplehurst Dramatic Society;
- Staplehurst Footpath Group;
- Staplehurst Horticultural Society;
- Staplehurst Interest Group;
- Staplehurst Monarchs Football Club;
- Staplehurst Neighbourhood Watch;
- Staplehurst Photographic Society;
- Staplehurst Snooker Club;
- Staplehurst Village Centre;
- Staplehurst Women's Institute;
- Staplehurst Youth Group;
- Staplehurst Society;
- The Weald Club for the Disabled.

Other facilities include:

- Bell Lane Nature Reserve – managed by volunteers;
- Duckhurst Farm Show Centre – for show jumping;
- Sports facilities – Jubilee Fields (with changing rooms and skateboard facility);
- Halls – Village Centre, Margaret Howard, Parish Room and McCabe Day Centre).

The care establishments in the village are Sobell Lodge; Abbotsleigh Residential Care Home; Iden Manor Nursing Home; Staplehurst Manor Nursing Home, The Hedgerows (a care home for people with a learning disability) and Woodland House (mental health care for adolescents)

Education

- Schools and pre-school care:
- Chapel Lane Pre-school (age 2½ - 5)
- Marden Children's Centre (under 5s, health visitors and 'messy play' – Staplehurst children welcome)
- Poppy's Day Nursery
- The Learning Tree – nursery school
- Under 5s Playgroup
- Staplehurst Primary School
- There are a wide range of state Secondary and Independent schools within easy access of Staplehurst.
-

Entry to Kent Grammar Schools is selective, and year 6 pupils take the Kent Test (sometimes called the 11+) if parents wish to apply for entry to one of the Maidstone Grammar Schools. Pupils in Staplehurst have the further option of taking a test for admission to Cranbrook School at 13+ from either a selective or non-selective school. Independent schools have their own entrance criteria.

Demography

STAPLEHURST STATISTICS	VILLAGE	CHURCH
Approximate age range		
0-18 years	24%	16%
19-40	29%	8%
41-64	34%	38%
65+	13%	38%
Socio-economic groups		
Professional/managerial	41%	53%
Skilled	15%	18%
Non-manual (e.g. offices)	12%	11%
Semi-skilled	9%	8%
Unskilled	21%	9%
Unemployed	2%	1%
Housing type		
Owner/occupier	95%	89%
Rented	5%	11%*
*9% privately, 2% local authority or housing association		
Ethnicity		
White	99%	91%
(of the families of Asian origin, some are Muslim and some Christian)		

Other Faith Communities

The only faith communities in the parish are Christian. Providence Strict and Particular Baptist Church is the only church not belonging to 'Churches Together in Staplehurst', which includes All Saints, the Free Church and the United Reformed Church. We

- worship together on fifth Sundays in the month;
- host joint services for the Women's World Day of Prayer, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Remembrance Sunday and Christingle with Carols;
- share a leaflet publicising our services at Christmas and Easter;
- distribute and collect Christian Aid envelopes;
- distribute hot cross buns in a napkin printed with the Easter message on Good Friday in the shopping parade;
- provide refreshments at the village carnival.

Appendix 3: The Worshipping Community

Worship

Normal Sunday Services (may change during festivals):

BCP = Book of Common Prayer; **CW** = Common Worship

1st Sunday

8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00 a.m.	Family Service
6.30 p.m.	Holy Communion (with special prayers for healing)

2nd Sunday

8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (CW)
10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (CW)
6.30 p.m.	Ignite (A service of Worship, Praise and Prayer)

3rd Sunday

8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00 a.m.	Family Communion
6.30 p.m.	Evensong

4th Sunday

8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (CW)
10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (CW)
6.30 p.m.	A variety of services, e.g. Taizé or Café Church

5th Sunday

8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion (BCP)
10.00 a.m.	Morning Worship
6.30 p.m.	A 'Churches Together' Service at one of the Staplehurst Churches

Weekday Services:

Monday, Thursday & Fridays

8.00 a.m. Morning Prayer

5.00 p.m. Evening Prayer

Tuesday

8.00 a.m. Holy Communion

5.00 p.m. Evening Prayer

Wednesday

8.00 a.m. Morning Prayer

9.30 a.m. Holy Communion

5.00 p.m. Evening Prayer

Saturday

8.30 a.m. Morning Prayer



Special services:

- High Mass with incense: Epiphany, Ascension Day, Birth of the BVM and All Saints Day.
- Holy Week and Easter:
 - Mon-Wed: Meditations;
 - Maundy Thursday: Washing of Feet and Stripping of the Altar followed by a vigil;
 - Good Friday: The Last Hour.
 - Easter Eve: Service of Light with Renewal of Baptismal Vows;
 - Easter morning outdoor dawn communion;
- Christmas: Carol services (including a primary school service), Christingle Service with Blessing of Crib and Midnight Mass;
- Plough Sunday is celebrated with the local farmers bringing in a horse drawn plough;
- Rogation Sunday service is held in the local fields;
- Harvest;
- Mothering Sunday is celebrated with the congregation 'Clipping the Church';
- All Age Workshops, which finish with a short act of worship, are held three or four times a year e.g. Advent, Good Friday and Harvest.
- Sunday nearest to St George's Day: Scouts, Guides, Cubs and Brownies Parade Service;
- Remembrance Sunday service: attended by members of the Royal British Legion, Scouts Guides, Cubs and Brownies and representatives of many village organisations;
- Monthly Communion at three local Nursing Homes;
- Communion by Extension to sick and elderly parishioners by Clergy or licensed Lay Ministers.

Participation:

Members of the Ministry Team share responsibility for leading services and preaching and are assisted by:

- Our organists, pianists and music group;
- Our robed choir;
- Our Churchwardens, who also act as Sacristan at present;
- A team of Altar Servers;
- Authorised Lay Assistants to administer the Chalice;
- Welcome, intercession and Bible reading teams
- A vergers for Occasional Offices.



Attendance:

Present average attendance by service type is:

- Usual Sundays
 - 8.00 a.m. Communion services: 25
 - 10.00 a.m. Communion services: 75 adults; 7 children
 - 10.00 a.m. non-Communion services: 55 adults, 7 children
 - 6.30 p.m. services: 15
- Midweek special services: 15
- Wednesday morning Communion services: 12
- Special Sunday service attendance is hard to predict but can be very high, especially on Remembrance Sunday and at Christmas.

Ministry Team

- Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy: Stipendiary Curate (3rd year; Licensed)
- Steve Bennett: Self Supporting Curate (1st year; Licensed) and Chaplain at Dulwich Prep School
- John Walker: Assistant Self Supporting Priest (PTO)
- Kevin Fulcher: Reader
- Peter Mortley: Reader Emeritus
- Marion Whatmore: salaried Youth Ministry Coordinator (retires April 2011)
- Sonja Drew: Authorised Lay Minister (Worship) & Music Director
- Karen Kember: Authorised Lay Minister (Pastoral Care) & salaried Church Administrator
- Audrey Bullock: Authorised Lay Minister (Pastoral Care & Funeral Officiant)
- Ron Dear: Accredited Healing Minister
- Barbara Dear: Accredited Healing Minister

The Life of the church

There are 140 on the Electoral Roll and the population of the village is approximately six and a half thousand.

We have excellent provision for children:

- MiniSaints – a mid-week group for parents, grandparents or carers with children from birth to 5 years old. Its aim is for parents and children to meet, play and make new friends. There is free play, refreshments and chat, followed with a craft activity and the session end with some action songs and a story.
- SuperSaints (age 3-8) and Sunday Explorers (age 8-11) – who meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month at 10.00 a.m. during term time. The sessions start in the church and then continue with Bible stories and appropriate activities in the Parish Room before rejoining the congregation again for the remainder of the service.
- Explorers (age 8-11) – a mid-week group following a scheme looking at some of the Old and New Testament characters, the life of Jesus and some of the Saints through reading, work sheets, quizzes and fun sessions.
- The Cru (age 11-15) – a mid-week group using the Cross Scheme which follows on from Explorers. Some evenings are spent having quizzes, discussions or watching DVDs. The Cru sometimes help with Family Worship and Communion services.

There is an excellent and very active Choir of about fifteen members present at 10.00am and 6.30pm services on Sundays and special weekday services.

There is a large band of dedicated bell-ringers who ring the ten bells in the Tower for both main services on Sundays and for any special mid-week services as well as for Weddings and Funerals when required. The band also teaches anyone who is interested in learning to ring bells.

There is a Mothers Union which has fourteen members.

The Flower Arrangers, Holy Dusters and Brass Cleaners make our church look beautiful.

The Health, Healing and Support prayer group is led by the Accredited Healing Team.

The church is linked to the other churches in the Village through the Churches Together committee which meets to organise joint ventures such as distributing cards at Christmas and Easter to every house giving details of services over the two Festival periods.

Special Events

We have lots of fun! Special events might be organised by the church, or may be village events in which we participate; the overlap is considerable. They comprise annual events and others that take place two or three times a year, and include fantastic meals and buffets, cream teas, quiz nights, coach outings, parish lunches and breakfasts, a pancake party, PCC parties, concerts, footpath walks, cycle rides, a summer fête, the Shepherd's Market, Staplehurst Carnival and Carols by Candlelight. Some of these events are organised by the Social Events Committee and some by the Friends of All Saints.



Occasional Offices

Last year there were

- 26 baptisms;
- 8 weddings (20 are booked for 2011);
- 34 funerals of which
 - 18 were held in Church followed by either interment in the churchyard or cremation
 - 16 were at a crematorium;
- 4 thanksgiving services where the funerals had taken place elsewhere.



The PCC

The PCC meets seven times a year and has a number of sub-committees:

- Buildings and Grounds
- Social Responsibility
- Finance
- Social Events
- Charity
- Worship
- Youth Ministry and Growing Together
- Parish Magazine

The Standing Committee meets when necessary. The PCC has representatives on the committees of The Friends of All Saints and Churches Together in Staplehurst.

Finances

In the last year the income of the PCC from all sources was £151,000 and the total expenditure was £134,000 which may seem reasonably healthy, especially considering the loss of £3000 in the previous financial year. However some qualification is needed. £10,000 of the income came from 'one-off' sources: a legacy, a loan converted to a gift and the Rector's Gift Day.

Total freewill offerings, including Gift Aid Tax recovery, were £64,000, a decline of £1000 on the previous year. The Parish Share was £61,000; projected to increase to £65,000 next year. It can therefore be seen that the freewill offerings of the congregation approximately cover the Parish Share; all other church activities are paid for by surplus from the Magazine, the Parish Room and Parish Fees. The net figures are shown in the table below.

There has been a decline in the number of givers over the year, mostly through death or re-location. Three new givers have joined in the year. Overall, only a few have increased the amount of their regular giving.

The congregation has frequently responded generously to a number of appeals for one-off schemes; for example, an appeal by the previous Rector for £200 to cover the costs of candles at Christmas 2009 raised a total of £1300, and no-one expressed the slightest desire to re-claim the surplus.

Thanks to the previous Rector's active promotion of collaborative ministry, a significant percentage of people are actively involved in the ministry of the church, and are willing to contribute both time and talents. In this year of 'Confident Discipleship', we hope and pray to increase this further.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY	2010	2009
Total Income	£151,000	£165,000
Total Expenditure	<u>£134,000</u>	<u>£168,000</u>
Surplus/Loss	£17,000	-£3,000
Banker's Orders: Gift-Aided	67	77
Non-Gift-Aided	9	10
Envelope Scheme: Gift-Aided	25	32
Non-Gift-Aided	7	12
Magazine Surplus	£800	£3,000
Parish Room	*£1,000	£4,000
Parish Fees	£16,000	£13,000

*In 2010 a new CH boiler for the Parish Room had to be funded at a cost of £2000, reducing the surplus by that amount.

Wider Links

As part of our planned charitable giving our Charity committee helps us respond to both UK Charities and those in deprived areas throughout the world. We pray for Christians in prison and under house arrest because of their faith. We collect for and organise soup lunches for Christian Aid. We participate in the Women's Day of Prayer and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Members of the congregation are invited to write to Prisoners of Conscience. Some of our preaching is about wider issues, such as Christian Solidarity Worldwide's International Day of Prayer and Black History Month.

Local Trusts

There are two village charities of which the Rector usually takes the chair; The JS Newlyn Trust, which gives grants to community projects and the church, and the Bathurst and Gybbon Trust, which gives grants to individuals.

The Church of All Saints

Early Church History

The Church stands on a hill that rises above the flat Weald once a dense forest. A post was put upon this ridge to mark the spot and was named Staplehurst-Post Wood. Staplehurst lies on the A229 an old Roman Road running from Rochester to Hastings. The Church's North Wall may be Saxon, having herringbone masonry made of local limestone and a few worn sandstone blocks. The Church had a chancel, a nave and probably a low south tower when the south door was fitted and from which the gargyle, now on the windowsill in the south aisle, may have fallen.



The West Tower

Construction started between 1400 and 1425. It has a stairway turret and a fine perpendicular doorway. The two coronetted heads on either side of the door probably depict King Henry V and his Queen, or Lord and Lady Bouchier who died in 1432. The centre coat of arms is either Lord Bouchier's or that of John de Somery. On the north spandrel is an engrailed cross, the arms of the Haute family. Until 1673 the church tower had a spire but it was blown down in what was described as a "great wind". The evidence for this is still visible in the church belfry where the supporting beams are still in place.



The Bells

Records show that between 1594 and 1748, bells were added piecemeal until Staplehurst grew to a ring of five. In 1885 the treble, 2nd, 3rd and tenor were recast and three bells added to make eight bells by Mears & Stainbank. In 1996 the wooden frame was replaced with a steel one and two new trebles added by Whitechapel foundry to make ten. Seven of the eight bells from 1885 were returned leaving the current ninth, cast in 1605 by Joseph Hatch, untouched.



The Nave and Aisle

On the North wall of the nave are renewed windows decorated in the fourteenth century style. By the Victorian pulpit is a spiral staircase which led to the high cross above the roodscreen. The aisle roof is tiebeam and kingpost construction dating from the fourteenth century. By the south door is a fifteenth century water stoup whilst the arch in the width of the south wall may be a sacred heart sepulchre. The only fragment of the medieval stained glass windows to survive the reformation, when Queen Elizabeth ordered stained glass to be destroyed in 1559, is mounted on a window ledge next to the south door.

The fonts

We have 2 fonts, the original dates back to 1100 and was found acting as a feeding trough on a local farm. It was carved from a single block of very hard Kentish Ragstone and was replaced by a new font in 1815 which now stands to the east of the porch. The original font is now located between the chancel and the chapel and is currently in use.



The Anchorite's Cell

This was originally accessed from the church through the round opening in the north wall. The door of the cell was blocked up so that the occupant depended on alms left on the ledge in the church. The floor of the cell was excavated in 1936 and can be seen outside.

The Chapel

Built in the fifteenth century with a private door and with its own holy water stoup. The altar tomb made of Bethersden marble is that of Walter Mayney of Spilsill and was originally located where the altar is now. After the First World War the chapel was redecorated and renamed St. George's Chapel and became the village War Memorial. It has recently been refurbished by removing the Victorian pews, making it a much more versatile space with a single level carpeted floor.

The Organ

The first organ after the reformation was installed in the nave, now the choir vestry. The current organ shown here was built by Father Willis.



The South Door

The South Door is the church's best known historical feature. It has been authoritatively dated to 1050, which means that it displays some of the oldest ironwork in England still in situ. It tells the story of Ragnarok, the Norse Day of Judgement, which starts with a cockerel crowing and waking Heimdall, the watchman, who blows his horn Gjallir to call the gods to battle. Nature is in confusion and the seals rush on to the land. Jormungandr, the Midgard Serpent (who has grown until he encircles the world) and other monsters on the Ship of the Dead fight the gods. The serpent is shown wriggling, and again, stretched in death, vanquished by Thor. Surt, the sunwheel, throws sheets of flame over the earth. The stars fall, while above flies Nithhoggr, who feeds on the slain. But above him is a cross, symbol of a new hope coming and a Christian conclusion to the Norse legend.



The new kitchen and toilet

This is the latest addition to the church, completed in March 2006. The facilities have become a fantastic asset to the church supporting a wide range of activities including concerts, "All Age Workshops" and Parish Breakfasts. Many of these activities are part of the life of the village and some activities attract visitors from outside Staplehurst. The kitchen facilities have also been made available for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals.



Other information

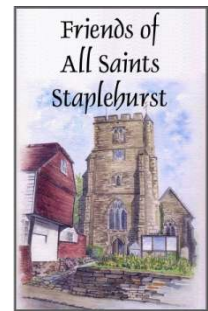
It is hoped that a new lighting scheme, for which a Faculty was granted in July 2010, will be installed by the summer 2011.

The Quinquennial Survey Report which was submitted in September 2010 did not indicate any major problems; the main recommendations for immediate attention and over the next five years were items of general care and maintenance.

The Church is open from before the 8.00am service until early evening every day and is unlocked and locked by a key holder.



'The Friends of All Saints Church Staplehurst' is a Charitable Trust that was created over twelve years ago with the sole objective of raising funds to maintain, repair, restore, preserve, improve, beautify and reconstruct for the benefit of the public the fabric of the Church of All Saints Staplehurst, its monuments, fixtures, fittings, furniture, stained glass, ornaments and other chattels and its churchyard. Recent projects have included a glass entrance vestibule and a new kitchen and toilet, and they have pledged £9,200 towards the cost of the new lighting scheme. In addition to specific projects, the Friends have made a contribution towards roof and heating system repairs, and help to fund organ repairs and tuning.



The Parish Room

The Parish Room is a wooden construction dating from 1912 and is on the A229 about 200 yards south of the Church and comprises a Main Hall with two smaller rooms and a kitchen and toilets to the rear. It is hired by a Nursery School on five mornings a week and by a number of village organisations in the afternoons and evenings and at week-ends.

The New Rectory

The New Rectory is a well maintained double fronted detached property situated in the High Street (A229) about half a mile north of the Church. The property dates from the 1930's with original fireplaces, some of which have gas fires installed. Secondary double glazing has been fitted. The hot water central heating is heated by a gas fired boiler situated in an attached outbuilding. The property comprises: - on the ground floor -three reception rooms, a large cloakroom with shower, a fully fitted kitchen, with a gas fired Aga, which can also supply some of the hot water for the central heating; a utility room with larder, a large entrance hall with staircase leading to the first floor on which there are four good sized bedrooms, one has an en suite bathroom, a large family bathroom and a separate WC. To the rear of the property is a conservatory, with separate access, which for the past eight years has been used as the Church Office. There are gardens to the front and rear of the property with ample parking and a large garage and an outside WC.



Appendix 4: Deanery and Diocesan Perspectives

The Weald Deanery



The twelve parishes that make up this most westerly part of the Canterbury Diocese are some of the most attractive villages in the south east of England. Many of the characteristic Oast Houses have been converted in to housing but the villages retain much of their charm of former years. Within comfortable commuting distance of London, these villages have attracted many incomers; some to retire, but many more to find a refuge from the hurly-burly of their daily lives. Here, among us, they discover active communities, good schools, local attractions such as Sissinghurst Castle or Bedgebury Forest and lively churches keen to respond to the challenges of living the Christian faith in the twenty-first century.

Previously known as the Cranbrook Deanery, the Weald Deanery was officially renamed on May 1st 2008, which was felt better reflected the area and communities we serve. We are a group of twelve parishes and seven benefices: Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Frittenden, Headcorn with Sutton Valence, Chart Sutton and East Sutton, Staplehurst, Marden, Goudhurst with Kilndown and Hawkhurst.

There is little natural sense of belonging together. Parishes are in different local authority districts; some looking to Tunbridge Wells or Tonbridge; others (Headcorn, Suttons, Marden and Staplehurst in particular) to Maidstone.

Secondary school children are likewise scattered in schools as far apart as Wadhurst and Maidstone, although Angley school at Cranbrook provides some sense of focus for secondary education. Parishes also belong to different parliamentary constituencies. Many of the population are commuters whose lives are centred on London and whose long working hours leave little time to contribute much to their adopted communities.

One thing the parishes have in common is that they are a long way from Canterbury! There is a sense of remoteness from the 'centre', and sometimes a feeling of being unheard or even neglected. In some ways this is being addressed as much of the work of the diocese is moving out a little, both in terms of training and venues for meetings.

The parishes in the Weald Deanery have worked hard on its mission and ministry plans and continue to work together on its financial responsibilities. We come together as a Deanery to share worship, and two of our synod meetings each year are open to all members of our parishes. On these occasions we have shared thoughts on subjects such as communion before confirmation and women bishops. We are planning for the future pastoral care of the people of the whole Deanery, and are working together for our growth and development. This will involve new patterns of ministry and, already, we are welcoming both the deployment of self-supporting ministers and new forms of Lay ministry.

We are fortunate that, within our communities, there are many people who give so generously of skills developed and experience gained from so many walks of life.

Against this background of change the church continues to provide its traditional ministry to the sick and the bereaved; the care and nurture of our children; opportunities to study and grow in the Christian faith, and the weekly provision of worship to God which (we hope) inspires and challenges our congregations. We also hope that our growing sense of interdependence will support the life and ministry of our individual communities.

The Diocese of Canterbury

The Archdeacon of Maidstone writes:

All that is taking place in the Deanery is set against a backdrop of an overarching Diocesan reorganisation which should help to bring greater resource to Parishes and Deaneries.

The Diocese has decided not to appoint a second suffragan Bishop and instead is to appoint a third Archdeacon. It is intended that this will help to support clergy and parishes locally in ministry and mission. In addition there will be new frameworks for doing 'communities and partnership', 'local church development', 'finance and compliance', 'education' and 'ministry and training'.

In addition the whole Diocese is engaged in a year of discipleship, 'Live It 24/7', which is an initiative of Bishop Trevor in conjunction with every Deanery and Benefice.

We are looking to recruit someone who is willing to exercise local leadership and to discover collaborative and collegial ways to engage creatively in ministry and to redefine local mission – securing a place for the church at the heart of village and community life.

If you possess imagination, energy and the willingness to explore the journey of faithful discipleship with others then we want your application for this post!

Appendix 5: Links

<http://www.canterburydiocese.org/general/index.htm>

<http://www.canterburydiocese.org/247liveit/>

<http://www.deaneryintheweald.org.uk/>

<http://www.allsaintsstaplehurst.co.uk/>

<http://www.inclusivechurch2.net/>

<http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/>

<http://www.staplehurstprimary.uk.org/>