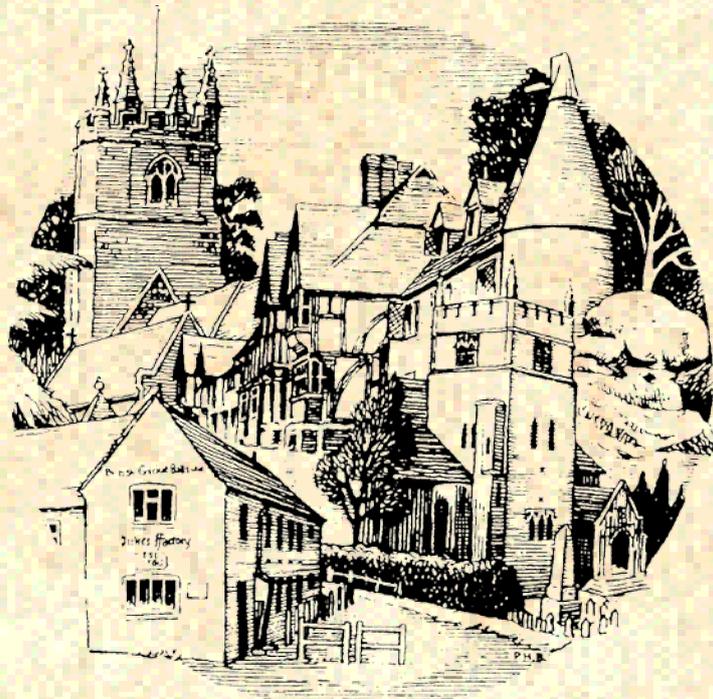
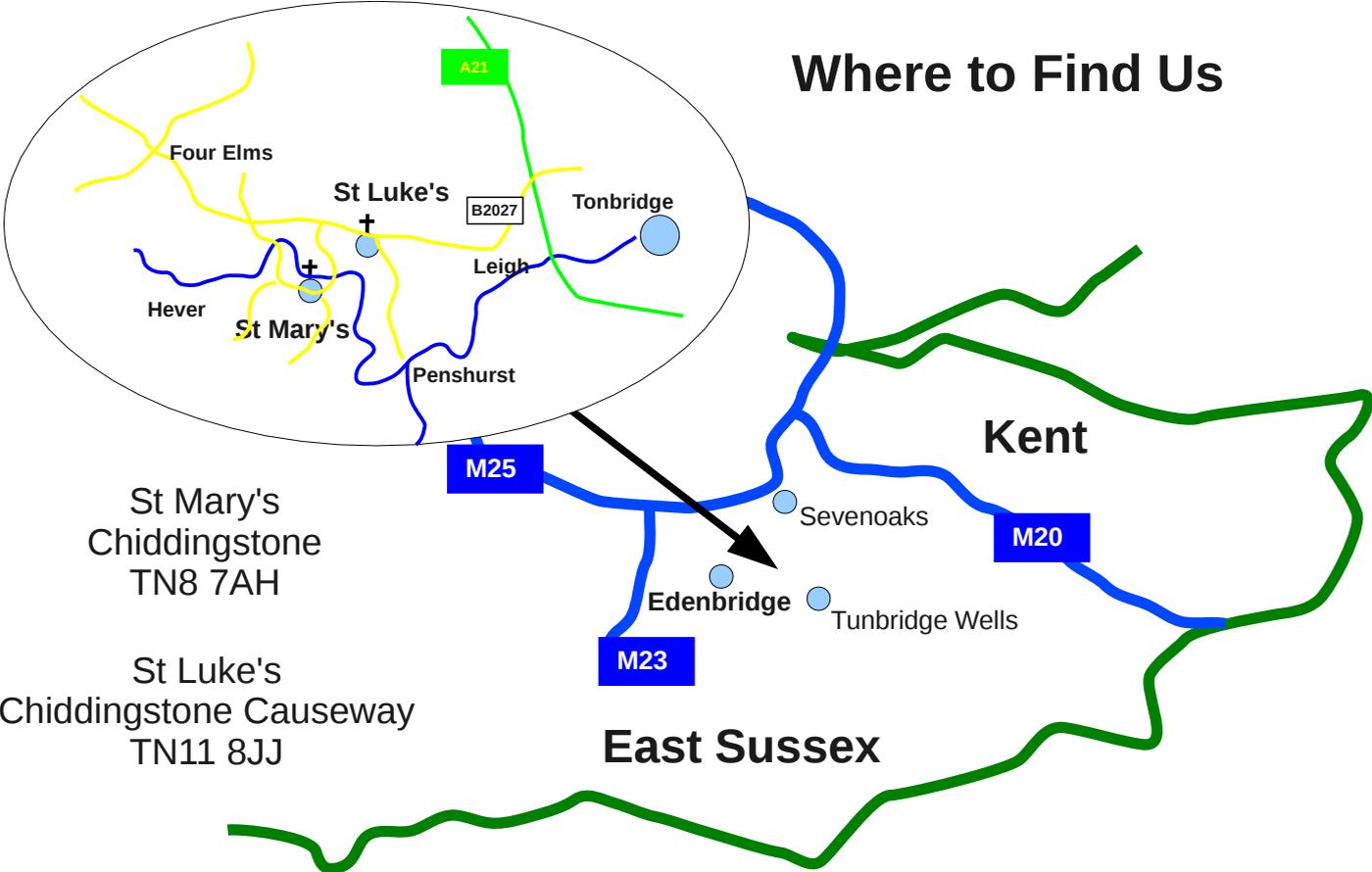


# *The Benefice of St Mary's and St Luke's*



*Parish Profile*

# Where to Find Us



St Mary's  
Chiddingstone  
TN8 7AH

St Luke's  
Chiddingstone Causeway  
TN11 8JJ

Kent

East Sussex

A21

B2027

M25

M23

M20

Four Elms

St Luke's

Tonbridge

Leigh

Hever

St Mary's

Penshurst

Sevenoaks

Edenbridge

Tunbridge Wells

## The Benefice of St Mary's and St Luke's



Welcome to our Parish Profile. The profile describes who we are, where we are, what it is like to live here, our spiritual life and our hopes for the future.

The parishes of St Mary's and St Luke's are in the Diocese of Rochester and serve the villages of Chiddingstone, Chiddingstone Causeway and Chiddingstone Hoath (collectively known as The Chiddingstones) and the hamlets of Bough Beech, Wellers Town and Charcott. The church is at the heart of the community; people from the different villages and hamlets join

together as one congregation for worship. The Chiddingstone Churches are the only places of worship within the benefice and we welcome people from all church traditions and denominations. We have long valued the ministry of our retired priest Rev'd Jean Lorimer and our Pastoral Assistant Carol Benton.

Chiddingstone has a thriving primary school in which the number of enrolled pupils has grown from 114 to 185 in the last 10 years. Easy access to the local towns of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells combined with the rail links to London and easy access to the motorway network means that, while the parishes are predominantly rural, most of our parishioners no longer work in traditional country occupations.



## St Mary the Virgin, Chiddingstone



The present church has 13<sup>th</sup> century origins but was substantially rebuilt in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The fine west tower with its stair turret and four pinnacles was added in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, also the chapel was enlarged in 1516. Following a lightning strike in 1624, which destroyed all but the tower, the church was rebuilt and rededicated in 1629.. We have a ring of eight bells in the tower which were all were rehung in 1991.

Our font was made in 1628 of local sandstone and has been described as the best production of its period in Kent. The pulpit dates from the same time. We are also proud of our organ (two-manual T.C. Lewis and much loved by our roster of organists) which dates from 1881.



The improvements to the fabric of St Mary's continue with recent additions of a small chapel in the base of the tower, toilet facilities, an area for preparing and serving light snacks, tea and coffee for meetings, concerts, visiting groups and general gatherings after services and a built-in laptop, remote controlled projector and screen for use both within services, by guest speakers and, importantly, the school. We have also recently installed a broadband link to the school with the co-operation of Kent Education Committee.

## St Luke's, Chiddingstone Causeway



St Luke's Church, Chiddingstone Causeway, was built in 1898, when the community and congregation grew with the development of light local industry. Larger congregations justified a church to replace the previous small chapel of St Saviour.

Local landowners commissioned the architect John Bentley, designer of Westminster RC Cathedral. The church is constructed of Bath stone in the late Gothic style. Notable features are a beautiful East Altar window, fine oak carved communion table, pulpit, lectern and choir stalls. The raised chancel is paved with Portland stone, and the font is constructed of alabaster, Portland stone and Italian marble. The original organ by Norman and Beard is still in regular use and the spacious barrel-vaulted roof provides fine acoustics.



The principal project at St Luke's is the addition of a parish room for use by the Sunday School, Youth Groups and the community as a whole.

## Worship and Ministry



Our services are rotated between the two churches over the year. On each Sunday Holy Communion is celebrated in one of the churches and the Family Service, Matins or Compline is held in the other church. A warm welcome is offered to visitors and regular worshippers; after our main services coffee is served for social time together. We aim to provide a variety of services for as many 'tastes' as possible. There are 105 parishioners on the Electoral Roll of St Mary's, and 69 on the Electoral Roll of St Luke's.

Our clergy usually wear cassock and surplice and we have a robed choir for the main services. This tradition is happily continued and robes are worn with dignity. In each month we offer a variety of services ranging from the very popular Family Service to the very traditional Service of Matins. We hold Eucharist at the main service twice a month and a said Eucharist at 8.00am on the alternate Sundays. The regular service pattern is:

1st Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)	4th Sunday	10.00am	Sung Eucharist
	10.00am	Family Service		6.00pm	Compline
2nd Sunday	10.00am	Sung Eucharist	5th Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion
	6.00pm	Compline		10.00am	Matins
3rd Sunday	8.00am	Holy Communion			
	10.00am	New Morning Service			

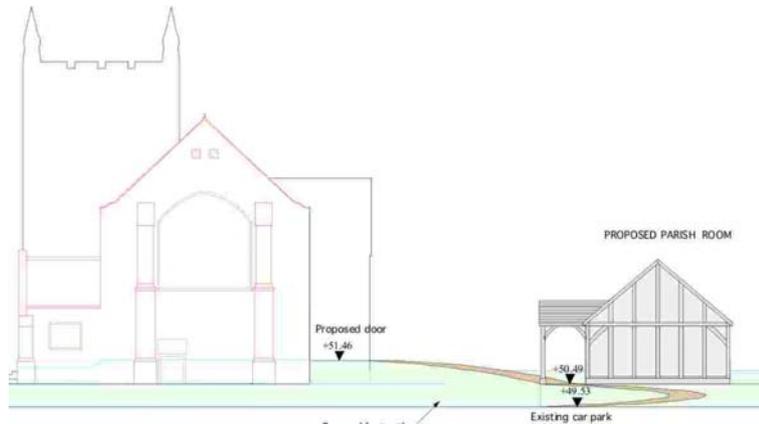
Special Services throughout the year shared by both Churches:

- Memorial Service for the bereaved held early in the year
- Maundy Thursday Evening - a Passover meal with Holy Communion
- Saturday Easter Eve: Service of First Light and Renewal of Baptismal Vows
- Rogation Sunday Service
- Patronal Festival Services with said Holy Communion
- Remembrance Sunday
- Toddler Service in St Mary's Chapel on 1st Tuesday and 3rd Friday each month
- Service of 9 Lessons and Carols held the Sunday before Christmas
- Christingle Service
- Carols by Candlelight Christmas Eve and blessing of the crib, outside the Castle Inn, followed by mulled wine and soup in the village street.



The attendance at the different services is good, with the numbers sometimes a little lower in school holidays. There has been a progressive increase in the number of young families moving into the area, and the school has grown from 114 to 185 children in 10 years. The leadership of our retiring Vicar has successfully brought together all age groups for worship in a friendly environment. The average number attending Family Services total 114. Sung Eucharist 84 and Matins 48. Our Easter and Christmas Services attract congregations of over 150 and as many as 500 for the Carols by Candlelight at St Mary's.

## St Luke's Development Project



The Sunday School was held in an upper room of St Luke's tower until ten years ago, when it was considered unsafe due to the single access by a narrow spiral stone staircase. A temporary solution was the placing of a Portacabin adjacent to the church. We are hoping to build a new oak framed purpose built Parish Room for the Sunday School. It is also proposed to construct a new south doorway to the Church to provide access and particularly enabled access to and from the Parish Room and car park by gently graduated paths. Planning permission has just been granted by Sevenoaks District Council for the Parish Room and south doorway.

The building will provide a home for the Sunday School, Youth Groups and Church Office, as well as a hall for socialising after Services, offering enabled access, baby facilities, kitchen and storage. The Parish Room will be available for wider community use, as a venue for meetings and talks, exhibitions and clubs in the area.

Due to generous support from the community and grant funding bodies, we are in a position to proceed with this project and, subject to DAC approval, the refurbishment of the interior of the church.

## Charitable Giving

Supporting through charitable giving is central to our church's activities. The funds are raised through church sponsored events such as abseiling down St Luke's tower, bungee jumping, the annual garden tour, the village Fêtes, sing and wine evenings, quizzes and coffee mornings held in local homes.

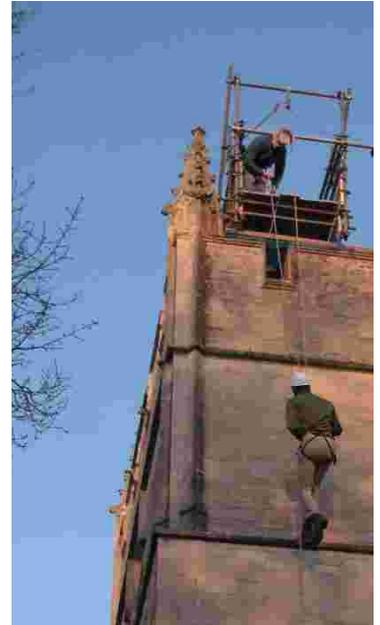
Some of the charities which we have supported include:

Leprosy Mission, Hospice in the Weald, Kent Air Ambulance, Friends of Kent Churches, Rochester DBF Bishops Charity, Christian Aid, Tear Fund, Royal British Legion, Children's Society, Middle East Christian Outreach, Biblelands, Demelza House Children's Hospice, Water Aid, Bridge Trust for homeless young people, South American Mission Society, Crisis at Christmas.

## Fair Trade Stall



Several years ago we answered Bishop Michael's Diocesan Challenge and set up a Fair Trade Stall which is operates each Sunday after the 10am service. We purchase our foods from St Andrew's Fair Trade shop Paddock Wood and last year we had sales of just over £900. These funds were distributed by St Andrew's PCC to projects in the developing world and this country.



## Chiddingstone Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School



Chiddingstone School has very close links with St Mary's Church. Rev Ian Harrison (our retiring incumbent), Rev Jean Lorimer and Carol Benton (Pastoral Assistant) have had an excellent relationship with the school and take regular Acts of Worship and contribute to many areas of the RE curriculum through talks and class visits to the Church. This close association has contributed to the school's success and expansion to 185 pupils over the last decade.

The incumbent and two parents are Foundation Governors appointed by the Church and meet regularly with the head teacher and governing body.

The school holds a weekly act of worship in the church. Special services are held at Christmas, Easter, Harvest and for the Year 6 Leavers where dance, drama and a mix of traditional and modern songs of worship are used. Interactive prayer stations in the church and at school have given children and parents the opportunity to prepare for major festivals.

A good number of children are involved in Sunday School, choir and family services and the strong connection between the school and the church is mutually beneficial. The school was awarded "outstanding" in both Ofsted and the last worship inspection.



## Chiddingstone Nursery School



Chiddingstone Nursery School is a long established nursery situated in the heart of Chiddingstone village. Our sessions are held in a converted stable in the grounds of Chiddingstone Castle. We have a safe enclosed play area in the castle courtyard adjoining the nursery where the children can experience gardening, sand and water play and use sit and ride toys. We use the area as part of a curriculum learning experience as well as a play area. The Nursery has close links with Chiddingstone School and St Mary's Church. During the summer term the nursery regularly join the key stage one assembly at the school and for the other two terms the Pastoral Assistant takes a short nursery assembly at the end of the Friday morning session. The Nursery was awarded "outstanding" by Ofsted.

## The Tuesday Group

The Tuesday Group is a coffee morning for parents and carers of pre-school children living in or near the villages of the Chiddingstones. It is hosted fortnightly by some of the parents themselves. The Group has been running for over 30 years and very much welcomes new members. The main focus is for adults and children to make and meet new friends within their community.



## The Youth Club

Run every two weeks during the school term-time by a loyal and enthusiastic group of leaders, the youth club gives a social focal point in the villages for young people between the ages of 11 to 16. The activities are as inclusive and varied as are the boundaries of the imagination. Recent activities have included curling, splash disco, make your own pizza evening and a 'blind tasting' evening in which ants (real), sheep's eyeballs (dried apricots) and monkey brains (pickled walnuts) were consumed with varying degrees of grimacing. The lively and empathetic style of leadership is rewarded with a regular attendance of 25 to 39 young people.

## The Sunday School



The Sunday School Team, of local parents and teachers from Chiddingstone School, bring their enthusiasm and Christian witness to their task of instructing and involving the children in presentations to the congregation on occasions during the year. The numbers attending fluctuate annually, as the children move on to the choir or youth club. The attendance is typically 8 to 12 children.

## The Rectory



The rectory is set back from Chiddingstone High Street, next to the village school, and about 100m from St Mary's church. It is a comfortable, 4 bedroomed detached house overlooking farmland with two garages and large south facing garden laid mainly to lawn. The rectory is in good order with no outstanding maintenance work required.

The ground floor comprises a large sitting room with south facing windows, dining room, study, toilet, kitchen and utility room. There is access to one of the garages via the utility room.

Upstairs are four bedrooms and a bathroom with toilet.

The garden is enclosed and extends to the south and west of the house with wonderful views. It is laid mainly to lawn with some shrubberies around the perimeter. There is parking to the front adjacent to the garages, and room to enlarge this area when needed in the future without detriment to the home.



## Chiddingstone as a Place to Live



### **Geography and Natural Beauty**

The Chiddingstones are located in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the river Eden between Edenbridge and Tonbridge at the eastern end of the High Weald of Kent. The village of Chiddingstone is a favourite starting point for local and visiting walkers.

There are several nature reserves in the area including: Sevenoaks Reserve and Jeffery Harrison Visitor Centre, Bough Beech Visitors Centre and Reserve, all operated by Kent Wildlife Trust. Chiddingstone Castle, Tonbridge Castle, Penshurst Place, Hever Castle and Knole Park are all close by.

### **Schools**

The area has a large selection of schools in both the private and public sectors. Many of the local villages have their own primary schools, including Chiddingstone School C of E School which is next to the rectory. For secondary education the main local schools are located in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. These are all within a 10 mile radius and they are accessible by public transport, mostly by additional buses provided during the academic year. Kent LEA have a selective secondary education policy with entry via the 11+ examination. There are also a number of non-selective secondary schools in the area, most notable of which is the Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, which is a non-selective co-educational school of about 1600 pupils. The website for Kent LEA is [www.kent.gov.uk/education\\_and\\_learning.aspx](http://www.kent.gov.uk/education_and_learning.aspx)

## **Shopping**

Locally there are village shops, including post offices, in Chiddingstone and Chiddingstone Causeway for the 'forgotten necessities'. For regular shopping, the towns of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells offer a selection of the principal high street retailers for food and clothing. A little further away, 40mins driving, at Bluewater we have one of largest 'out of town' shopping centres in the South East of England.

## **Local Organisations and Clubs**

There are many thriving clubs organised by the parishioners. St Luke's has its own fête and a couple of weeks later St Mary's joins with about seven other groups for Chiddingstone Village Fête. The two village fêtes are always well supported, undaunted, as sometimes occurs, by the weather. We have clubs for Mothers and Toddlers, 2 Women's Institutes, Over 60's, Tuesday Group (pre-school), youth club, gardeners, football, tennis, sailing, golf, cricket, shortmat bowls and stoolball.

Within the villages we have a very active amateur dramatics group CHAPS which puts on one or two shows a year. The shows can be established productions or written entirely by local talent. Last year the younger members of CHAPS, CHAPYS, put on a production of 'Toad of Toad Hall' entirely run by the younger members. The production was a virtual sell-out with standing room only on the last night. Further afield, there are professional venues in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells which present theatrical, dance and musical events to suit almost every taste and interest.

## **Public Transport**

The Chiddingstone villages have hourly rail links to London via the stations at Chiddingstone Causeway, named rather confusingly Penshurst, and Hever. These stations give access to the centre of London within a journey time of less than an hour. The national motorway network is also easily accessible via the M25 which is about 10 miles distant.

## Summary of Finances

The two parishes of St Mary's and St Luke's manage their finances independently. The PCC's treasurer provides a written report which is presented at each PCC meeting.

- Regular donors are encouraged to donate by standing order and to use gift aid to increase the value of their donations.
- There is a fund raising group within the joint PCC which organises numerous events throughout the year. The funds raised are then shared between the two churches.
- The development of St Luke's parish room is managed as a separate project to handle the fund raising and all of its associated costs.
- The budget for the maintenance of the fabric of St Mary's and St Luke's is managed on a yearly basis to ensure that all work identified in the quinquennial inspections is carried out in a timely manner.

The full 2009 audited accounts are available upon request.

	St Luke's	St Mary's
	2009	2009
<b>INCOME</b>		
Voluntary Income	20941	32808
Fund Raising Events	6177	5305
Parish Magazine	2925	2925
Other Income	1407	5218
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>31450</b>	<b>46255</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Charitable Giving	1546	3147
Cost of the Ministry	15982	15982
Services and Church running costs	7212	8241
Parish Share	4800	8000
Major Repairs	1598	0
Other Expenses	756	5816
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>31894</b>	<b>41186</b>
<b>Net surplus/deficit</b>	<b>-444</b>	<b>5068</b>
<b>RESERVES</b>		
General Reserves	22780	3503
Church Repair Fund	8060	17906
Endowments	500	22478
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>31340</b>	<b>43887</b>

## Who We Need

The combined parishes of St Mary's and St Luke's are growing communities whose parishioners have a very diverse range of life experiences in rural, local towns and commuting to London. With skills as varied as CEOs of multinational corporations, through potters, artists, farmers, plumbers, carpenters, airline pilots, doctors, dentists and more than one can mention, the parishioners of the Chiddingstones enjoy the community's strong and vibrant heart centred on St Luke's and St Mary's. Therefore we are looking for a man or woman who will enhance the Christian fellowship of our parishes. Under the guidance of the previous incumbents we have seen a steady and progressive increase in the attendance at our regular services. We are seeking an incumbent who will :

- Maintain the church at the heart of the community in which people from the different villages and hamlets join together as one congregation for worship. The Chiddingstone Churches are the only places of worship within the benefice and we wish to continue to welcome people from all church traditions and denominations.
- As a school governor, build on the existing excellent relationship with the head teacher and governing body of Chiddingstone C of E Primary School to provide Christian guidance in the development of our young people.
- Encourage and develop our volunteers working with young people using the new Parish Room being built at St Luke's and Chiddingstone Village Hall, next to the school and opposite St Mary's.
- Lead and inspire the many individuals and groups who contribute to the smooth running of the parishes.
- Become a trustee to The Chiddingstone Parish Charities (incorporating FHT Streatfeild Charity and Richard Streatfeild Charity [Poorcroft]) and the Margaret Hyde Charity.