THE ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH OF ST LAURENCE IN THE ISLE OF THANET, RAMSGATE

ST CATHERINE MANSTON

ST CHRISTOPHER NEWINGTON

ST LAURENCE-IN-THANET

ST MARK NORTHWOOD

ST MARY CLIFFSEND

ANNUAL TRUSTEES REPORT

For the year ending 31st December 2025



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1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the report is to review the life of the parish during 2025, as well as relating the financial statements to the work and vision of the five churches in the team. Since April 2017, St Laurence-in-Thanet Team Ministry (The Ecclesiastical Parish of St Laurence in the Isle of Thanet, Ramsgate) has been a five church benefice which includes St Catherine Manston, St Christopher Newington, St Laurence, St Mark Northwood and St Mary Cliffsend.

2 AIM AND PURPOSE

The aim of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) is to co-operate with the Shared Leadership Team (SLT). From July 2024 Rev Catherine Tucker has led the Team, it includes Rev Ken Cox (Honorary Assistant Curate and Chair), Rev Brian Griffiths and Rev Phil Barnes who are retired priests who have permission to officiate, Judith Andrews, Sue Cox, Amanda Madgwick, and Frances Barnes (lay readers), Sharon Cutler and Kevin Spain (Parochial wardens).

We seek to assist in promoting within the parish the whole mission of the Church, spiritual, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical (PCC measure 1956). The mission of the Church is assisted by those named in the Admin Team. The PCC has delegated maintenance responsibilities, to the relevant Local Leadership Teams (LLTs) for all five churches, and for the St Laurence Parish Hall and St Mark‘s Hall.

3 OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

- The prime objective throughout the Parish has been to mediate the love of Christ and minister to the spiritual and practical needs of our parishioners.
- To offer a variety of both traditional and creative forms of worship in each of the five churches within the benefice.

4 THE PRIEST-IN-CHARGE’S ANNUAL REVIEW 2025

Our overall picture is one of five churches open and functioning to offer worship, biblical study, fellowship and community engagement, serving our parish area in ensuring that the Christian Way of compassion, support and community continues and grows in this place. Each of our five churches is different and has something unique to offer and so I have developed a more ‘focal’ style ministry as well as Parishwide togetherness.

I would like to thank the Ministry Team of Clergy: Revd Phil Barnes, Revd Ken Cox, Revd Brian Griffiths together with our LLM Readers Amanda Madgwick, Judith Andrews, and Frances Barnes for the huge commitment they give to this Parish and together with them making up our Senior Leadership Team – Parochial Wardens Kevin Spain, Sharon Cutler and Treasurer Alison Willoughby-Browne who again give over and above both in time and commitment to this Parish.

I would also like to thank all our local Churchwardens: Ann Gregson, Barrie Coombs, Zena Barron, Julia Penn, Cheryl Belsey and David Easterbrook who again give so much – and a special thanks to Christine Martin, Jan Austin, Angela Kneller, David Newman, Barbara Redman, Marcia Neve and Freda Parker who don’t fit a particular category but offer an immense amount.

With great pleasure we commissioned 3 new Worship Leaders in January who had taken the Diocesan course: Helen Crittenden, Sharon Cutler and Kevin Spain are now on the rota to lead services and give reflections across the Parish. In addition, we are delighted that Sharon is now exploring LLM Reader ministry – let’s see if this is where God is leading her. It is wonderful that Sue Cox is now back active with us – she has stepped back from being an LLM Reader but continues with us as an extremely experienced Lay Leader. Cover help has been drawn in with Revd Alice Bates and Revd Richard Rossignol and overtures have been made to retired minister Richard Oliver in connection with an Ignite application for St Christopher’s.

Chaplaincy work continues at Chartwell House and has developed at the Spitfire Museum, Manston.

Knit & Natter, The Thursday Fellowship, the Acorn Club, Scrabble Club and St Catherine's socials and suppers continue as fellowship groups.

Each church has developed this year – with growth in number at St Laurence, St Mark's and St Catherine's. St Laurence key development this year has been its Junior Church and building plans, St Mark's its leading of services by Home Groups and new music sessions, St Catherine's its Walk for your Soul programme and new midweek socials, St Mary's outreach to St Augustine's Cross and leafleting plans and St Christopher's its new link with the Newington Community School and link with LOVE.

Altogether Services have been successful: Mothering Sunday & Epiphany at St Catherine's, Advent 1 at St Mark's especially the one at St Augustine's Cross last June – to be repeated this year with more input from English Heritage. St Mark's this year offered the Altogether Agape meal, St Laurence will be developing their October Saturday Pet Service to be Altogether and community orientated and in November we will be Altogether on a Sunday at St Christopher's for a healing service.

Also Parishwide was the new Pastoral Training Course – led by most of the Ministry Team and held at St Christopher's – this will be repeated this year and extended to the Deanery. In addition, All Souls and Remembrance have been developed and seen growth. Learning Lent was a new focus this year and enjoyed across the majority of the Parish.

Monthly Midweek Services have increased with a new music session at St Mark's, Celtic style prayer and communion at both St Mary's and St Christopher's and just starting – a reflective and fellowship service at St Catherine's.

Bible study continues at St Mark's and now also a very lively group at the Rectory and we were pleased to Confirm 3 people and Affirm 2 at the latest Deanery Confirmation.

Our 3 major areas of focus this year are:

- Building primary school aged Children's engagement with church – building Junior Churches and engagement with schools. Parent & Toddler groups are envisaged.
- Increasing a new worship community via Footprints Bereavement Group – Parishwide Reps to be found – this leads to non-churched people increasing their engagement.
- Revitalising the whole Parish by a total revamp of our website and social media usage – an advert for this project has just been placed.

A new Parishwide Community leaflet is out which will help in reaching out to new people to the area in new housing which has been a focus for our broader leadership group.

Watch out for the Parishwide pantomime! This is a very positive picture of development and striving for a Parish that struggles both with funds and with levels of personnel - but we are on our way!

Blessings to you all.

4.1 ST CATHERINE MANSTON

It has been a successful year for St Catherine's Church. We have a growing and committed congregation who are very welcoming to visitors and event attendees giving the church a friendly warm atmosphere whenever it is open. We have recently had a regular attendance of a mum and her 3-year-old Lily and our children's activity bags, introduced this year for any children attendees, have been very welcome.

St Catherine's is happy that we can have a regular Communion service and would extend our grateful thanks to Revd Brian Griffiths. Also, our appreciation to our Lay reader Amanda Madgwick for her assistance for Revd Brian.

Our thanks also to our Church Wardens Julia Penn and Cheryl Belsey without whom many of the unseen tasks carried out by them both would not happen. Our additional thanks to Julia our esteemed Organist and her IT skills allowing information to be available on a raised screen for our services.

I am happy to report that we have a wedding booked for July this year and a possible one in 2027.

Our Christmas services and our Music event were advertised on flyers delivered to every household in the village, across the new developments and Haine Road. Thank you to all helped in the distribution.

St Catherine's is well maintained both inside and outside and we have enjoyed being host to the whole parish for the Rogation Service and Candlemas and to welcome Bishop Rose to our church on her visit to the Parish of St Laurence.

4.2 ST CHRISTOPHER NEWINGTON

At St Christopher's, progress is much slower than expected: the pre-school seems to have likely fallen through. Parochial Warden Kevin Spain has been working very hard, correlating crime numbers from reported vandalism from the past seven years with repair bills in order to submit insurance claims and this will fund building improvements.

Collaboration with community groups is now flourishing again. Maintenance issues have impacted on the site's ability to hold events, however Bingo has been a regular and December saw the return of the Festive Food Pantry attended by both Polly Billington MP and Bishop Rose. This event highlighted the need that exists within the local community. Newington Community School held their Carol Service on Wednesday 17th December. The Safe Families group held a well-attended afternoon event in January 2026. Trampoline Therapy has returned and is scheduled for Friday mornings.

An interesting and unexpected result of eco-surveys at St Mark's and St Christopher's is that it would be possible to insert bat scoops in our flat roofs! There are grants available to implement the recommendations of the eco-survey. Both St Mark's and St Christopher's were already found to be quite eco-friendly. St Christopher's maintained a constant temperature, without heating, of 8°C throughout the winter.

Thanks must go to Dan & Maria for their valiant efforts in opening the Church on Wednesday afternoons, and to everyone involved with St Christopher's in whatever way they help.

4.3 ST LAURENCE

Local Churchwarden's report 1st January 2025-31st March 2026 – Ann Gregson

During this period stated above, St. Laurence hosted:

- 15 baptisms
- 2 weddings
- 4 funerals
- 5 interments of ashes
- 2 memorial services

It is interesting to note that the number of baptisms last year exceeded the combined total of weddings, funerals, interments and memorial services.

Sadly, due to members passing away, we lost a number of our congregation last year, including our much loved

and valued Parish Secretary, Zoe. Her memorial service at St. Laurence on 1st March 2025 was well-attended with packets of wild-flower seeds being provided for people to plant in her memory, which proved to be a popular idea,

There is a 'pool' of people from which readers are drawn for the Sunday services. Towards the end of 2025, Jake and Jed asked if they could join the readers group and their names have been added to the list. Jake has already taken two readings and was obviously more confident with his second spell at the lectern – hopefully his confidence will continue to improve with every reading he does. Other commitments have prevented Jed from taking any readings as yet, but I am hopeful that he will also step up to the lectern at some point.

The post-service refreshments have become something of a problem as the number of volunteers has dwindled. I have agreed to accept responsibility for making sure that there are sufficient supplies available (tea, coffee, milk, biscuits, etc.) but some help with the refreshments service would be useful. We are very lucky in that the mother of our youngest chorister/acolyte, Priya, is a professional baker and brings along to every Sunday service a dozen or so cupcakes which she has made. These go down very well with the congregation and it is virtually unknown for any to be left by the time the church is closed!

I would like to thank everyone who gives their time and energy behind the scenes to ensure that the church continues to function, look good and feel welcoming. There are many 'unsung heroes' whose contributions to our church life are not always obvious to the congregation generally, but without whom it would be difficult to function as we do. I hope they never think that their efforts are unappreciated or unnoticed.

I would, however, like to say a particular 'thank you' to the Holy Dusters for their sterling work with vacuum cleaners, polish and cloths. Also many thanks to Yasmin and her team for the beautiful floral arrangements they put together in the church. We made the decision to switch from real flowers to silk ones, partly to cut back on cost but mainly because silk flowers are now so realistic and don't need continual watering. Interestingly, I read a newspaper article which reported that the Church of England was trying to encourage churches to use artificial flowers (or fresh flowers from congregants' gardens) to cut back on the number of 'foreign' blooms being brought into the country. I am informed by Yasmin that we now have a good stock of silk flowers of various types/colours, which can be re-purposed for any of the Church Seasons.

I would also like to thank our bell-ringers for the 'joyful noise' they raise every Sunday and our choir members and organist, Edward, for leading the singing.

In January 2025, St. Laurence was honoured by being asked to host a special service for Holocaust Memorial Day, which was well attended with several different faiths being represented. It was a sombre yet moving service which made an impression on all who attended. Refreshments were offered in the Beckett Chapel after the service, giving the attendees a chance to socialise and, perhaps, get to know people who they had not met before.

In June, the 'all together' service for all five churches was held at St. Augustine's Cross at Cliffsend, with St. Mary's kindly hosting refreshments afterwards. The choir were present in their robes and Edward managed to provide musical accompaniment, which was very much appreciated. Many thanks to the Ministry team, Edward and the choir for making this such a memorable service. I suspect that everyone was relieved to wake up that Sunday morning to see blue skies and sunshine! An outdoor service was a new experience for most but it is hoped that this could be repeated next year.

There was another 'all together' service on the 10th August, to celebrate the Patronal Day of St. Laurence, which was well-attended by members of all five churches

The monthly Spirituality Hour service at St. Laurence is being maintained with an attendance of around fourteen each time. Interesting talks have been provided by Revd. Catherine and various members of the congregation, initially on various Saints but, subsequently, on places mentioned in the Bible as they were in biblical times in comparison with as they are today.

Revd. Catherine and the St. Laurence LLT decided to hold a service to celebrate Corpus Christi, on the evening of the 19th June. It was a fairly simple service with the attendees (numbering 24) gathered together on chairs by the High Altar, rather than spreading themselves around the pews, which gave it a more intimate 'feel'. For the first time, incense was used during this service which made it seem a particularly special occasion.

On the subject of incense, following a survey of the congregation, Revd. Catherine has decided incense can be used at evening services (such as Midnight Mass), but will not be used during the normal Sunday services.

In the hope of encouraging more young people to attend church, the decision was made to include a Junior

Church on the second Sunday of each month, starting in September 2025. This part of the service is run by a children's team (comprised of Kelly, Marcia and her daughter, Andrea) and around seven or eight children attend on a fairly regular basis. The young people have their own area where they have activities put together by the children's team, which reflect the service that day. The children rejoin the main congregation before Communion takes place and are encouraged to talk about what they have been doing that morning. Many thanks to Kelly, Marcia and Andrea for the time and effort they put into the Junior Church services.

A Healing Ministry is now held on the third Sunday of each month, commencing in January this year. After taking Communion, anyone is welcome to go into the Becket Chapel and talk to a member of the ministry team or spend a few minutes in silent prayer. Numbers for this part of the service seem to be holding steady in the mid-teens and may possibly increase in time.

The usual Pet Service was held during November, with a slightly increased number attending. All the pets that were brought were dogs but all were really well-behaved throughout.

Remembrance Sunday was particularly special in 2025 as the local Guides, Brownies and other young people's groups attended, taking up all the pews in the back section of the Nave. They processed in with their respective standards and also processed out for the service that takes place at the War Memorial in the churchyard, lowering their standards as a mark of respect during that service.

Chilton School again used St. Laurence for their Christmas celebrations and the church was absolutely full for both their services, to such an extent that there was very quickly standing room only as the pews had filled up. It was good to see the church full to capacity.

The Christmas services went well, with attendance up on 2024. Christingle went particularly well with 57 children and 101 adults, though we would like to see the numbers increase even further. Thanks to Marcia and everyone involved for their help in making the Christingles and also to Marcia for organising and leading the service.

Attendance at Midnight Mass was also fairly well attended with 2 children and 64 adults though, again, it would be good to see a further increase in numbers. A few people from the winter shelter in the parish hall also attended this service and seemed to appreciate the occasion.

The Christmas Day service was another occasion where Revd. Catherine decided to gather the congregation on chairs at the High Altar, which worked really well. The attendees were slightly surprised to be given crackers as they arrived but these were cleverly linked to the nativity during the service. Thanks to Revd. Catherine and Revd. Ken for making the service so memorable.

The Brownies, who have been using the parish hall for their meetings for some time, have temporarily moved into the church as they are unable to use the hall at the moment *(see paragraph below*). They seem to be enjoying using the church and were particularly impressed by the Christmas trees and the Nativity scene set up at the High Altar.

The Parish Hall is being used as a winter shelter for the homeless, commencing at the end of October and lasting till the end of June 2026. It is being funded by Thanet District Council and seems to be going well, with several of their clients occasionally attending services at St. Laurence – particularly during the Christmas period. It has also provided the church with another finance stream.

Fabric Report

The Becket Chapel

Grant applications have been lodged with the Diocese and we are waiting to hear from them with regard to funding for repairs to the internal surface of the eastern wall of the Chapel.

The Geneva Bible and Manuscript Fragment

The documents were collected from the Diocese by Sharon and are ready to be displayed, but Sharon is researching a membrane that can be put behind the glass of the manuscript cabinet to protect it from light damage.

St Laurence in Thanet Change Ringers Tower Captains Report – Freda Parker

Looking back 2025 was a busy year for the bell ringers of St Laurence. The strapline for the year was "striking is the key", and as the year progressed, we definitely improved our ringing and striking.

In January we had Jake join us to learn to ring, followed in June by Grace and Ashley. It is always a pleasure to see new ringers progress from being completely unsure of the rope and the bell to becoming able and confident to ring rounds unaided.

We sadly lost Zoe Story in January who was a sound ringer, who was always so encouraging to so many new ringers, both young and old. Zoe also did many years in the post of Tower Treasurer and Secretary during her time as a St Laurence ringer. The bell ringers attended her Memorial Service in March and a quarter peal was rung after the service in celebration of Zoe's life.

We had one ringer, Karen, elected to join the KCACR (Kent County Association of Change Ringers) at the district meeting in February at St Alphege, Whitstable.

Our notable rings for the year were:
New Year's Eve – 5 of us rang in 2025
Quarter peal on Mothering Sunday in memory of Christine Brandrick
Good Friday half muffled quarter peal
General ringing for VE Day 80th Anniversary
General ringing for VJ Day 80th Anniversary
Wedding ringing
General ringing for the St Lawrence Junior Academy leavers service
Quarter peal for Bible Sunday, Elaine's first quarter in over 50 years
Half muffled ringing for the All Souls Service, Remembrance Sunday and the Tuesday practice in between
Christmas Eve Christingle Service and Midnight – 6 bells
Christmas Day – 8 bells

Apart from the Sundays when there was not a morning service at St Laurence the ringers only missed two Sunday mornings due to holidays and sickness preventing a viable band.

We took part in the Canterbury District Call Change Competition in March and came 6th, along with coming 5th in the Striking Competition in May.

Bell Sunday was celebrated with pre-service ringing and participation by the ringers in the service with readings, prayers and talk.

We have had several quarter peal practices, eventually ringing 240 changes of our focus method St Lawrence Doubles.

In July we were interviewed by Radio Kent for broadcast in August regarding the ringing recruitment day the KCACR were holding. The article was on myth busting in bellringing and the final broadcast was extremely good.

In August we hosted an ART (Association of Ringing Teachers) training session, this was a whole day session for new bell ringing teachers to learn how to teach, the days was full of learning and fun and it gave confidence to those who wish to become bell ringing teachers. Moving on from this session, St Laurence in Thanet jointly with St Peter in Thanet are now recognised as The Thanet Training Hub for new bellringers

and new bellringing teachers. We were really lucky to have Neil Jones the Chairman of KCACR come and join us for one of our Saturday morning sessions in October.

October also saw the annual Thanet Outing. This year we ventured to London by train to ring at 5 towers. Those were St Dunstan's in the West, Fleet Street; St Andrews', Holborn; St Vedast, Foster Lane; St James, Garlickhyde; St Olave, Hart Street. A very good day's ringing.

As always I give my thanks to everyone in the band who turn up, Tuesdays, Sundays and any other time ringing is required. Without your dedication and commitment we would not have a band.

St Laurence Clock Restoration - Freda Parker

The clock committee met 6 times during 2025.

The total in the appeal fund at the end of 2025 was £32,894.85 which was made up from the balance brought forward from 2024, a grant of £10,000.00, donations and proceeds from our fund raising events.

The fundraising events we held in 2025 consisted of 3 quizzes, a concert by the Coastal Choir, an art show, a strawberry tea garden party, an organ recital, a Bob Marley night and a Christmas Concert by the Thanet Light Orchestra.

We also had our stand and collection pots at Ramsgate Tunnels Local History Day, the Summer Celebration in the Rectory garden, the Guides and Brownies summer fair, Heritage open day in St Laurence church and a stall at the St Laurence Christmas fair.

4.4 ST MARK NORTHWOOD

Local Churchwardens' report 2025 – Kevin Spain

This past year has not been without its ups and downs, but a lot has happened and St Mark's continues to attract newcomers to all its services, events and interest groups.

My profound thanks to each and every one of you who make this possible and those that keep us in prayer.

1] Both "Thursday Fellowship" and Wednesdays "Knit & Natter" continue in their respective time slots and remain well attended.

2] The regular church services continue to follow the normal pattern of worship here at St Mark's and attendance, despite the sad loss of some of our stalwarts this past year, is still increasing at both services.

3] The Senior Leadership Team meets in the Pathfinder Room on the first Wednesday of the month.

4] Sunday School is still running monthly and currently has a small number attending at differing times.

5] The summary for the year is as follows:

A] An Agape Supper was held on the 16th of April. Very well attended but this year it will be by pre-booked ticket only to assist with the meals logistics.

B] A very successful Spring Fayre was held in the Hall on 26th April. Again, many thanks to all who attended, donated and organised it.

C] The APCM was held on 18th May and Chaired by Catherine.

D] On the 8th of June the Evening Service was not held as Churches together in Thanet held a service at the Royal Harbour Academy which we attended.

E] The Belleplate Tea was held in the Hall on the 28th of June and proved an enjoyable afternoon for all.

F] The Morning Service on the 29th of June took place at Saint Augustine's Cross. It was an all-Parish Service and caused considerable attention from the passing traffic, locals and walkers, many pausing and asking about it. Saint Laurence provided robes and St Marks the seating. Saint Catherine's many of their congregation and Saint Mary's the catering and facilities, well done everybody for a real Parish Together Service.

G] July 23rd St Mark's hosted the PCC meeting in the lounge.

H] August 3rd was the first of the "Home Group" led services which provided a very fresh way for the congregation to worship. Very inspirational.

I] On the 16th of August a very successful barbeque was held in the grounds, this proved to be a good witness for the church fostering local interest.

J] September 16th was the LLT

K] Moving into October, the Harvest Bring & Share meal on the 5th proved popular.

L] The LLT met again on the 10th of November and prior to this on the 1st Members of the Parish began a local Worship leaders course held at Diocesan House. Our now regular Christmas Fayre took place on the 22nd and the Altogether Service on the 5th Sunday (30th) showed a growth from the Parish for these services, The opportunity was used to promote Safeguarding Sunday, a National Church initiative.

M] December was a very busy month with all of the traditional services represented the carol service being held on the 14th.

N] 2026 started with the LLT on January the 12th

Followed by A "Net Zero" meeting on the 14th. This involved the Diocesan Net Zero Team and Diocesan Surveyor.

The aims of this meeting was to establish our church carbon footprint enabling us to access Green grants for energy and make our churches more environmentally friendly and cost effective. This is currently ongoing.

O] On the 25th Royal Harbour Hosted an evening service for Churches Together and the 6-30pm Evening Service was not held to allow attendance there.

P] PCC meeting was held in the lounge on January 28th

Q] Saint Luke's hosted a Confirmation Service on the 28th of February where Bishop Rose presided and candidates from across the Island attended.

6] Throughout the year Phil Barnes has organised a Saturday Morning Music group, held monthly on the second Saturday. This has introduced new Hymns and music to the church and bought forward previously unseen skills from within St Mark's.

7] Fabric: Most of the issues are covered in the Main Wardens reports to PCC and are not repeated here. Our main issues this year are hall roof and gutters. Our roofers have addressed an issue of wrongly fitted guttering and identified a problem with drainage and capability of the system at the rear of the hall. Ongoing.

More recently the Bell Cote has been invaded by Pigeons. Pest control services have identified the source of the birds; they are nesting under solar panels in a nearby building and colonising us! A Harris Hawk was bought to the church but could not be used to deter them due to the proximity of the main roads and bus stops etc.

The Hall floor is now drying out following the guttering issues solution and floor mats to control the ingress of water from the roof is proving positive. When dry the planking will be rebounded to the sub-floor. Issues of heating oil delivery badly affected our winter hirings and caused the NHS hirers problems.

The sound system has now been further upgraded with the provision of a new laptop which has greatly enhanced the recorded music delivery and be able to deliver good quality graphics in the future.

Mission at St Mark's 2025 – Rev Phil Barnes

Sadly, obvious mission activities have not really happened at St Marks this year. Having said that, the normal low-key activities have happened. Week by week worship continues and we have welcomed visitors, some of which have continued to worship with us, mainly occasionally, rather than regularly, but it has enabled us to have an average attendance of around forty for the beginning of 2026. There have also been the opportunities that opened up through baptisms and funerals.

Mission does not have to be proactive; it can be done through normal church life. Sunday mornings and pastoral services have already been mentioned and there are other events, church fayres, our annual MacMillan coffee morning and the barbecue are examples of this. The challenge for us is to make a greater use of these events.

So looking to the future we will be looking at communication by having more information for the congregation and for those who live in the community around the church. Leaflets, banners and signboards will be looked at and introduced to better inform. We will also be looking at being more open as a church and making a greater use of the surrounding grass to enjoy our Sunday morning refreshments during the summer. We are also looking at parish visiting and healing ministries to connect with our local community.

Belleplate Group – Janice Austin

The Belleplate Group meets on Tuesdays from 10.30-11.30. We play a varied selection of music which is enjoyed by all who attend. The group includes people who are also involved with music in other settings as well as some who had no music background at all and appreciate being able to make music.

We played at the St Mark Easter and Harvest Sunday morning services, also at the Carol service and at the Remembrance Day service on 11 November which residents and staff from Chartwell House attended.

In June and December we held afternoons of music with tea in St Mark church hall. People attending were encouraged to join in by singing along to our playing if they wished. At the December afternoon we played carols and other Christmas music. We also played carols at the Albion Towns Women's Guild afternoon in December at St Ethelbert Church

We would always welcome people to join us on a Tuesday morning. There is no need to be able to read music as our music is all done by numbers. An ability to count up to 4 is all that is needed!

Homegroups – Christine Martin

The two homegroups have met throughout the year of 2025 with a break in August and short breaks at Easter and Christmas. We meet on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Each session includes a Bible study and prayer with a cup of tea or coffee and possibly a biscuit.

During the year we have studied the books of Esther and Ephesians over eight and five weeks respectively.

Requests from members for studies produced series on *God's Time, Happiness, Developing Faith* and exploring what it means to Love the Lord Your God.

We began a requested series on Daniel and one on Matthew's gospel. Both of these are longer-term and have been continued in 2026.

The groups were asked to devise a Sunday morning service and present it which both have now done. Both groups included personal testimony to faith.

We are deeply grateful to those who open their homes to welcome the groups, some occasionally and others for most of the year. Particular thanks to Anita and John Parker, Barbara and Kevin Spain and Angela and Peter Kneller – for the lovely biscuits!

Thursday Fellowship – Angela Kneller

Last year we saw our leader Prim Williamson standing down due to health reasons. We give thanks for her leadership and pray for her health and recovery.

So far, the role of leader has not been filled and is not likely to be filled. We are taking turns to lead. I am the main keyholder and secretary (I also live close to St Marks).

We have had several members pass away last year including two active members and one non active member Marjorie (103).

We have three main committee members, Angela Kneller, secretary, Vicki Kemp and Ruth Lawlor Theresa Smith is and honorary member. Kevin Spain is our Treasurer and Barbara Spain can sign our cheques. We have twenty-five active members numbers of people attending varies.

Our Charity this year is the Pilgrim's Hospice, and we are hoping to raise more money and are looking forward to presenting the cheque to a representative of the hospice.

Various speakers have visited this year Laura Woodcock speaking about Regency Dress, Cliff East entertained us with a talk about men's hats, showing his extensive collection. We have had quizzes, in house talks and invited Dottie's Hedgehog Hospital again, (we may have a day trip during the summer months). Clive Nuttman continues to be a favourite and has many more talks planned for us.

We have had talks from Frances, Phil and Catherine. Ruth Armstrong from Vale Square and Hardres Street United Reformed Church. My mother Pastor Rita Brown from St Andrews church Dartford is a favourite with the group and although she retires in October she will continue to write reflections for our meetings.

The members agreed to allow Tony Vick to join the group as his wife needs help to get to church.

All the members are pleased that the group continues to meet even though the meeting structure has changed during the year.

We are considering adding the Friendship to the name of the group and are aiming to advertise the group more in the future.

Prayer Group – Janice Austin

This group meets weekly on Fridays at 11.00. Numbers are generally low, but even if there have been very few of us we have enjoyed meeting with each other and sharing in God's work by prayer.

Prayers are made for all the people named on our prayer tree, for all the churches in our parish, for our local area, for our country and our world. We would always welcome others to join us.

Knit, Craft and Natter – Frances Barnes

Knit, Craft and Natter has continued throughout the year and has a regular group of ladies that form the nucleus. Others call-in and take advantage of the skills and the fun atmosphere. It has been the source of support for some, and the source of new friendships that are lasting.

Christmas was celebrated with a do-it-yourself Christmas meal and everyone had a good time. Throughout the year subs were collected and paid into the church account.

4.5 ST MARY CLIFFSEND - REV KEN COX

St Mary is keeping active and the services are conducted in a normal pattern. There are however new faces in the Sunday services and a young family are now a very welcome addition to our regular attenders.

We have held four LLT meetings during the year, to discuss and keep the church running. The fabric of the church is alright at this time but is showing signs of damp ingress, which we will need to address when the drier weather comes in during the summer. This is a requirement of the last Quinquennial inspection.

The building Quinquennial report highlighted structural problems with the front wall. Investigations were carried out and it transpired that the defects were by subsidence due to leaking underground water/drainage pipes. These have been repaired and the wall has been strengthened and repointed

During the year a new heating boiler was installed thanks to the kind generosity of Ann Rowland-Hill's family, donating the gifts given by people at Ann's funeral

A St Laurence Team Service was held at St Augustine's cross, it was a fantastic event and everyone came back to St Mary for refreshments after the service.

We held our traditional two Christingle services on Christmas Eve, a total of 83 people over the two services was a joy to behold.

4.6 THE BARBER SHOP

This is located adjacent to the St Laurence Parish Hall and continues to be leased to Mr Simon Wiseman, who is a very good tenant. The contractual term for the lease is 7 years from 8/06/22.

5 ELECTORAL ROLL FIGURES AND USUAL SUNDAY ATTENDANCE

Electoral Roll Report

The Electoral Roll information for all five district churches is given below

St Catherine	29	Resident	21	Non-resident	8
St Christopher	0	Resident	0	Non-resident	0
St Laurence	58	Resident	43	Non-resident	15
St Mark	52	Resident	38	Non-resident	14
St Mary	17	Resident	17	Non-resident	0
Totals	156	Resident	119	Non-resident	37

Church Attendance 2025

St Catherine	29
St Christopher	0
St Laurence	38
St Mark	43
St Mary	11

The average Sunday attendance figure total across the Parish for 2025 was 121

6 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

6.1 INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Parish of St Laurence-in-Thanet

I report on the accounts of the parish for the year ended 31st December 2025 which are set out on the following pages.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under section 145 of the 2011 Act);
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the benefice and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements

   - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and

   - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Ms Judith Rowland-Hill FCA, April 2026

6.2 FINANCIAL REVIEW

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £119,578 of which £56,817 was unrestricted voluntary donations, and a further £16,997 was from Gift Aid. Bank interest totalled £4,011. Restricted voluntary receipts of £416,646 were also received and are detailed in the Financial Statements. Leasing of the Barber Shop provided a net income of £6,676.

Planned Giving this year increased by almost 5% when compared with 2024, however, collections at services decreased by 8.83%. The Parish Giving Scheme has proved invaluable, providing a regular return of Gift Aid. Fundraising activities generated £7,180 – an increase on last year – many thanks to those who give their time, effort and money! We received legacies from the estates of Dorothy Manning, Pam Knight, Marie Evans and Ron Quick and donations in memory of Zoë Story, Christine Brandrick, Eileen Gardner, Eileen Boast, Graham Barron and Ann Rowland-Hill for which we are overwhelmingly grateful. Hall rental income generated £13,528, including a donation for hosting the RISE Winter Shelter.

Three weddings, twenty-three funeral services and six interment of ashes were carried out this year.

£129,248 was spent from unrestricted funds, including the contribution to the Diocesan Parish Share. The sum that the churches of our Parish have to find is apportioned according to a formula that is based on unrestricted voluntary receipts of each church. £75,520.47 was paid; a grant of £10,000 from the Lower Income Communities (LinC) Fund brought the total to £85,520.47. Issues with our gas and electricity provider resulted in utility costs of £26,290.53 – a huge burden – utilities now switched to another provider. Church repairs and maintenance expenses were significantly higher than in 2024 - £17,886.

The net result for the year was an excess of receipts over payments of £380,910.

The 2026 Parish Share is £96,714.48.

6.3 RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 December 2025

Receipts and Payments Account 1

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	TOTAL FUNDS 2025	2024
RECEIPTS						
Voluntary Receipts:						
Planned Giving		30,366	2,416		32,782	31,222
Collections at services		18,689			18,689	20,498
All other giving / voluntary receipts	5a	7,762	414,230		421,992	7,254
Gift Aid recovered		16,997	0		16,997	20,050
		73,814	416,646	0	490,460	79,024
Activities for generating funds	5b	7,180			7,180	6,133
Investment income	5c	23,688	1,622		25,310	22,088
Church Activities	5d	14,896			14,896	13,059
Total Receipts		119,578	418,268	0	537,846	120,304
PAYMENTS						
Church Activites						
Parish Share		54,520	21,000		75,520	75,064
Clergy and staffing costs		3,855			3,855	3,725
Church running expenses	5e	62,606	3,287		65,893	28,762
Hall running costs		7,390	425		7,815	4,327
Mission giving and donations		384	2,976		3,360	9,267
		128,755	27,688	0	156,443	121,146
Costs of generating funds	5f	493	0		493	583
Total Payments		129,248	27,688	0	156,936	121,729
Excess of Receipts over Payments		-9,670	390,580	0	380,910	-1,426
Transfer between funds	4	0	0		0	0
		-9,670	390,580	0	380,910	-1,426
Cash at bank and in hand at 1 January		***28,197***	***14,433***		42,630	44,055
Cash at bank and in hand at 31 December		18,527	405,013		***423,540***	42,630

6.4 STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Endowment Funds	TOTAL FUNDS 2025	2024
Cash Funds						
Bank Current Account		0	4,611		4,611	3,609
Deposit Account		18,527	400,401		418,929	39,021
Cash		0			0	0
		18,527	405,013	0	***423,540***	42,630
Other Monetary Assets						
Gift Aid recoverable		0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0
Investment Assets						
Investment Fund	2			393,820	393,820	431,085
		0	0	393,820	393,820	431,085
Fixed Assets retained for Church use	3				0	
Liabilities						
		0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0

6.5 FINANCIAL NOTES

1 The Financial Statements of the PCC have been prepared in accordance with the Church Accounting Regulations 2006 using the Receipts and Payments basis.

2 The Endowment Funds consist of various donations to be retained as capital funds, but the income is for ordinary church purposes. They are invested in CCLA Church of England Investment Fund Shares.

3 Fixed Assets retained for church use - St Laurence Parish Hall and Salon/Barber Shop

4 Movements between unrestricted and restricted funds.

5 Further Analysis of Receipts and Payments

		Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowm't Funds £
	Receipts			
a				
	Donations	2,357	4,461	
	Grants	-	1,000	
	Legacies	5,100	408,447	
	Mission and Charity	-	322	
	Miscellaneous	305	-	
		7,762	414,230	
b				
	Fund Raising	7,180	-	
		7,180	-	
c				
	Dividends on Investment Funds	12,622	1,622	
	Salon Rental Income	7,056	-	
	Bank Interest	4,011	-	
		23,688	1,622	
d				
	Fees for Weddings and Funerals	1,624	-	
	Photocopying	13	-	
	Hall Income	13,258	-	
		14,896	-	

	Payments		
e	Music including CCLI and Organ Maintenance and Tuning	1,269	-
	Cost of Services	1,124	-
	Parish Office Costs; Printing, Stationery, Broadband/Telephone	2,618	-
	Church Building Running Expenses - Water, Utilities and Insurance	39,899	-
	Churchyard Expenses	-	-
	Salon Costs (Insurance)	380	-
	Church Repairs and Maintenance	14,599	3,287
	Discretionary Fund Expenses	-	-
	Miscellaneous	2,717	-
		62,606	3,287
f			
	Fundraising	493	
		493	

7 REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

7.1 CHARITY NAME AND LOCATION

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Laurence in the Isle of Thanet, Ramsgate (St Laurence-in-Thanet Team Ministry) is part of the Diocese of Canterbury within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Parish Office, 2 Newington Road, Ramsgate CT11 0QT

7.2 PCC MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

The members of the PCC, excepting Clergy, Readers and Parochial Churchwardens, were elected at the Annual Church Meeting for each member church. All clergy in the team were members ex-officio, as were such of the Readers as the Annual Parochial Church Meeting determined. The Parochial Churchwardens were elected at the Annual Meeting of Parishioners (Vestry). The Assistant Churchwardens and/or PCC representatives were elected at the Annual Meeting of parishioners for each member church as were the Deanery Synod representatives. Kevin Spain is the Parish Safeguarding Officer and Parish Disclosure Officer.

PCC MEMBERS April 2025 – May 2026

Priest in Charge	Rev Catherine Tucker
Clergy Team	

Priests with permission to officiate	Rev Ken Cox Rev Phil Barnes Rev Brian Griffiths
Parochial Churchwardens appointed at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)	Kevin Spain Sharon Cutler
Parish Reader	Judith Andrews
Local Church Wardens and PCC representatives appointed at the Annual Church Meetings (ACM):	
St Catherine	
PCC reps	Barbara Redman
St Christopher	
Local Church Wardens	Vacancies
PCC representatives	Vacancies
St Laurence	
PCC representatives	Barbara Byne, Sharon Cutler
St Mark	
Local Church Wardens and PCC representatives	Kevin Spain, Zena Barron, Jean Wall
St Mary	
Local Church Wardens	2 vacancies
PCC Representatives	2 vacancies
All the above were approved at the APCM in March 2025	
Deanery Synod Representatives are also members of the PCC:-	Judith Andrews (St Laurence) Dave Newman (St Mark) St Catherine, St Christopher and St Mary have no Deanery Synod Representative
Secretary (non-voting)	Malcolm Story
Treasurer (non-voting)	Alison Willoughby-Browne

In 2025, the PCC held six meetings. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting was held on Sunday 29th March after which there was a brief PCC meeting to appoint the Standing Committee. Meetings were chaired by Rev Catherine.

Committees

The PCC has a Standing Committee which can meet between scheduled meetings to discuss any outstanding business, and to make recommendations to the PCC, or to take decisions on urgent matters on behalf of the PCC. Its members are the parish clergy, the two parochial churchwardens and 2 PCC representatives who were Zena Barron and David Newman. (The treasurer and secretary are non- voting and there needs to be 5 members on the Standing Committee).

Each of the five churches has a Local Leadership Team (LLT), elected from parishioners who are usual attenders of that church; the composition of each LLT is formally approved at the Annual Parochial Church meeting. The LLT of each church meets at least 4 times a year and reports to the PCC.

7.3 INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Ms Judith Rowland-Hill

8 STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The PCC operates under the Parochial Church Councils (Powers) Measure 1956. It has delegated to five committees (one in each of the five churches) known as Local Leadership Teams (LLTs) all its functions in

respect of the Parish Church of St Laurence-in-Thanet, St Laurence Parish Hall, and the other churches in the Parish. LLTs have more flexibility than District Church Councils (DCCs), and delegated responsibilities differ in each church depending on local circumstances.

The PCC has retained the right to be consulted and to make decisions on any expenditure proposed by the LLTs for which borrowing is required, and to decide on any application for a Faculty or Archdeacon's certificate, or planning permission for any development and its rights as an interested party under the Pastoral Measure 1983. The PCC has responsibility for the oversight of the maintenance, repair and insurance of the churches in the Parish, namely St Catherine in Manston, St Christopher in Newington, St Laurence in Ramsgate, St Mark in Northwood and St Mary in Cliffsend, the grounds and churchyards of those churches (in the case of St Laurence only the Memorial Garden is the responsibility of the church).

Parish Website - http://www.stlaurenceparish-ramsgate.org.uk