

St Augustine's Church, Grove Park Parish Profile



Rooted in Christ's love, our vision is to be a beacon of hope, welcoming everyone from all ages and backgrounds into a caring community, honouring our worship traditions and nurturing our spiritual life.

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Summary

St Augustine's Church, in Grove Park, is seeking a new vicar. We are a diverse and engaged congregation who seek to help each other and play a positive part in our community. Our suburban parish is demographically and economically mixed.

Our worship is mainstream Anglican, with robed choir and servers, and organ-based music, traditional and modern. We have a congregation of around 80 on an average Sunday, with substantially higher numbers attending major festivals. Many members are at, or approaching, retirement age, but there is a strong body of people of working age.

One of our key mission action areas is attracting more young families, children and young people generally. We also want to make sure St Augustine's is a welcoming church for everyone and to deepen our faith. The congregation has been enthusiastic in contributing to this Profile and many of the views and concerns

expressed are reflected in the document.

The church is actively involved in the local community, especially in two local primary schools and Brymore Nursing Home. We also support our local food bank in Motttingham and provide financial assistance to another. Many groups use our church halls.

We look to our new vicar to maintain our basic traditions but also introduce new dimensions to worship to reflect the growing diversity of our congregation. We also look for inspiration in attracting families and young people as we experienced some fallout during Covid. A vicar who enthusiastically brings people together within and beyond our church will help us strengthen our church community and address wider needs within our parish.



The Vicar we need

Essential characteristics of our new vicar:

- o Passion for outreach and parish integration

Demonstrates a genuine willingness to connect with people beyond the immediate church community, especially younger generations and those experiencing deprivation, and to build strong links with local organisations.

- o Skilled and sensitive communication

Expresses ideas clearly and kindly in both spoken and written form, using varied channels (including online) to connect with different audiences.

- o Enthusiasm and experience in intergenerational ministry

Shows a keen interest in bringing together children, teenagers, families, and older adults into a thriving faith community, valuing each generation's unique contributions.

- o Inclusive and welcoming pastoral approach

Fosters an environment where all individuals feel accepted and supported, providing compassionate pastoral care (including visiting when members are in hospital or dying), and encouraging collaboration to overcome divisions.

- o Strong spiritual leadership including stimulating and effective preaching

Maintains a deep personal faith grounded in prayer and the sacraments, and communicates the Gospel in ways that resonate with a diverse congregation of all ages—respecting St Augustine's worship traditions and building upon them to inspire spiritual growth, including in our children.

- o Ability to strengthen internal community and address practical needs

Helps uphold a warm, hospitable environment by responding effectively to practical concerns (e.g. facilities, including running of the hall, comfort) and motivating everyone to share in caring for both current members and newcomers.

- o Collaborative teamwork and empowerment of lay leaders
Nurtures others' gifts and fosters a sense of shared ownership, working in partnership with lay leaders and volunteers to develop and implement church initiatives.

- o Resilience and good humour
Maintains a positive and flexible attitude in the face of demands, setbacks, or criticism, and brings warmth to personal interactions.

Desirable characteristics:

- o Adaptability and commitment to reviewing progress
Remains open to adjusting plans and priorities as situations evolve, regularly assessing progress and being willing to change course if needed.

*I pray for a vicar who will maintain
our current style and standards of
worship but also lead us in new
directions.*



The Parish

The parish of St Augustine's, Grove Park is in the London Borough of Lewisham and adjoins Bromley borough. We are part of the Diocese of Southwark and border the Diocese of Rochester. The church itself is in the Northwest of the parish. See Appendix A for a parish map.

E. Nesbit lived in Grove Park and was inspired by the stretch of railway behind the church to write 'The Railway Children'. Another famous resident was Desmond Tutu, who served as honorary curate at St Augustine's during the early 1970's. Our beautiful Chinbrook Meadows is home to the Desmond Tutu Peace Garden.

We think the five best things about living in Grove Park are:

1. St Augustine's (naturally!).
2. Good transport links (plenty of buses and trains).
3. Chinbrook Meadows and our green spaces.
4. The peaceful, diverse community that feels like a village.
5. Family and friends.

Ours is a predominantly suburban residential parish. Some 6000 residents live in c.2500 households, of which 34% are made up of a single family with dependent children. 31% of the population live in social rented accommodation, and the parish ranks 1,361 out of 12,239 in terms of its measure of deprivation (1 being the most deprived). 52% of residents are white, and 12% are aged 65 and over. 50% identify as Christian.

We have a variety of local shops and an Army Reserve centre. The Ringway Centre houses the Grove Park Community Group, which offers a wide range of social, recreational and educational facilities. Several Pentecostal congregations meet at the Centre; The Word of Life church is also in the parish. The thriving Grove Park Youth Club currently offers an after-school club for younger children, and evening activities for teenagers twice a week. There is a community primary school, an Adult Education Centre and, near the church and just over the parish boundary, a community library and a second primary school. There are two care homes, including Brymore House Nursing Home.

Who we are

Our church life is centred on our Sunday Eucharist service. Our worship follows a mainstream Anglican style with a strong emphasis on celebrating the Eucharist and exploring prayerful spirituality. Our much-loved long-serving former vicar led our worship inclusively, engaging with everyone in the church and more widely in the community.

We do not presently have a curate, or any SSMs, licensed lay ministers or retired clergy, but some experienced members of the congregation do undertake lay leadership in worship as appropriate. We have a small, robed choir and music forms an important element of our worship. The music is mainly traditional, and organ accompanied, although an increasing amount of contemporary music is now included to reflect the preferences of our diversifying congregation.

Children of all ages are a welcome and integral part of our congregation, participating in the

service rather than in a separate Sunday School. The care and nurture of children in the Christian faith is something we wish to develop with our new vicar.



St Augustine's is an amazing, inclusive church. I have been involved with several churches, but I strongly feel a sense of belonging here.

Beyond our Sunday Eucharist, we had a midweek Eucharist weekly with our previous vicar. The PCC has prioritised this weekday service as far as possible during the vacancy. We would like to offer other services and develop lay leadership of worship.

St Augustine's marks the Christian year with special services during Advent and Lent as well as celebrations at Easter, Christmas and other holy festivals. The Mothers' Union enables us to support the Children's Society at our regular Christingle service; the MU meets monthly and contributes significantly to parish events.

St Augustine's hosts uniformed groups for young people, specifically beavers, cubs, brownies and scouts but not, at present, guides. These groups, run by experienced leaders, meet in the church halls, which are also used by St Augustine's for a Christmas fair as well as for having tea, coffee - and importantly biscuits! - after the Sunday Eucharist. The congregation wants to make better use of the halls ourselves, for example through more bring and share lunches, as well as ensuring it is well used and appreciated by community groups (see below).

We have a strongly motivated Parochial Church Council that contains some very experienced lay members who share in the running of the parish and church buildings. One or two of these are looking to retire so renewal is an important objective. We do not employ any paid administrative staff.



Our Congregation

Our 2025 Electoral Roll totals 87 of whom only 17 are resident in the parish. Average Sunday attendance is around 80 including some 65 communicants. Numbers increase substantially for major festivals and special events.

According to our recent survey, our age profile shows:

36% are aged 75+

13% are aged 65-74

29% are aged 45-64

16% are under 18-44

6% are aged under 18



and our self-reported ethnic breakdown is:

81% White

12% Black

2% Asian

2% Mixed

3% Other

A dashboard summary of church numbers and attendance is attached as Appendix B. The impact of Covid can be seen from these charts.

The congregation has participated in an extensive programme of consultation which has produced a cross-section of opinions and concerns about St Augustine's both as it is now and as we would like to see it develop in the years ahead. The key points are summarised here, but more detail is examined in our Mission Action Plan.

There is a widespread feeling of belonging among church members, highlighting a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. The form of worship, including uplifting music, inspiring sermons and a supportive church community, helps members in their daily lives.

Looking to the future, there is a strong wish to welcome more children and young people into the church community and this is seen as a key objective. Members want to see continued spiritual depth while reaching a broader community, with greater community involvement.

Church members are willing to participate directly in the life and work of the parish with many

being directly involved in practical or creative tasks such as flower arranging, music and liturgical roles within our worship. Members are committed, within their means, to providing financial support through regular giving and by making generous weekly gifts to the food bank.

There are some practical concerns about St Augustine's with a general feeling that the church can be very cold during the winter months and that our eco-friendly heating system may not be adequate.

While our style of worship is well supported and liked, some people would like to see more contemporary elements and greater variety in worship.



*“Church is the best place to go to
talk to people, and I love giving
people hugs”*

The Community we serve

We believe we have good relationships with many organisations that operate in Grove Park, and as a church community we are keen to ensure that we are positively involved in local affairs. As part of our preparation for this Profile we met with local community organisations. Feedback from this contributed to the Mission Action Plan and here we summarise some key points.

Many community groups use the halls at St Augustine's regularly: The Gateway Club, for people with learning difficulties, has operated in our halls on Tuesday evenings for some fifty years and is a thriving part of the local community. A taekwondo class operates a number of days a week and is very well attended. The NHS makes weekly use of the halls to provide an exercise class to assist senior citizens with their balance. The U3A uses the halls weekly for badminton and bridge.

"St Augustine's has an important welcoming role ... and is integral to the community" Rob Clayton,
Grove Park Youth Club

We welcome schools and uniformed organisations to services at St Augustine's regularly. Our ministry, particularly through our previous vicar, has been much appreciated by our two local primary schools who benefited from assemblies; the vicar was also on the board of governors for one of the schools for many years.

St Augustine's engagement with Brymore nursing home is much valued. Our previous vicar ministered to many residents and members of the congregation have given carol concerts regularly. Staff at Brymore are keen for this engagement to deepen when we have a new vicar.

The congregation supports a local food bank located in another church just outside the parish in Mottingham. We collect non-perishable food items which are delivered to the foodbank at St

Edward's weekly. St Augustine's also provides a grant to this foodbank and another one just outside the parish. The food and financial support are greatly appreciated by these food banks.

In our recent meetings with local community leaders as part of our consultation to prepare our Mission Action Plan, we were encouraged to hear that St Augustine's is well regarded and considered an essential part of the local community. Many comments show that the church is valued as a welcoming, safe space. Those we spoke with admire the church's history, the availability of its facilities, especially the halls, and they support its ties to the local schools, care homes and youth groups. However, they urge the church to refresh its activities, update the halls, improve social media and collaborate more actively with local organisations.



"The church is a staple of the community and people appreciate it for the activities held there as well as for the services" Brymore House Nursing Home



Our Church buildings and resources

Our lovely church building dates back to 1886 when it was constructed as a chapel of ease within the parish of St Mildred's, Lee. St Augustine's became a parish church in 1891. It is a fine building architecturally and contains some beautiful interior features, particularly an elegantly carved wooden reredos. The church seating is pew-based.

We are fortunate to have an exceptionally good three manual pipe organ which has recently been the subject of significant renovation.

The church is served by a car park and a 1960's halls complex, which is somewhat dated but remains structurally sound and is properly maintained.

A two-bedroom flat, designed originally for a caretaker, is located above the smaller hall. This is

now let out to provide an income stream, as is the house we own in Marvels Lane, which was intended originally to accommodate a curate. They are maintained in good condition and the house is managed by a local letting agent. As previously mentioned, the main church hall, in particular, is well used throughout the week. There is, however, capacity each day for further mission and ministry opportunities.

The relatively modern purpose-designed vicarage, with four bedrooms, is right next to the church at 336 Baring Road. This is in good structural condition and its décor is presently being addressed by the Parsonages Board during the vacancy.



Finances

St Augustine's is financially supported through stewardship, rental income from the two church properties, and the community use of the church hall. The Parish Pledge to the Diocese is based on the total income of the church from all these sources.

Whilst the stewardship income does not currently fully support the Parish Pledge and the running expenses of the church, the congregation does respond to specific fund-raising initiatives. Usually, the rental income of the hall fully covers its running costs but in 2024 new central heating boilers were installed costing £17,218.

The PCC monitors the condition of the church building closely. The recent quinquennial report highlighted some stonework repairs that were of an urgent nature and other repair works that were of lesser concern. The urgent work will be completed in 2025 and the lesser works within 2 years, all of which will be financed from current resources.

St Augustine's meets the salary of an organist, the use of a wide range of music regulated by licences, and the decoration of the church by flowers.

We cover the regular ministry expenses of our vicar, and expect them to take regular holidays and days off. We will support them as they take time for training, reading weeks, personal development, retreats and academic study.

Our 2024 financial statement can be found at Appendix C.



Our Mission Action Plan 2025-2029: Summary

Our vision:



“Rooted in Christ’s love, our vision is to be a beacon of hope, welcoming everyone from all ages and backgrounds into a caring community, honouring our worship traditions and nurturing our spiritual life.”



Positive words people use to describe St. Augustine's

Mission Priorities

To make our vision a reality, we have set out three mission priorities for the next 5 years:

1. Reaching Out and Caring for each other

We reach beyond our walls to serve, listen, and work with each other, our community and the environment, ensuring that people of every age and background experience Christ's love in tangible, caring ways. (Marks of Mission: Tell, Tend, Treasure)



We still have a tendency to be middle-class and middle-aged and not fully integrated as we could be.

2. Growing Together Across All Generations

We nurture meaningful relationships across all ages, offering teaching and activities that invite everyone—children, young people, and adults—to grow in faith, belonging, and service together. (Mark of Mission: Teach)

3. Deepening Our Faith While Honouring Traditions

We honour our worship heritage while encouraging personal and communal spiritual growth, creating space for diverse expressions of faith to flourish in our united community. (Mark of Mission: Tend)



How is someone who isn't already part of the faith going to start conversations with the church?

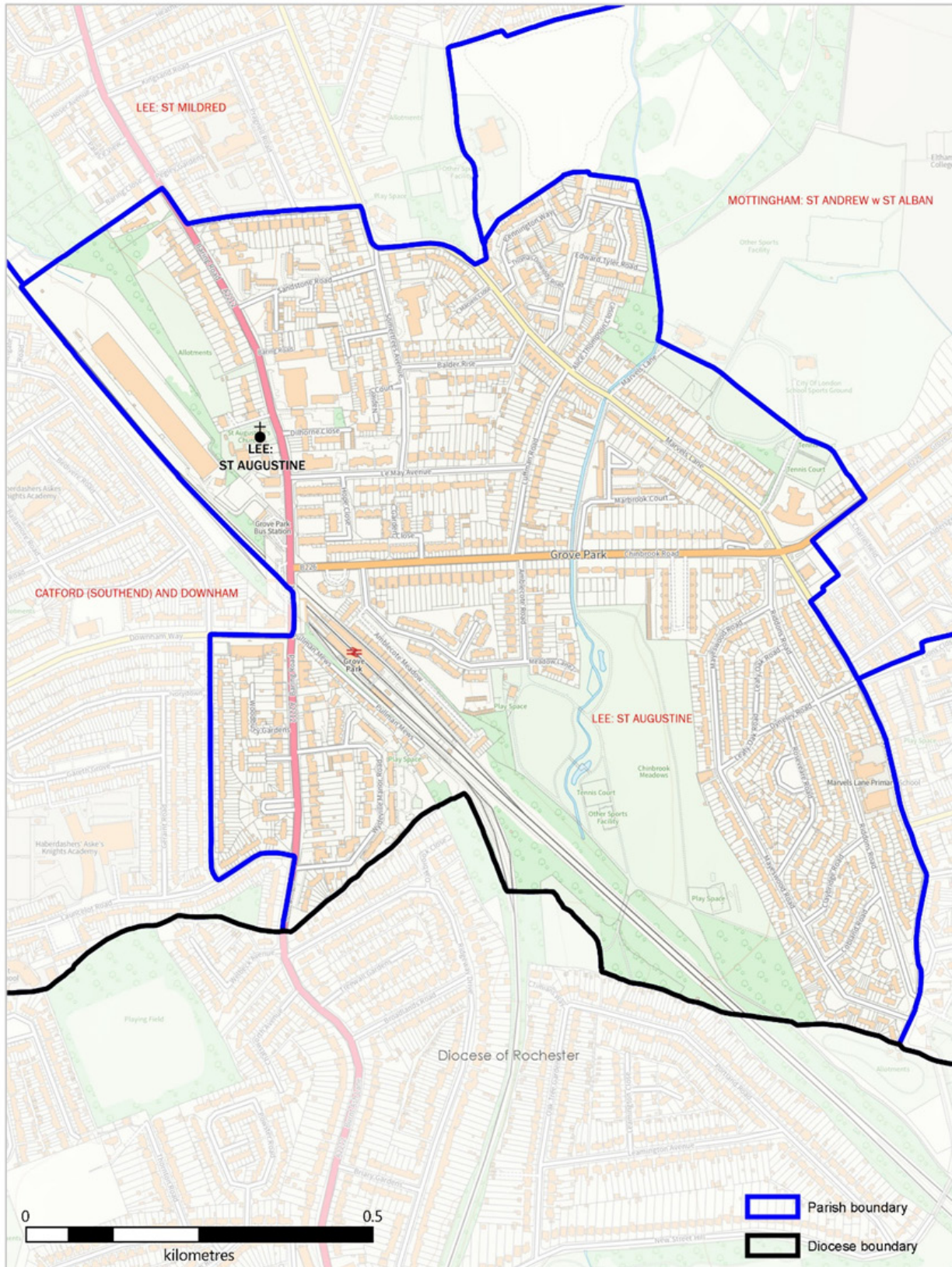
St Augustine's is a welcoming church community. We are keen to grow together in our faith, serve each other and nurture a growing congregation. A vicar who will help us lead our worship, strengthen our engagement with our parish community and bring people together to fulfil our priorities will be a wonderful addition to our church family.



Saint Augustine's church feels like home to me. I look forward to worshipping there every week. The friends I have made have become my family. A listening ear, or a shoulder to cry on, a warm hug after a difficult week. And always delicious biscuits! From the bottom of my heart,
THANK YOU!

Appendix A: Map of Parish

Parish of Lee, St Augustine

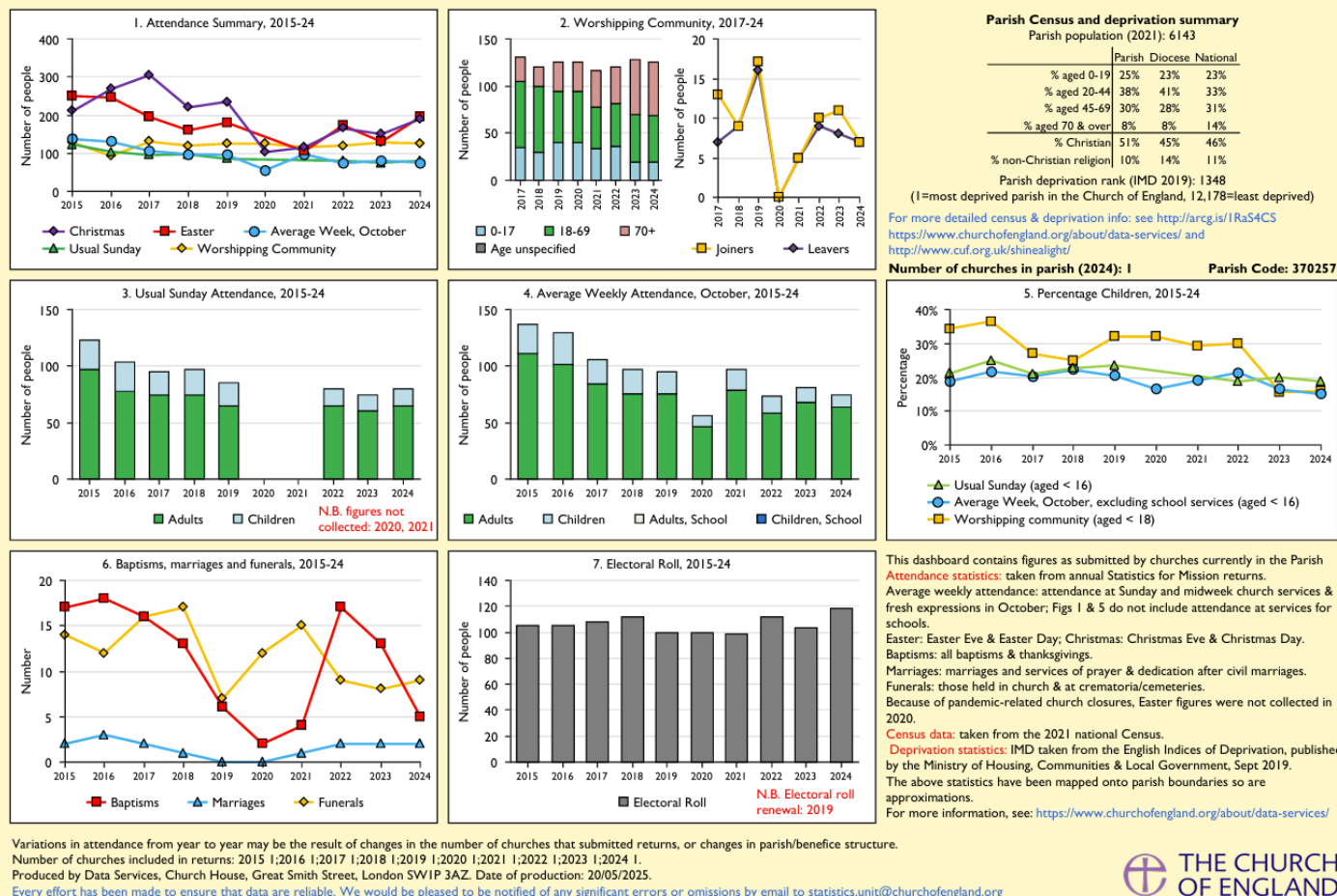


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Map produced by the Diocese of Southwark (SA) on 21-01-22

Appendix B: Dashboard

SfM Dashboard for the Parish of Lee: St Augustine, Grove Park in the Deanery of EAST LEWISHAM



SfM Dashboard for the Parish of Lee: St Augustine, Grove Park in the Deanery of EAST LEWISHAM

Report	Field	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1. Attendance Summary	Christmas	210	268	305	220	235	103	115	165	150	190
	Easter	250	246	195	160	180	-	105	173	130	195
	Average Week, October	137	130	106	97	96	56	97	74	81	75
	Usual Sunday	123	104	95	97	85	-	-	80	75	80
	Worshipping Community	128	93	130	120	125	125	116	120	128	126
2. Worshipping Community	Total			130	120	125	125	116	120	128	126
	0-17			35	30	40	40	34	36	20	20
	18-69			70	70	55	55	44	45	50	48
	70+			25	20	30	30	38	39	58	58
	Age unspecified			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Joiners			13	9	17	0	5	10	11	7
	Leavers			7	9	16	0	5	9	8	7
3. Usual Sunday Attendance	Adults	97	78	75	75	65	-	-	65	60	65
	Children	26	26	20	22	20	-	-	15	15	15
4. Average Weekly Attendance	Adults	111	102	85	76	76	47	79	58	68	64
	Children	26	28	22	22	20	9	19	16	13	11
	Adults, School	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Children, School	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Percentage Children	Usual Sunday (aged < 16)	21%	25%	21%	23%	24%	-	-	19%	20%	19%
	Average Week, October, excluding school services (aged < 16)	19%	22%	20%	22%	20%	17%	19%	21%	16%	15%
	Worshipping community (aged < 18)	34%	37%	27%	25%	32%	32%	29%	30%	16%	16%
6. Baptisms, marriages and funerals	Baptisms	17	18	16	13	6	2	4	17	13	5
	Marriages	2	3	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	2
	Funerals	14	12	16	17	7	12	15	9	8	9
7. Electoral Roll	Electoral Roll	105	105	108	112	100	100	99	112	103	118

Appendix C - Financial Statement

A high-level summary of the Parish finances at 31st December 2024 is as follows:

Fixed Assets

38 Marvels Lane £450,000

Current Assets

Debtors £42,778

Cash bank balances

Church £3,059
Hall £9,543

£12,602

Short Term Deposits

Church £67,629
Hall £ 6,817

£74,446

Liabilities

Amounts due within 1 year £(3,136)

Net Current Assets £126,691

Total Assets £576,691

Note:

Debtors include Gift Aid claims amounting to £39,082 of which £29,192 has been received in early 2025

Income and Expenditure Summary for the year to 31st December 2024

Income:

Stewardship £47,373

Collections £ 1,514

Donations £ 8,378

Legacy £10,000

Church Hall Lettings £26,626

Property Rents £29,716

Fees, Fund Raising, Interest £ 5,538

Total Income £129,145

Expenditure:

Parish Pledge £43,500

Ministry & Music £ 4,692

Church running expenses £13,971

Church Maintenance £ 6,391

Church Properties repairs £ 3,128

Hall running costs £38,707

Charitable Donations £ 2,200

Other expenses £ 531

Total Expenses £113,120

Surplus Income over Expenditure £ 16,025

Appendix D- Mission Action Plan

Our vision:

'Rooted in Christ's love, our vision is to be a beacon of hope, welcoming everyone from all ages and backgrounds into a caring community, honouring our worship traditions and nurturing our spiritual life.'

Introduction

Welcome to St. Augustine's first Mission Action Plan. We have sought to involve the whole congregation in the planning process in a variety of ways. Through it we have tried to discern together where God is calling us in the next five years, following the retirement of our previous very long-serving and much-loved vicar.

The Mission Action Planning process has so far comprised the following:

- Prayer: as a congregation, we have regularly sought, and continue to seek, God's guidance throughout the process, both in corporate worship and private prayer.
- Consultation: we asked the

congregation for their views, through a questionnaire and bring and share lunch, both of which had high levels of participation, and through informal conversations. We also captured our children's perspectives at Christmas and Easter workshops. In parallel, we consulted the wider Grove Park community through in-depth interviews with key community leaders.

- Audit: at our 'Where are we now?' discernment day, we reviewed the consultation responses alongside demographic data for the parish and congregation. We then carried out two SWOT analyses, one at the discernment day and one with the wider congregation. As well as identifying various Weaknesses and Threats, these highlighted many current Strengths of St. Augustine's and Opportunities on which we can build.

- Vision and mission priorities: having reflected on the audit, our second, 'Where are we going?', discernment day focussed on setting our vision and strategic priorities for the next 5 years.

- SMART goals: the PCC then established five short-term SMART

goals, which we will focus on delivering during the vacancy. We will then set further goals with our new vicar.

Developing our vision

Our vision is set out at the top of this document. In developing it, we imagined what a thriving St. Augustine's would look like, five years from now:

- We hope for an engaged and active congregation of all ages, whose gifts and talents are involved in all aspects of the church's life.
- We want to ensure our buildings are welcoming and comfortable.
- We envisage a church which is seen as a stable point within our local community, connecting with local organisations and reaching out to combat loneliness and low self-esteem with a message of hope.
- To achieve this, we would like to expand the activities the church offers, including activities for all age groups, especially children and young people and their families, and social events for the whole community.

Mission Priorities

To make our vision a reality, we have set out three mission priorities for the next 5 years:

- Reaching Out and Caring for each other

We reach beyond our walls to serve, listen, and work with each other, our community and the environment, ensuring that people of every age and background experience Christ's love in tangible, caring ways. (Marks of Mission: Tell, Tend, Treasure)

- Growing Together Across All Generations

We nurture meaningful relationships across all ages, offering teaching and activities that invite everyone—children, young people, and adults—to grow in faith, belonging, and service together. (Mark of Mission: Teach)

- Deepening Our Faith While Honouring Traditions

We honour our worship heritage while encouraging personal and communal spiritual growth, creating space for diverse expressions of faith to flourish in our united community. (Mark of Mission: Tend)

SMART goals

These are the short-term actions towards the delivery of our priorities which we plan to take during the vacancy. We have identified a lead person for each goal, and will ensure any financial implications are reflected in our budget.

1. Carry out a skills audit to identify which skills and talents exist within the congregation to help deliver the church's Mission Action Plan, during the vacancy and in the future.

- o Specific: This is a clearly defined task
- o Measurable: We will produce a document summarising the results of the audit once it has been completed
- o Achievable: We have the expertise within the congregation to carry out the task
- o Relevant: This supports all three of our mission priorities
- o Time bound: Will be completed in July 2025

2. Continue to encourage the congregation to collect items needed by the Nottingham Foodbank and transport donations to the food bank each week, to

ensure we are serving some of the most disadvantaged people in our local community, and sharing Christ's love with them in a tangible way.

- o Specific: This is a clearly defined task
- o Measurable: The quantity of items donated each week can be easily verified
- o Achievable: The system is already in place for the congregation to donate, and to take the donations to the food bank
- o Relevant: This supports our first mission priority: Reaching Out and Caring for each other
- o Time bound: this happens every week for as long as there is a need.

3. Hold three bring-and-share lunches in 2025, to increase a sense of belonging and unity within the congregation, and help members of all ages feel connected and cared for.

- o Specific: This is a clearly defined task
- o Measurable: We will know if we have managed to organise all three lunches, and if the feedback from the congregation is positive
- o Achievable: We have already organised one very successful bring-and-share lunch

- o Relevant: This supports our first mission priority: Reaching Out and Caring for each other
- o Time bound: Will be completed by December 2025

4. Prioritise the continuation of services and activities, such as egg-rolling and parade services, which are specifically designed to engage our children and young people.

- o Specific: This is a clearly defined task, as there has been a regular pattern of children's activities throughout the church year for some years
- o Measurable: We will know if we have managed to organise these activities at each point in the church year
- o Achievable: We have already organised a parade service for Mothering Sunday, and egg rolling on Holy Saturday
- o Relevant : This supports our second mission priority: Growing Together Across All Generations
- o Time bound: Will run until our new vicar is in post

5. Continue to organise services beyond the Sunday Eucharist at significant points during the church's year, such as during Lent and Holy Week, and at least

monthly outside these periods. This honours our worship heritage and supports personal and communal spiritual growth.

- o Specific: this is a clearly defined task

- o Measurable: We will know if we have managed to organise these activities

§ in Lent and Advent, as there has been a regular pattern of such services for some years

§ each month outside these periods.

- o Achievable: Since the vacancy began, we have already organised all the usual Lenten and Easter services, as well as a midweek Eucharist, and Taize-style prayer at two away days

- o Relevant: This supports our third mission priority: Deepening our faith while honouring traditions

- o Time bound: Will run until our new vicar is in post

Delivering this Plan

Achieving our priorities will only be possible through the prayerful action of the St Augustine's family. We recognise there are threats to us making progress on our priorities.

To manage these risks, we need to commit as individuals and as a church congregation to the priorities, not expecting someone else to take responsibility for us. We'll need to check our progress regularly, and keep everyone energised and engaged. We will therefore:

- Share this document widely with everyone who will help deliver it
- Put the MAP on each PCC agenda to track progress, and report back regularly to the wider congregation.

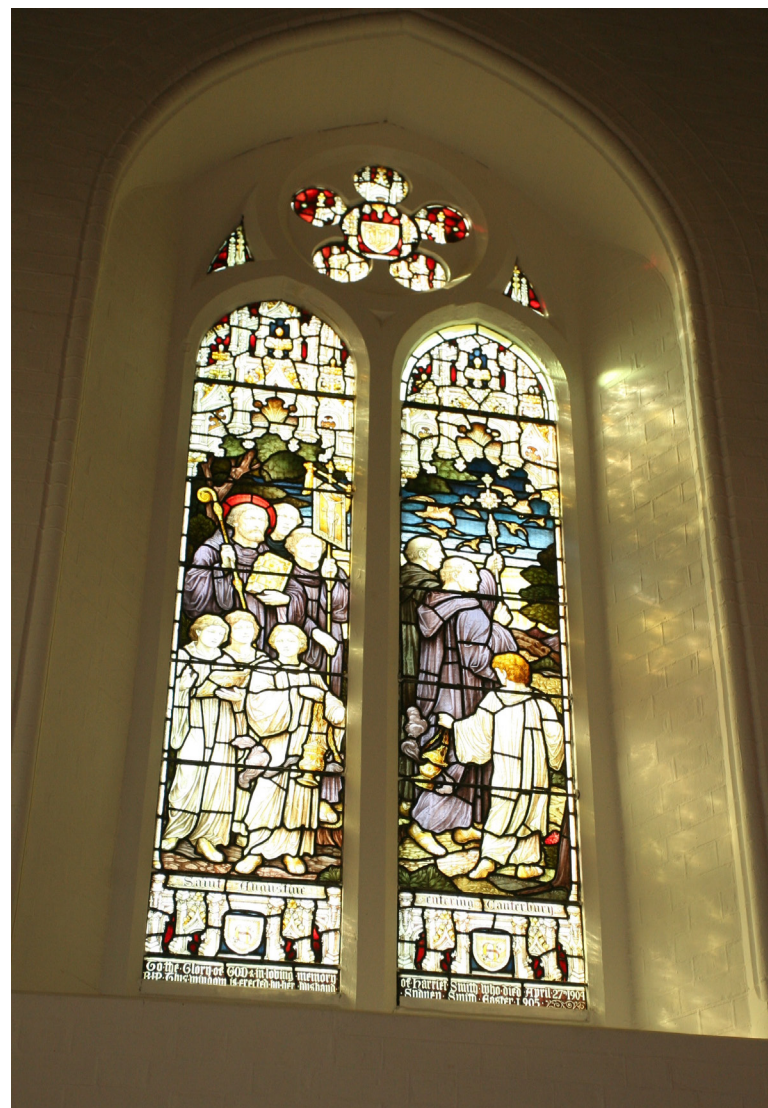
There is a concern our congregation might reduce in number, leaving a smaller core of human and other resources. We therefore want to prevent people disengaging from our church life and encourage more people to contribute their time and talents to help us meet our goals.

- Our skills audit will help with this, as will the regular bring-and-share lunches.

Although we have been learning more about developing lay leadership during the vacancy, we recognise the importance of appointing and welcoming a new

vicar who can work with us to meet our priorities and deepen our spiritual growth.

- We will review the whole plan thoroughly with our new vicar once they are in post, and set new SMART goals together, going forward.



The St. Augustine windows in church

