



Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin Rickmansworth



Serving the
whole community

Welcome

Thank you for showing an interest in becoming our next Vicar. We hope you like what you learn about us and feel called to apply for the post.

St Mary's is located in the heart of Rickmansworth in south west Hertfordshire, within the M25.

We are a dedicated and loyal congregation although most members are retired and few young families habitually worship with us. There is a strong sense of community and friendship which is reflected in a willingness and enthusiasm to embrace new projects, plus lots of fun.

We'd describe our churchmanship as 'middle of the road' with an appreciation of tradition without too much formality.

We are extremely proud of our beautiful church building which is a local landmark. We are also fortunate to have a separate hall next to the church which is used for a wide variety of church activities as well as generating income from external lettings.



The congregation is well-educated and articulate. They hold strong views which they are not afraid to express but they are generally open-minded and willing to give new things a go.

There are currently 115 people on the electoral roll.

St Mary's has registered with Inclusive Church and adopted its statement of belief.

We're looking for a vicar who can inspire and lead us forward in our worship, build up our congregation once more, develop our faith and the witness of Jesus that we share with the community.



Welcome	2
Worship at St Mary's	3
Special services	4
With whom will you be working?	5
Safeguarding	5
Our vision: serving the whole community	6
Young people	7
Older people	7
Music	8
Communications	8
Activities	9
Finance	11
Buildings	12
The Vicarage	13
Rickmansworth: the parish	14
Rickmansworth: the area	15
Looking forward	16
So, do you feel called to be our next vicar?	17



Worship at St Mary's

At the heart of our worship is the Eucharist. Our range of services includes both modern and traditional language and can be described as 'middle of the road' in churchmanship terms.

Vestments are generally worn except at our Non-Eucharistic Worship (NEW) service.

Our current pattern of services

Sundays			Average attendance 2022 (2019)
1 st , 3 rd , 4 th , 5 th	8.00am	Holy Communion (said)	12 (17)
2 nd	8.00am	Morning Prayer (BCP)	
1 st , 2 nd , 4 th , 5 th	10.00am	Holy Communion (sung)*	51 (89)
3 rd	10.00am	Non-Eucharistic Worship (NEW)* including All-age worship, Songs of Praise and Morning Prayer	
3 rd	12.15pm	Holy Communion (said)	15 (8)
Tuesday			
1 st	10.00am	Holy Communion (said)	7 (8)
2 nd -5 th	10.00am	Morning Prayer	

*Our 10.00am Sunday morning service is also broadcast via Zoom. On average, it is attended by 10-12 people each week.

It is disappointing to note that overall church attendance since COVID-19 has fallen by approximately 30%.



Lay people are involved in many aspects of our worship including reading lessons, leading intercessions, serving and administering communion (including home communion). A number of experienced people share the role of sacristan.

Our team of sidespeople focuses on giving a warm welcome to everyone who comes to our services.

The church is open during daylight hours and is well used by casual visitors.

*We would like our vicar to
embrace those who worship
at home so they feel included
in our church family*



Special services

Special occasions

- Baptisms are usually held on the last Sunday of the month (5 (2 adults, 3 children) in 2022)
- Confirmation (3 adults in 2022)
- Weddings (6 in 2022) It is our policy sympathetically to consider remarriage following divorce
- Funerals are held in church and at local crematoria (8 in church, 3 at crematoria in 2022)



Other special services

Despite being in vacancy, our Christmas services in 2022 (attendance numbers in brackets) included a Carol Service (115), Crib and Christingle Service (124), Midnight Communion (56) and two services on Christmas morning (16 at 8.00am, 55 at 10.00am).

During Lent and at Easter we usually hold a wide range of services including those on Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday Eucharist and Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. Early on Easter Sunday we join with local Christians for an informal outdoor service before our own services in church.

Other special services include our Patronal Festival in September (the feast of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary) which we often combine with social activities. We also hold an annual service in November to remember the departed.

The town's war memorial is in the churchyard where we hold a civic service on Remembrance Sunday. This is well attended (300 in 2022) by local people, representatives of a wide range of local organisations and local dignitaries. Working with the local branch of the Royal British Legion, we also have a gathering at the war memorial on Armistice Day.



With whom will you be working?

*We are looking for a strong
team leader who is able to
recognise, enable and use
the skills of others*

Staff

Karen Ellis is our extremely efficient Church Administrator. We are lucky to have her! She works 14 hours each week.

Her duties primarily include:

- Being the first point of contact with St Mary's for many people
- Dealing with all email, telephone and written correspondence
- General administration
- Church and Church Centre bookings
- Financial and statistical returns
- Drafting the weekly pew leaflet
- Compiling the quarterly service rota
- Paperwork associated with occasional offices and making sure appropriate staff are available
- Ordering church, Church Centre and office supplies
- Anything else that the vicar wants help with!



We are proud to have supported a number of people as they have explored their vocation and trained for the ministry.

We are committed to ensuring that all those who come into contact with St Mary's have a safe and positive experience.

We take safeguarding very seriously. Our Safeguarding Officer is supported by two deputy officers. Between them they implement relevant policies and carry out DBS checks on those who come into contact with young people and vulnerable adults.

There is a senior leadership Safeguarding meeting every two months, currently attended by the Lay Vice-Chair.

To date, there have not been any safeguarding incidents.

Church leadership

St Mary's has positions for three churchwardens who play an active leadership role. There are currently no churchwardens so, during the vacancy, a small team has been managing the day-to-day running of the church.

Our PCC meets five times a year. Each member is also assigned to serve on one of the sub-committees which meet in alternate months:

- Community & Outreach
- Fabric & Churchyard
- Stewardship & Finance

We have three places on Rickmansworth Deanery Synod.

A member of our congregation is on Diocesan Synod and is also Lay Chair of Rickmansworth Deanery Synod.

We recently registered as a charity and all members of the PCC are trustees of the charity.

Members of the congregation play an active role in leading various activities. See pp9–10.



Our vision: serving the whole community

We feel confident that we have set realistic, achievable goals in our MAP and are looking for someone with vision to help us reach them



Mission Action Plan

We reviewed our Mission Action Plan in 2022 and set out our vision for our future:

- To be a spiritual, prayerful and dynamic church
- To be a welcoming, inclusive and accessible church
- To be a joyful church serving the whole community

To achieve this, we established four key goals:

- Welcome and invitation
- Sound finances and teaching on generosity and giving
- Engaging youth and children's work
- Empowering and inspiring leadership



View our MAP on the
St Albans Diocese website

Young people

Disappointingly, in common with many churches, very few young families regularly worship at St Mary's and we are no longer able to run a Sunday School or our youth group. Despite this, we welcomed 40 children and 80 adults to our Crib Service in 2022 so there are certainly opportunities for growth. This aspect of our ministry features prominently in our Mission Action Plan.

However, we have recently set up a team of people to welcome young families. They will support them during services and provide a comfortable, friendly play area.

We have close links with St Mary's CofE School which has 198 children on the roll this year. The vicar is *ex officio* a governor of the school but is not the Chair.

The vicar regularly visits the school and takes assembly each week. The school holds services in the church at the beginning and end of each term.



Members of the church run an after-school sewing and craft club at the school which is currently attended by an average of 15 children each week. We also support the school in other ways whenever we can including helping at the annual summer fair and other events.

The church has strong representation on the school's governing board with the Chair, two Vice Chairs and two other parishioners on the board. The school has a clear Christian ethos and we support it and the worship leaders in the school.

Past incumbents have also established links with other schools in the area, both state and independent, who have held services in the church.

We have links with Girlguiding UK including Brownie and Guide packs who meet in the Church Centre; we would like to strengthen this connection. Local Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Sea Scouts also parade at the annual Remembrance Day Service.



We welcome opportunities to strengthen our links with pupils, their parents and staff at St Mary's School



Visit the website of St Mary's School

We are looking for a priest who is skilled at inspiring and encouraging young people and their parents

Older people



We recognise and value everyone in our congregation and strive to include them in every way we can.

For those for whom getting to church is difficult, we take communion to them at home. For those for whom life is a little lonely, we have our monthly social group and Sunday Lunch Club.

Our ministry in local care homes was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic and we have not had the resources to resume this service. There are a number of care homes within the parish, including a new one being built next to the church.

We wish to ensure we extend our ministry to older residents of the parish who are unable to get to church



Music

We enjoy our music at St Mary's and are proud to have a fine pipe organ. We employ a salaried organist who plays at our Sunday morning service at 10.00am as well as at midweek occasional services and special occasions.

Sadly, our choir has dwindled over the years and is no longer able regularly to lead the singing during services.



The oldest part of the church building, the tower, hosts a peal of ten bells. We have a number of bellringers in our congregation and frequently welcome ringers from other towers.

We hope our new vicar enjoys music and has the enthusiasm and energy to revitalise this aspect of our worship



Communications

As well as announcements at services, our main way of communicating with members of the congregation is via an e-newsletter which is sent out weekly, together with the pewsheet. Printed copies are posted to those who do not have access to email.

Our website is actively maintained by a volunteer, is comprehensive and well used.



We use social media tentatively. We used Facebook to broadcast services during the COVID-19 pandemic and recognise the importance of social media in attracting younger people to come to church.

We have previously produced a printed newsletter which we have delivered to all the homes in the parish but have found it increasingly difficult to find enough volunteers to do this.

Our church magazine ceased production in 2019 with the retirement of the editorial team.

We have begun to use ChurchSuite in the Church Office to help with maintaining records and are aware that it has additional functionality that may help us in our communications.

We are looking for someone who is a skilled communicator, both from the pulpit and via other media, who will broaden our reach in the community and the important message we wish to convey



Activities

Pastoral activities

Over the past few years we have worked to involve church members in leading pastoral activities, from taking Holy Communion to the housebound to running house and prayer groups.

We currently have two housegroups that meet monthly.

In Lent we usually run study groups which are led by members of the congregation. In 2023, more than 30 people took part in these.

We are currently setting up a new group that provides a social opportunity for fellowship and friendship, particularly for those who feel isolated or lonely.



Social activities

We enjoy getting together and spending time in each other's company.

Social activities also provide fundraising opportunities both for St Mary's and the charities we support.

Activities in 2022 included:

- Flower Festival
- Christmas Tree Festival
- Quiz suppers
- Concerts

We are also renowned for hosting community events such as celebratory picnics with parachuting teddy bears from the tower being a special highlight.



Coffee is served after Sunday and Tuesday morning services



We would like our vicar to help us develop the confidence to grow and take on leadership roles at St Mary's



St Mary's supports Fairtrade

Activities *cont'd*



Members of the congregation help maintain our buildings and green spaces



The Motley Crew gets together every so often to mount a pantomime or theatrical extravaganza (oh yes they do!)

Our social knitting and sewing group meets weekly; they are currently knitting items for babies at Watford General Hospital and blanket squares for charities



As our congregation gets older, we are seeking someone who will inspire new (and younger) members of the congregation to become involved in the varied life of St Mary's



Lads Who Lunch is our informal men's group that meets for lunch in a local hostelry each month

The monthly Sunday Lunch Club is well attended, mostly by older members of the congregation and community who enjoy a home-cooked meal and a glass or two of wine

Finance

For a few years we have been working with a deficit budget and, though we are working very hard to address this, our finances are not as robust as we would like them to be. However, the level of our reserves is relatively healthy.

We have increased our fundraising activities which have also added to the fun and fellowship we all enjoy.

We actively promote financial support through the Parish Giving Scheme and have established ways in which people may make donations online both in the church building and via our website.

We run a stewardship campaign each year, emphasising the giving of time and skills, as well as financial giving.

In 2022 our income was £174,000 and expenditure was £195,000. The parish share was £91,000. During the year we undertook repairs to the fabric of the church and church centre which account for the deficit.

We are fortunate to have a Treasurer who is a qualified management accountant.

Recent generous legacies have enabled us to undertake a number of capital projects including the installation of a new boiler and new interior and exterior lighting schemes. We have been informed that we will shortly receive a significant legacy which has been left to St Mary's for use in mission and ministerial work.

Charitable giving

Historically, we have been proud to give a percentage of our planned giving to charities (local, national and international). However, the deficit budget has meant we have had to suspend this for now. It is our intention to return to this model of giving as soon as we are prudently able.

We continue to support charities through specific activities including a Lent Lunch in aid of WaterAid and the Harvest Lunch in aid of the Bishop's Harvest Appeal. We are also represented on the local committee of Christian Aid and support Christian Aid Week each year.

Members of the congregation also support The Children's Society through home collecting boxes and part of our collections at Christmas are also given to charity.



Buildings

Church

There has been a church on the site since at least 1216. The present building is Grade II listed and dates from 1890 although the tower is dated 1630. A notable feature of the church interior is the east window, made by Morris & Company and based on designs by Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

The church is well-maintained and generally in good decorative and structural order. It is cleaned by members of the congregation.

The next Quinquennial inspection is due in 2023.

At the back of the church is a well-stocked library with a wide range of books.

The church building is kept open during the day and there are frequent visitors. Although we have not designated the building as a Warm Space, a growing number of visitors have come to the building where they know they will be warm and welcome.

The churchyard is closed and its maintenance is now the responsibility of Three Rivers District Council. There is a garden of remembrance for the interment of ashes.



We'd like to explore creative ideas to make use of the church building during the week



Church Centre

The Church Centre was opened in 1982 and comprises a large hall and kitchen, plus smaller meeting rooms upstairs.

The well-equipped Parish Office is situated in this building.

The church and Church Centre are both used for a wide range of events by St Mary's and other external organisations. A privately run nursery school hires the Church Centre during term time.



Future capital projects

We currently have plans to improve access to the church by installing an accessible ramp to the north door. This includes building a new glazed foyer with automatic doors. Plans are currently under consideration and we are working with the DAC and Church Buildings Council to agree these. It is hoped to commission the works within the next year.

We hope to be able to fund most of this project with a legacy that was left specifically for the fabric of the church.



We try and do as much maintenance ourselves as we can

The Vicarage

The Diocese of St Albans is currently in negotiation with a property company to redevelop the existing Vicarage site. This will include the building of flats and a new Vicarage.

As this project is likely to start very soon, our next Vicar will be housed temporarily in another Diocesan property in Church Street.

The photographs on this page are of the Church Street property. Plans of the new vicarage are available from our website.



View prospective plans for the new Vicarage online

Rickmansworth: the parish

The original parish was much larger than it is today, extending over Croxley Green, Moor Park, Batchworth, West Hyde, Mill End and Chorleywood. As the community grew, new parishes were formed and the Vicar of Rickmansworth is patron of two of these.

The present parish primarily comprises the town centre and the residential area to the south of the town, including the private Moor Park estate. St Mary's Church is located in the heart of the town centre.

It is classified as an urban parish and covers an area of 3.7 square miles. The population of the parish is approximately 6,254 in 2,564 households (2011 census, updated in 2018). The parish is in the top 5% of least deprived parishes in England.

Most of the residential areas of Rickmansworth are actually in other parishes. However, St Mary's has a strong identity among residents of the area and approximately 50% of the congregation live outside the parish of St Mary's.

In 1979, the congregation of the former Rickmansworth Methodist Church began to share the St Mary's Church building. Over the years the two congregations came together to form a Local Ecumenical Partnership. Sadly this came to an end in 2021 as the number of Methodist members dwindled.

We are delighted that many of the Methodist members have continued to worship at St Mary's and the spirit of ecumenism remains important to us.



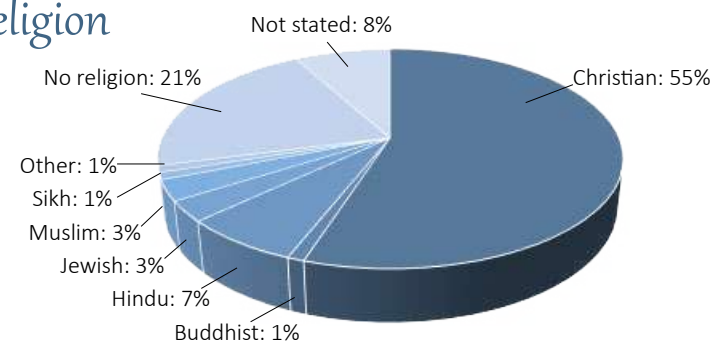
We are hoping our vicar has creative ideas to develop and build a congregation to create a vibrant community comprising people of all ages



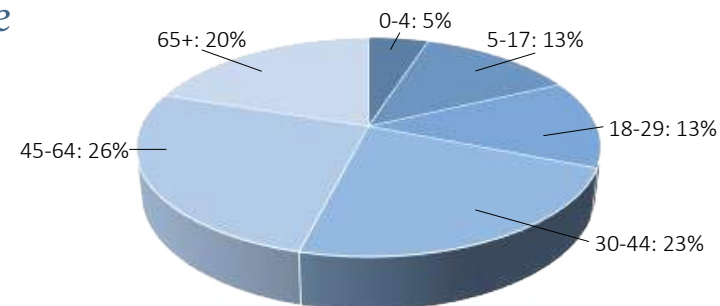
Although Churches Together in Rickmansworth is not active as an organisation in the town, the different denominations in Rickmansworth have a good dialogue and work together to promote the Christian message.

St Mary's is in the Deanery of Rickmansworth which comprises nine parishes. Deanery Synod meets three times a year as well as organising joint events such as the annual Ascension Day Service.

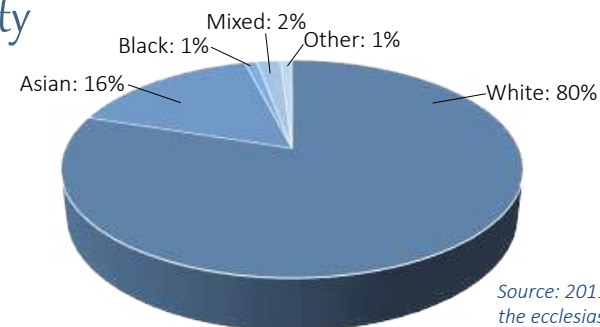
Religion



Age



Ethnicity



See a map of the parish online

Source: 2011 census for the ecclesiastical parish of Rickmansworth

Rickmansworth: the area

We're looking for someone who will encourage us to join in with community activities and help integrate St Mary's into Rickmansworth life where we can offer a stronger Christian presence



Our community

The town lies to the east of the Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; to the south is the Colne Valley Regional Park.

There is good access to London via the Metropolitan Line (TfL) and Chiltern Railways. The town is also close to major motorways (M25, M1, M40 and M4) and Heathrow Airport.

Early industry in Rickmansworth was based on the manufacture of paper and gravel-digging with the M1 of the 18th Century – the Grand Union Canal – running through the town.

As the railway network increased between the wars, the town developed as a residential area for commuters with many of the houses being built by the Metropolitan Railway Company, creating what became known as Metro-land. The excellent transport links mean that a high percentage of residents work outside the town.

Within the town centre, most of the housing consists of Victorian cottages or modern flats. Elsewhere in the parish, residential accommodation primarily comprises detached houses on substantial plots. In neighbouring parishes there is a much wider mix of housing.

The town and surrounding areas are served by Three Rivers District Council whose offices are in Rickmansworth town centre.

St Mary's has excellent relationships in Rickmansworth and participates in a number of community, civic and religious occasions including Ricky Week (held in May each year), the Rickmansworth Festival, Remembrance Sunday and the Winter Festival. The town's War Memorial is in the churchyard.



Education

In addition to St Mary's C of E Primary School (see p7), there are five other state primary schools in Rickmansworth and excellent secondary schools (state and independent) in the area.

Further education is available in Watford and there is easy access to universities locally and in London.



Leisure and recreation

Rickmansworth offers a range of leisure facilities.

Within the town centre itself is Watersmeet, a multi-purpose entertainment venue. There is also a good library.

There are a number of sporting facilities in the area including William Penn Leisure Centre, playing fields, gyms and sports clubs. Golfers are particularly well served – indeed, much of the parish is a golf course!

There are many pubs and restaurants in the town centre and surrounding area.

The Grand Union Canal runs through Rickmansworth and is the focus for an annual festival. The Aquadrome is a public park comprising a nature reserve, lakes, open grassland and woodland. It is a delightful place to walk and meet friends as there is a café and children's play area.

London and its many attractions are just a short (approx 30 minutes) train journey away.

[View a map of the area online](#)



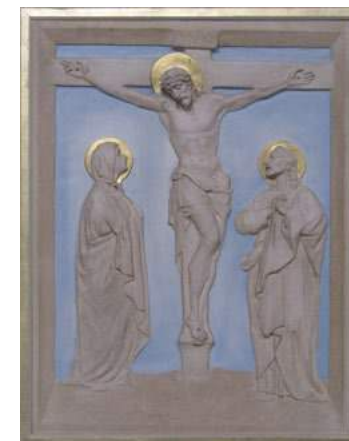
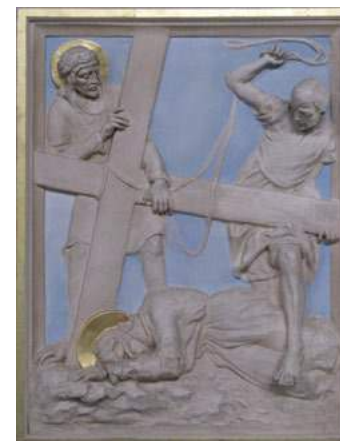
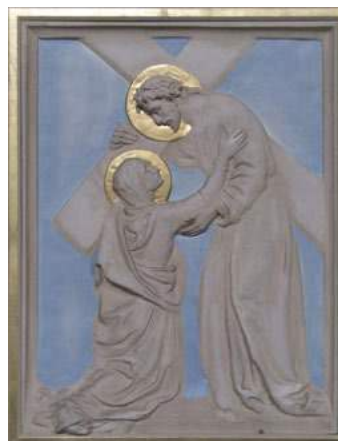
Looking forward

The congregation at St Mary's has been dwindling in recent years. Young families have grown up and few new families have joined as regular worshippers. The remaining members of the congregation are getting older and the running of church activities is falling heavily on the shoulders of a decreasing few.

However there is a positive 'can do' attitude in the church and, with a gifted motivator and leader, we have faith that we can turn this situation around and make St Mary's a thriving church once more.

As the parish church in Rickmansworth, St Mary's is a focal point for the community. It is essential that we look out beyond our four walls and re-engage with this community in effective and meaningful ways.

We believe there are considerable opportunities for outreach:
we wish to be a church that serves our whole community.



So, do you feel called to be our next vicar?

We are looking for an individual who is enthusiastic and excited at the prospect of leading us into the next phase of our journey of faith.

We expect the new vicar confidently to lead us as we promote Living God's Love in Rickmansworth.

The post is a full-time stipendiary role.

We are looking for a vicar who:

- is inclusive and able to engage with and motivate all ages with particular enthusiasm for relating to families and young people
- is community focused and able to reach out to those who may feel alienated or unwelcome
- is a prayerful, spiritual leader who will help us all to grow in faith and spirituality
- is a good delegator who knows when to be the team leader and when to be a team player, and who will invite and encourage us all to use our strengths to promote God's love in whatever way we can
- is resilient, collaborative and diplomatic with a track record of successfully introducing change in a way which brings people along with them
- has good management skills and will ensure that the church is well run and that it remains viable
- is energetic and enthusiastic with good listening and communication skills
- is committed to building a life with us and establishing strong working relationships with other churches in Rickmansworth



Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin

Church Street

Rickmansworth

Hertfordshire

WD3 1JB

01923 721002

www.stmarysrickmansworth.org.uk

Registered charity 1201244

Serving the whole community



*St Mary's Church is an
Inclusive Church*

March 2023

