

Parish Profile

The Benefice of South Mymms and Ridge

St Giles and St Margaret's



Welcome

1 Welcome

Our two churches are looking forward to welcoming our new Vicar (House for Duty) to help us fulfil our vision and hope for future growth and progress.

We are friendly communities and we want our churches to welcome in new members, and to provide Christian witness fit for the 21st Century and to serve the needs of our communities.

Our Priest will help us:

- by leading us in the Christian faith (sermons, study groups) in an accessible way, encouraging the joy of worship, in sympathy with our traditions.
- by leading us in pastoral matters, developing ministry among the congregations.
- by having an interest in children's and youth activities, continuing to develop the links with St. Giles School and young people in the villages, and
- by engaging in the two villages and promoting the mission of the church.

Our two congregations offer worship with different flavours and wish to maintain and are open to developing our traditions so we can meet the variety of ways people find fulfilment in worship: this offers you an opportunity to spread the Word to the whole community. We are looking for a strong commitment to proclaiming and interpreting the Word, joy in celebrating the Sacraments, and leading us forward in Prayer and Study.

The churches are very much part of our two villages, and you will work with the wider community, helping the churches to be visible in the life of the villages. Within the Deanery there are opportunities to share ministry with our neighbouring churches, and also with Churches Together in Potters Bar.

In return we will offer you:

Our support through prayer and in practical ways as you develop and sustain the two village communities in their Christian worship and witness.

Your expenses are paid in full, and there is a house for duty. The officers of the two PCCs are experienced in much, if not most, aspects of church administration, and provide administrative support on a voluntary basis.

Who we are

2 The Benefice

The Benefice was established in 1979, when St Giles, South Mymms became part of the Diocese of St. Albans, joining St Margaret's, Ridge, already in the Diocese. It is close to Barnet, St Albans and Hatfield. The area enjoys good transport connections to London and towns in the Home Counties, while still being a countryside area in the Green Belt.



St. Giles Church South Mymms



St. Margaret's Church Ridge

2.1 Community

The two villages are in the Borough of Hertsmere, in the County of Hertfordshire. South Mimms has a population of some 1,700, 1,200 of whom live in the village itself, as opposed to the outlying farms and other institutions. Ridge is much smaller, about 200 population.

2.2 Education

Children from both villages attend infant and primary school at St Giles Church School (as well as other schools in Potters Bar and elsewhere): www.st.giles.herts.sch.uk.

The relationship between the churches and St Giles School is close, the Priest and the PCC are represented on the Governing Body; and the Priest takes worship at the School, and the School make regular visits to St Giles for worship.

2.3 Leisure and Recreation

Although many facilities for recreation are outside the two villages, in Potters Bar, Barnet, St. Albans or further into London, the villages enjoy active community events and venues. There is now only one pub in South Mimms, The Black Horse, and one in Ridge, The Old Guinea, which offers a Pancake evening to raise funds for the two churches; and two village halls. The pubs provide food in the day and the evening. There are small parks with children's play areas in both villages.

Who we are

3 Worship

St Margaret's morning service is at 9.15, whether Holy Communion or (second Sundays) Morning Prayer BCP. St Giles' morning service is at 11.00, normally Sung Eucharist. The Priest takes School services weekly in School and in Church: this has been maintained during the Vacancy. Both churches use Common Worship, and also All Age services adapted for each season. The previous Curate-in-Charge initiated an experimental shortened All Age Service with Communion, followed by refreshments on the first Sunday each month for the two congregations together, alternating between St. Giles and St. Margaret's, at 10.00.

Lent is marked by services and study groups in collaboration with other local churches: a full range of observance takes place in Holy Week. On Remembrance Sunday both churches hold an Act of Worship at the War Memorial in South Mimms, attended by large numbers, followed by the British Legion Service in St. Giles. Harvest Festival is celebrated in conjunction with the School with gifts from church and school distributed locally afterwards.



For Holy Communion St Giles uses vestments, bells and candles, while St Margaret's has a plainer church tradition, broadly in the middle of the Anglican spectrum. People from either village will go to the other village's church, according to their preference, and a few will alternate between the two to suit their particular spiritual needs at different times. Thus the Benefice as a whole offers a wide range of practice to the community at large. Attendance is between 20 and 30 at both churches each week (up to 15 at St. Giles and 12 at St. Margaret's). These figures rise significantly for services with Baptisms, and at major festivals, weddings and funerals. The age of the congregations is relatively high, though young parents with their children attend at both churches. Children from the School regularly read on Mothering Sunday, at Harvest Festivals and Carol Services.

Who we are

3 Worship

In 2025 there were 4 funerals, 1 wedding and 2 baptisms between the two parishes. Both churches have open churchyards, though they may need to be closed in the near future. Burials are limited to residents of the parishes or on the electoral rolls, or with strong links. Both churchyards have space for the burial of ashes.

St Giles has a unique service dating from the 17th century, the Bread Service on Christmas Eve, one of the best attended services of the year, attracting most residents of both villages, and is very popular with children and their families. Both churches also offer Carol Services at Christmas, and share in the Black Horse Sermon on Good Friday evening, held in the Black Horse pub, South Mimms (like the Bread Service, this is unique to St. Giles, instituted in the last century by the Vicar: "If they won't come to the church, the church will go to them!").

The music is traditional Anglican. Child friendly hymns feature at Family Services. Each church has an organ, and both churches have also purchased a Hymnal Plus machine in case there is no organist.



Who we are

4 Pastoral and Ecumenical

The links with the School afford the Vicar an important opportunity for ministry, being ex officio a School Governor. St. Giles PCC also appoints three School Governors.

Pastoral visits are essential. Lay support for pastoral work is minimal but could be developed. There are no Readers or other formally recognised officiants, apart from those authorised to administer the chalice at Communion.

St. Giles holds Open Church Tuesday Teas (2.00-5.00 pm) with a regular and growing attendance from the villages, and visitors. Both churches are open for the Bike 'n Hike event in September, and on a number of other occasions. A feature of both churches is the attractiveness of their churchyards, places for quiet and beauty. Both have public footpaths through them: the St. Giles churchyard has an abundant diversity of wild plants and flowers. Both churches receive grants from Hertsmere BC to help maintain the churchyards.



Both churches have restricted funds which have been given for Mission and Outreach. These have been used for supporting children and families, churchyard maintenance, the purchase of audio and visual equipment and provision of the kitchen and toilets at St Giles.

Both churches give a proportion of collections and donations to charities nominated by the PCCs and use their regular and special collections to enable Mission giving (Bishop's Harvest Appeal, British Legion Fund, local Hospices, and overseas Missions). St. Giles PCC supports Fairtrade purchasing for coffee and tea after services, and has moved its CBF investments into the Ethical rather than the Income Fund.

Who we are

4 Pastoral and Ecumenical

Both churches distribute their Harvest gifts to local residents and Food Banks. Christmas collections go to “Save the Children”, and Remembrance service collections go to the British Legion. Christian Stewardship is practised at both churches through envelopes and gift aid, now collected monthly via standing orders.

The relationship with other churches in the Potters Bar area is good. The clergy meet regularly and may agree to exchange duties. This helps to enable them to provide cover during holidays. Both churches have welcomed clergy from the rest of Potters Bar as well as Readers when the Priest has been on leave. Churches Together in Potters Bar is represented by a member of St Giles, and there have been occasions for sharing ministry between the churches. St. Giles hosts regular Saturday Breakfast Prayers for members from Churches Together. Both churches welcome members of other Christian churches to take Communion, and there are representatives of other denominations who regularly worship at each church.



Who we are

5 Communications

The two parishes share a bi-monthly magazine, the Parish Paper, produced by the churches, which is funded from advertising. It contains church and community news, together with articles both informative and entertaining. It is distributed free to every household and to people linked with the churches, but living further away. Both churches are represented on A Church Near You. The Website for both churches is www.stgiles_stmargarets.co.uk

6 Leadership

The Churchwardens at St. Giles and a Lead Team from the St. Margaret's PCC take the lead in organising events. They provide administrative cover for the parishes for the Vicar, given that the appointment is only half time, so that your leadership in pastoral matters can be most effectively used.

7 Ministerial Team

There are no other members of the Ministerial Team, lay, or ordained. Given the proximity and good relationships with Potters Bar churches, and with churches in the rest of the Barnet Deanery, and adjacent Deaneries, there is reasonable support at hand for parishes of this size. There is good support from the Area Dean and the Archdeacon.

8 Electoral Roll

Currently there are 17 on the electoral roll of St Giles, of whom 8 are resident in the parish. There are 13 on the electoral roll of St Margaret's of whom 4 are resident in the parish.

9 Organisations

Both churches have people who change altar frontals, prepare the sanctuary for worship and process the Gospel book, one of whom is a member of the Company of Servers. A band of Bellringers rings for services at St. Margaret's and occasionally St. Giles, where they practise. They hope to recruit members so that ringing at St. Giles may resume full-time.

Who we are

10 Buildings

St Giles' is a Grade 1 listed building built between 12th and early 16th centuries and attracts visitors throughout the year. In 2011 the base of the tower was converted to include a kitchen and a fully accessible toilet with the north aisle being re-ordered in 2017 to allow a flexible space.

St Margaret's, built in the 14th century, is in good repair and it's six bells were re-hung on a new metal frame for the millennium.

Both churches now use the same Inspecting Architect and recent quinquennial reports made a few major recommendations for essential works to both churches. Working parties provide basic housekeeping for the inside of the church and for the churchyard, with contractors maintaining both churchyards thanks to grants received from Hertsmere Borough Council.

At Ridge there is an independent Village Hall beside the church, used by St Margaret's on occasions (e.g. Quiz evenings). St Giles has made use of the South Mimms Village Hall and the School for meetings, but with the addition of a toilet, a kitchen and storage in 2011, the church is now able to be used for meetings, concerts and other village events.



Who we are

11 Finance

Both Churches have a Treasurer and St. Giles also has a Financial Correspondent who deals with the CCLA for investments. The latest audited accounts for both churches are attached. Currently both are able to live “within their means”, but need to be very careful with their funds. The annual Parish Shares are currently £7,646 for St Giles and £4,163 for St Margaret’s. In addition both churches enjoy sums invested from benefactions, as noted above (Pastoral and Ecumenical). In addition to collections in services donations are encouraged by Standing Order and Direct Debit.

12 Expenses of office

The Vicar’s expenses are paid in full, and there is a house for duty. It is situated in a quiet cul-de-sac in South Mymms (EN6 3PG), on the Ridge side of the village, so more or less between both communities. There is access to the Vicar’s study, separate from the rest of the house, which has 4 bedrooms; the garden looks across the fields towards Ridge. In addition, the churches reimburse the expenses of visiting priests in accordance with Diocesan practice. These, together with other joint expenses, are shared between the two parishes on a roughly 50/50 split.



St Giles and St Margaret's

Who we are

13 Strengths and weaknesses

A number of strengths have been noted above:

- The diverse and inclusive nature of both parishes, together and individually.
- The strong, supportive and friendly community spirit of the villages.
- Designation of St. Giles as a Warm Space for its Open Church Tuesday Teas.
- The beauty of the churches and their attractive rural setting.
- St. Giles School, and its links with the Church.
- The mixed nature of the community, and its relationships with, and proximity to, neighbouring communities and centres of population.
- Communications to London and the rest of the region.
- The support offered by clergy in Potters Bar and the Barnet Deanery.

Weaknesses include:

- The high age profile of both congregations: work needs to be done to reinforce a sustainable worshipping community in the 21st century.
- Congregations are not large, and need to grow.
- Finances and stewardship, while stable, need careful monitoring.

These are small country parishes: this is their charm, but also their challenge. BUT – In the words of one of the St. Margaret's Team, a regular contributor to the Parish Paper, addressing you, the applicant:

“As a person moving to live as well as work in a village, you should be sure that the area will suit the life style you want. The first thing you might notice at first glance is the quiet and peacefulness of both villages (except when the children arrive and leave St Giles School). Indeed if you stand at the back of St. Margaret's and look across the fields, or in the leafy shades of St. Giles Churchyard, it's hard to realise that you are less than 20 miles from the centre of London. There are good connections to St. Albans in one direction and to Potters Bar in the other, for shops, and entertainment, and to London. The villages are also only minutes away from the junction of the M25 and A1M. So here is your opportunity: the joy of being part of a village community, the friendly welcome of the congregations, but also the challenge of increasing the congregations at both Churches and the certain knowledge that you will have the full support of the two PCCs.”

May 2026

Appendices

1 OUR MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS

Our Vision is

To be churches for our multigenerational community, who gather in the church building as a place of prayer and walk in the path of discipleship together.

Our Values

1. Welcoming
2. Outward looking
3. Caring
4. Understanding
5. Tolerant

Our priorities are

1. Children and Families
2. Warm Welcome
3. Community Engagement

In the light of these priorities our goals are

1 Lead regular assemblies and collective worship at St Giles primary school on a Wednesday.

- Provide regular worship for the school at the St Giles Church on a Monday.
- Increasingly involve other church members at our church in the ministry to the school.

2 Develop our welcome and think about ways of becoming more welcoming to newcomers.

- Invite families connected to the church to special services / festivals throughout the year.
- Improved access to the church building in conjunction with DAC and church architect.



3 Continue and sustain Open Church Tuesdays.

- Strengthen our relationship with local community groups by building connections with the school/church community.
- Loving and serving the community and supporting life events.