

The Parish of Eaton Bray with Edlesborough

Dunstable Deanery

Archdeaconry of Bedford

Thank you for exploring the possibility of becoming our new vicar. We hope this profile will help to give you a realistic sense of who we are: a parish with deep roots, living in hope and expectation, with a shared desire to flourish in faith and community.



Please continue reading and visit our website:

www.stmaryseatonbray.org.uk/

Our Parish in brief:

The Parish of Eaton Bray with Edlesborough, is a rural parish on the edge of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; it is made up of four villages, two large and two small. We have a parish church (Eaton Bray), a district church (Dagnall) and a closed church (Edlesborough).

There is one PCC and a manageable service schedule. Lay people assist in worship, and help with many practical and administrative tasks. We recognise that churches are for the whole community and Eaton Bray Church is open daily for visits and prayer.

We have talked a lot about the future and reflected on the needs of our parish, the forward steps we have taken in recent years, how we can build on these, and the qualities our new vicar might need to lead us on that journey.

We are ready for our next chapter and are looking forward to welcoming a priest who will help us on that journey.

What excites us:

- A congregation that is increasing, with genuine enthusiasm for the future.
- A warm, united church family drawn from different traditions.
- Strong lay-led prayer groups.
- A church that serves its community in many distinct and effective ways.
- A developing relationship with local schools that offers real potential for future growth.

Our shared hopes:

Together with our new vicar, we hope to:

- make Jesus known more widely across our villages
- grow in number, depth of prayer, and confidence in faith
- enrich our worship — diversifying styles of worship to reflect the breadth of traditions within the Anglican church
- strengthen our ministry with children and families, building on the work already happening in our schools

We hope our new Vicar will:

- enjoy building warm, pastorally-sensitive relationships across a whole community
- communicate easily with clarity, warmth and confidence
- love teaching, preaching and nurturing faith
- lead collaboratively and encourage others to use their gifts
- feel called to engage with schools, families and younger generations
- be excited by the challenge and opportunity of broadening our age demographic
- be ever mindful to offer accessible entry points to newcomers
- enjoy a deep, dynamic and prayerful relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ

What we offer you:

- A welcoming, caring congregation with a desire to grow
- A united, loyal and open-minded PCC
- Strong lay leadership and ministerial support
- Churches in good condition, with modern facilities and flexible spaces
- A healthy Fabric Fund and well-managed finances
- A parish that values its vicar and wants them to flourish
- A clear mission field among children, families and school communities

Safeguarding

The PCC and congregation are committed to offering a welcoming and safe environment to all who attend our churches. We understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and it is on the agenda at every PCC meeting. Our Parish Safeguarding Officer keeps us up to date with training and information, supported by a proactive and helpful safeguarding team at the diocesan offices.

If what you have read so far seems attractive to you, please read on.

Our Churches

St Mary the Virgin, Eaton Bray

St Mary's is a beautiful 13th-century church with remarkable architectural features. It is the Parish Church and has been lovingly cared for, with no major building concerns and a healthy Fabric Fund. Although Grade I listed, St Mary's is adaptable for 21st-century worship and community life. We have:

- a small office and accessible toilet in a modern extension
- a kitchen-in-a-cupboard in the north aisle
- Wi-Fi to live-stream services and enable online gifting
- a portable altar for nave worship
- flexible seating which can be rearranged for a variety of different service and events
- a new lighting system

All Saints Church, Dagnall

All Saints', Dagnall, was built in 1863 as a Chapel of Ease to St Mary's, Edlesborough. It is now a District Church within the parish of Eaton Bray with Edlesborough. It is run by a Management Committee and two District Wardens who are members of the PCC. It has a kitchen, toilet and ample meeting space and has had significant renovation in recent years. Although there is small regular congregation, it is still at the heart of the village and well-loved and supported at Festival services and social events.

Dagnall has the one Church of England Primary School in the parish.

St Mary the Virgin, Edlesborough

This Church was closed in 1975 and is now administered and maintained by the Churches Conservation Trust. There is a group of Friends which helps care for the church and churchyard, and which organises events. A popular Carols by Candlelight service led by the Vicar, is held at Christmas; there is scope to hold up to six services a year.

Parish liturgical tradition

Our worship centres on the celebration of Holy Communion. We use Common Worship and vestments are usually worn. We fully embrace the ministry of women in all areas of church life.

On the third Sunday, Café Church at Eaton Bray, is a non-communion service with discussion and interaction.

Our congregation includes a significant number from non-Anglican Christian traditions, and we value the richness this brings.

Sunday Services

Eaton Bray

- 8.00 am, Holy Communion (said) 1st & 3rd Sundays: attendance: 8-12
- 10.00 am, Parish Sung Eucharist; attendance: 45-60+. Coffee is served after the service.
- 10.00 am, Café Church with coffee and croissants is held on the 3rd Sunday: attendance: 30-35.

Dagnall

- 10.30 am, 3rd Sunday only, Holy Communion: attendance: 8-10

Weekday Services

- 10.00 am, Wednesday, Holy Communion with short address followed by coffee and fellowship. Attendance: 10-15.
- Home Communion is offered to the sick and infirm.

Annual services

Special services are held during Advent, Christmastide, Holy Week, on Ash Wednesday and Ascension Day. On Remembrance Sunday, in addition to the traditional service at the War Memorial, a service remembering the Departed is held in church.

Other worship & Bible study

- Eaton Bray church is open daily and prayer materials are made available to give visitors the opportunity to encounter God in the quiet of his house.

- Prayer and Praise, Prayer Matters and Pathlight are three well attended lay-led home groups, each with its own style and focus.

Music

- We have a 2-manual pipe organ built by Peter Collins in 1991, located in a gallery in the tower.
- We are very fortunate that our organist is a former organ and choral scholar at Cambridge and experienced choral director and recitalist. If wished, he will collaborate on the choice of hymns.

Ministerial Support

- Amongst our congregation, we have two retired priests with the Bishop's permission to officiate, also one Reader Emeritus, one Reader in training (to be licensed September 2026) and two Lay Leaders of Worship.
- Many members of the congregation participate on rotas to read Lessons, lead intercessions and act as chalice assistants and sides-people. Two lay people have permission to take Holy Communion to the sick. There is a pastoral support group and a small team of baptism visitors. The Church has one churchwarden and an experienced sacristan/verger.

The Parochial Church Council

- The PCC consists of 16 members, all committed and active in managing the churches. It meets regularly; some meetings are held virtually, especially in the winter months. We try to keep a balance of business and pastoral matters at meetings and to look objectively at our church.
- See our [Annual Report](#) to the APCM

Statistics

[Diocesan Statistics](#) – search for Eaton Bray with Edlesborough

- Electoral Roll (2026): 120
- Christmas Eve & Christmas Day attendance (2025): 426
- Christmas communicants (2025): 63
- Easter Day attendance (2026): 100
- Easter communicants (2026): 61
- October count (2025) average attendance over 4 weeks: 63
- Weddings (2024/25 average): 3
- Baptisms (2025): 3
- Funerals, including cremations & burials of ashes. (average): 15

The North Chilterns Group of Parishes

Our parish is a member of the North Chilterns Group of Parishes (NCG), a great source of clerical and congregational support. It came into being about 40 years ago and is made up of three benefices. Each benefice has a full time vicar.

There are joint services at different times of the year and Confirmation candidates from all the parishes learn about their Faith together. The NCG also runs a well-attended joint Lent Course.

Churches Together in the Parish

Representatives of the various Churches and Chapels in the parish (Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and Salvation Army), meet as 'Churches Together'. The committee organises events to strengthen and support Christian witness in the parish. These include a service in the week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Pancakes & Prayer on Shrove Tuesday, an annual open air 'Hymns on the Green', and greetings cards with times of services at Christmas and Easter to every home in the villages.

Community Life & Outreach

Our churches are woven into village life. Many events raise funds, but their deeper purpose is connection, hospitality and witness.

The following events are held regularly:

- Edlesborough Village Carnival, a major community and fund-raising event, is held on Edlesborough Green on the first Saturday of July.
- Parish Lunches for those who might otherwise be alone,
- Coffee Mornings are held in church on the first Saturday of the month, which attracts 80-100 people.
- A Christmas Fair with craft stalls is held in November.
- Open Gardens in June.
- Music@St Mary's afternoon concerts reflect a variety of musical tastes.

We also host:

- weekly Beavers meetings
- a popular Book Swap
- a model railway exhibition each November

These events make our churches places where communities meet, and we hope to do more.

Communications

A free community magazine called [Focus](#), which developed from the church magazine, is distributed monthly to every household in the Parish. The Vicar writes a monthly letter, which offers a means of communicating with the wider Parish.

Most Sunday services are live-streamed and posted on our website and You Tube.

St Mary's has an excellent [website](#) which gives a good insight into our parish life. We also have a [Facebook](#) page and make use of modern technology for meetings and other purposes.

Finance

Our reserves are healthy with £80k in historic endowments and £149k in restricted and designated funds to support and maintain the fabric. Our general fund, supporting the day-to-day activities of the Church stands at £12k.

Of course, the annual budget needs careful management to keep expenditure within income but we are just about managing to do so.

General information about the four villages

Population and housing:

The four villages, Eaton Bray, Edlesborough, Northall and Dagnall, have a combined population of about 5500. The housing stock is mostly modern but many older farmhouses and cottages still exist having been modernised and extended. Some small new developments with a range of housing types including affordable houses, continue to be built.

Village halls and sporting activities:

Each village has a hall to hire for private or community events and where villagers can join a wide range of clubs and societies. Each also has a village green with children's play equipment and in the two larger villages there are opportunities to play, cricket, football and tennis. Edlesborough also has a new sports pavilion which is used for community activities as well as by local sports clubs.

Shops and businesses:

Together, the villages have a surprising variety of shops and businesses. You can buy a bicycle, a bunch of flowers, a washing machine and fish and chips as well as everyday groceries, all without leaving the parish! To eat out there is a choice of an Indian restaurant, a café, Edlesborough Pavilion and four pubs, as well as a Chinese takeaway.

Schools:

There are three primary schools in the parish, [Dagnall VA Church of England School](#), [Eaton Bray Academy](#) and [Edlesborough Academy](#),

Dagnall school became a Church of England school in 2015 and has grown from 21 children to over 70. The Vicar is ex officio, a member of the governing board and several members of the congregation are governors or volunteers. The children visit Dagnall church for festivals and special events. It received a Good rating from Ofsted two years ago and an excellent report in this year's SIAMS inspection.

There are also close links with Eaton Bray Academy, each class visits the church every term and we support staff in delivering the RE curriculum. This is a developing connection, much valued on both sides.

At age 11, children move to secondary schools in various directions. There are three grammar schools in Aylesbury, which retains the selective system and many comprehensive schools in Wing, Leighton Buzzard and Dunstable. Dunstable which is the nearest town, has two Church of England comprehensive schools.

Employment:

Local businesses, shops and schools employ small numbers of people, but most employment opportunities are outside the community in the neighbouring towns of Luton, Dunstable, Hemel Hempstead, Leighton Buzzard and Milton Keynes or of course, London. There is also an increasing number of self-employed people who offer a wide variety of services to residents.

The Vicarage

The comfortable and private four bedroomed Vicarage, purpose built in 1975, is situated across the High Street from Eaton Bray Church.

Outside, there is a double garage, greenhouse and large shed. The garden has some fine trees and shrubs and although large, it has been well maintained in recent years. The perimeter of the garden is left as a natural area.

We believe this is a parish full of possibility, a place which could offer you, opportunity and the prospect of a happy and fulfilled ministry.

We warmly invite you to visit and discover whether this is the place to which God is calling you.

Contact: churchwarden@stmaryseatonbray.org.uk



View of Ivinghoe Beacon from St Mary's, Eaton Bray

Parish Life



Vicarage & St Mary's

