

St Francis Church
You're welcome here



The service will start shortly



Lead Minister

St Francis Church, Valley Park

A Local Ecumenical Partnership between CofE, Methodist & URC churches



DIOCESE of
WINCHESTER

Eastleigh Deanery

Church Profile



St Francis Church
you're welcome here

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St Francis Church is a living, dynamic fellowship, putting faith in Jesus at the heart of all we do.

WELCOME!

Welcome to this Church and Parish Profile and Role Description.

St Francis' Church Valley Park is a Local Ecumenical Partnership, between the Church of England, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church; this means that St Francis' constitutes the missional and worshipping presence of all three denominations.



St Francis is a Single-Congregation Partnership which means that there aren't three lots of everything to do; three lots of services, three lots of committees or three lots of paperwork. Where possible we do it once and we do it as well as we can, and it is seldom that we have to duplicate anything.

In fact, once you've got used to a few distinctive things about ecumenical life, and realised what wonderful freedom an LEP can offer, you probably won't find that leading at St Francis is that different to leading in many other churches of whichever is your own home denomination.

The person appointed to the role of Lead Minister in St Francis will be welcomed and celebrated by all three denominations and will represent all three denominations – **a minister of one and a minister of all**. More than that, they will be free to draw upon the strengths of us all, consciously promoting our shared life and mission, and fostering the breadth of welcome and partnership that has become such a hallmark of St Francis' Church.

Welcome!



DIOCESE of
WINCHESTER

Rt. Rev'd Rhiannon King
Bishop of Southampton



Rev'd Rachel Bending
Chair, Southampton District



Rev'd Dr. Michael Hopkins
Moderator, Wessex Synod



In this profile we'll take you through our vision, life, work and ministry across the church, the people who make it the special place it is, and something about our local area. We have a great affection for this place, not just because of what we are but also because of what we see God doing here and the potential for what He can do for others, through us. We're blessed to live in this area, and we're blessed with an active and committed congregation who are happy to take responsibility and use their many skills in the service of the church. With all of this in mind, we're seeking a Lead Minister who will take us into the next chapter of our journey. The two key parts to that will be driving new forms of inclusive outreach to our community and supporting spiritual growth within the fellowship. If that might be you, read on!

You'll see that we're a Local Ecumenical Partnership of CoFE, Methodist and URC, which means that this role is open to ministers from any of these churches, and we draw our style from each (and beyond). As the only church in Valley Park, we hold our denominational roots lightly and warmly welcome those of all church backgrounds and none.

So turn over and find out more – and know that we are praying for you as you explore the next steps in your ministry!



What the congregation and local community say about our church

OUR VISION

Vision: Realising Jesus in our church and community

Our vision is to be a community where lives are changed by the love of Jesus. It is to be a church devoted to spiritual and church growth, fellowship, outreach and to seeing Valley Park encounter the transforming message of the Gospel, and God's love and Kingdom in all our lives.

Mission:

To fulfil this vision, we are continuously exploring our:

Relationship with God

Through all facets of church life we will encourage our congregation to deepen their relationship with God, and reflect that relationship across our daily lives. We will seek opportunities for those inside and outside the church to meet the living God, understand the love and sacrifice of Jesus, and experience the saving power of the Holy Spirit. We will also support members who are called to explore lay or ordained ministry.

We desire to know and love God and his son Jesus more, and for this to be continually worked out in the life of our church. Our new minister will be someone who seeks that for themselves and has the passion to lead all others to it as well.

Relationship with one another

We will reflect our relationship with God in relations between us, seeking to bless and serve all who encounter our fellowship, without discrimination. We will do this in services and home groups, but also in events, shared meals and wider opportunities, open to all.

We embrace our reputation for sharing with each other, and will plan new ways to do this meaningfully across the year. Our new minister will be someone who also embraces modelling our love of God by loving our neighbour, and leads us in doing so.

Relationship with our Community

We believe we are called to be a beacon of hope in our community, founded on God's love – and that we are to be salt and light, bringing perspective, purpose and direction in a world that increasingly lacks these. We will use our central location to be central to the life of our parish and those who live here.

We seek to put more into mission outside our walls, meeting people where they are to show the love of God in practical ways, and lead them to find faith and hope. Our new Minister will be someone who shares this desire and has the skills and courage to lead us in pursuing it.



LIFE AT ST. FRANCIS CHURCH

Worship

We are blessed to have many within the church who assist our worship in music, leadership, teaching, and prayers. Our styles of worship reflect the variety of our church membership, and we use a wide range of accessible service formats which are based around the CoFE, Methodist, and URC liturgies, and beyond. Going forward we believe we need to maintain and possibly expand the scope of our services and worship, while exploring additional times and different styles to enhance our praise and experience and to increase accessibility.

The 10.00am Sunday Service is our main service with a cycle of formats across the month, and we also have an 8.30am Said Communion. We also hold a monthly Communion service on a Monday lunchtime. Our Communion Services are ecumenical with all being invited to take part, and we usually use small cups for the wine.

We hold worship at our local residential care home Brendoncare, led by the Curate and a member of our congregation who holds BCM. Communion is celebrated monthly there, and we also lead an annual Remembrance Day and Christmas Service of Lessons and Carols, with residents being involved in readings. This is an important outreach to us; some of our members have moved here in recent years, and from feedback we know that these services are much appreciated by residents.



It is exciting that Lay leadership of our worship has been growing over recent years, with people being awarded BCM in Worship, Bishop's Permission to Preach, one person currently completing the LLM course and another already ordained and being priested in June 2025; we would like to continue to encourage lay leadership in this way.



We recognise that not all who would like to can attend in person, so main services go out [live on Zoom](#), with recordings posted on YouTube and our [website](#). Zoom allows the remote congregation to actively participate, and through the gallery view they have a sense of community. Every few weeks our service is broadcast live across Hampshire and the internet by [Outreach Radio](#), a local station we work with closely. We have a strong and committed AV team, which helps involve some of our young people in services.

Further details of our patterns and frequency of worship, attendances, etc. are in [Appendix – Pattern of Services](#) page 20.

Junior Church and Messy

Children and Families are a key priority in the life and work of St Francis Church. We are pleased to have funded a part-time Children and Families Minister for three years, beginning in February 2023. Hannah has made a huge impact and is continuing to grow our offering to young people and their families.

Hannah leads an incredible group of volunteers, many of whom are part of more than one team for Children's Ministry. We run a Sunday Morning Junior Church of up to 15 regular attendees and growing. The children enjoy games, discussions, Bible stories, and crafts based on series such as The Parables, The Fruit of the Spirit and 'What is God like?' Messy Church is once a month, where between 25 and 50 children and their families attend. This draws in people who don't come to our other services. Christmas and Easter are particularly popular, but it is a thriving Ministry all year round due to exciting crafts, Messy activities, Bible stories, songs, creative prayers...and always cake!



Footprints Group

Hannah works with the team at **Wednesday Café** each week where she meets with parents, grandparents and carers of St Francis school children, some of whom are also regular Messy Church attendees. This is a brilliant opportunity to come alongside these families, chat and laugh with them, but also listen and support where needed.

We are thrilled that over the last 18 months Hannah has developed the **Footprints Group** for under-fives with additional needs. Footprints runs weekly and provides play, craft, stories and songs for the children along with support, tea and cake for their parents and

carers. Whilst this is not a faith-based endeavour, we have seen some crossover of attendees amongst our other children's ministries. The group embodies St Francis Church's mission of inclusivity and wellbeing.

Collaborating with St Francis CofE School is also a significant part of the mission of St Francis Church. Hannah plans and leads regular collective worship for the children of the School. The children enjoy coming over to the church for worship and are all always attentive and eager to participate. In addition, we hold special Christmas, Easter and Leavers' Services for the children and their families. In the last year, Hannah has led activities at nearby Knightwood School, also in the Parish, holding a Q&A session with Year 3 about the Bible, and participating in their Interfaith Day teaching about Love in Christianity. Building a relationship with this school is something we're keen to develop.



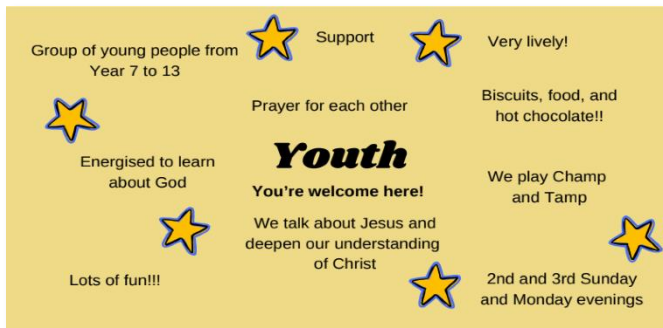
Junior Church



Messy Craft at Valley Park Life Festival

Youth

We have around 15 dedicated teenagers who get together on Monday evenings, and twice a month on Sunday mornings, to have fun together, eat a lot of snacks, ask questions, and learn about God. We take most of our material from Energize and have also done Youth Alpha, which they engaged with very enthusiastically. The group is growing, and we would love to see grow further so that more teenagers can have the knowledge of God's love and guidance before they venture out into the big wide world!



The teenagers put together this poster to tell you how they see their group.



Youth Group on a Monday evening

Music

St Francis' Church enjoys a wide variety of sung worship, enabled by a large and talented group of musicians and singers with a broad range of instruments. We have a rota of pianists who generally choose music and lead during our 10am and seasonal services. Every service includes one traditional hymn and at least one recent worship song, with new songs introduced regularly. Our musical style follows the cycle of services across the month.

We love to lead the congregation as we worship God together, and to work with service leaders in sensing the leading of the Holy Spirit during our services.



Some of the Music Group

Outreach

We want to do more! There is more we could be doing to share the love of Christ with others beyond our walls, and this mission within the wider community is a key priority for us and something we want the new Minister to actively lead us in. In our recent consultation, the response of one church member reflected much of what the other 80+ said, and sums up our passion and vision – and gaps – perfectly, so on the next page we share it with you in full:-

Through the sermon series studying 1 Thessalonians, I have been asking myself what would Paul write about St Francis?

I think he would write about our compassion, and he might write that he need say nothing more about that, because our works of compassion are well known.

If people of Valley Park were dying without food, we would be appalled. It would not be OK. And we support the Basics Bank.

If people in Valley Park were dying of homelessness, we would be appalled. It would not be OK. And we support Fledge.

If people in Valley Park were dying of loneliness or despair, we would be appalled. It would not be OK. And we have the Cafes. And the Chaplaincy.

If people in Valley Park were dying in slavery, we would be appalled. It would not be OK. And we have supported Stop the Traffic and now IJM.

If people in Valley Park could not come to church because of extra needs, we would be appalled. It would not be OK. And we are a roof-breaker church. We have modified our building. We have Footprints.

If people in the world will die because of climate change we are appalled. It is not OK. And we are acting to make our church more carbon efficient, and supporting A Rocha.

If people in Valley Park are dying without knowing Jesus, does that break our hearts in the way that all the other things do?

We have people all over the church who give selflessly in so many ways to ensure there is compassion. We discover needs, and they move us to action. And all those acts of compassion are Godly works.

But the sight of so many in our community who do not know Jesus does not hurt us in the same way. It does not disrupt our comfort in the way that hunger, or homelessness, or loneliness, or despair, or disability have done. It does not drive us to the same intensity of action. And yet not knowing Jesus is the overwhelming disadvantage that affects more people in our community than any of the other disadvantages that we work so hard to address.

Some work in telling Valley Park about Jesus is there, but we must be realistic and admit that it barely scratches the surface of the need. We have people who have learned the skills and actions of compassion because they were shown the need and were moved to act.

So what does our church need in a minister? We need someone whose heart compels them to tell others about Jesus, and who will teach, lead and grow the church to do the same. Rom 10v14: How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? Matt 9v35-38: Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and illness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'

Consultation response – church member

WE'RE AN LEP – WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO US?

At St Francis we are privileged to be a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP), representing the denominations of the Church of England, the Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church. We worship as one congregation and many of our members describe themselves as non-denominational. Our Lead Minister will be welcomed by, and represent, all three denominations. Together, we are one Church in Christ.

Our unique identity gives us a diverse church family, connecting Christians from different backgrounds. We feel freedom in our worship, able to welcome different ways of doing things with a variety of worship forms and expression. We appreciate the richness of each denomination, blending elements from all to match the character of our congregation.

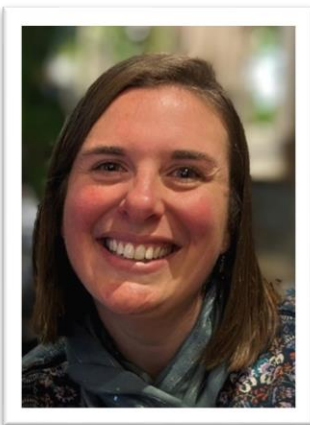
Being an LEP is a blessing that we at St Francis are keen to maintain. We love to welcome Christians from all denominations, or none, and are keen to explore new ways that we, and the wider community, can benefit from that partnership.

Constitutional details for the LEP are given in [Our Organisation](#), page 13.

"It is really important. I count myself as non-denominational, having gone to churches from a range of backgrounds over the years. I like that because everyone comes from a different place (and more denominations than just the official three in the LEP), we don't get hung up on 'the one right way to do things', but we focus on loving Jesus as the most important part of our faith - everything else is secondary. At the same time, we get to pick good things from each denomination - e.g. using a prayer from the URC tradition, in a communion service which is otherwise typically Anglican."

From the consultation

MEET US!



Hannah Hiscock, Children and Families Minister – I lead our children's work and the related ministry to their families. I joined St Francis in 2023 after a career in the NHS as a Children's Nurse. I have a deep passion for sharing the love and message of Jesus with children and their families in ways that meet them where they are, and have been fortunate to use my career experience to set up the Footprints group in 2024, supporting children with additional needs and their families. I have a paid role, managed by the Lead Minister.

Hannah Hiscock,
Children & families Minister



Diane Anderson, Church Administrator – I'm a part-time administrator who is the first point of contact for the church. My roles include the admin (emails, updating the website, invoicing to name a few), supporting the day to day running of the building and organising the church diary. I feel privileged to do a job I enjoy!

When I am not working (or taxiing my teenage twins around), I enjoy walking my cavapoo whilst listening to a good audio book.

Diane Anderson,
Church Administrator

Steve Williams, Curate – I have lived in the parish since 2005 and have been a regular worshipper at St Francis since, my family having moved to Valley Park from Hertfordshire due to a company relocation. I have been involved with children's work, including at Spring Harvest, and helped start Messy Church at St Francis. I have also been on the Church Council for a number of years, eventually becoming a church warden. In 2019 I retired from my job and started training as an LLM. I then felt God was calling me to the priesthood, and was ordained as a Deacon in June 2024. I will be priested in June 2025.

I now support the church as a non-stipendiary curate, leading services, preaching, and being involved with both the Sunday morning teaching program and communion services at the local care home.

Steve Williams,
Non-stipendiary Curate



Ian Clarke, Trainee Lay Minister – I have worshipped at St Francis for over 20 years, with my wife Becca, and we've celebrated our 10th, 20th and 30th wedding anniversaries with parties in church - as well as organising one or two gigs here over the years. I have volunteered as a leader in youth group, youth alpha, alpha, crèche, been on Church Council and have been privileged to be able to lead and preach at many services. My calling is to serve my local church, and work full-time in secondary education. I will be licensed as a Lay Minister in October 2025.

Ian Clarke,
Trainee Lay Minister



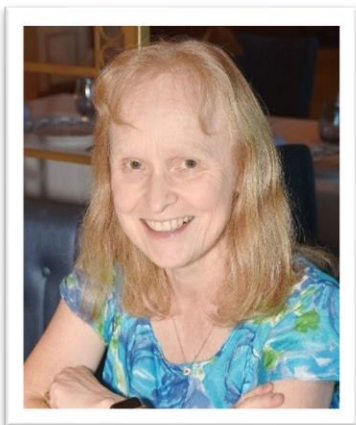
Fiona Grove, Churchwarden — Hello, I'm Fiona (Fi) and have worshipped at St Francis since 1991. I am married to Andy and we have two sons, who are also married, and three energetic small grandchildren. As well as being a church warden and all that entails, I also head up the Pastoral Team, am involved with the youth group, co-ordinate the café rota and help Hannah (C&FM) with the book group we run for some of those who come to Wednesday café. The church family is very important to me and I feel blessed to be able to worship with a wonderful group of people. I love spending time with family and friends, walking and travelling, especially around Europe in our very old Porsche Boxster!

Fiona Grove,
Churchwarden

Peter Rhodes, Churchwarden — It's a huge privilege to be Warden in such a loving and dynamic church. Whilst my responsibility is to support the administration of the church and ensure everything works as it should, and I really enjoy doing that, my heart is in the things we do that share the love and message of Jesus with others – inside and outside our fellowship. I've been a Warden for 2 years, and on Council for longer; I hold the Winchester Diocese Bishop's Permission to Preach, lead the AV team and Men's ministry (monthly breakfast and annual weekend away), and play in the music group. My wife Alison is also actively involved, and both our children grew up through the church and now hold leadership roles in their own churches. Outside of St. Francis, I have a senior innovation-based job in the NHS, enjoy road cycling, mountain biking and kayaking, and play trombone in a ska band.



Peter Rhodes,
Churchwarden



Steph Barlow, Worship Music Lead — I lead the music group and co-ordinate musical worship across all our services and ministry. I'm a professional musician (as are the other lead pianists) and I love to lead others to worship God together. I completed the Winchester Diocese Bishop's Commission in worship leadership, and also lead our Take Time Bible meditation group.

Steph Barlow,
Worship Music Lead

OUR ORGANISATION

Constitution

St Francis Church is constituted as a Single Congregational Local Ecumenical Partnership in line with the Charity Commission-compliant model constitution, complemented by an Ecumenical Vision Statement and Standing Orders; in 2015 we updated this constitution and registered as a charity ([1165677](#)). Recent review of that constitution shows it is now in need of revision, which we will address once the new Lead Minister is established in post. A formal Sharing Agreement covers use of the facilities by the partner denominations. We are also the Parish Church for the Anglican parish of Valley Park, Hampshire; the Church Council therefore comprises the Parochial Church Council (PCC) and the Ecumenical Church Council (ECC) for the LEP, for which Council members are Trustees. Further details of this arrangement are available from the Wardens on request. Our electoral roll is 130 and our Worshipping Community around 200.

We maintain close relations with each of the founding churches and contribute to their parish share or equivalent, according to the ratio of their original investment – 96% CofE, 3% Methodist and 1% URC. However, from a governance perspective we tend towards the policy, training and resources (eg DBS and Safeguarding support) from Winchester Diocese. Whilst up to now our lead ministers have been Church of England, we rejoice in the diversity of traditions we represent, and we will be glad to welcome applications to this role from ordained ministers in any of these three participating denominations (CofE, Methodist Church, United Reformed Church).

In the past, despite the role coming with responsibilities as a Methodist District Trustee and URC Synod member, our ministers have taken a pragmatic approach to equal involvement in these denominations. There is opportunity to re-define and develop relations with these, in a way that is balanced with our core mission.

Governance

There are two Churchwardens, a Treasurer, and an effective and committed council which reflects a wide diversity in line with our membership; Council meets monthly, chaired by the Lead Minister and is supported by a clerk. [Meet the Council members on our website.](#)

A combined Annual Parochial Church Meeting/Annual Congregational Meeting elects members to the PCC and ECC, and representatives to the various denominational synods and meetings. Church of England representation rules apply unless there are over-riding reasons for the application of Methodist or URC rules.

We have high standards for safeguarding and follow CofE guidance on this, but are not complacent and have an active action plan to close remaining gaps, led by our committed Safeguarding Lead. All volunteer team members have role descriptions, and there are well developed policies and risk assessments in place for all applicable church activities which are regularly reviewed. We are currently in a programme to secure references for volunteers to bring us into line with Diocesan requirements. We have clear policy and practice around sharing images of members and attenders on social media, including how we manage service video recording, and are mindful of those who wish not to have images made public.

St Francis' Church is dedicated rather than consecrated, and is not subject to faculty jurisdiction – with the exception of the Garden of Remembrance which was more recently consecrated for the interment of ashes.



St Francis Church Council

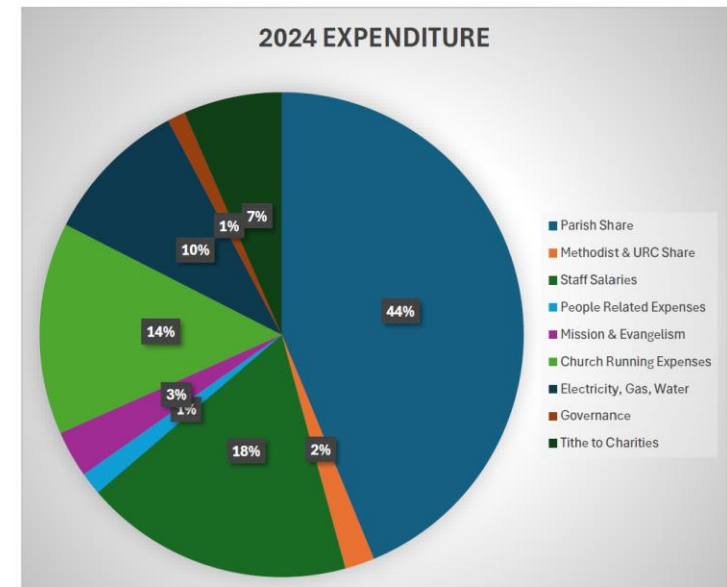
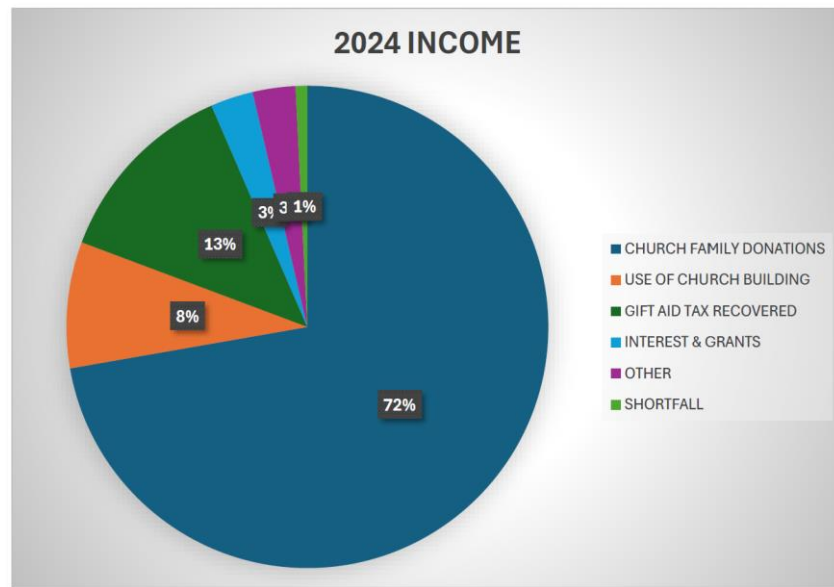
Finances

Our current annual turnover of around £170,000 comes mostly from the generosity of our church family, with a high proportion of gift-aided donations. These, together with income from building hire, statutory fees and the occasional small grant or legacy, have enabled us to consistently meet our commitment to the Diocesan Common Mission Fund, and make equivalent pro-rata contributions to our Methodist and URC partners. In addition, through careful management, we have been able to build-up modest designated reserves to cover more substantial building maintenance and repairs, and sustainability projects. Funding for our new Children & Families Minister post in 2023 came entirely from additional giving by the fellowship, reflecting our commitment to this mission.

Last year we were faced with a budget shortfall of around £20,000. Thankfully due to a successful Generous June campaign we were able to meet our outgoings in full by the year end. This year is also proving to be a challenge with a similar shortfall predicted, due to loss of a significant income stream. However, we have already begun a programme to address this. Through prayer and diligence we are confident that we will again achieve a balanced budget.

For many years we've ensured that 10% of our general income is tithed annually to local, national and international charities (see [Mission Partners](#), page 22).

We are working to grow the overall "financial maturity" of our congregation in terms of their individual generosity. We have seen some good progress here in recent years but strive to encourage more wider giving to keep pace with ever increasing costs. We also see growth in membership as the long-term route to sustainability, and this remains a focus for us in the coming years.



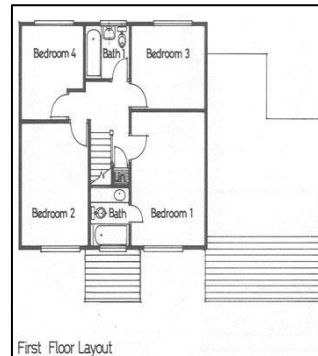
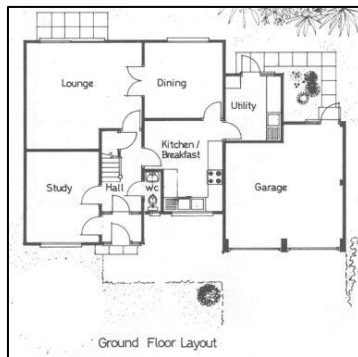
THE HOUSE

The Vicarage is a detached four-bedroomed house, situated at the entrance to Raglan Close, a quiet cul-de-sac at the southern end of Valley Park. Built in 1984, the interior was completely renovated in Autumn 2017, including new kitchen, bathroom, en suite bathroom, utility room, solar panels, boiler and central heating system.

There is a large front garden (11m x 9 m), a mature oak tree, and a gravelled front drive (12m x 4m) which can accommodate four cars, double garage and side gate to the back garden. The secluded south facing back garden (16m x 16m) has a large lawn with borders, a recent timber garden office/games room/meeting room and a garden shed. There is a small patio area outside the sliding glass doors from the living room.

A small entrance porch provides immediate access to a large study, so work-related visitors don't need to pass through the rest of the house. The ground floor has a kitchen with door to the dining room which in turn has glazed double doors to the lounge. There are a downstairs cloakroom and utility room.

Upstairs there are four bedrooms, with en suite bathroom for the main bedroom. There is also a separate family bathroom. On the upstairs landing is an airing cupboard and access to the loft space.



From Raglan Close there is immediate access to a footpath and cycle path, part of an extensive network of walking and cycle routes throughout Valley Park. The village centre is five minutes' walk away, where the church, St Francis C of E Primary School, the doctors' surgeries, dentist, vet, Tesco Express store, pub, hairdresser, takeaway, sports centre, nursery and Community Centre are located.

Bus stops are a short walk from the Close with services to Southampton, Romsey or Winchester, and to local Chandlers Ford secondary schools. Local trains from Chandlers Ford are 15-20min walk, and connect to nearby mainline stations and fast routes to London, North, East and South West. Southampton Airport is 15min drive away. Chandler's Ford centre is five minutes by car with easy access to a Library, shops and supermarkets including an ASDA and Waitrose.

OUR COMMUNITY

Valley Park is a CofE and civil parish jointly in the Test Valley and Eastleigh boroughs of Hampshire. It's adjacent to Chandlers Ford, with Southampton, Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey nearby. Built between the 1980's and 2000's, it is a modern residential development of approximately 3,000 houses with a population of 7,400. A delightful feature is the open spaces and woodlands throughout the area, making this a green and pleasant place to live. You can find out more in [Test Valley Council's profile of Valley Park](#) (download). Valley Park has excellent travel links, with the M3 and M27 both close by, as well as rail stations and an airport. We are surrounded by the beautiful Hampshire countryside with the edge of the New Forest just over 10 miles away.

St. Francis Church is situated in the village centre, next to St. Francis Church of England Primary School, the Community Centre, local shops, doctors, dentists, a vet, and the Cleveland Bay, a family friendly pub that has a spacious garden and children's play area. Knightwood Leisure Centre is close by with a gym, sports hall, outdoor courts, and grass football and cricket pitches.



We enjoy excellent relations with St Francis School: the church provides the seven Foundation Governors, one of whom is the Lead Minister. Knightwood School is a second primary school in Valley Park, just over a mile away from the church, however we are only now starting to develop early relations here – building these and further developing those with St Francis School will be key priorities for the new Minister.

We also have good relations with **St Francis doctors' surgery**, with the church supporting a [GP Chaplaincy](#) (see Appendix p23). In recent years we have built strong relations with **the pub**, co-hosting events and leading carol singing at Christmas, always filling the place to capacity. **Our church magazine Chrysalis** is published monthly as part of the Community Association's journal, and is delivered to 3000 homes in Valley Park, providing news and outreach.

The church has hosted a community event each year, and for the last three years this has been the 'Valley Park Life' festival, a day of local musical acts performing on stage in the church garden and building, with tea and cakes, a licenced bar, barbeque, crafts and face painting. The festivals have been something the whole community has enjoyed, with around 1000 attending across the day.

We are very conscious that more work is needed to truly put us at the heart of our community – the foundations and opportunities are there, but concerted strategic effort is needed to make the church more visible. From the consultation, some people feel we're an inclusive church but others feel we could do more. We are concerned about, and committed to, inclusive outreach to our community, and long to share the love of Jesus with all. A key priority for the new Minister will be leading us in this work.



ROLE DESCRIPTION

Role Description for the Lead Minister, St Francis Church, Valley Park.

Details of Post: A Local Ecumenical Partnership between CofE, Methodist & URC churches, this role is open to ordained ministers from CofE, Methodist and URC churches.

Role Title: Lead Minister

Name of church: St Francis Church, Valley Park.

Deanery/Area: Eastleigh (CofE), Southampton District (Methodist), Wessex Synod (URC); Bournemouth CofE Archdeaconry

General responsibilities

- i. To exercise the cure of souls shared with the bishop in this parish in collaboration with your ecumenical colleagues (Methodist and URC)
 - ii. To have regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy as described in the Canons, the Ordinal, the Code of Professional Conduct for the Clergy, and other relevant legislation/the Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church and URC codes of practise.
 - iii. To work to advance the Kingdom of God through servant leadership, collaboration and example, and with regard to the current Diocesan, Methodist circuit and URC Synod, mission vision and values.
- a) **Serving** - Our Churches have played a major role in shaping this nation, and the life of the diocese is still marked by loving service, in innumerable ways, reaching out in love to those on the margins, serving the wider community, ensuring our parishes are on the forefront of creation care and racial justice for the nation and the wider world.
- b) **Learning** - Our Churches have been a major engine of Christian learning and education, from the time of King Alfred onwards, and remain a centre of education, learning and discipleship, through its universities and colleges, through its schools and churches.
- c) **Growing** - Our Churches have been a huge catalyst for church growth and mission. Today, we are still working for the revitalisation and renewal of our churches, equipping and enabling them for the challenges of this generation and beyond, nationally and internationally.
- d) **Loving** - Our Churches have emanated love that has changed our communities and the wider world. Today, as people encounter our churches, schools and chaplaincies, they find themselves brought face to face with the love of God in Christ, and find their lives changed as a consequence.

Specific responsibilities

Working within the church of St Francis Church, Valley Park, which is a Local Ecumenical Partnership between the Church of England, Methodist Church and United Reformed Church:

1. To develop, hold and articulate a strategic vision for the growth of the church in the civil and CofE parish of Valley Park
2. To be a sensitive pastoral leader, able to engage in informal as well as formal situations.
3. To model collaborative leadership being both a team leader and player.
4. To encourage, equip and train up leaders both lay and ordained for the growth of the church.
5. To establish and promote discipleship within the congregations, enabling deeper personal and corporate growth.
6. To work with the existing congregation in a way that is appreciative of its partner traditions but also enables change and revitalisation for future generations.
7. To develop new and existing relationships and ministry with the schools within the area, ensuring governance representation where applicable.
8. To work collaboratively with other parishes in the deanery and wider community of the churches within the area.
9. To lead the church in outreach to the local community, sharing God's love and the opportunity of personal faith in Him
10. To ensure good ecumenical dialogue, prayer and ministry.

Accountable for the following employed staff:

- Children & Families Minister
- Church Administrator
- Cleaner

Key working relationships:

Generic:

The Church Wardens, Church council and ecumenical council for the LEP of St Francis Church Valley Park.

The Deanery Chapter and Synod; The Staff at Old Alresford Place

Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Methodist Circuit Superintendent Minister;

Wessex URC Synod Moderator.

Specific:

Head teacher of St Francis CofE School

Local councillors/officials

Clergy and parishes within the Deanery, Methodist Circuit and URC Fellowship

Develop relationships within URC Wessex Synod and Methodist Southampton District.

Supportive:

CofE Deanery Lay Chair:

Carol Kidd

CofE Deanery Area Dean:

Vacant

The Archdeacon of Bournemouth:

The Venerable Jean Burgess.

The Suffragan Bishop:

The Rt Revd Rhiannon King, Bishop of Southampton

Methodist Circuit Superintendent Minister:

Rev Peter Rayson.

Deputy Chair of the Southampton Methodist District:

Rev Dr Mark Cheetham

URC Synod Moderator:

Rev Michael Hopkins



What the congregation and local community say they seek in a new minister

APPENDIX

Pattern of Services

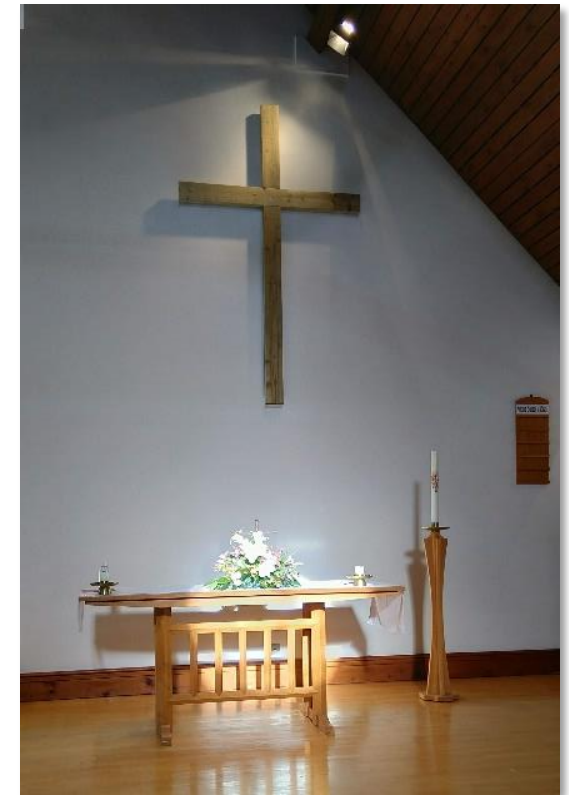
As a single congregation LEP our worship is ecumenical. These are our usual services and acts of worship across the month and year:

When	Service form
Sunday 8.30am Weekly	Said communion, led by the Lead Minister and/or members of the leadership team
Sunday 10.00am	Morning Worship, led by the Lead Minister and/or members of the leadership team:
1st Sunday	All-age service, led by Children & Families Minister and All-Age team – café style round tables with drinks and pastries
2nd Sunday	Morning Worship, separate Junior Church & Youth Group
3rd Sunday	Morning Worship, separate Junior Church & Youth Group
4th Sunday	Communion service, including children & young people
5th Sunday	Morning Worship, separate Junior Church
3rd Sunday 3.00pm	Messy Church, led by Children & Families Minister and Messy team
Monday 12.15pm Monthly	Communion
4th Monday 2.30pm	Service with Communion at Brendon Care residential home, led by Curate and congregation member with BCM
Across the week	Small groups
2nd Saturday Monthly	Men's Breakfast
1st Sunday of January 10.00am	Methodist Covenant Service
Ash Wednesday 7.00pm	Service of penitence with ashes
Maundy Thursday evening	Shared supper and communion
Good Friday 10.00am	Communion, all church together
Easter Sunday	All-Age Communion
1st Sunday of Autumn Term	School welcome service, led by Children & Families Minister
All Souls 6.00pm	Service for remembering those who have died
1st Sunday of Advent 6.00pm	Advent Service of Light
3rd Sunday of Advent 6.00pm	Carol Service
Christmas Eve 3.00pm	Crib service, led by Children & Families Minister
Christmas Eve 11.30pm	Midnight Communion
Christmas Day 10.00am	Morning worship

We are extremely privileged to have four practising or retired ministers as committed members (three CofE including the Curate, one URC), and others skilled and qualified to preach and lead (trained via diocese Bishop's Permission to Preach, Bishop's Commission for Mission, and Licensed Lay Minister programmes), so a range of styles and voices are experienced. We always have different individuals preaching and leading worship, at both 8.30am and 10.00am services. **It is important to the church that this continues, so a key skill of the Lead Minister will be to enable, develop and lead this ministry, without necessarily leading each service – releasing the minister for the broader work of the church.**

In the past we have held evening services on a Sunday which were more of a relaxed service, with worship, a talk and open discussion based on the topic. A key outcome of our consultation was desire for a service away from Sunday mornings. **This is an area we are keen to explore with the new minister.**

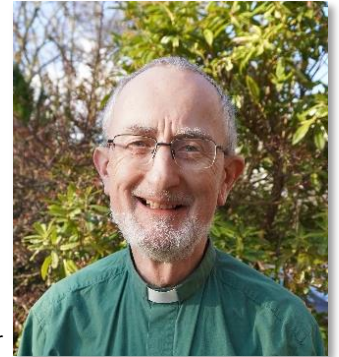
- **Overall**, our services are modern, varied, and flexible to the occasion and the leader's style, making them accessible to those unfamiliar with church. Members of the congregation take part in each service, eg reading, intercession, or interview/testimony
- Across much of the year we plan a **teaching theme** for the sermons and this theme can be further discussed in small groups during the week.
- **Communion services** use CofE Order 1 service, or Alternative Eucharist 1 for all-age services; occasionally we use Methodist or URC forms of communion.
- **Attendance:**
 - 8.30am Said Communion is small at 10-15, but includes some involved in the later service and is valued by the regulars. This is a wonderful reflective service, and we would like to grow this ministry and welcome more to share in it.
 - 10.00am services: typically 60-100 including children and young people.
 - Messy Church: typically 25-50 children, as well as family members.



Small Groups

Small Groups play a vital role in the life of our church and discipleship of the members. There are around 70 people in seven Home Groups. All meet in person but some also use Zoom. Each group has a different feel but all balance connecting with God ('up'), encouraging one another to grow as disciples ('in'), and supporting the mission of each person ('out').

Most of the time each group decides what to study, but roughly once a year all will follow the same material, either a course or tracking a sermon series. Topics include a book of the Bible, Bible characters and exploring a theme. Group leaders meet together three times a year to share how their groups are going and to exchange ideas. Nick Grew leads this ministry – Nick is a retired CofE minister. He also takes an active role in leading services and preaching.



Rev Nick Grew,
Small Group Leader

Pastoral

Caring pastorally for each other is very important at St Francis and we know we are all responsible for this. However, we also have a well-prepared and motivated Pastoral Team who get alongside people when things are life-changing, both celebratory and more difficult. Practical and emotional support is provided by this dedicated group. Alongside this we have a very active prayer network of over 80 members of the church family. Requests are emailed and it is very encouraging to those who have asked for prayer to know so many people are supporting them in this way. Fiona Grove leads this ministry and holds the BCM in Pastoral Care.

Mission Partners

St Francis' mission partners are charities we support for a three-year period, allowing them the certainty to plan and us time to build a relationship with them. We give 10% of our whole church income, divided across these charities.

To help build those relationships, we invite speakers to our main services to explain their work, and to chat with us and our youth group.

Information about the mission partners is also displayed in the church and updates are provided on the noticeboard and in our newsletter. We want to support them in prayer as well as financially, and this information helps but we wanted to do more. So, in July, we organised summer drinks and an evening of prayer, using media and videos provided by our partners to encourage people to pray for them together. This was the first time we have done this, but we are planning more sessions.

"So who are our current mission partners?", I hear you ask... [Fledge](#), [Eastleigh Basics Bank](#), [CAP](#), [Through the Roof](#), [IJM](#) and [A Rocha](#).

Our church family have a heart for enslaved people and those trapped by poverty, and that is reflected in the charities we chose. We also used the 5 marks of mission as a guide to add balance in our choices. This led us to choose new charities like A Rocha and Through the Roof this time, and in turn this has helped us take action to be more inclusive of those with disabilities and to protect creation.



Caroline Gough,
Mission Partner co-ordinator

GP Chaplaincy

As part of our Healing and Wholeness focus, one of our long-standing members, a retired GP, works as a GP Chaplain linked with the neighbouring doctors' surgery. This is becoming an invaluable ministry for those who need more than medical care. She has additional training from the national Association of Chaplaincy in General Practice, and takes referrals from GPs and Social Prescribers from the Surgery. Patients are typically experiencing situations such as loss through bereavement, redundancy or retirement, long term illness, life-threatening diagnosis, or end of life, as well as addiction, depression, anxiety, isolation or loneliness and loss of wellbeing; the Chaplain is able to journey with them, even where situations can't be changed.

Cafés and Social

Social events are a big part of life at St Francis. We have a purposefully designed programme of events through the year including breakfasts, lunches, teas and suppers. We make sure there is something for everyone to participate in, growing in fellowship and offering an opportunity to introduce friends to the church. Clearing the church to serve a home-cooked Sunday roast lunch for 100+ is always eagerly anticipated, and may well offer the best roast potatoes in Hampshire! Other events have included concerts by local and touring Christian musicians, and we're keen to explore how we can further use our facilities and skills to bless our community.



Our Community Café is open twice a week. On Mondays it has 20-25 mostly adult visitors, from across Valley Park but including some members of the Church. Wednesday morning café includes around 15-20 who stop for coffee and chat after dropping their children at St. Francis School. There are a few pre-schoolers who enjoy playing in the crèche and doing craft activities. There are a few pre-schoolers who enjoy playing in the crèche and doing craft activities with a dedicated volunteer.

The Café is a fantastic outreach opportunity and the team of volunteers makes everyone welcome by chatting and getting to know the visitors while serving tea and coffee. A number of regular church members first engaged with us through the cafés, and last year we ran a modified Alpha course for some of the Wednesday attenders, who are so full of questions. This is a great place for the Minister to meet the community, and there is scope to grow this work.

Men's Breakfasts take place once a month on Saturday, sharing good conversation and a Bible talk led by one of the group. There's a small but dedicated following for this work, and we are keen to explore how this group should evolve to engage and embrace more in the church. Once a year we hold a **Men's walking weekend** at a bunkhouse, and have visited Brecon Beacons, Dartmoor, Exmoor, and the South Downs. These are well attended and an excellent forum to invite others from outside the church. While the main emphasis is social and enjoying creation there is always a short message during Saturday breakfast and a Sunday service.

Lots of photos in the gallery below!

Useful websites, resources and gallery

- Find us: **St Francis Church, Pilgrim's Close, Valley Park, Hampshire, SO53 4ST.** [Google Maps](#) [StreetMap](#)
- Our website: <https://stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk/>
- Meet our team: <https://stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk/contact/#meet-the-team>
- Listen live on zoom: www.bit.ly/SFCzoom Recent service recordings: <https://stfrancis-valleypark.org.uk/talks>
- Our 'A Church Near You' site: www.achurchnearyou.com/church/18458/find-us
- Winchester diocese & deanery: <https://winchester.anglican.org/> <https://winchester.anglican.org/our-areas/eastleigh-deanery>
- Southampton Methodist District: www.sdmc.org.uk/about/about-us
- Wessex URC Synod: www.urcwessex.org.uk/about-the-synod
- St Francis CofE School: www.stfrancisceprimarysch.co.uk See also www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/findaschool/schooldetails?dfesno=3663
- Local secondary schools: <https://www.toynbee.hants.sch.uk/> <https://www.thornden.hants.sch.uk/>
- Sixth form & FE: <https://barton-peveril.ac.uk/> <https://psc.ac.uk/> <https://www.eastleigh.ac.uk/>
- Local Authority:
 - Test Valley Borough: www.testvalley.gov.uk Eastleigh Borough: www.eastleigh.gov.uk Valley Park Civil Parish: <https://valleyparkparish.org/>
 - Test Valley Council's profile of Valley Park: <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/assets/attach/21908/valley-park-profile-2024.pdf> (download)



Valley Park Life Festival, 2024



Steve our curate's ordination as Deacon, 2024



Recent events – Clockwise from left: Harvest supper, Valley Park Life Festival: our pianists, Outreach Radio do a lot of work with us – this was their live broadcast from the festival, festival in the garden, a walk in the New Forest.





Christmas at St Francis – Clockwise from left: Advent Service of Light, carols in the pub, Messy Nativity, crib service; men's weekend





Our lovely building – Clockwise from left: The welcoming main entrance, garden, Memorial garden, view from the drive showing proximity to the school.



**‘From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.’
John 1:16**

Recruitment is being led by Winchester Diocese on behalf of the three denominations:

Diocesan Office, Wolvesey, Winchester SO23 9ND

e: clergy.appointments@winchester.anglican.org

t: 01962 737310

w: www.winchester.anglican.org



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