

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS
FOR THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL OF ST LEONARD'S PARISH,
HYTHE**



Aims and purposes

“We aim to be an ever-more welcoming, inclusive and caring Christian community that reaches out to all, thankful to God who draws us together and gives us life in all its fullness.”

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) of the parish of St Leonard has the responsibility of co-operating with the churchwardens and Rev Michael Darkins to promote in the ecclesiastical parish, the whole mission of the Church, pastoral, evangelistic, social and ecumenical. The PCC is responsible for the maintenance of the two churches of the parish, St Leonard's and Holy Cross, and for the Parish contribution, agreed by the Joint Council, to the St Michael's Methodist Anglican Church Centre (StMMACC).

Objectives and Activities

The PCC is committed to enabling as many people as possible to worship at our churches and to become part of our parish community. The PCC maintains an overview of worship throughout the parish and makes suggestions on how our services can involve all those who live within the parish. Our services and worship put faith into practice through sacrament, prayer and scripture.

When planning our activities for the year, the incumbent and the PCC have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion. We try to enable ordinary people to live out their faith as part of our parish community through:

- i) worship and prayer, and the development of spirituality through study and discussion
- ii) provision of pastoral care for people living in the parish
- iii) missionary and outreach work

To facilitate this work, it is important that we maintain the fabric of the churches in the Parish.

Achievements and Performance

Worship and Prayer

The PCC is keen to offer a range of services throughout the parish that our community finds both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling. The Eucharist lay at the heart of our worship, with a Sung Eucharist being our main weekly service at St Leonard's. We also celebrate our choral tradition, with choral evensong sung twice a month. Anglican Holy Communion is celebrated once a month at SMACCS with joint services at SMACCS, such as Harvest Festival and Palm Sunday, bringing the congregation together for fellowship and worship. The Eucharist is celebrated semi-regularly at Holy Cross on the fifth Sunday of the month (where there is one). But the major feasts of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost are celebrated there, alongside other more occasional services. Weekday services take place every Wednesday at SMACCS, alternating between Anglican and Methodist communion services.

Our main services are live streamed, also weddings, funerals and baptisms on request.

All are welcome to attend our services. At present, there are 137 parishioners on the Church Electoral Roll. The average weekly attendance for the whole parish, counted during October, was 103 adults and 5 children under 16.

There have been 9 baptisms, 4 weddings, and 4 funerals held in church, and 9 funerals conducted on behalf of the parish at crematoria and cemeteries.

This year 0 members of our congregation were confirmed, either in the deanery or at the cathedral.

Deanery Synod

3 members of the PCC sit on the Deanery Synod. This provides the PCC with an important link between the parish and the wider diocesan structures.

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral and Healing Team of the parish, in liaison with the clergy, ensure that all those who are unable to attend church because of age or ill health are visited and given communion when requested, also our services are live streamed which has been appreciated by many. A service of healing and wholeness is held monthly on the fourth Sunday.

Mission and Evangelism

Our Parish Review has moved to a bi-monthly publication and continues to be distributed widely in the community and is always available at the back of each church. Contributions are welcomed from anyone.

The church continues to maintain strong links with Hythe Bay Church of England Primary School, and we have been pleased to be able to welcome them in the church for church days and their services each term.

Through these the children become familiar and comfortable with the church and begin to learn that the church is part of their town and for them to use.

We have established an Evangelism Working Group who have compiled a calendar of regular missional events throughout the year.

Ecumenical Relations

Churches together in Hythe and Saltwood are making an effort to get things moving and are making a positive step forward.

Financial Review

Total receipts for unrestricted funds were £172,804. In addition restricted income of £4,7787 was also received and is detailed in the financial statements.

Planned giving through bankers orders and weekly envelopes was £44,710 (£49,451 in 2023) while the plate collections at all services totalled £8,625 (£11,613 in 2023).

The total expenditure required for the year totalled £167,898 of which £154,241 was from unrestricted or designated funds.

A further £1,885 was spent on furnishing the High Street business premises known as the 101 Open Door Project. The collection of income and payments of running costs continue to be dealt with by a separate Community Interest Company.

The parish share as assessed by the Diocese of Canterbury was £88,439 and this was paid by the parish in full but utilising some of the legacy funds.

The remaining historic unpaid parish share was paid off during the year as part of an agreement with the Diocese of Canterbury whereby the diocese would match any payment made by the parish.

Reserves Policy

Cash reserves held at the bank the end of the year totalled £103,147 of which £1,698 is restricted funds .In addition there is a long term investment portfolio valued at £194,019 and further investments held with CBF Church of England funds of £10,345.

Expenditure on the fabric at St Leonard's Church is met by legacy funds or requires a request for funding from the Friends of St Leonards Church, a separate and independent charity.

It is necessary from time to time to utilise some unrestricted reserves to settle the parish share.

The parish receives rent from a residential property which may be used for general purposes as well as the upkeep of that property

Volunteers

Our large team of volunteers is what makes the church function. These include members of the PCC, servers, church cleaners, sides persons, choir members, bell ringers, coffee makers, flower arrangers, churchyard maintenance workers and many others, all of whom add up to a band of helpers who willingly give their time for the good of our church community. We are truly grateful to them all and offer our heartfelt thanks to them all.

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of PCC members is set out in the Church Representation Rules. Here in the parish of St. Leonard the membership of the PCC consists of the Priest in Charge, the churchwardens, the reader, members of the deanery synod and members who are elected by those of the congregation who are on the electoral roll of the parish. All who are members of our congregation are encouraged to register on the electoral roll and stand for election to the PCC.

The PCC is responsible for making decisions on all matters of general concern and importance to the parish including decisions about how funds of the PCC are to be spent.

The parish and PCC take the issue of safeguarding seriously and our safeguarding officer, Carolyn Chivers, has continued to promote safeguarding training throughout the parish, working to ensure that all church officers have undertaken their required safeguarding training. Our parish understands that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and so encourages every member of the congregation to undertake Basic Awareness safeguarding training.

Administrative Information

The Parish of St Leonard is part of the Canterbury Diocese within the Church of England. The correspondence address is The Vicarage, Oak Walk, Hythe, Kent CT21 5DN.

The PCC is a body corporate (PCC Powers Measure 1956, Church Representation Rules 2022) and was registered as a charity (No 1144695) on 16 November 2011.

PCC members who have served from May 5th 2025 until the date this report was approved are:

Priest in Charge	Rev Michael Darkins
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Curate	Andy Yan
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Churchwarden & Deanery Synod	John Wren
Churchwarden	Helen Waymouth

Deanery Synod & Treasurer	Brian Bishop
Deanery Synod	David Owen

Elected Members:	Berkeley Hill
	Steve Williams
	Christine White
	Gillian Jones
	Ali Chambers
	Alison Brett
	Gwyn Batchelor
	Mary Tyler
	Guy Sharrock
	Joanne Hill

Caroline Chivers

Secretary	Imogen Taylor
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