

Parish Profile



"To know Christ and to make Him known"

Welcome to Albury and Farley Green. We hope that you will find our parish profile helpful in deciding whether the Lord is leading you to join us.

Our Parish

The parish of Albury lies about 5 miles east of Guildford in the designated area of outstanding natural beauty known as the Surrey Hills. The parish covers an area of ten square miles and stretches for about four miles from Newlands Corner in the north to Winterfold in the south. Housing is scattered throughout the parish but there are three distinct communities: Albury, Farley Green and Brook/Little London/Albury Heath. We are part of the United Benefice of Shere, Albury and Chilworth.

Albury has a population of approximately eleven hundred, of whom 85 are on the electoral roll. It is a popular place to live, enjoying the benefits of rural surroundings but within easy reach of Guildford. Some residents work locally (there are about 15 small local businesses), many commute to work in London or Surrey towns. Housing is expensive here, but there is a small amount of social housing and some rental provision for local workers by the Albury Estate. There is a wide choice of good schools for all ages in the area, both state funded and independent. There is a reliable daytime bus service connecting Albury to Guildford and Cranleigh, and a very good doctors' surgery in nearby Shere.

Albury itself has a small post office, a pub, a modern village hall and the church.

Farley Green is a hamlet with no shops or amenities, and a collection of houses centred loosely around the village green. Approximately two hundred semi-permanent residents live in chalet style caravans in a "holiday park" in Farley Green.

Church Buildings

Although there are two church buildings regularly available within the parish (see below), almost all of the services now take place in the present parish church of St Peter and St Paul, which is located close to the centre of the village. This church was built in 1842 and the chancel was extended in the 1870's. It is in good structural condition and was completely redecorated in 2000. Since then it has undergone modifications to provide a toilet, small kitchen, welcome area, sound system, additional parking and access for the disabled. A small gallery has recently been glazed to provide accommodation for one of the children's groups and for small meetings.

St Michael's Church in Farley Green, known as the Barn Church, seats thirty five, and is now used only infrequently for services, usually at festival times.

A third building, the old parish church of St Peter and St Paul, parts of which date back to Saxon times, is still consecrated and is situated on the edge of Albury village in Albury Park. It is vested

in the Churches Conservation Trust and is used three times a year for parish worship.

The “vicarage” is a 3 bedroomed detached house with a double garage and 0.6 acres of garden in Farley Green. Discussions are underway between the diocese, the local planning authority and the Albury Estate with a view to relocating the vicarage to a more convenient position closer to the Albury parish church. Any new vicarage would not be ready for habitation before early 2013.

The Benefice

The parish of Albury is part of the United Benefice of Shere, Albury and Chilworth which was formed in 1998. The Benefice, which has a total population of 6,100, is overseen by a stipendiary Priest in Charge at Shere, Nick Whitehead (the “Rector”), who was appointed in 2010. Chilworth has a full time stipendiary Curate who was appointed in 2007. Albury and Farley Green have been under the care of a House for Duty Minister since the formation of the Benefice. Each parish in the Benefice has its own distinct style and emphasis in worship and in general ministry tends to be locally based, though not exclusively so. We enjoy good relationships and the clergy meet weekly for discussion, fellowship and prayer.

Our Church Services

Whilst respecting the sacramental and central tradition which has nurtured many of our longstanding members, in recent years there has been renewed emphasis on the preaching of the word and a seriousness about outreach, and this has led to significant growth in our numbers. The current ministry leadership sees the church in Albury as a missionary church, evangelical in emphasis. Each term there has been a structured sermon series following a biblical theme, and in recent years this has not been related to the Lectionary except at major festivals. Usually one member of the ministry team leads and another preaches. Our main Sunday service takes place at 9.30 a.m. As there is a need within the church to accommodate differing preferences in style of worship, this service alternates between an All Age service and a more formal Common Worship Communion service.



The All Age services are designed to be helpful for the large percentage of the congregation who are relatively new in their Christian walk and who have no prior knowledge of the Bible. The children leave the main body of the church before the sermon to go to one of four different children's groups for teaching appropriate to their age. In these services the music is mainly led by a worship band using modern songs and music. We make use of multi-media resources, and much of the service content is projected onto a screen. We seek to create an environment which is welcoming, friendly, accessible and relaxed.

Our 9.30 CW Communion services are mainly but not exclusively attended by the older, more established churchgoers. Children, however, are welcome and a separate children's "Sunday Club" is provided during the sermon and prayers. Music at these services is a mixture of traditional and modern and is led by the organ. A high proportion of the 9.30 a.m. CW Communion congregation also come to the All Age services.

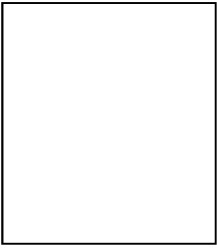
On All Age service Sundays, in addition to the 9.30 service we hold a said Communion (BCP) service at 8 a.m.

Our occasional evening service, “The Gathering” is an informal service in a variety of styles, normally led by one of our worship team. There is usually group discussion or prayer, and contemporary worship accompanied by guitar and keyboard.

Coffee is served after all our services and there is a great deal of enthusiasm for staying for warm fellowship and good coffee. It is at these times that the bonds between us are forged.

For further details of our services please see the table in the Appendix.

Parish Organisation and the Ministry Team



House for Duty minister: YOU?



Andrew Pearson, SSM Curate, regularly preaches or leads at all our services including the Gathering, and since taking early retirement is increasingly available during the week.



John Gould, retired Licensed Lay Minister (Reader) with permission to officiate. John's involvement is usually at the 9.30 Communion service, where he either preaches or leads. He also leads one of our weekly home groups.



Brenda Wray has a Bishop's licence as an "Occasional Preacher", which enables her to preach at five services a year.

In addition, there are a small number of other members of the church who may lead services or give a talk from time to time.

We have a good team of three pastoral assistants, a fourth in training, and many other church members willing to provide neighbourly support where necessary.

The clergy and pastoral assistants comprise the Shared Leadership Team, which meets approximately every two months to discuss the mission and pastoral life of the parish.

We have two church wardens and twelve elected members of the **PCC**. Meetings are held once every two months.

Benefice Forum meetings are held every four months and involve clergy, wardens and treasurers of the respective parishes, who meet to discuss areas of common concern and to explore ways of working together.

Our regular church organist plays at Sunday services and is sometimes available for weddings

and funerals. There is another local organist who can help with weddings and funerals if required. We also have a small band consisting of keyboard, drums, acoustic and bass guitar, flute, lead singer and one or two other singers

We enjoy good relations with the URC Chapel in the neighbouring village of Gomshall.

What the Church Does

Work with Children and Young People

Children's ministry is very important to us and has been a powerful engine of growth. Through our work with young people we aim to bring them into a relationship with God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ, and to help them to grow in faith. We seek to provide teaching that is relevant to their needs and we recognise that they are a vital part of the church and have a unique contribution to make to the church as a whole.

During our fortnightly All Age services we have four children's groups:

Scramblers is for children up to and including Year 1 (Attendance 8-12)

Climbers is for children in Years 2 and 3 (Attendance 5-8)

Explorers is for Years 4 to 6 (Attendance 2-5)

Pathfinders is for Years 7 and above (Attendance 0-4)

Each of these groups is headed as far as possible by regular and committed leaders, although inevitably this represents a challenge for a small church in the competing activities and busyness of modern life. Some of our older teenagers have at times helped as assistant leaders in the younger groups.

The children's activity in the communion services is led by volunteers on a rota basis.

On Friday Evenings two young people's groups meet in the village hall for games, fun and friendship:

6²⁵, for school years 3-6, meets from 6.25 till 7.30 p.m.

Friday Night Live (FNL), for school years 7-10, meets from 7.45 till 9.00 p.m.



The Friday clubs attract youngsters from neighbouring villages as well as from Albury. Numbers fluctuate but average attendance in the last year has been 6 at 6²⁵ and 15 at FNL. Both of these groups are led by volunteers from amongst the church congregation, and consist of games, fun, and a short time of reflection based on a Christian theme. We are currently in contact with one of the larger Guildford churches in the hope of finding a student or young person who could provide regular help at both of these clubs.

Holiday Club



For the last three years the three parishes in the Benefice have joined forces to run a holiday club for children in August. In 2011 50 children enjoyed games, craft, and music all centred around a biblical theme. The experience of working together as a Benefice has been extremely positive.

Once a week on a Friday morning one of our Pastoral Assistants and other helpers run Little Fishes, a toddler group for mothers and young children. There is a song, a Bible story for the children, coffee, cakes, games and

lots of happy noise! At present the numbers attending are small, but we hope that this will grow in time.

Although there is no school in the parish, our previous minister took assemblies in two of the local schools and there would be scope, time permitting, for greater links to be forged with other schools in the area.

Small Groups and Christian Development

Four adult home groups meet weekly and a further group meets fortnightly to facilitate Biblical learning and discipleship and provide opportunities for fellowship and mutual support. Each group has a committed and regular membership, and follows its own study programme, chosen by the leaders according to the needs of the group. At times (such as Lent or during a Christianity Explored programme) the whole church is encouraged to follow the same programme.

We have run Alpha courses twice in the last four years, and in 2010 over fifty people followed a Christianity Explored course.

In 2011 for the first time a group of twelve adults and six children went to Spring Harvest. A further group has booked for 2012.

Prayer

Prayer is fundamental to the life of this church, and we aim to seek God's guidance and inspiration in all that we do. Much prayer has been offered over decades for this village and we recognise that it is largely as a result of this faithful prayer that the church is the thriving place it has become today. We are committed to maintaining and strengthening this tradition.

There are currently three regular prayer meetings open to all:

Wednesday 7 a.m. weekly

Saturday 9 a.m. monthly

Sunday 6 p.m. monthly

Prayer is an integral part of each home group, each PCC meeting, and each pastoral assistants' meeting.

We have tried to introduce prayer ministry at the end of our morning services, but so far this has been largely unsuccessful, with people lacking the confidence to come forward for prayer. This is an area we would like to revisit and where we would welcome fresh ideas.

Pastoral Work

The pastoral team seeks to bring God's love into the lives of church members and non-members alike. In addition to visiting, arranging lifts, making occasional meals and running errands, a monthly tea time gathering which we call "Tea and Chat" is open to parishioners of all ages.

"Moments of Truth"

This is the title we have given to a series of occasional evening talks on subjects relating to the Christian faith. Recent speakers have included Bishop Michael Nazir Ali and Jonathan Aitken. We have also had an afternoon with the Rhema Theatre Company and an evening with Jonathan Veira.

Social Activities



As a church we seek to build relationships with the local community and many church members are actively involved in various village social and sporting activities. Albury has a History Society, a Bowling Club, a Cricket Club, a Football Club for children, a Friendship Club for older villagers, a Women's Institute, a Produce Association and more. The annual Produce Show is followed by a very popular Barn Dance, and the following day a joint Benefice service (the "Tent Service") takes place in the produce show marquee. This is now followed in the afternoon by an independently organised free rock concert.

Several church-run social activities have become popular in recent years and are now well supported by church members and non-members alike. Examples of these include the annual Quiz Night, Harvest Lunch, Christmas Café, and the Farley Green Barbecue.

Finance

The church is in a satisfactory position financially, and is able to cover its costs, with a small surplus in recent years. Church members are encouraged to commit to regular giving and to gift-aid their donations where possible. Stewardship campaigns were run in the church in 2010 and 2011. The combined result of these appeals has been an increase of approximately 52% in regular giving. Albury is currently able to pay its parish share, which is levied on the Benefice as a whole and is divided by agreement between the parishes. The church also holds some small unrestricted reserves.

Where we are now—Challenges for the future

The story of this church in recent times offers much scope for encouragement and celebration. With the Lord's help we have seen remarkable numerical growth, but this in itself has brought its challenges. Much of the space used for the Sunday children's groups was not designed for this purpose and is sometimes cramped and unsuitable.

Many of our teenagers have been with us since infancy but as a small rural church it is difficult to see how we can now disciple these youngsters well at the same time as continuing to draw in and provide for younger children. We share with other churches all the difficulties of committed youth leadership and competing calls on the time of both leaders and youngsters alike.

With such a large proportion of church membership relatively young in their faith there is much work to be done in teaching and discipling. There is often a reluctance to engage with the Bible in individual study, and we need to find new ways to promote spiritual development and Christian living. A balance need to be struck between the teaching of basic Christian truth and the on-going Biblical education of those who are more mature in their faith.

We need to build up our prayer life as a church, finding ways to encourage more people to attend prayer meetings and to come forward for prayer ministry.

There are large areas (both geographical and social) into which we have made little inroad and who remain either indifferent to or in ignorance of the gospel.

Currently there is no paid secretarial or administrative help available, and with the growth in the church this took up a significant proportion of the previous post-holder's time. Some provision for administrative/secretarial help should be part of our future planning.

The Person we are looking for

You will be able to devote two working days per week, or their equivalent, to this post in addition to Sundays. You will be someone who enjoys working in and managing a team, is good at delegating, and an active encourager of lay ministry. You will be willing to maintain and encourage the healthy diversity of preaching and personal styles brought to us by the different members of the present ministry team. You will be keen to nurture spiritual growth and personal discipleship. You will be able to work with different traditions within the church, and not afraid to embrace new ideas as the Spirit directs.

There is much scope for sensitive exploration of gifts and abilities within the congregation and for encouraging a greater sense of participation in the life of the church. We are hoping that our new minister will want to spend time identifying these gifts and gently motivating people to use them.

There is great potential for further development of our youth work and we cannot imagine that you will be the right person for this post unless you want to make a difference to the lives of young people by being personally involved. We envisage that the successful applicant will have some experience in this field and be willing at times to step in to run a week-time group, also being able to co-ordinate the input of the many others who play their part.

You will be an evangelist at heart and enthusiastic about outreach. It will be a great advantage to have had experience of outreach initiatives in parish situations. In your role as community pastor there will also be much opportunity for welcoming and supporting those who live in the village but who do not presently see themselves as part of the church.

Additional Information

If you would like to read more about us, there is more information on our website, www.alburychurches.org.

The story of Albury as a case study in rural church growth has been published by Grove Books under the title of "Growing Churches through House for Duty Ministry". The author is our previous minister, Ken Hobbs.



Plans have been drawn up to build an extension on the north side of the church to provide accommodation for children's groups on Sunday mornings as well as a space for larger meetings such as PCC meetings. Planning permission and faculty approval have been obtained.

The estimated cost of the extension is £200,000, some £25,000 of which is already held by the church as money which was bequeathed for such a purpose a number of years ago. It is hoped that a proportion of the building costs will be raised from local grant awarding and charitable

bodies. At some stage decisions will need to be taken about the appropriate time to launch an appeal for the remaining costs of construction.

Appendix

	Form of service and range of attendance	Level of formality	Clergy Dress	Music
8 a.m. Communion	BCP Communion 8-20	Formal	Robed (cassock and surplice)	N/A
9.30 a.m. All Age Service	CW "A service of the Word" in structure 70-110	Informal	Unrobed, collars	Mixture, with significant use of contemporary songs, with band and organ
9.30 a.m. Communion	CW Communion 35-60	Relaxed formal	Robed (cassock and surplice)	Predominantly traditional songs/hymns, with some introduction of contemporary music. Mainly organ.
6.30 p.m. The Gathering	Informal worship/prayer 15-25	Relaxed but reverent	N/A	Mainly contemporary songs, 2 or 3 instruments

More about our services

Occasional Offices

In a typical year there are 3-4 baptisms, 6-7 funerals and 2-3 weddings in the parish church.

Church Practice and Policies

The parish adheres to the Diocesan Policies, Procedures and Regulations which can be found in the Diocesan Directory and Handbook. This includes baptism, confirmation, marriage and re-marriage. Baptisms normally take place during our family services. In addition to any clergy visit, one of our Pastoral Assistants visits the parents of infants or children to be baptised before the event to talk over the implications of Christian baptism. Families are gently encouraged to attend church if they do not already do so.

We feel that weddings are an important part of our outreach to those not currently involved in the church.

Statutory Policies

Child Protection

The church is in the process of adopting the Guildford Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and a volunteer member of the PCC acts as Safeguarding Representative promoting good practice and giving relevant advice. All those who regularly work with our young people are CRB checked. The policy is reviewed annually by the PCC.

Health and Safety

Work is currently under way to develop a church Health and Safety Policy