

Attendance trends

2026									
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	AWA stands for Average Weekly Attendance for all church services. We pray for future growth for the coming year	
	AWA	AWA	AWA	AWA	AWA	AWA	AWA		
				Adults			Children		
All Saints	74	74	84.75	93	5	7	7		
St Peter	22	18.25	22.75	24.5	0	0	0		
St Alphege	77	77	80	83	8	12	10		
St John	40.75	42	44.5	49	6	5	10		
Seasalter	107	127	94.5	93.5	24	14	11		
St Andrew									
	321	338	327	343	43	38	38		

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN WHITSTABLE

We continue to be actively involved in the various ministries in the town often working with other Christians from other churches as part of our commitment to Churches Together in Whitstable. The following were active in 2024:

Whitstable Beach Pastors – which has a team which goes out into Whitstable on Friday nights to Care, Listen and Help whilst the prayer team pray over the town of Whitstable

Christians Against Poverty incl Job Club – helping release people in our community from the burden of debt, poverty and their causes, to bring good news, hope and freedom

Community wardrobe -recycling good quality school uniform to help beat the cost of living crisis.

Fare Share- offering just past sale date supermarket food for free to anyone in our community who would appreciate it.

Remembrance - playing an active role in supporting the RBL in running this important service for the whole town community **Ride and Stride** – raising money to help historic churches in the county

Sacred Space – an hour of silent prayer by candlelight

WHITSTABLE TEAM
OCCASIONAL OFFICES 2025
(2024 figures in brackets)

Funerals 60 (65)

Interment of ashes: 27 (22)

Weddings: 12 (9)

Renewals of vows/ Prayer after
Civil Marriage 4 (2)

Baptisms: 38 (40)

plus 2 thanksgivings (3)

Confirmations: 16 (13)

A Year of Generosity: Community Wardrobe 2025

The Community Wardrobe has had a phenomenal year in 2025. Operating as a collaborative effort across our Team Ministry, this initiative provides good-quality, second-hand school uniforms to local families who might find buying new uniforms financially difficult. The dedication of our volunteers and the generosity of our community have led to an incredible impact. Over the course of the year, the project supported a remarkable total of 370 families. Because of this shared mission, we were able to directly benefit 641 children across the community.

In total, a staggering 3,267 items of uniform were distributed —a figure that includes hundreds of requests fulfilled directly through direct messages.

These figures represent much more than just numbers; they reflect a deeply caring, unified community coming together to ease the burden on parents and ensure every child has what they need for school. A huge thank you to everyone who donated, sorted, and distributed clothing this past year!

WHITSTABLE TEAM MINISTRY
(Church of England)
TEAM TALK 2026
Annual Report for 2025

Rev Rachel Webbley writes:

Dear Friends,
2025 has been quite a demanding year, not just in the parish, but for the Church of England. In both there have also been wonderful blessings, not least the appointment of Dame Sarah Mulally as Archbishop of Canterbury, and a new Archdeacon of Maidstone in place, former Deanery colleague Rev Estella Last. Closer to home I am hugely grateful to Malcolm who has served as Vice-Chair this year, and to all my colleagues, lay and ordained, as we serve God’s people together across the parish to the best of our ability.

An important theme to celebrate this year is the on-going fruit of our healthy vocational culture. We now have two ordinands training in the team, with four more discerning their vocation to ordained ministry, a new Anna Chaplain, our curate Rev Jayne priested, and two new curates, Rev Eddie and Rev Ripeka from Aotearoa New Zealand. Youth Ministry has bubbled up or been strengthened in three of our churches, and it was a privilege to host the Deanery confirmation in the parish this year in May.

Our Safeguarding culture continues to embed throughout our shared life and in each church. The new online Dashboard and Hub give helpful snapshots and updates of action points for each of the five churches in the parish, and alongside that, we now have regular support sessions for our parish safeguarding leaders. This creates a space for conversations that create healthy safeguarding cultures, which is so much more effective than a defensive tick box attitude where we just seek to ‘cover our backs’. The church is called to be a champion for the vulnerable, including through our work and focus on safeguarding.

The fifth mark of mission encourages Christians to ‘strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth’, and across the parish this is happening in many different ways, including starting to work together. Three of our churches have either paid for or received free heating audits, and our Deanery was the first in the Diocese where every single church submitted its Energy Footprint Tool.

Sadly, a huge amount of time and energy went into managing the emergency closure of St Andrew’s Church Centre in August for urgent safety reasons. I would like to express my thanks again to everyone who supported this work, including through prayer, and to acknowledge the vital support that Archdeacon Will and our colleagues from Diocesan House provided during this very challenging period. The pastoral offices recorded in this report are only the tip of the iceberg of the witness, prayer, community service and ministry that has taken place across the parish this year. Despite the challenges that faced us, we are strengthened in spirit through the adversity we have shared, and God has blessed us with overall growth. As our Mission Action Plans continue to take root, I pray that this process will encourage and stretch us, and in time, bear further fruit for the glory of God.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Our Team Ascension Day Service will be at St John’s Swalecliffe on **Thursday 14th May at 7pm.**

Our Annual Parochial Meeting at St Alphege Whitstable will be on **Monday 18th May at 7.30pm.**

Our Advent Choral Evensong will be at St John’ Swalecliffe on **Sunday 29th November at 6pm**

Rev Ripeka and Rev Eddie Bijl (Whitstable Team curates) will be putting on a community Shakespeare production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream". The rehearsal dates will be 20th-31st July rehearsing at St Peter's Church, and the two matinee performances will be on 1st and 2nd August in the All Saints vicarage gardens. All are welcome to be part of this and absolutely no experience is required, apart from enthusiasm. They are looking for actors, musicians, costume design and makers, stage management and prop masters, and all are welcome to join. Please note, stage direction and assistant direction is already in place at this stage of pre-production. Please save the date!



NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES



St Alphege Seasalter www.stalphegeseasalter.org

2025 was a year of seeing God's provision and grace. 'Gather Round' - a whole Church Weekend of special activities and worship drew us together wonderfully at the beginning of the year, new people joined and life and energy felt restored. The 'Moment of the Week - good thing or a God thing' slot in our services has been life-giving, and a team now plan intergenerational 'Gather Round' services. A fundraising breakfast and Christmas Fayre helped us meet our away-giving commitments and built community. Eco work continues with Solar Panels being put on the Christian Centre roof and due to generous donations, and an amazing response to a gift day - instead of selling the old Nursery bungalow we were able to retain it, pay off the mortgage and refurbish it in line with the original vision from 2023 of a Youth Hub and other community outreach work running from that base. Much hard work with numerous volunteers took place over the summer and autumn, with the youth work beginning in November. Claude Gayle moved on from Curacy to her first incumbency in Maidstone, Lise Jennings our Children's Minister moved to St Alphege Whitstable to begin her Ordination Training and volunteers stepped up to sustain the existing Children and Families Ministry. Helen Jones has also begun her training, and Sarah Hammond is nearly through her discernment process.

Rev Paulette Stubbings



St John's Swalecliffe www.swalecliffestjohns.co.uk

St John's Swalecliffe reports an excellent 2025, defined by strategic growth and new beginnings. Building on funding secured in 2024, we were delighted to have Emma Rafferty begin her youth ministry in January. Her partnership with Children and Families Minister Jane Myhill has already flourished, most notably through the launch of a new youth club which is showing a promising start. Furthermore, Jane's monthly 'Messy Church' has proved incredibly popular, with attendance rapidly hitting the maximum capacity the Centre can manage. Our corporate worship has been equally vibrant. The 9:30 am service has seen a marked increase in attendance, supported by an encouraging, ever-increasing team of service leaders and preachers. We also launched a significant new initiative: worshipping at Chestfield WI Hall on every fifth Sunday. This is going really well, serving as a crucial outreach into that specific part of our pastoral district. Operationally, the Church Centre's previous redevelopment is now fully proving its worth, offering essential capacity for our expanding groups. We were also pleased the Diocese continues to grant the use of the Rectory Garden for events. Finally, our monthly Saturday markets remain a vital pillar, providing essential income and fostering community spirit. It has truly been a year of blessings..

Rev Simon Tillotson



All Saints Whitstable www.allsaintswhitstable.com

All Saints experienced a welcome increase in attendance during 2025, with new people joining the congregation especially at our Sunday 8am and Thursday 10am services. This growth was particularly encouraging as the Electoral Roll for the church reached 155 members.

The previous year's 'Thinking Day' proved fruitful, leading to the development of a Spirituality Group. They have been innovative in generating new ideas, notably a valuable series explaining the meaning of aspects of Eucharistic worship. Our wider community life remains strong; midweek groups like Cameo and Film club continue to thrive, and Singing for Fun and Health is a popular activity for many. During 2025, we celebrated 16 baptisms in total, which included 7 adults. We also welcomed 442 people to our special Advent services and 596 people to our Christmas services. It was also a significant year for spiritual milestones, with 6 adults being confirmed.

Elena Markova and her team continue to run successful workshops for young families. Meanwhile, our monthly Café Church continues to bring the congregation closer together and encourages newcomers to join. Finally, a notable highlight when Rev Jayne Edinboro was priested in July (see photo above).

Rev Simon Tillotson



St Alphege Whitstable www.stalphege.org.uk

We have had a wonderful 180 th year, including a celebration concert and museum display. Our links with St Alphege CE Infants (150 th anniversary) and Endowed School (180 th anniversary) remain strong: 7 of the 8 foundation governors for both schools come from St Alphege, with weekly school services in church. Kids' Space continues to nurture our church children with a resilient team led by our volunteer leader, Sarah. A new monthly teen group, Threshold, has begun and is gaining momentum. Of 11 baptisms, 4 were of adults, and 10 people were confirmed. Fund- raising started with a bang with 'Shakespeare's Version' of the Thrift Ball – the last one for the time being. The standards of 4 military associations were laid up at a special ceremony in the autumn. Our eco church team facilitated an energy audit and encourages other churches in the eco-church journey. Amongst the celebrations the year has been intense, with governance issues in the wider church impacting on time and energy for mission at St Alphege. Nonetheless we remain in good heart, welcoming new people, including Rev Ripeka and Rev Eddie, both half- time curates, and supporting one ordinand in training, and another person discerning their vocation to ministry.

Rev Rachel Webbley



St Peter's Whitstable www.stpeterswhitstable.org.uk

We continue to work hard to increase giving through our annual stewardship invitation, and to heavily control costs. Church and Church House running costs are now presented separately giving a clearer picture of finances. We are gradually moving towards creating an online giving function on our website, with a QR code available for cash-free occasional visitors. The Fabric team works alongside the Finance team in completing works identified by the Quinquennial, although gaining quotes always seems to be challenging. Volunteers have gradually been clearing the garden, for which we are very grateful while we make plans to reinvigorate the Quiet Garden space for the local community. We have conducted a full energy audit and will be working through the recommendations to reduce carbon and save costs.

The Church House garden has been cleared of a derelict shed and contents, and a full Fire Risk Assessment completed. Worship continues to be inspiring and nurturing within the inclusive catholic tradition, and is treasured by the regular congregation and returning visitors. We enjoy participating in team services, particularly singing. The fellowship has strengthened over the year, with several socials after church, and the Mission Action Planning process has been very encouraging.

Rev Rachel Webbley



We are absolutely thrilled to introduce Reverend Eddie and Reverend Ripeka Bijl, serving together as curates for the Whitstable Team Ministry. Along with their daughter, Eddie and Ripeka moved to the UK in May 2025 from Auckland, New Zealand, having been ordained together in the Māori Anglican diocese of Te Tai Tokerau.

Both share a beautiful, intertwined passion for theology, ministry, and the performing arts. Eddie, born in Christchurch, began as a cathedral chorister before pursuing acting in London and returning to NZ for the pop-up Globe Shakespeare project. Ripeka, born in Dunedin with Māori roots in Taranaki, grew up as a minister's daughter and has lived in both London and Germany, also working in theatre before her theological training.

Together, they love exploring the intersection of faith and the arts. They are deeply committed to sharing the Gospel and ensuring that the marginalized remain at the true heart of the church. They have already made a hugely positive impact on us all.

Eddie and Ripeka are grateful for their warm welcome and look forward to bringing their love of drama and community to Whitstable—starting with plans to create A Midsummer Night's Dream with you all this summer!