



Saint Augustine of Canterbury

North Springfield

Parish Profile

March 2019

A message from Bishop Stephen

In the Chelmsford Diocese we believe that God is calling his church to be a transforming presence. Our vision is that the church - that is the people of God here in Essex and East London - should be a transforming presence in every one of our parishes.

These are our priorities:

- To inhabit the world distinctively.
- To evangelise effectively.
- To hold ourselves accountable to one another and to God for the stewardship of the gospel.
- To re imagine the way we minister so that each ordained minister and each individual Christian discovers their part in God's ministry and so that each church flourishes.

To this end we are looking for priests who are excited by this vision of becoming a church which is itself transformed, and which is becoming a more visible and effective presence in the huge diversity of communities that make up this most exciting and energetic part of England.

There are many challenges ahead of us.

- **We are a diocese generously subsidised by the national church.** We need to become financially self-sufficient.
- **Leadership often seems distant.** We are creating patterns of leadership that are closer to the parishes. And we are looking to develop missionary leadership at all levels of church life. Nearly half our clergy will retire in the next ten years. We need to find out how to minister with fewer stipendiary clergy and with a re-imagining of how stipendiary ministry works. We need to re-organise the way parishes relate to each other in what we are calling Mission and Ministry Units.
- **Some of our congregations still think ministry is what Vicars do.** We have a vision of ministry where the whole people of God are involved in the whole of God's ministry. We are also experimenting with new forms of authorised lay ministry.
- **Church must be a safe place.** All those in ministry will be expected to undergo training that will equip them to respond well in situations associated with safeguarding.
- **Levels of church going are below the national average.** We need to get evangelism on to the agenda and into the lifeblood of every church. We encourage and train churches to put on weekends of mission and outreach. One of our aspirations is that every benefice should have a trained lay evangelism enabler.
- **We are developing missionary discipleship,** so that every church in the diocese is a place where Christians are formed in order to be sent out in witness and service.

Despite planning for a future with fewer stipendiary clergy, we remain as committed as ever to the local church. And what is the local church, but that community of men and women gathered around Christ, and living and sharing the gospel in the networks and neighbourhoods of their lives? But we need priests to lead and to serve. We know we need to change. We can only be a transforming presence when we have allowed God to transform us. Therefore at the heart of all we do is a longing for intimacy with God and a renewed life of prayer. First and foremost a priest is a minister of the word and sacrament. All ministry flows from this. But a priest shares the ministry of the bishop, therefore presbyteral ministry will increasingly be a ministry of oversight, guiding, nurturing and directing the mission of God's church in the communities we serve.

It is an exciting time to be part of God's missionary movement for the world, and the Diocese of Chelmsford is an exciting place to serve. We have a clear vision and we are looking to appoint clergy who will share this with us. In every parish we long to see each person and each community grow in faithfulness and ministry so that together we may serve in the world and Christ may be made known.

+Stephen



A very warm welcome

We have prepared this profile as part of the process of finding our next Anglican Priest in Charge and we hope it gives you a feel for us and the area that we serve.

Our church community has been praying, talking, listening and thinking about what God is doing here in North Springfield and in the life of our church family. If you are thinking about your future ministry, you may well have been doing something similar. We hope for us, and for you, that God will illuminate a path ahead on which he wants us to travel and blesses our respective preparations for the journey. Whether God intends your path and ours to join, or if he has other plans for us, we wish you every blessing on your way.



The church cross is a visible symbol

For four weeks, as part of our Sunday morning worship, we devoted time to reflecting prayerfully on ourselves, where we are now, the journey that we think God wants us to embark upon and the kind of ministries that we need for the journey. In this profile, we will try to share that with you.

We are located in North Springfield, an area in the north of the City of Chelmsford in Essex. Most of the houses were built within the last four decades and now over 3,500 new houses are being built in the neighbouring Beaulieu Park on what were previously fields. On the other side of the parish is the older, more established area of Springfield.

With such rapid change going on around us, we want to be open to new ways in which God may be calling us to serve. We are an ecumenical partnership and are committed to being an inclusive church. We see working with and welcoming others as an important part of our calling and we are keen to work with Christians, churches and others and to develop strong relationships in the areas around us.



The interior of the church is attractive, flexible and reflective of the ecumenical partners' traditions



The stained glass window shows The Holy Spirit descending as a dove

About us

We are part of a local ecumenical partnership and we worship in a modern church building that we are pleased to share with our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters. Our congregation includes people whose backgrounds are Anglican, Methodist and URC, and many of us were confirmed ecumenically and are members equally of more than one denomination.

We are members of 'Inclusive Church' and we strive to welcome and serve all people and not to discriminate on grounds of economic power, gender, mental health, physical ability, race or sexuality.

We host the monthly meetings of the Chelmsford group of the Progressive Christianity Network. Being ecumenical means we see the breadth and diversity of people's experience and understanding of God as a blessing and we value thoughtful exploration of this.

As we reflected on ourselves and on our future journey and mission as a church, we seemed to come back to a few key themes:

1. We should maintain our ecumenical, inclusive character and our openness to progressive theology and thinking
2. We need to build our connections with (and relevance to) our community
3. We should develop and nurture our members and their ministries, and strengthening further the church community and organisation
4. We welcome opportunities to partner with others, especially in the rapidly growing Beaulieu Park next door to our parish

***"Being ecumenical,
inclusive and open to
progressive thinking is
important to us"***

About our church life

We are a small congregation; typically on a Sunday we may have about 20 people, though it can be more. Larger numbers get involved in things like Messy Church and children from the combined Church of England/Roman Catholic primary school come across to the church every week.

We worship at 10.45am, following the Roman Catholic mass which finishes at 10.00am and our Sunday morning service is generally a Eucharist. We are on the Methodist local plan and once a month our worship is led by a Methodist minister. We use a variety of resources in our worship including Celtic, Churches Together, Inclusive Church, and Progressive Christianity Network as well as Common Worship.

Our Sunday School said... "We want a cheery, friendly Vicar...kind and warm-hearted"

We like this variety and, in addition to ordained ministers and our Reader, various members of the church have led worship, including the young people in the Sunday School.

We have an occasional informal choir who mainly sing at concerts and larger worship services such as Christmas Eve. We have three people who play the electronic organ/piano in church, and sometimes have guitar accompaniment.

St Augustine's in the wider area

A priority going forward is to develop further our connections with the community around us, finding relevant ways to love and to serve people in the area so that the church may be a blessing and be a beacon of God's love.

St Augustine's is in the North Chelmsford Mission and Ministry Partnership, (NCMMP) as well as the Chelmsford North Deanery. Relationships with other churches in the MMP are strong and they have been very supportive during the present vacancy.



The modern font is used for baptisms of which there can be a number each year



The reserved sacrament from the Catholic Mass is kept in the tabernacle in the church

We are committed to working together, ecumenically across denominations and geographically across the parish boundaries that increasingly do not reflect the life of the area. This is both for practical reasons and because we believe that working together in positive relationships is in itself an important witness to others and a joy for us.

Reflecting on us, our mission and our future

Our four week process of reflection was very helpful in many ways. What came out of it was by no means all new, but we found that stepping back, taking stock, reflecting, praying and looking to the future was a helpful thing to do.

Over the four weeks we reflected on four themes:

1. Where are we now?

The reflections were positive, with a little uncertainty because of the vacancy. People thought we are welcoming, but can be more so. There is a desire to be more relevant to the local community and to grow not just in number, but also in mission, witness and service to the area.

2. What are the features of a successful church?

A number of things came out of this. People focused on discerning and following God's will; being a place of safety, welcome and pastoral care and being responsive to others' needs.

People saw the need for strong ordained and lay leadership linked to our sense of purpose and calling. There was a desire to see us organising the church community and our life together, creating spaces to 'be' together as well as to 'do' together.

Many people were keen to see study and prayer groups and to reinvigorate social events for us and the community (which have been a bit 'on hold' since the vacancy) and we probably need our new minister to provide some leadership and energy around this.

"We found that stepping back, taking stock, reflecting, praying and looking to the future was a helpful thing to do."

3. Wishes, hopes and prayers for the future

As priorities in the short-term, people want to listen to God and each other, work together as a team, increase our engagement with the community including our local schools and to create more spaces and opportunities for us to meet together as a church family.

Longer-term, after a new minister joins us, people want to continue to focus on those things, but they also hope we will continue to be ecumenical and inclusive and to relate biblical teaching to everyday life in a relevant way. Pastoral care, outreach and social events also featured strongly in people's reflections.

4. What sorts of ministries do we need to help us to make the journey?

High on the list were maintaining the ecumenical and inclusive nature of the church and working effectively with our neighbours, especially in the growing Beaulieu Park area just over the parish boundary. Ministry to the two primary schools in the parish is seen as important, as is developing new flexible approaches to worship in terms of time, place and style.

Within the church, people see nurturing people's ministry and leadership as a priority so, as one put it: "We all act as pastors", alongside developing a wide leadership team. One group said it was important to be inclusive and encouraging of each person's individual journey.



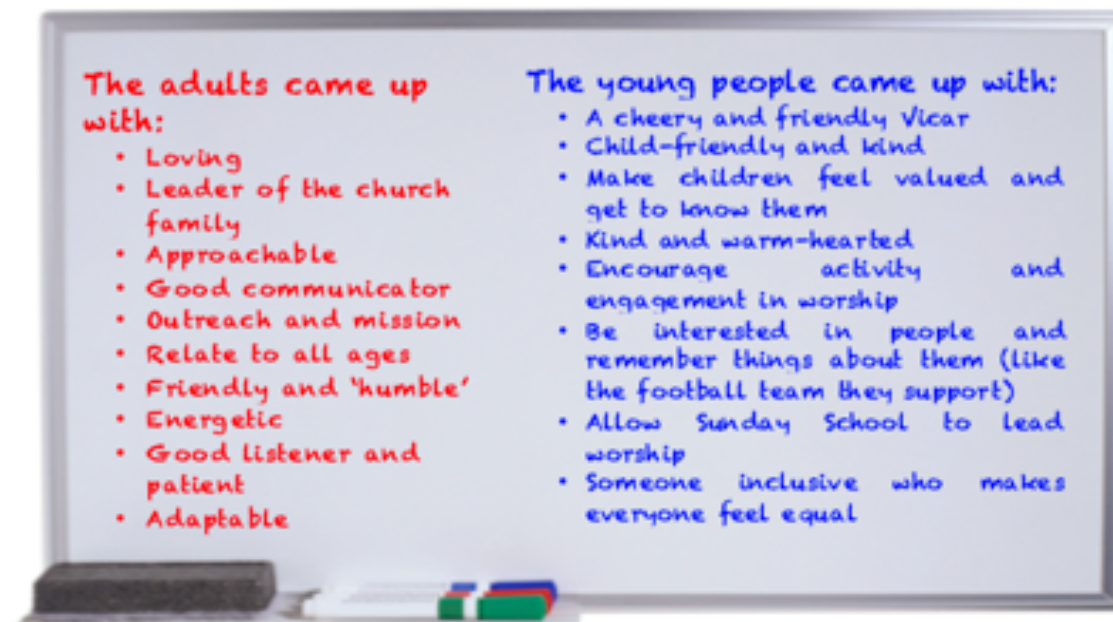
Messy Church is well supported. In 2018 we had a 'Messy Christmas Eve and Christingle' service

What do people hope for in our new minister?

We hope that we have given you a flavour of who we are, where God has led us as a church and how we feel about the way God is leading us forward from here. Perhaps you may also have some sense of whether or not this is a ministry to which God is calling you.

You will see opposite a summary of things that people said when asked about our new minister. We aren't looking for Superwoman or Superman and we aren't looking for someone who will do everything. That isn't just unrealistic, it isn't a very good model of church or discipleship. Maybe the phrase 'lead disciple' captures something about how we view the role. Someone to join us on our journey and become part of our church family; someone who feels called to serve here as a leader and minister and who sees leadership and ministry as something collaborative and inclusive.

We value the diversity of Christian experience and traditions, so we don't expect someone to fit neatly into a preconceived mould. However, we have tried to convey in this profile some of the things that are important to us.



Members of the church reflected on their hopes for our future minister and both the adults and the children came up with some important thoughts

What can you expect from us?

This is a House for Duty post created under common tenure with the agreement of Chelmsford North Deanery. Whoever joins us will be joining a church family that wants to be supportive and will welcome the person and their ministry. The Church Council is active and supportive.

We know we are at a pivotal moment with a lot of change going on around us in the church and in the area. We are keen to work with our new minister to discern what God is doing, where he may be leading us and how we can respond. There is support in our neighbouring parishes of Boreham and the growing Beaulieu Park for working collaboratively with us and the North Chelmsford MMP is a strong network of churches that continues to develop.



The Canterbury Cross can be seen in a stained glass window and elsewhere in the church

So what are the opportunities?

The opportunities for mission and ministry are great. Around a quarter of all the people living in the North Chelmsford MMP area live in our parish yet too few are touched by the presence of St Augustine's in their midst.

There are two primary schools in the parish, Springfield Primary School and a joint Anglican/RC school called The Bishops' School, which is opposite the church. We work closely with The Bishops' School, but do too little with the children and families in Springfield Primary.

We run Messy Church periodically, and this could be developed further. Some other activities such as coffee mornings and the 'Evergreens' services in a local residential home, parent and toddler group, concerts and other events for the community (which also raise funds) need to be restarted or reinvigorated along with new ways of engaging with and serving our community.

As models of ministry change, new relationships between parishes and new forms of ministry emerge and there is great opportunity to develop creative, collaborative ministries.

What are the challenges?

Some of these will be familiar because they apply to many churches. We are a small church community and this limits the number of 'labourers in the vineyard' and it also limits our finances and resources. We are unable to pay our parish share in full, but the MMP has secured funding to meet the shortfall across all the North Chelmsford MMP churches, including ours for the current financial year. Along with the opportunities of collaboration come the challenges of collaboration but as we have noted above, we think that working in partnership with others to love and serve the community around us in God's name is a good model of ministry, discipleship and church.

A Message from the North Chelmsford Mission and Ministry Partnership

North Chelmsford MMP is an emergent Mission and Ministry Partnership which includes St Augustine's and ten other churches in both rural and suburban North Chelmsford. We began praying together in May 2015 and continue to do so every Thursday lunchtime, visiting all the churches in the MMP area and sharing in local styles of worship.

The MMP aims to enable our churches to work together and support each other through collaboration in mission and ministry to every community in our partnership, while cherishing the diversity and local identities of our churches. One of our major collaborative projects is supporting the development of the new St Francis' Community church close to St Augustine's that serves the new housing developments at Beaulieu and Channels.

We have all benefited from our initial small-scale collaborations, building networks and relationships at all levels, and supporting each other with cross cover across the MMP churches. You would be welcomed into this wider collaborative ministry team and your gifts and skills will be appreciated and supported as we work together to do God's work in the communities we all serve.

Susan Iskander
(Clergy Co-chair, NCMMP Council)

John Bloomer
(Lay Co-Chair, NCMMP Council)



Our modern church building provides a large and flexible space for worship and other activities

A Message from the Mike Lewis, Chelmsford Circuit Methodist Superintendent

The Methodist church is pleased to be part of the Parish of Saint Augustine's. As a Local Ecumenical Partnership St Augustine's has developed an important ministry expressed in the desire to be inclusive of all and supportive of difference.

The Methodist Church, and particularly the Chelmsford Circuit welcomes the continuing opportunity to represent the Free Church in the parish community.

We happily support the mission through monthly communions and occasional preaching services. A member of our team has continued to develop links with the school and representatives from the Circuit attend Church Councils.

As is the case with many denominations we struggle to meet all of the many calls on our time but we are involved in and supportive of diverse worship styles, good governance and share Circuit training opportunities and the wider Methodist/Wesleyan theological, world church and practical ministry perspective.

We look forward to continuing this important work.


The **Methodist** Church



A message from the headteacher of The Bishops' School

Our church school is opposite the church and the school community comes to worship in church each week. We would love a priest who wants to be involved in the school's life and worship at every level. We welcome families of all faiths and none, and want our pupils to grow into happy, thoughtful, serving and gifted citizens - without prejudice or fear. And so would love a priest who advocates the fullness of life as God's gift for all of us.

Our school is unique in Essex as being an inter-church Anglican/Catholic school, and so reconciliation and ecumenism is at our heart.

Greg Waters, Headteacher

St Augustine's in context

The LEP of which we are a part includes the Anglican parishes of North Springfield and Chelmer Village (Church of Our Saviour) but the two churches operate separately. St Augustine's enjoys regular contributions from Methodist ministers and is included within the Methodist Circuit Plan. In the past there was also URC ministry and some church members are from a URC background.

Our modern building is large and flexible, with pullback partition walls that can open up the entire church or divide it into two or three separate spaces. Opposite St Augustine's church is the joint Anglican/RC Bishops' School, and the Springfield Parish Centre (a large community space) is adjacent on the other side. Springfield Primary School is a short walk from the church. The nearest secondary school is The Boswells School in the parish of All Saints, Springfield, and a new 'all through' school is being built as part of the Beaulieu Park development just outside the parish to the west. The community centre for Beaulieu Park is just a ten-minute walk from St Augustine's Church and this is being used as the worship centre for St Francis' Community Church, the Anglican Church being established under a Bishop's Ministry Order in Beaulieu Park.

Within the parish of North Springfield, most housing is privately owned, with some social housing and a small but growing private rented sector. There is a doctor's surgery, a handful of small shops and care homes providing for older people and for people with disabilities and other care needs. There is one pub (The Gardeners). In 2011, the population of the Springfield North local government ward was 8,807.



Our Sunday School meets each week and the young people had their own important views about our church and the future. As they go out for their activities we say our 'sending out prayer' together...

"We send you out as our loved children, to learn,
to play and as part of the family of God. Amen"



The modern vicarage is close to the church

The vicarage is close to the church. It is a modern, well maintained house with a good size garden. It has a garage and ample parking on its own driveway for several cars. It has four bedrooms, two reception rooms, a spacious kitchen and a ground floor study.

In conclusion

Thank you for your interest in St Augustine of Canterbury Church and in the area of North Springfield. We hope that you have some sense of who we are and the possibilities and opportunities that there are for ministry here.

There is more information on our church website, our Facebook page and the diocesan website.

If you are exploring your future ministry then we pray that God will lead you to the place where he wants you to serve. If you feel that might be here, then we hope you will apply.

**With very best wishes from everyone at
St Augustine of Canterbury in North Springfield**

About the area



There is a small parade of shops in the parish as well as others that are in the community but outside the parish itself.



Opposite the shops is a pub called The Gardeners.

As well as smaller shops in North Springfield, a large Sainsbury's store is just a ten minute walk from the church



North Springfield has a significantly higher density of population than most of Chelmsford. There are a number of flats in the area as well as some developments which feature smaller sized terraced and other houses.



There are many green spaces, parks and children's play areas.





The older area of Springfield with its large green and traditional church building is next to North Springfield. Some from our parish choose it for their wedding.



Boreham is a village to the north with an historic church. There are plans to appoint a new minister with a 50:50 role between Boreham and Beaulieu Park



Beaulieu Park is a large development of some 3,600 new homes on the edge of North Springfield



The Springfield Parish Centre is next door to the church and it is used by a variety of groups as well as the Christ Embassy church on Sunday mornings.



Boswells is a large secondary school attended by most young people from North Springfield, and a new school is opening in Beaulieu Park