

The Parish of St Peter & St Paul Tonbridge



Background information





St George's Day parade on Tonbridge castle lawn

INTRODUCTION

Tonbridge is an old Kentish market town in the Medway Valley with a population of about 40,000. The original part of the town is on the north bank of the river and contains the Norman castle, the parish church and Tonbridge School.

With the arrival of the railway in the 1840s the town expanded southwards across water meadows via the High Street to the railway station. Fast and frequent trains services to London Charing Cross, London Bridge and Cannon Street mean that it is a popular centre for commuters.

There are a number of excellent secondary schools which draw students from both Sevenoaks to the north and Tunbridge Wells to the south. Right Move's 'Happy at Home' index recently declared Tonbridge to be the happiest place to live in the south east. The population covers a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, with some areas of significant deprivation, but there is relatively low ethnic diversity.



THE PARISH IN CONTEXT

The parish of St Peter & St Paul has a population approaching 24,000 and its oldest properties are grouped around the parish church, the castle and Tonbridge School. Recent expansion of housing in the town south of the river has led to the opening of a new Church of England primary school in St Stephen's parish.

The town is blessed with many community groups. The local clubs and societies cover community, cultural and sporting areas. Music, art, drama, athletics, football and rugby union all have large followings. Both Tonbridge Philharmonic Society and Tonbridge Music Club use the parish church for concerts and recitals. The church is a centre for Jane Austen Society meetings as a result of her family's connections with the parish and Tonbridge School.

We have contacts with the many schools and thousands of children attending them in the town. The town is an outstanding centre for education with seven secondary schools and numerous state and private primary and junior/preparatory schools. The internationally known Tonbridge School is a major employer. West Kent College, based in south Tonbridge, is a college of further and higher education with thousands of students, full time and part-time. Tonbridge also has an adult education centre.

OUR VISION

We have a new five-year vision for the parish. Built on the two **Foundations** of God's Word and Prayer, nine vision areas will help focus our ministry and mission over the coming years:

Teaching and discipling with God's word

Opportunities to show love practically

Networking with other churches

Being accessible for all

Raising up leaders

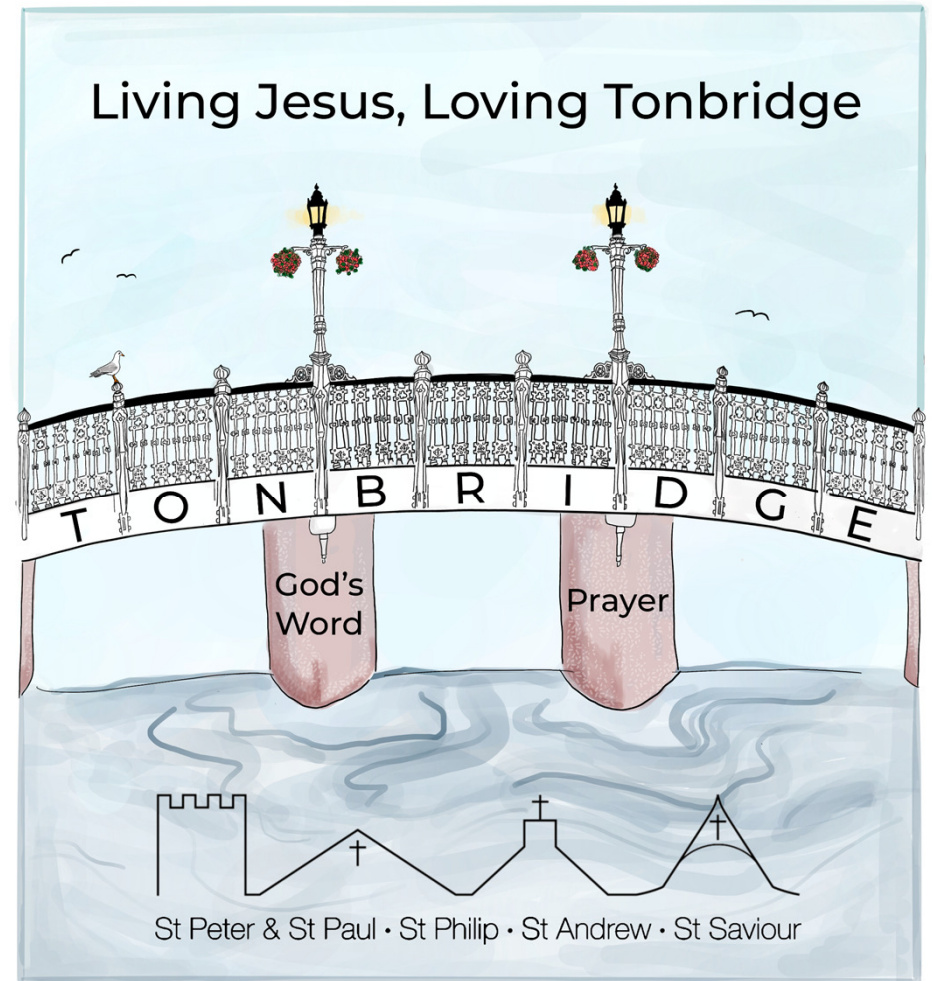
Inspired worship together

Deep pastoral care

Going out to the world

Every word spoken for Jesus

Not forgetting the **Framework** of the bridge – our finances, gifts and buildings that we use to serve the Gospel and work towards our vision.



We are...

Evangelical

Our commitment to the Bible, discipleship, evangelism and mission are foundations of our faith. We welcome Christian disciples from a range of backgrounds and want to learn from one another, growing together in passion and love for God. We aim to work out our faith in practical service to our community as well, as a witness to God's love for us. We welcome those who are less sure of what they believe and want to make space for those who doubt or disagree to think things through together.

Multi-congregational

Rooted in our local community, we are a church family of all ages, diverse in our needs, callings and aspirations. We value our unity as a single parish as well our individuality as fellowships. Newcomers relate best to the church and congregation they join, then become aware of and are absorbed into the wider parish fellowship. The variety of our worship styles suits a wide range of people and makes for a rounded whole.

Wholeheartedly Anglican

We express our love for the living God through a breadth and depth of spirituality and worshipping styles. We give thanks for the generations who have gone before us, we belong to the Diocese of Rochester and wholeheartedly value the Anglican ordering of mission, ministry and worship.





Families, children and young people...

In **your role**, you will join the leadership team of this parish with multiple congregations across four church buildings, and a single Parochial Church Council (PCC). We are sure that you will appreciate this unique community; clearly one parish but with four active worship centres which attract a wide variety of parishioners.

We value Biblical exposition which will enable us to be nurtured in faith and confidence, and to be encouraged in our practical witness and evangelism to our friends, neighbours and community.

It is important to us that families, children and young people are encouraged, brought to personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and drawn and rooted into the life of the church family. **Two of our churches have Sunday morning provision for children and young people.** Helping grow this will be key to your role, although beyond that you will also have responsibility for developing and leading our strategy for discipleship and outreach to families, children and young people across the whole parish.

Our Youth and Children's Minister is joined by a number of skilled volunteers.

Groups covering all age groups, experience Bible-based teaching and a variety of social events. Fun Club runs in one of the local primary schools led by High Hopes (which is a local evangelistic charity).



Holiday Club

In recent years a summer holiday club has run for a week at the start of the school holidays. Up to 170 children of primary age have enjoyed activities, Bible teaching and outdoor fun. The youngest children used St Saviour's church, with school years one to six in the parish church. Leadership came from adults and teenagers. The final session for everyone, was followed by a barbeque in the vicarage garden.

Organisation

The pre-Covid parish Electoral Roll was 440, with the following breakdown: St Peter & St Paul (271); St Saviour (75); St Andrew (31); St Philip (63). Average Sunday morning attendance was around 30-35 children and young people (26 St Peter & Paul; 7 St Philip), though we had links with a larger number of families, children and young people on our lists. In addition, our ministry with older teenagers had around 9 join us weekly.

Current service patterns

Due to an interregnum, our four churches did not all begin meeting together weekly until January 2022. As we re-build and re-shape our post-Covid service patterns, approximate average Sunday attendances are currently:

St Peter & Paul	8am	15-20 adults
	10.45am	85-100 adults, 20-25 children
	6pm	15-25 adults
St Philip	10.45am	40-50 adults, 0-5 children
St Saviour	9.15am	30-40 adults
St Andrew	9.15am	5-15 adults

We have a larger number of families who were part of the church pre-Covid, but who have not yet made the return to regular patterns of worship. **It is therefore an exciting time to join the team – early days in our rebuilding, a new vision for the parish; and therefore much scope to draw in and build up this key area of ministry to families, children and young people!**

