



**SAINT LAURENCE
THE PARISH CHURCH OF UPMINSTER**

**Parish Profile relating to the role of
House-for-Duty Associate Priest**



www.upminsterparish.co.uk
Facebook: The Parish Church of St Laurence, Upminster

St Laurence, Upminster Vision and Mission Statement

(The following may be updated when possible to reflect some additional new priorities, but remains a good reflection of how St Laurence sees the core of its mission and ministry.)

To make St Laurence a visible and welcoming centre of Christian worship and prayer, that in an atmosphere of respect and inclusiveness, demonstrates the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of God

Spiritual: Draw people closer to God through:

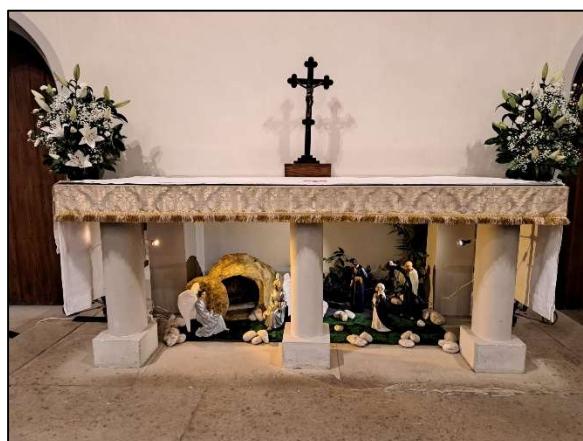
- A focus on Eucharistically-based services suitable for all ages.
- Teaching and spiritual leadership.
- Remembering the needs of others locally and globally.
- Social events that promote fund-raising and working together.
- Stewardship.

Growth:

- Be a visible presence in the Parish.
- Reaching out through baptisms, marriages, funerals, school work and youth groups by promoting an understanding of the spiritual meaning and value of the Church.
- Parish online presence.

Buildings & Plant: Enhance: quality; spirituality; heritage and accessibility.

Finance: Engender financial commitment for Parish needs and the Parish Share.



The Parish

Upminster is a suburban town on the eastern outskirts of Greater London in the London Borough of Havering and borders on the Green Belt, a Conservation area and the Thames Chase. Historically, it is thought Upminster was so named after the first St Laurence's Church, established here in 653 AD. It remained a crossroads village until the early 20th century when large-scale residential development commenced. Most of the properties are owner occupied. Upminster was part of the County of Essex until the 1965 boundary reorganisation. It is close to the M25 and approximately six miles from the Dartford Crossing.

The parish has a population of about 13,000, some of whom are third or fourth generation Upminster families. However, because the town is within comfortable commuting distance from London, it also attracts people moving into the area. Many of the working population commute to London (15 miles) and are served by the District Line Underground and the main line C2C service from Shoeburyness to Fenchurch Street (25 mins). There are also local bus and rail services to Romford, Grays and Lakeside Retail Shopping Centre. Transport in London is currently available at discounted rates to those aged 60 and over, and is free after 9am (via the Freedom Pass) for those aged 66 and over.

In view of the relatively high cost of housing, many young people move away from Upminster when they become independent, hence in recent times there has been a tendency for the average age of the population to increase. This is evidenced by the number of homes for the elderly in the area.

Upminster is fortunate to be well served by excellent Infant, Junior and Secondary schools including a school (in our neighbouring parish) which, as part of their admission policy, asks for regular attendance at a place of worship. There is no Church of England school within the parish although there are two Roman Catholic schools (primary and girls' secondary).

A hospital is located in Romford (4 miles). There are also two private hospitals within 6 miles.

The South Essex Crematorium and Upminster Cemetery are within the parish.

The community is served by a department store, four supermarkets and a variety of smaller shops. There is a post office, hair and beauty salons, coffee shops, restaurants, take-aways, petrol stations and pubs.

For leisure purposes there are two recreation grounds and facilities for various sporting activities. There are a number of other social amenities available in the area for all age ranges, and a public library next to the church. Of historical interest there is a windmill which is open to the public on various occasions through the year.

The Church in Upminster is actively represented by all major denominations, who come together to form Churches Together in Upminster, Cranham and North Ockendon. The clergy from the individual churches meet regularly. United services are held from time to time, including an ecumenical Procession of Witness through Upminster on Good Friday to a service in the park attended by a large number of people.



The Church

St. Laurence's Church was established by St Cedd in 653 AD.

It is a Grade I listed building set at the crossroads in the centre of the town.



Notable past incumbents include members of the Holden family, who were the Rectors for nearly 200 years (and retain the patronage to this day) and William Derham, who measured the speed of sound from the church tower.



The tower is 12th century, the St. Mary's Chapel (now an ante-Chapel to the present Lady Chapel) was built in 1771 and subsequent additions were made right into the 20th century. The church was completely refurbished and redecorated early in 1992 and 2002–03 saw major re-ordering of the chancel with the provision of a new 2 manual 24-stop organ by Kenneth Tickell.

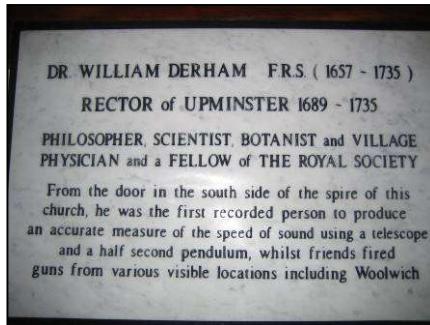


To the south of the High Altar, there is a small St. George's Chapel; to the north, a Lady Chapel with Reserved Sacrament and a votive stand. On Sundays, services are conducted and Communion administered at the moveable Nave Altar.



Weekday daytime services are normally held in the Lady Chapel. The church is open from 9am until 4/5pm daily and receives a good number of visitors who call in to look around, pray and light candles. Keeping the building open and available for anyone who wishes to call in is something that lies at the heart of our identity and mission as a church.

The tower has 4 bells, the earliest of which was cast in 1460, which are not now hung for full circle ringing.



Worship

Sundays	Weekdays
Said Mass (Common Worship) 8.00	
Sung Parish Mass 9.30	Wednesday Mass 11.00
Sunday School (Adventurers)	
Baptisms (where requested) 12.00	
Evening Service 18.30	Morning and Evening Prayer are said publicly in church on Wednesdays – not on other days due to the Rector being the only person who would usually be present and the safety considerations around that. However, there is scope to expand to other days if others wish to join the Rector.
	Monthly
	Footsteps service for children aged 0-5 Mondays 09.30
	‘Building Faith’ – informal service for primary school children in the church hall Sundays 08.00

The church is ‘modern Catholic’ in tradition as far as labels can be applied, but is keen to be first and foremost a parish church. There is a firm grounding in the sacraments and the main Parish Eucharist is celebrated with incense, bells and, on Feast days, a procession. There has been a strong musical tradition though this has faced some challenges since the pandemic. However, though our choir is currently small, it has committed members who, under the leadership of our Director of Music, sing a wide range of music to a high standard.

We have a team of servers of varying ages.

Congregational booklets have been produced for each liturgical season. The hymn books we use are *Ancient and Modern* and *The New English Hymnal*, sometimes supplemented from elsewhere.

In recent months, attendance at the Parish Mass has usually been around 65-90, and 40-50 at the 8.00am Holy Communion (as, in addition to the 'core congregation', many children seeking church attendance stamps attend this service because it fits in well with Sunday morning sporting commitments). The Sacrament is taken to the housebound during the week by clergy and lay Eucharistic Ministers. The Wednesday Mass usually has an attendance of 8-12 people. Parade services with the uniformed organisations happen four times a year with about 200 attending, there is a civic Act of Remembrance held at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday and on Christmas Eve there are two crib services which attract a combined total of about 500.

In May 2025 we began 'Building Faith', a monthly short service held at 8am in the church hall, in parallel with the 8am Mass. It is non-eucharistic and informal, and aimed primarily at children seeking school attendance stamps (i.e. children aged 8-10 years) and their parents. We offer refreshments, have some informal liturgy, listen to a Bible passage, offer a short reflection and invite the children to craft an appropriate response of some kind in Lego. Thus far the service has attracted around 50-70 people each time.

We hope we are an open, friendly and welcoming church. Beyond the regular congregations there are many occasional attenders who look to St Laurence as 'their' church, particularly in times of celebration or need.



The churchyard, carefully maintained by the St Laurence, Upminster Gardening Squad (SLUGS) provides a peaceful oasis in the centre of Upminster

Baptisms take place either during the 9.30 am Parish Mass or at 12 noon with the Welcome and giving of the baptism candle happening at the Parish Mass the following Sunday.

We have a Sunday School known as 'Adventurers' which takes place during the Parish Mass. Those old enough are prepared and admitted to Communion before Confirmation and some have then proceeded to Confirmation in their later teenage years. Young people are involved in various aspects of leading worship and we aspire to enable the Parish Mass to be an intergenerational act of worship.

Our 'Footsteps' service for children aged 0-5 and their parents/carers happens monthly and is sometimes followed by play and refreshments. It normally has an attendance of around 10 adults and 30 children - mostly the staff and children from St Laurence Pre-School – this pre-school meets in one of the church halls; it is independent from the church, but we have a good relationship with them and as well as joining in with Footsteps they also link with the church for various other purposes through the year.



Remembrance Sunday



Baptisms and Admissions to Communion

We hold non-Eucharistic services in three local residential homes for the elderly around Christmas and Easter.

Throughout the year, additional services are held for festivals, during Lent, Easter and Christmas. Once a week during Lent, Stations of the Cross are said jointly with the nearby Roman Catholic Church.

Each year, St Laurence hosts a small number of weddings (in recent years, 1-3 per year) – together with occasional renewals of vows and thanksgivings for civil marriage. We usually have 10-20 baptisms per year and around 10-12 funerals/memorial services, which may be in church or at the crematorium. We are also asked to inter ashes in the churchyard or at the cemetery from time to time.

Coffee, tea and soft drinks are served in the Main Hall after the Parish Mass on Sundays and on Friday mornings – the latter being open to the wider community. We use Fairtrade fresh coffee, tea and biscuits, and seek to continue this commitment to sustainable and ethical sourcing in other aspects of parish life where possible.

There are usually study/discussion groups during Lent and Advent, and sometimes at other times of the year. We recently ran an Enquirers' Course using the Roman Catholic 'Sycamore' material.

One person was confirmed in 2025. The parish has offered placements to various people from other churches exploring vocation or training for ministry, and we have recently had two people completing curacies here. Fiona Macaulay is due to join us as SSM incumbency pathway curate from the summer of 2026 (being ordained deacon in September 2026). We have an Authorised Pastoral Assistant (Deborah Masterson) and an Authorised Local Preacher (Juliet Masterson). Lay people contribute to the mission and ministry of the church in many other ways and take care of many practical matters in parish life.

The Congregation

The Electoral Roll stands at 122 with about a third living outside the parish; there are also a significant number of people who attend St Laurence semi-regularly but are not on the Electoral Roll. A fair proportion of the congregation is retired but there is diversity across the age range and quite a number of families and younger people, some of whom are actively involved in a variety of ways. We have welcomed a small but steady number of people who are relatively new to church or have not attended for many years but have suddenly felt some impetus to come to church and to explore faith, and it is a great privilege to be able to accompany them on their journeys.

Mission and Ministry

Having a catholic understanding of mission, we aspire to live and share the Gospel in all that we do as a church (from the mundane to the adventurous), to be present for and in our parish, and to help each other to discern God at work in all the places and people that are part of our lives. The PCC considers mission and ministry at every meeting.

A particular focus in recent years has been stewardship of creation and we are hoping in due course to achieve an Eco-Church Bronze Award. Environmental considerations can be a challenge with an ancient church building and multiple church halls, but we are seeking to make changes where we can reduce our environmental impact.

A Parish magazine, "Gridiron", is published 6 times a year by a team of volunteer editors. The magazine is available on our website. It contains a large proportion of home-produced material and advertisements for local businesses. We also produce a weekly pewsheet, 'Porchtalk'.

We rarely do school assemblies – though there may well be potential for these in future - but we do host visits to the church for school groups both from within the parish and further afield, who come to learn both about the history of the church and about Christian worship and belief. The local uniformed organisations which meet in our church halls also visit the church periodically, apart from for Church Parade, in order to learn about its meaning and history, and sometimes invite the clergy to share in meetings and events held by their groups.

We hold social and fundraising events – the latter are often currently for the Church Building Improvements Project but are sometimes for other charities. There is a nominated 'Charity of the Month' each month to which people are invited to donate. The church also supports the local foodbank and holds special collections of money/food/presents for various charities to coincide with particular times in the Church's year.



Mediterranean Evening



Children's Good Friday workshop



Harvest boxes for the Harold Hill Foodbank

The Buildings

Accommodation

The PCC owns a 3-bedroomed semi-detached house (pictured below) within half a mile of the church, which is for use by curates and assistant clergy. This is the rent-free house which would be made available for the better performance of the duties of this post. It consists of two good-sized bedrooms and a small 'box' room, an upstairs bathroom, separate upstairs toilet, kitchen, two reception rooms and a study. The kitchen is brand new and the house would be decorated prior to a new occupant moving in.



The Church and grounds

The church is in good repair, having recently had a substantial programme of quinquennial repairs carried out. We are in the process of planning a major building project which aims to provide much needed accessible toilet facilities and better equipped vestries and hospitality space which can enhance what we offer for congregation members and visitors – particularly the young and the elderly. Fundraising for this project has been ongoing for a number of years and we hope that Phase 1, involving changes to the Tower area, can proceed before too long.

There is a Parish Office which is staffed on a part time basis, providing administrative services and support. This space can also be used for meetings.

There are four church halls (with limited car parking) which are hired and used by the local community as well as by the church. The hall hire provides a substantial part of our income although we offer very subsidised rates to uniformed groups and addiction support groups.

Current Staffing

The current Rector, the Revd Susannah Brasier, has been in post since February 2015.

We have a Pastoral Assistant who works closely with the Rector, an Authorised Local Preacher and will in due course also have an SSM incumbency pathway curate. Employed staff consist of a Parish Administrator, a Director of Music and a Church Halls Booking Secretary.

The PCC

The PCC is actively involved with planning and organisation within the church. Full meetings are held 5 times a year. It is complemented by the Central Management and Finance Group, and a variety of task groups looking after areas such as Buildings and Halls.

Expenses and Income

The parish share is paid in full; reasonable clergy expenses are met, as is the remuneration for the paid staff. Congregational giving alone is insufficient to raise the full amount of share so we are very dependent on income from the church halls. We have regular stewardship campaigns to encourage people to consider their giving of time, talents and money.

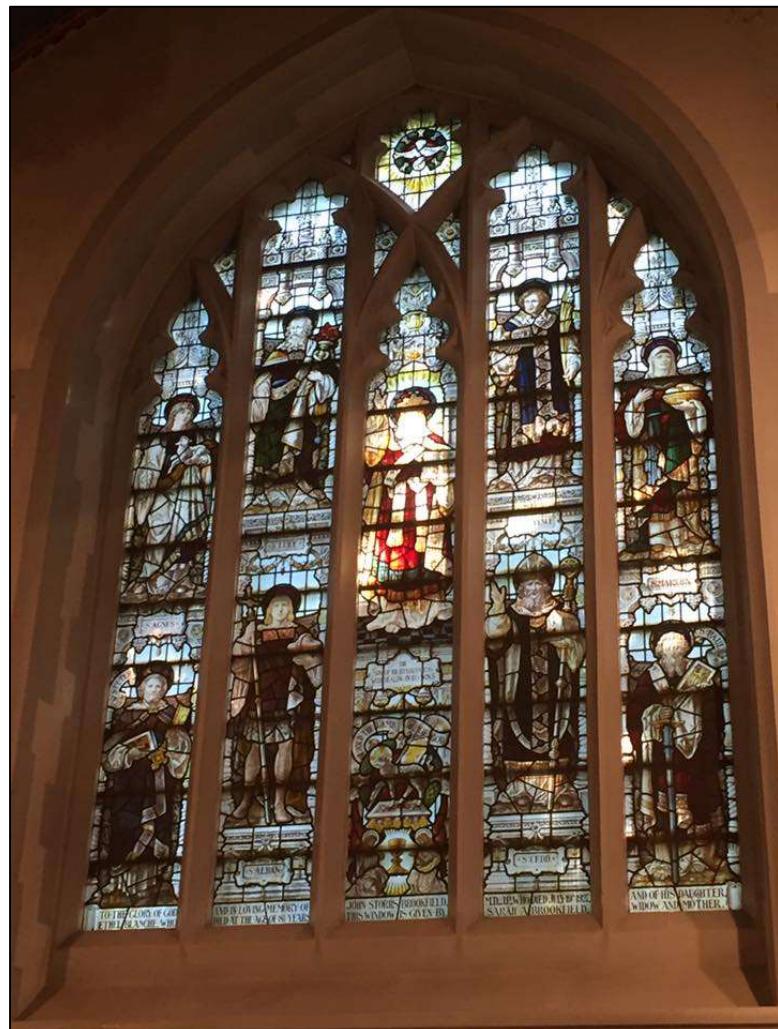
The congregation is encouraged to sponsor certain items of expenditure for specified periods to assist with funding.

Looking to the future

Within Upminster there is a reasonably strong sense of community and a sense of support and goodwill towards the Church. The Church has contact with a wide range of people and groups and is privileged to be involved in joyful, routine and difficult moments in people's lives. We need to find ways, though, to continue to build on existing contacts, to maintain good pastoral contact and availability and to resource mission and ministry for the future.

There is also a need to offer ongoing regular, focused formational opportunities both for those who are regular churchgoers and those who are not, and to find ways to encourage people to explore vocation, both in its broadest sense and in terms of their place within the church community. It is important to ensure that skills, knowledge and roles relating to the church are shared and passed on from one generation to the next. It is also important that we seek to engage as best we can with those who are attending church in connection with school application processes – parents and children.

An Associate Priest is sought to assist with Sunday and midweek services and occasional offices, to provide cover when the Rector has to be elsewhere or on leave, to enhance pastoral ministry and to help to grow links with the wider community. We would be particularly keen to appoint someone who has a desire to help to grow our work with the 'Building Faith' families and/or with teenagers, but who is also able to engage well in other areas of parish life.



The following description and specification set out requirements that are specific to this post. It is already assumed that the person appointed would be a priest who takes their calling seriously, is attentive to the words of the Ordinal and would have regard to the general responsibilities of the clergy, including relevant legislation, formation and safeguarding requirements.

Role Description: House-for-Duty Associate Priest

We are seeking someone who is willing to share in the priestly ministry required by the parish and to be part of our mission to be a church that is available for and visible within the local community.

Specific duties would include:

- Being present at the 9.30am Parish Mass each Sunday and at least one other Sunday service.
- Sharing in preaching and leading of services, on a rota basis – to include the full range of forms of worship offered at St Laurence.
- Attendance at and leading of Morning and Evening Prayer.
- Providing preparation for, and leading, occasional offices.
- Engaging with young people's ministry, to include 'Building Faith' and associated initiatives.
- Sharing in pastoral ministry – home visiting, offering counsel etc.
- Attendance at staff meetings, PCC and other relevant meetings
- Work with schools and uniformed organisations, as appropriate.
- Work with catechetical/study groups/faith development initiatives, as appropriate.
- Involvement in other projects and ministries as seems appropriate and according to experience, skills, interest and the needs of the parish.
- Providing a degree of general cover, within the time commitment of this post, when the Rector is on leave or needs to be otherwise absent.

A house is provided for better performance of the duties of this post. No rent is charged and council tax, water bills and reasonable working expenses will be paid. The priest appointed will be able to access (and in some cases required to make use of) training and support provided by the Diocese of Chelmsford.

The time commitment would be Sundays plus two days or equivalent during the week, with specifics to be negotiated according to circumstance. The pro-rata holiday entitlement for this post is 6 Sundays and 12 other days. On occasion (e.g. Holy Week) it will be necessary for the Associate Priest to work extra days for which they will be given time off in lieu, but the normal pattern of work will be expected to add up to 3 days per week.

The person appointed is required to work in collaboration with and under the direction of the Rector. They should also be prepared to collaborate with those who have responsibilities in the many areas of lay ministry, and in their own ministry should always be seeking to enable and develop the vocation and ministry of others.

Person Specification: House-for-Duty Associate Priest

Essential:

- Experience of, and appreciation for, parish ministry.
- Comfortable within a modern Anglo-Catholic context; someone who is enlivened and fed by worship of a Catholic nature. Willing to lead and participate in all the forms of worship offered at St Laurence. Able to understand and work within inherited traditions whilst also being open to new developments and more informal kinds of services.
- A proven ability to minister collaboratively and enthusiastically with and alongside others. Able to take initiative, to lead, and to make contributions from own experience and skills, but to do so within a collaborative framework.
- Recognition of the value of pastoral care.
- Experience of ministering to people of all ages.
- Theologically astute and able to communicate theological ideas in an engaging and understandable way.
- An ability to help others to explore faith and vocation.
- Administratively competent and with the ability to use computers for word processing, email, internet access and video calling, and to produce printed materials to a good standard.
- Able to balance seriousness and light-heartedness, as appropriate!
- Attentive to the self-understanding of the parish, in which teamwork plays an essential part.

Desirable:

- Full driving licence
- Willingness to sing liturgically (e.g. in the Eucharistic Prayer and the leading of Evensong) or openness to trying to learn this skill.
- Proven experience of effective ministry with children and young people