

ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH. BARKING

"The Abbey Church"



2026

PARISH PROFILE

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Welcome to St Margaret's Church, Barking

St Margaret's is a church of remarkable contrasts: a Grade I listed building rooted in more than eight centuries of parish worship, standing beside the remains of Barking Abbey where Christian prayer began over 1,300 years ago, and, at the same time, a lively urban church in one of London's fastest changing and most diverse communities.

We are thankful for growth in recent years: a growing congregation, children coming to the Communion rail, a developing choir and music ministry, renewed work with children and young people, strong school relationships, and a congregation willing to serve. We enter the vacancy with gratitude for what God has done and with real expectation about what may come next.

We are especially encouraged by the growth of the congregation and the encouragement of seeing so many children participating in Sunday worship.

Our partnership with the Centre for Theology & Community and Citizens UK has been described as one of the most significant developments of 2025. Through "Listen & Lead", we are learning to listen more deeply to one another and to our neighbours, identify leaders, and discern how St Margaret's can serve Barking with courage and imagination.

The invitation

We are not looking for someone simply to maintain what already exists. We are looking for a vicar who will love this place and its people, honour the breadth of our tradition, equip others for ministry, and help us turn opportunity into sustainable mission.



Parish Profile 2026

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Who We Are Praying For

We are seeking a vicar whose life with God is visible and exemplary, whose leadership releases the gifts of others, and whose confidence in the gospel is matched by curiosity about people.

Faith & worship

A prayerful disciple of Jesus Christ, rooted in Scripture and open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Comfortable working across our open evangelical and Catholic traditions, valuing Word and Sacrament and enabling a breadth of worship styles.

A thoughtful, engaging preacher and teacher who can connect Christian faith with the lived realities of a diverse urban parish.

Mission & pastoral ministry

Passionate about evangelism, discipleship and growing new leaders from within the church.
Committed to children, young people and families, and able to encourage our schools ministry and Youth & Children's Worker.
A warm and skilled pastor who is approachable across cultures, generations and circumstances including people at the margins.
Excited by community organising, civic engagement, ecumenical partnership and the opportunities created by regeneration.

Leadership & stewardship

Collaborative, consultative and able to articulate a shared vision, delegate well and develop teams.
Organised and confident with governance, finance, fundraising, buildings and the practical demands of a complex parish.
Committed to safeguarding as a culture, not simply a compliance task.
Honest, open, resilient and able to bring people with them through change.

Above all

We hope for someone who will love St Margaret's, its worship, its children, its elders, its newcomers, its volunteers, its history, its neighbourhood and its unfinished possibilities and who will help us follow Christ together.

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What do we offer the new Vicar.

A vibrant, supportive, faith driven and culturally diverse church family: rooted in tradition, curious about the Bible, open to growth and ready to explore creative ways of expressing Christian faith.

A congregation that values prayer, preaching, Holy Communion, music, fellowship and service.

A growing ministry among children and young people, with a paid Youth & Children's Worker and an expanding volunteer team.

Strong relationships with local schools and an extraordinary stream of schoolchildren visiting the church.

Experienced churchwardens, PCC members, lay ministers, musicians, servers, AV volunteers, bellringers, safeguarding and support teams.



A purpose built Church Centre with significant community and income generating potential.

A nationally significant heritage setting beside Barking Abbey and the Curfew Tower.

A civic role and relationships across the borough, deanery and wider community.

A substantial five bedroom, spacious semi detached home with two reception rooms, fitted kitchen and garage in Barking.

And perhaps most importantly:
A parish that knows there are challenges and is willing to work on them together.

Parish Profile

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The Church We Are Becoming

A church family with many voices

Fellowship is a central mark of our congregation and this comes alive through the various organizations and groups in the church.

The following groups offer opportunities to meet, share and grow in our Christian walk

Baptism Preparation, Bell Ringers, Choir, Dove club (Sunday morning children's groups), Youth group, Junior Confirmation, Ladies Breakfast Bar (open to and attended by a range of local churches), & Fellows of Antioch (Men's Fellowship)







Our many "bring and share" gatherings hosted by various groups in the church bring food, fun, and smiles and sharing this is a powerful opportunity for Christian evangelism.





The grounds around our church encourage a garden atmosphere which we all look forward to especially in the summer time.

The Halls in the church Community Centre are more than adequate in cooler seasons as we share tea, biscuits and a rich variety of international dishes.

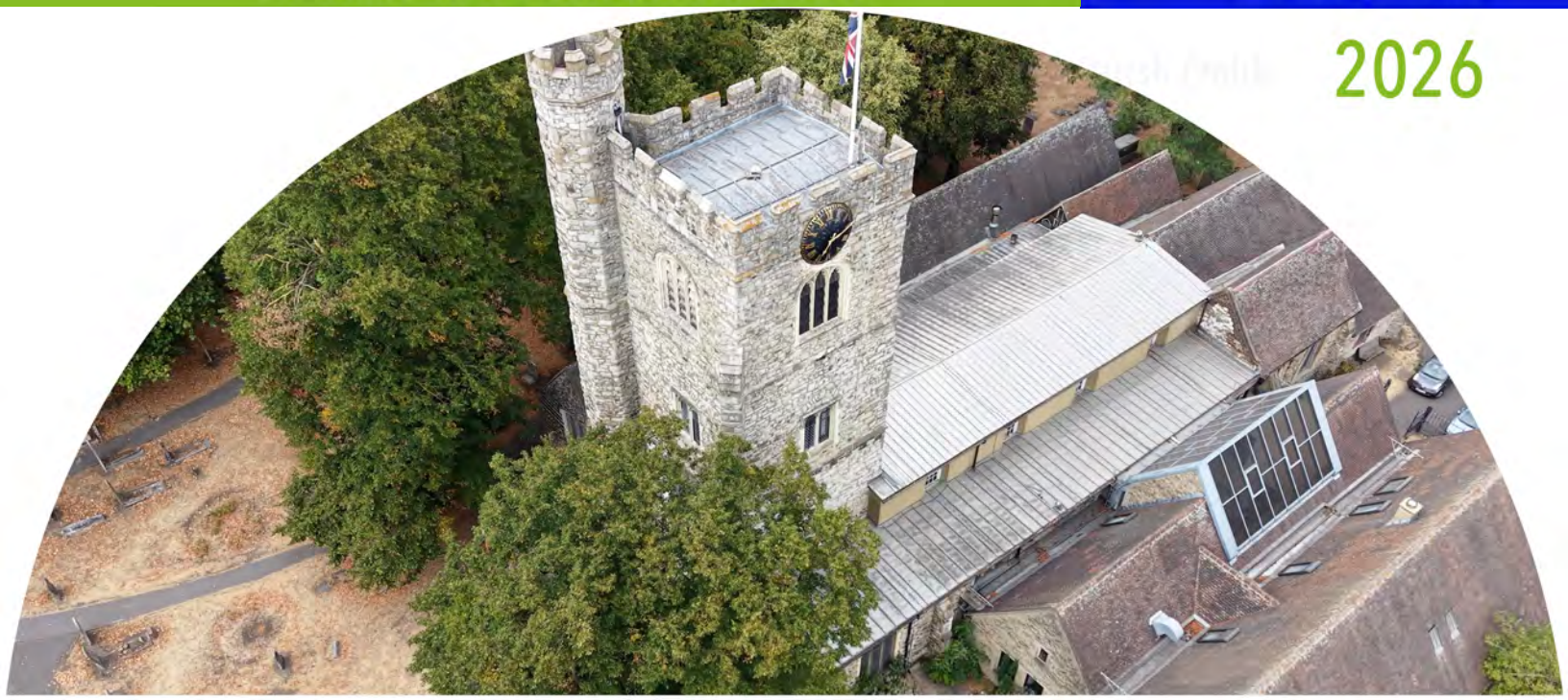




OUR HEART

Centred on Jesus Christ, shaped by Scripture and sacrament, and expressed through welcome, service and friendship.

2026



The Church We Are Becoming

Our Civic Links

St. Margaret's is the main Civic Church for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. In May each year the newly elected Mayor and Councillors usually attend a Civic Service. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant and local M.P. also attend. The Sermon is generally preached by the Mayor's Chaplain (who may be a visitor).

On Remembrance Sunday the Vicar leads a service with the Royal British Legion at the War Memorial in Barking Park before the "Civic Service" in Church with The Mayor, other Dignitaries and uniformed organisations. At the Job Drain VC Memorial Statue opposite the Abbey Green a service is held on the 11th November at 11.00a.m.







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St Margaret's is proudly multicultural. Our congregation reflects the international character of Barking, bringing different cultures, accents stories and church backgrounds into one family.

We value both our Catholic inheritance and our open evangelical life. We want a vicar who is at ease with this breadth, someone who can preach Scripture with depth and clarity, preside reverently, pray expectantly and create space for the gifts of others. This breadth is central to the kind of vicar we are seeking.

A culture of participation

Lay people already serve across worship, governance, safeguarding, children's work, hospitality, music, bellringing, AV, finance, fabric and community activities.

During this vacancy, clergy and lay leaders continue to carry responsibility faithfully. Our next Vicar will inherit not a passive congregation, but a community with people ready to contribute, learn and lead.

OUR HEART

Worship • Community • Hospitality

**Centred on Jesus Christ,
shaped by Scripture and sacrament,
and expressed through welcome,
service and friendship.**

Children, Young People & Schools

St Margaret's Church Barking Youth Group has a very long history dating back to pre-1940s. Over the years our vibrant Youth Groups have been the root of the Church and a dependable source of dedicated Christians skilled in ministry.

Children and young people are not an "extra" at St Margaret's Church; they are central to our present life and to our hopes for the future. In 2025-26 the Sunday groups; Dove Club maintained steady participation, eight young people were confirmed, and the regular tvolunteer team grew to ten.

Growing faith on Sundays

Our Sunday groups help children and young people encounter Jesus through Bible teaching, games, creativity, prayer and relationships.
We want to keep developing a ministry that is joyful, safe, rooted in faith and connected to the worshipping life of the whole church.

Abbey Toddlers & holiday activities

Abbey Toddlers celebrated its first birthday in early 2026 and regularly welcomes around ten children each week for play, crafts, songs, Bible story and bubbles. Holiday film and craft sessions draw around 30 families from local schools, a valuable bridge between church and community.

An exceptional schools' opportunity

Our Youth & Children's Worker and the clergy have built relationships across all seven primary schools in the parish in different ways.

By the end of July 2026, more than 1,000 children were expected to have come through the church doors to learn about Christianity and the history of St Margaret's. There is also ongoing support for RE at Eastbury Community School.



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At the Heart of Barking

St Margaret's Church stands close to Barking town centre, beside Barking Abbey and within a community experiencing major regeneration. Good rail and Underground links connect Barking with central London, Essex and the wider capital. New housing continues to reshape the neighbourhood, bringing new residents, young families and fresh possibilities for mission.

We recognise both the challenges and extraordinary potential of this changing context, including new housing and the opportunity this creates for evangelism and ministry.



A place of challenge and possibility

The parish includes areas of significant deprivation as well as new development and professional households. Housing ranges from tower blocks and social housing to terraces and newer developments.
The community is young, mobile, ethnically and religiously diverse. This complexity asks for ministry that is rooted, relational and attentive rather than one-size-fits-all.

A church that can convene

Our location and history give St Margaret's a distinctive civic presence.
The church has long-standing links with the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham, local schools, the Nepton Trust and other community partners.

In 2025 we hosted a Windrush service and community celebration, welcomed Bishop Guli to preach at an open-air Pentecost service in the Abbey grounds, and worked with other local churches.
We want to deepen this outward-facing role.

Listening before launching

Our work with the Centre for Theology & Community and Citizens UK is helping us resist the temptation to begin with programmes. "Listen & Lead" offers a way to discover the concerns, gifts and leaders already present in our congregation and neighbourhood, then act together.

We hope our new Vicar will embrace and develop this approach.

Hospitality, Compassion & Community

The St Margaret's Centre

Our purpose built Church Centre is a major asset for mission, Christian Fellowship and sustainability.
It contains flexible meeting space, a refectory/café area, kitchen, offices and a secure garden. It is used by church groups, community organisations and private hirers.

In 2025 hall letting income rose to £23,852, more than double the previous year, reflecting active promotion.
The Centre is more than a venue. At its best, it is a front door into relationship: a place where people meet, celebrate, learn, seek support and encounter the church and Christ Jesus in an informal setting. It's the gathering place for social celebrations after church services
We want to continue developing it as a welcoming, well run and financially sustainable hub.

A CHURCH WITH OPEN DOORS

Breakfast guests, toddlers, schoolchildren, worshippers, tourists, hirers, civic leaders, Brownies, bellringers and neighbours all cross our threshold.
Our opportunity is to help every welcome become a relationship, and every relationship become an opportunity for grace.









Heritage as mission

A living historic church

Music, Heritage & Celebration

The parish church of St Margaret of Antioch dates from the early thirteenth century and is the living continuation of the story of Barking Abbey, founded in 666.
The oldest parts of the church date from around 1215. The Curfew Tower at the churchyard entrance is the surviving gateway of the Abbey complex, while the church itself contains centuries of local and national memory.

Visitors come because of the Abbey, the Curfew Tower, the church's architecture, stained glass, bells and centuries of story.
The church and Curfew Tower are opened on designated open days, and our bellringers welcome visitors and younger groups into the tower.
We see heritage not as a museum exercise but as an invitation: a way to tell the Christian story, integrate our faith walk into the community and offer beauty, peace and prayer to people who may not otherwise enter a church.

Bells and music

Our bells are rung for Sunday worship and festivals, with practice on Tuesday evenings.
In 2025 the bell ropes were replaced, the tower welcomed children and young people for demonstrations, and St Margaret's hosted ringers from across Essex.
The choir and organ enrich regular worship, civic occasions, concerts and major festivals, including Nine Lessons and Carols.

Celebration in public

The Abbey grounds create unusual possibilities for worship and community events.
The 2025 open-air Pentecost service brought local churches together and welcomed the Bishop of Chelmsford.
Windrush celebrations, civic services, Remembrance, school services, concerts and heritage events all show how St Margaret's can gather people around faith, memory and hope.

Support in the Vacancy and Beyond

We thank God for the faithful ministry of our self-supporting ministers alongside our lay preacher and a wide range of lay leadership. The PCC, wardens and ministry teams are committed to sustaining worship and parish life through the vacancy and to welcoming a new Vicar into a genuinely shared ministry.



Our Priorities for the First Season

We do not expect everything at once.
We hope the first season of a new incumbency will be characterised by prayer, listening, relationship building and a few clear priorities.

Listen & pray - Meet people across the church and parish; understand our stories, gifts, pressures and hopes; continue the Listen & Lead culture.

Gather a shared vision - Help PCC, ministry leaders and congregation turn listening into a small number of compelling, achievable priorities.

Deepen discipleship - Strengthen prayer, biblical confidence, sacramental life, small-group or other pathways, and everyday faith.

Invest in the next generation - Support youth workers and volunteers; connect Sunday ministry, schools, toddlers, holidays, young adults and family life.

Diverse Worship - Support the growth of Christ focused church worship, the choir and the music outreach ministry

Strengthen sustainability - Work with lay leaders on giving, Centre income, fundraising, buildings and realistic financial planning.

Be present in Barking - Build relationships with civic, community, ecumenical and interfaith partners; make the most of our town-centre and Abbey location.

SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE...

...a church growing not only in attendance but in discipleship and effective evangelism; more people discovering and using their gifts; children and young people becoming lifelong followers of Jesus; deeper relationships with our neighbours; and a financially and physically sustainable base for mission.

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Home is where the heart is and the Vicarage is a semi-detached five bedroom centrally heated house situated outside the parish at 20 Sandringham Road, Barking.

A lovely neighborhood great for walks and calmer streets. Close to public transportation. Spacious corner house, with newly built garage, 5 bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, brand new fitted kitchen and 2 integral staircases.







Come and Discover St Margaret's

There is much more to St Margaret's than can fit into a profile.
Come and stand in a place where Christians have prayed for more than a millennium.
Meet a church family whose roots span the world.
Hear the bells.
Share Communion.
Talk with our children and volunteers.
Walk through the Abbey ruins.
Look at the new homes rising around us.

Then imagine what God might do next.

We believe this is a parish of unusual opportunity: historic but not stuck in the past; diverse but seeking deeper unity; active but ready for clearer focus; realistic about its challenges and hopeful about its future.

If you are a prayerful vicar who loves people, Scripture, sacrament, mission and the adventure of building a shared vision, we would be delighted for you to explore whether
God may be calling you to St Margaret's Church Barking.