

Parish Profile: The Parish of Wickford and Runwell



The Parish

The parish of Wickford and Runwell is situated in south Essex, between Basildon and Chelmsford. Wickford was originally a market town serving the local farming community. As the town has expanded the neighbouring village of Runwell has been incorporated, and they now form a continuous area. Extensive development is still taking place, most recently at St Luke's Park to the north of Runwell. After the last war, many people moved to Wickford from the east end of London and there remain strong links with that area. Others have moved from Basildon, neighbouring towns, or from further afield using Wickford as a base to commute to London. Most housing is owner-occupied and in places there are small traveller Communities.

The Wickford and Runwell Team Ministry, a parish of 40,000 people, was formed in 1981 from St Andrew's based in Wickford town centre, St Catherine's (historically the parish church) on the hill to the east of Wickford, and St Mary's to the north in the village of Runwell.



The parish has been through a time of change with a re-shaping of the pattern of ministry, moving from three stipendiary clergy, each with pastoral responsibility for a particular church, to a smaller stipendiary team, working with self-supporting clergy and laity from across all three churches. Revd Jonathan Evens is Team Rector, Revd Nik Wright is Curate, Emma Doe and Mike Tricker are Licensed Lay Ministers. Mike is Rail/Street Pastor and Emma is Spiritual Adviser at Wickford Church of England School. Our pastoral visitors group is made up of authorised Pastoral Assistants, who take on a variety of roles, including visiting, administering home communion, and sharing in worship in care homes.

A joint PCC meets regularly to coordinate between the churches and to manage the parish finances and strategic oversight. Each of our churches has its own team of wardens and a District Church Council who serve to develop the mission and worship of each church, maintain the fabric of the buildings and run the local church halls.

Vision

We are seeking to be connecting churches: connecting with individuals, with our community, and with God. In this way, we aim to be churches, and a team of churches, that are at the heart of the communities of Wickford and Runwell, while also being with those on the edge. We are using the HeartEdge mission model, the 4C's of compassion, culture, commerce and congregation, together with the idea of Being With, as an incarnational model of mission and ministry:

- **Compassion:** We are involved with our ecumenical partners in the Gateway Project, the local Foodbank hosted by the Salvation Army. We also collect for the local Women's Refuge and fundraise for our Kenya Link (Positive Life Kenya). Occasional collections have also been made at our churches to support other organisations and causes. We partner with Kintsugi Hope and ran our fourth Wellbeing Group during 2026. We also run a Parent and Toddler Group at St Catherine's. Our coffee mornings and Meet and Make group provide warm spaces to local residents.
- **Culture:** We have further developed St Andrew's as a cultural centre for the town through our 'Unveiled' arts and performance evenings, an exhibition programme, and other occasional events/concerts. In 2025, we used UKSPF Feasibility Funding to explore the potential of St Andrew's Church and Centre to operate as a cultural and heritage centre for the town and, as a result, have expanded our cultural and heritage offerings.
- **Commerce:** We hire out our Halls at all three of our churches (St Andrew's uses the Sharesy App to do so) and have a contract for rental of the car park at St Andrew's.
- **Congregation:** Our core activities include – Services; Messy Church; Mothers Union; Quiet Days (St Mary's); Pastoral Visitors; Educational opportunities (Bible Study groups, Lent Course, Being With courses); discuss (our Youth discussion group); Prayer Circle; and Social/fundraising events.

For us, Being With others includes: Care Homes services; Contemplative Commuters; Meet & Make (Craft group); Nazareth Community (contemplative prayer); Parent and Toddler Group; Rail/Street Pastors (Mike Tricker); Saturday Solace; Schools ministry; and Unveiled events.

We hope that in our three churches visitors and regulars will find: a warm welcome, whoever they are, wherever they come from, and whatever they bring, because all are made in God's image; and people in all their variety who try to live out God's transforming love for this parish and community.

Mission and ministry



We have 93 people on our Electoral Roll, of whom 86 are resident in the Parish.

Our members enable our three churches and halls to function as hubs for the community. Between them activities and groups supported include: Coffee Mornings; Councillor Surgery; Art and Heritage Exhibitions; Floral Art; Gamblers Anonymous; Lace Makers; Ladies Support Group; Martial Arts;

Meditation; Meet & Make (Crafts Group); Mothers Union; Parent's 1st Group; Phlebotomy Clinic; Rangers; Steps; Tai-Chi; U3A; Unveiled arts and performance evening; Warfarin Clinic; WI Craft Group; Wickford Chapter; Wickford Lodge; Wickford Women's Institute; and several Yoga Groups. These groups and activities provide a wide range of social, leisure and educational opportunities for the local community. On a monthly basis, we estimate the groups meeting in our Halls benefit in excess of 750 local residents.

In addition, local schools regularly visit our buildings for educational opportunities. Our Unveiled arts and performance evening (Fridays fortnightly) plus our new art and heritage exhibition programme deliver new cultural offers in Wickford. These seek to bring high quality art and performance to Wickford while also encouraging local talent by providing new platforms for local performers and artists.



Our Sunday morning pattern of Services is: 9.30 am St Mary's; 10.00 am St Andrew's (livestreamed); and 11.00 am St Catherine's. There are All-Age Services at St Andrew's on the first Sunday in the month, St Catherine's on the second Sunday in the month, and St Mary's on the third Sunday in the month. Joint services for all three churches happen on the fifth Sundays in the month. Evening Services are held on the second, third, fourth and fifth Sundays in the month at St Mary's (Reflective Evening Prayer), St Andrew's (Healing Eucharist) and St Catherine's (Evensong) respectively, with a Songs of Praise held at St Catherine's on the fifth Sunday. We say Morning Prayer at 9.00 am on Tuesdays (St Andrew's), Wednesdays (St Catherine's) and Thursdays (St Mary's). These services are livestreamed, as is our midweek Eucharist at St Andrew's at 10.30 am on Wednesdays.

The parish has a Liberal Catholic heritage, but members of our congregations come from diverse backgrounds within and beyond the Church of England. St Andrew's seeks to be a warm, welcoming, and inclusive community. St Catherine's seeks to retain something of the feel of a village church. St Mary's is liturgically the most catholic of the three churches.

Much of our mission and outreach, including Messy Church (bi-monthly on Saturdays), the Gateway foodbank (ecumenical initiative), Open the Book (schools work), ministry in care homes (monthly services in five homes), and other initiatives, is enabled by teams drawn from across our three churches.

Our school's ministry includes after-school clubs, assemblies, lessons, and visits. We have input at 9 Primary Schools and 1 Secondary School. We have developed mission initiatives related to our context including: Contemplative Commuters - a Facebook group for any commuter wanting quiet reflective time and content on their journeys to and from work; Saturday Solace - 10-minute reflection and Christian mindfulness sessions between 10.00 am & 12 noon on Saturdays at St Andrew's and St Catherine's; and Unveiled – an arts and performance evening which is part of establishing St Andrew's as a cultural and heritage centre for Wickford.

Our average weekly attendance across the parish in October 2025 was 116, with 113 in our worshipping community and a usual Sunday attendance of 71 (and an additional 10 online). During that time our churches held their Harvest Festivals, we also had several baptisms, held our usual midweek (including home communions and care home services) and evening services, and hosted a School Harvest Service.

At Christmas 2025, our numbers at Christingle and Crib Services, Midnight Mass and Christmas Day services exceeded those recorded pre-Covid in 2019. Advent and Easter also saw encouraging numbers in church. There were 29 baptisms in 2025, of which six were adults. Four adults were also confirmed, some of whom are part of a growing number of young people in the 20-30's who have joined our congregations. There were four weddings in the parish and our funeral ministry continued with 19 funerals conducted by our clergy, in either church or crematorium, and 10 interments of ashes.



The Person we are looking for

We are looking for a Team Vicar who, under God's grace, will join with us in building upon what has been achieved so far, and work with us as we move forward as a parish.

- Someone who will nurture, motivate and affirm the talents and contributions of others in order to build up and support all those involved in lay ministry in our parish.
- A strong team worker who will want to work with and build up our existing team.
- A self-starter who is able to manage their work tasks and schedule effectively and flexibly.
- Someone passionate about bringing the Word of God to a wider audience, especially to younger families.
- Someone with a pastoral heart to walk with people through the ups and downs of life.
- Someone who is keen to share their knowledge and understanding of scripture through their preaching and teaching.
- A good communicator who can build up relationships with the local community.
- Someone who will take on responsibility for a key aspect of our mission, such as ministry with schools or with care homes.
- Someone who will help us all to see the "bigger picture" while being respectful of different worship styles and church cultures.

We have deliberately not included a role description as we wish to develop this with the input of the successful candidate in order to utilise their skills and interests effectively. The range of ministry currently undertaken by the Ministry Team includes: care home services; chairing of DCC's/PCC; children's and youth work; contemplative commuters; compiling rota's; cultural programming (including Unveiled); educational opportunities (including Lent/Autumn courses, Parish Study Day

etc); leading worship; occasional offices; organisation of committees; parish administration; pastoral visiting; Quiet Days; Saturday Solace; and schools ministry (including Open the Book).

St Mary's Vicarage



The Team Vicar would live in St Mary's Vicarage, a four-bedroom detached house with living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, plus a downstairs study and bathroom by the front door. The house is located on Church End Lane and is alongside the Church Hall and North Churchyard, with a fence separating the house and garden from the Hall and Churchyard. St Mary's Church and Churchyard is on the opposite side of Runwell Road from the Hall and Vicarage.

Further information

Annual Report:

https://www.wickfordandruneellparish.org.uk/uploads/3/5/3/9/35392776/parish_of_wickford_and_runwell-annual_report_2025_draft_.pdf

Website: <https://www.wickfordandruneellparish.org.uk/index.html>

A Church Near You: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/benefice/08-466BH/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WickfordandRunwellCofE>

X: @wickfordrunwel2