

# St James' Church, Cambridge

## **Parish Profile**



“St James' Church Cambridge—  
a warm, welcoming  
community”

# Our church community

St James' Church is an open, diverse, inclusive and understanding community. People with a wide range of personalities, nationalities and faith backgrounds have found a home with us. We offer a warm welcome to individuals from all backgrounds, ranging from those with a mature faith to those just beginning their exploration of what it means to trust in God.

Our buildings, dating from 1955, combine a simplicity of style with a few artistic touches to create the atmosphere and feel of a church, a house of prayer, without compromising its use for community purposes. And they are warm!

Our services are liturgical in style but worn lightly so that people feel relaxed to be themselves and to express themselves. We want our church to be rooted in prayer, listening to God to understand how best to reach out and serve our community, which continues to expand.

Our Sunday-morning sung Eucharist is normally in a traditional style, including three Bible readings, a psalm sung to Anglican chant and a weekly anthem, but with modern flourishes and ideas that appeal to a broad range of worshippers. Children are always welcomed at the Eucharist and are supported with activities related to the readings of the day. These services are streamed for the benefit of those who cannot attend church in person.

“St James' is so welcoming to all minorities”

Other regular services include a said Eucharist earlier on Sunday mornings, twice-weekly morning prayer, a meditation group and a mid-week Eucharist. Major festivals are celebrated, sometimes organised together with St John's Hills Road and St Andrew's Cherry Hinton.

We have a longstanding reputation as a church that encourages Christians to deepen their understanding of our shared faith. Questions can be raised, or doubts expressed, while individuals are treated with respect. Over the years, there have been a variety of home groups, the current manifestation being 'Pilgrim Groups' that grew out of Lenten activities.

We value coffee time after the mid-morning Sunday service as an important part of our ministry, and we hold Lent and Advent breakfasts between the Sunday-morning services to foster interactions between those often-separate groups of people.

The Cambridge Alliance Church meets every Sunday at noon in St James' for two services, in Mandarin and Cantonese. They have been with us for 20 years and often join us for social occasions. We also have a good working relationship with the independent Queen Edith Chapel, across the road from us. Saint Philip Howard Church (Roman Catholic) and a Latter-day Saints church also lie within the parish, while St. Athanasios Church (Greek Orthodox) and a Friends Meeting House lie just outside the boundary.



## Our local community

St James' Church occupies a very flexible building that is used by several different community groups: two art groups; the U3A choir; a guitar group; a knitting group; and Beavers. Indeed, the Church has enjoyed strong relationships with the whole scouting movement; the local scout group is formally church-sponsored.

We have faith-centred activity and craft mornings for local children at Advent and on Good Friday, and in recent years have provided holiday lunch clubs during half terms, including an annual Pumpkin Picnic. Our monthly Bring & Buy sales are popular with the local community.

In May 2020, during the pandemic, St James' opened its doors to the Queen Edith's Community Food Hub, organised by the Queen Edith's Community Forum. Funded by generous donations from local residents and businesses, and run by volunteers, the Hub was originally intended as a temporary response to the crisis. However, the need for affordable food did not diminish, and in 2024 the Hub was succeeded by Fairbite Food Club Queen Edith's, run by St James' in collaboration with Cambridge City Foodbank. Every Saturday morning, in addition to shopping, members can access expert advice from charities and professional agencies, and are warmly welcomed to enjoy free tea, coffee and home-baked cakes. The St James' pastoral care team also attends, offering friendly conversation and a listening ear to anyone who would like it.



St James' is close to a small crescent of shops, including a thriving coffee shop and pub opposite, which have in their different ways become dynamic centres of the local community. St James' has enjoyed good relations with both; in recent years we have led community carols outside the shops, at local sheltered housing, and inside the pub.

Principally serving our own congregation but reaching out to others who don't worship with us regularly, we have run a group called Flames for children aged 10–16, combining a mix of games, social activities and thoughtful discussions. Mainly during the winter, we have also held monthly Puddings and Games evenings, which have attracted participation across all ages.

We recently hosted a Weaving Trust event in partnership with Citizens UK, bringing members of local institutions, faith groups and charities into St James' for shared discussions about community.

## Protecting our community

We want St James' to be a community in which everyone, of all ages, abilities and attributes, feels supported, protected and valued. Thanks to the efforts of our Parish Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and DBS checker, we maintain the highest level (Level 3) of the Diocese's safeguarding requirements. This has been achieved by making Safeguarding more transparent throughout the church and sharing information through talks, posters and leaflets, creating a positive and proactive culture around Safeguarding. Along with the PSO (and our previous vicar) a third member of our congregation is also designated as a 'listener'. These named people are available to be approached by the congregation and have been chosen to represent a wide age range.



# Leading our community

The person we are looking for is someone who:

- has a solid Christian faith, grounded in Scripture and a deep prayer life
- has an outward-looking focus that springs from a natural and genuine concern for people
- is comfortable and empathetic with people from all walks of life, who will naturally want to interact with everyone involved in all aspects of life at St James'
- has a well-trained and acute theological mind
- is an inspiring communicator across all life stages
- has an easy engagement with children, young people, and families
- appreciates good liturgy and church music
- is a flexible team player with a sense of humour

and who will:

- provide leadership that will enable St. James' Church to grow as a lively, prayerful Christian presence that reaches out to our local community
- encourage, support and energise lay people in realising and developing their gifts for use in God's service
- be a role model for a Christian life
- teach and communicate the Gospel with inspiration and imagination
- plan and lead worship in a way that enables a wide range of people to encounter God

In recent decades, we have been blessed with the active involvement of several ordinands and curates and a Licensed Lay Minister, which has enabled a broader range of outreach than a part-time incumbent would have managed alone.



## Where we are

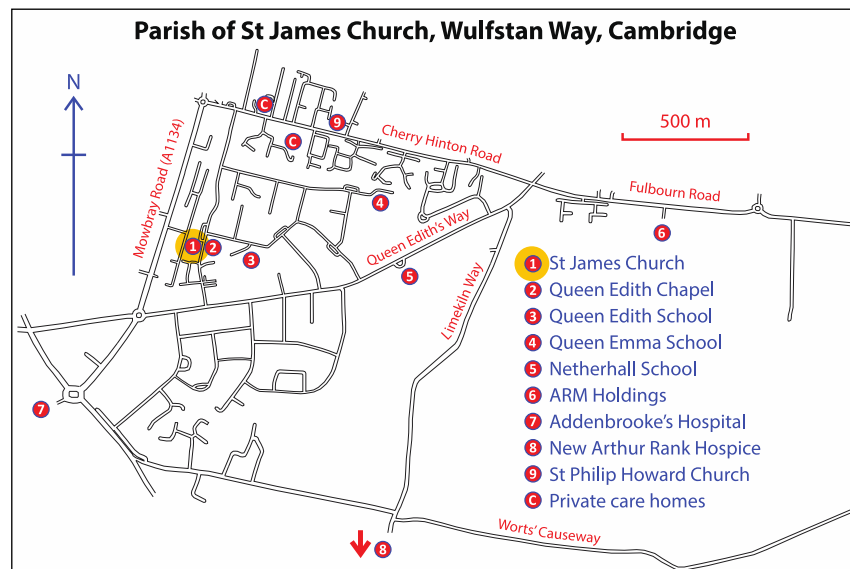
St James' is located in the Deanery of Cambridge South, Diocese of Ely. The parish covers 1.5 square miles, half of which is housing and the rest suburban shops and businesses, school playing fields, recreation grounds and agricultural land. Its 6,600 residents (2021 census) live in Queen Edith's ward for City and County Council purposes, and in the parliamentary constituency of South Cambridgeshire. Accommodation is divided between post-war council houses, of which a considerable number are now privately owned, a concentration of sheltered housing close to the church, and larger family houses. A new development towards the south of the parish, currently under construction, will include 200 homes inside our boundary adjoining a further 200 homes just outside.

Residents work in a wide range of occupations, including the University, Hospital and nearby biomedical campus. There is a stable core population, but many families live here briefly in short-term work, education or training.

There are two state primary schools, Queen Edith and Queen Emma, each with about 400 pupils, including nursery classes, and managed by the Queens' Federation. Neither is a church school, but many incumbents (including the most recent) have been governors there, and clergy and lay volunteers have offered assemblies and curriculum support.

The parish also contains Netherhall Secondary School, which has around 1,300 pupils, including a sixth form (Oakes College). St Bede's Inter-Church Secondary School (900 students) and the small, private Cambridge International School are just outside the parish boundary.

Employers in the parish are concentrated in three areas. Close to the church are a parade of shops, a public house and two doctors' surgeries. At the eastern edge of the parish is a technology park that houses the semiconductor design company ARM Holdings plc and Cambridge Water Company. The northern boundary along Cherry Hinton Road includes two private nursing homes (where St James' has an active presence), a petrol station and a commercial trading estate.



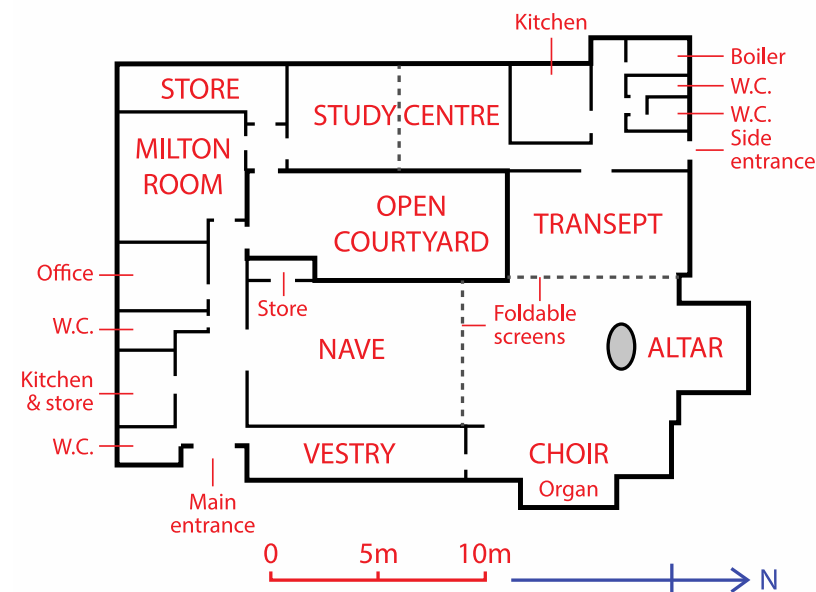


To the southwest, just outside the parish, are Addenbrooke's regional teaching hospital and Cambridge Biomedical Campus, home to numerous research businesses and other institutions, including the AstraZeneca headquarters and the new Royal Papworth Hospital. A new children's hospital is currently under construction.

The parish is served by frequent bus services to the city centre and the railway station, which has fast direct trains with a 55-minute journey time to central London. As a result, the parish includes regular commuters who work in the capital. The Cambridge South railway station, principally serving the biomedical campus, will open in 2026.

## Our buildings

The original church was built in 1955 in an area of new housing at the southwest end of the large parish of St Andrew's Cherry Hinton, to accommodate a congregation that was already meeting in Queen Edith School. This small building was extended to its present length in 1956, and then twice more between 1966 and 1980. The church is built on a north-south axis, with the sanctuary at the north end, a transept to the west, and the choir, organ and vestry on the eastern side; its maximum seating capacity is 300. An entrance hall at the end of the nave leads into community rooms with two kitchens, which can be accessed without entering the nave. The buildings are constructed around an open, paved courtyard, accessed via the transept and the community rooms. Outside, there is a car park with bicycle racks. A lawn to the side of the building is used for



church activities during the summer and contains a garage where the local Scout group keeps its equipment. The rest of the grounds are laid to lawn, with hedges and shrubs. Thanks to the hard work of our Fabric Committee and other volunteers, the buildings and grounds are well maintained, internally and externally, in good decorative order and with good access for the disabled. The church does not have a graveyard.

## Vicarage and Curate's house

The vicarage adjoins the church and was built in 1956. It has five bedrooms, a study and a good-sized garden. It is in good condition and has been modernised several times over the years. A curate's house was built on the church site in 1993, with vehicle access via Hulatt Road; it has four bedrooms and a small garden.



# Services

## Regular services

Sunday 8 A.M.	Eucharist. Common Worship (CW), said; 1st Sunday, Book of Common Prayer.
Sunday 10 A.M.	Sung Eucharist. CW, musical setting (Thorne Mass); 1st Sunday, All-Age Eucharist.
Monday 9.10 A.M.	Morning Prayer.
Wednesday 9.10 A.M.	Morning Prayer.
Wednesday 10.15 A.M.	Eucharist. CW, said; 1st Wednesday, in Dunstan Court (sheltered housing).

Our Eucharist services normally use liturgy from Common Worship. Once a month, the early Sunday service uses liturgy from the Book of Common Prayer, while the mid-morning service is an All-Age Eucharist that includes a more informal liturgy and more diverse hymns accompanied by a music group.

## Special services

Special services (e.g. Ascension Day) and quiet days (e.g. for Advent and Lent) are arranged collaboratively on a rotational basis with neighbouring parishes (St John's Hills Road and St Andrew's Cherry Hinton).

## Pastoral visits

St James' has had, until recently, two Authorised Lay Ministers who (under the supervision of the incumbent) coordinated regular pastoral visiting and care. They also ran hymn services at the two care homes and sheltered housing units in the parish and administered house communion from Reserved Sacrament when required. It would be good to identify and support new people into these roles.

## Choir and music

St James' has a strong musical tradition, principally through its choir. Numbers have waxed and waned over the years, but the full membership is currently 25, including seven of school age. One of the choir members is acting Director of Music, and we have a rota of five local organists. Principally supporting the mid-morning Eucharist, at which we sing the psalm to Anglican Chant and a post-communion anthem, we also hold occasional community events such as Sing Messiah. A small group of musicians (orchestral instruments), accommodating people of all musical abilities, accompanies the monthly All-Age Eucharist.



## Teaching and outreach

### Sundays

During services, teaching for adults involves lectionary-based preaching and occasional discussions. Running in parallel with the middle section of the mid-morning service are weekly craft-based children's stations, inspired by the lectionary readings, attracting up to 10 children aged four to 12. Older children are encouraged to listen to the sermon. Currently, these stations are offered in the transept, which means they can be run by one adult, rather than two. We have recently been joined by some new Sunday school leaders, and if sufficient numbers are achieved, we aim to hold a Sunday School in the Study Centre to allow more lively interactions.

### Local outreach

We have an easily accessible outward-facing website to help local people find out what is going on at St James' and we reach out to the wider parish through the Queen Edith Community Forum.

### International outreach

Through a Church Mission Society link, we continue to support a couple who used to live in the parish and are now involved in theological education in Bangalore, India. We also participate in Christian Aid week each year, and engage in *ad hoc* fundraising as needs arise, for example for disaster relief.

## Opportunities

Any future developments at St James' will of course be shaped by the passions and gifts of our new incumbent. As a community, we are excited by the potential and possibilities this brings. While reflecting and discussing what the future may hold, the PCC has been particularly interested in the three following possibilities.

### Food Club

Despite the Food Club only operating in its current format for just over a year, it already offers significant social support in addition to the obvious financial support. There are signs that its existence is allowing people to appreciate the Church as a valuable part of their own community, and we would like to see this grow as an important part of our ministry.

### School links

We are privileged to have strong links with the Queens' Federation primary schools, Queen Edith and Queen Emma. Our previous incumbent and curate served as federation governors, and offered regular assemblies, class visits and curriculum support. This visibility has led to several local families becoming core members of St James' congregation. We would like to strengthen these school links, and to forge a connection with Netherhall secondary school.

### Young people

The number of young people of secondary age regularly involved in church life, either through the youth group (Flames) or main church services is consistently about a dozen, mostly the children of involved families. Those with a musical bent remain attached through affiliation with the choir, but others can lose contact due to competing options, such as Sunday morning sports, large youth ministries in city-centre churches, and other social activities. Youth events can be unpredictable in terms of attendance which puts off others who are keen to come. This is an area in which we have particularly benefited from the input of recent curates, as the





teens seek to build relationships and ask the big questions of life from adults other than their parents. Flames hasn't met for several months, in part because a part-time curate has moved on and our current curate has been stretched during the vacancy. Considering our proximity to Netherhall School, we believe that there is potential for re-building a youth group at St James'.

“I enjoy the Congregation being relaxed around children and those with additional needs”



## Facts and figures

### Attendance

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Electoral Roll</b>							
Membership	95	96	92	92	89	88	67 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Sunday attendance (8:00 and 10:00)</b>							
Over 16's	72	11	54	60	60	60	59
Under 16's	15		13	12	12	14	11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Christmas services</b>							
Communicants	119	18	100	96	88	97	
Attendance	136	19	115	136	113	119	
<b>Easter services</b>							
Communicants	115	0	14	96	91	98	105
Attendance	175	0	53	104	105	122	117
<b>Occasional services</b>							
Funerals <sup>b</sup>	4	1	3	3	2	1	2
Baptisms <sup>c</sup>	3	1	0	0	1	3	1
Weddings <sup>d</sup>	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Confirmations <sup>e</sup>	1	0	0	5	0	5	0

*a, b, c, d, e - see page 11*

### Church employees

The church employs a secretary for 12 hours per week, worked over three days (generally two in the church office and one remotely). The current secretary has been in post since 2000. We also employ a part-time cleaner/caretaker (eight hours per week) who lives locally and is responsible for opening and closing the church, as needed.

We also employ a coordinator for the Fairbite Food Club Queen Edith's (FFCQE) for 10 hours per week, which is funded by takings of the Food Club.

We do not have a permanent organist, but are well resourced by three volunteers who cover most services and two external organists who are paid on a per-service basis. We also currently have a volunteer Director of Music, for what had previously been a paid role.

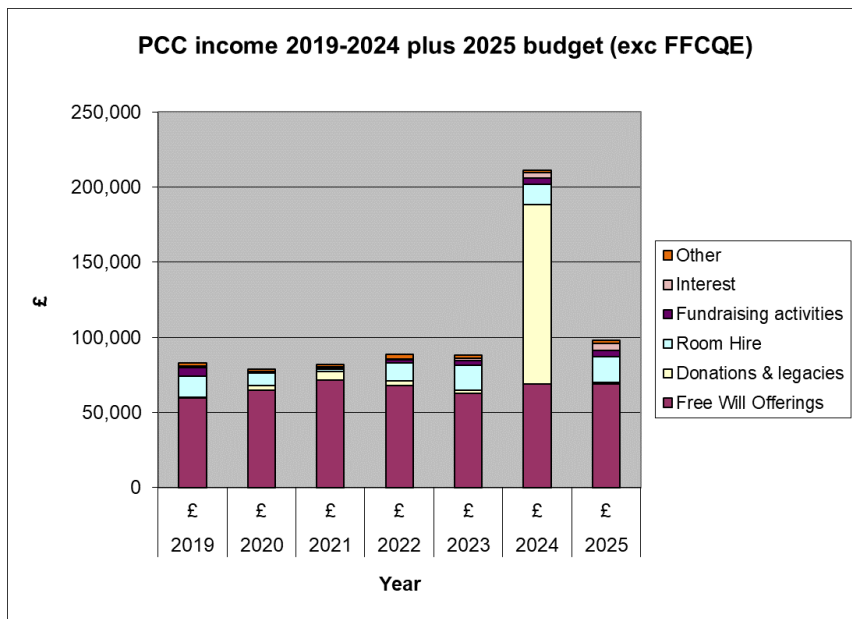
## Finance (excluding FFCQE)

Annual giving to the church via freewill offerings is around £68,000 of which around £62,000 is from regular offerings. There are around 45 regular givers. Almost all of our freewill offerings income is tax-efficiently donated.

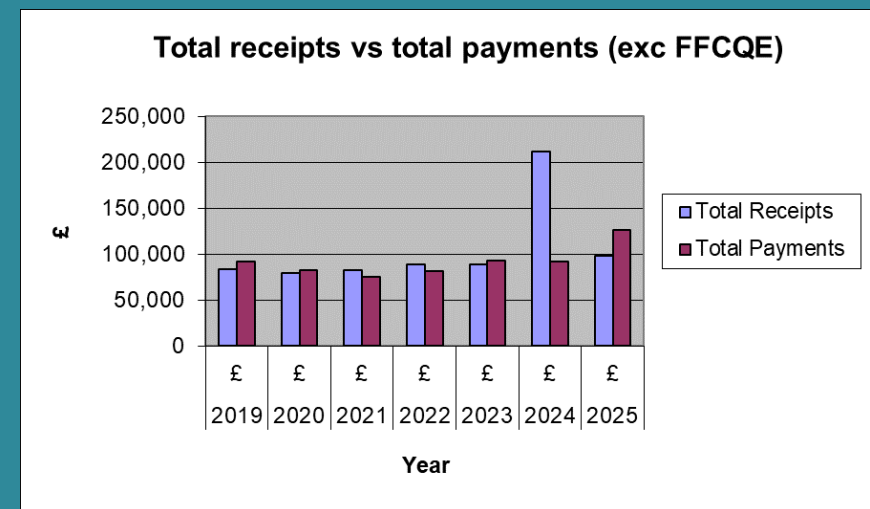
Room hire currently brings in around £16,000 each year, of which the Cambridge Alliance Church, running services for Cantonese and Mandarin congregations, accounts for about half, with other regular users making up the majority of the rest (there is relatively little *ad hoc* hiring). The regular hirers include art groups, guitar groups and yoga groups and use as a polling station for elections.

Our main other fundraising is via regular Bring & Buy sales, together with an annual Christmas event and *ad hoc* events such as music performances and ceilidhs.

We have for many years paid our parish share in full, via direct debit during the year. The level of parish share, at around £58,000, reflects our previous part-time priest.



Our costs are normally very stable, with our relatively modern building being reasonably easy to maintain and kept under careful review by our Fabric Committee. We are, however, in the process of replacing several sections of flat roof in the building (currently in the planning permission process), which is expected to be fully funded by a generous legacy received in 2024 of £115,000. This legacy is not a restricted fund, but the amount is currently set aside in a designated fund. It is unlikely that there will be significant progress on this in 2025, so our budgeted expenditure this year mainly relates to professional fees, but we hope to get the work done in 2026.



While our level of activity stays at its present level, we can expect to broadly break-even or have a small surplus, in the absence of exceptional income such as donations or legacies, or exceptional property-related expenses. Our next quinquennial review is due in 2027.

We donate a proportion of our income to local and other charities, currently £2,700 *per annum*, which is around 3% of our income. A full breakdown is shown in the accounts.

## Cash and reserves

Total cash balances as at the start of 2025 were approximately £210k (all held in current accounts, instant access or short-term deposit accounts). Our total reserves of c. £212k includes £115k for the designated Roof Fund and the following restricted funds:

- FFCQE – c. £19k (see commentary below)
- Focus Fund – c. £9k to be used for Christian education.
- Holiday lunch club fund – £2k (local authority grant)

The balance of c. £67k is our available funds of which £40k has been designated as our contingency 'rainy day' fund.

## Accounts

The accounts from 2019 to 2024 and the 2025 budget are all on the St James' website. The charts on the previous page show our income and expenses for the last six years and the 2025 budget.

## Fairbite Food Club Queen Edith's (FFCQE)

FFCQE started in July 2024, operated by St James' Church in collaboration with Cambridge City Foodbank (CCFb). Under our agreement with CCFb, members can purchase a basket of goods (supplied by CCFb for free) for either £3 or £5, depending on their needs. The value of these goods is estimated to be roughly five times the price paid by the members, but FFCQE does not have to make any payment to CCFb unless (and to the extent that) the payments from members exceed our running costs.

Additionally, we receive donations from local individuals to allow FFCQE to purchase further supplies which are provided to members for free (mainly this is additional fruit and vegetables). Most of these donations are restricted to be used for the free supplies.

FFCQE costs are primarily the wages for our coordinator, and the amounts we spend on the additional free fruit and vegetables supplies.

The finances of FFCQE are ring-fenced and cannot be used for other purposes within St James'. If there is a surplus then, subject to retaining sufficient working capital, this would be applied for the alleviation of food poverty, with priority given to the local area.

The members' income covers the costs of operating FFCQE and is expected to enable a relatively small contribution to CCFb. For the restricted funding which enables us to provide further free supplies, we are currently operating with a surplus. Therefore, there is no expectation that St James' will need to subsidise FFCQE (which could only be done with PCC consent).

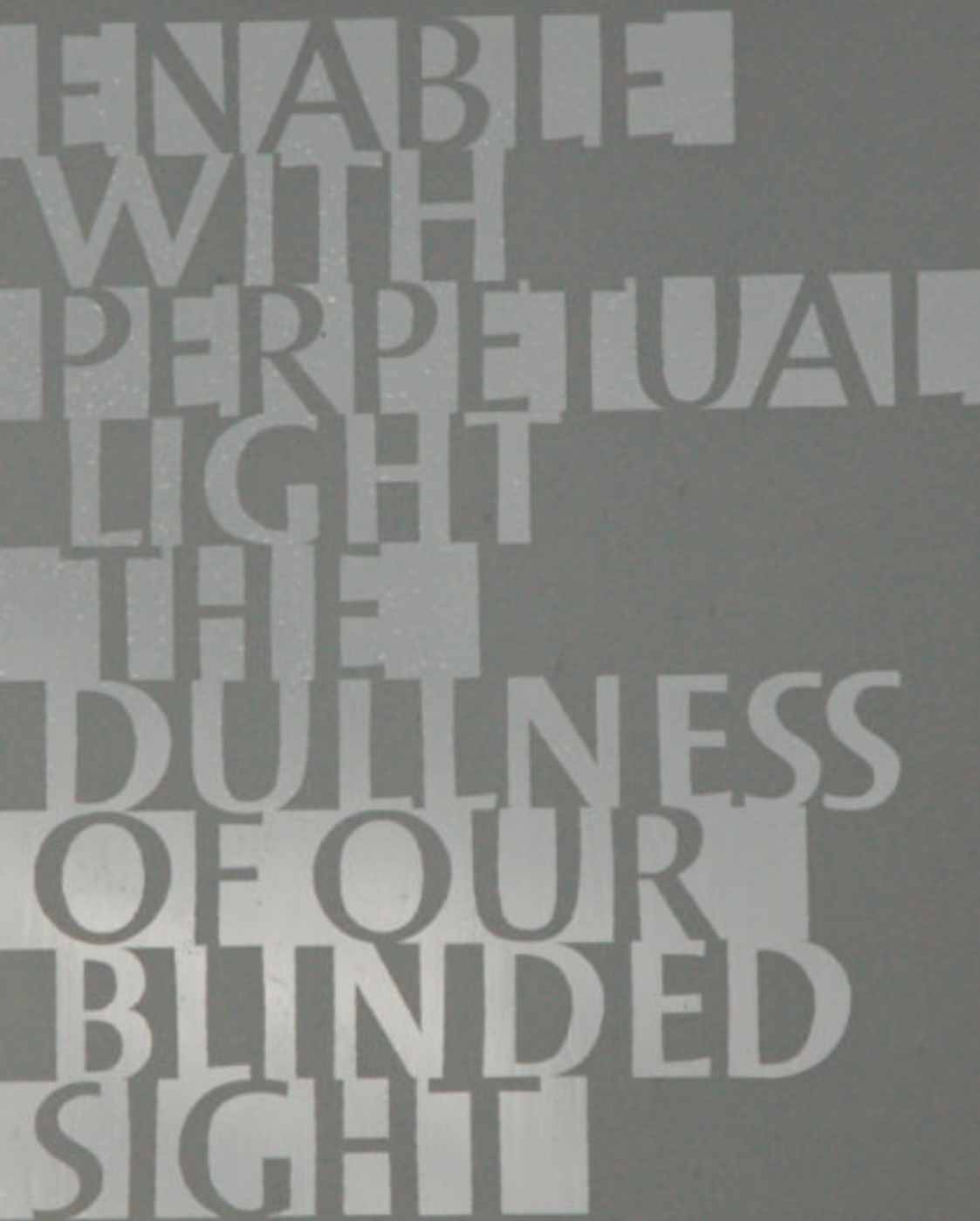
The accounts and budget for FFCQE are included separately within the St James' financial statements and budget.

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## Notes (from attendance table)

- This large drop coincided with the six-yearly preparation of a new roll.
- Includes cremations. N.B. The church grounds are not licensed for burials.
- Because there are so many beautiful historic wedding venues in Cambridge, weddings rarely take place in St James'.
- Baptisms and the Admission of Children to Holy Communion usually take place during the 10 A.M. Sunday Eucharist (often the All-Age).
- Confirmations take place in Ely Cathedral or on a rotational basis within churches in the Cambridge South Deanery.





“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11

## Contact details

Questions about St James' and any of the details in this document may be addressed to:

[The Ven Dr Alex Hughes, Archdeacon of Cambridge  
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