

Summary of data reports on St Margaret's church Mapledurham submitted for PMC

1. Partnership for Missional Church: Listening Portfolio. 1 Introduction.

St Margaret's Mapledurham, at the heart of the beautiful village of Mapledurham, is a pilgrim church with a focus on companionship, seeking to grow by embracing others on the journey of faith. Together we proclaim that God's love is absolute, inclusive and available to all. Our chosen values: "inclusive, generous and life-giving".

2 Demographic and Deprivation data

40% of congregation are 65 and over. The number of Christians in the parish has fallen. More people are expressing themselves as no religion or religion not stated.

Living in a couple: Married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership still shows to be most preferred way of relationship at about 50% of the parish.

The 16 to 44 group are mainly missing from the congregation. The leisure activities on offer for Sunday are more appealing than going to church.

We live in a community consisting of all age groups. Well educated and mainly in full time employment. A community in mainly good health and good housing. With the ability to travel, with 82% having access to a car. The community is still mainly Christian but there are a substantial number of people with no faith or no faith stated. These are the people who need to hear the gospel of God's love.

3. Building Use and Travel

St Margaret's church is a grade one listed building. Its main use is for Sunday morning worship that is attended by an average congregation of twenty four. The church could seat ninety people.

The church is open every day by someone living in the village. The number of people visiting the church varies greatly between summer and winter seasons as the Mapledurham manor house and water mill close to the public during the winter months. Winter weekdays may see 6 to 10 visitor but in the summertime this could be 10 to 25. People visiting the church leave comments in the visitor's book expressing that they have found the church to be a place of peace and tranquillity. Visitors come from all over the world.

The church has a good sized carpark and this is often used by people starting out on a country walk. The estate has its own parking but on occasions request the use of the church carpark as additional parking.

A short drive away is Trench Green hall and this is hire by the church for events such as Burns night, Maundy Thursday supper, and harvest supper.

A portable ramp enables wheelchair access to the church. The toilet is accessible to a wheelchair but there are no rail supports and the path way needs improvement.

4. Numerical Growth and Decline

Electoral roll figures.

Year	No	Year	No
2010	49	2013	40
2011	58	2014	43
2012	51	2015	45

An average of 24 people attending on Sundays.

Easter attendance 70 with 66 communicants.

Christmas attendance 82 with 70 communicants.

This is about three times the average Sunday showing that the main Christian festivals are important to the wider community.

In the village the only other denomination is the Roman Catholic chapel in the Mapledurham Manor house which hold a monthly service.

5. Finance and leadership

There is an annual increase in the amount of Parish share to the deanery.

Money is spent on general maintenance and larger repairs such as refurbishment of the bells and roof repairs.

Charitable giving by the church used to be 10% of its income but this has stopped due to mounting financial bills. Separate fund raising is done for some charities.

The congregation has paid its way. Legacies have helped to maintain the fabric fund. Special events have raised funds.

St Margaret's church has two churchwardens, a treasurer and four other members who together with the minister make up the Church Leadership Team (CLT). This team makes decisions as to the general running, maintenance and style of worship within the church. The CLT receives direction from the Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham (CTM) PCC and the views of the St Margaret's church Open Forums. St Margaret's currently provides five members to the PCC.

The relationship between ordained and lay leadership is one of support and co-operation. Spiritual direction and vision is sought to come from the ordained clergy but with disciplines such as dwelling in the word God may be at work among us to hear his preferred way through lay members.

6. Civil Society and Culture

The congregation time line has a chronology of event from 1154 to 2015. This showed the church link to its patron Eaton College and list vicars of St Margaret's church. It mentions the Savill Flagon presented to the church c1599 by Lady Margaret Savill. The flagon is now held at Eaton College but has been brought back to the church for use at special occasions such as St Margaret's Day (20th July). In 1829 Lord Augustus FitzClarence is instituted as vicar and in 1831 he presents a magnificent service plate (this service plate is now on loan to the Victoria & Albert Museum). William IV presented the clock in the church tower.

1966 Mapledurham ceases to be an independent parish after nine hundred years and joins the parish of Caversham with John Grimwade as Rector.

The congregation highlighted:

Red letter days: Baptisms, Weddings, refurbishment of bells and celebration event to mark this, the joining of a new organist.

Blue letter days: Funerals, conflict in leadership and lack of support, brake up of marriage, small congregation size.

Hope for the future: Loyal bell ringing team, Rector and ministry team, larger congregation at Christmas and Easter, a grant for roof repair work, unity and working together.

The historical neighbourhood would be the village of Mapledurham and the surrounding rural community of farms. The old parish boundaries include the suburban area of north Reading (Caversham). The church now serves members from outside of the parish and visitor from a much wider area.

The congregation are involved in all the main Christian festivals, Christmas, Easter and patronal Saints' days. This is a chance to foster fellowship with the community and other churches. Christmas is very successful with the Christingle service. Wedding and baptism services are seen as ministering to people who are not always regular members of the church.

The congregation's identity and ministry is currently shown in the functional values of the services of worship in the church in the Eucharist and lay-led service of the word. They contribute in many aspects such as music, choir, intercession prayer, side persons etc. Also with supporting at weddings and baptisms and with comfort of the bereaved at funerals.

The congregation also are active in fund raising for Christian Aid, Children's Society and British Legion poppy appeal.

A church:

Caring for each other

Praying for each other

Sharing together as a fellowship in the joys and sorrows of life

7. Congregational Discovery Interviews

An old church building in a beautiful rural surround provides a place that is peaceful. God is providing love and encouragement for a small fellowship of Christians who are mainly older people. God is developing a congregation that shows warmth of feeling and friendly welcome. There is a unity in worship and discipline of religion in the company of likeminded Christians.

God is giving people direction and a desire to grow the church in this rural setting.

God is providing the peace, tranquillity and space to give rest from the busy daily stresses of life.

People feel God's presence in a place where generation have come to worship God. Having received love, they offer friendly welcome to new comers and visitors. As a small congregation all take part in various aspects of church life with the desire to keep things going:- e.g. cleaning, flower arranging, coffee rota, opening & closing church, Sunday school, bell ringing, assisting with communion, taking offering, PCC member, parish fete, drop in centre, Christian Aid, intercessions and Lent groups.

They become more like family, tight-knit but welcoming. Some opening their homes for social get together.

They are uplifted by attending church, through the stress relieving atmosphere, the sermon, the music and hymn singing. They express a profound gratitude for the services of worship, especially noting Christmas midnight, Christmas day, St Margaret's day and Remembrance Sunday.

No fighting. The congregation accommodates different personalities. Resolution is by discussion and by working together. Communication is important and exclusion from information is seen as it being only been divulged to a chosen few. A feeling of lack of support and concerns of closure arose when the congregation was told it would need to be self-supporting. This was resolved with a new Rector showing better communication and commitment to a small rural church and was seen as a turning point in the hopes of the church.

Readers report on interviews provides more of a breakdown of the replies and then asks questions as to how the gathered information can be used for God's preferred future for the church.