



The Parish of  
*St Mary the Virgin*  
STANWELL  
&  
*St Matthew*  
ASHFORD



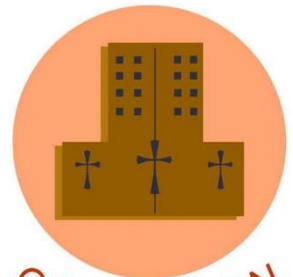
BAPTISM



CONFIRMATION



EUCCHARIST



CONFESSION



ANOINTING OF THE SICK



HOLY ORDERS



MATRIMONY



## Sacramental and Pastoral Offices

### Policies

## Contents

Baptism Policy .....	3
First Holy Communion Policy.....	5
Confirmation Policy.....	7
OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) Policy.....	9
Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) Policy.....	11
Rite of Sacramental Healing Policy .....	13
Marriage Policy.....	15
Funeral Policy.....	17
Churchyard and Burial Policy .....	19
<b>Quick Guide to Churchyard Policy .....</b>	<b>22</b>



The Parish of  
*St Mary the Virgin*  
STANWELL  
&  
*St Matthew*  
ASHFORD

## **Baptism Policy**

*for the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell and St Matthew, Ashford  
(A Parish in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England)*

### **Introduction**

Holy Baptism is the gateway to life in Christ. It is the first and foundational sacrament, through which a person is united with Christ in His death and resurrection, made a member of His Body, the Church, and given the promise of eternal life.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)*

The Parish of St Mary and St Matthew rejoices to welcome all who seek Baptism, whether for infants, children, or adults.

### **A. Baptism of Infants and Children**

Parents who seek Baptism for their child are taking on the responsibility of raising them in the life of faith.

Preparation will include:

- A meeting with a member of the Ministry Team.
- A commitment to regular worship and Christian formation.

Baptisms usually take place during the main Sunday Mass or at a specially arranged time.

At least one Godparent must be a practising, baptised Christian. Other sponsors are welcome to support the child's Christian life.

### **B. Baptism of Adults**

Adults who seek Baptism will normally be invited to participate in a time of preparation and formation, often through our *Journey in Faith* programme.

Adult candidates will be baptised, confirmed, and welcomed to Holy Communion at the same celebration where possible.

### **C. Preparation and Arrangements**

Please contact the Parish Office ([office@smam.org.uk](mailto:office@smam.org.uk)) to begin the process.

A member of the Ministry Team ([ministry@smam.org.uk](mailto:ministry@smam.org.uk)) will then be in touch to arrange preparation sessions.

There is no fee for Baptism. A voluntary offering may be made to support the life and ministry of the parish.

#### **D. Who May Be Baptised?**

- Any person who has not previously been baptised with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- Those already baptised in another Christian tradition are welcomed through Reception into the life of the Church.

If there is any uncertainty about Baptism or eligibility, the Parish Priest will be pleased to advise.

#### **E. Baptism Outside the Parish**

Those seeking Baptism at St Mary and St Matthew but living outside the Parish boundaries should normally have the goodwill of their local parish priest.

This honours the wider family of the Church and helps ensure good pastoral care.



## **First Holy Communion Policy**

*for the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell and St Matthew, Ashford  
(A Parish in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England)*

### **Introduction**

The Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.

In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we receive the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ under the outward forms of bread and wine. Through this most sacred gift, we are united with Christ and with one another as His Body, the Church.

First Holy Communion marks a new and profound step in a person's life of faith, as they are drawn deeper into the mystery of Christ's love.

*"Jesus said, 'I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.'" (John 6:35)*

### **A. Who May Receive First Holy Communion**

First Holy Communion is open to:

- Baptised Christians who have been prepared through the Parish's catechetical programme;
- Children who are at least 7 years of age (Year 3 or above);
- Adults who have not previously made their First Communion, after appropriate preparation.

All candidates should be regular in attendance at Mass and actively seeking to grow in the life of faith.

### **B. Preparation for First Holy Communion**

Preparation normally includes:

- Participation in a series of classes for both candidates and, for children, their parents;
- Formation in the meaning of the Mass, the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the practice of prayer, and the life of the Church;
- Opportunities for Confession (Sacrament of Reconciliation) prior to First Communion.

Parents, guardians, and sponsors play a vital role in supporting and nurturing the faith of candidates.

For adults, First Communion is usually prepared alongside Confirmation as part of the OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) programme.

### **C. Contact and Registration**

Those wishing to enquire about First Holy Communion should:

- Contact the Parish Office ([office@smam.org.uk](mailto:office@smam.org.uk));
- Or speak to a member of the Ministry Team ([ministry@smam.org.uk](mailto:ministry@smam.org.uk)).

Registration normally opens in September each year, with classes beginning in the autumn. The First Holy Communion Mass is usually celebrated in the summer.

An application form must be completed and returned to the Parish Office.

### **D. Parental Commitment**

Parents are the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith.

It is expected that:

- Families will participate regularly in Sunday Mass;
- Parents will support their child's preparation through prayer and attendance at meetings;
- The home will nurture Christian life through prayer, reading Scripture, and practising the faith.

### **E. Special Circumstances**

If a child has special educational needs, or if there are pastoral reasons requiring flexible preparation, the Parish will do all it can to accommodate and support each individual.

No-one is excluded from receiving the Lord's Body and Blood through circumstances beyond their control.



The Parish of  
*St Mary the Virgin*  
STANWELL  
&  
*St Matthew*  
ASHFORD

## Confirmation Policy

*for the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell and St Matthew, Ashford  
(A Parish in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England)*

### Introduction

Confirmation is a joyful step in Christian discipleship, where those already baptised affirm their faith, receive the strengthening gift of the Holy Spirit, and are admitted to Holy Communion if they have not already been receiving.

In the laying on of hands and prayer by the Bishop, the candidate is sealed with the Holy Spirit and called to a fuller life of Christian witness.

*"Strengthen, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit."*

Confirmation marks a deepening of commitment to Christ and to His Church.

### A. Who May Be Confirmed

Confirmation is available to:

- Baptised adults and young people who are ready to make a mature profession of faith;
- Those baptised as infants who now seek to claim the faith for themselves;
- Adults preparing to be received into the full life of the Church.

Candidates should:

- Be baptised with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
- Have received appropriate preparation in the Christian faith and life;
- Express a personal desire to live as faithful members of Christ's Church.

If you have not been baptised, Baptism and Confirmation can be celebrated together.

### B. Preparation

Preparation for Confirmation normally takes place through:

- Group sessions led by members of the Ministry Team;
- Individual mentoring where necessary;
- Opportunities for prayer, study of Scripture, and learning about Christian living.

Courses usually run during Lent each year, in readiness for Confirmation around Pentecost.

To express interest in Confirmation, please contact the Parish Office ([office@smam.org.uk](mailto:office@smam.org.uk)) or speak to a member of the Ministry Team ([ministry@smam.org.uk](mailto:ministry@smam.org.uk)).

### **C. The Service of Confirmation**

Confirmation usually takes place at a Mass celebrated by the Bishop, either in our Parish or as part of a regional celebration.

Candidates will:

- Renew the promises made at their Baptism;
- Be anointed with the Oil of Chrism (where this is customary);
- Receive the laying on of hands by the Bishop, invoking the gift of the Holy Spirit.

### **D. Young People**

Young people preparing for Confirmation must usually be at least 11 years old, though maturity and readiness are more important than age alone.

Parents and sponsors are encouraged to support candidates in this important step of faith.

### **E. Adults Seeking Reception into the Church**

Those already confirmed in another tradition may, in consultation with the Parish Priest, be received formally into the life of the Church through a special rite, often alongside Confirmation candidates.

### **F. Encouragement**

All Christians who have not yet been confirmed are warmly encouraged to consider this step as a deepening of their life in Christ.

*"Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."* (cf. Ephesians 1:13)





## **OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) Policy**

*for the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell and St Matthew, Ashford*

*(A Parish in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England)*

### **Introduction**

The Christian life is a journey of conversion, of growing deeper into the life of Christ and His Church.

The OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults) is the pathway by which adults seek to be received into the full sacramental life of the Church through Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion.

It is open to those who have never been baptised, those baptised but not catechised, or those from another Christian tradition who now wish to be in full communion with the Church as expressed in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England.

*"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19)*

### **A. Who May Enrol in OCIA**

Those seeking admission into the Church may include:

- Adults who have never been baptised;
- Adults baptised in another Christian denomination seeking full sacramental participation;
- Baptised adults who have not yet received Confirmation or First Holy Communion.

A commitment to regular attendance at Sunday Mass and participation in the life of the Parish is expected.

### **B. Structure of the Programme**

The OCIA programme involves:

- Weekly sessions (normally from autumn through to Pentecost);
- An introduction to Christian faith, Scripture, prayer, the sacraments, and Church teaching;
- Opportunities to participate in Parish life and service;
- Celebrations of the traditional stages of Christian initiation: the Rite of Acceptance, the Rite of Election, and the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil or another major feast.

The process is flexible to accommodate different personal situations and journeys of faith.

### **C. Contact and Registration**

Those interested in joining the OCIA programme should:

- Contact the Parish Office ([office@smam.org.uk](mailto:office@smam.org.uk));
- Or speak to a member of the Ministry Team ([ministry@smam.org.uk](mailto:ministry@smam.org.uk)).

An initial meeting will be arranged with the Parish Priest or one of the catechists to discern the best path for the individual.

### **D. Reception into Full Communion**

Depending on a person's background:

- Those not yet baptised will receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion.
- Those already validly baptised will make a Profession of Faith and receive Confirmation and Holy Communion.

Valid Christian Baptism (i.e., by water and the invocation of the Holy Trinity) is always recognised and is never repeated.

### **E. Commitment and Pastoral Care**

The journey of faith requires prayerful preparation and personal openness to God's grace.

The Parish is committed to accompanying each candidate with love, patience, and respect for their personal journey.

Candidates are encouraged to take an active part in the Parish's liturgical and community life as they grow in discipleship.



The Parish of  
*St Mary the Virgin*  
STANWELL  
&  
*St Matthew*  
ASHFORD

## **Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) Policy**

*for the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell and St Matthew, Ashford  
(A Parish in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England)*

### **Introduction**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation – often called Confession – is a gift from Christ to His Church:

*"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven."* (John 20:22-23)

Through this sacrament, we are assured of God's mercy, healing, and grace.

The Parish of St Mary and St Matthew encourages all Christians to make regular use of this sacrament as part of their spiritual life.

### **A. Who May Receive the Sacrament**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available to:

- All baptised Christians who desire to seek God's forgiveness;
- Children who have reached the age of reason (usually around 7 years old) after appropriate preparation;
- Adults preparing for Confirmation or Reception into the Church.

Private confession is entirely confidential and is offered without fear or judgement.

*"What is said in confession stays in confession."* (Seal of Confession)

### **B. When and How to Make a Confession**

Confessions are heard:

- By arrangement with a member of the Parish clergy;

To arrange a time, please contact the Parish Office ([office@smam.org.uk](mailto:office@smam.org.uk)) or speak directly to a member of the Ministry Team ([ministry@smam.org.uk](mailto:ministry@smam.org.uk)).

Guidance and preparation materials are available for those who are new to the practice of confession.

### **C. Forms of Confession**

The Church provides two traditional forms:

- **General Confession** (within the Mass or corporate liturgy, without individual absolution);

- **Private Confession** (one-to-one with a priest, with the granting of individual absolution).

In our tradition, the principle applies:

*"All may, none must, some should."*

This sacrament is always freely offered, never forced.

#### **D. Children and Young People**

Young people are introduced to the Sacrament of Reconciliation as part of their preparation for Confirmation.

Parental involvement and support are encouraged.

#### **E. Confidentiality**

The Seal of the Confessional is absolute. Nothing confessed may ever be disclosed, even under legal obligation.

This sacred trust assures complete freedom to confess without fear.

#### **F. Encouragement**

All members of the Parish are warmly encouraged to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation, especially during penitential seasons such as Lent and Advent.

*"Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful." (Joel 2:13)*



## Rite of Sacramental Healing Policy

*for the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell and St Matthew, Ashford*

*(A Parish in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England)*

### Introduction

The Church continues the healing ministry of Jesus Christ through prayer, the laying on of hands, and the anointing with holy oil. The Sacrament of Healing, often known as Anointing of the Sick, is a powerful sign of God's love and care for the whole person – body, mind, and spirit.

Through this sacramental ministry, we seek to strengthen those who are sick, bring comfort to the dying, and uphold all who are suffering.

*"Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the Church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord."* (James 5:14)

### A. Who May Receive the Sacrament of Healing

The Sacrament of Healing is available to:

- Those who are seriously ill, whether in body, mind, or spirit;
- Those preparing for surgery or major medical treatment;
- The elderly experiencing frailty;
- The dying, as part of their preparation for meeting the Lord.

It may also be received by Christians seeking spiritual healing in times of distress, anxiety, or depression.

Anointing is not limited to those at the point of death and may be received more than once if the need arises.

### B. How to Arrange the Sacrament

To request the Sacrament of Healing:

- Contact the Parish Office ([office@smam.org.uk](mailto:office@smam.org.uk)) or a member of the Ministry Team ([ministry@smam.org.uk](mailto:ministry@smam.org.uk));
- In urgent cases (for example, if someone is dying), please make contact immediately to arrange a visit.

Where possible, a family member or close friend is encouraged to be present to pray and support.

### C. Where the Sacrament Is Celebrated

The Sacrament of Healing may be celebrated:

- At home;
- In hospital or a hospice;
- In church, often within a regular Mass or at a special service of healing.

Occasionally, parish-wide services of Healing and Wholeness are held where many receive the laying on of hands and anointing during Mass.

#### **D. Anointing Within the Final Rites**

When ministering to the dying, the Sacrament of Healing may be accompanied by:

- The Rite of Confession and Absolution;
- The Apostolic Pardon (where appropriate);
- The Reception of Holy Communion (Viaticum) – "food for the journey."

This ensures that the Christian departs this life strengthened by the grace of Christ.

#### **E. Healing and Wholeness**

Healing is not only about physical cure. It is about restoration to wholeness – peace with God, oneself, and others.

The ministry of healing is a sign of the coming Kingdom, where "there will be no more death, or mourning, or crying, or pain." (Revelation 21:4)

Those receiving the Sacrament are encouraged to continue in prayer, supported by the love and prayers of the Church family.



The Parish of  
*St Mary the Virgin*  
STANWELL  
&  
*St Matthew*  
ASHFORD

## Marriage Policy

*for the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell and St Matthew, Ashford  
(A Parish in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England)*

### Introduction

Christian Marriage is a sacred covenant, by which a man and a woman are united in Christ for the whole of their lives. It is a vocation of love, fidelity, and fruitfulness, reflecting the unbreakable bond between Christ and His Church.

*"Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." (Mark 10:9)*

The Parish of St Mary and St Matthew is delighted to prepare and celebrate Christian Marriage for those who seek it in faith.

### A. Who May Marry in Church

Couples may be married at St Mary and St Matthew if:

- One or both parties live within the Parish boundary;
- Or are regular, practising members of the congregation;
- Or have a strong pastoral or historic connection to the Parish.

Please contact the Parish Office ([office@smam.org.uk](mailto:office@smam.org.uk)) in the first instance.

### B. Previous Marriages

Because of our commitment to the indissolubility of marriage, if either party has been previously married in a union that was sacramental and the spouse is still living, it is normally not possible for a new marriage to be celebrated in the Church.

Each situation is treated with great pastoral sensitivity. Where an annulment has been granted, or where there is serious doubt about the validity of a previous union, the Parish Priest will offer guidance.

We encourage anyone in this situation to arrange an initial conversation with a member of the Ministry Team ([ministry@smam.org.uk](mailto:ministry@smam.org.uk)) before any plans are made.

### C. Preparation for Marriage

All couples preparing for Christian Marriage will participate in a course of preparation, which will include:

- Exploring the meaning of Christian marriage;
- Growing in communication and spiritual life together;
- Planning the liturgy for the wedding.

This preparation is normally offered through meetings with the Parish Priest and other resources.

#### **D. Marriage Service**

Marriage services are conducted according to the rites and teachings of the Church of England in the Catholic Tradition.

A Wedding Mass (Nuptial Mass) is encouraged but not required.

Music, readings, and other details will be planned together with the clergy to ensure a joyful and prayerful celebration.

#### **E. Legal Requirements**

There are legal steps that must be taken, including the publication of Banns of Marriage. The Parish Office will advise and assist you with these requirements.





The Parish of  
*St Mary the Virgin*  
STANWELL  
&  
*St Matthew*  
ASHFORD

## Funeral Policy

*for the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell and St Matthew, Ashford  
(A Parish in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England)*

### Introduction

The death of a loved one is always a time of sorrow and hope. In the Christian faith, death is not the end, but a new birth into eternal life with Christ.

*"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though they die, yet shall they live." (John 11:25)*

The Parish of St Mary and St Matthew offers the prayerful ministry of the Church to all who seek Christian burial or memorial.

### A. Who May Receive a Funeral

Funeral services may be held for:

- Those who have lived within the Parish boundaries;
- Those with a strong pastoral or historic connection to the Parish;
- Members of the congregation or their immediate families.

Funerals may take place either in one of our churches or at a local cemetery or crematorium.

Please contact the Parish Office ([office@smam.org.uk](mailto:office@smam.org.uk)) in the first instance, usually through your appointed Funeral Director.

### B. Christian Funeral Services

The Church offers a range of services to honour the dead and commend them to God's mercy:

- A Vigil or Reception into Church (often the evening before);
- A Funeral Mass (Requiem) or a Funeral Service (without Holy Communion);
- A Service at the graveside or crematorium.

The Parish Priest or a member of the Ministry Team ([ministry@smam.org.uk](mailto:ministry@smam.org.uk)) will meet with the family to plan a service that reflects the life of the deceased and the hope we share in Christ.

### C. Who May Have a Requiem Mass

A Requiem Mass is a powerful and beautiful offering for the soul of the departed.

All baptised Christians may receive a Requiem Mass if it is appropriate to their faith and wishes.

For those who have not practised the Christian faith, or where there is uncertainty, the Parish Priest will guide families to the most pastorally appropriate service.

#### **D. Burial or Cremation**

The Church affirms the goodness of both burial and cremation.

Where possible, burial in consecrated ground is encouraged as a sign of Christian hope in the resurrection of the body.

Ashes may also be buried in our Memorial Garden or in a family grave, by arrangement with the Parish Office.

#### **E. Memorial Services**

If a funeral cannot take place in Church, a Memorial Service may be arranged at a suitable time.

We also hold an Annual Requiem in November to pray for all the faithful departed.

#### **F. Costs and Offerings**

The Parish Office will provide a clear schedule of fees, which are set by the Church of England.

No one will be denied the ministry of the Church for financial reasons.

We encourage families to make a thanksgiving offering to the Parish if they are able.

*"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)*



The Parish of  
*St Mary the Virgin*  
STANWELL  
&  
*St Matthew*  
ASHFORD

## Churchyard and Burial Policy

*for the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell and St Matthew, Ashford  
(A Parish in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England)*

### Introduction

The Churchyard of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell, and St Matthew Ashford is a sacred space where the final resting place of the faithful is honoured. The right of burial, the care of memorials, and the preservation of the sanctity of this space are governed by both Canon Law and local policy. The following outlines the policy for burials, memorials, and the use of the churchyard for those whose final resting place is in our care. For any further inquiries or assistance, please contact the Parish Office at [office@smam.org.uk](mailto:office@smam.org.uk) or a member of the Ministry Team at [ministry@smam.org.uk](mailto:ministry@smam.org.uk).

### A. Right to Burial

In a consecrated churchyard, every parishioner has the right of burial, provided there is space available, and the churchyard has not been closed for burials by Order in Council. Additionally, anyone whose name is on the electoral roll of the parish at the time of their death also has a right to burial. Furthermore, any person dying within the parish boundaries, regardless of their affiliation, has the right to be buried.

**Note:** At present, the churchyard of St Mary's is closed for further burials.

No other individuals may be buried in the churchyard without the express consent of the Parochial Church Council (PCC). If the Parish Priest declines to allow the burial of a person who does not have a right to burial, his decision is final. There is no right to be buried in any particular part of the churchyard.

### B. Reservation of a Grave Space

The Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Stanwell, and St Matthew Ashford does not permit the reservation of grave spaces for future burial or for the interment of ashes in areas designated for cremated remains. Grave spaces will be assigned based on the row currently in use.

**Exception:** A grave space designated by the PCC as a burial plot for multiple burials (e.g., a double or triple grave) following a prior burial.

### **C. Ownership of the Churchyard**

The 'ownership' of the churchyard is vested in the Parish Priest for the use of parishioners. In the event of a vacancy, the 'ownership' is vested in the Diocesan Bishop. The right to burial, the interment of cremated remains, or the erection of a memorial does not confer any ownership rights over the churchyard itself to the relatives of the deceased or any other person.

### **D. Ownership of Memorials**

The owner of a churchyard memorial is defined as the person who erected the monument in question. After their death, the heirs of the person or persons in whose memory the monument was erected are considered the owners. The primary responsibility for the upkeep of the memorial rests with the owners of the memorial—usually the heirs of the deceased.

If the heirs cannot be traced, the PCC holds responsibility for ensuring that dangerous monuments are addressed, within the limits of available funds. The PCC will take appropriate action to remedy unsafe situations in the churchyard.

### **E. Erection of Memorials**

The erection of a memorial in the churchyard, including the alteration or removal of an existing memorial, is a privilege and not a right. A minimum settlement period of six months must be observed before any stone memorial is placed.

**No work may be undertaken in the churchyard, including the erection of memorials, placement of gravestones, or interment of cremated remains, without the prior written permission of the Parish Priest and the Parochial Church Council (PCC).** In accordance with legal requirements, a faculty is required for the erection of any memorial. The Chancellor has delegated limited power to the Parish Priest (or the Area Dean in a vacancy) to grant permission for the erection of gravestones and to allow simple alterations to existing memorials, provided that the Chancellor's regulations are fully adhered to.

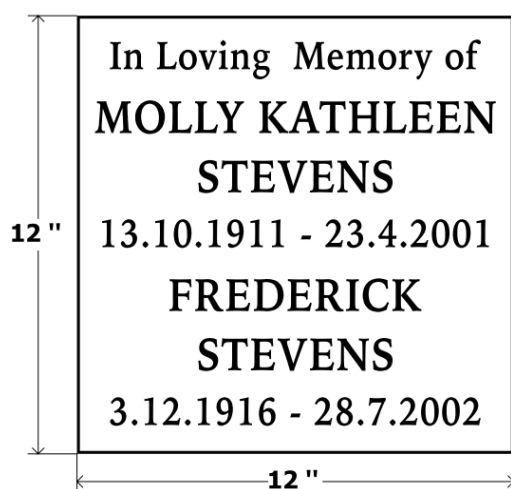
### **F. Gravestones**

The materials, sizes, designs, and inscriptions of all memorials must comply with the Chancellor's guidelines. All proposed memorials must be submitted to the Parish Priest for approval prior to any work being undertaken.

### **G. Areas for Cremated Remains**

A designated area for the interment of cremated remains is available within the churchyard. Cremated remains must be reverently placed into a specially prepared hole between 18 and 24 inches deep. The scattering of cremated remains is not permitted; remains must be interred in a container of perishable material, preferably cardboard or wood.

The parish permits the use of a stone plaque (12 x 12 x 2 inches) or a wooden plaque behind the burial to mark the location of the cremated remains. The placement of plaques is subject to PCC approval and must be positioned in a way that allows for the maintenance of the churchyard using machinery.



The memorial inscription should be simple and follow a prescribed layout, with engraving in black on stone memorials. If cremated remains are interred in an existing grave, a separate memorial or gravestone is not permitted; however, an inscription may be added to the original gravestone.

#### H. Trees in the Churchyard

The PCC is responsible for the maintenance and safety of trees within the churchyard. To preserve the safety and integrity of the churchyard, the planting of trees is not permitted.

#### I. Sundry Points

- **Confetti:** The throwing of confetti is permitted but should be done as close to the church gate as possible to minimise disruption to the churchyard.
- **Churchyard Maintenance:** The PCC is responsible for the general maintenance of the churchyard, including mowing and pest control. The PCC will strive to maintain a balance between keeping the churchyard in good order and ensuring the provision of suitable areas for wildlife.

For further information or to make arrangements for burials, memorials, or other related matters, please contact the Parish Office at [office@smam.org.uk](mailto:office@smam.org.uk) or a member of the Ministry Team at [ministry@smam.org.uk](mailto:ministry@smam.org.uk).

## Quick Guide to Churchyard Policy

The Parochial Church Council of St Mary's and St Matthew's, hope that all parishioners, friends and relatives may find the following information useful when dealing with the delicate and difficult situation of bereavement.

There are "rights" to burial in a church graveyard, that is, for those who were living in the parish at the time of decease, or who actually died in the parish.

These differ to the rights of burial in a municipal cemetery.

### Burials

**Can I reserve a space for a burial in the churchyard?** No

**Can I select a specific space/plot?** No

*The situation of a new grave will be the next in the current row.*

*No provision is made in the churchyard for family plots*

**Do I need permission to erect a headstone?** Yes

*An application form may be obtained from the Parish Priest;*

*however, a minimum period of 6 months should elapse between the burial of the person to be commemorated and the installation of the monument.*

**Do the family or relatives have responsibility for the upkeep of the burial plot?** Yes

*The appearance of the grave must be in keeping with the rest of the graveyard.*

*The headstone must always be in a safe condition.*

### Cremated Remains

**Do I need permission to bury ashes in the churchyard?** Yes

*Cremated remains in this churchyard are interred in a prepared plot in the space provided at the west end of the church.*

*A flat memorial plaque may be placed over the space*

*- an application form for this may be obtained from the Parish Priest*

*Ashes may be buried in an existing family space with permission.*

**Do the family/relatives have responsibility for the upkeep of the space?** Yes

*The space must be in keeping with the rest of the area.*

**Can I select a specific space?** No

**Does St Matthew's or St Mary's have a Remembrance Garden for the scattering of ashes?** No

**Does St Matthew's or St Mary's have a Book of Remembrance?** Yes

*If you wish to have a name placed in this book, please contact the Parish Priest.*

**Whom do I contact to arrange a church service or for further advice?**

*The Parish Priest.*

---

## PARISH DIRECTORY

---

### *The Parish Office*

The Vicarage, 99 Church Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2NY

☎ 01784 259093 | ✉ office@smam.org.uk

🌐 [www.smam.org.uk](http://www.smam.org.uk)

---

### *Parish Clergy*

---

**Parish Priest:** Fr Stuart King SSC

The Vicarage, 99 Church Road, Ashford, TW15 2NY

✉ fr\_stuart@smam.org.uk

**Curate:** Fr John Hillman SSC

✉ fr.john@smam.org.uk

---

### *Licensed Lay Ministers*

---

**Melanie Cooper** ☎ 01784 390461 | ✉ melanie@smam.org.uk

**Alan Joel** ☎ 01784 244320 | ✉ alan@smam.org.uk

**Sarah Pain** ☎ 01784 259093 | ✉ sarah@smam.org.uk

---

### *Parish Lay Leadership*

---

#### *Church Wardens*

Julie Bell, Luis Elias, Pauline Muldowney, Ian Spencer

✉ warden@smam.org.uk

---

### *Key Contacts*

---

**Tower Captain** 🏰 Dr Chris Marshall | ✉ bells@smam.org.uk

**Director of Music** 🎵 Philip Buckmaster | ✉ music@smam.org.uk

**Mothers' Union** 👩‍👧 Heather Hurrell | ✉ MU@smam.org.uk

**St Matthew's Flowers** 🌸 Heather Hurrell | ✉ flowers@smam.org.uk

**Church Hall Bookings** 🏠 | ✉ hall@smam.org.uk

---

St Mary's and St Matthew's are part of the See of Fulham  
in the Diocese of London.

