

St Thomas à Becket Ramsey – Strategy 23-27

2023 H2 Dashboard and Recommendations for the Vacancy Period

Numerical growth

	Avg adults (16+)/Sunday	Avg children/week	Online (Sundays)
Jan to June 2022	53.8	5.7	40.9
Jan to June 2023	72.3	7.5	41.0
Q3 2023	58	9	42

The table above represents mainly attendance numbers at church services, and show growth in children but decline in numbers of adults.

However, our Strategy is actually focused on the number of individuals pursuing discipleship through our activities, and we have always recognised that church attendance is a poor proxy for this. We have recently conducted a survey of activities to establish a baseline for this metric. Details are in Annex A, but the headline results are as follow:

1. In Q3 2023 about 208 individuals pursued discipleship through our activities, representing about 50% growth vs. October 2022.
2. Of those 208, about 80 (38%) appeared in Sunday church at least once in the quarter.
3. Of the 128 not in church on Sundays, about 20 people worshipped online with us each week. Around 7 people took communion at home or in care homes.
4. The other 100+ are a mix of Toddlers, Fen Church, Coffee Mornings, 20s-30s, Craft Night, plus after-school and holiday clubs.
5. I estimate that we are in touch with about 60-70 new people compared to a year ago: 45 through children's clubs, 6 through Fen Church, 6 through 20s-30s, plus maybe a dozen who attend services.

I hope you find this survey encouraging.

Delivery against Strategy

Topic Overall rating (R/Y/G)	Goals last period (commentary)	Forthcoming goals in next period	Suggested approach during vacancy
Worship	<p>5th Sunday</p> <p>Online - format is time-consuming and does not appear to be sustainable.</p> <p>Marketing/comms - proactive approach settling to routine, new website. But still not generating regular flow of images for FB/Instagram.</p> <p>Children's choir – rehearsing and leading worship regularly.</p> <p>Wider group involved in worship (servers, crucifers, reading)</p> <p>Live-streaming from church (no progress)</p>	<p>Adult-focused informal services.</p> <p>Possible approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite 20s-30s group to experiment? • Collaborate with others in Deanery? <p>Explore external venues for worship.</p>	<p>Simplify online provision (to a 10-minute prayer slot).</p> <p>Focus on sustaining the wider group involved in worship (servers, crucifers etc.). If clergy vary week-by-week, this will need a pastoral steer from the PCC/CWs.</p> <p>Sustain children's choir.</p> <p>To put on hold: Further development of social media management External venues for worship Live-streaming</p>
Children/families	<p>Good supply of volunteers for children's clubs – although more always welcome!</p> <p>Clubs (after-school and holiday), OtB settling to routines and well-subscribed.</p> <p>Fen church format maturing nicely, attendance and children attending growing.</p> <p>Abbey College relation moving forward with creation of permanent 'reflection space'.</p>	<p>Sustain...</p> <p>Plus 'Outdoor Lent course'.</p>	<p>Focus on sustaining relationships, especially with schools. (Being a reliable partner is extremely important to build trust with schools over a long period.) Focus volunteers towards clubs and Fen Church.</p> <p>On hold: expansion of work with 11+.</p> <p>Hayley is a key resource for the church over the next months; support her!</p>

	<p>Children's First Communion. (No interest in being prepared for, but a good sense of belonging.)</p> <p>Pilot ministry with 11+ children - separate Sunday Fun a tentative first step.</p>		
Premises	<p>Encouraging site-visit from DAC. Now awaiting sketches from architect.</p> <p>No news from Fairhaven estate on Abbey Green.</p> <p>Scout Hut fitted and in use, including for winter parish office. (TSB space declined.) Ergonomic assessment of Jackie's needs commissioned. Scouts' long-term plans unclear.</p>	<p>Faculty application.</p> <p>Parish office with town-centre 'shop window'.</p>	<p>No reason why faculty process cannot proceed. Allowing time for due consultation, I'm imagine you will have a new Rector before you are ready to make a formal application!</p> <p>Future plans for parish-office to go on hold. If the Scouts want the Hut back, you can always retrench in the top Vestry.</p>
Creation-care	<p>A Rocha Bronze was the YE target, achieved well ahead of time.</p> <p>Real progress already made towards Silver.</p> <p>Creation-tide liturgy season in autumn.</p> <p>Solar panels awaiting grants.</p>	<p>A Rocha Silver. Believe can achieve mainly through work on churchyard (plus what is already in place).</p> <p>Eco churchyard plan depends on HDC, RTC – who may not be reliable partners.</p>	<p>Resources/leadership of this group a concern in Maggie's absence (and with Shan now a CW again, and losing Susan). A key area to recruit volunteers?</p> <p>If HDC deliver, they will do much of the churchyard work for us – so suggest focusing effort on encouraging/pressuring them rather than starting new projects.</p>
New housing	<p>Grant application from Henry Smith Trust refused.</p>	<p>Quite likely to be able to access CMT or other diocesan funds for a mission worker/pioneer. But probably not sensible to try without a Rector?</p>	<p>This remains the main gap. People are moving into Ramsey fast, and there is huge opportunity here. However, I still suggest that small-scale efforts that do not really build relationships (e.g.,</p>

			<p>'welcome packs') may be a waste of time.</p> <p>Suggest this may need to await new Rector.</p>
<p>Social need and pastoral care</p>	<p>Pastoral team running well (and demand has reduced as Red House and Upwood Manor have shut).</p> <p>Pastoral need register: Val has established a list, now working to ensure we have contact details.</p> <p>Broaden relationship with North Kigezi. Set back by Rachel's illness in Feb.</p>	<p>Q1 target is 'review the range of causes we support'. That the Foodbank is likely to be moving out of STaB's premises will highlight that the number of STaB people supporting this work is actually very small. A significant question, what is the church's ministry to the disadvantaged? This is a large, strategic question.</p> <p>While I hoped to broaden the relationship to N. Kigezi, there is no pressing reason for change.</p> <p>Tactical question, whether/how to minister in the new convalescent home in Upwood.</p>	<p>Sustaining existing pastoral work the main priority. Feelers might be put out to the new convalescent home but take care not to over-promise.</p> <p>Val's work to complete a pastoral care register is near completion, worth finishing off as will help avoid losing sight of vulnerable people during the vacancy.</p> <p>Some strategic questions present themselves about a) relation to N. Kigezi and b) STaB relation to the Foodbank. Suggest these need to await a new Rector.</p>
<p>Operations</p>	<p>Unify fonts/colours. New colour scheme in operation.</p> <p>Design logo. PCC and congregation consulted. Whether it's a good idea to complete and launch now?</p> <p>New website in operation, but operating under old URL. Change to ramseycofeparishchurch.org?</p>	<p>Q1 goal to implement 'budgets and spending controls for each area of operation'.</p> <p>We've done a good deal of work on the new logo. Push it through to completion now, or wait for new Rector?</p>	<p>Put on hold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New financial controls/budgets. May not have been sensible anyway, given deficit. - Membership database. Too much work and change during the vacancy.

	<p>Review PCC operations – did this in July.</p> <p>Membership database – a large project, which we began but have not managed to bring anywhere near completion.</p>	<p>Membership database. We could try to complete a business case for some CMT funding. Not sure whether implementing a large change of this kind is sensible in the next months, however.</p>	<p>Our comms modernisation is half-done. Next steps would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Complete and implement logo;- Switch to new URL (ramseycofeaparish church.org) which would also mean changing all email addresses. <p>Suggest these can easily wait for 6 months – although they are not in themselves large jobs.</p>
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Annex A - Census of 'Disciples'

Our Strategy aims to double the number of individuals pursuing discipleship through our activities. While the Strategy commits to sustaining many traditional church activities, it recognises that growth is likely to come from 'mini-Thomases' – other discipleship activities, separate from Sunday attendance.

Counting attendance in church produces different numbers than counting individual disciples, because church-goers attend other activities as well, but also some people never go to church. To estimate the number of individuals, we need to exclude double-counting. We do not have a systematic method to count individuals i.e., to exclude multiple attendance by the same person. However, we have done an *ad hoc* 'census' by asking the leaders of church activities about how many or what % of those attending their activity attend services (and with regard to families, how many of the non-church-goers attend other of our children/family activities). We used this information to try to exclude double-counting from the Q3 attendance data. This gives an informed estimate of the broad picture, although not an exact count.

As a baseline, in October 2022, for the parish awayday, I estimated our total numbers at 140.

The results of this exercise are as follows:

1. In Q3 2023 about 208 individuals pursued discipleship through our activities, representing about 50% growth year-on-year.¹
2. Of those 208, about 80 (38%) appeared in Sunday church at least once in the quarter.
3. Of the 128 not in church on Sundays, about 20 people worshipped online with us each week². Around 7 people took communion at home or in care homes.
4. The other 100+ are a mix of Toddlers, Fen Church, Coffee Mornings, 20s-30s, Craft Night, plus after-school and holiday clubs.
5. I estimate that we are in touch with about 60-70 new people compared to a year ago: 45 through children's clubs, 6 through Fen Church, 6 through 20s-30s, plus maybe a dozen who attend services.

I hope you find this survey encouraging. While there are some caveats to these numbers, I have been conservative. I believe this growth has been achieved in several ways, each involving a lot of hard work:

- initiating new ministries (in children's ministry, Fen Church, 20s-30s group). *What these have in common is going out to where people are, rather than hoping they will come to us;*
- sustaining the online congregation;
- building community contacts and credibility (e.g., eco group); and

¹ I have erred on the low side. I did not include bell-ringing or the flower group, since I was not sure that people involved in these would regard it as 'discipleship'. I also wrote down most of the Seniors as church-goers (which is the information I was given), although I think in truth infirmity means perhaps 40% of them rarely attend worship so their presence at the lunch makes them 'extra'. Including bells, flowers and 40% of the Seniors as additional disciples would add another 20 or so individuals. I also disregarded the hundreds of children who benefit from Open the Book.

² This is frankly a guess – guessing that 50% of the online congregation also worship with us face-to-face and half do not. We honestly do not know.

- sustaining the outward and missional character of existing work (Sunday services, online congregation, craft night, coffee mornings, Toddlers, Seniors' lunches, care homes/at home communions).

Hayley's ministry has been key. Of the 60-70 new people, over half have been reached through her activities. This illustrates the enormous potential value-added of a paid worker, when this is a skilled person who unlocks potential within the congregation as a whole.