



### Moving towards the rear of Church

There are three windows placed in the new church north wall which were originally in the old church, one a twelfth century round headed light, and two from the fourteenth century, all now containing stained glass from much later as the inscription on one testifies.

Below these windows is the Great War Memorial which lists the names of all 128 men from this parish and district who died in the service of King and Country 1914 – 1918. Sadly the list is not complete as there are several War Graves in the churchyard of men who died of wounds after the war but who are not listed. There is no separate memorial to those killed in the second world war; a small plaque near the chancel step notes that the chancel floor was raised in their memory.

There are several other windows worth looking at in the new church including to the north east a memorial window designed by Comper, which includes his strawberry signature at the bottom right of the window. It is a memorial window to Captain John R Philpott MC Royal Flying Corps, the son of the Rector, who died a prisoner of war in January 1918, aged 24.

The window just before the Philpott memorial window records two former Rectors, Maurice Curteis Elphinstone who served the parish from 1933 until 1941 and Philip

Charles Lee from 1942 until 1963. This window includes the arms of Christ Church Canterbury and the Diocese of Rochester, which this parish formed part of for many years.

As we make our way to the rear of the church in front of us is the West Door and doorway. This was originally the north door and doorway of the old church and was rebuilt into its current position in 1906.

### OUTSIDE

The Churchyard here is large. It measured about ¾ of an acre in the 1880's and extended roughly as far as the first path east to west. This was subsequently extended several times in the 1940s until it was closed for burials in 1979.

To the west is the old rectory, which is in fact at least the second rectory. The first was demolished by the Rev Charles H B Bazely who was rector from 1828 until his death in 1836. He built the current 'old rectory' which was then subsequently enlarged by the Rev J H R Sumner during his incumbency 1849-54.

You may notice that scratched onto the wall here by the small priest's door and by the window there are two dials. These were used to indicate the time of the celebration of mass in days before everyone could read. The small door here is the Priest's entrance to the old church, and the small window is traditionally known as the Lepers Window, where they could watch the services from outside. Sadly the window allows no view of the altar but happily it is very unlikely that there were ever any lepers here anyway.



Prayer has been offered on this spot for over a thousand years. During your visit, we invite you to find a few moments to be still and quiet and to absorb the peaceful atmosphere of this beautiful ancient building, where God has been worshipped and the Christian faith proclaimed for generations.

Whether you have never prayed before, or you are used to speaking with God, you will have **something to thank him for**, and some **special needs to bring before him**. Prayer is not only talking to God, but also listening to him and allowing him to speak to you.

Before you leave, please pray for this church and for all who serve and worship here.

### A 'BELL' PRAYER

*Dear God,  
please bless all  
who visit this church.  
May it be a place where  
the glad can give thanks,  
the sad can find comfort,  
the sinner true forgiveness,  
the lost find a real welcome  
and the faithful find assurance;  
where the disturbed are comforted  
and the comfortable disturbed.  
In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*

*A copy of the full history of Holy Trinity is available at the back of the Church. Alternatively please do check out our website for more information about the life of our community and also for full digital versions of all these leaflets.*

[www.holytrinitysouthchurch.org](http://www.holytrinitysouthchurch.org)

With thanks to Les Harrod for producing the tour this guide is based on



**HOLY TRINITY**  
**SOUTHCHURCH**



### A SHORT TOUR





## Welcome to Holy Trinity, Southchurch

*A church has stood on this site for well over a thousand years. There would have been an original wooden church here no later than the 9th century, but the oldest parts of the current church date back to around 1150.*

*Holy Trinity is an historical gem and speaks of the way people have been worshipping God here for countless generations. Today we are a friendly and growing community of all ages that seeks to make the love of God known to all in Southchurch and beyond.*

## 'OLD CHURCH'

### Under the Spire

You will doubtless notice the eight massive wooden pillars supporting the belfry. These were probably hewn from the old forests nearby, and low down on the back left pillar is an inscription giving the date and the initials "IA" - quite what these initials represent is not known. Higher up on the same pillar you can see the date 1747 inscribed.

Next to the pillars is the font, which is of an uncertain age and is still used for baptisms. Its location near the entrance door symbolises the place of baptism as the starting point of being a Christian. Above your head is the belfry which now contains just one bell, inscribed



"JOHANNES" and which was cast and installed in the 14th century. It is still used to call people to worship to this day.

Looking to the left of the porch door, you will see a board listing every Rector of the parish since 1193, together with the name of the sitting Archbishop of Canterbury, the patron of the church.

It should be remembered that not all Rectors of Southchurch lived in Southchurch. Some had responsibility for other parishes and left a curate to serve the parish, just visiting occasionally. One such curate was Rev Thomas Archer who was curate in charge from 1783 to 1816. There are many stories about Rev Archer, a favourite being about him regularly wearing hunting clothes under his surplice, as he was someone who

frequently rode to hounds. On one occasion he was officiating at a wedding when the local hunt rode by outside. He is reputed to have greeted the hunt, mid-service, with a loud Tally Ho!

During this period Princess Charlotte of Wales, daughter of the future King George IV, visited the area, staying at The Lawns near the Rose Inn and worshipping at Holy Trinity.

## The nave of the Old Church

You are standing in the Nave - the main body - of the original church. It is the oldest part of the original church, dating from about 1150. In front of you to the east is the Chancel and Sanctuary where the altar stands; this was added later and dates from around 1250.

Originally there would have been a decorated wooden 'rood screen' dividing the nave from the chancel, with a loft above. The first four steps of the stone stairs which went up to the rood loft can still be seen in the north wall below the 15th century arch.

Local nobleman Thomas Drew and his wife Elizabeth, who lived in nearby Southchurch Hall, paid for much of the work carried out in the 19th century which significantly changed the look and feel of the original church. A carved wooden coat of arms was removed from the church and relocated to Southchurch Hall in 1856. He and several other family members are commemorated on two memorials on the north wall.

There are a number of tombstones on the floor of the old church including, in the centre of aisle immediately below the Chancel step, the tomb of Henry Moore of Thorpe a "Sen Gent" (senior gentleman) who died 20th Jan 1678 and his wife who died in 1689. At the west end of the aisle are members of the Brown family who died between 1748 and 1792. Quite who they were is not clear but presumably they were of some standing to be interred here.

On the south wall - the right hand side if you're facing the altar - you can see an extremely rare 12th century double piscina, used for the washing of the communion vessels.

Along the south wall are several ancient windows with Victorian stained glass in memory of several people, including the family of Rev William Vallance, Rector from 1854 to 1875.

## Chancel

In the chancel is another piscina, dating from the 13th century after the chancel and sanctuary were added and the altar moved.

Particularly noteworthy are the unusual tiles behind the altar. These were installed during the 1856 restoration and the tiles came from the Crimean peninsula, probably from a Russian Orthodox Church.

On the left hand side of the altar, in the north wall, is the Easter Sepulchre built in the 14th century. A sepulchre is a tomb; although the term 'Easter Sepulchre' is usually symbolic, in this case it did actually include a tomb below.

## 'NEW CHURCH'

As you move past the organ, you enter the new church which was built in 1906 to a design by Sir Ninian Comper.

By the beginning of the century, it was clear that the medieval church was too small for the rapidly growing population of the parish. Sir Ninian Comper was asked to design a major extension and in 1906 a new church was built on to the side of the old Church. Much of the Norman work was incorporated into the new nave, including the original north Norman doorway.

The wooden lectern, from where the Bible is read, has the letters "IHS" carved into the front - which are the first three letters of the name Jesus in Greek. The Latin inscription around these translates as "This is the name above every name", a reference to Philippians 2:9.

## Moving to the Communion Rail

The altar in the new church is made of oak, and behind it is a reredos made of carved oak, lime and sycamore erected in March 1976. The centrepiece is a carved crucifix. To either side are the symbols of the four evangelists. The man/angel, St. Matthew; the lion, St. Mark; the bull, St. Luke and the eagle for St. John.

Looking up, you can see the magnificent East Window erected in 1956. Its main theme is the Benedicite, a prayer based on Scripture which begins "Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord: sing his praise and exalt him for ever". The window was given by the Thorby family.

The full description of this window is available to the side for you to read in more detail if you wish, but in brief the window depicts in the centre the figure of the risen Christ on the tree of life with a rainbow above. The four panels encircled by the tree branches contain scenes from the four seasons:

Spring with Southchurch Hall in the distance; Summer shows haymaking with St Mary's Prittlewell in the background; Autumn shows the corn harvest with Daines Farm in the background; and Winter shows people ice skating.

