

Blean Church Today

www.bleanchurch.net T: 01227 763373 E: bleanchurch@tiscali.co.uk



The village church of St Cosmus and St Damian in Blean is a thriving focus of community life. Services and activities are attended by a large number of people from the villages of Blean and Tyler Hill and further afield.

Dozens of local families attend Weddings and Christenings at Blean church every year. The work with children, both at Blean Primary and in our own 'Sunday School', has widespread support. We have good connections with Canterbury's schools, colleges and universities.

We hope you enjoy reading this introduction to what's going on at Blean church and St Francis' Tyler Hill.

Why is Blean church often full on Sundays?



On Sundays there are normally at least two Church of England services in the church, at 8am and at 10am.

The 10am service attracts people of all ages from the local community along with visitors and regulars from further afield. It lasts exactly one hour, and normally includes hymns, prayers, bible readings, an address and Communion. People who have heard reports about local churches being in decline may be surprised to discover that Blean church is often virtually full on a Sunday. But there is always some space (along with toys to keep young children happy plus activities for older ones) and ALL ARE WELCOME!

Weekdays too The church is open to visitors every day from around 9am to 5pm: some people come to enjoy the atmosphere of our ancient church building and churchyard; some are tracing family histories; others want to pray quietly. At festival times such as Easter and Christmas there are additional opportunities for worship, including Carol Services for both Blean Primary School and the local community.

Not just church services...

Village churches like ours have always been important focuses for community life and places for teaching and learning. We host concerts, flower festivals and the annual Blean Lecture. Recently we have run courses for people concerned about family issues such as bereavement and the care of the elderly. Classes from Blean School often visit and hear about the history and present day use of the church and churchyard.

Working with schools and local children

Blean church has a thriving Sunday School: we call it 'Junior Church'. It meets every Sunday during term time at 10am. Occasionally our main services are led by groups from Junior Church and feature a theme which they have been working on.

We value our links with Blean Primary School: our ministers visit regularly for school assemblies or to help with RE lessons.

Whether through our Junior Church or at the local school, we believe that it is very important that children receive good basic Christian teaching, get to know the church building and hear stories from the Bible.



Local and global

Through our links with a community in Madagascar, we offer prayer and financial support for Christian mission, medical and social work, but we can learn a lot from them too!

'Madagascar lunches' are an important aspect of community life in Blean. They provide an opportunity for people to hear news from our 'link parish', to socialise and to raise funds. In the past 5 years over £5000 has been raised in order to help with anything from the purchase of mosquito nets to the improvement of church buildings.



Meanwhile a large number of visitors from many different parts of the world visit Blean church. Our visitors' book shows that over a recent 12 month period people of 27 different nationalities dropped in!

Can I get involved even if I am not a 'regular'?

We are always happy to hear from people who would like to get involved. First of all, just come along and enjoy a 'Blean church welcome!' The activities of a thriving village church require significant active input from volunteers – people with interests and skills who are prepared to give some time to develop our work alongside our professional ministers. Volunteers meet people, help others and enjoy themselves whilst doing so. There is plenty of 'behind the scenes' work to be done: cleaning, flower arranging, helping to keep the churchyard in good order and assisting with the annual door to door collection for Christian Aid,



the international relief charity. Some of the tasks carried out by our volunteers are specialised, including visiting the housebound and working with children.

Many people have found that membership of **The Friends of Blean Church** is an enjoyable and effective option as it encompasses activities within the whole village community whilst also supporting Blean Church – see contact details below.

Some interesting facts

Blean and Roman Britain Blean church is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) but its origins may well go back to Roman times – the church is situated on the site of a fortified farmstead alongside the old Roman road between Canterbury and Whitstable, which is now a footpath and cycle track.



A congregation of 1.8 million One Sunday morning in October 2009 there was a live BBC Radio 4 broadcast from Blean church: the Archbishop of Canterbury had chosen to give his harvest sermon 'for the nation' in one of our services! The church and village were evocatively described on air, an estimated 1.8 million people listening in. This was a moment of pride and significance for the church and village community.

Agnes of Blean Born in 1849 at Lockett's Farm, she was beautiful and 'doll-like' in appearance, growing to just 18" tall. The Duchess of Kent (Queen Victoria's mother) heard, and Agnes was summoned to London to be examined by the Royal doctors. Although tiny, she was perfect in every detail. Agnes Gibbs died in early childhood and was buried secretly in the churchyard in order to foil the plans of body snatchers.



So who pays for all this?

The costs of Christian ministry and the ongoing maintenance of the historic building and churchyard is funded by loyal givers from the regular congregation, from the wider community (notably through the Friends of Blean Church), and by one-off donations. Income is supplemented by the modest fees charged for church weddings and funerals. We do not receive any money from the government or the central church.

Ways we can help you straight away: call 01227 763373

- Weddings, Marriage Blessings and Christenings (see back page)
- New recruits for Junior Church (5yrs+; most current members are School Years R to 8)
- Advice about funeral arrangements and caring for the bereaved; churchyard memorials
- Advice about church facilities for disabled people (NB church and loo are wheelchair accessible)
- Involvement with active responses to local and global environmental concerns
- Student enquiries about Christian groups at the University, and churches in Canterbury
- Making a donation to Blean church or towards a specific aspect of its work
- Joining **The Friends of Blean Church** (call Liz 01227 781771 or Barbara 01227 760162)
- Asking us to consider doing something which you think would be valued by the community

Getting Married at Blean Church

We welcome enquiries from couples who are considering getting married at Blean Church – a lovely, intimate and traditional venue for a wedding service.

Couples are given full professional support in choosing music and planning orders of service. The national rules about who is 'eligible' to hold their wedding service in a particular church have recently been relaxed. Almost all current residents and those with a family connection to the villages of Blean or Tyler Hill should qualify, along with present and past members of Kent University who have lived in the Park Wood estate and Woolf College. Contrary to popular belief, the costs of having a traditional wedding ceremony in a church are low compared with that of other venues.



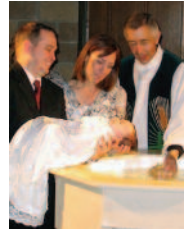
Christenings (also called Baptisms)

We are delighted when parents enquire about the possibility of having their children (young and not so young) Christened in Blean church. We understand that you may want this to be a simple family occasion and will try to be as supportive of your plans as we can, helping with orders of service etc. It is interesting to note that in recent years several adults have been Baptised at Blean church – some of them students from the University of Kent.

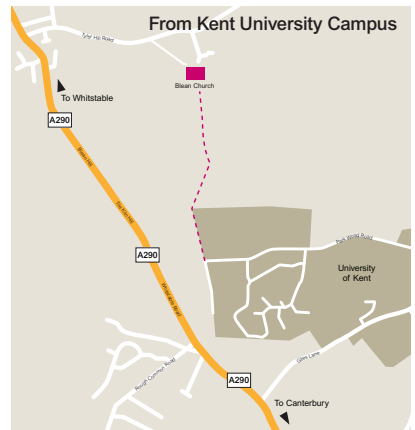
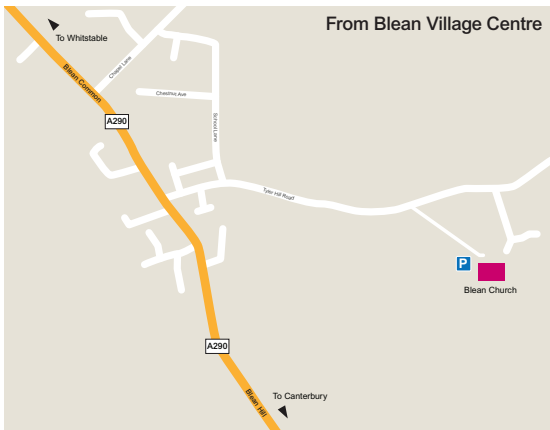
There is no charge for a Christening service, but families usually make a donation in support of the church's ministry in the villages, which includes work with children both at church and at the local school.



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



How to find Blean Church (01227 763373)



Blean Church: Sunday Services

8am Holy Communion (not second Sundays of the month)
10am Main Service (usually Eucharist; also Family Services as announced)
6.15pm Sung Evensong (first Sunday of the month).
Junior Church meets in the Church Room at 10am in Term Time

St Francis of Assisi Tyler Hill: Sunday Service

8.30am Holy Communion (second Sundays and major festivals only)



We are proud of our strong links with the University of Kent, where this brochure was designed and printed. Blean Church is a pleasant 5 minute walk from University's the Park Wood Estate.

University of
Kent