



## The Bishop's Statement

### Vacancy in the benefice of St Nicholas, Sutton

The Bishop's Statement is in relation to the post, the needs of the diocese and the wider interests of the Church. In considering whether to offer this post to any applicant, the Diocesan Bishop will wish to satisfy himself that the applicant is able and willing to work positively and purposefully with the [Diocesan Vision](#).

#### The Benefice

St Nicholas is the Church of England church in the centre of Sutton, close to the council offices, and should play a key role in the relationship between the churches and civic authorities. Much of this work has been undertaken in recent years by Sutton Community Works, a partnership of local churches. I envisage that the Rector of St Nicholas will have a significant role in building relationships between the church, the borough of Sutton and other key civil society organisations.

St Nicholas is also in a Local Ecumenical Partnership with Trinity (Methodist/URC) and Sutton Baptist. These three town centre churches have a great deal to give to one another, and it is hoped that St Nicholas will both contribute and benefit more in the future from this partnership than it has in recent years.

The parish has found the post pandemic landscape difficult, and the past Rector moved on about 18 months ago. In this time Revd Alison Way, the Croydon Parish Development Officer, has worked with the PCC to develop a new MAP and give pastoral support. The church is ready to become more outward-focused, and I am looking for a priest with a pioneering heart to lead in new ways of reaching the town for Christ.

There are plans to bring the neighbouring parish of St Barnabas into a benefice with St Nicholas, while retaining a House for Duty post at St Barnabas. The two clergy will provide mutual support and be able to lead on areas of strength across the benefice.

#### The Deanery

The parish is part of Sutton Deanery. The Revd Kevin Lewis, Area Dean writes:

*There are 14 parishes and 18 worshipping communities in the deanery of Sutton, reflecting the breadth of theology across evangelical and catholic strands, and the breadth of church style from contemporary to traditional worship. As a Chapter we celebrate that which unites us, and meet regularly to eat and share our experiences together because it is only in building relationships that we can learn from each other and work together.*

*The deanery consists of the entire London Borough of Sutton (plus a tiny bit of Merton), containing within it not only Sutton town centre, but also at least 6 small town centres across its largely suburban area. There is great socio-economic diversity, with not all areas reflecting the perception of Sutton as a leafy middle-class commuter-belt borough. There is increasing diversity in population, which is slowly being reflected across some of the church congregations.*

*We look forward to welcoming new colleagues who seek to work together across and within this theological and geographical spread, helping our parishes to adapt to a changing world as we seek to proclaim the Gospel and serve the people of Sutton.*

## **The needs of the Diocese & the wider church**

All appointments in the Southwark Diocese take place within the context of the diocesan vision: [Christ Centred, Outward Focused](#). This next evolution of our vision comes as we continue to walk together, discerning God's wisdom and guidance in our shared pilgrimage of faith. Keeping Christ as our centre and the focus of unity, we will continue to turn outwards - seeking to support, encourage, resource and learn from one another as we serve our parishes and God's world. Church is formed when people gather around the person of Jesus Christ, drawn to worship him and join in his work as he meets human hurts and hopes. Jesus walks with us and is also waiting for us in places of mission, healing, reconciliation, learning and worship. It is important that all clergy in the diocese have a good understanding of the aims and objectives of the vision.

## **Finance**

As of 2016, a new system of financial contributions towards the parish share was introduced across the Diocese, called the Parish Support Fund (PSF). All parishes and churches are invited to contribute with generosity, and to aim at least to meet their own ministerial costs. St Nicholas Sutton made a pledge of £12,000 for 2025, a 20% increase from their 2024 pledge. However, this contribution was 13% of their indicative costs, a small increase on its 2024 pledge when the parish decreased its contribution from 45%. With the ministry provision of a vicar with a full stipend, this parish's indicative costs for 2025 will be £89,300. Whilst the last years have been challenging for parish and diocesan finances and we are living in political and economic uncertainty, we encourage all parishes to give both generous and realistic pledges, in proportion to their means, and each year to aim to take a step towards become self-financing. We would expect the new incumbent to work with the lay leaders and congregation to nurture and restore the financial position and encourage a pattern of generous giving.

## **Collaborative Ministry**

I am looking to appoint clergy in this Area who can articulate their vision for the mission of the church in the places to which they are called, and who have a vision for the church's growth. In whatever tradition or location, I look to hear from the clergy how they will work together with lay members of the church and with their neighbouring parishes and colleagues. I am looking for people with active and developing spiritual lives who can be an example of discipleship to the people of God. I take very seriously my own responsibilities as pastor to the clergy and will always endeavour to make myself available to support them in their ministry.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Rosemarie Mallett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

The Right Reverend Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon

**February 2025**