



## The Bishop's Statement

### Vicar of St Francis of Assisi & St Mary of Nazareth, West Wickham (United Benefice)

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

The united benefice of St Mary's and St Francis is a friendly and well-resourced benefice, well connected to its local community. St Francis and St Mary share, along with many other suburban churches, the long-term problems of an ageing congregation and a gradual decline in attendance. There is within the churches a recognition of the need to change this trend around. The priest to be appointed will need to be able to work with the parishes to care for those who are church members now, as well as, as a matter of priority, develop and grow the mission of the two parishes in outreach, with particular emphasis on evangelism and discipleship.

Both parishes are blessed with strong and supportive lay and ordained leadership teams and active and enthusiastic volunteers. The new incumbent will also need to work collaboratively with the leadership teams of both parishes, as well the leadership of St John's with whom they are part of a Group ministry, in developing this creative missional partnership.

#### The Deanery

The parish is part of Croydon Addington Deanery and Revd Debbie Forman, Area Dean, writes: *Croydon Addington Deanery comprises significant socio-economic diversity, ranging from leafy suburbs to areas high on the index of multiple deprivation. In addition, parts of the deanery relate more easily to the neighbouring borough of Bromley whereas others are firmly Croydon based. All parts of the deanery enjoy excellent transport links and Central London is easily accessible as is the beautiful Surrey and Kent countryside. Despite our diversity there is a genuine desire and move towards increasing collegiality and a growing awareness of the ways in which we can share our gifts for the benefit of all. The clergy meet regularly for worship and the sharing of joys and sorrows and deanery synod, as well as conducting its business, has an ongoing programme of inspiring and informative speakers. The voices of the laity are greatly valued as we work together for the furtherance of God's kingdom in this part of S E London.*

#### 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. The West Wickham United Benefice's 2024 pledges total £84,584. With the ministry provision of a vicar with a full stipend, this benefice's indicative costs for 2024 are £86,300 and, whilst both churches increased their pledges for 2024, they are a fraction short of the two parishes' combined indicative costs. St Francis' pledge is £39,500 and St Mary's pledge is £45,084. All parishes are encouraged to give both generous and realistic pledges, in proportion to their means. This benefice has worked since the pandemic to try and move back towards being self-financing as it was in 2019. Whilst the last few years have been challenging for parish and diocesan finances, we expect parishes such as St Francis and St Mary, which are not in a deprived area, to maintain their pattern of yearly increases each year so that in the near future they will once again be self-financing as a benefice and as individual parishes. They should be able to give generously and enable the Diocese to resource ministry in areas of severe deprivation. We would expect the new incumbent to work with the lay leaders to nurture and restore the financial position and build up their 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 black ink that reads "Rosemarie Mallett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping flourish at the end.

The Right Reverend Dr Rosemarie Mallett, Bishop of Croydon

**September 2024**