

St John's Church hensingham



About us:

St John's is a vibrant conservative evangelical Anglican church located in the historic coastal town of Whitehaven in beautiful West Cumbria, between the mountains of the Lake District and the Irish Sea.

The church has a long history of faithful Bible teaching and we are seeking an Associate Vicar who loves studying the Word and sharing it faithfully; allowing us to learn together as we come to know God more intimately.

The congregation is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural (unusual for our semi-rural locality) and we delight in being a church family that embraces newcomers from 'every tribe and tongue and nation'.

The St John's family is praying for an Associate Vicar to work alongside our new vicar and his leadership team. We are looking for a man¹ who will help us grow in spiritual maturity through a deeper knowledge of the gospel and the Word and help us become passionate disciples of Christ. The post is permanent with an incumbent level stipend as set by Carlisle Diocese.

¹ **St John's Parochial Church Council** has passed a resolution in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests which means that this post is only open to male applicants.

We are praying for someone who can lead our discipleship and oversee our ministry to children and youth, encouraging our team of enthusiastic volunteers. This desire flows from careful research done on our strategic needs to help St John's become a gospel influence in our local area and throughout West Cumbria.

We need an Associate Vicar to help us invest in training people for teaching roles in our church and beyond. In 2022, with our full support, a small group left St John's to plant a new church in a nearby gospel-deprived town and we would love to see this repeated into other needy locations in Cumbria.

About our vicar:

In June 2024, Simon (Si) Walker became our new Vicar. He joined the church as our curate in 2011 and served as our associate vicar until the retirement of Fergus Pearson in 2023.

Si is from Northumberland and has a passion for seeing gospel ministry thrive in Cumbria. He trained for ministry at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford (2008 - 2011). Prior to that, he was a Youth Worker at St Thomas' Oakwood (London), during which time he benefitted from attending lectures at Oak Hill Theological College.



Si is married to Mim and they have five children (4 to 15 years) whom they home educate. He is happy to answer any questions if you would like an informal conversation before applying and his details are on our website.



About you (the candidate):

What we would like you to do:

- ❖ Take responsibility for discipleship within the church as part of our joyful vision to be passionate disciples while our Vicar leads on evangelism
- ❖ Oversee our Youth and Children's Ministry, working with our brilliant team of volunteers. This involves recruiting, providing vision, training and pastoring those who are serving with our youngsters as we provide excellent care for those who work hard to keep our youth work thriving
- ❖ Contribute to the training of others in ministering God's Word. We would like to develop an in-house Bible handling course to this end
- ❖ Deputise for the Vicar and contribute to the leadership of St John's, as we deliver our vision
- ❖ Share in services by leading and preaching as well as pastoral work at St John's
- ❖ Leading and preaching at St Andrew's (a Mission Community partner) once a month. In addition to provide 3 hrs a week investing in outreach in St Andrew's parish. This will most likely be in helping lead an afterschool club for primary age children alongside an Intern.
- ❖ Share in taking occasional offices
- ❖ Participate in our prayer meetings (the engine room of the church!), as well as playing a full part in our worshipping life as the St John's family.
- ❖ Work under the oversight of the Vicar by participating in a weekly line management meeting as well as meeting with ministers of the other Mission Community churches on a monthly basis.

What we would like to see in you:

- ❖ A person who loves Jesus and worshipping Him with His people
- ❖ Someone who has great confidence in the power of Jesus to change lives and a proven track record of raising up disciples
- ❖ A minister demonstrably within the reformed tradition, who loves the Word of God, plumbing its depths, and sharing its riches with God's church
- ❖ One who possesses a conservative evangelical theology which accords with St John's and informs the way you minister
- ❖ Experience of delivering successful children and/or youth ministry that you can use in encouraging and directing our volunteers.
- ❖ A servant with a humble heart and compassion for the flock.

- ❖ Someone excited by ministry in the North of England and ready to learn our culture (if you aren't already familiar with West Cumbria). We would love someone who feels the call to leave their comfort for Christ and to be a labourer in this corner of the harvest field.

What skills you could offer us:

- ❖ An ability to warm hearts to Christ with preaching that causes your hearers to see Him as more beautiful and believable than before
- ❖ Gifted in expository preaching, with confidence to let the Word do the work.
- ❖ A skilled communicator who can present the things of God to a variety of backgrounds and levels of education
- ❖ An understanding of people, their motivations and how to shepherd the heart
- ❖ Confidence to work on your own initiative and persevere when situations are hard
- ❖ Grace to handle criticism, work through conflict and win people over by your godly life

Some areas where our church is currently blessed:

- ❖ active youth work at all age levels with every group growing in number
- ❖ faithful expository Bible teaching at the heart of all our services
- ❖ wide involvement of church members in many areas of service
- ❖ a church with two ordained stipendiary ministers (Vicar and Associate)
- ❖ sound buildings, facilities and finances
- ❖ a strong, supportive evangelical Mission Community
- ❖ a welcoming church family with cultural diversity
- ❖ a skilled music group with wide intergenerational participation
- ❖ a history of training leaders, planting a congregation and a desire to do more
- ❖ good relationships with the Deanery and Diocese
- ❖ episcopal oversight from the Bishop of Ebbsfleet

Some areas we see as opportunities:

- ❖ oversight & training of our group leaders and Bible teachers; ensuring they are workers who “correctly handle the word of truth”

- ❖ wider church family involvement in small Bible study groups
- ❖ maximising the opportunities that our cultural diversity offers
- ❖ a renewed and widespread vision for sharing the Gospel within the Parish

What will we do for our Associate Vicar?

- ❖ Commit to regular prayer for him and his family in all aspects of their lives
- ❖ Ensure sufficient rest²
- ❖ Encourage ongoing training
- ❖ Support appropriate resourcing needs as they are identified
- ❖ Your role will be as an office holder within the Diocese on Common Tenure
- ❖ Work alongside him, providing a team ethos to support and encourage a sense of shared responsibility to further the work of the church
- ❖ Provide administrative support to co-ordinate, plan and organise the practical work of the parish including running the church management system³
- ❖ Housing in St Andrew's Vicarage⁴ for up to 5 years.
- ❖ We are committed to use our talents and resources to support our new Associate Vicar and believe that God will “thoroughly equip for every good work” the man He calls to join us



² We support the new guidelines for clergy rest produced by General Synod

³ Our Church Coordinator is a paid 18-hour/week role

⁴ This is a comfortable and modern property within 1 mile of St John's. St Andrew's have agreed to loan us their vicarage for 5 years after which another plan will be made for housing.