



THE BISHOP OF HERTFORD
The Right Reverend Dr Jane Mainwaring

Bishop's Statement on the appointment of a Team Vicar for St Faith's Church, Hitchin (0.5) and Leader of the Hub Church (BMO), Hitchin (0.5)

This post presents a unique opportunity within St Albans Diocese to model a mixed ecology church and would be an exciting post for a priest who has a heart for both the traditional model of parish ministry and the missional focus of a Bishop's Mission Order.

The post has come about by the joining together under one roof of St Faith's congregation and the Hub Church. This is a new venture for both churches and comes at a time when both were looking at the financial sustainability of leadership going forward. In the immediate future the Hub Church will be renting space from St Faith's with the PCC maintaining responsibility for the maintenance of the church building. However, it is hoped that as relationships and trust build there will come a time when this initial arrangement may develop into something deeper and structurally linked. This will need to be carefully navigated and done at a pace that both churches are comfortable with.

The coming together of the two churches under one roof and one leader will give the Hub church the missional opportunity of premises which are available during the weekdays, providing enhanced opportunities for mission and a permanent place to call home (as opposed to renting commercial and community spaces) and for St Faith's church family there is the opportunity of a priest ministering full-time from the church building and the energy and younger demographic of the Hub church family.

It is our strong hope that weekday missional activities will enhance the life of both churches and that under this new arrangement both the traditional and the more informal communities and worship styles will be honoured and enabled to flourish.

There will be much to do in this role but you will have the support of the rest of the Hitchin and St Paul's Walden team, of the Hitchin Deanery and of the wider diocese, myself and Archdeacon Charles included.

If you would be interested in learning more about this exciting opportunity then please do read the parish profile and contact Archdeacon Charles for an informal conversation (archd@stalbans.anglican.org).

Some specific matters:

1. After extensive consultation, the Diocese is focused at this time on "Living God's Love" (www.livinggodslove.org). We are asking every benefice to address three themes: Going Deeper into God; Transforming Communities; Making New Disciples, alongside 'Growing younger and more diverse'. Of course, all our benefices are free to approach these themes in the way that seems right to them under God. But any priest accepting this post will commit himself or herself to engage with this initiative and to work with the people of St Faiths and Hub to make sense of it in the life of the churches.
2. Within "Living God's Love" every priest is expected to work with their lay and ordained colleagues in the construction of a Mission Action Plan. Mission Action Planning is a tool to help each benefice listen to the communities in which it is set and to identify ways in which the Church can grow. Further information is available on the Living God's Love website: (http://www.livinggodslove.org/about/mission_action_plans)
3. As a Diocese we are committed to developing the ministry of all God's people. Any priest wishing to come and serve here will therefore be working collaboratively with ordained and lay colleagues. A key part of his or her ministry will be to identify and encourage those who have the calling and the gifting to be ordained or to be lay leaders.
4. The spiritual and numerical growth of the Church is a priority for the Church of England and for the Diocese. We will help and support any new post-holder in the Diocese as they work to secure this growth in depth and in numbers, and we will act in partnership with them to ensure that they have the necessary training and equipping for this vital part of their task.
5. I expect that anyone appointed to this post will involve themselves actively in the life of Hitchin Deanery, in particular of its Chapter and its Synod, and in the life of the Diocese more generally. It is expected that you will attend Diocesan Clergy Conferences as and when they are arranged and access the wide range of ongoing training opportunities offered by the Diocese. The Church of England needs to hear the wisdom and insight of the diverse community of strong and thoughtful people that this Benefice contains. I look to the new Team Vicar and Hub Leader together with his or her colleagues and people, to be fully involved in the ideas, strategies and policies of the Diocese and of the wider Church of England, robustly offering his or her own wisdom and insight, and listening carefully to the wisdom and the insight of others.
6. The Diocese takes seriously the call on the Church of England to serve all the people of this land and in particular to be there for any who may need us at significant moments of transition in their lives. For this reason, we expect our clergy to be wholehearted in their exercise of the "cure of souls" to all within their benefice, and to take responsibility for the provision of the pastoral offices to any who request them.

7. St Faith's and Hub Church have been generous in their giving and have sought to do their best to financially support the ministry they have received through their contributions to the Common Fund via the Parish Share scheme. Both churches have recognised sharing a full-time minister will enable ministry to be financially sustainable.
8. Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is a priority of the Diocese, as it is of the whole Church. The clergy of the Diocese receive regular training in this area, and anyone coming into the Diocese will commit themselves to remaining up to date with their safeguarding training during their tenure in office.
9. St Albans Diocese makes the well-being of our clergy, and lay ministers and officers, a very high priority. We have support in place for our clergy including Support in Your Ministry (SIM) scheme, Clergy Counselling, Dispute Advisory Service, training, regular reviews with senior clergy, and more. We encourage any priest coming to St Albans Diocese to access this support.

+ Joe Holford