

A statement from our Bishops



Vicar

Thornton and Crosby All Saints with  
St Frideswyde

## **Bishops' Statement on the appointment of a new Vicar to Thornton and Crosby All Saints with St Frideswyde**

Dear Applicant,

We warmly welcome your interest in this post and commend our Diocese and the parish of All Saints with St Frideswyde to your prayerful consideration and discernment. Thank you for taking the time to think through whether it might be right under God for you to minister with us.

All Saints with St Frideswyde is a valued member of the Diocesan family. The spirit of the church is open, warm and joyous. As bishops we expect its distinctive witness to continue, flourish and develop under the guidance of its new Vicar.

If you come to this Diocese, we and our Diocesan colleagues commit ourselves to support, sustain and resource you in your ministry. The most important gift you can bring to your people is your best self, flourishing in your ministry and in your personal life. Nourishing your best self under God is a matter for you, supported by us all. We expect, and would hold you accountable for, a high level of personal responsibility from you in the conduct of your ministry within the direction to which we are committed together. With this in mind we want to be as clear as we can about our commitment and our expectations from the start.

### **Vision and purpose**

For many years we have been working to achieve growth in discipleship, in transformative strength and in numbers across our Diocese. We have expressed this purpose in different ways over the years, but the aim and direction of travel has remained the same – consistent with the purposes of the Church of England as a whole.

So in the Diocese of Liverpool we say that we are

**“Asking God for a bigger church to make a bigger difference”, and we say “more people knowing Jesus, more justice in the world”**

You will note that our purpose begins in prayer, as we ask God for grace, strength and creativity to fulfil the purpose which we believe God has for us in this season of our corporate life.

As bishops we want to see every parish, school, fresh expression and chaplaincy making sense of this aim in ways that connect with their own

specific context. In coming to be with us you would be aligning yourself with this purpose and committing yourself to make it real within your own community.

## **A Rule and five numbers**

To focus our general aims, the Diocese has a number of specific objectives at present. These are crystallised in a Rule of Life and in five numbers.

Leadership and discipleship in the Diocese takes its place within our Rule of Life ([www.ruleoflife.org.uk](http://www.ruleoflife.org.uk)). We believe that we are ***called to pray, read and learn, and sent to tell, serve and give.***

As bishops we expect all ministers of the Diocese to live out this Rule personally and to build their ministry on it, interpreted so as to fit with their specific calling and spiritual practice and with the specific context of their ministry.

This Rule of Life frames the “five numbers” which we use to inform our prayers and set out our hopes.

So we ask every disciple in the Diocese, including every ordained and lay minister, to *bring one person each year into the worshipping and serving life of the church*, and to *enact ten acts of service or points of connection each year, that change the world for the better.*

In short, we ask everyone to **bring one friend** and to **do ten things.**

And then we ask each leader in the Diocese to contribute to the following aims, which have been developed in consultation with the ministers of the Diocese and formally approved by the Diocesan Synod:

To plant **a hundred new congregations** which draw new people into the worshipping and serving life of the church (over the next 10 years)

To identify and nurture **a thousand new leaders** in the worshipping and serving life of the church (over the next 5 years)

To encourage the first **ten thousand disciples** to commit themselves to our Rule of Life (over the next 3 years)

Building on the Rule of Life and the five numbers, we have developed guidelines which shape our expectations of what it means to be a leader of God's people in the diocese of Liverpool. These are appended to this Statement. We encourage you to read these and to decide whether you will be able to align yourself with them; we look to all our ministers to do so.

Our understanding of the Ministerial Development Review (MDR), which all ministers under Common Tenure are required to do, is that it will help you answer questions in two closely related areas:

- How am I flourishing as a human being, as a Christian disciple and as a minister of the Gospel?
- How is my ministry contributing to the work of God as our Diocese perceives it?

The same is true for the life of your community, which we survey regularly by means of our Archdeacons' Parish Review. In this Diocese we have chosen to increase the number of Archdeacons so as to provide the support that our communities need. Our Archdeacons take seriously their role as missional consultants and advisors, as do our Diocesan staff colleagues.

We make these demands and state these expectations unambiguously. In addition we explicitly commit ourselves as bishops to support and resource you in your ministry as best we may. We want you to draw close to our Lord in your work, as well as in every other aspect of your life. We will therefore be praying for you and asking God's blessing on you and your household, so that you may flourish in your life and in your ministry, and so that your ministry may operate from the overflowing of the love of God in Christ for you and those close to you.



## Some specific matters

- The parish of All Saints with St Frideswyde is part of the Deanery of Sefton North. This aims to be a supportive place and has long been exploring the right way to develop structures of mutual encouragement and care for clergy and lay people alike. The diocese places a strong emphasis on devolved Deanery mission planning, which will of course only be effective if all our local leaders involve themselves actively in the Deanery's life and structures. The allocation of the Parish Share is also now decided at Deanery level, so as to make decision-making local and relational. Anyone appointed to this post will therefore be committed to and accountable for regular attendance at Deanery Chapter and Synod, robustly offering their own wisdom and insight and listening carefully to the wisdom and insight of others.
- The Church of England needs to hear the wisdom and insight of the diverse community of strong and thoughtful people that this parish contains. We look to the new Vicar, together with the people of this parish to engage positively with the ideas, strategies and policies of this Diocese and with the wider Church of England's agenda for mission and growth, and to contribute robustly in shared conversation, insight, wisdom and learning.
- We are committed in the long term to a vision for "bigger parishes" which are better resourced and equipped, reducing extensive governance and administration and releasing disciples for ministry and mission. We expect anyone who joins the Diocesan college of clergy, or who moves within the Diocese, to be explicitly committed to this as our direction of travel.
- As a Diocese we are determined to develop the ministry of all God's people. Any priest wishing to come and serve here will therefore be committed to working collaboratively with ordained and lay colleagues. A key part of his or her ministry will be to identify and encourage vocations generally but specifically those who have the calling and the gifting to be ordained or to be lay leaders. The national report "Setting God's People Free" sets the tone of our investment in all disciples, lay and ordained, as ministers of the Gospel within and beyond the corporate life of the Church.
- 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, expecting them to pray and to 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.

- We take seriously the call on the Church of England to serve all people and to be there for any who will need us at significant moments of transition in their lives. For this reason we expect our clergy wholeheartedly to exercise the “cure of souls” to all within their benefice, for example taking full responsibility for the provision of the pastoral offices to any who request them.
- The people of the parish of All Saints with St Frideswyde fully recognise the mutuality of our congregations and are committed to paying the parish share in full and on time. The Diocese, and in particular those of its parts in areas of deprivation, honours and values this commitment. We look to the new Vicar to sustain and encourage generosity in the future, teaching regularly on the principles and practice of Christian stewardship and availing himself or herself of the diocesan and other resources available for this purpose, and in particular advocating full involvement in the Parish Giving Scheme.
- We are committed to mutual flourishing in the Diocese as expressed in the Five Guiding Principles and the House of Bishops’ Declaration on the ministry of women as priests and bishops. In the case of All Saints with St Frideswyde, this is a parish which has affirmed and has been blessed by the contribution of ordained women in public ministry, and we will look for this approach to continue.
- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is an absolute 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, or moving within it, will commit themselves actively to undertake our relevant diocesan training as a matter of obligation.

## Thank you!

Thank you for reading this far. Please be sure of our prayers for you as you discern whether it will be right for you to explore this post further. And may God bless you in your future ministry!

With our warmest good wishes,



The Rt Revd Paul Bayes  
**Bishop of Liverpool**



The Rt Revd Beverley Mason  
**Bishop of Warrington**

