

Associate Vicar of Hartford

1. Introduction and Background

St John's is a medium sized, conservative evangelical parish church on the edge of Northwich, a mid-Cheshire market town of around 50,000 inhabitants. The church will celebrate its 200th anniversary in 2021, and has had clearly evangelical vicars for just over 50 years.

Our main Sunday morning service is currently averaging around 220 people, of whom around 50 are under 16 and in our flourishing Sunday School. The church has recently experienced gentle growth. We have a small 8am BCP communion with around a dozen regulars and an evening service which averages about 40. We are a genuine family, with newborns to 90-somethings, committed to "walking in truth, and living in love". Youth work takes place on Friday and Sunday nights. We have a strong commitment to supporting mission.

Christ Church Greenbank, also in the parish, was planted in 2002 and has thrived. It has its own full time minister and part time youth worker.

The west end of the parish, served by St John's, is largely owner occupied housing, with significant new housing developments in recent years. Most people commute to work. There are relatively few 18-30 year olds in the local demographic, and this is reflected in the congregation. The parish has numerous educational institutions, catering to approximately 5,000 young people. These include state, private and special schools, and a number of nurseries/pre-schools. One, re-founded in 2012 in partnership with St John's, is an 11-16 Church of England high school.

Our mission is to reach these residents and students with the gospel, and to serve them in Christ's name.

The Associate Vicar will share the oversight of the ministry of St John's with the Vicar. In broad categories, the Vicar will oversee Discipleship and Pastoral Care, and the Associate Vicar will oversee Evangelism, Youth and Schools. In day to day ministry, each will serve in a variety of ways under both those headings.

We are looking for someone with evangelistic passion, a mature preaching and teaching ministry and an ability to share the oversight of a busy parish with an established Vicar, particularly focussing on our youth, children's, families and schools' ministry, and including the management of those staff members working in that area. We are also seeking someone to help us enliven and renew our corporate worship.

2. The post of Associate Vicar

1. This is a new, senior post, based at St John's in the parish of Hartford and Greenbank.
2. The Associate Vicar will be expected to serve as a member of the clergy team across the parish, for example in taking occasional offices at both churches.
3. This appointment will be an establishment post responsible to the Vicar and under canonical obligation to the Bishop of Chester.
4. The minister appointed will be a presbyter (priest) ordained in the Church of England or another Anglican jurisdiction. Under the terms of the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests, only male candidates will be considered for this role.

3. Personal and Leadership Qualities

The Associate Vicar will need to be:

1. a man who knows and loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and who displays clear evidence of this in his own deepening faith and obedience, prayer and godliness;
2. committed to the supreme authority and inerrancy of Scripture, recognising the Bible as 'God's Word written' (Article 20);
3. committed to the centrality of the cross, and subscribing to our Church's teaching that there the Father was reconciled to us (Article 2);
4. a clear and faithful preacher of God's word, committed weekly to systematic, expository preaching and also to seeking out and training other preachers and Bible teachers;
5. a warm-hearted and humble leader, committed to working collaboratively with staff colleagues and church members, and in partnership with other local gospel churches;
6. a Christ-like pastor, able sensitively to "encourage and rebuke with all authority" (Titus 2.15);
7. committed to making disciple-making disciples of Jesus Christ, beyond just seeking converts;
8. able "to do the work of an evangelist", and to encourage and equip his fellow believers in the same task;
9. able to develop the ministries of others, seeing his own calling as "equipping the saints for the work of [their] ministry" (Ephesians 4.12);
10. able to develop and implement strategies for continued church growth;
11. a hard worker in a place where many people contribute many hours to church work on top of busy work and family lives;
12. someone who can help us build further links into the wider community for Christ;
13. a person who is able to work with people of all ages from a diverse range of socio-economic and educational backgrounds;
14. a person who is well-organised;
15. if married, a person who has the full support of his wife (and any children who are at home), in line with Titus 1.6;
16. a man who is able to work alongside and encourage women in many and various ministries, but who will support and teach the church's position that the church office of presbyter ('priest') is limited to men, in the light of Biblical teaching on 'headship'; and
17. able to subscribe to the PCC Motion on Marriage, passed on 23 October 2017 (attached).

4. Particular Responsibilities

The Associate Vicar will share the oversight of the ministry of St John's with the Vicar. In broad categories, the Vicar will oversee Discipleship and Pastoral Care, and the Associate Vicar will oversee Evangelism, Youth and Schools. In practice, both will serve in a variety of ministries under all those headings and in sharing the full range of pastoral ministry in the parish, including Occasional Offices.

Particular areas of responsibility will include, but not be limited to:

1. taking the lead in developing our church's evangelism and evangelistic strategy, including developing an evangelistic culture, organising particular events and equipping church members in evangelism and apologetics;
2. overseeing our under 18's ministry and mission, including
 - a. overall responsibility for all youth and children's activities within the church family, and our mission to schools;
 - b. the line management of both our Youth Worker (currently being appointed) and established Children's Outreach Worker, helping them to develop their ministries;
 - c. developing, training and equipping lay leaders in our youth, children's and school ministries; and
 - d. developing a comprehensive gospel focussed strategy to reach and retain young people for Christ;
3. developing our families ministry, seeking to reach "fringe" families for the gospel, and encouraging and equipping church families to grow in Christian faith, love and service;
4. overseeing our men's ministry, which is in need of renewal and strengthening, for both evangelistic and discipleship purposes;
5. overseeing the (possibly radical) renewal of our 6.30 service, which, while in good heart and appreciated by the faithful who attend, has shrunk in recent years;
6. working with our voluntary Director of Music and committed team of musicians to develop our music ministry in both main services;
7. overseeing thanksgivings, baptisms and confirmations, including preparation and follow up;
8. developing our links with and support for our mission partners, including the re-establishment of a missionary support group; identifying and nurturing new calls to mission or local church ministry; and
9. administering, on behalf of the Vicar and in partnership with our parish safeguarding officer, our safeguarding responsibilities.

5. Conditions

This is a permanent, full time stipendiary position. It will attract an incumbent's stipend and includes membership of the Clergy Pension Scheme.

The Associate Vicar will be provided with a five bedroom, semi-detached family home, including a study, within easy walking distance of the church and Centre.

Legitimate expenses will be paid, as agreed with the Churchwardens and Vicar. A book allowance and financial help towards further studies may be given.

There is a shared office in the Church Centre.

The Associate Vicar will have one full day and one additional evening a week off, plus public holidays (which may be transferred if he is required to work on those) and an additional day off in months without any public holidays. Annual holiday entitlement is six weeks, including Sundays.

Hartford PCC Resolution passed 23 October 2017

This PCC affirms, in accordance with Canon B30, and according to our Lord's teaching, that marriage 'is in its nature a union permanent and lifelong, for better for worse, till death them do part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side, for the procreation and nurture of children, for the hallowing and right direction of the natural instincts and affections, and for the mutual society, help and comfort which the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.'

In the light of the above, we intend

- a) To continue to teach that heterosexual marriage is the only right context for a sexual relationship.
- b) To continue to welcome all who come to our churches, to make charitable assumptions, to respect all as people made in the image of God, to teach and preach the good news of Jesus to all, and to call all to repentance and faith, irrespective of sexuality and lifestyle.
- c) To reject all actions, words and attitudes which victimise or diminish people, and to make clear that these are sins to be repented of.
- d) To engage pastorally and gently with those who become regular attenders and are open about being in a sexual relationship outside of heterosexual marriage; and to make it clear to them that we are all sinners, and that their being in a sexual relationship is a sin to be repented of.
- e) To be discerning about who we invite to engage in ministries in the church, so that we 'practise what we preach' on sexual matters. Those who are open with us about a sexual relationship outside of heterosexual marriage, and show no sign of wishing to put it right, will not be asked to serve in church life though they will always be welcome to attend. If they are already serving, they will be asked to step down.
- f) To exhort all who come to Baptism or Holy Communion to do so with a true penitent heart and lively faith, heeding the warning of God's word to so judge ourselves that we practice repentance, pursue holiness and above all things give thanks to God for the redemption of the world by the death of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- g) To urge the Diocese of Chester, and the Church of England and other churches too, to uphold the Christian teaching that marriage between a man and a woman is the only right context for a sexual relationship.

In all of this, we wish to hold ourselves to the high demands of Christian love and care in all our dealings with people inside and outside the church, knowing that for some people the intentions outlined above will be hard to understand, and very hard to put into practice. We nonetheless believe them to be the way of Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us, for our everlasting good.