



**CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS CHAPLAIN**

**UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN**

## FURTHER PARTICULARS



*From the Vicar of the University Church*

Thank you for your interest in the role of Children, Families and Schools Chaplain at St Mary's. This is an exciting new post which we hope will enable the spiritual and numerical growth of the children and families among the St Mary's congregation, as well as help us to reach out to the wider community to help schools in the region to engage with the rich heritage, faith resources and educational enrichment the University Church can offer.

We are seeking to grow and develop our ministry among children, families, and schools; supporting and resourcing the existing Godly Play team, expanding our offer among regular and occasional families with children aged 0-12years in church and supporting religious education in schools across the region, especially in urban priority areas. St Mary's has recently welcomed an increasing number of new parents and parents of small children among the congregation. It is essential to ensure that they are supported pastorally, and in their discipleship, and to enable families to engage in worship and church community activities in ways which nurture their faith and fellowship.

Our relationship with the University of Oxford is obviously central to our mission, and yet while the story of that relationship and the beginning of the University in this city speaks to our history and heritage, we must be proactive in finding ways of relating to every aspect of the work and life of a modern University. At the same time, the city of Oxford provides a rich and stimulating context for ministry. Standing between Radcliffe Square, the historic heart of the University, and the High Street of a bustling city, we believe that St Mary's has a vital role to play in helping the University to be a good neighbour. We are particularly alert to the growing needs of children and their families affected by the cost-of-living crisis, loss of income and opportunity through the covid-19 pandemic, and food poverty in this city, and we must be proactive in finding creative opportunities for serving our city and enabling all its inhabitants to flourish and belong.

We are looking for a lay or ordained person to who will be excited by the opportunities to minister among our children, their families, and local schools; who will be a good colleague, who will have a genuine pastoral heart, and who is committed to mission through relationship-building. Above all, we are looking for a person who feels a genuine sense of call to serve the children in this church and wider community.



# St Mary's Profile

## Location and Setting

St Mary's is a significant city centre church at the heart of Oxford. It is a parish church from which the University of Oxford developed in the middle ages. It is therefore both historically and geographically at the centre of the University. While remaining a parish church it continues to serve the University community through formal links and many informal relations. Among these are University Sermons, which are preached twice a term before representatives of the university and memorial services for university members. A collaborative and supportive relationship with the college chaplaincies is vital for the flourishing of both the University Church and the chaplaincies. The church also provides one of the larger venues for concerts, award ceremonies, services and other occasional events held by community or university organisations. It functions and feels like a blend between a small cathedral and a large parish church. The church attracts in the region of 500,000 visitors per annum. It is one of the most visited churches in the country. As such it affords very wide opportunities for ministry and outreach.

St Mary's is a building of great historical importance, which has witnessed some of the major events in English church history: the trial of Thomas Cranmer, the preaching of John Wesley, and the Anglican ministry of St John Henry Newman, who was the Vicar from 1828-1843. In a city of dreaming spires, its spire dominates the Oxford skyline from every angle.



## Ministry

St Mary's has a threefold ministry, to the University, to a gathered congregation drawn from all parts of the city, and to visitors. St Mary's stands in the liberal catholic tradition of the Church of England, with a critical and exploratory approach to theology, while valuing the historical continuity of liturgical worship. We strive to be a place of intelligent and

faithful Christian witness, unafraid to engage with the modern world. In recent years, our ministry has been characterised by a particular concern for those on the margins of society and a genuine commitment to inclusion. This has involved supporting a number of campaigns and initiatives: Asylum Welcome, Oxford Pride, the Oxford Winter Night Shelter, the Porch, the Gatehouse, Crisis Skylight and the Old Fire Station, the Oxford Community Emergency Foodbank, Oxford Community Action, and Climate Action. A commitment to social justice and care for creation are important accents in our life together. In a world where trust and confidence in institutions has eroded in recent years, we want to engage with those 'on the penumbra' of church life, particularly those who find themselves searching for beauty, goodness and truth, but who have been bruised by a past encounter with organised religion. We want to continue to offer those who are within and without the church a place where they can deepen their spirituality and their sense of the divine presence. We want to do so from a confident, joyful Christian perspective, anchored in the historic catholic faith.



## Congregational Life

The majority of the Sunday morning congregation comes from Oxford and its surroundings but there is usually a significant number of visitors from elsewhere in the country and abroad. The congregation includes people of all ages, from those who are retired to children who are part of young families. More unusually, the church also attracts a significant number of people in their 20s, 30s and 40s.

We are delighted to have children worshipping with us in church at many of our services but find that most of those who come regularly attend the 10.30am Parish Eucharist on Sundays. Sunday attendance is variable, and often is weather and transport dependent for families with small children, but we have 5-10 regular infants and young children among the congregation and we welcome visitors with children on a regular basis. There is a weekly breakout space in the Newman Room (next to the baby change facilities) available during the Eucharist; with a playmat, toys, books and drawing available for young children and babies. We have put together a selection of faith and justice themed books, but hope to be able to develop the resources available to families further and to support children and their families both practically and pastorally. The families have expressed that they would particularly value support engaging with eucharistic worship. They have suggested that this may include creative ways of involving older children in liturgical worship, or assisting parents with small children practically through the service so they can listen to the sermon.



Godly Play takes place on the first Sunday of every month in the Old Library, for children ages 3-8 and their families during the first 45 minutes of the service. The children return in time to receive communion. There are currently four or five families who regularly attend Godly Play sessions and we have a small but faithful team of children's ministry volunteers, the core of which are our Godly Play Team. We are committed to supporting the growth

of the children and the volunteers and have recently begun to purchase and make our own Godly Play stories and figures. We have also invested in residential training in Godly Play practice and spirituality for lead volunteers. The team have considerable professional and personal experience of caring for young children and some have expressed a desire to deepen their theological understanding and biblical literacy and to grow in confidence in answering the children's questions about faith.

In the last year we have experimented with running activities in church and off-site during each vacation to help regular and visiting children to engage more deeply with questions of faith e.g. 'Explore Easter', 'families craft and chat' mornings and wildlife walks in Holywell Cemetery. We also hold a regular 'beating of the bounds' on Ascension Day to which two local schools are invited, and a Crib Service on Christmas Eve which is well attended. We hope to build on the success of these one-off events and services to build a more regular year-round programme for all ages. Since the pandemic, we have also engaged with an increasing number of schools who want to bring their students to the University Church to support their Religious Education and History curriculum, offer enrichment activities and experience the Anglican tradition. We have offered school tours, workshops and teaching on Christian practice, and opportunities to sing choral evensong.

The average number of communicants at the 10.30am Parish Eucharist has recovered well post-pandemic and there are usually very large congregations at Easter and Christmas. There is also a weekly Sunday 8.30am Eucharist (said) and a 3.30pm service which is often Choral Evensong, but occasionally takes other forms of service. There is the possibility of developing this service to include a regular 'messy church' or children's activity.



Throughout the week there are regular activities including:

- Parish Lunch in the Old Library: Sundays after the Parish Eucharist, twice a term.
- Sunday Forum: presentation and discussion on local and global issues twice a term.
- Second Coffee: a Sunday gathering for students and young adults through the year.
- Coffee and Doughnuts: Wednesday mornings weekly during term time.
- Poetry Hour: Wednesday evenings, three times a term.
- Lunchtime Concert: Thursday lunchtimes, weekly through the year
- Lunchtime Bible Study: Friday lunchtimes, weekly during term-time



### **Sunday Services**

8.30am	Eucharist (said) in the Chancel (CW Order One Contemporary Language). Alb, stole and chasuble are worn.
10.30am	Parish Eucharist (CW Order One Contemporary Language) (the choir sings at this service in full term). Alb, stole and chasuble are worn. The University Sermon is incorporated into this service twice a term. This service is live-streamed and recorded.
3.30pm (1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday) (2 <sup>nd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> )	German Lutheran Service (conducted by German Pastor) A cycle of different services for pilgrims and visitors, often Choral Evensong

### **Weekday Services**

9.00am	Morning Prayer
12.15pm	Eucharist (said)





## **Baptism of Children and Admission to Holy Communion**

We regularly welcome infants and young children to baptism; both within the 10.30am Parish Eucharist and, most-often, in a 12.15pm baptism service by arrangement with the family. We have admitted one child to Holy Communion in the last year and some of those in the Godly Play group will soon be of an age to also be prepared for admission to Holy Communion should they wish to be. Often families who bring their children to baptism will be former students or current staff of the university. The Chaplain will work with the clergy to prepare and welcome children and their families to baptism, and will share in building good pastoral connections to nurture their ongoing growth in faith and integration into the worshipping life of the church.

## **Parish Development**

In 2023, after extensive consultation, [a new vision and strategy](#) was developed and adopted by the Parochial Church Council to shape the ministry and mission of St Mary's over the next five to ten years; with special focus on the priorities of worship, learning, community, culture, hospitality, and justice. As part of this plan a new social enterprise, repairs to stonework, replanting of the gardens and a major redevelopment of the University Church's café facilities at Radcliffe Square are set to ensure a much-loved space can welcome visitors to Oxford for years to come. The proposals for redevelopment, will significantly reduce energy usage, improve accessibility, enhance security, and ensure that our Grade 1 listed building is fit to welcome all visitors well into the future.

## **Staff**

- Vicar: The Revd Canon Dr William Lamb
- Associate Vicar: The Revd Hannah Cartwright
- Assistant Curate: The Revd Naomi Gardom
- Associate Priest: The Revd Alan Ramsey (SSM)
- Licensed Lay Minister: Professor Sarah Mortimer
- Operations Manager: Patrick Croom
- Facilities Manager: Kevin Harris
- Shop Manager: Becky Plows
- Finance Officer: Jeanne White
- Communications and Volunteering Officer: Ana-Maria Niculcea
- Director of Music: Robert Howarth

- Organist: James Brown
- There is a large lay staff of Shop and Operational Assistants.

A number of College Chaplains and Honorary Chaplains assist regularly. There is a large team of lay volunteers who share in the life and ministry of St Mary's throughout the week and on Sundays.

## **The Children, Families and Schools Chaplain**

The Vicar and PCC of the University Church are seeking to appoint a Children, Families and Schools Chaplain with enthusiasm and energy, who will contribute to the spiritual and numerical growth of our ministry among children and families, and reach out to the wider community in creative and imaginative ways. In a city with many excellent examples of different ecclesial traditions it is important that the postholder is committed to enabling the 'liberal catholic' tradition of St Mary's to flourish and the full participation of children and families in Eucharistic worship.

The contract of employment is made directly with the PCC.

<b>Role title:</b>	Children, Families, and Schools Chaplain
<b>Type of Role:</b>	Part-time (16 hours per week) fixed-term for 2 years
<b>Name of benefice:</b>	Oxford: St Mary the Virgin with St Cross with St Peter in the East
<b>Episcopal area:</b>	Oxford
<b>Deanery:</b>	Oxford
<b>Archdeaconry:</b>	Oxford

### **Role Description**

The duties of the Children, Families and Schools Chaplain will include:

- Working closely with the clergy and Parish Safeguarding Officer to ensure the highest standards of safeguarding and care for all children and families.
- Supporting children and families during 10.30am Parish Eucharist
- Sharing with the clergy in offering pastoral care to families with children
- Working with the clergy and volunteers to plan and lead special activities and acts of worship (e.g. Crib Service, Explore Easter, and other seasonal events)
- Supporting the Godly Play team administratively, practically, and with theological and storytelling resources where needed, and assist in sessions when required
- Working with the Volunteering Officer to recruit additional occasional and regular children and families and school's volunteers, in accordance with safer recruitment procedure
- Developing and managing the database of children and their families' details in accordance with GDPR and safeguarding best practice
- Leading in the planning, risk assessment, delivery, and review of activities with children and families
- Liaising with local schools and the Diocesan Chaplaincy team to offer curriculum support, and to grow the theological and biblical literacy of students and staff
- Build a volunteer team to assist in leading school assemblies, tours, and other activities, e.g. workshops or Church visits
- Auditing and renewing worship resources for young children, and evaluating how to develop the spiritual life of children and families at St Mary's for the future

- Working with clergy and volunteers to plan social and learning activities for primary school-age children.
- Preparing children and their families for baptism and admission to Holy Communion, and leading in the ongoing discipleship of children and their families.
- Taking care of their own well-being and the well-being of others.
- Following the policies and procedures outlined in the Staff Handbook.
- Carrying out any other duties and responsibilities as required in line with the needs of the benefice.

## **Person Specification**

### *Qualifications*

- A baptised Christian who is passionate about enabling children and families to grow in faith (the Chaplain may be lay or ordained)

### *Personal Qualities*

- A team-player who is collaborative and keen to engage with both congregation and wider community
- A person with a sensitive pastoral heart who is trustworthy; a person of integrity
- Be creative and willing to try new ideas and develop new skills
- A person who exhibits self-awareness, warmth, empathy, and openness
- Efficient and organised
- Confident and enthusiastic
- Evidence of a commitment to ongoing learning and development
- A developing spirituality and a personal discipline of prayer
- Sympathy for the ministry and ethos of the University Church

### *Skills*

- A good communicator with an ability to preach with imagination and intellectual integrity
- Able to lead courses and contribute to the Christian formation and learning of others
- Effective listening skills
- Keen to build and nurture the talents and gifts of others
- Pastoral sensitivity
- Able to demonstrate an ability to work with people of all ages – especially families with young children
- Good working knowledge of databases and IT

### *Other*

- Right to work in the UK

## **Terms of the Appointment**

The contract is fixed term for two years, sixteen hours per week, remunerated at £12,800 per annum. Days and times of work are to be arranged by mutual agreement and may be spread over multiple days, however attendance at the 10.30am Parish Eucharist on Sundays and at major festivals (such as Christmas) and other events with children are key.

Some onsite and some remote working will be required and a desk space with desktop computer can be made available in the church office if required.

The post-holder must have the right to work in the UK, and employment is subject to the return of a satisfactory enhanced DBS check. The post-holder agrees to undertake all required safeguarding and other necessary training.

A copy of the Church safeguarding policy can be found online:

[www.universitychurch.ox.ac.uk/content/parish-safeguarding-policy-promote-prevent-protect](http://www.universitychurch.ox.ac.uk/content/parish-safeguarding-policy-promote-prevent-protect)

The postholder may expect to take pro rata of six weeks of annual leave each year. Those who may desire additional working hours on a separate contract, are invited to enquire about any current vacancies within the shop and operations teams.

The appointment is part-time for two years with a six-month probationary period. It is hoped that during the period of the contract, further funding may be able to be secured to extend the post. In this event, the Chaplain may seek to extend the post for a further two years, subject the agreement of the Vicar.

## **Application**

Applicants should complete [the application form](#). Shortlisted candidates will be invited to complete a confidential declaration form. Candidates should give **names, occupations and addresses (including e-mail if possible)** of three persons to whom reference can be made. At least one should be your current (or most-recent) employer and one from a person who has knowledge of your work with children e.g. a youth or children's worker, vicar, or head teacher of the local school. Referees should have a detailed up-to-date knowledge of the applicant's work. Please obtain their permission. If the candidate is ordained in the Church of England, or a lay-worker who holds the bishop's licence, they should include the name of their current Bishop among their referees.

Paper applications should be addressed to:

The Associate Vicar  
The University Church of St Mary the Virgin  
High Street, Oxford OX1 4BJ  
Tel 01865 279110

### **Applications preferred by email:**

Email: [hannah.cartwright@universitychurch.ox.ac.uk](mailto:hannah.cartwright@universitychurch.ox.ac.uk)

Website [www.universitychurch.ox.ac.uk](http://www.universitychurch.ox.ac.uk)

Applications close at 5.00pm on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April. Interviews will take place on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> April. Overnight accommodation will be provided if required.

*We welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons, particularly from those who are currently under-represented such as those of majority-world heritage.*