

UNIVERSITY  
CHURCH



# Gift Shop Assistant

APPLICATION PACK

## From the Vicar



Thank you for your interest in the role of Gift Shop Assistant at St Mary's. Gift Shop Assistants play a vital role at the University Church in operating the gift shop and tower visits, and responding to the needs of visitors to the church. They are often the first point of call, and the current team have an enviable reputation for their helpfulness and in responding to very different kinds of need.

St Mary's stands in the centre of Oxford, between Radcliffe Square, the historic heart of the University, and the High Street of a bustling and diverse city. Our relationship with the University of Oxford has been integral to our mission and identity over many centuries, and yet we know we must be proactive in finding ways of relating to the life and work of a modern research University. At the same time, the city of Oxford provides a stimulating context for ministry and for collaboration with other churches and organisations. Through a wide range of events and activities, from concerts and exhibitions to the Interfaith Friendship Walk, we seek creative opportunities for serving our city and enabling all of its inhabitants to flourish and belong. It is important that the post holder is in sympathy with our mission and values.

If you would like any further information about the post or an exploratory conversation, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Becky Plows, our Shop Manager.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. Lamb".

The Revd Canon Dr William Lamb  
Vicar, The University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford

If you would like an informal conversation about this post, please contact Becky Plows by emailing [rebecca.plows@universitychurch.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rebecca.plows@universitychurch.ox.ac.uk)

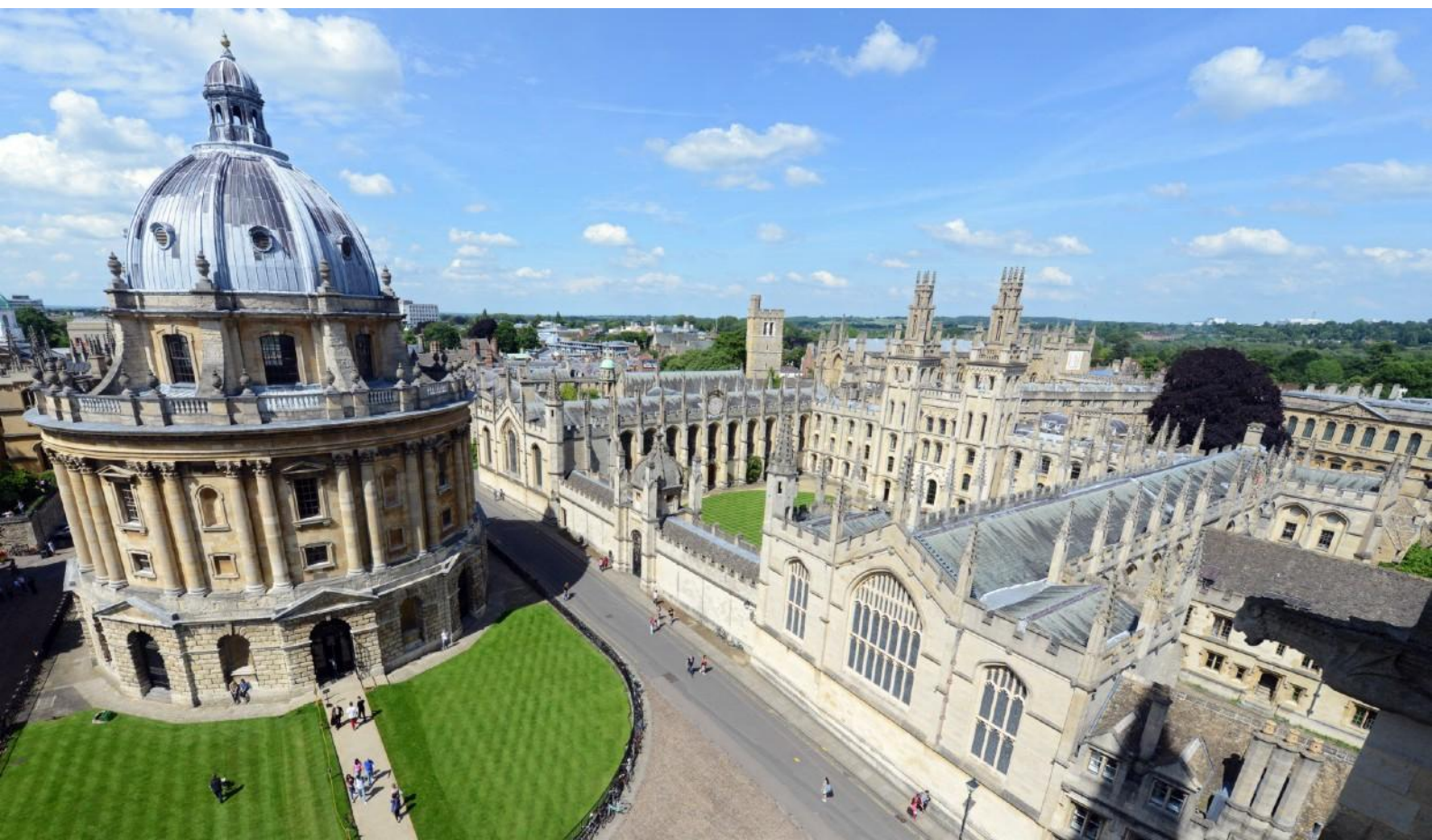


# Location and Setting

St Mary's is a vibrant and inclusive church in the centre of Oxford with strong links to the University of Oxford.

The University Church is a significant city centre church at the heart of Oxford. There has been a church on this site for over a thousand years. It is also the site of many of the earliest activities of the University of Oxford. Although St Mary's remains a parish church it continues to serve the University community through formal links and many informal relations. Among these are University Sermons, 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 over 500,000 visitors per annum, making it one of the most visited churches in the country. With its unique position, it affords very wide opportunities for ministry and service.

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 modern 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 by 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

St Mary's ethos is inspired by the maxim of St Anselm, 'Faith seeking understanding'. We believe that God calls us to be a community of active and faithful disciples, inspired and enabled by the Christian gospel to live in love and joy.

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.

Sunday Services are at 8.30am, 10.30am and 3.30pm. The congregation has been growing steadily in recent years. There are usually very large congregations at Easter and Christmas.

Regular activities include:

- 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.
- Activities for children and young people 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



# Arts, Heritage and Hospitality

The church provides one of the larger venues for concerts, award ceremonies, services and other occasional events held by community and University organisations. The De Brome Chapel is often used for exhibitions. The Operations Manager is responsible for managing events and ensuring that everything 'front of house' runs smoothly. Bookings for concerts and all other events are managed by the Bookings Secretary.

The Gift Shop is located on the north side of the Church at the Tower Entrance. The Tower affords one of the best views of Oxford, and approximately 100,000 visitors climb the tower each year. The Shop Manager and Assistant Shop Manager are responsible for managing the shop. The Gift Shop opening hours are 9.30am – 5.00pm Monday – Saturday and 12noon – 5.00pm on Sunday. The staff hours are 9.15am-5.00pm and 11.45am-5.00pm on Sundays. During July and August, the opening hours are extended to 6.00pm.

Gift Shop Assistants play a key role in the daily running of the University Church and our ministry of hospitality. Their work is diverse and interesting, and the role offers a wealth of opportunities to gain experience in a wide range of different spheres of activity. Training is provided in first aid, fire safety, and emergency procedures.

The precincts of St Mary's also include the church café. Above the café is the Old Library which is used for fine dining and hospitality, as well as lectures and the Church's educational programme (including conferences). The café operates under a licence agreement but is an integral part of our ministry of hospitality.

The Events Team is responsible for delivering hospitality, maintaining the University Church, and providing a safe and secure environment. Events include occasional offices (baptisms, weddings, and funerals), concerts, conferences and seminars, as well as guided tours of the church and fine dining in the Old Library, the Congregation House, and the Nave and Chancel.



# The Staff Team

## Church Staff and Volunteers

### *Ministry*

- Vicar
- Associate Vicar
- Chaplain for Children, Families and Schools
- Assistant Curate
- Associate Priest

*A number of clergy assist regularly and form part of the ministry team. The Associate Priests are licensed to the parish and work either part-time or are self-supporting ministers. In addition the parish benefits from a number of College Chaplains and Honorary Chaplains, including five very active retired clergy.*

### *Administration and Facilities*

- Administrator
- Finance Officer
- Facilities Manager
- Cleaners
- Livestreaming Assistants
- Visitor Experience Officer
- Welcomers (volunteers)

### *Events*

- Operations Manager
- Sales and Marketing Officer
- Event Supervisors
- Operations Assistants
- Head Steward and Stewards (volunteers)

### *Music*

- Director of Music
- Organist
- Vicar Choral and Music Administrator
- Choir and Choral Scholars

## St Mary's (PCC) Limited Staff

- Shop Manager
- Assistant Shop Manager
- Shop Supervisors
- Shop Assistants

# Gift Shop Assistant

Role Title: Gift Shop Assistant  
Hours of Work: Zero Hour Contract at Oxford Living Wage rate

## Benefits

Staff members are entitled to 28 days' holiday with pay every calendar year including bank and other public holidays for full-time employees, based on a five day week. Holiday entitlement for part-time workers will be pro-rated accordingly. The Church's holiday year runs from 1 October to 30 September.

## Main Purpose of the Job

The Gift Shop Assistant works with the Gift Shop Manager, Assistant Manager and other Gift Shop Assistants to process sales transactions, including ticket sales for the tower, to resolve customer issues, to develop the commercial performance of the Gift Shop, and to maximise financial support for the mission and ministry of the University Church.

## Principal Responsibilities

### *Shop Sales*

- Assist the Gift Shop Manager, Assistant Manager and shop staff to help provide a happy and cooperative working environment.
- Price merchandise in consultation with the Gift Shop Manager, arranging and labelling goods, and optimising the sales space for presentation of goods in the Gift Shop.
- Operating cash registers and point-of-sale machines, ensuring that all cash and card receipts are handled in accordance with the Church's financial procedures.
- Receiving deliveries and verifying the quality and quantity of new shipments.
- Keeping the shop are clean and organised at all times.

### *Tower Visits*

- Serve customers and provide information.
- Monitor tower numbers and maintain a safe environment for visitors by ensuring that visitor numbers remain at a safe level, and recording any incidents.
- Work efficiently during busy periods.
- Opening and closing the tower (this requires climbing the 127 steps to the top, checking all public have left and opening/closing required doors).

### *Security, Health and Safety*

- Enforce security, particularly within the shop itself.
- Maintain a healthy and safe environment for yourself, colleagues and visitors – reporting and dealing with any hazards or incidents as necessary.
- Report faults and repairs to the Operation Manager.
- Assist with emergency procedures, and undertake Fire Safety Training.

### *General*

- carry out any reasonable request of the senior management team. This could include any task deemed to be within your capabilities
- participate in an annual appraisal
- follow the policies and procedures outlined in the Staff Handbook

## **Person Specification**

### **Qualifications, knowledge and experience**

#### **Essential**

- Education to GCSE or equivalent – Good Maths and English
- Good personal hygiene
- Previous experience of working within a team

#### **Desirable**

- Previous experience in a retail role
- Previous experience of providing high quality customer service
- Awareness of safeguarding\*
- Emergency First Aid at Work Qualification (or higher)\*
- Fire Safety Qualification\*

*\* Note that this training will be provided for Gift Shop Assistants*

### **Skills, abilities and aptitudes**

#### **Essential**

- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Good oral English, and an ability to communicate effectively in a 'front of house' role
- Good time keeping
- Ability to follow a set of written or oral instructions
- Ability to develop effective working relationships with a broad range of people

### **Work-related personal qualities**

- An efficient, flexible, and effective team player
- An enthusiastic, self-motivated and positive demeanour
- Neat and smart appearance, with pride in high presentation standards in all aspects of their work
- Comfortable working in a Christian environment and in sympathy with the ethos of the Church of England
- Right to work in the UK

## Terms of the Appointment

The hourly rate is set at the Oxford Living Wage. This is currently £14.06 per hour. Working hours are flexible and by agreement with the Shop Manager.

The post is subject to current safeguarding legislation and the Diocese of Oxford's safeguarding policy. The post-holder will be required to undertake appropriate safeguarding training.

Work will be offered subject to providing evidence of the right to work in the UK, and obtaining satisfactory references.

## Application

Candidates should complete the application form. Please note that a curriculum vitae will not be accepted in its place. Candidates should include the names and contact details of **two** referees. At least one of the candidate's referees should be their most recent employer.

Applicants who wish approaches to referees to be made only if they are being called for interview or are in receipt of a conditional offer are asked to state this on the application alongside their full contact details. In all cases two referees must be identified.

Referees must be over 18 and must not be family members or relatives. 'Self-supplied' or 'to whom it may concern' references will not be accepted. A minimum referencing period of two years is required. A basic DBS check will be required for this role. The DBS check will be processed once candidates have received a provisional offer of employment.

Applications should be addressed to:

The Administrator  
University Church  
High Street  
Oxford OX1 4BJ

Tel: 01865 279111

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

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

Applications may be submitted at any time.

## Interview Procedure

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to attend an interview once their application has been reviewed. They will be asked to provide proof of identity and evidence of a right to work in the United Kingdom at interview. All applicants will be informed by email whether they have been shortlisted within ten working days of their application.