Your ministry with us

Team Rector Designate
Church Wigan
Dear applicant,

We warmly welcome your interest in this exciting post and commend our diocese and the parish of Team Rector Designate to your prayerful consideration and discernment. The Diocese of Liverpool is a creative place to minister as we work together to be a bigger church making a bigger difference. You can get a flavour of our diocese here.

The north west of England is a marvellous place to live and work. Your ministry with us will be stimulating, challenging and fulfilling with high expectations, a strong commitment to supporting and empowering your ministry.

Your ministry with us will come with high expectations. As your bishops we both expect, and will hold you accountable for, a high degree of personal responsibility with regard to how you conduct your ministry. We want to be clear with you about that from the start before you go any further in your discernment.

This document sets out our expectations.

We expect you to read it carefully as should you be offered and accept a post in our diocese then we will hold you to this set of standards. We believe they are what makes for the good functioning of both parish and diocesan ministry.

It is a rich and rewarding privilege to lead the people of God in the offering of praise, the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. As you reflect on the next phase of your ministry and your consideration of this post may you know the peace of God and the guidance of his Holy Spirit.

With every blessing

The Rt Revd Paul Bayes
Bishop of Liverpool

The Rt Revd Beverley Mason
Bishop of Warrington
Our commitment to growth

For many years we have been working to achieve growth in our diocese. We have used different ways to express this but the aim and direction of travel has remained the same – consistent with the whole of the Church of England. When Bishop Paul was installed he adopted our growth agenda refreshing it by saying

‘we are asking God for a bigger church so we can make a bigger difference; more people knowing Jesus more justice in the world’

We think we will achieve this mission if we have:

100 new congregations
1000 new leaders
10,000 new disciples

to help us do this we are calling every worshipping Christian in our diocese to:

1. Sign up to the Bishop of Liverpool’s rule of life which will encourage and support us to Pray, Read, Learn, Tell, Serve, Give, #RuleOfLife www.liverpool.anglican.org/RuleOfLife

2. Bring 1 person into the regular worshipping and serving life of the church #BringOneFriend www.liverpool.anglican.org/BringOneFriend

3. Do 10 acts of service or find 10 new points of connection beyond the walls of the church #DoTenThings www.liverpool.anglican.org/DoTenThings

Bishop Beverley, the Bishop of Warrington, and I strongly affirm that numerical growth is a good and appropriate aim for every church, provided it embraces both a developing spiritual maturity and a transformative engagement with the local community. We want clergy who are confident in their Christian tradition and we rejoice in the diversity of our diocese as reflected across our parishes, fresh expressions, schools and chaplaincies.

Clergy in the Diocese of Liverpool are expected to be leaders in mission and agents of change in the congregations and communities entrusted to their care. They will come to a new post with the intention of nurturing growth and with a readiness to work with their people in planting or preparing to plant a new service, congregation or fresh expression of the church.

The staff and officers of our diocese are committed to resource and support every parish in this task. We expect that any priest appointed to this post will engage seriously with the tools offered by the Diocese.

We welcome the research insights of the national report From Anecdote to Evidence and we are confident that the leadership of each church will make use of this research in praying and planning for the future. There is a clear correlation between spiritual and numerical growth and the quality of a community’s welcome and Christian nurture. We also know that a commitment to work amongst children and young people is almost always a key element of the sustainable growth of each church in these days. Taking up a post in our diocese any priest will utilise insights like these as they pray and discern the future together with their people.
We support collaborative ministry and nurture vocations

Parish leadership requires a servant heart and a collaborative approach. As a diocese we are committed to developing the ministry of all God’s people. We are also in transition to a smaller number of significantly larger parishes within which different expressions of church will complement and resource each other. Any priest wishing to come and serve here will therefore relish working collaboratively with ordained and lay colleagues and will be committed to identifying and nurturing the gifts of every baptised Christian. Within this ministry of all the baptised, Bishop Beverley and I expect all our colleagues to work with us in promoting and nurturing vocations to the ordained ministry and to Reader and other lay ministries. We are also committed to enabling God’s people to be set free and encouraging all aspects of Christian vocation. We see this as essential.

Our diocese places a strong emphasis on devolved Deanery mission planning. This will only be effective if all our local leaders involve themselves actively in the Deanery’s life and structures. Anyone appointed to this post will therefore be committed to regular attendance at Deanery Chapter and Synod, robustly offering their own wisdom and insight and listening carefully to the wisdom and insight of others.

Our approach to parish ministry

Our diocese takes seriously the call on the Church of England to serve all people and be there for any who may need us at significant moments of transition in their lives. For this reason we expect our clergy to wholeheartedly exercise of the “cure of souls” to all within their benefice, and take full responsibility for the provision of the pastoral offices to any who request them.

Your commitment to Stewardship and the Parish Share

The generosity of our parishes means that our diocese is blessed by a high level of commitment to and payment of Parish Share. We do not have significant levels of reserves or historic endowments. It is the commitment of our churches to one another that underwrites Parish Share and makes possible ministry and mission in some of the most deprived parishes in the UK. Thus the offering of Parish Share in full is fundamental to sustainable stipendiary ministry in our diocese. We look to all priests to exercise leadership in Christian stewardship: to be an advocate of the Parish Share system, to actively sustain and encourage the generous giving of our congregations by teaching and to model in their own life the generosity we seek from our people.

We take this mutual responsibility very seriously. In a minority of cases, parishes fall into Parish Share arrears. Where this happens, unless there is an agreed Parish Share Payment Plan, the parish will not be able to apply for a curate, the incumbent will not be able to go on study leave, the parish will not be able to apply for any diocesan loan. Local arrears will also have an adverse effect on the Mission and Growth Fund available to the deanery as a whole.

Your Professional development

As clergy in our diocese I will expect you to be diligent in attending to your professional development and the nurture of your spiritual life. We expect clergy to allocate some five days a year to professional development and training alongside a commitment to an annual retreat. If you take a post in our diocese you must attend our induction and leadership programmes.

We encourage clergy at the appropriate point in their ministry to avail themselves of the mid-ministry opportunities offered to clergy in the north west dioceses and to diocesan pre-retirement conferences. We are committed to enabling study leave for eligible clergy.

We conduct annual Ministerial Development Reviews as a framework for personal reflection, support, accountability and goal-setting.
We support the Five Guiding principles

The Five Guiding Principles which have been affirmed by the House of Bishops establish a settlement within the life of the Church that fully supports women as Bishops while providing for the flourishing of those opposed on the grounds of theological conviction. The House of Bishops is clear that the Five Guiding Principles ‘need to be read one with the other and held in tension, rather than being applied selectively’.

The Five Principles are:

- Now that legislation has been passed to enable women to become bishops the Church of England is fully and unequivocally committed to all orders of ministry being open equally to all, without reference to gender, and holds that those whom it has duly ordained and appointed to office are true and lawful holders of the office which they occupy and thus deserve due respect and canonical obedience;

- Anyone who ministers within the Church of England must be prepared to acknowledge that the Church of England has reached a clear decision on the matter;

- Since it continues to share the historic episcopate with other Churches, including the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church and those provinces of the Anglican Communion which continue to ordain only men as priests or bishops, the Church of England acknowledges that its own clear decision on ministry and gender is set within a broader process of discernment within the Anglican Communion and the whole Church of God;

- Since those within the Church of England who, on grounds of theological conviction, are unable to receive the ministry of women bishops or priests continue to be within the spectrum of teaching and tradition of the Anglican Communion, the Church of England remains committed to enabling them to flourish within its life and structures; and

- Pastoral and sacramental provision for the minority within the Church of England will be made without specifying a limit of time and in a way that maintains the highest possible degree of communion and contributes to mutual flourishing across the whole Church of England.

The Bishop of Warrington and I support these guiding principles and will work clearly and conscientiously to ensure a fulfilling and flourishing ministry for all.

We take Safeguarding extremely seriously

Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is a priority of our diocese. Any new post holder will therefore be fully supportive of the safeguarding policies and procedures of the Diocese of Liverpool and of the Church of England. The clergy of our diocese receive regular safeguarding training.
Deanery Statement
on the appointment of a new Team Rector (Designate) of Church Wigan

The people of the communities of Wigan deserve a Church renewed and reinvigorated in God’s service. In the last years there has been a palpable sense of blessing on the Deanery, a sense of God stirring the Church, and a willingness to acknowledge and wrestle with some long-term challenges. Transforming Wigan has been the mission strategy for the deanery, given an enormous boost by the Church Commissioners’ generous investment of over £1 million, over seven years, towards this work. Wigan was successful in winning that funding because our challenges are typical of many post-industrial communities. One of the essential requirements of the Leader of Church Wigan, the Team Rector, will be that they come eager to be first among equals part in leadership team of clergy meeting weekly, sharing the cure of souls and responsibility for mission. Our vision is of seeing one in ten people on a discipleship journey with Jesus in the coming years.

The tradition of the inherited churches is a mixture of the sacramental, Tractarian tradition, which had a strong presence in the town in the last century, not least thanks to the influence and patronage of successive Rectors of Wigan. On the other hand the long-standing ‘Lancashire low’ tradition continues to shape church life. There is an openness to the work of the Spirit across the Deanery, and fruitful cross-fertilisation of traditions, such as the Order of Prayer, a group of some 50 people committed to daily intercession for the area. It is important to be candid about the fragility of the inherited churches. This will easily distract us from the priority of planting new worshipping communities. One of the real gifts of working together as we now doing is that it has been possible for the first time to properly resource support around areas of concern such as buildings, finance, and youth. There are questions about the viability of a number of the worshipping communities, at the same time as inherited expectations of Eucharistic worship in every parish every week. Until a few years ago each of the parishes had its own stipendiary priest, but there are neither the vocations nor the money to sustain this model. The communities served span from some of the most deprived in England to areas of relative prosperity. Significant work has been done in the last year to help people to understand that Hub leaders will not be vicars or Team Rectors in the traditional vein. But there are bound to be bumps in the road as people wrestle with a Hub model of Local Missional Leaders working fruitfully with a smaller number of stipendiary clergy. One of the most important fruits of Transforming Wigan has been the raising up and nurturing of a number of such leaders, some of whom are already engaged in remarkable new ministries.

So the role of Leader of Church Wigan will require a courageous minister, secure in their call and prayer life. These will be tested. The opportunity is to come and work with supportive colleagues who recognise that the Lord is at work among the people of Wigan. You will work collaboratively, primarily in focusing on discerning and following God in planting the new Church for the future of these communities.

Revd Canon Dr Philip Anderson,  
Area Dean of Wigan