

## **A brief guide to the vacancy at St Matthew's and St Luke's Churches**

### **So, what is a 'vacancy'?**

Revd Steve Hellyer has been vicar of St Matthew's and St Luke's for over 20 years. Steve and his wife Jenny are now leaving the parish for a new phase of their lives. This means that the parish will be without a vicar for a period – this is called a 'vacancy'.

### **Why can't we get a new vicar straight away?**

In the Church of England, the search for a new vicar doesn't normally start till the old vicar has left. So, the process of finding a new vicar for our parish will get going after October.

### **How is a new vicar found?**

As with other jobs, a job advert is normally put out to tell potential vicars that there's a vacancy in the parish. Alongside this, a document called a 'parish profile' is created which describes the parish and its churches, to help potential new vicars know what it's like; and there will be a specification setting out the sort of person we're looking for to be vicar. Once applications have come in from vicars who might want to come here there will be a shortlisting and interview process.

### **So when will we get a new vicar?**

The process to find a new vicar could be fairly quick if the right person comes along, or it could take longer if more than one round of advertising is needed. But it's quite likely that the parish will be without a vicar for at least six months, and it could potentially be much longer.

### **Who makes the choice of the new vicar?**

The churches in the parish are overseen by the Parochial Church Council (PCC) which is made up of congregation members plus associated clergy. The PCC will have two representatives who will be involved in the selection process. The Bishop's representatives (Archdeacon, Area Dean, sometimes the Bishop) will also be involved as will the church 'patrons'. Every parish has patrons (for historical reasons!) – for St Matthew's, the patrons are Oxford Churches Trust.

### **Can I be involved within the vacancy process ?**

We would love to have people as involved as possible. In particular, there will be opportunities for everyone to contribute to what we would like to see in a new vicar, and to how we'd like the churches to grow and develop in the future. Everyone is invited to take part in a meeting to share your thoughts from **9.30am to 12.30am on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November**. Please be praying about these things in House Groups and any other mid-week activities you are involved with.

### **So who's in charge during the vacancy?**

During the vacancy, the formal responsibility for looking after the churches rests with the Church Wardens. These are Chris Taft and Tim Goodacre at St Matthew's and Andrew Smith and Catherine Ham at St Luke's. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) will continue to meet to oversee the churches, and it is likely that the PCC and the Wardens will put in place other small groups to help co-ordinate the activities of the churches during the vacancy. St Matthew's and St Luke's both have a District Church Council (DCC) – the two church DCCs form the PCC.

### **How do I know who to contact during the vacancy?**

Much of what's happening at the two churches will carry on during the vacancy (and new things can be started!), and there are lots of people who look after various areas of church life – see overleaf for a list of contacts.

### **Will we still be able to have communion services if there's no vicar?**

St Matthew's and St Luke's churches are both blessed with various clergy who have kindly said they are available during the vacancy to take communion services and do other things. The clergy are also willing to take occasional offices (baptisms, weddings, funerals). Some lay people can also take these.

## Who to contact during the vacancy

Church Wardens, St Matthew's  
**Chris Taft, Tim Goodacre**  
Church Wardens, St Luke's  
**Andrew Smith, Catherine Ham**

Associate Minister, St Matthew's  
**Revd Mike Rayner**  
Self-supporting Minister, St Luke's  
**Revd Jane Lees**  
Curate, St Luke's  
**Revd Stephen Tuck**

Families' & Pastoral Care worker  
**Jo Hutchence**  
Children & Families' worker  
**Kate Smith**

Youth worker  
**Andy Jefferson (until Nov)**  
**Naomi Shaw (From Nov)**  
Church office/bookings, St Matthew's  
**Rosemary Kitto**  
Church Office/bookings, St Luke's  
**Siegi Dethune**  
Cleaner, St Matthew's/St Luke's  
**Sarah Hearne**

Exploring faith/Spiritual guidance  
**Revd Mike Moynagh**  
Lay Minister  
**Yvonne Morris**  
Lay Minister  
**Jane Usher**

Treasurer/Christians Against  
Poverty(CAP)

**Nicky Rayner**

Stewardship Secretary/CAP

**John Price**

Safeguarding/Pastoral Care

**Nicky Rayner**

PCC Members (\* Deanery Synod)

**Pat Alexander**

**Andrea Colbrook**

**Sarah Beattie**

**Alison Beek**

**Christopher Dick**

**Sandra Dick**

**Sue Fulford**

**Justin Hutchence**

**Alan McCullough\***

**Donna McCullough\***

**Anne Njeri**

**Joy Wilson\***

Groups & Committees, St Matthew's  
Services:

**Mike Rayner/Janet Taft**

Pastoral:

**Sandra Dick**

Children & Young People:

**Alison Hobbs**

Buildings:

**Nigel Fulford**

Staff:

**Anne Winter**

Mission:

**Mike Rayner**

Music:

**Philip King/Nigel Pearson**

## Parish prayer during the vacancy

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the ministry of Steve and Jenny. We pray for your blessing on them as they move into a new phase of their lives.

We ask that you will help us to  
grow in faith  
love one another  
care for those in need  
reach out to others  
and welcome newcomers  
during our time without a vicar.

Lord Jesus, guard and grow our churches as we serve you together during this vacancy period.

Please guide those who are seeking the right minister for us, and those who might apply to be vicar here, that together we may discover your way for the future and see your kingdom grow.

Amen.

