

# The Bishop's Statement

## Vicar of St. Swithun's Lewisham

*The Diocese of Southwark - Christ Centred & Outward Focused*

St. Swithun's Church is in a prominent position on Hither Green Lane, at the heart of a diverse and vibrant parish. Within a few minutes' walk from the church, there are two schools - both of which have strong links with the church, a St. Mungo's Hostel, a large park which hosts many community events each year, and various care homes. Over recent years some pockets of the parish have been gentrified, but it remains one of the most deprived parishes in the country.

St. Swithun's is in the liberal catholic tradition, and is a church that is creative, open to different forms of worship, and willing to try new things. Its willingness to embrace an exercise ministry based in the church worship space is indicative of this. St. Swithun's is part of the Inclusive Church network, and inclusivity is one of their core values, which is reflected in the make-up and outlook of their congregation.

The church has a strong ministry team who work well together, and an engaged PCC. They have developed flourishing work amongst children and young people, and there are numerous opportunities to develop this ministry. The new priest will need to strengthen and widen this lay leadership, and find ways to engage the congregation in deeper discipleship beyond their Sunday morning services.

The parish is at the centre of a large, positive deanery, where clergy colleagues work well together and are willing to help and support one another. Parishes in the Woolwich Episcopal Area are underpinned by a diocesan team that offer a multitude of skills and resources that parishes can draw on.

The priorities for this parish reflect those in the renewed *Southwark Vision*, which sets out our commitment to being a diocese which is Christ-centred and outward focussed. Our vision for the next decade focusses on investing in parishes, developing ministry, growing our churches, becoming younger and more diverse, deepening our discipleship, and seeking healing for our communities and the wider world. The new priest will be committed to this vision, and to the values that support it.

This role offers the new priest the opportunity to strengthen and build up a growing church, helping it to develop strong and sustainable ministry for the future. This would be a great setting for someone who is creative, willing to take risks, and passionate about leading worship that seeks to engage all ages.

Hopes for a new priest:

- Christ centred, with a strong pattern of personal prayer and an infectious faith
- A proven track record of enabling others to deepen their discipleship
- Rooted in the liberal catholic tradition and able to make worship engaging and meaningful for all
- Committed to supporting and enabling work with children and young people

- A person who values inclusivity, and has the cultural competency to work with people with a wide range of backgrounds and abilities
- Outward looking, and eager to help the congregation establish a Christian presence in the community
- A leader who can build trust, and establish strong partnerships with others in the parish, deanery and diocese
- Able to manage competing demands whilst caring for themselves, within the opportunities and limitations of a part-time role

*The Right Reverend Alastair Cutting, Bishop of Woolwich  
The Revd Bridget Shepherd, Acting Archdeacon of Lewisham & Greenwich  
July 2024*

*Southwark Vision*

<https://southwark.anglican.org/about-us/who-we-are/southwark-vision/>

*Southwark Parish Support Fund*

<https://southwark.anglican.org/giving/parish-support-fund/>

This post is open to ordained Anglican priests signed off for incumbency status, with the right to work in the UK.