

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for expressing an interest in the vacancy at St. Mark's Tollington Park, Islington.

St Mark's is a vibrant and prayerful congregation, committed to Sunday worship and providing a welcoming community in north Islington. St Mark's is ready for a new team and recruiting the next priest will be the first step of this exciting new chapter. The foundations are strong: love for scripture, committed lay members, enthusiasm for prayer, dedicated service to the local community, and openness to the Holy Spirit's prompting. This is a church where people pray. The pre-service prayer time highlights the spiritual and relational strengths of this community, which will prove to be a blessing for its new leader and staff team.

The past year hasn't been easy for St Mark's. Loss of clergy and staff team members has been challenging, but the PCC and members have risen to the occasion and demonstrated their resilience and dedication. The congregation holds a shared hunger for church growth, particularly seeking to grow attendance amongst young people and within the local community, providing stability and focus through this season of change. One of the practical realities of the past year is that Common Fund contributions took a significant drop in order to stabilise the parish finances. There is a realistic expectation that this was temporary, but the new priest will need to set a vision that enables an increase in giving and income-generation from the building.

The Stepney Area team are praying for a leader that has strong relational skills, courage to step out into new areas of mission, experience of church growth and passion for young people. The local community is diverse and multi-cultural so we need a leader who will have confidence to adapt their style so that the many cultures represented will feel they belong and are welcome at St Mark's.

We are increasingly seeing the need for collaboration between parishes and the Hackney and Islington Mission Initiative is founded on parishes working together. An example of this for St Mark's will be the new Youth Minster that is being led by a group of neighbouring churches who are seeking to develop regular larger gatherings for young people and supportive network for youth leaders. The national church has given a generous grant for mission in Stepney (c£9.4million – see 'Hackney and Islington Programme') and we are developing innovative mission seeking to bring about a step change and sustainability for all our parishes.

The reason that the parish is advertising for a priest-in-charge (rather than incumbent) is that the vicarage is under review. The diocese is taking the opportunity of vacancies to evaluate and renew parsonages. In doing so, we will seek to make them more affordable for the clergy household, more environmentally friendly for the planet and easier to repair and maintain. The PCC love the current vicarage and are working positively with the diocese on plans to re-shape and re-imagine the space. At present we are not sure what the outcome will be, but we want to assure everyone that applies for this role that good and suitable housing will be provided. Please do get in touch with Archdeacon Peter if you have any questions.

The church building is in a reasonable state of repair and has been well supported by the Cloudeley charity, which provides regular maintenance grants to churches in Islington.

The neighbouring parish of Emmanuel Holloway is soon to be entering into a consultation over pastoral re-organisation and we are seeking a priest at St Mark's who will work with the diocese as it seeks to make local changes to parish boundaries in the coming years.

Islington Deanery

Islington Deanery serves the London Borough of Islington and includes a wide range of churches and traditions. It is historically an area that has been very active in terms of evangelism, church planting and growth. This is a great legacy which the Bishop and Area Dean are seeking to build on within the parishes.

You will note in the parish profile that the context includes great wealth and poverty. Engagement with the diversity of socio-economic and cultural factors is something that will be an important part of your ministry in Islington.

We are seeking to appoint a minister who is sensitive to the breadth of Anglican traditions, a team player willing to work alongside others and contribute to the mission of the deanery and diocese.

The Diocese of London

The overall strategy of the Diocese is being developed in the London 2030 Vision. Our ambitions are to develop confident disciples, build compassionate communities, and to see creative growth as a church. We have some further priorities which we are committed to seeing running through all our ambitions: to grow safer as a church, to put the needs of young people first, and to strive for racial justice.

In Stepney Area, we recognize that we are younger and more diverse than most other parts of the UK. We want to strive as hard as we possibly can to reflect this reality in our church structures and to ensure that we act in ways that are just and safe. We will demonstrate this priority in our appointment making process, using unconscious bias training with PCCs in vacancy, alerting PCCs to inclusive practices and the need for more racially just appointments when putting together their parish profiles, and offering any additional support that might be helpful for candidates who are people of colour and/or young candidates in the application/interviewing process. We will also collect data over time on diversity in appointments. We will do all of this because the church is compelled to be the whole body of Christ and every Christian ought to be free to play their part in sharing the gospel and living out the kingdom of God.


See Bishop Sarah talking about plans for the next ten years: <https://vimeo.com/387640824>. Those appointed as priests in the diocese must be able to demonstrate that they can lead a church forward in mission and be committed to growth – in depth, impact, and number.

The cultural context

Stepney Area is a vibrant, diverse, creative place in which to minister. It is also complex, with people of different faiths and cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Those who minister here need to be sensitive to this context and alert to the opportunities for ministry that present themselves within the community and congregation. St John's is a highly visible building on a major road through the borough which welcomes people of all backgrounds.

We pray that we will see confident discipleship, compassionate communities, and creative growth flourishing across the Stepney Area, and that we will be able to appoint clergy who will catch the vision of being a church for every Londoner to know the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Thank you for reading all the documents related to this post and for your interest. Please do get in touch if you'd like to arrange an informal conversation prior to submitting an application.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Joanne Stepney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

The Rt Revd Dr Joanne Grenfell
Bishop of Stepney

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter J Farley-Moore". The signature is written in a cursive style.

The Ven Peter Farley-Moore
Archdeacon of Hackney