



# Vacancy in See 2026 Statement of Needs



The Diocese of  
**Southwark**

Christ Centred | Outward Focused



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Thy Kingdom Come event, Southwark Cathedral 2025



## | Welcome to our diocese

Southwark is proud to be a large, diverse and vibrant diocese. Our borders reach from the urban environs of the River Thames to the rural communities of East Surrey, from Kingston in the west to Thamesmead in the east.

We are a collective of churches, schools, chaplaincies and social justice initiatives that make up a rich and varied Christian witness across our communities.

We're praying for a pastoral-hearted bishop who has discerned God's call to lead our diocese: a leader who can speak powerfully and prophetically of God's love both within and beyond the Church. Someone who will prayerfully guide us in loving, blessing and serving our parishes, who will enable worshipping communities of all traditions to grow and flourish, and who can inspire us in proclaiming the Gospel afresh. Someone who

will seek to discern God's work among us, helping us to meet the challenges before us with courage, wisdom and trust in the God who goes before us.

In the following pages you will find the story of our diocese, a snapshot of our current context and our aspirations for our future.

We are delighted that you are considering whether God might be calling you to serve as our next diocesan bishop – and we hope that this document will help you to reflect on how your gifts, passions and strengths may complement our own in the service of God's kingdom.



## *Vacancy prayer*

*God of all times and places,  
send us a Bishop who will lead us faithfully  
through days of rejoicing  
and nights of challenge,  
with prayer and Scripture,  
with love and laughter,  
with bread and wine.*

*Send your Holy Spirit to guide  
those entrusted with this process.*

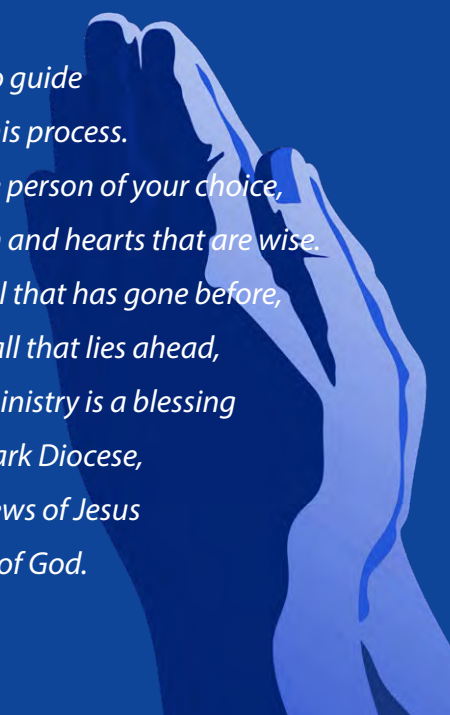
*May they recognise the person of your choice,  
with ears that are open and hearts that are wise.*

*Make us thankful for all that has gone before,  
ready and hopeful for all that lies ahead,*

*with a Bishop whose ministry is a blessing  
to everyone in Southwark Diocese,*

*as we hear the good news of Jesus  
and delight in the love of God.*

*Amen.*



# Our landscape

The name 'Southwark' has origins in the 10th century description of the 'work' to the south of London Bridge. Southwark Diocese is much bigger than that ancient borough, hosting one of the largest populations in the Church of England – nearly 2.9 million people – with faithful congregations across 355 places of worship in 293 parishes.

It's home to some of the wealthiest areas of the South East, as well as many more deprived communities. Southwark has the second highest number of housing estates in the Church of England, with parishes serving the needs of a rapidly-changing population.

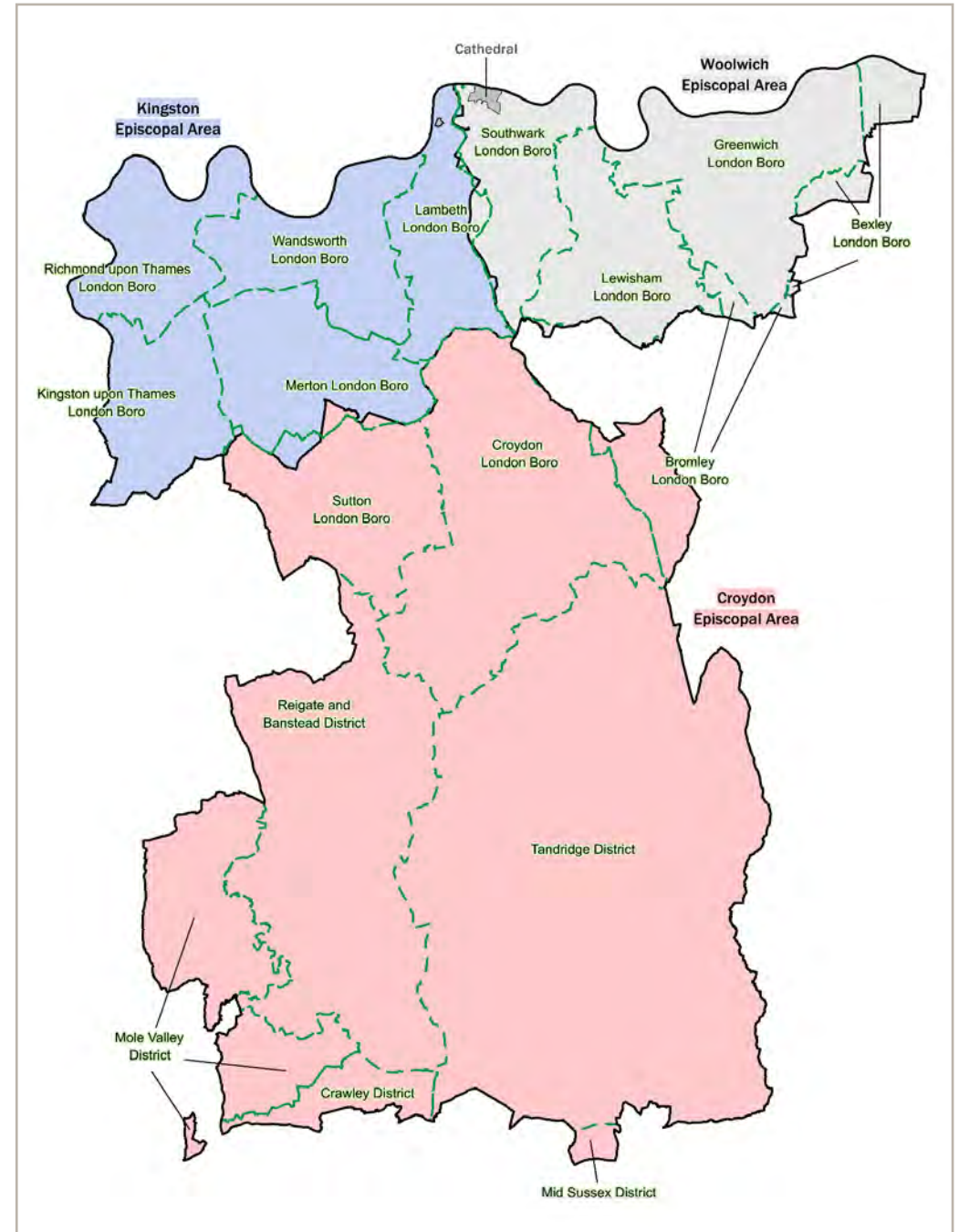
Our diocese is diverse in many ways – in the ethnicities and languages spoken, in our rural, suburban and urban settings, in our spectrum of church traditions and our wonderful array of lay and ordained ministries. Nevertheless, with Christ as the focus and foundation of our unity, we all belong together.

In 1991, Southwark expanded to include the See of Croydon. This led to our current 'Area scheme' structure which consists of three Sees: Kingston, Woolwich and Croydon, under the overall authority of our diocesan bishop.

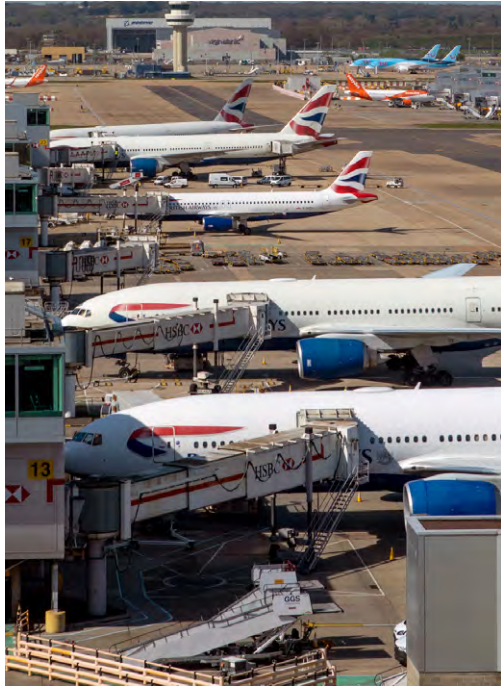
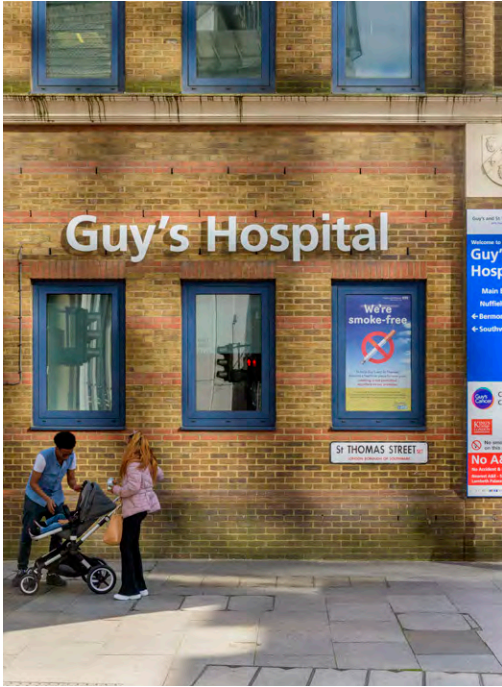
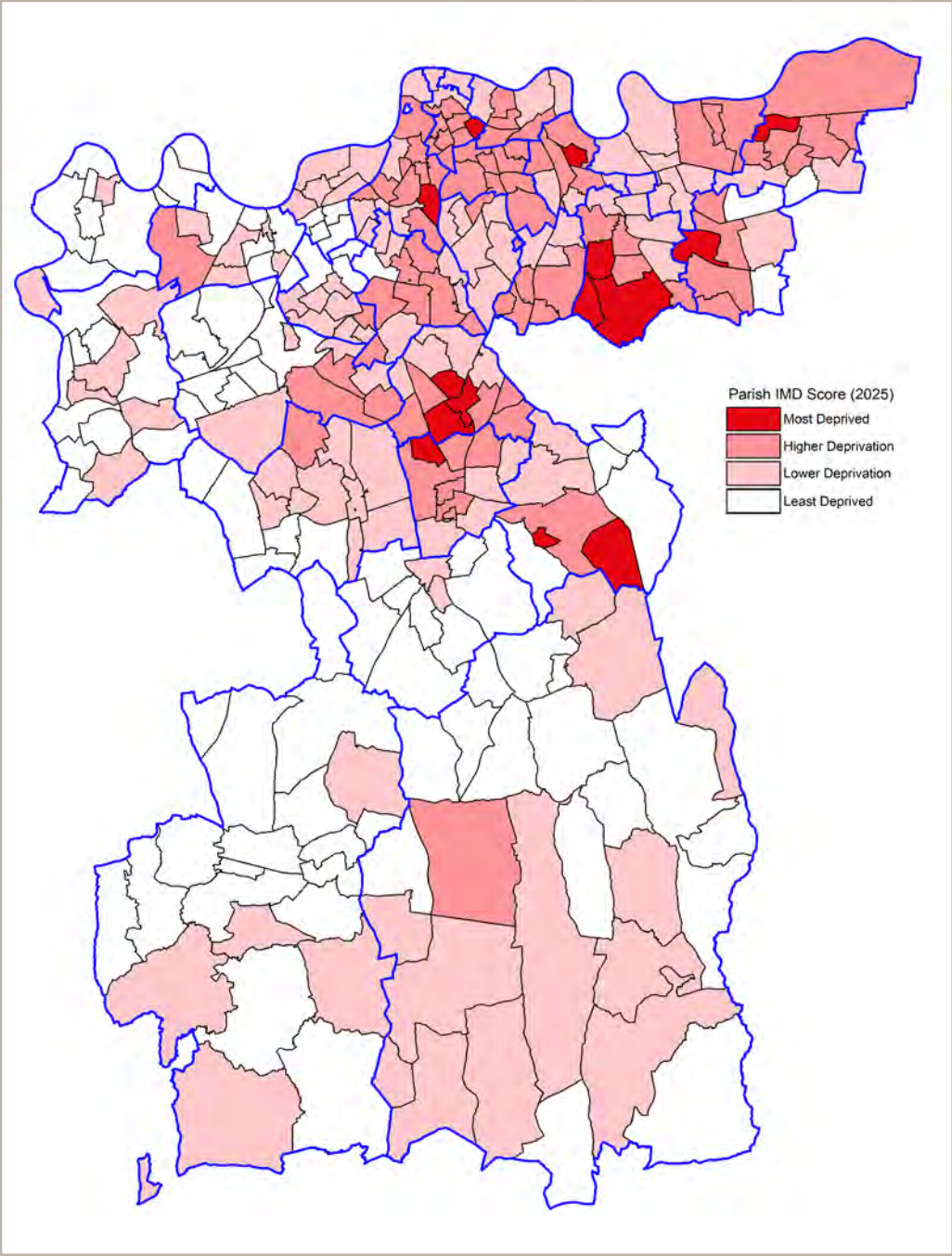
Our parishes come in many different shapes and sizes and many serve some of the most deprived communities as well as some of the wealthiest in our country. Southwark has leafy suburbs, small market towns and villages, and 180 of our parishes have significant housing estates for which we are developing new approaches to mission and evangelism.

Our local diversity gives Southwark a rich cultural vibrancy, which is enhanced by our partnerships, ecumenical relationships and international links.

Map of the Episcopal Areas with Local Authorities



Map of the deprivation levels within the Diocese of Southwark



# | The Cathedral

The Cathedral Church of St Saviour and St Mary Overie stands on the south bank of the River Thames, nestled alongside Borough Market.

Originally an Augustinian priory, it is both the mother church and a parish church of our diocese. In 2000, major extensions designed by Richard Griffiths were added north of the Cathedral, providing meeting and conference rooms, a song school, library, shop and café.

The Vision of the Cathedral, established in 2024, is *'Making Space for Love: with Heart, Mind, and Soul'*. This commits the Cathedral to social justice, to learning

and Christian formation, to the arts and creative engagement, community partnerships and – most importantly – a life of worship and prayer. The Cathedral seeks to hold together reverential worship, within the Catholic tradition, with a generous, exploratory, and inclusive theology. There are four services each weekday and five on a Sunday, with the main liturgies livestreamed, serving a substantial online congregation.





Our six Archdeacons, 2026

## Governance & oversight

The Bishop of Southwark has a strong leadership team and shares their episcopal ministry with three area bishops. Each episcopal area is led by a suffragan bishop and two Archdeacons who meet regularly in a 'trio'. The Dean of Southwark Cathedral, as senior priest of our diocese, also plays a key role.

### The Woolwich Episcopal Area

The Rt Revd Alastair Cutting is the Bishop of Woolwich. The newest of four Bishops, Alastair first served in our diocese as Archdeacon of Lewisham & Greenwich from 2013, taking up his current role in 2024. He is our lead bishop for those living with disabilities. Bishop Alastair is supported by the Archdeacons of Southwark and Lewisham & Greenwich.

Woolwich is ethnically, culturally and socially diverse and episcopal priorities are focused on mission and evangelism, celebrating the gifts of children and young people and working for racial justice and equality. The area has a thriving and active Youth Forum and is proud of its international links with the Diocese of Manicaland in Zimbabwe.



Kingston—Woolwich—Croydon Area Bishops, 2024



Bishop Alastair



Bishop Rosemarie

### The Croydon Episcopal Area

The Rt Revd Dr Rosemarie Mallett is the Bishop of Croydon. Rosemarie was Archdeacon of Croydon from March 2020 until her consecration as Bishop of Croydon in June 2022 and was a member of the General Synod of the Church of England from 2010-2021. She is our lead bishop for social and

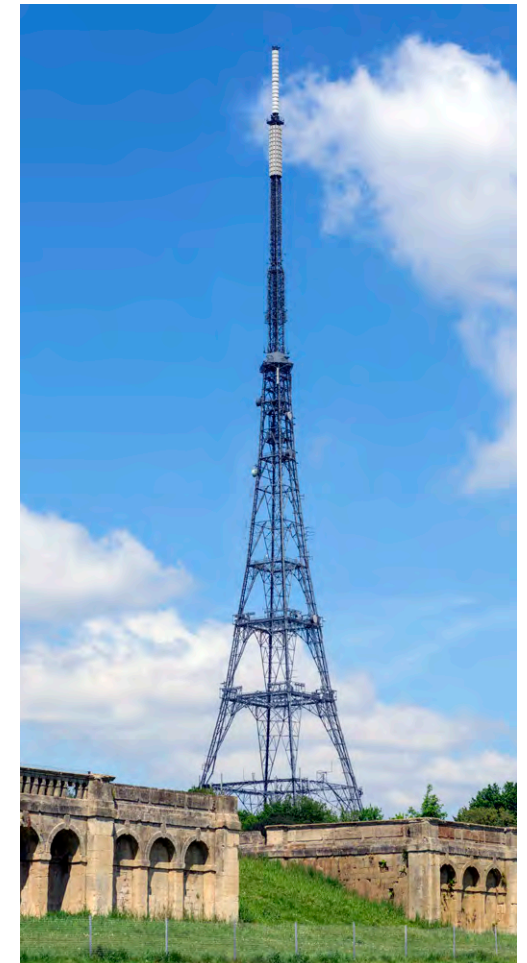
racial justice and co-lead bishop for racial justice nationally. Bishop Rosemarie is supported by the Archdeacons of Croydon and Reigate.

Croydon is the largest of the three Episcopal Areas, covering two-thirds of our diocesan footprint, with areas of significant ethnic and social diversity. Croydon includes some of the most

prosperous places in the country, alongside communities wrestling with real poverty and hardship. The area has a strong link with the Diocese of Central Zimbabwe and many parishes commit to financially and prayerfully support home and overseas mission projects over and above their financial commitment to our diocese.



The Venerable Dr Geoff Dumbreck, Bishop Rosemarie and The Venerable Greg Prior, 2026





© Eleanor Bentall

Bishop Martin

## The Kingston Episcopal Area

The Rt Revd Dr Martin Gainsborough was consecrated as the Bishop of Kingston in February 2023. He is deeply committed to fostering interfaith relationships and environmental justice and is our lead bishop for the environment. He was responsible for tabling the General Synod amendment

which saw the Church of England adopt a more ambitious Net Zero Carbon target. Bishop Martin is supported by the Archdeacons of Lambeth and Wandsworth.

Kingston Episcopal Area sits between Waterloo and Kingston upon Thames, covering ten parliamentary constituencies and five London

Boroughs. It serves a population of about 1.1 million through more than 100 parishes, nearly 50 church schools, four universities, seven hospitals and hospices and two prisons. The area is committed to supporting the Diocese of Matabeleland in Zimbabwe.



Climate pilgrimage, 2024



# Governance

Our Diocesan Secretary, Nicola Thomas, is our most senior member of the diocesan staff team and is lead officer within our diocesan administrative structures.



**Nicola Thomas**

Nicola leads a strong and skilled staff team whose priority is to support, enable and serve our people and parishes as they minister to and bless our communities. From safeguarding, HR and financial advice to support in growing ministry with children and young people, clergy property management, ministerial development and advice for church buildings. The team engages closely with our parishes,

seeking to strengthen them as they rise to meet missional challenges. Nicola and the team are based at Trinity House in Southwark.

We are blessed with an extraordinary range of trustees and committee members, who give their time, skills and expertise to ensure our governance structures align with our diocesan vision and priorities, supporting parishes in their mission and ministry.

Our Diocesan Synod meets three times a year and is supported by a dedicated Council of Trustees (DCT), which acts as our Bishop's Council meeting. It considers resources, holds vision, drives mission, sets strategy and shapes priorities. Members of DCT are also members of the Diocesan Board of Finance, the Bishop's Council and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee.



**Diocesan Synod**



# | Christ Centred and Outward Focused: Southwark Vision

We seek to be a diocese that is Christ centred and outward focused. Our vision is rooted in our mutual commitment to speak well of one another and to walk together in our shared pilgrimage of faith.

With Christ as our centre and the focus of unity, we turn outwards – seeking to work together and encourage one another to serve our parishes and God's world.

Southwark Vision is shaped around our six priorities: Parishes, Ministry, Growth, Youth and Diversity, Discipleship and Healing.

## **Parishes**

Valuing and serving all our parishes, so they can minister to the whole people of God in their context.

## **Ministry**

Growing, resourcing and diversifying our ministries – lay and ordained, stipendiary and self-supporting.

## **Growth**

Equipping churches and congregations of all traditions and contexts to grow and innovate.

## **Youth and Diversity**

Helping churches to better reflect the communities they serve and the gifts of the whole people of God.

## **Deepening our discipleship**

Going deeper in our journey with Christ, replicating our learning and sharing our resources.

## **Healing**

Seeking God's healing for our communities and God's world through safeguarding, social, environmental and racial justice.



Ceri Richards *The Supper at Emmaus*, MMAC



## Mission and Ministry

**A vibrant 'mixed ecology' of churches across all contexts and traditions is enabled by the clergy, lay ministers, teachers and volunteers who serve faithfully across our diocese.**

The tradition of 'Southbank religion' lives on in the commitment of many of our parishes to social action in their communities with food banks, cooperatives, night shelters, care for the elderly and support for refugees and asylum seekers. In every sense, our parishes are real hubs of diversity, with many worshipping communities serving people for whom English is their second

language, including those who speak Spanish, Portuguese, Farsi, Lugandan and German, to name just a few. We also rejoice in our theological diversity, with Anglo-Catholic parishes, to charismatic congregations, to churches with central choral traditions and evangelical churches working collaboratively in mission, evangelism and learning – providing mutual support and

enrichment within our deaneries. Around 100 Fresh Expressions of Church across our diocese offer imaginative responses to local missional needs.

Extended episcopal oversight is offered to 13 parishes through the Bishop of Fulham and a further four parishes and two Bishop's Mission Orders through the Bishop of Ebbsfleet. We pray that our next Bishop of Southwark will hold difference well, valuing this practice where it is appropriate, ensuring every voice counts and that all our worshipping communities feel valued.



In June 2024, it was announced that our diocese would receive £29 million over nine years from the Church Commissioners for our Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP). This whole-diocese programme seeks to address the four main missional challenges that have been identified by our Diocesan Synod:

- Growing church attendance
- Doubling the number of churches with more than 25 children and young people
- Reaching and resourcing estates parishes
- Growing pathways to ministry that increase the diversity of leadership and are more accessible to young people.

DIP is supporting growth in parishes across all traditions, nurturing new initiatives and diverse models of lay and ordained ministry. Through DIP, we are growing church attendance, sharing models of best practice and facilitating parish-led innovation in mission. Since its launch, the programme is now working with over 120 parishes of varying sizes – and continues to grow its reach.

Six churches in our diocese from a variety of theologies and traditions have been designated as Resourcing Churches, planting new congregations in partnership with host parishes, bringing life and growth to smaller struggling churches. Bishop's Mission Orders (BMOs) are an important part of our mixed ecology of mission. We have the second largest number of BMOs (six with two more planned), which allow for creative partnerships in our diocese. Our BMOs are regularly reviewed and we have recently revised the safeguarding oversight requirements to strengthen and clarify responsibilities and processes. Planning of new and revised BMOs takes place with local consultation, as well as involvement of our Mission and Pastoral Committee.

Our estates parishes stretch across every part of our diocese, from the inner city to the suburbs, and in the towns and the villages of East Surrey. Through our dedicated mission team, missional outreach projects, and the



A Parish Conversation at St Peter, Vauxhall

support of our Dean of Estates Ministry, we visit, listen and share ideas to provide encouragement to our estates to share the message of God's love with these communities. Networks are also established to support parishes in their specific contexts – such as estates, pioneering and small churches – to

enable growth, support, sharing of experience and expertise.

Over the past two years, members of the bishop's senior team and the diocesan staff team have been meeting with parishes for Parish Conversations – an opportunity to listen, learn and hear about the joys, challenges, concerns

and opportunities that each parish is presently grappling with. Through these conversations, we have been exploring where God is already at work and spending some time imagining what a healthy and exciting future might look like for each community.



## Faith in action

### Social justice

In Southwark, we use the acronym JPIC (Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation) to describe our work for social action. Our main areas of work concern poverty, homelessness, social isolation, community cohesion, care for older people and violence affecting young people. We seek meaningful change in our communities, standing alongside young people and those who support them, while advocating for structural change.

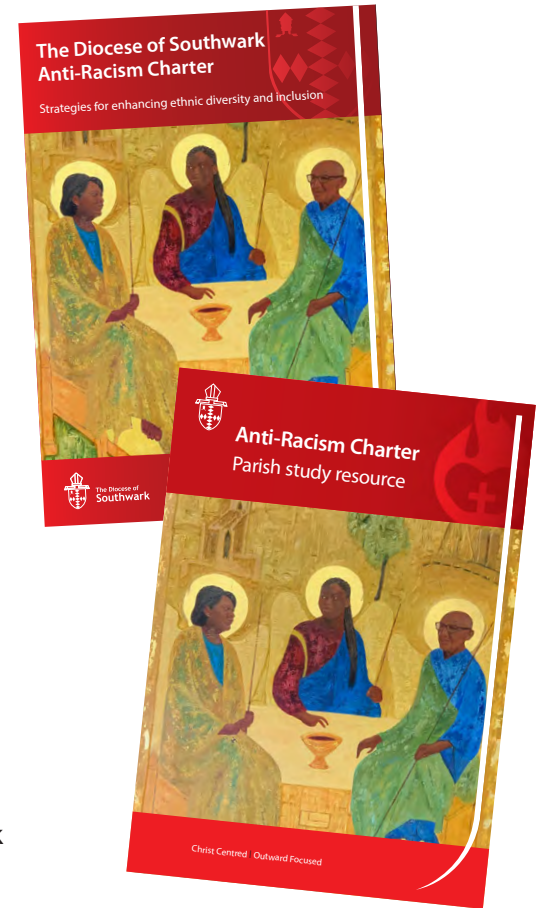
We support parishes who work to welcome refugees and asylum-seekers, and through Southwark Against Modern Slavery, we raise awareness of

human trafficking and modern slavery, helping parishes to respond.

Through our schools, churches, and youth groups, we work to raise awareness of the tragedy of serious youth violence, promoting safety and affirming the God-given value of every life. We long to see all people – including those who are marginalised, disabled or neurodivergent – thrive and flourish. Our aim is not only to serve but to make our churches truly accessible, enabling every individual to participate fully in God's Church. We have a regional system of three Disability Advisers, who with JPIC, support our churches in meeting this aim.

### Racial Justice

Racial Justice and a commitment to opposing racism is at the heart of our work as a diocese. The Southwark Anti-Racism Charter (<https://southwark.anglican.org/mission-ministry/faith-in-action/justice-peace-and-integrity-of-creation/antiracism/>) – the first of its kind in any Church of England diocese – was unanimously approved by our Diocesan Synod in 2021 and we continue to embed its principles of our Anti-Racism Charter in all our work – from unconscious bias training to Bible-study resources, Black History Month celebrations and resources for community cohesion. The Christian imperative to actively counter, disrupt and oppose racial injustice is encouraged through a wide range of resources and events, as well as the work of our Area Racial Justice Committees and staff team.



## Black History Month



## Caring for creation

We recognise that it is a missional imperative to safeguard the Earth entrusted to us and live out our faith through our daily actions, responding to the urgency of the climate crisis, and we're working hard across all our contexts to achieve our diocesan goal of achieving Net Zero Carbon by 2035.

A growing number of churches have achieved Bronze, Silver and Gold Eco Church Awards having taken part in

the *A Rocha* Eco Church initiative. As a diocese we have achieved the bronze Eco Diocese award and are working towards silver.



# Valuing our people

Nurturing vocations is a key priority for our diocese.

## Nurturing vocations and clergy formation

We have brought pre- and post-ordination infrastructure for our training pathway together to make the journey to ordination smoother – weaving together encouraging vocations, the shared discernment process, initial training and curacies

We send about 15 people into pre-ordination training and ordain between 12 and 20 each year. We offer a four-year curacy and aim to deploy

curates strategically to support parish mission and growth, as well as nurturing a range of stipendiary and self-supporting ministries.

We are in the midst of a pioneering research project to better identify and address the barriers to realising people's vocations. This has a particular focus on those who are under-represented in our leadership, including people of global majority heritage and those from working class backgrounds. We will be using the findings to better promote and support vocations among these groups.



**3** full-time team members are supported by a large team of volunteers – including **50** Vocations Advisers, **18** Area Directors of Ordinands, **10** Placement Supervisors, **30** IME tutors and **60** Training Incumbents, along with two Administrators

# Supporting our ministers

## Supporting our clergy

Clergy are at the heart of the mission and ministry of our diocese, including pioneer ministers, distinctive deacons and self-supporting clergy as well as chaplains in healthcare, prisons and education. They enable the mission of the whole Church to be Christ centred and outward-focused. We are committed to maintaining the highest possible number of stipendiary clergy, alongside highly valued self-supporting ministers.

We recognise that ordained ministry can be complex and challenging, with multiple demands and sources of strain – from buildings, to administration, volunteer management and high workloads, as well as more personal challenges. Clergy are encouraged to

take regular time off, including at least two consecutive days each month, and time for retreats and holidays. All clergy are entitled to wellbeing support and confidential counselling and psychotherapy services are available free of charge. We can also direct clergy and their families to other sources of support beyond the diocese.

## Valuing our lay ministers

We have well-developed and well-supported lay ministries: street pastors, lay chaplains, children and youth ministers, pastoral ministers, lay pioneers, readers and Church Army evangelists, parish nurses, lay estates pioneers and more. Each year we keep a Season of Lay Ministries to celebrate and



affirm our lay ministers and encourage people to explore their own vocations.


We regularly offer regular Lay Ministry taster evenings for anyone thinking about how to use their gifts to serve the Church, enabling individuals to explore the different pathways and reflect on their own gifts. Lay Ministers and volunteers are at the heart of our shared

life and give sacrificially to sustain the ministry of the Church. We offer practical support to our lay ministers, as well as a wide range of learning and development opportunities.

Our Dean of Women's Ministry and Area Advisers support and advocate for women in all ministries, ordained and lay.



**358** stipendiary clergy with **25** pioneer curates, **235** PTO clergy, **279** commissioned or licensed lay ministers and **43** self-supporting clergy



## Training

To equip our clergy and lay leaders for mission and evangelism, we provide a range of training and development opportunities. Our Bishop's Certificate in discipleship is a popular ten-month course exploring the Christian faith for anybody who wants to be more confident about their faith or begin to explore their vocation.

Our regular Vocations Forums offer an opportunity for people to explore God's call, encouraging discernment through reflection, prayer and discussion.

We also offer foundation training across a range of key missional areas where people can connect, share, and learn alongside others, exploring simple, effective and practical ways to live out faith in parishes. Other courses, such as Magnify (our lay estates pioneer training), aim to reach people that other training might not, speaking to specific contexts, callings and communities.

### Bishop's Certificate graduates delight in receiving their certificates



### Award certificates of credence for completing the Magnify Estates Ministry Course





## *Children's Vacancy Prayer*

*Dear God,  
Thank you for loving our diocese and  
everyone in it.  
Please help us while we look for a  
new Bishop.  
Show us the right person who will listen  
to you, care for people and help us follow  
Jesus every day.  
We pray for Bishop Christopher as he  
gets ready to retire.  
Thank you for all the ways he has helped us.  
Please give him rest, happiness, and lots  
of your peace.  
Help all the people making big decisions.  
Help our churches, schools, and families  
to pray and listen to you.  
And help us to trust that you are with us  
and will guide us.  
Amen.*



# Children, young people and families

Children and young people bring life and energy to our churches - and we are blessed with some amazing Children and Young People's (CYP) ministry across the parishes of our diocese.

We are committed to seeing children and young people grow and nurture their faith with the confidence to share it and contribute to the life of our Church. In the past two years, average weekly attendance of children and young people in our churches rose by 9%. Our experiences in areas such as Brockley, Norwood and elsewhere demonstrate a deep thirst in families seeking

engagement with the living God. This thirst is being quenched in a variety of ways, bringing joy to our churches and signs of hope.

To help our parishes grow their ministry with young people, we are investing in models of church that speak particularly to their needs. Our home-grown initiative Bubble Church (for very young

children) has grown exponentially and is now operating across many dioceses. Other initiatives – such as Youth Ministry in Communion, children's choirs and estates-based pathways – span our church traditions. 2025 saw the launch of our CYP Apprenticeship Scheme, offering parish-focused experience and training to support the growth of new CYP ministers.

Our CYP team, Board of Education, and Archdeacon for Growing Faith (the Growing Faith Committee) meet quarterly to track progress, share practice and foster faith development across home, school and church.



Children, young people and families – **90** Children and Young People Apprentices across our Diocese



**78** Estate parishes – Southwark has the second highest number of housing estates in the Church of England



# Schools and higher education



SOUTHWARK DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Developing Church of England Education

## 'Belong, Serve, Thrive'

The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) serves a diverse and vibrant family of schools and academies, colleges and universities. Our schools and academies educate and support over 35,000 pupils and families across south London and east Surrey.

The SDBE serves our school leaders, governors, staff and chaplains – attentive to their needs and the changing education landscape, offering support, encouragement and expertise and promoting a Christian ethos in all our settings. Our schools and pupils contribute richly to our life as a diocese, helping us to mark the seasons of the Christian year, inspiring us with their commitment to learn and grow and leading the way in caring for our world and its people.



Southwark Diocesan  
Board of Education  
Multi-Academy Trust

The Bishop of Southwark is President of the SDBE, which is a separate registered charity – chaired by Bishop Rosemarie. This role of chair will soon be taken up by Bishop Martin as Bishop Rosemarie steps up as acting diocesan bishop. There are 11 schools within the SDBE's Multi-Academy Trust. Educating over 3,000 children, the Trust is designed as an offer for schools wishing to convert to academy status. The Archdeacon of Southwark is the Chair of the Trust.



99 church schools –  
78 voluntary aided,  
1 foundation  
school and 20 academies





## | Safeguarding

**Every person is created in the image of God and is precious – and this is the foundation of our commitment to excellence in safeguarding across all our communities.**

Central to this is our belief that the voices and lived experience of survivors must help shape safeguarding policy, practice and culture, ensuring that our work is grounded in learning, accountability and compassion.

Strengthening our governance through robust safeguarding policy and practice, in line with the National Safeguarding Standards, remains a priority and contributes to making the Church a

safer and welcoming place for all. We are supported by a strong diocesan safeguarding team, who work closely with clergy and senior leadership to ensure survivor perspectives inform ongoing development and improvement. The team offers expert guidance and high-quality support, responding with care and compassion to survivors and to parishes managing a range of safeguarding concerns.



# | Giving, finance & resources

**Our Parish Support Fund (PSF) resources the costs of our clergy and the support given to each parish in our diocese.**

The PSF is a generosity-based scheme where each parish is invited to make a realistic and generous pledge, in proportion to its resources, to take steps towards meeting the full 'indicative' costs of their ministry, and – where possible – to exceed this so as to support ministry in less well-off parishes.

The very high collection rate (98-99%) of the PSF that has been sustained in recent years is a testimony to the strength of our relationships across our diocese and the commitment of our parishes to support the whole of our diocesan family.

In 2025, we celebrated 10 years of the PSF and saw an encouraging increase in contributions, with 24% of churches' pledges covering their full indicative costs of ministry. Income from the PSF in 2025 was £16.4m (2024: £16.4m). In 2026 the budget is 1.5% higher than the amount we received in 2019 and 2025. However inflation has risen by 31% since 2019. The collection rate for 2025 was 99.2%, compared to 99.7% in 2024, an exceptional result in both years, though the small reduction in 2025 does show the financial pressures that many parishes are facing.

Ongoing practical support is provided by our Giving team to all parishes, encouraging a culture of generosity, sharing resources and information and strengthening their financial processes. The team offers advice on financial discipleship, digital giving, Gift Aid, legacy fundraising, income generation and grant funding.

More than one third of our parishes are now members of the national Parish Giving Scheme, which offers an efficient donation system, monthly Gift Aid claims and an encouragement for givers to offer an annual inflationary increase – providing greater financial resilience for parishes.



Between 2016–2025 parishes have given **£145.2m** in pledges through the Parish Support Fund (PSF)

2026 PSF collection rate **99.2%** to date



**92%** of churches equipped to use digital giving.

# Finance

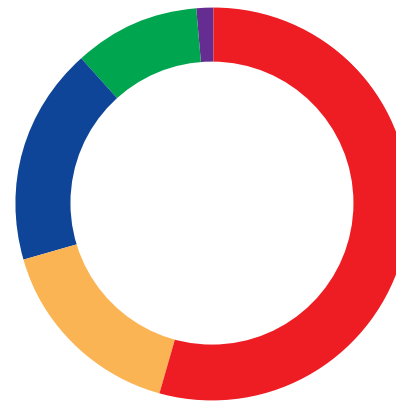
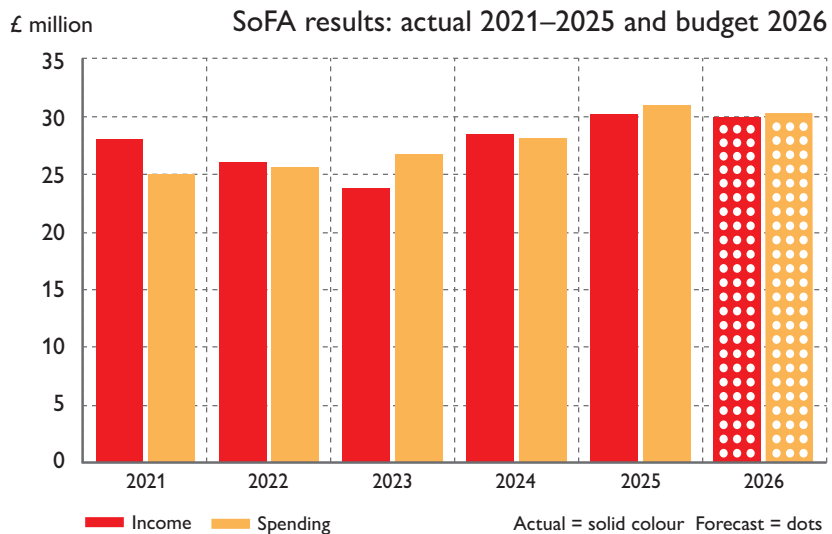
God’s work in our parish mission and ministry remains our highest priority – but like other Church of England dioceses, Southwark is wrestling with a number of challenging financial realities.

Donations made by parishes through the PSF is our principal source of income – and we are deeply grateful for the faithfulness and generosity of our people. Inflation has increased by approximately 31% since 2019, but the amount collected through PSF has only increased by 1.5% over the same period.

Additionally, whilst we welcome the much-needed stipend increase for clergy recommended by General Synod in 2025, this is projected to

increase our annual expenditure by £1.2 million. Therefore, we are taking steps to plan carefully for the future of our diocesan finances, through prayerful discussion with our deaneries and parishes. We continue to be committed to maintaining the maximum possible number of stipendiary clergy in our diocese, but it is likely that this provision will need to be reshaped to make our investment in parish mission and ministry sustainable. As part of this

## Financial history and plan



## 2025 Income vs (Budget)

- Parish share: £16.41m (£16.25m)
- Funding from outside Diocese: £4.90m (£6.72m)
- Gain on asset disposal: £5.34m (£3.60m)
- Funding from Diocesan assets: £3.14m (£3.13m)
- Parochial fees: £0.35m (£0.40m)
- Total: £30.14m (£30.10m)**



## 2025 Expenditure vs (Budget)

- Ministry stipends: £13.75m (£13.46m)
- Ministry housing, training & support: £8.82m (£7.14m)
- Area Mission & JPIC: £1.50m (£1.58m)
- Board of Education: £0.38m (£0.38m)
- Strategic Development & Fresh Expressions: £2.65m (£4.06m)
- Governance and administration: £2.04m (£1.90m)
- National Church: £1.83m (£1.83m)
- Total: £30.97m (£30.35m)**

work, a review of all the services that we provide for parishes through our central staff team (and how those are resourced) is taking place in 2026.

We recognise that these conversations are challenging, but believe that it’s

crucial that we do this work carefully, reflectively and collaboratively, rather than deferring such decisions until they have to be made and risk making them more painful and less strategic.

# Resources

## Our buildings

Our church buildings do their own beautiful missional work; quite often the church is one of the oldest buildings in a community and holds within its walls the story and history of an area. The oldest of our churches was built in the 11th century and the newest in 2018. Southwark has more than 350 places of worship, which span 11 centuries. Of these, 191 churches are nationally listed buildings, with many more locally listed as being of significance to their communities. Supporting our churches to make the best use of their buildings and care to maintain them is the focus of our Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). Where churches

contain physical features of 'contested heritage' for example, with links to slavery or oppression, the diocesan staff team works with the relevant advisory structures to support parishes' consideration of any issues that may arise.

In response to the climate emergency, we are working closely with our churches and grant-funding bodies to offer practical ways to reduce both costs and carbon emissions, improving systems and structures within worship spaces including low carbon heat and insulation systems, solar panels, LED lighting and other ways to efficiently modify our buildings to sustain our journey towards a net-zero carbon future.



**136** parish proposals for church buildings recommended and **£72,000** awarded to **20** parishes in grants from 'Buildings for Mission' Church of England funding



## Wychcroft Resource and Retreat Centre

Wychcroft is our diocesan retreat and training centre. It's a stunning Victorian house set in the beautiful Surrey countryside 22 miles south of London, open to all groups including those from other dioceses. Wychcroft is a place for learning, peace, prayer, hospitality and welcome and has been part of our shared life for more than 60 years. It remains a special place and spiritual home for those training for ministry – lay and ordained – and for many pilgrims seeking God's call and guidance in their journey.

## St Augustine's College of Theology

We have a close relationship with St Augustine's College of Theology, which provides non-residential theological training for both lay and ordained ministry, as well as initial ministerial educational students across the South East of England. The College operates a small library and teaching centre at Trinity House.



## Partnerships

### Global links

The globally diverse nature of those who make up our diocese (<https://southwark.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/The-World-in-a-Diocese.pdf>) is reflected in our close mutual global links with dioceses in other Anglican provinces.

Since 1994, we have nurtured partnership links in Zimbabwe, with each Episcopal Area and the Cathedral connected with a different Zimbabwean diocese.

We also have partnership links with:

### Björgvin (Bergen) Diocese, Norway

We have been linked with Bergen since 15 October 2000. The link has since grown and developed with strong Lutheran ecumenical links through the Porvoo Communion in the Nordic countries as well as across our Cathedral and diocese.

### Jerusalem

Our covenant agreement with the Diocese of Jerusalem has been active

since 2021, developed through Bishop Christopher's close links with the ecumenical catholic bishops in the Holy Land and St George's College in Jerusalem. Our diocese has had a unique insight into recent conflict in the Holy Land – and an opportunity to amplify the voices of the Christians who call this precious region 'home'.

### Barbados

In 2024, a covenant agreement was signed with the Anglican Diocese of Barbados. A relatively new connection, but with deeply rooted connections through our two Barbadian Bishops of Croydon, (Wilfred Wood in 1985 and Bishop Rosemarie much more recently).

### Ecumenism

A number of significant long-established Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) have their home in our diocese. The Thamesmead Team Ministry – founded in the 1970s under Bishop Jim

Thompson – is still flourishing, with annual ecumenical confirmation services incorporating Methodist and United Reformed Church (URC) leaders all laying on hands. The URC/Anglican LEPs at the Copleston Centre and at St Michael's New Cross/Hatcham (URC/Anglican links) are other early examples.

St Bede's School in Redhill was formed in 1976 as an amalgamation of Bishop Simpson (CofE) School and St Joseph's (Roman Catholic) School. The School is supported by the Arundel and Brighton Catholic Diocese and our Board of Education.

We play an active role in Churches Together in South London (CTSL), which represents over 50 local ecumenical networks, hosting a number of significant gatherings of church leaders each year.

[https://southwark.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/deaneries-ecumenical\\_borough\\_deans.pdf](https://southwark.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/deaneries-ecumenical_borough_deans.pdf)





## Mothers' Union

The Mothers' Union in Southwark continues to grow in confidence, making an impact in social justice, building on connections with mission in our parishes and across our diocese. Members volunteer and pray for a variety of projects that reflect Mothers' Union's aims, promoting the advancement of Christian religion in marriage and family life and raising funds to help families worldwide.



## Welcare

Welcare is a separate Christian charity working with families and children up to the age of 13 in south London and east Surrey. Supported by our diocese, it provides practical help and support to families experiencing difficulties, with services such as life skills development, domestic abuse recovery and parenting programmes – irrespective of faith, culture, abilities or life choices. It also offers assistance in accessing opportunities to nurture and build resilience in children, so that children in these families can have a happy, confident future.

## Interfaith relationships

London has three main pan-London interfaith organisations:

- London Boroughs Faith Networks – LBFN
- Faith Forum for London – FFL
- The Faith & Belief Forum – FBF

Since the pandemic, where the strength of interfaith links was particularly valued by government and local health authorities, there are now strong links with the Mayor of London's *Resilience* team and the *Faith and Belief Sector Panel*. The Bishop of Woolwich is co-chair of *London Resilience Faith & Belief Sector Panel*, and the Archdeacon of Southwark and Archdeacon of London are both involved in pan-London resilience planning.

## Local government

Our diocese covers 16 local authority and London Borough partnerships. The 'Chain Gang' of newly elected mayors are welcomed annually with a reception at the Bishop's House and there are strong formal links with the Mayor of London and Greater London Authority. The Mayor of London signed his inauguration charter in Southwark Cathedral and holds an annual carol service there. Our Archdeacons and clergy are actively engaged with each of their local boroughs.



Pupils participate in Welcare's *CapAbility* Schools programme

# | Our next Bishop of Southwark

## The Bishop we seek

The Diocese of Southwark is seeking a bishop who will travel with us on this next stage of our shared pilgrimage of faith. We pray for a wise, prayerful shepherd who can lead our diverse diocese with humility, courage and compassion.

Southwark is a broad diocese in so many ways – but what unites us as a family is our strong sense of belonging, trust

### *The person we are seeking is...*

- Pastoral and prayerful
- Inclusive and compassionate
- Courageous and principled
- Approachable and communicative
- Theologically grounded
- Able to hold diversity without fragmentation
- Committed to parish ministry
- A trusted advocate for the diocese nationally

and shared identity. We are proud of our legacy of engagement with social justice, from the Clapham Sect's role in the abolition of slavery to the radical Southbank religion movement and the appointment of Bishop Wilfred Wood as the first Bishop of Global Majority Heritage in the Church of England. This heritage tells a story of a vibrant, creative and visionary faith, rooted in parish life and seeking life in all its fullness for the communities that we serve. We hope and pray that our story will resonate with yours.

As part of our Vacancy in See process, we carried out a diocesan consultation over a six-week period to hear the views of as many people across our communities as possible about how they see our diocese and what we most need in our next diocesan bishop. There were more than 2,300 responses from a range of voices across the diocese, including children and young people and those who feel their voices don't get heard very often. Overall, responses indicate a strong mandate for a bishop who is pastoral rather than managerial, inclusive yet able to hold disagreement well, visibly present in parish life, robust on safeguarding and capable of offering hope amid demographic, financial and theological challenges.



We pray for a relational bishop who will grow to know the people of our diocese, who will be pastoral and visible, person-centred and parish-focused, with a strong care for the clergy. We seek a bishop who nurtures and supports both ordained and lay leaders, with a desire for the Church to be inclusive in the broadest possible sense, hospitable and generous.

We hope for an imaginative leader who can hold together both reflection and action. Someone who will work with us to envisage the future direction of our diocese, develop our strategy, enthuse and sustain us in living out our shared vision.

We seek someone who can hold theological diversity together, maintaining unity without erasing difference. Someone who respects and holds space for a variety of theological perspectives, respecting integrity and enabling those of differing perspectives to find a home together. Someone with a love for the Church in all its variety, who we hope will continue our firm ethos of speaking well of one another.

We hope for a bishop whose own lively faith spills out into an attractive and fresh articulation of the Gospel for our times, who can lead us in prophetic mission and thoughtful evangelism and support the Church as it seeks

to grow. We seek someone who can relate well with whomever they encounter and who can hold together theological integrity with the ability to communicate in the language of ordinary people. We are praying for someone who can advocate for those without a voice and emphasise God's preferential care for the poor. We seek someone who can relate well to children and young people, champion youth-centred ministry, strengthen faith formation across our parishes, inspire and equip leaders and nurture faith in this generation and the next. We also look for someone who will encourage the work of our many schools.

We recognise the need for a bishop who can offer leadership beyond the Church, in wise engagement with our public, civic and national life, sharing 'Southwark's voice', advocating for justice and the common good. We hope for a bishop who will have a high regard for our international, ecumenical and interfaith relationships.

We look for someone who can offer robust leadership in safeguarding, who fully grasps the importance of safety and care for the most vulnerable, someone with self-awareness, who understands the dynamics of power and who welcomes transparency and accountability as expressions of a healthy church culture.





To this end:

- We seek a bishop who will foster a culture of generous ‘unity within diversity,’ who can relate well across differences of tradition and conviction, and enable us to do the same. A bishop who will set a tone and example of respectful collegiality, shaped by the Church of England’s Pastoral Principals for Living Well Together (<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/governance/general-synod/structure/house-bishops/pastoral-principles>).
- We seek a bishop who will honour, affirm and work with clergy and lay people who are LGBT+.
- We seek a bishop who will commend and give their blessing to the use of Prayers of Love and Faith, whilst ensuring clergy who do not wish to use the Prayers of Love and Faith are supported.
- We seek a bishop who will offer a high degree of pastoral care and support for those clergy, lay leaders and churches in the diocese whose convictions lie within a more traditionalist or conservative theological teaching, actively ensuring that they are respected, included and enabled to flourish.

There are a range of views across the Vacancy in See Committee as to how appointing a candidate in a same-sex civil partnership would be received in

the diocese. Feedback from our diocesan consultation indicated strong support from our parishes for an inclusive bishop (although what respondents mean by this term may vary), with a significant group of respondents who indicate an opposing view.

We would therefore like to encourage those who are charged with discerning who God may be calling to this ministry to consider a broad range of candidates, including those who are currently underrepresented in senior

Church leadership – particularly women, those of Global Majority Heritage, neurodiverse or disabled people, as well as LGBT+ people, including those who are in a same-sex relationship or civil partnership.

Our diocese has recently set up a group for LGBT+ clergy to work together to resource pastoral ministry and missional engagement with LGBT+ people and offer support to clergy and lay leaders facing particular challenges in ministry.



We seek a bishop who will ordain women as priests and deacons and enable women to flourish in ordained ministry. We hope for someone keen to support and nurture the ministries of all women, lay and ordained, across all theological convictions.

As with the whole Church of England, there are different views across our diocese about the blessing of civil partnerships, same-sex marriage and the ordination of clergy in same-sex marriages. Our culture for many years has been to be as inclusive and affirming of LGBT+ clergy and lay people, and their relationships, as possible within the current guidelines of the House of Bishops, as well as ensuring that those whose convictions are different are valued and can feel at home.

## What we hope to offer you

We hope to give you, as our new bishop, space to discern your vocation here. We understand that you will need time to grow into your new role. We recognise that episcopal ministry has its own complex challenges, stresses and strains and we would want you to find a healthy and life-giving balance that enables you to find joy in your work and the rest you need. We would hope to work with you to find the right kind of support you will need to flourish as the Bishop of Southwark. We are praying for you and feel confident that you will find here an encouraging, supportive and dedicated team of staff, clergy and lay people.

## *Thank you*

We are thankful to everyone who has contributed to this process and who has helped to shape this Statement of Needs. We invite everyone to join us in holding this whole process and everyone who is a part of it in prayer.



**This painting of *Christ the Worker* by John Hayward, hangs in the chapel at Wychcroft, our diocesan resource and retreat centre. It is a reminder that all ministry is a participation in the work of Christ in and through us.**



The Diocese of  
Southwark

# *Their promises... our prayer*

*When a Bishop is ordained  
they are asked to keep  
several promises.*

*As part of praying for the  
process of selecting a new  
Bishop for the Diocese of  
Southwark let us use these  
promises as a prayer and  
hope of fulfilment by our  
next Bishop...*

Christ  
Centred  
Outward  
Focused



# *Their promises... our prayer*

*We pray that our appointed Bishop, with the  
help of God, will...*

- 1** accept the Holy Scriptures as revealing all things necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.
- 2** be diligent in prayer, in reading Holy Scripture, and in all studies that will deepen their faith and fit them to bear witness to the truth of the gospel.
- 3** lead our people in proclaiming the glorious gospel of Christ, so that the good news of salvation may be heard in every place.
- 4** teach the doctrine of Christ as the Church of England has received it, refute error, and hand on entire the faith that is entrusted to them.
- 5** be faithful in ordaining and commissioning ministers of the gospel.
- 6** promote peace and reconciliation in the Church and in the world; and strive for the visible unity of Christ's Church.
- 7** be gentle and merciful for Christ's sake to those who are in need, and speak for those who have no other to speak for them.
- 8** endeavour to fashion their own life and that of their household according to the way of Christ and make their home a place of hospitality and welcome.
- 9** work with their fellow servants in the gospel for the sake of the kingdom of God.
- 10** accept the discipline of this Church, exercising authority with justice, courtesy and love, and always holding before them the example of Christ.
- 11** in the strength of the Holy Spirit, continually stir up the gift of God that is in them, that the good news of Christ may be proclaimed in all the world.