*Clergy Role Description*

**Diocese of Durham**

*Role description signed off by:* Archdeacon of Auckland Date: August 2025

To be reviewed 6 months after commencement of the appointment, and at Ministerial Development

Review, alongside the setting of objectives.

**Details of Post**

*Role Title:* Vicar-Designate (initially, Assistant Curate)

*Name of benefice:* St Mark with Paul and St Matthew and St Luke,

Darlington

*Deanery:* Darlington

*Archdeaconry:* Auckland

*Initial point of contact on terms of service:* Diocesan Secretary

**1. Role Purpose**

**The vision of the Diocese is 'Blessing our communities in Jesus' name for the transformation of us all'. Within this the four core priorities are:**

* **Energising Growth**
* **Engaging with Children, Youth and Young People**
* **Challenging Poverty**
* **Caring for God’s Creation**

The Diocese of Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All post holders and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.

In addition to the priorities, the Diocese is working to a Transformation strategy, and the expectation is that all our clergy will participate in this. Diocesan Transformation is designed to enable a future that leads to missional growth and financial sustainability for our churches and diocese**.**

**General**

* To share with the Bishop in the cure of souls in these parishes, in line with the Diocesan Vision, Priorities and Plan described above.
* To be, initially, Assistant Curate and ultimately Vicar of these parishes, having regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy of the Church of England as described in the Ordinal, the Canons, national safeguarding policies, and all other relevant legislation, and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy 2015.* Specifically, the Priest-in-Charge must give due regard to safeguarding policy and practice.
* To work with the PCCs towards the development of the churches (both the people and their buildings) so that the churches are sustainable and effective in mission.
* To ensure that a high standard of worship, preaching and pastoral care is provided so that people are enabled to live as disciples of Christ.
* To nurture discipleship and develop the ministry of all God's people, through training, cooperation, delegation, support and example, so that they take more responsibility for the mission and ministry of the parishes; to seek to identify potential future leaders and ministers.
* To encourage all church members to participate in generous giving for the mutual support of one another across the diocese, and the wider Church of England.
* To collaborate within the deanery in mission and ministry.
* To be proactive and persistent in seeking the fullest degree of ecumenical cooperation wherever possible.

**Specific**

* To help the PCCs and the congregations to continue develop their vision and their approaches to mission and ministry, giving leadership in this area while working collaboratively, building on the strengths of what is already being done.
* To facilitate a growing working relationship between the two churches, PCCs and congregations.
* To reach out to the people of the parishes in mission, enabling people to begin a journey of Christian faith or make a return to faith.
* To enable people to grow as disciples, nurturing new and established Christians and helping the churches to become better at discipleship-development in and through their worship and other activities.
* To encourage and enable lay ministry, recognising the vocation of all God’s people, identifying and developing the gifts that God has given his people.
* To develop in particular ministry among children, young people and families.
* To work well with local schools.
* To be creative and innovative in leading worship, including further development of worship which will engage children and families, whilst also being mindful of the needs of those who value existing, traditional forms of worship.
* To actively seek partnerships and collaboration with local people and organisations in pursuing the mission of the church.

**2. Key Contacts**

**St Mark’s:**

* The Churchwarden and PCC
* Clergy with PTO who support St Mark’s:
* Revd Jeff Astley
* Revd Caroline Ferguson
* Revd David Spokes
* Reader Catherine Jowett
* Reader in Training Peter Craig
* The local schools and their Headteachers:
* Northwood Primary - Sarah Kelly
* Harrowgate Hill Primary - Amanda Abbott
* Longfield School -- Angela Sweeten
* Local elected civic leaders, especially Cllr Sonia Kane Mayor MP Lola Mcevoy
* Elderwood Care Home (which receives regular visits

**St Matthew and St Luke’s**

* The Church Wardens and PCC
* Rev Gordon Tough, Assistant Curate (trainee, SSM)
* Lay Pastoral Assistants: Carol Richardson & Geoff Chilton
* Parish Administrators: Mavis Jubb (Office), Clare Tuddenham (Treasurer), Diane Evans

(Church Magazine & newsletter)

* Corporation Road School
* Civic leaders:
* MP - Lola McEvoy
* Local Councillors:  (Pierremont Ward) - Stephen Harker (Leader of the Council), Mary  Layton and James McGill  (church works with
* Friends of the Denes
* Friends of North Lodge Park
* Springfield Care Home (outside the parish)

**Both:**

* The Archdeacon of Auckland
* The Area Dean of Darlington
* Darlington Deanery Chapter and Synod

**3. Role Context**

The successful applicant for this post will be appointed initially as Assistant Curate and Vicar Designate. This is because there is pastoral reorganisation in hand. St Matthew and St Luke is currently part of a benefice with St Michael in Heighington Village, five and half miles away. For many years the Darlington Deanery Plan has envisaged St Matthew and St Luke instead being paired with St Mark to share a stipendiary minister, for obvious practical reasons. This is now being pursued. So while The appointed minister must initially be appointed as Assistant Curate, he or she will be named in the final version of the Pastoral Scheme as the first vicar of the new benefice, and the appointment will be made with this understanding by all parties.

These two parishes both have faithful officers and PCCs. St Marks has been vacant for nearly three years. In this time they have shown huge resilience. They have also not stood, still but have developed a new vision for community engagement and launched an impressive range of new activities, mainly focussed around the promotion of health and well-being. They are looking to improve the facilities of their church building in line with this renewed missional vision. St Matthew and St Luke has entered vacancy much more recently.

Like most churches in the diocese, these churches need to grow, not least for their sustainability: to maintain the loving service they demonstrate in their communities and necessary governance, more volunteers are needed. There is also a need to develop mission in terms of proclamation and the nurture of disciples (Marks 1 and 2 of the Anglican Five Marks of Mission). The churches are most naturally comfortable with loving service and challenging poverty (Marks 3 and 4), and good work is being done here. Developing a holistic approach, in which it is also natural to invite people to make a journey of Christian faith, is important here, as it is throughout the diocese.

It needs to be noted that the churches main Sunday service times currently conflict: St Mark meet at 10.00 and St Matthew and St Luke at 11.00. The former are unwilling to meet earlier and the latter unwilling to meet later, for wholly understandable reasons: both PCCs believe such a move would have a negative impact on their current congregation and limit the possibility of them growing. There are other clergy involved in the life of both churches, and a system whereby the new minister alternated between the two on Sundays with support from other clergy is currently conceivable. This may need further consideration in future.

**4. Person Specification**

The successful applicant for this post will be someone who is:

* A strong leader who is wise and collaborative
* A good communicator who is able to speak to a wide range of people
* A person with a deep spirituality, who is determined to help the churches seek the will of God and to help the people of the churches serve God in mission
* A thoughtful preacher and teacher who will help the people of the churches understand the Scriptures better and translate their faith into a vision for their community
* An encourager, who can nurture people in discipleship and enable their spiritual growth
* A team leader who can encourage people to discover, develop and use their gifts
* A person who will be deeply rooted in the local community, who will be focused on mission
* Inclusive in approach, reaching out to all and valuing the contributions of all God’s children
* A person with a heart for all ages who will work well with schools and families
* A person with a good a sense of humour, who will see the funny side when things don’t run perfectly
* Someone who is flexible, open to change, who will enable others to handle change well

**Safeguarding:** The Diocese of Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All post holders and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.

*SMwSP & SM&SL V designate C*

*2025.08 v01*