

Our ref: DB/01/19

January 2019

The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek

Bishop of Gloucester

The Bishops' Office

2 College Green, Gloucester, GL1 2LR

bgloucester@glosdioc.org.uk

Tel: 01452 835511

Dear Candidate

Vicar of St Philip and St James Up Hatherley, Cheltenham

Thank you for making enquiries about this vacancy – I hope you find the enclosed documents helpful in considering your application. Following a resolution of the PCC two years ago I have delegated the pastoral and sacramental oversight of the parish to the Bishop of Ebbsfleet and have invited +Jonathan to reflect from his own perspective on the vacancy below:

“For all parish churches, especially single parish churches like St Philip and St James’s, mission today is in a widely diverse society. Outreach to children and young people with the joy and hope of the gospel remains a primary task, in any age. But for the foreseeable future, and a bit paradoxically, in our age the Gospel must be shared in a society that is overall becoming increasingly older. So the mission could not be wider, and our vision has to be broad.

As the congregation looks to that future mission, and to welcoming the priest that God will bring to Up Hatherley, they have, in my experience of them, three great assets. First, they have a genuine sense of invitation and warmth of hospitality; and second, a deeply rooted sacramental life. (The recent imaginative re-furnishing of the church is a sign of both of these.) Third, there’s a willing and collaborative relationship with the other parishes in South Cheltenham, which gives ample opportunity for mutual flourishing. We need therefore, a confident priest, rooted in Catholic tradition, who understands that the Church is ‘mission-shaped’ *because* it is ‘sacrament-shaped’: that the sacraments taken together *are* the mission strategy of a constantly celebrated and constantly widened life in Christ’s body. *That* would be a real gift worth sharing with the LIFE vision of the wider diocesan family, and I hope that it is a challenge and a call that you can share.”



The Rt Revd Jonathan Goodall, Bishop of Ebbsfleet

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gloucester.anglican.org

☎ 01452 835511 ✉ bgloucester@glosdioc.org.uk

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From my own perspective, I share +Jonathan's sense that there is much to celebrate and much potential for mutual flourishing in this worshipping community, set in a popular and expanding suburb of Cheltenham, with the Cotswolds on the doorstep. The parish is in good heart and the congregation is committed and supportive, but also – as the profile makes clear - very aware of the fact that their demography does not fully reflect the wider parish community, especially in terms of younger families and children. This said there are signs of a desire to grow and reach out with the good news of the gospel more fully to all age groups and I am praying for a colleague who will be able to encourage this desire and help to equip the whole worshipping community to grow in discipleship and mission.

You will find good support in the deanery and wider diocese and I would expect that you will play an active part in our common life, centred around our 'LIFE' vision process (mentioned in the profile) which is focused around Jesus' offer of 'life to the full', rooted in John 10:10. <http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/>. The accompanying document gives a little more detail about how this vision translates into the culture and values we are seeking to see grow amongst all those licensed to minister across the Diocese.

The benefice is part of the Cheltenham Deanery and it is expected that the person appointed will not only find collegial support within the deanery chapter and synod but will also play a full part in those bodies. There are also plenty of opportunities to be involved in the wider life of the Diocese.

I hope very much that having seen the profile and read so far you will feel encouraged to apply and I look forward to receiving an application from you.

If you have any questions or want to know more please do not hesitate to contact the Archdeacon of Cheltenham, The Ven. Phil Andrew on 01452 835594 or 07498 052045 or the Bishop of Ebbsfleet on 0118 948 1038 or the patron's representative, Fr Darren Smith, Chairman of the Church Union, on 0121 382 5533 or 07956 440669.

With all good wishes and thanks.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Rachel". The plus sign is positioned to the left of the name, and the signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rt Revd Rachel Treweek
Bishop of Gloucester

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