*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:* Interim Minister Priest-in-Charge

*Name of benefice:* The Good Shepherd, Bishopwearmouth

and St Mary Magdalene, Bishopwearmouth

*Deanery:* Wearmouth

*Archdeaconry:* Sunderland

*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 this parish, in line with the Diocesan Vision, Priorities and Plan described above.
* To be Priest-in-Charge of this parish, 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. To enable the churches to grow, so that by the end of the initial three-year term of this post there is sustainability financially and in the number of officers/volunteers, so that positive decisions to be made about the long-term future.
* To continue to help the churches and their congregations to work well together, developing their relationships with one another.
* 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 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**

* Churchwardens and members of the PCCs.
* Clergy of the deanery, and the Area Dean.
* Local retired clergy ministers with PTO.
* The Archdeacon of Sunderland.
* Ecumenical colleagues.
* Headteachers of local schools.
* Local elected members and community leaders.

**3. Role Context**

The parishes of the Good Shepherd and St Mary Magdalene have been vacant since the retirement of the previous Priest-in-Charge. The Deanery Plan did not envisage a replacement, for a number of reasons. This was partly because there are four parishes which look to the Bishop of Beverley for oversight in Wearmouth Deanery, three with small congregations, and a combined parish population of only 25,000. It did not seem sustainable or equitable – in the context of the needs and capacity in the wider deanery – to place more than 2 FTE stipendiary clergy between them long-term. Furthermore, there was intended to be significant missional capacity serving Good Shepherd and St Mary Magdalene, with the intention of growing the churches, through the Sunderland Centre for Mission (the SCM), a collaboration with the Church Army. However, the SCM was only fully staffed briefly, and Church Army have now withdrawn from the project. The current SCM employee will be made redundant at the end of September 2025.

There also needs to be a clear decision about pastoral reorganisation here. Good Shepherd has now been suspended for 38 years (!), and so an answer to the question of what pastoral reorganisation is to be effected here must now be reached, even if the situation remains complex.

This Interim post has therefore been created so that a minister can work with the parishes, seeking to build trust confidence, pursue growth, and help prepare for a sensible long-term solution to the question of reorganisation. By the end of this initial period it is also likely that there will have been other changes among clergy posts in the deanery, meaning that decisions about future clergy provision can be made in a wider context at the same time.

The interim post is therefore offered for an initial period of three years; it can be renewed for a further period of up to three years if further developmental work needs to be done, or a permanent post may instead be created as part of a Pastoral Scheme.

In the work that lies ahead the successful candidate for this role will be able to build on some strong missional foundations in outreach to the community. While the SCM project has encountered difficulties, the current post-holder has done excellent work in gaining the trust of the congregations of Good Shepherd and St Mary Magdalene and establishing missional opportunities in the parishes which are being very well attended. Building on these foundations will be key to the success of the new Interim Priest-in-Charge.

**4. Person Specification**

We are looking for a minister who:

* is both **collaborative** and able to bring inspiring **leadership**;
* is **enabling and encouraging** and who will discern and develop the vocation and gifts of others, affirming and supporting all in their discipleship and ministry;
* will be a **loving pastor**;
* has the ability to develop **mission plans** with the congregations;
* while **inhabiting the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England** deeply, also has the skills and knowledge to **prepare and lead worship** in a range of styles, both valuing tradition and enabling experiment and innovation;
* has the **resilience** to work in a context of significant social need;
* has a heart for engaging with **families, children and young people**, encouraging them to grow in faith, and who will seek to grow the churches younger**.**

*GS MM WD Int PiC*

 *2025.08 v01*