

## **BISHOP'S STATEMENT ON ST EDMUND AND ST ALBAN, DARTFORD**

The two current vacancies at St Edmund, Dartford and St Alban, Dartford represent a *kairos* moment – a once in a generation opportunity to re-shape the mission and ministry of the Church of England in east Dartford in a lasting and imaginative way.

We are seeking one priest in charge to have responsibility for both parishes and this has been made possible by the willingness of the two churches to work more closely together, shown graphically in the speed and willingness in which they made their person specifications coalesce and in the recognition that existing service times will need to be reviewed. The two churches share a commitment to inclusivity, prayerfulness and innovation and already have a good, informal record of working and worshipping together. The intention is that this may deepen and bear more fruit still.

The parishes also share similar demographic and socio-economic profiles, with missions to large post-war estates which pose genuine challenges both in the range of needs presented and in the churches' capacity to meet them. There is a real desire to enhance this mission and a specific way in which we plan to do this in partnership between parishes and diocese.

Once the successful candidate has been appointed as Priest in Charge of St Edmund and St Alban, he or she will help in the creation of a further appointment of Estates Missioner, who will have specific duties to develop relationships on the estates, deepen our community engagement and build fresh expression of church, relevant to the lives and interests of parishioners. This person might have a limited role advising other churches on their own work with estates.

There is already an innovative Living Well partnership at St Edmund which involves the shared use of one building by the PCC, GP surgery, Sure Start and the Healthy Living Centre; evidence of the ability and willingness to meet the holistic needs of the community.

The Priest in Charge would live in St Edmund Vicarage.