St Dunstan and All Saints Stepney

**Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer Agreement**

**Summary**

The St Dunstan and All Saints Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Scheme is a one year scheme, suitable for people who wish to explore whether to pursue a calling to Christian ministry, lay or ordained. It includes parish experience, theological reflection, community engagement and vocational discernment. It supports the mission and ministry of the St Dunstan and All Saints Church, where the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers will explore their calling.

**Aims of the Scheme for the Ministry Experience Volunteers**

The Scheme aims to give Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers an experience of Christian ministry, in the context of parish church life, so as to give them an informed and realistic understanding of that ministry. Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers will also be given an opportunity to undertake study and training to help them appreciate the knowledge and skills that would be needed for the ministry they are exploring, and so help them develop and discern their vocation and fulfil the potential of the ministry experience. Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers will be expected to live together in St Dunstan’s Parish in the flat provided for the purpose. Accommodation is provided as an integral part of the Scheme.

**Aims of the Scheme**

The St Dunstan and All Saints Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Scheme aims to:

1. Equip Ministry Experience Volunteers for mission and ministry;
2. Attract and encourage high calibre people who may have a calling to serve in the London Diocese or dioceses outside London in the future.

**Organisation of the Scheme and Status of the Ministry Experience Volunteers**

The Ministry Experience Volunteers will offer their services as volunteers to the Incumbent and Parochial Church Council of St Dunstan and All Saints Church and will not be employees. The two following basic characteristics distinguish volunteers from the Charity’s employed staff:

i) Volunteers are unpaid and do not receive any material reward for their work.

ii) There is no contract of employment between the Charity and its volunteers.

As a Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer, you confirm that you offer your services to the Charity without the Charity being under any obligation to pay you for your services and the Charity agrees to use your services as and when required and available. So far as practicable you will do what you have offered to do and at the times that you agree from time to time, but both the Charity and you recognise that you are not under any obligation to work for the Charity and the Charity is not under any obligation to provide you with any work. This document is intended to explain how the Scheme will operate and reassure Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers that their participation in the Scheme will be rewarding. Whilst you are asked to read this document and sign it, there is no intention to create any contract of employment between you and the Incumbent and PCC of St Dunstan and All Saints Church.

**Expenses**

You will receive no monetary payment of any description, except in respect of expenses incurred (or reasonably estimated as likely to be incurred) in the course of the ministry experience. The current rate of stipend to cover estimated expenses is £500 per calendar month or £6,000 per annum. For the period of time that you are acting as a Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer you are also provided with accommodation. Should you cease to be a Ministry Experience Volunteer for any reason, you will be provided with notice to leave the accommodation. A telephone and internet connection are provided in your accommodation. Energy costs are payable by you. You should make a note of meter readings immediately upon arrival and contact the supplier to pay for energy used. You should make a note of meter readings when you vacate the accommodation.

**Key Dates**

The scheme will begin on 1st September each year, and end on the 31st August each year.

**Outline Week**

The details of the placement will be agreed between the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer and the Incumbent of St Dunstan and All Saints Church. The pattern may need to be adjusted over the year, as the training needs of the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer, and the ministry aims of the parish change.

In a typical week, it is anticipated that Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers will:

* Attend the daily offices of Morning Prayer (9.30am) and Evening Prayer (4.00pm) Tuesday to Friday.
* Serve at the daily Mass and occasional; funerals, memorials, carols and weddings.
* Lead, read or intercede at the daily office in rotation with other members of the team.
* Prepare for and serve at the Sunday Parish Mass at 10.00am.  It is envisaged that the Parish Assistant will learn each of the liturgical roles during the year.
* Open and close the church daily, Tuesday to Saturday and keep an eye on the building in rotation with other members of the team.
* Thursday is normally a day free from duties on the church site for project work and visiting.
* Edit and print the weekly liturgy sheet and other occasional liturgy sheets.
* Answer telephone, e-mail and other written enquiries and/or redirect to the correct people.
* Maintain the databases of contacts and mailings.
* Help keep our social media up to date and interesting.  Training will be given if required.
* Learn to give guided tours of the church to school groups of varying ages, tourists and other visitors and help with the school visits programme.
* Visit parishioners in their homes and take communion to the sick in rotation with other members of the team.
* Participate in the bi-weekly staff meeting.

**Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Opportunities**

The Scheme will provide a range of opportunities for Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers to explore parish ministry. The opportunities at St Dunstan’s include, but are not limited to;-

* Learning how a variety services are constructed and structured.
* Experiencing the full cycle of the liturgical year in an Anglo-Catholic setting; Lent, Holy Week, the Tridium, Patronal Festival, Advent and Christmas.
* Leading, reading and interceding at the daily office.
* Learning how to serve at the Mass and other services.
* Learning how the administration of a church works.
* Experience of social engagement through St Dunstan’s Food Bank.

Each person’s involvement will depend on the needs of the parish and your gifts for ministry. Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers will be encouraged to develop their own particular strengths and interests, and the intention is for the roles to have some flexibility to allow you to grow and develop.

**Time off**

It is expected that Ministry Experience Volunteers will have 20 days off over the duration of the scheme. This may include a total of up to 4 Sundays. Ministry Experience Volunteers should expect to spend the key times of Christmas, Holy Week and Easter at St Dunstan and All Saints Church. Time off should be agreed in advance with the Incumbent. Ideally that time off will not conflict with the key events within the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Scheme. For example Christmas, Easter and Holy Days / Christian festivals.

**Duration of the Scheme**

Whilst it is envisaged that all Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers will complete the Scheme, as a sign of their commitment to the Scheme and to the parish, this agreement is binding in honour only and there is no legal obligation upon the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer to complete the Scheme. Should it become necessary for a Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer to leave the Scheme early, due to changes in their personal circumstances or otherwise, the ministry experience volunteer / parish assistant would be expected to first discuss their decision with the Incumbent. A Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer’s participation in the Scheme may be brought to an end prior to completion of the Scheme if the volunteer’s placement has become unsustainable for any reason.

**Standards of Behaviour**

Ministry Experience Volunteers are expected to act at all times with due consideration for others and in a manner that reflects the fact they are volunteering for the Church. The London Diocese has implemented a Dignity at Work Policy and does not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, gender reassignment, race or ethnic origin, religious or philosophical belief, sexual orientation or age.

Ministry Experience Volunteers are not permitted to use illegal substances or misuse prescribed drugs or solvents whilst they are participating in the Scheme. If a Ministry Experience Volunteer is caught consuming such substances, or is believed to be under their influence, then their participation in the Scheme may be brought to an immediate end. Whilst participating in the Scheme, Ministry Experience Volunteers may come into possession of property that belongs to the parish in which they are placed. Ministry Experience Volunteers are expected to treat this property with respect and to return it at the end of the Scheme, or at the request of the Scheme Director.

**Problem Solving**

Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers should expect their participation in the Scheme to be a positive experience. If a Ministry Experience Volunteer has a problem or a complaint, in the first instance they should try to discuss the matter with the Incumbent. If they are unable to resolve the matter, the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer should speak to one of St Dunstan and All Saints Churchwardens. They may be able to help the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer to resolve the problem informally, or the Ministry Experience /Parish Assistant Volunteer may be asked to provide further details in writing so the matter can be taken forward on a more formal basis. Any concerns regarding the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer’s behaviour or their ability to participate fully in the Scheme will normally be raised with them informally by the Incumbent. Occasionally it may be necessary to investigate a problem and during that time, the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer's participation in the Scheme may be put on hold. Following investigation, if the matter is resolved the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer will normally resume their participation in the Scheme. Alternatively there may need to be some discussion about how the problem should be resolved, or the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer’s participation in the Scheme may end early, in which case they will be told why.

**Whistle Blowing**

If a Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer becomes aware of any of the following whilst participating in the Scheme, they must inform the Incumbent and Churchwardens immediately:

* a criminal offence
* a failure to comply with a legal obligation;
* a miscarriage of justice;
* the endangering of an individual’s health and safety;
* damage to the environment;
* bribery; ordeliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above.

**Data Protection and Confidentiality**

During the Scheme, the Incumbent and PCC of St Dunstan and All Saints will need to hold and process some personal information about the Ministry Experience Volunteers, including their name, address and contact telephone number. Ministry Experience Volunteers should ensure up-to-date contact details are provided – if in doubt they should check with Incumbent. Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers should also have regard to the privacy notices of the PCC.

In some circumstances sensitive personal data about the Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers may also be held, for example regarding their religious beliefs and/or criminal record. If a Ministry Experience Volunteer has any questions or concerns about the data held, then they should contact the Incumbent or PCC secretary. In the course of the Scheme, Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers may have access to confidential information relating to the parish in which they are placed, members of the clergy and/or parishioners. Ministry Experience /Parish Assistant Volunteers must not use or disclose this information to any person either during their Ministry Experience or at any time afterwards unless such use or disclosure has been authorised by the owner of the confidential information or is required by law. Whilst participating in the Scheme, Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers should not hold themselves as representing the views of St Dunstan and All Saints Church, the PCC, the Diocese of London or the Church of England.

**Health and Safety**

Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteers must comply at all times with the health and safety rules and policies of St Dunstan and All Saints Church. If a Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer has any concerns regarding the environment in which they are volunteering, they should speak to the Incumbent

I confirm that I have read the above information regarding my participation in St Dunstan and All Saints Ministry Experience / Parish Assistant Volunteer Scheme. I acknowledged that its terms are binding in honour only and it is not intended to be a legally binding contract and can be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party.

Signed:

Ministry Experience Volunteer

Print Name:

Date:

Signed:

On behalf of the Charity

Print Name: **The Reverend Trevor Critchlow, Rector St Dunstan and All Saints Stepney**

Date: