

ST. THOMAS' CHURCH, EDINBURGH

RECTOR PROFILE

October 2024

We have identified the characteristics which we think are key and have provided an explanation in each case, which we hope will be helpful. We will be happy to give any further explanation which might be needed.

This document should be read in conjunction with the church profile.

Characteristic	Explanation
The Rector must be a person who affirms the Christian faith as expressed in the Apostles' Creed and the Jerusalem Declaration, and who has been ordained.	St Thomas' is part of the Anglican Convocation in Europe. ACE is a relatively new organisation and so we do not necessarily expect our new Rector to already be part of ACE. However, at an early stage after the appointment, our Rector must subscribe to the ACE Canons. Eligibility to be licenced to preach is at the discretion of Bishop Andy Lines. This is both a constitutional requirement, and a practical necessity for the relationship between Rector and members
The Rector will share our theologically orthodox, evangelical Anglican position.	As is explained in the Church Profile, our theological position has always been evangelical and we have reaffirmed that in our current constitution, which underlines our commitment to Scripture as the written Word of God. Our constitution also references the Apostles' Creed and affirms the Jerusalem Declaration as the pre-eminent contemporary expression of the tenets of orthodoxy which underpin our identity.
The Rector will lead by example with regard to personal Bible study and prayer.	Considering Jesus said "Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing", we would encourage a Rector to ensure that significant time is set aside for personal study, prayer and wider Christian reading. This is particularly important in the midst of a busy schedule.
The Rector's preaching will be biblically-based.	Sunday services should "focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging believers, and teaching them." 1 Tim 4:13. The Rector will be someone who preaches from the Bible in a systematic way, digging deep and applying Scripture's lessons to the hearer's life. A desire for expository Bible teaching is a necessary requirement. Biblical teaching is in our church DNA! Its importance is emphasised every time we consult with the congregation about what matters to them about St Thomas'.
The Rector will take responsibility for our congregational and small group prayer meetings.	We acknowledge that the place of prayer, both corporate and private, is central to the health of church and individuals. The Rector will encourage the vital ministry of "two or three meeting together" (Matt 18:20) – both in our small groups and in church-wide prayer.
The Rector will share our commitment to evangelism and will take a lead in putting that into practice.	One of the things we did on leaving the SEC and reconstituting ourselves as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation was to affirm our commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission of Matt 28:19-20. We are keen to continue put that into practice. One specific example is our desire to reach out into the new housing estates being built near the church.

Characteristic	Explanation
The Rector will lead services in a way which blends liturgy and accessibility.	Our services are streamed and viewing one or more of them will make it clear what we mean by this. The church is Anglican in its formation, and hence liturgical. However, we have members from a variety of church backgrounds and from several nationalities (including some for whom English is not their first language). Sometimes, people come to our services with little or no church background of any sort and, in an increasingly secularised society, that may be expected to continue. Sometimes, people who attend have learning difficulties. We see it as important that our services are accessible to everyone and that no-one is excluded by excessive use of formal or antiquated language, or of jargon, which is perhaps best reserved for mid-week teaching meetings.
The Rector will be able to take a lead in outreach to young families.	COVID and lockdown happened shortly after we left the SEC, and like other churches, we have found that not everyone has returned. On top of that, we have (like other churches who have taken the same stance as us) experienced difficulty in our relationships with the local schools. As a result, our demographic has become unbalanced to an extent which concerns us. We think that we need to put significant effort into making contact with, and attracting, young families. We are excited that a large number of new homes are being built on our doorstep and that development will bring hundreds of families into our area, and we are currently the nearest church.
The Rector will take a lead in ensuring that the pastoral needs of the congregation are met.	Something else which emerges from congregational feedback is the high value we place on our relationships with one another. We are told repeatedly that we are warm and welcoming to visitors and newcomers. Pastoral needs are met in a number of ways (including, in particular, through our mutually supportive small groups) but that work needs to be led effectively and there will always be some needs which can only be addressed by the Rector.
The Rector will be able to work with members from widely varying backgrounds and make good use of the skills which they bring to the church.	We have a long tradition of lay involvement. Many of our members have much to offer in terms of skills which they have developed in their working lives and other contexts. They contribute those skills gladly, within an ethos which is supportive of the Rector and of one another. This is an important resource which we would want to see used for the extension of God's Kingdom.
The Rector will be able, in conjunction with Vestry and Trustees, to give to such staff as are employed from time to time effective and supportive management.	At present, our members of staff are a Ministry Assistant, the Church Administrator and our cleaner (who is, at her request, on leave of absence for family reasons). We want to be good employers and we regard it as important that staff are well managed. The Rector will be the line manager of the staff, supported by our personnel committee. In the past St Thomas has taken a prominent role in training clergy, and we would support the return to this practice.
The Rector, along with lay assistance, will manage the church's material assets.	As to material resources, we own our building and two houses, we have good reserves and we have a number of income streams. We do not expect the Rector to have substantial management experience or that management will be a core skill but, in leading the church as a whole, the careful management of our material resources is important. Some Trustees and members of Vestry do have significant management experience and will be able to support and work with the Rector in this area, to whatever extent is required.