

# THE PARISH OF CROYDON

The Minster Church of St John the Baptist



A Profile of Minster Life 2024

# Introduction

Our vision, at Croydon Minster, is to be a church that is welcoming and open, where people find life, joy and belonging in Christ. This is the culture we seek to foster.

It is our mission to be a Minster Church at the heart of Croydon, faithfully offering worship to God, intelligently growing in Christian faith and, looking beyond ourselves, compassionately serving our locality and human need as Christ serves us.

As we look to the future, and what God has prepared for us, so we seek to discern who we are as a church, who we are called to become, and how we will get there. This profile gives a snapshot of who we are in 2024. In knowing who we are, then we can discern who we are called to be.

I hope this profile encourages, challenges and inspires us here at the Minster. Your response to this will help us in our prayer and planning for future mission and ministry.

To fulfil our vision we need young and old who will 'see visions and dream dreams' (cf Acts of the Apostles 2.17). To deliver our mission we need to commit ourselves afresh to serving the whole mission of the Church in this parish. The fundamental call of the Church is the worship and adoration of God and contemplation of his abundant grace in all that is good, beautiful and true.

Whilst this profile focuses on the Minster we do not exist in splendid isolation, but with St George's, Waddon, we serve the whole parish (see page 17). The parish is part of the Croydon Central Deanery, Croydon Episcopal Area and Diocese of Southwark and we seek to participate fully in the life of the wider Church at all levels. The Minster is also part of the Major Churches Network (see page 11).

Those who worship at the Minster represent the picture in the Revelation to John where 'a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb [of God]', (Revelation 7.9).

Some of us live in the immediate locality of the Minster and others a little further away. All of us cherish the liturgy and music, the buildings and heritage of this church that is the ancient and enduring spiritual heart of Croydon.

In our different ways we are all here following the prompting of our patron saint, John the Baptist, who says 'Look, there is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!' (John 1.29)



*1 L-R Stephen Willmer, Arlene Esdaile (churchwardens), Fr Andrew*

*Fr Andrew*

The Birth of St John the Baptist, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024

# Worship

The Minster stands in the catholic liturgical tradition of the Church of England. The celebration of the **Eucharist** is central, as 'the source and summit' of the Christian life as the Body of Christ. The Eucharist is celebrated daily in the parish (except Saturdays).

On Sundays and feast days the Eucharist is enhanced by the choir singing repertoire from the English and European tradition of sacred music.

In June 2022 there was a 'Month of the Eucharist' which used the celebration of Corpus Christi to reflect on the Eucharist and to celebrate the Eucharist with a 'devotional commentary' which was greatly welcomed.

As with many churches the question of how the whole church participates in worship is a significant one at the Minster, especially with our strong choral tradition. The priests at the church always aim to preside in a reverent, open and generous way, so that all feel drawn in to the celebration.

Teams of **servers** minister as thurifer, crucifer and acolyte. **Lay Eucharistic Ministers, readers** and **intercessors** serve the liturgy on a rota basis.

The **daily offices** are celebrated in the church. Morning Prayer is said daily on weekdays and Choral Evensong is sung on Sundays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays (in term time).

The richness of the liturgical year is celebrated. In Lent and at other times **Compline** is sung with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

**Holy Week and Easter** are observed with full dignity and throughout the year full use is made of liturgical material from 'Common Worship: Times and Seasons' and 'Festivals'.

Preaching is undertaken by the clergy and Lay Reader and occasional visiting preachers. With a number of staff there are different styles and voices of preaching offered.



2 Detail of a fresco on south of High Altar

# Services

## *Sundays*

8am Eucharist (said) with homily; 10am Sung Eucharist with sermon; 11.30am Holy Baptism; 5.30pm Choral Evensong with sermon

## *Weekdays*

Monday to Friday - 8.30am Morning Prayer

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday – 11am Eucharist (said)

Thursday – 10.30am Eucharist (said) at St George's

Tuesday & Wednesday (in term time) – 5.30pm Choral Evensong



*3 Mass for Ascension Day at the High Altar 2024*

# Music

Music is an integral part of the worship and life of Croydon Minster.

The **Minster Choral Foundation** today draws on a long-established tradition. The foundation comprises choristers, both girls and boys, with choral scholars and adult lay clerks.

Minster music excels at developing singers and musicians. Many choristers, choral scholars and organists go on to university choral scholarships, posts in cathedrals and national institutions.

We enjoy a fruitful partnership with Whitgift School. Our **Director of Music**, Justin Miller, is also Director of Choral Singing at Whitgift and our partnership with the school makes an appointment of Justin's calibre possible. The Whitgift link also means that Graduate Music Assistants from the school also sing in the choir at the Minster and support our musical life.

We employ a sub-organist, George Inscoc, and Singing Development Lead, Sophie Garbisu. Sophie gives vocal training to choristers and also leads **CroydonSings!** our outreach programme working with local schools. These posts are currently funded by a generous benefactor and a grant from the Cathedral Music Trust.

In term time weekly **lunchtime recitals** take place in the Minster on Fridays. The recitals are open to all (a modest donation is asked). They are of the highest musical standards and are particularly a showcase for students at music colleges and schools.

It would be a great thing to commission music for our choirs perhaps for a significant occasion which would also be something other church and cathedral choirs could use.



4 Choristers of the Choral Foundation

# Children & Young People

The pandemic had an adverse impact on our provision for children and young people on Sunday mornings. It is good to see children and families week by week on a Sunday morning using the children's area which enables them and parents/guardians to be present for the Church's worship.

During the pandemic a regular monthly Sunday afternoon service started for children and their families. It is led by one of the clergy with the Lay Reader. It is valued by those who come, but numbers are low despite a lot of publicity through our church schools. The children's Good Friday Liturgy is well attended as well as the Children's Nativity on Christmas Eve.

The Feast of the Baptism of Christ 2023 saw the introduction of a **celebration of baptism** service, as part of the regular pattern, to which those children baptised at the Minster over the past year were invited, with their families. A party with tea and cake followed and both the service and party were well attended.

We have a **Children & Families' Catechist** who works with our growing number of young families in the church.

Through the involvement of choristers and choral scholars the Choral Foundation exposes children and young people to the Church's liturgy, preaching and festivals. The Royal School of Church Music awards undertaken by choristers enable them to excel in musicianship but also require biblical and liturgical knowledge too.

At **Candlemas**, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, we made a particular point of praying for discernment of how best to minister to our children and young people. It is an inter-generational scene: a baby brought by young parents, Mary and Joseph, to the Temple, received by the wise, older people Simeon and Anna. It is a model for a church community, made up of different generations gathered in a holy place around Jesus Christ.



*5 Children by the font during a Children & Families' Liturgy*

## Prayer & Catechesis

**Morning Prayer** gives a chance for people to gather to pray in church during the week at the beginning of the day.

During Covid **Lectio Divina**, which is an ancient yet endlessly fresh contemplative method of reading the Scriptures, moved to an online format. That continues weekly on Tuesdays and gives an opportunity to engage Scripture – the Gospel reading for the coming Sunday – with the heart, feeding and forming mind and spirit.

Since 2019 Fr Andrew has offered short courses known as '**Bitesize Catechesis**'. Lasting no more than 20 minutes there is an element of teaching, time for question and discussion. 'Bitesize Catechesis' has been valued by participants, including those preparing for **Confirmation**. Many of these sessions are on the Minster YouTube channel as an archive.

Fr Alan has regularly run a weekly **Bible study group** from his home, typically but not exclusively in the seasons of Advent and Lent.

The challenge with our current provision is accessibility, both in terms of time of day and online and also knowing what demand there is for more provision.

## Pastoral Care & Hospitality

Pastoral Care in a church should be something we all share, even if some people take a lead on it through training and their personal gifts. We have a vision of Christ-centred pastoral care as a major element of the life of any church, along with worship and teaching.

In our ministry of hospitality we have '**Contact Cards**' available at the West Doors. These are for those new to the church, or want to make contact, to give their details and become part of our life. Members of the congregation are encouraged to hand out these cards and get in conversation with newcomers. In conjunction with these cards Fr Andrew and Alice Bishop have also hosted a series of **welcome lunches** for those new to the church.

The serving of **refreshments** after the principal Eucharist on Sundays has resumed. This takes place in church in the endeavour to be inclusive and enable as many people as possible to stay. The challenge is how to incorporate those who are new to the church and to see coffee as much outreach as catching up with friends.

**Chaplaincy care** is also provided through Fr Andrew at Elis David Almshouses and in Whitgift Care.

# Schools & Education

The **Minster Nursery and Infant School** and **Minster Junior School** are both part of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education's Multi Academy Trust.

Clergy and members of the congregation serve on the Governing Bodies of the two schools. Fr Andrew leads corporate acts of worship regularly through the term and other members of the Minster congregation are involved in activities and supporting reading in school.



6 Logo of the Minster Schools



Aerodrome Primary Academy and Harris Purley Way Academy are in the Waddon District of the Parish and are served by St George's.

The **Minster Education Officer** (MEO) is David Morgan. The role of the MEO is to promote awareness and knowledge of Croydon Minster as an historic and living place of worship set at the heart of Croydon. This is done by arranging visits from schools, other adult educational and local interest groups, involvement in planning talks, exhibitions and displays pertaining to the history of the Minster.

*MinsterSings!* (see page 5) has worked this year in Aerodrome, Heathfield and Minster Junior schools.

75 David Morgan (MEO) welcoming a school group to church



8 Fr Andrew welcoming 30th Purley Scouts



## Beyond ourselves

One aspect of our mission is to look beyond ourselves, compassionately serving our locality and human need as Christ serves us. There have been two key expressions of that this year, one a new venture and one a longstanding commitment delivered in a new way.

We work with the **Separated Child Foundation** (SCF) to assemble packs for unaccompanied children coming to the UK. In spring 2023 the PCC sought a Croydon Episcopal Area Mission Grant to enable SCF work in Croydon and to use the Minster Hall for storage and packing sessions. This partnership continues.

We regularly collect items for the local **Crisis** centre in Surrey Street.

One of our past outreach projects has been the weekly hosting of the **Croydon Churches Floating Shelter** during the winter months. The project no longer provides accommodation due to new regulations about required amenities which many church halls, including ours, cannot meet. It is unlikely that the project as it was will resume. The project has had to reinvent itself and now, coordinated by Denise Mead, we prepare and provide food for people without shelter in partnership with the charity 'Nightwatch'.



*9 Those involved in packing for Separated Child – March 2023*

# Communications

Communication is central to the Gospel: God's self-communication to his creation through the Incarnation of the Word of God, Jesus Christ, and the propagation of that Gospel 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 13.47).

The Minster has a presence on **social media** including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The Minster has a long established website ([www.croydonminster.org](http://www.croydonminster.org)) and a YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/croydonminster>) with playlists on Minster Life, Teaching & Catechesis, Prayer & Worship and Choir & Organ.

In 2024 we appointed Trish Kiercek as **Communications Officer** to develop our social media, internal and external communications.



10 Parish Magazine cover January 2023

The **Parish Magazine** is edited by Liz Watkins ([magazine@croydonminster.org](mailto:magazine@croydonminster.org)) and is published bi-monthly. The magazine invites contributions from around the parish, both the Minster and St George's.

A **communications policy** for staff is in place so that all communication in the name of the Minster and associated with it, by office holders and employees, maintains the good reputation of the Church, nationally and locally and is courteous and communicates our vision here of being a church that is welcoming and open, where people find life, joy and belonging in Christ.

The **weekly bulletin** is sent out by email using **Mailchimp**. Our email contact list is now above the threshold for the free service and so we will need to upgrade.

@croydonminster



# A weekday church; a civic church: Major Churches Network



Croydon Minster is a member of the Major Churches network. This is a useful lens through which to see our mission and ministry, and also sets us in the context of other comparable churches. A Major Church is defined by the Church Building Council as:

- having exceptional significance
  - being physically very large (over 1000m<sup>2</sup> footprint)
  - listed as Grade I, II\* (or exceptionally II)
- open to visitors daily, having a role or roles beyond those of a typical parish church
  - making a considerable civic, cultural, and economic contribution to their community

The Minster is unarguably of **exceptional significance** both locally and more widely. The church's Saxon roots give it tremendous historical importance. The first recorded Priest of Croydon is Elfsie in 960AD. The upheavals of the Reformation era played out in Croydon where the Incumbent was Rowland Philips, friend of St Thomas More and St John Fisher, but who signed the Act of Supremacy having been coerced by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. The church is most associated perhaps with the Elizabethan Settlement through its connection with Archbishop John Whitgift. Whitgift is buried in the church with five other Archbishop of Canterbury.

The building is **Grade I listed**, and is of **significant size**. That brings particular challenges in maintenance and expenditure on the fabric of the building. We have the privilege and challenge of keeping the building open during the day. The establishment of a team of welcomers during the week would be beneficial both in terms of hospitality and security.

The Minster is the 'go to' venue for Episcopal Area and Civic services. It hosts Ordinations and Area Confirmation services. The London Borough of Croydon's Remembrance Sunday service takes place annually at the Minster, and in the past year we hosted the Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth for the Borough and a Service of Celebration for the Coronation of HM the King.

The Minster is often referred to as the '**Civic Church** of Croydon'. One of the live questions for the Minster is 'what does it mean to be a Civic Church?' That there is a considerable civic, cultural, and economic contribution to our community is not in question but how that is measured and how it can be developed needs to be articulated more clearly.

The Minster is a **seven day a week church**. Whilst much of the focus of our life together is inevitably the Sunday life of the Church, much of the work and life of the church remains unknown by the Sunday congregation.

# Heritage

The first recorded priest of Croydon was Elfsie, in 960AD, reflecting the church's position as **the ancient and enduring spiritual heart of Croydon**.

There is no trace of the earliest church on the site, but the tower and south porch are part of the medieval church that was largely destroyed by fire in 1867. The rest of the present church, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, was built on the medieval 'footprint' and consecrated on 5th January 1870.

The Minster is the resting place of six **Archbishops of Canterbury**, notably John Whitgift (above) who founded the Hospital of the Holy Trinity (Almshouses) and a school for boys in 1597. The Whitgift link continues today as the Vicar of Croydon is Chaplain to the **John Whitgift Foundation** and a member of the Court of Governors.

The City Mercer, Elias Davy, also endowed Almshouses in 1447. This legacy continues as the '**Croydon Almshouses Charity**'. The Churchwardens nominate a Board member of the charity and the Vicar is Chaplain to the Charity.

The renowned Anglo-American painter John Singleton Copley was buried at the Minster and has a memorial plaque. Copley has a memorial in Copley Square, Boston, Massachusetts thus giving a link with the United States.

Recently another historical vein has opened up with research into the Royal Waggon Train, a logistics regiment based in Croydon and active in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars of the late 18<sup>th</sup> early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Veterans are buried in the churchyard.

Our Minster Education Officer continues to research and tell the stories of numerous figures from Croydon and beyond who are associated with the church or buried in or around it.



11 Tomb of Archbishop John Whitgift in the St Nicholas Chapel

# Finance

Finance and stewardship of our resources is a key part of the PCC's responsibility. The parish receives no state support or from the Church of England nationally or the Diocese, but is assisted by the St Edmund's Charity for educational work in the parish and income from the Church Tenements Charity (Ecclesiastical Branch) for the maintenance and upkeep of the fabric of Croydon Minster.

The PCC acknowledges the generosity and prudence of past generations and the skills of our finance team which enable us to continue to serve the mission of the Church in this place.

The need for a stewardship campaign – appealing to committed and planned financial giving to the Church and the offering of gifts and talents through time and skill – is timely.

Generous, planned and regular giving enables the PCC to be good stewards and responsible in financial management of the household of the church. The PCC ensures that tax recoverable through the GiftAid scheme is claimed, as is VAT rebate from the Listed Places of Worship Scheme. The PCC also is clear sighted about procurement of services, contracts and insurance.

Legacies remain important. Recently the PCC has received a particularly significant legacy.

The PCC encourages all worshippers to consider leaving a legacy to the PCC for the life and mission of the church in this parish.

The Parish Support Fund (PSF) resources the costs of our clergy and the support given to each parish in the Diocese of Southwark. Each year parishes are invited to make a pledge to the PSF which is realistic, challenging, and generous. These pledges fund our shared mission in each community in every part of the Diocese. **In 2022 the Minster supported the Diocese with £80,000 and St George's with £11,684. Both churches have increased their pledges for 2023 to £81,600 (Minster) and £12,125 (St George's).**

# Minster DCC topics

The following points indicate areas of the Minster's life under consideration by the DCC:

- **Mission Action Plan** – the Diocese asks parishes to be able to articulate their plans for mission
- The future of the **Church Hall** (see page 16)
- **Stewardship** – how do we encourage giving to the Minster in terms of committed, regular and generous giving to the Church; through the offering of time and skills to the Church to serve different areas of our life together
- **Open House** – how we engage with the annual national 'Open House' scheme each September?
- **Eco Church** – how will we become an Eco-Church? Can we aim to complete the Bronze Level and then move on to the next?
- **Diocesan Anti-Racism Charter** – how do we foster a sense of community in which people of all ethnicities and heritage can be one in Christ?
- **Hospitality** – how are we an hospitable church? What does that look like? How will we deliver that?
- A **Civic Church** – what is the nature of the Civic Life of our town and Borough; what is our true role and vocation within that?

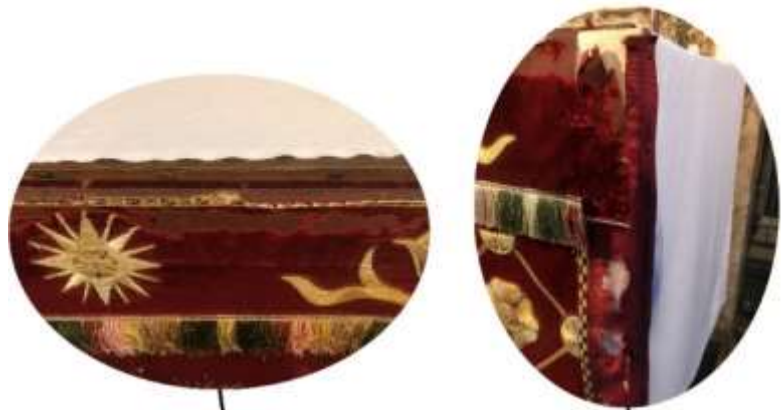
## Projects Pending

The Minster fabric (i.e. buildings, fixtures and fittings) needs constant care and attention. The **Quinquennial Inspection** of the church by our Inspecting Architect generates repair work and long-term attention to the building. The Churchwardens lead on this.

Other projects also will need attention in the new future. In no particular order there are various discreet projects that need attention, including:

- **Sound system** – further enhancements to the Minster sound system
- **Martin How plaque** – the installation, subject to Faculty approval to commemorate the late Martin How as a figure of note in Croydon and with national significance through his choral work and composition.
- **Organ** – there is outstanding work to be done on the Minster organ

- **Vestments/frontals** – some of the Minster vestments are showing their age, and some are not complete sets e.g. a chasuble without a matching stole. Two of the historic altar frontals – red and penitential - need professional attention (see photo)



- **Paschal Candle Stand** - The Paschal (Easter) Candle represents the triumph of the Resurrection and figures prominently in the Liturgy through Eastertide and used at Baptism and Funerals. Our current Paschal Candle stand is part of a set and, whilst functional, does not convey the unique dignity of the Paschal Candle. We could commission a



12 The red High Altar frontal is showing significant signs of deterioration

bespoke Candle stand for this significant item of Church furnishing.

None of these projects are inexpensive and will need either fund raising or donations, but they are potentially discreet projects. The task of the DCC will be to prioritise projects.

The major project that will need to be considered is the future of the Church Hall (see over). The challenge is how a major project – which it will be - is held alongside, and aids, the ongoing mission and ministry of the church.

# Church Hall

The Church Hall was opened in 1960. It is now very tired and in pressing need of attention.

In June 2019 a parish vision day identified that the PCC should consider the future of the hall as a Minster Centre that both serves the needs of the church and also enables the church to serve the community effectively.

A project of this scale (almost certainly in the millions of pounds) will require partnership working, which is something we welcome. The Diocese of Southwark has indicated the desire to locate the Croydon Episcopal Area Office at the Minster and conversations continue with the John Whitgift Foundation and other potential local partners.

For the project - which will need approval from the PCC, Archdeacon, other bodies, and the Chancellor of the Diocese - to be taken forward, the DCC will need to be clear sighted about our appetite for a major project such as this, and realistic about the potential costs and timescale.

A project of this significance will be a major commitment in terms of finance, time and energy.

We will also have to demonstrate why we want to undertake the project in the way we decide to undertake it. It also means we will have to be realistic about the way in which a Minster Centre would be used, what amenities it might have and how it relates to our charitable purpose.

We will need to draw on project management and fundraising advice and see the whole project in the round by considering how the whole site of the church and hall relate to each other.





# The Parish & Governance

The Parish of Croydon comprises Croydon Minster (St John the Baptist) and St George, Waddon. The Minster is the parish church and St George's, consecrated 1932 serves the Waddon estate. The two churches are very different but at their best complement each other's mission and ministry. In 2023 the Annual Meeting adopted a Scheme to clarify the governance within the parish.

The **Parochial Church Council (PCC)** is the body of trustees for the whole parish – the Minster and St George's. It has specified legal responsibilities under the Church Representation Rules. The PCC is an employer and has responsibilities for finance, policies and an overview of the whole mission of the parish.

The Minster and St George's each has a **District Church Council (DCC)**. The DCC has delegated responsibilities by the PCC and can focus on opportunities for 'the whole mission of the Church' in its own locality and district of the parish.

As part of the Croydon Central Deanery, the Parish elects four representatives to the **Deanery Synod**. These representatives also serve on the PCC and bring the wider perspective of the deanery to the parish and vice versa.

## **Parochial Church Council (PCC) membership**

The PCC is chaired by the Incumbent. Clergy licensed in the parish, Churchwardens and Deputy Wardens are ex officio members of the PCC. Other lay members are elected directly. Elected parish representatives on the Deanery Synod also serve on the PCC.

*Members elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting:* Sheila Campbell (G) (term ends 2025), Jamie Carswell (M) (terms ends 2026) Elaine Cooper (M) (term ends 2026), Sandra Craig (M) (term ends 2025), Lucy Graham (G) (term ends 2025), Carol Milgate (G) (term ends 2027), Debbie Miller (Hon Treasurer) (term ends 2026), Anne Tanner (G) (term ends 2025), *Deanery Synod Members (2023-2026)* Deanna Blake (G), Denise Mead (M), Susan Williams (M), Stephen Willmer (M),

## **District Church Council (DCC) membership**

The Minster and St George's each have a DCC. The DCC comprises clergy, ex officio officers and PCC members for the Minster District of the Parish, and up to four directly elected representatives to the DCC. For the Minster three person have been elected: George Ganaraj, Sue Kibler, David Young.

# Policies & Practice

Policies are not to be kept in filing cabinets and forgotten: we seek to embody in action what we say in principle. This is a priority for the PCC and to be embraced by staff and volunteers alike.

The PCC treats **safeguarding** with the utmost importance. Policies and practices reflect this. The PCC's safeguarding and domestic violence policies draw from the Diocese of Southwark best practice 'A Safer Church'. The Minster ensures safeguarding training is kept up to date. Choir chaperones are used to safeguard under 18s in our choirs. We embed a culture of safeguarding of the young and vulnerable at all levels.

The PCC has a policy on **GDPR** (data protection) and undertakes to use all personal information responsibly and only for the clear purposes set out.

The PCC has also developed a **Risk Register** and **Staff Handbook**, which includes the Communications Policy.

The PCC pays due regard to the Diocese of Southwark's Anti-Racism Charter. Through our life as a church we seek to model the diversity of the human race and kingdom of God.

# Clergy, staff & lay officers

## College of Priests

Priest in Charge: The Revd Canon Dr Andrew Bishop (appointed 2018)

Associate Vicar at St George's Waddon: The Revd David Adamson-Hill (appointed 2021)

Associate Vicar at Croydon Minster: VACANCY

**Churchwardens:** Arlene Esdaile, Stephen Willmer

## Deputy Wardens:

Serving Croydon Minster: Melvyn Mead,

Serving St George's Church: Mark Mason, Dave Milgate

## Ministry

Children and Families' Catechist, the Revd Alice Bishop (Permanent Deacon)

Reader (LLM), Elaine Cooper, based at Croydon Minster

## Music

Director of Music, Justin Miller

Sub-Organist, George Inscoe

Singing Development Lead, Sophie Garbisu

## Ministry Support

Administrator and Verger, Denise Mead

PA to the Priest in Charge and Communications Officer, Trish Kiercek

Minster Education Officer, David Morgan



