**St Luke’s and St Mark’s Downham**

Catford (Southend) and Downham Team

Team Vicar: Rev. Nick Walsh

**Children and Families Outreach Worker Job Description**

Responsible to: Team Vicar and DCC

Place of Work: St Luke’s Downham

Hours of work: 35 hours – the role will require flexibility including a commitment to Sunday mornings and other weekend working, some evening sessions, church festivals and school holidays.

Salary: £22,000 per annum (this could increase dependant on further funding and other relevant factors) plus pension contribution and expenses.

Status: Funding for this role has been secured for 3 years. The role is subject to 6 months’ probation and an annual review.

# **Background**

The District Church Council (DCC) of St Luke’s Downham is seeking to employ someone to enthusiastically develop and enhance our ministry to children, parents, and carers (and potentially youth ministry depending on skills, passion and capacity), enabling all to encounter God’s love. A vital part of this role will be to give significant focus to developing our outreach, discipleship and support of children with autism and special educational needs, and their families.

St Luke’s Downham ([www.stlukesdownham.org.uk](http://www.stlukesdownham.org.uk)) is one of four churches in the Catford (Southend) and Downham Team ministry and shares a vicar with St Mark’s North Downham. The parish of Catford and Downham has a population of around 28,770 and is in the top 7% most deprived parishes in the Church of England. With child poverty and single parent households being particularly high in the parish.

The parish is located in the London Borough of Lewisham and St Luke’s is located on the border of two of the most deprived wards in the borough – Downham and Whitefoot. Lewisham has the highest prevalence of children with Autism Spectrum Condition known to schools of all local authorities in England.

St Luke’s is a small but active church with an average Sunday attendance of 30 adults and 10 children, the majority of whom are from BME backgrounds. Many of our congregation are living in poverty (working or otherwise) and many are vulnerable adults.

St Luke’s has an excellent track record of community engagement and a very good reputation in the local community, with the church open six days a week for the community. Our projects include; the Front Room Club, a café style drop-in for people who are isolated, which runs three days a week; a Parish Nursing project; a toddler group; and a Senior Social Club.

**The Opportunities:**

St Luke’s is very well placed for outreach and growth, with our reputation, our connections, our history of trying new things, and our existing ministries. Not only could this project be locally beneficial and lead to church growth, particularly amongst some often-excluded groups, but there is also an opportunity for wider impact across the diocese and wider church – through developing materials, training and sharing good practice.

**The Role:**

The role will have three main strands of activities, services and outputs:

**Strand One:** Building up and improving our existing work with Children and Families. St Luke's is already undertaking significant work with children which this project would seek to build upon. This will involve:

* ***Volunteers:*** Training, equipping, managing, and recruiting volunteers for our work with children and families
* ***Sunday morning service:*** Providing input into planning and delivery of our all age services and Sunday School; and improving our welcome of children with special educational needs and their families.
* ***Busy Bees Toddler group:*** to take leadership of the toddler group and explore increased Christian content, as well as relationship building with children and families.
* ***Messy Church at St Mark's:*** to assist in the monthly Messy Church at St Mark's and to link this with other projects.
* ***Front Room Club:*** To work with the student volunteers from Conisborough College Special Educational Needs unit to help them with their volunteering and learning, as well as offering a chance to explore the Christian faith if they are interested.

**Strand Two:** Exploring new opportunities for outreach to children and their families, especially those with special educational needs. This will involve:

* ***School Visits:*** There are three primary schools, two secondary schools and one Special Educational Needs schools near to St Luke's, of which four are readily open to Christian input. Initially our view is that this is likely to involve lessons/assemblies around Christmas and Easter.
* ***Fresh Expression of Church:*** A service specially designed and presented for children with Special Educational Needs and their families. Regularity would be dependent on staffing, volunteers and additional research into the preferences for local families, however we would be aiming for at least once a month.
* ***Other groups as the need and interest arises:*** The exact pattern and shape of these groups would depend on those who we engage with and the skills of the staff member and volunteers. However we would envisage groups such as a coffee morning with Bible study for parents, afterschool activities and Christian exploration courses (e.g. Alpha) geared towards children with Autism and Special Educational Needs.

**Strand Three:** Creating new resources and raising awareness of existing resources for the wider church to welcome and support children with special educational needs/autism and their families. This will involve:

* ***Research:*** into other groups and projects reaching out to and nurturing the faith of children with Autism and Special Educational Needs and sharing good practice
* ***Network:*** Exploring establishing (or becoming part of) a network of groups and projects working with children with Autism and Special Educational Needs and their families to share ideas and good practice
* ***Resources:*** Developing and piloting resources for wider use and providing training and consultation for churches and Christian groups exploring this area of ministry

**Additional Expectations:** The Children and Families worker will also be expected to work with the Vicar and ministry team on the following:

* Involvement in local community groups and activities as appropriate (e.g. Local Autism groups, festivals, etc)
* Overseeing the safeguarding policy and procedures for the church
* Contributing to the online presence of the church
* Planning, preparation and delivery of special events (Church festivals, etc)
* Involvement in the governance aspects of church life as appropriate (e.g. APCM)

# **Personal Attributes, Skills and Experience**

* A personal faith in Jesus Christ demonstrated through regular reading of Scripture, prayer, giving and church involvement
* A longing to see people from every walk of life discover the love of Jesus and a living faith in him.
* Willing to get behind the vision of St Luke’s to be Jesus Shaped ([www.jesusshapedpeople.net](http://www.jesusshapedpeople.net)) and a source of life for the local community
* A proven track record of children’s ministry leadership, schools ministry or equivalent transferable skills (voluntary or paid).
* Experience/understanding of Christian faith and ministry in areas of urban social housing and other socially disadvantaged areas.
* Experience/understanding of working with people with Special Educational Needs
* Experience/Understanding of ethnic diversity, especially Christian faith in African and Caribbean cultures
* Experience/Understanding of the Church of England and a willingness to work within its structures and values
* A pioneer and resilient heart who enjoys a challenge and finding creative solutions
* Reliable and dependable able to work effectively both individually and as a team
* The character, confidence and maturity to build meaningful relationships across a wide age range; responding sensitively to the diversity within our church family and wider community.
* A team player; someone who is able to identify talents and then enthuse and inspire volunteers in the ministries of the church.
* Willing to serve practically and ‘get stuck in’ (chairs will need moving and washing up will need doing!).
* An eagerness to learn, able to constructively receive and apply feedback.
* Able to communicate through a variety of mediums in language which people can understand
* Ability to write regular reports to our funders
* Administratively, organisationally and technologically capable

**Occupational requirement:** There is a genuine occupational requirement for the post holder to be a practising Christian committed to the life and worship of St Luke’s. The post is subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure and satisfactory references.

There may be some restriction on holidays at particular times of the year, for example if significant events relating to children and families have been arranged during the period leading up to Christmas or over Easter.

**Application and Interview Process:**

To apply send a CV and covering letter setting out why you believe that you are suitable for this role to Rev. Nick Walsh at revnickwalsh@gmail.com or 233 Bellingham Road, London, SE6 1EH by midnight on Friday 25th January 2020.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to visit St Luke’s for a Sunday service followed by lunch with a chance to meet key members of the congregation which will be followed by a formal interview panel. Proposed dates would be 2nd or 9th February or 1st March but this can be discussed.

Email or telephone conversations and informal visits to the Parish in advance would be welcomed.