Thank you for your interest in the role of Vicar of St Nicholas, Perivale, in the Diocese of London. This is a caring church with a deep commitment to growing in faith and serving the wider community. You will see all of that depth and variety reflected in the parish profile. Building on this, we are seeking to appoint someone who will lead and encourage the worshipping community as it discerns and lives the vision for the next chapter. In consultation with the patrons, The Society for the Maintenance of the Faith, we are praying for a caring and compassionate leader, who will work in collaboration with others, developing and sustaining a healthy culture where leadership is shared and accountable. I am delighted that you are exploring the possibility of applying for this role and I want you to know that there are many of us here in the Willesden Episcopal Area who are praying for those seeking to discern God’s calling in this area.

If appointed, you would serve a Diocese that has an audacious and ambitious vision to see every Londoner able to encounter the love of God in Christ. To serve this vision, we have committed ourselves to develop churches that engender leadership that will nurture people of all ages and backgrounds to live out their faith among those with whom they do life Sunday to Saturday. We want to foster the emergence of a church that is visibly and meaningfully loving her neighbours. We wish to see a church landscape of ever-increasing varied configuration with new worshipping communities emerging in new and different ways alongside inherited ministry within parishes. We also hold to the aspiration of building church communities that will reflect the rich diversity of our city, welcoming all people across ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritages, and safe places where we enable younger generations to flourish alongside others.

Here in the Willesden Episcopal Area, we have been blessed with a rich diversity in theological and liturgical traditions. These have come with some remarkable examples of partnership and mutual support in mission and ministry across church traditions. We aspire to enable innovative expressions of ministry, actively partnering with other parishes, our schools, chaplaincies and Fresh Expressions of Church. It has been encouraging to explore and develop new opportunities for the resourcing and revitalisation of mission and ministry across the Area.

St Nicholas’ next priest will need the imagination, vitality, and commitment to attend to the expressed aspiration of the church for missional engagement with the whole parish, sharing the transformative power of the Gospel. As you discern whether you are called to minister here, you will need a healthy dose of enthusiasm about being part of this fluid landscape, anchored around a community formed around the Eucharist. You will need to come with considerable emotional and cultural intelligence, deep spiritual resilience, and a demonstrable passion for issues of social and racial justice.

Inevitably, there is an element of challenge to this venture, including the need to develop and release more capacity and establish stronger bonds across the rich mosaic of life experiences in Perivale. We are trusting God’s calling and are committed to the emerging vision of hope and flourishing expressed by many at St Nicholas’.

For the right candidate, I will also invite them to take on responsibility as Lead ADO for the Episcopal Area. This is part of our commitment to better resource our shared mission and ministry. It is a role of strategic importance, especially as we seek to harness and release particular gifts brought by those God sends to us in Willesden.
If this is something that you find exciting and daunting, then perhaps God is calling you to this role. Please keep reading, and if you need more insight into St Nicholas’ and the Episcopal Area, do get in touch with me or my colleagues for an informal chat:
Ven. Catherine Pickford, Archdeacon of Northolt: archdeacon.northolt@london.anglican.org
Revd David Neno, Area Dean of Ealing Deanery: david.neno@london.anglican.org

Yours in Christ’s service,

[Signature]

Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy
Bishop of Willesden
St. Nicholas’ church family in Perivale has been actively seeking to be transformed as God guides us and shapes us for mission in the twenty-first century. In November 2008 Ray Simpson visited us from Holy Island bringing a message that has inspired our vision for new life at St Nicholas, Perivale: being ‘Urban Bethlehem’. This echoed the promise of the ‘little town of Bethlehem, “small but beautifully formed”. This vision brought an appreciation that growth was not just about ‘size’ but also about maturity, in depth of faith, strength and character. Our new building stands in the midst of residential and commercial sites, representing God’s continual presence within this world and concern for every person and aspect of creation. We recognise our church is on the frontline of Perivale and West London and seek to be open to ways in which God will meet the needs of our twenty-first century world through our worship and service.

1. The Charism of St. Nicholas Perivale

Our fourth century patron Saint Nicholas is regarded as a protector by so many different groups in society, from children to repentant thieves, and his comprehensive commitment to care for others is an inspiration for our purpose and mission. We have identified key elements of the charism of our church, in terms of our past, present and future:

- **Eucharistic living**: the mass is the centre of our worship at St.Nicholas, and its weekly celebration speaks to us of being chosen, blessed, broken and given in loving service in our world.

- **Creative and contemplative worship**: the lectionary and liturgy of the Church of England give us the foundation to shape creative expressions of prayer and worship in Sunday services and throughout our week at home, at work and in the community. We are blessed with members of our church family whose gifts in music and the arts bring energy and deep reflection to the ministries of worship through the seasons of the church’s year.

- **Generous and just service**: the modest resources of our church are always available to be shared with those in need, and our collective voices are raised to speak out against injustice and exploitation, locally, nationally and globally.

- **Spiritual refuge**: our church seeks to offer fellowship and compassion to people without judgements or demands and with no respect for privilege. We seek to work against barriers that inhibit people in our society according to features such as disability, ethnicity and gender.

The charism of St. Nicholas, Perivale has constant connections to the charism of our patron saint, but also evolves in new ways as circumstances and needs change. We are eagerly
anticipating fresh expressions of the charism in the years ahead as our new priest leads us forward.

2. History and Community
Perivale is a community of highly diverse peoples in residential and industrial settings. Social and multi-occupancy housing is scattered across the parish, alongside multi-generational homes and luxury flats. The geography reflects this with the beauty of Horsenden Hill and the green corridor to Perivale Park and the River Brent contrasted with the environmental blight of the A40 and Hangar Lane corridor and the strategic light industrial zone. Rather than an obvious centre, there are two distinct shopping parades in Medway Parade and Bilton Road, with a string of community hubs on Horsenden Lane South: Perivale Residents Association & Impact theatre; Perivale Community centre & Perivale Hive (library); and Horsenden Farm. Our church location is at a boundary point, the interface between the residential and industrial zones; an opportunity to be a presence, touching the lives of those who live and work here.

Recent censuses show that Perivale has become a highly diverse multi-cultural district and likely to remain so. The church is delighted to be serving and caring in such a place, with its range of different shops and restaurants, and the encounters we can have across different faiths and denominations. Migrants have been settling in Perivale for generations, and most of our congregation have a migration story to tell, mostly from the Caribbean islands or West Africa. In recent decades, migrants to the area have come from Eastern European countries, or Arab-speaking nations, like Iraq or Syria. See appendix A for ethnic and religious data for Perivale from the censuses of 2011 and 2021.

St. Nicholas Perivale grew out of the ancient church of St Mary, which was built to serve the rural area of Perivale in the 13th Century. Industrialisation brought work to the area and the population grew and spread. The district church of St Nicholas was formed in 1935. In 1965 a new church building was consecrated and the existing building became the church hall. St Mary’s church was deconsecrated in 1976 and is now maintained by The Friends of St Mary’s Perivale. After many years of praying, planning and dogged determination on the part of our previous Rector Andrew Corsie and Reverend Valerie Aitken (later to become Rector) and the church family, St Nicholas Church, Hall and Rectory were demolished in 2013. We spent 2-years sharing a church building with the United Reformed Church at Holy Trinity Medway where we met some new people who have stayed with us. The new St Nicholas church building was dedicated at the feast of Epiphany in 2016.
3. Church Leadership

Leadership at St. Nicholas is always considered to be shared amongst the church family, under the overall direction of our priest. For many years we chose to call our core group a ‘Church Leadership Team’ and had smaller teams led by CLT members for all the key aspects of church life. We have now returned to the more conventional title of a Parochial Church Council (PCC), but the spirit of distributed leadership remains. There are two lay commissioned ministers and two wardens, with one person taking both roles. Church members undertake the usual roles of treasurer and secretary, but there is an external bookkeeper and auditor. Other members of the PCC take care of hospitality and pastoral care, and some of the team are actively involved in planning the seasons of worship in the church year, with the leader of the Music Group. The PCC has taken a very active role in the development and outworking of the church’s Mission Action Plan, which currently features five key areas that define our community life and service.

4. Worship

The church of St. Nicholas, Perivale, is a worshipping community throughout the week. The centre of our Sunday services is our celebration of the Eucharist. Church members participate in the service by leading the intercessions, taking the roles of Eucharistic ministers, reading the scriptures, playing in the music group, as well as the energetic singing and praying throughout. Some members also preach occasionally. The seasons of the Church’s year shape our calendar of services and the lectionary is used for our readings, which are the basis for our preachers’ sermons. We have welcomed visiting speakers to our worship service to bring specialist knowledge on various topics and to bring new ideas for us to learn from. We are open to different ways of leading intercession. We use visual displays and communal activities during times of teaching, prayer and meditation to enhance the themes of the different liturgical seasons and feast days; to make them more meaningful and accessible to all. The extensive open space of our building gives us opportunities to shape the physical layout in different ways, and we have regularly re-ordered the church for Advent, Lent and Holy Week.

Pentecost Sunday 2023.
St Nicholas has an accomplished music group, with several experienced musicians and songwriters, under the longstanding leadership of our music group leader. The music is a mixture of contemporary and more traditional songs. Members of our music group write songs that we sing in church and have written arrangements for the mass settings that we sing each week. Some of these songs have been heard nationally, and our version of the Lord’s Prayer, written by one of the music group musicians, was sung at the Albert Hall by the Kingdom Choir in 2018.

Evening Reflection on All Saints Day

During the working week, we meet online three times for Daily Prayer. The time varies with the day giving a morning, a lunchtime with Bible study, and an evening opportunity to gather. On Thursday mornings there has been a meeting at the church for gentle physical exercise, refreshment and worship since the building opened.
5. **Our Mission Action Plan**

There are currently five areas of focus for the development of St. Nicholas’ Church, Perivale, modelled on the Marks of Mission:

---

**Teach and Nurture**

Our Sunday services have an important teaching slot each week, with sermons that largely follow the lectionary readings set by the Church of England. Three major seasons of the year, Advent, Lent and Holy Week, regularly have special themes that are worked through between the priest and worship leaders. There are often short courses during Advent and/or Lent, sometimes following a book recommended by the Archbishops or bishops.

St. Nicholas, Perivale, seeks to grow as an inter-generational community. Although there are a small number of children in the church family at the moment, there have been times when more young people have worshipped and embarked on their journeys of faith with us, through baptism, first communion, junior church sessions, and confirmation. We continue to provide Junior Church sessions during the Sunday morning service for school-aged children. We pray that renewed work with children and young people will be a feature of our mission soon.

St Nicholas seeks to build our relationships with local schools. School trips and assemblies have been facilitated to enhance the children’s understanding of the Christian faith.
Respond in Loving Service

There are three pastoral assistants who visit the sick and the lonely within the community. The team provides support to those who are dying and comfort those who have lost their loved ones. The pastoral assistants follow up contact with those not able to come along to services, those who may be going through difficulties and who may need companionship. The pastoral assistants have led morning prayers and are active in the life of the Church. There are two lay commissioned ministers who preach, lead services, take Communion by Extension and are involved in outreach and youth work.

The hospitality at St Nicholas is firmly based on "all are welcome" to our worship services and other events. There has been positive feedback from visitors that they have been very welcomed, some returned to join our regular services or are comfortable to come whenever they can. The hospitality team support the regular services with refreshments. There are occasional social events inviting neighbours and the local community. The hospitality received is a significant strength of the church. All are welcome in this place. On Thursday people meet for exercise, coffee and a Bible study. There is mix of people attending from within the church and those in the local neighbourhood.

St Nicholas hosts a weekly distribution venue for Ealing Foodbank, with volunteers from the church, the wider Christian community in Ealing and welfare assistants from Ealing Council. Having been running since September 2022 we are seeing this increase our visibility in the community, with some joining us for services and social events. We seek to serve all who come with generosity, a warm smile, refreshments and the opportunity to connect with other services as appropriate. We are connected with Ealing Churches Winter Night Shelter (ECWNS). In the past we have regularly hosted homeless guests once a week for a period over the winter months. Church members cook and serve meals, socialise with the guests, provide oversight through the night, and clean and tidy up the next morning.

Fight Injustice

Serving the community around us through the Foodbank and Night Shelter make us acutely aware of unjust structures in our society. We are also very conscious of discrimination and disadvantage that has blighted and impaired lives whose class, disability, ethnicity or gender have marked them as ‘other’ in society and the church. There are also issues of injustice in the community that impact on church life in practical ways, with particular challenges in our location on the edge of a small industrial estate. The church leadership have considered it prudent to focus our commitment to a small number of causes at any one time. Over a year ago we decided to start with issues that faced our older people in the church family, most of whom are Black women of African-Caribbean heritage. We were shocked when national investigations revealed the Windrush Scandal in 2017-18, but many of our sisters knew of the problems from their own acquaintances.

In 2022 we committed to listening more to the ‘Elders’ and a group was started. We found they had a lot to say and realised that they had so much knowledge and experience with no outlet to have a voice in our church community. A ‘Friday group’ was started and continues; people come
and have lunch and speak of their experience coming to England: how they coped; what they faced as migrants; and how they felt about the drastic changes they faced. There have also been opportunities to offer the members practical help in aspects that particularly affect senior citizens: benefits; wills and probate; mobility support and wellbeing services.

The group’s leader, a long standing church person says: “These are stories that need to be recorded as a legacy and inspiration to those that follow and are now 1st, 2nd and 3rd generation born here, and indeed to those of any people calling Britain ‘home’. Sharing these stories with our White brothers and sisters is important in building our church, local community, and wider society, helping people to truly understand and appreciate where this generation are coming from”. On Sunday 25th June 2023, on the 75th anniversary of the Windrush voyage, the ‘Elders’ led a service of reflection and remembrance; it was a triumph of their spirit and resilience, and of God’s constant sustaining love for them and the church family.

Windrush Sunday 2023

Plans are being made for members of the group to visit local schools and share their experience with student, many of whom now study the experiences of migrants of the Windrush Generation in their history classes. The group has grown in confidence and their meetings have attracted folk from the wider community.

Safeguard Creation
Having developed the rear garden, attention and funds were sought to bring green to Wadsworth
Road by rebuilding the garden at the front of church. The aim was not just to bring green back to an industrial street, which is valuable, in and of itself, but also to act as a focal point where we can highlight what scripture says about creation and our responsibility. It also demonstrates to the Council that we want to be part of the solution to improving the industrial/residential interface. Church members have also helped LAGER Can to clear litter in the local area and further afield in the borough.

Proclaim the Good News
Each week we pray for a different street in the parish, covering the whole area in a year. For the last 5 years each house has received a card from the church, inviting prayer and welcoming people to our church community. We have walked the streets talking with our neighbours, introducing St. Nicholas to many for the first time. We have been a presence at the Perivale Festival in recent years, with a stall where we can meet the community; we look forward to that event returning. An annual community carol service has been held outside the church with as many neighbours attending as church members.

6. Church Buildings & Rectory

The main part of the building is an open space that seats about 200 people. Within the worship area is a baptismal pool. The main worship area can be split up with a sliding door to create two smaller areas if needed.

On the main entrance on the west side there is the office, vestry and a chapel in the foyer. There is a room at the rear of the west side that can be divided into two smaller rooms by a sliding screen. The church has a small to medium size garden. There is a modern kitchen which is used for hospitality purposes. The whole church ground floor has underfloor heating. There is modern lighting throughout plus fitted sound system. The church has its own cross tower with light. The church occupies the ground floor of the building with housing association flats above.

The Rectory

This is a modern eco-friendly four-bedroom house with private parking and garden. There are privately owned houses on Federal Road and in Bethlehem Close.

7. Church Attendance
The recent updated electoral roll gives an average 55 people listed. Recent average number of Sunday communicants is 32, Easter 48 and Christmas 55. Average number of Baptisms in the last 3 years is 1 (per year). Average number of Confirmation candidates in the last 3 years is 2 (per year). Marriages - 0. Funerals in church - 1. Funerals at crematorium - 2.

8. Financial Information

The church has been able to meet its financial running costs. St Nicholas contributes an agreed smaller percentage of the full common fund. We recognise other churches subsidise our common fund giving and we are grateful. We seek to increase our percentage year on year. We engage regularly with the church community on reflecting on discipleship giving and tithing, in responding to God’s blessings and purposes through the life of the church. Copies of annual accounts are available.

9. Our New Incumbent

For some thirty years the journey of St. Nicholas, Perivale, has been inspired and directed by priests whose spiritual faith and wisdom has given life to the charism of our small church. They have recognised and valued the gifts and talents of the church family and sought to empower us to live spirit-led lives through worship, love and service; our new priest will continue to do that. We pray that our new incumbent’s faith and work will bring expressions of the charism that both build on the work that God has already begun here and also develop new aspects of being ‘urban Bethlehem’ in west London. Their teaching, prayer and worship will nourish and support us as we continue our journey.

The older members of St. Nicholas have been inspired and energised by their recent exploration of their migrant journeys to England, and their involvement in the church has flourished. Our new priest will have both understanding and experience of diverse cultures and be able to develop this work. Our younger members need innovation to inspire and energise their participation in the church and attract others. Our new priest will listen and build connections with the upcoming generation and younger families.

The church building is a large flexible space that should be used more effectively to serve our mission. It needs better access and the new incumbent will lead the way in securing improved support from local politicians and businesses to make that possible. Local communities and leaders should be able to engage with our priest and other church leaders in tackling important local and national social justice issues and establishing the building as a site for public service and spiritual renewal.

10. Poem From the Church’s Resident Poet & Songwriter
Parish pledge: Tomorrow is Today

Our vision of tomorrow
Is our vision of today
A vision where as one we pray
A vision of new life and tradition
Where young and old make a difference
A vision of freedom where all can reason in God's name
Where we come from many places
But our direction is the same
We don't walk in vain
We walk in the Lord's lane and remain

Through sun and through rain
Through bliss and through storm
With less or with more
Standing for a cause
Not for applause
Rest assured but never pause
Slowly but surely we journeyed to Bethlehem
Following the guiding star
By foot, by train and by car
Now here we are.

St. Nicholas Perivale Affirmation of Faith

During a Sunday service about seven years ago we spent time thinking about what we believe and want to demonstrate to others. The ideas were collected and expressed in our version of an Affirmation of Faith:

We believe in one God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
We believe all people are created equal and should be treated with respect no matter what their age, gender, beliefs, origins, ethnicity or ability.
We believe that God has placed us here for a purpose. He is with us in our darkest hour, loves us unconditionally, and wants us to love, honour and cherish each other.
We believe the cross is there to remind us of Jesus’ sacrifice, so that we might be forgiven for our sins and through the cross find redemption.
Our church is a home for all,
We believe in building community through prayer, compassion and hope.
We believe in the God of infinite possibilities who helps us see beyond the rim of limitations.
We believe that Christ lived among us, died and rose again; he ascended to heaven to be with his Father and we believe He will come back again and bring his Kingdom to this place.
Appendix

Demographics

Perivale Age data 2011 & 2021 (values)

Perivale Ethnic Data 2011 & 2021 (value)