Chaplain, Merton College, Oxford

Merton College, University of Oxford, is seeking to appoint an experienced priest to the post of Chaplain following the appointment of The Revd. Canon Dr Simon Jones as Dean of Lincoln.

Merton College was founded in 1264 by Walter de Merton, and is one of the oldest colleges in Oxford. It was the first fully self-governing college in the University of Oxford and was originally founded for twenty fellows, with undergraduates being formally admitted in the early 1380s. Over the centuries, many eminent scholars and cultural leaders have called Merton home including three Nobel Prize winners and an Abel Prize winner. Merton College has a strong commitment to excellence in research and teaching across a range of subjects in the Humanities, Social Sciences and the Sciences. The College community currently comprises around 590 students (320 undergraduates and 270 postgraduates), and over 220 staff and Fellows (mainly academic staff).

The College is a charity whose objects are, for the public benefit, to advance education, learning, research, and religion through the provision of a college. The College’s aims for the public benefit are to achieve the highest outcomes in education, learning and research at national and international level; and to maintain the College Chapel as a place of public worship pursuing the highest standards of liturgical, homiletical, and musical excellence. The Chapel and its activities are therefore core to the work of the College. The Chapel dates back to the end of the 13th century and stands at the heart of the College as a witness to Christian worship over almost 750 years. Today the Chapel is home to a lively and diverse Christian community which continues this faithful offering of worship with daily services during term time.

The Chaplain engages widely with resident members of the College and staff, with College Officers, with Organ Scholars and members of the Choir and Girl Choristers. In addition, the Chaplain engages with clergy in other colleges, the University and beyond (including visiting preachers), with alumni of the College, clergy and congregations of the parishes where the College is patron, visitors to the Chapel, and individuals and groups within the Church of England.

The College strives to create a diverse, welcoming, inclusive and supportive community in which its students can thrive.

I. Introduction to the role

The Chaplain is a key College Officer who directs and oversees the provision of services and the conduct of divine worship in the College Chapel under the College Statutes and in accordance with the rites of the Church of England; oversees Chapel music and the activities of the Choir and Girl Choristers and provides
pastoral care to the whole College community, working with the welfare team, as appropriate.

The Chaplain manages a core Chapel team which includes the Director of Music, the staff of the Chapel Office and the Associate Chaplain and also convenes the College’s Chapel & Patronage Committee. The Chaplain makes an important contribution to wider College life, for example by serving as a member of the Governing Body and on a number of College committees. Working with the Development Office, the Chaplain also supports alumni relations, and where appropriate donor relations and fundraising activity in support of the College’s purposes. To support the Chaplain’s work, the Chapel Office & Choir Manager acts as the Chaplain’s PA.

As well as being in sympathy with, and strongly supportive of, the College’s outstanding musical tradition, it is important that the Chaplain should be able competently to sing the relevant parts of the liturgy.

II. Chaplain: Main responsibilities

1. Strategy

The Chaplain sustains the Chapel as the driving force in the College’s fulfilment of its religious purposes. The Chaplain works with relevant committees, Fellows and College Officers to develop a strategy for the Chapel that fits with the College’s overall strategic ambition and priorities, including those that relate to equality and diversity, and sustainability.

2. Chapel

The Chaplain is responsible to the Governing Body for leadership and oversight of all activities of the Chapel including for the programme of worship and life in faith nurtured by the Chapel, ensuring that it remains a warm and welcoming place for all, and fostering an intellectually and musically enriching experience.

Chapel life is supported by a team of student chapel officers and livestreamers, who work under the supervision of the Verger. Members of the College community are also involved in the life of the Chapel as readers, intercessors and servers.

Chapel services are currently held at the following times during term:

- Sundays: 9:00am Morning Prayer or College Eucharist and 5:45pm Choral Evensong or Choral Eucharist;
- Monday: 8:15am Morning Prayer and 6:00pm Choral Vespers;
- Tuesday: 8:15am Morning Prayer; 12.30pm Eucharist and 6:15pm Choral Evensong;
- Wednesday: 8:15am Morning Prayer and 6:15pm Choral Evensong;
- Thursday: 8:15am Morning Prayer and 6:15pm Choral Evensong; and
- Friday: 8:15am Morning Prayer.

Services in Chapel are well attended. The average attendance at the Sunday evening service, for example, is 125.

Special services throughout the year include those for: the annual commemoration of All Souls, Remembrance Sunday, the Advent,
Christmas and Epiphany Carol Services, Candlemas, two services for the Commemoration of Benefactors, Ash Wednesday, Ascension Day and Corpus Christi.

Some services also take place during the vacations, including a number sung by the Girl Choristers (who follow the school rather than university calendar), carol services in December, and for Gaudies and the annual alumni weekend.

In an average year, there are also between 6-10 weddings (or services of thanksgiving and blessing following civil marriage or civil partnership), a small number of infant baptisms and a larger number of adult baptisms and confirmations, and occasional memorial services and funerals in the College Chapel.

Responsibilities include:

- Overseeing a programme for divine worship and regularly conducting services in the College Chapel;
- Preparing members of the community for baptism and confirmation;
- Inviting and hosting visiting preachers and speakers (including of different faiths);
- Overseeing and hosting a programme of discussion groups and other activities (principally during the academic terms) which enhance the community and social activities connected to the Chapel;
- Organising events and trips for the Chapel community including the annual pilgrimage/retreat;
- Overseeing arrangements for visitors to the Chapel;
- Working with the Estates Bursar and other colleagues to maintain the fabric of the Chapel; and
- Overseeing and encouraging the furtherance of developing interfaith work from the Chapel.

While the Chaplain has responsibility for all aspects of Chapel life, the College’s Bylaws make provision for the appointment of Junior or Associate Chaplains to assist with the Chaplain’s duties.

3. Music

The Chaplain oversees the provision of music in the Chapel, which is organised by the Director of Music.

Merton’s Chapel Choir consists of thirty undergraduate and graduate students at the University reading for degrees in a variety of subjects. Since the establishment of Merton’s Choral Foundation in 2008, its choir has gained an international reputation for offering the best of choral music through tours, recordings and broadcasts. The choir’s annual festival, Passiontide at Merton, has an established place in Oxford’s musical calendar. In 2016 Merton became the first College in Oxford to admit girls into its Choral Foundation. The twenty-four girl choristers attend many different schools across Oxford and beyond, and rehearse at Merton on Mondays and Wednesdays during school term-time. In addition, the College aims to have two Organ Scholars at any time.
In support of the provision of music in the Chapel, the Chaplain, working with the Director of Music, is responsible for:

- Planning a programme for the College Choir and Girl Choristers, including in regular and special services, tours, concerts, and recordings;
- Assisting in the recruitment of members of the College Choir, including the assessment of applicants for Choral and Organ Scholarships and taking part in activities that promote these schemes; and
- Ensuring satisfactory safeguarding arrangements for the Girl Choristers.

The College Choir and Girl Choristers tour each year with the Director of Music and are often joined by the Chaplain.

4. **Livings**

The College has twenty Livings. There are normally two or three vacancies each year. Where the College is the sole patron, the Chaplain usually runs the appointment process, which includes liaison with the parish and Diocese, advertising, shortlisting, interviewing, and presenting candidates.

Where appropriate and possible, the Chaplain may provide support and offer the College’s friendship to parishes. This may include covering a Sunday for College parishes during a vacancy, visiting two or three livings a year to preach, and arranging parish visits to Merton.

5. **Pastoral care**

The Chaplain is expected to make a significant pastoral contribution within the College community. This responsibility includes:

- In confidence, listening and offering pastoral support, and giving advice where it is sought, to all members of the College community who seek it, of whatever faith or none;
- Creating opportunities for inter-faith dialogue in College and with the local community;
- Creating and leading opportunities from the Chapel to support the College’s co-curricular plans, including by leading a programme of community and outreach activity for students;
- Being an active participant in the social and community life of the College; and
- Working collaboratively with the College’s welfare team, as appropriate.

6. **Leadership and management**

The Chaplain is expected to take a leadership role within the Chapel which includes:

- Line management responsibility for the Director of Music, the Chapel Office & Choir Manager, the Verger, and the Associate Chaplain, including ensuring that all Chapel staff have clear objectives, work together as a team in a collaborative culture, and benefit from opportunities of review and personal development;
- Inspiring, motivating, and steering the Chapel team with a clear vision of priorities and how they will be achieved;
- Ensuring that the Chapel is appropriately structured and staffed, with clear regular communication and sharing of information; and
• Ensuring that procedures are documented, policies properly approved, documented and reviewed, and that the Chapel and Choir plays its full part in the effective use of College systems and processes.

The College is undertaking a review of its welfare structures. Currently the College has designated the Chaplain as the College Officer who will line manage the Head of Welfare.

7. Financial management

With the support of the Finance Bursar, the Chaplain is expected to develop the annual and multi-year plans and financial proposals for the Chapel and to ensure that income and expenditure are managed to budget and within other appropriate authorities.

8. External relations

The Chaplain supports the College’s network of relationships outside Merton, including by:

• Representing the College on any relevant intercollegiate or University committees;
• Fostering and maintaining professional links with counterparts in other colleges and the University; and
• Where appropriate, contributing to the Diocese of Oxford, the national life of the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion, for example through service on a Church body or committee, and where not in conflict with the Chaplain’s other duties.

9. Alumni relations and fundraising

The Chaplain is a member of the Development and Alumni Relations Committee, and is expected to work closely with the Development Office in relation to alumni activities (such as services at Gaudy weekends) and fundraising for the Chapel and Choir and relationship management of donors.

10. Communications and marketing

The Chaplain should set the overall tone and direction for internal and external Chapel communications, in line with the wider College communications strategy and priorities as appropriate and ensuring that Chapel and Choir activity, news and opportunities are shared with the relevant internal and external audiences in a timely and engaging way. This includes the production of term cards, services and music booklets, working with the Verger to publicise services, and working with the Chapel Office & Choir Manager to keep under review the Chapel’s presence on social media and the College website.

11. Governance

As a Fellow, the Chaplain will contribute to the wider life of the College, for example serving as a member of the Governing Body and participating in other College committees, as and when required. The Chaplain acts as convenor of the Chapel & Patronage Committee, chairs the Student Support Sub-Committee (the body responsible for disbursing grants to students) and is a member of the Equality Forum and Welfare Forum.
12. Research

There is no contractual obligation to undertake research but the Chaplain is encouraged to make an active intellectual or academic contribution to the College (not necessarily theological). Where the Chaplain has an academic or research background or interest, they are encouraged to pursue scholarly research, to promote research impact within their specialist field, and to keep abreast of developments in research and scholarship in that field. Where appropriate, the Chaplain may be asked to act as College Advisor to postgraduate students in relevant disciplines.

III. Person specification

It is a Genuine Occupational Requirement that the person appointed is an ordained priest of the Church of England or of a Church in full communion with the Church of England. Set out below are the essential criteria for the role.

Essential requirements

1. A strong track record as a leader of worship in the Anglican choral tradition (including being able competently to sing the relevant parts of the liturgy) and of excellence in preaching, able to provide a focus for regular and occasional worshippers from a variety of faith backgrounds;
2. Commitment to and relevant experience of enabling the choral tradition embedded in the Chapel, including its embrace of innovation and educational excellence;
3. Excellent leadership skills, demonstrating a collaborative and collegial approach to setting direction and achieving results;
4. A strong pastoral commitment, rapport with younger people and ability to engage with students through a wide range of activities;
5. Ability to work effectively across faith communities and with those in the College who have no faith, and more generally to build community and collegiality in a spirit of creative engagement with all members and staff of the College;
6. Ability to command the respect of Fellows, students, staff and alumni of the College;
7. Strong commitment to developing the social, cultural and intellectual experiences of students and the capacity to engage the College with broader ethical issues;
8. Commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within the Chapel community and wider College;
9. Evidence of suitability for the critically important safeguarding responsibilities inherent in the role;
10. Excellent management style for people and functions, with the ability to plan for and manage a large budget prudently and effectively;
11. Excellent representative qualities, able to form and sustain a range of stakeholder, alumni and donor relationships that are important to the Chapel, choirs and College; and
12. Experience in building effective external links with, for example, relevant faith, educational or civic communities.
IV. Terms and Conditions

Salary: The salary will be £61,198-£70,918 p.a. (consistent with grade 10 of the University of Oxford pay scale), according to skills and experience. Those appointed below the top of this salary range will receive annual increments until they reach the top point. There is also an annual ‘cost-of-living’ review. Further increments may be awarded according to the College’s policy on the application of discretionary pay points at grade 10.

Pension: The Chaplain will be enrolled as a member of the Universities Superannuation Scheme or may remain in the Church of England Pension Scheme if they prefer, with the right to opt out of either scheme.

Housing: The Chaplain will be required to live in accommodation assigned for this purpose by the College. This accommodation will be provided free of rent and the Chaplain will receive a modest housing allowance, depending on the accommodation provided. The Chaplain will be responsible for payment of bills and council tax, and the cost of internal decorations.

The Chaplain will be entitled to the following benefits and allowances

(i) Every Fellow has the right to free meals at the Common Table of the College when the kitchens are open;

(ii) Full Membership of the Senior Common Room (for which a small monthly subscription is payable);

(iii) An office in College;

(iv) Private medical insurance including cover to cohabiting partners, and dependent children under the age of 21, free of charge (the premium is assessable as a taxable benefit);

(v) An annual research allowance of up to £3,800 of qualifying expenses;

(vi) A taxable entertainment allowance of £450 p.a. The cost of entertainment organised by the Chaplain in connection with their duties will, subject to consultation with the Finance Bursar, be charged to the College;

(vii) Sick leave on the same basis as the University;

(viii) Parental leave on the same basis as the University.

Hours of Work: No hours of work are specified but this is a full-time post and the Chaplain is expected, when not on holiday or leave, normally to be present in the College during the working day and to work such additional hours as are necessary to properly perform the duties of the position. The Chaplain is required to be present during Term, including on Sundays, and for the services out of term, including those in the Christmas vacation (that continue until Thursday of week 10), the Easter vacation (including the Passover festival) and during the period of summer residence during which services continue.

Notice: The appointment will be subject to an initial probationary period of 12 months during which the appointment may be terminated by one month’s notice
on either side. Following the successful completion of the probationary period, the period of notice would be three months on either side;

**Relocation expenses:** The College will help with relocation expenses in line with the University’s relocation policy for an appointee who is required to move home in order to take up the appointment.

**Confirmation of the appointment is subject to:**
- the receipt of three references (one of them from the applicant’s Bishop) commenting on the applicant’s suitability for the post;
- the receipt of a satisfactory response to an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check;
- a satisfactory Clergy Current Status Letter (episcopal reference) from the candidate’s Diocesan Bishop to the Bishop of Oxford; and
- satisfactory provision of proof of the right to work in the United Kingdom.

**V. Procedure for Applications**

Those wishing to apply for this post should complete the online application form at [http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/about-merton/vacancies](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/about-merton/vacancies) and upload the following as a single PDF document in the named format ‘Last Name First Name Application’ by 12 Noon on Monday 5 August 2024:

- a letter of application (detailing suitability for the post);
- a Curriculum Vitae; and
- details of three referees, (one of whom should be the applicant’s Bishop). References will only be requested for candidates invited for interview.

You should contact your referees before applying, to ensure they are aware of your application and the requirements for the post, and that they would be content to write a reference for you for this post, if asked to do so. Applicants are also requested to inform their referees that, under the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 and the Data Protection Act 2018, the references they provide will be regarded as disclosable to the subject of the reference unless it is clear that the reference has been given in confidence. The College asks that a reference given in confidence should be marked “strictly confidential” on the letter of reference itself. Referees should also be asked to note that even where a reference is marked “strictly confidential” it could still be disclosed to the subject of the reference if that subject so requested and the College’s Data Protection Officer deemed it appropriate.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to return the Recruitment Monitoring form (available for download from the College website [http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/about-merton/vacancies](http://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/about-merton/vacancies)). The information collected on the equal opportunities recruitment monitoring form does **not** form part of the selection process and will **not** be circulated to the selection panel. It will be used solely to monitor the effectiveness of the College’s equality policy which is published at [https://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/college-policies](https://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/college-policies).

It is anticipated that interviews will be held at Merton on **18 and 19 September 2024** and candidates are advised to hold these dates in their diaries. Reasonable interview expenses will be reimbursed and overnight accommodation will be available for candidates who require it.
Any enquiries related to these Further Particulars should be directed in the first instance to the Warden, Professor Jennifer Payne (E-mail: warden@merton.ox.ac.uk)

VI. Equal Opportunities

The policy and practice of Merton College require that all staff are afforded equal opportunities within employment. Entry into employment with the College and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

VII. Privacy Notice

To view our Privacy notice please see here https://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/privacy-notices-and-ropas.