



DIOCESE OF CYPRUS AND THE GULF

*Statement of Need
for the appointment of*

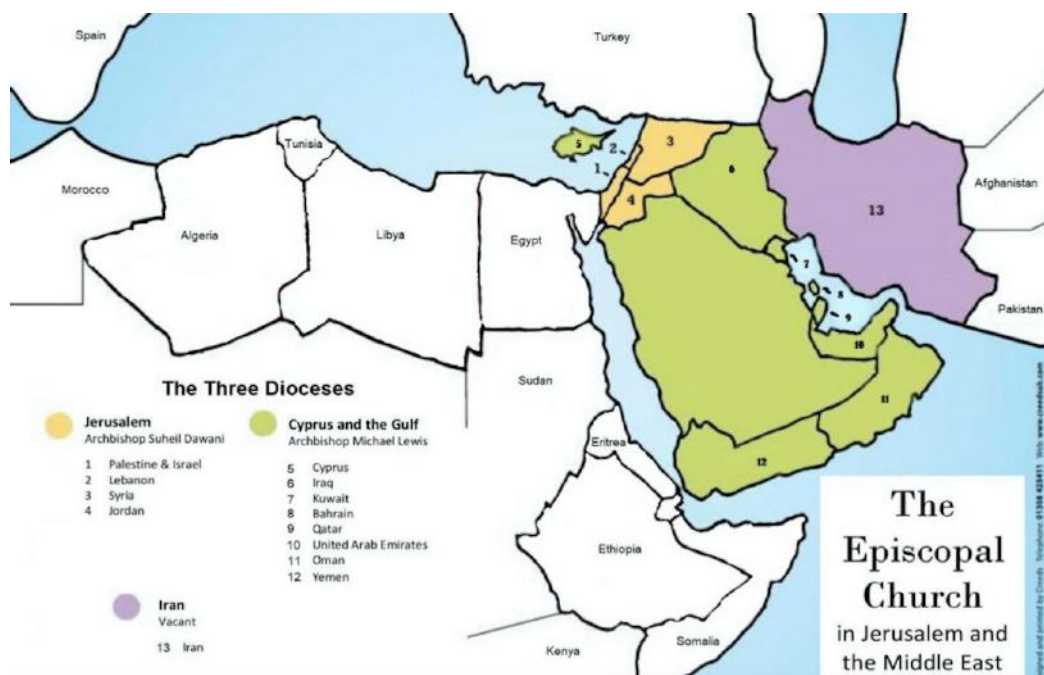
Diocesan Bishop

Who we are

The Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf is part of the Province of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, which includes the dioceses of Cyprus and the Gulf, Iran, and Jerusalem. The Diocese was formed in 1976 and will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2026; the next Bishop to be appointed will be its sixth.

(For a brief history of the Diocese, please visit <https://www.cypgulf.org/the-diocese/>
A detailed history—*The Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf: The Unfolding Story* (2020) by Angela Murray (ISBN 9781908531612) is also available.)

The Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf is unique among Anglican dioceses around the world. With a presence in nations across the Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula, including Iraq, Yemen and the divided island of Cyprus, some of our parishioners are citizens but most are expatriates—from South and East Asia, Africa, the Americas and Europe.



The Diocese stretches from Paphos on the shores of the Mediterranean in the West to Muscat by the approaches to the Indian Ocean in the East, from Erbil in the Kurdish region of Iraq in the north to Aden facing Africa in the south—an area of over 3 million square miles. In two or three countries there are multiple parishes but in many there is just one.

The parishes are the heart of the Diocese, supporting and supported by the office of the Bishop. Diocesan clergy aim to build cohesion by playing a full and public part in society, participating in local events and national celebrations. They also provide a lead in reassuring communities in times of uncertainty, such as during the two Gulf Wars, the tsunami in 2004 affecting the families of many migrants and, most recently, the Covid-19 crisis.

Anglicans throughout the region are often well placed to facilitate ecumenical and interfaith dialogue, sometimes acting as hosts for gathering representatives together for dialogue, focused discussion and co-operation.

The Anglican Cathedral in Cyprus



St Paul's Cathedral, Nicosia

In 1981, St Paul's Church in Nicosia was rehallowed as the Cathedral Church of St Paul by the first Bishop of the Diocese, the Right Revd Leonard Ashton. It has been a place of worship for over 125 years, home to an international community drawn from all continents of the world. There are also events each week for refugees, asylum-seekers and those in need.

The Anglican Cathedral in the Gulf



St Christopher's Cathedral, Bahrain

St Christopher's in Bahrain was built in 1949 and raised to Cathedral status in 1986. The Cathedral congregation welcomes visitors and residents to its services in English and Tamil, as well as the congregations of other denominations who worship there. The Cathedral is home to an international community drawn from all the continents of the world: a diverse mix of people of many nationalities, ages and backgrounds.

The Anglican Archdeaconry in Cyprus

Cyprus serves a significant expatriate and English-speaking international community. There are parishes both sides of the UN buffer zone—the 'green line' that divides the Greek-Cypriot south from the Turkish-controlled north. In the south worshippers also include migrant workers and asylum-seekers, while in the north migrant workers as well as many university students, mainly from Africa, are an important part of congregations. The island as a whole is also a holiday destination for many thousands.

The Anglican Archdeaconry in the Gulf

The archdeaconry covers eight countries across the Middle East, with 14 church compounds serving expatriates of widely varying stations in life, and representing almost every Christian tradition. In the Gulf, the reputation of the worldwide Anglican Communion and its trusted long-term commitment to the region give confidence to rulers and authorities to permit our presence, and to be open to our plans for development.

The Bishop's Residence and Diocesan Office



Bishop's House

Bishop's House comprises two apartments in a single building: an upper-storey apartment of three bedrooms and a one-bedroom ground-floor apartment. Each includes a master bedroom with en-suite bathroom, a kitchen, additional bathroom/s and a large reception room. There is sheltered off-road parking for several cars.



The Diocesan Office

The Diocesan Office comprises the offices of the Bishop and his PA and the Archdeacon in Cyprus, as well as the Finance Officer, Administration Officer, Retreats Facilitator and Diocesan Weddings Officers. There is also a Conference Room, which is equipped for small meetings and online group meetings.

External Relations

The Diocese has a strong relationship and close connections with fellow Provincial constituent member the Diocese of Jerusalem, with regular Zoom meetings between Bishops and clergy and a three-yearly Provincial Clergy and Spouses Conference (last meeting in Jordan in 2022). We look forward to a time when the Diocese of Iran will be able to participate more fully in the Province.

The Diocese also enjoys good relations with the Anglican Communion Office and Lambeth Palace.

The Episcopal Church (United States) is a major contributor to the Province and its dioceses, while the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf Foundation—a UK charity—also supports the Diocese, along with the UK-based Association of Friends of the Diocese. A planned American Association of Friends will further increase awareness of the life and presence of the Diocese in the Middle East.

JMECA (the Jerusalem and Middle East Church Association) manages historic investment funds to provide support to the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, as well as the Province of Alexandria. The stability of the funds that JMECA is able to send to the dioceses means they can plan for the future and invest in long-term projects as well as shorter-term needs.

Diocesan Governance

The life of the Diocese is ordered by the Constitution (revised in 2020). At the heart of that life is the annual meeting of the Synod, when diocesan representatives, lay and ordained, gather in assembly with the Bishop for prayer, teaching, fellowship and business. Between Synods the Bishop's Council/Standing and Finance Committee meets as the Executive Committee of the Diocesan Synod.

Specific areas of focus approved by Synod in support of Diocesan aims are:

- enhancing relationships beyond the Diocese
- providing education, ministry training and discipleship resources
- supporting ministry in Baghdad, Aden and Famagusta
- working in partnership with Mission to Seafarers
- maintaining high standards of governance
- promoting effective communications
- providing administrative resources necessary to support the activities of the Diocese

In 2022 the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy was renewed with a greater emphasis on training.

The life of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

Through our ministry and witness we:

- serve people of all backgrounds with sacramental worship and seek to grow our congregations
- offer space and hospitality to many Christian groups of other traditions;
- support the most disadvantaged, including our work with asylum-seekers and refugees in Cyprus and in migrant labour camps in the Gulf
- encourage and develop vocations
- participate in ecumenical and interfaith relations
- work for peace and justice in the region

Serving people of all backgrounds with sacramental worship

Around 25 Anglican clergy work in our 20 parishes across the region, serving diverse congregations with regular worship and sacraments, in English, Mandarin, Tamil, Igbo, Arabic and more. Links to each parish can be found on our website (<https://www.cypgulf.org/>). Our clergy and lay ministers are committed to growing congregations, in prayerful and active discipleship.

Offering space and hospitality to many Christian groups of other traditions

In the Gulf archdeaconry particularly, we are able to offer hospitality to many Christian groups of other traditions who, without premises of their own, would not otherwise be allowed to worship. Each week up to 100,000 people attend one of the many services held on our premises. Such a range of ecumenical hospitality is—like our Diocese—unique.

In Famagusta, in the north of Cyprus, a dedicated chaplaincy serves students, mainly from Africa, who attend local universities. Parishes in the rest of Cyprus serve a significant expatriate and English-speaking international community.



St Andrew Kyrenia



Christ Church Jebel Ali, Dubai

Our compounds in the Gulf are typically built with multiple halls as well as a church. This allows them to host other Christian groups, including those serving poorer migrant workers.

The Anglican Centre in Doha, Qatar is an inspiring example of how Anglican presence transforms communities. In 2005 the Qatari authorities asked the Diocese to establish a church that would accommodate not only Anglican worship but also that of over one hundred other Christian groups.



The Anglican Centre Doha, Qatar

The Anglican Centre, with the Church of the Epiphany at its heart, has grown into a thriving facility welcoming great numbers of Christians. All are expatriates, of widely varying stations in life and representing almost every Christian tradition. Where it was previously impossible for non-Muslims to be married in Doha (other than in an embassy), following consultation with the Diocese, the government now allows registered churches to perform and legally register marriages. We can also offer baptisms and Christian funerals.

Supporting the most disadvantaged

In every parish we seek to serve the common good. Thrift shops are run in many places, food is provided, meals are served, language classes and advice are offered.

We have a long-term commitment to working alongside the most disadvantaged, particularly in Baghdad, Iraq and in Aden, Yemen.



St George's Kindergarten, Baghdad

Since the invasion of Iraq in 2003, St George Baghdad has been a centre of practical love and hope. As well as a medical clinic and food relief distribution, it hosts a smallshop, micro-

businesses, and an ecumenical resource centre. The popular kindergarten of 150 children is next to the new primary-level School of the Redeemer that will take children through to the start of secondary education. Most are from Muslim families, who are happy to see their sons and daughters educated at an explicitly Christian school next to a church whose congregation meets joyfully each Sunday.

At Christ Church in Aden, the busy Ras Morbat eye clinic, next to the Victorian church, cares for 40 to 50 patients a day. No one is turned away. The mainly female medical staff, all local Yemenis, are proud to work in a church setting. Ras Morbat, which has continued to function throughout the most extreme local threats and disorders of recent years, is held in high esteem in the city and throughout the country as an example of Christian service to all.



Ras Morbat Clinic, Yemen

Up to half of perhaps 20 million migrants in the Gulf are Christians. Church members support men and women in labour camps who work very long hours, many on construction sites and in hotels. We offer them friendship, support, prayer and the sacraments, advocacy and assistance.

In the Mediterranean, refugees arriving by sea to escape conflict or poverty, or both, need urgent and sustained help. Anglicans in Cyprus with the backing of the Diocese play a prominent part in this work. They also advocate for justice for the many trafficked women in the country.



Mission to Seafarers

The Diocese partners with the Mission to Seafarers to provide both religious and practical support, including advocacy for sailors disadvantaged by natural disaster or commercial mismanagement. Chaplains also provide food and water to crews on ships abandoned by their owners.

Encouraging and Developing Vocations

We have an active Ministry Team consisting of a Director of Ministry, Vocations Advisers, Warden of Readers, a representative of SSM clergy, and an administrator. The Vocations Adviser in each archdeaconry has a key role in nurturing vocations to a range of ministries for those discerning a

call. We usually have between 20 and 25 people in training, which includes participation in the ‘Exploring Faith’ Discipleship and Ministry Programme—a modular course of theological learning run by the Diocese in association with Queen’s College Newfoundland, which gathers students into a community of learners in local or online groups.

Since 2011 women have been prepared for ordained ministry in the Diocese.

A pattern of discernment conferences has been developed in the Diocese using trained selectors and a robust programme to advise the Bishop about admitting candidates to ministerial training.

Ministerial preparation includes a) the development of theological literacy, b) training in practical competencies necessary for the accomplishment of ministry, and c) encouraging the progress of formation.

A recent review, unanimously received by the Synod, has made recommendations for continuing development.

Two Summer Schools have been held (2019 ‘Church in Context’, 2021 ‘Theological Reflection’) at the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut. So far 24 participants have taken part. The Summer School provides for desired outcomes in theological learning, training and formation in an efficient, focused and experiential way that is not usually possible for students working in isolated locations.

Coming out of the first Summer School, online learning days have been introduced to allow a greater concentration on preaching and liturgy.

Ecumenical and interfaith relations

Our previous Bishop has been involved in international ecumenical dialogues on behalf of the Anglican Communion, and also in ecumenical and interfaith relationships with religious leaders throughout the Diocese. In every parish of the Diocese, clergy and some laity are involved in ecumenical and interfaith relationships and co-operation, particularly with the historic churches of the region.

Working for peace and justice in the region

The Diocese works and prays for peace with justice with other Christians and people of goodwill across faiths.



Archbishop Michael with the Ruler of Ras al Khaimah His Highness Sheikh Saud bin Saqr al Qasimi

At all times the Diocese and its parishes strive to maintain and deepen relationships with host governments. Representing the worldwide Anglican Communion of more than 80 million can bring with it considerable influence, and the Bishop and clergy regularly visit authorities and rulers to promote the life and work of the Diocese. This is a delicate but important partnership, whether facilitating their exposure to the non-Islamic world or helping governments counter religious extremism in their own societies.

Looking towards the future

Emerging from the pandemic as part of a world learning to live with Covid-19, the Diocese faces several key short-term challenges. Our parishes are the Diocese, and the closure of churches and compounds—often for many months, followed by restrictions on numbers able to attend services—has, of course, severely impacted parish incomes and contributions to diocesan funds.

The economies of Gulf states are changing. Indeed, some are shrinking. There are fewer high-paid expatriate roles, and poorer migrant communities cannot afford to give as much. As a result, contributions from some Gulf parishes are falling.

The Diocesan Synod has approved necessary reductions in our budgets to give time for parish incomes to restabilise. During this time, we have been grateful to receive additional external funding to help sustain the office of the Bishop and our programmes.

We are working towards strengthening our finances and central organisation, convinced that this unique Diocese has a vital Christian presence in the region, and that its ministry has a contribution to make to the character of Anglicanism in the wider world.

The role of the Bishop of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

This is an exciting Diocese in an extraordinary part of the world—a reality reflected in the day-to-day life of its Bishop. Frequent international travel around the Diocese is a feature of life for the Bishop, and a significant amount of time each year will be spent away from home.

In drawing up this Statement of Need for approval by Diocesan Synod, the Vacancy-in-See Committee has carefully considered if the appointment of the next diocesan bishop should be open to suitable candidates whether male or female.

We have recognised that in this Diocese some ecumenical, interfaith and national relationships assume that the exercise of episcopal ministry will be ‘easier’ for a male bishop. We are also aware that within the Diocese a woman in the episcopacy will be difficult for some clergy and lay people to accept. However, we have still found ourselves unanimously reluctant to limit the search for a new bishop to male candidates alone.

We need

A prayerful Bishop

- whose vision and spirituality are centred on the sacraments
- who will inspire and lead on intentional discipleship for all

A teaching Bishop

- who is involved in parishes in a teaching ministry as well as in the wider church
- who is inspirational and an able theologian in our context
 - engaging with the teachings and practices of Eastern Orthodoxy
 - growing in understanding of Islam and Arab Islamic culture

An authoritative Bishop

- exercising leadership with vision and purpose
- who is a team leader who brings out the best in clergy and laity
- who works well with the Synod, Bishop's Council and the bishop's staff team
- bringing a wide variety of distinctive gifts to this context
- with wide and diverse previous experience in an international setting
- who opens doors with other churches and with national governments
- allowing and supporting innovative projects and opportunities
- ambitious for the Diocese and forward-looking

A wise Bishop

- who will appreciate the diocesan distinctiveness and understand the strengths, hopes and needs of the parishes
- with an ability to be discerning and empathetic, aware of cultural differences and sensitive to diversity
- who will face up to complex or seemingly intractable problems with patience
- who is courageous and creative in making strategy
- able to command the confidence and respect of ecumenical and faith communities
- pragmatic, with administrative, IT and financial competence

An encouraging Bishop

- who will call on lay people to use all their gifts
- exercising a pastoral ministry among 'the pastors'
- setting a godly example for the clergy and nurturing them in their abilities
- committed to discerning vocations and the ordered development of ordained and lay ministry
- who will work to ensure that all nations understand the role of the Diocese
- supportive of youth worship
- who embraces social concern in every part of the Diocese

A visible Bishop

- who advocates for the Diocese in the Anglican Communion, showcasing how the Church is engaging within the region
- who is a frequent visitor to the parishes of the Diocese
- who is an accessible communicator, connecting all to a larger vision
- who is comfortable in a wide variety of social settings
- who may be an Arabic speaker
- who nurtures good relationships with the variety of Christian agencies and partners within the Diocese incorporating them appropriately into diocesan life
- who as a spokesperson raises funds for the Diocese in other parts of the world
- who nurtures and maintains good relationships with external partners

A unifying Bishop

- giving the Diocese a coherent identity in the face of parochialism
- drawing the people of the Diocese together through better communication for the ‘family’ of the diocese
- celebrating and working with non-Anglican attendees, recognising the diversity and international profile of congregations
- who is a focus for the unity of the diocese with the wider church
- who strikes a balance between being traditional and open to fresh ideas
- giving attention to ecumenism and interfaith relations across the whole diocese