College Chaplain and Director of new College Multifaith Space

Further particulars

The appointment

St Hilda’s College, Oxford, invites applications for the role of College Chaplain and Director of the College multifaith space from 1 September 2020 (or as soon as possible thereafter). The appointee will be taking up the role at an exciting juncture in the College’s history as it moves from providing an Anglican chapel open for use by other faith groups in the College to a dedicated multifaith space. Called The Sanctuary, the multifaith space is intended to be accessible to those of all faiths and none as a place for worship, assembly, and prayer, and for quiet contemplation and reflection. The Sanctuary is located in a new College building currently under construction and which is expected to be completed in September 2020. The main responsibility of the appointee will therefore be to lead the development of The Sanctuary as a successful multifaith space for the use of a range of identified student faith groups in the College as well as generating and overseeing a programme of activities, possibly including initiatives for interfaith dialogue and education, that will underpin the spiritual dimension of the life of the College as a diverse community fully committed to the principles of equality and mutual respect among all its members.

The Chaplain will work in conjunction with a ‘Sanctuary Users Group’, to be constituted of the Chaplain, normally two members of the College’s Governing Body, and representatives of the different student faith groups regularly using The Sanctuary, which will meet termly. As this is a new venture for the College, the Chaplain will also be asked to participate in a process of annual review of The Sanctuary for at least the first two years of its functioning. There is no automatic assumption that the Chaplain will be a member of the College’s welfare team, but the appointee may be invited to join it in the event of presenting appropriate qualifications and experience. The Chaplain will report directly to the Principal of the College.

Further particulars of the role are provided below.

The College and its faith practice

St Hilda’s is one of the constituent colleges of Oxford University, spectacularly set in four acres of gardens on the banks of the River Cherwell at Magdalen Bridge. The College, which enjoys registered charitable status, is an independent and self-governing body, with an academic staff of about 100 Fellows and Lecturers. Having historically been one of the women’s colleges in the University of Oxford, since 2008 it has been a mixed college, accepting both female and male students and Fellows. There are at present approximately 400 undergraduates and 230 graduate students, who study most of the subjects offered by the University. The College promotes a thriving culture of research and intellectual engagement, to which all members of St Hilda’s contribute. The Principal of St Hilda’s is Professor Sir Gordon Duff. Further information about the College may be found at http://www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk/.

The students and staff of St Hilda’s come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, with more than a third of our students coming from outside the UK and a welcome degree of diversity in our UK student population. When consulting within the College on the proposal to establish a multifaith space in the new building, the College’s Governing Body received responses from students and staff who had been regular users of the College chapel hitherto (for Christian Union prayer meetings, Anglican communion, Roman Catholic mass, and regular discussion events) as well as from practicing Muslims, Jews, and representatives of other faith groups. A significant number of student respondents saw themselves as not professing any faith, but had appreciated the College chapel as a space for quiet reflection and
meditation and welcomed the provision of such a space in the new building. The student body, through its undergraduate and postgraduate representatives who sit on the Governing Body, has expressed strong support for the establishment of a multifaith room in the College.

Historically, the College’s roots are Anglican. The College’s Founder, Miss Dorothea Beale, was a devout Anglican who chose the name ‘St Hilda’ to recollect outstanding female spiritual leadership as well as dedication to culture and learning. From the College’s foundation in 1893 Christian practice in the Anglican tradition was embedded in the College’s daily life. Nonetheless, unlike most Oxford colleges, St Hilda’s has never had a formal chapel building. In the course of the College’s history, there have been three designated chapels, of which only a ‘temporary shed’ that stood in the grounds for forty years was a freestanding building. Otherwise, the Chapel has been for most of the history of the College a room for the communal gathering of up to 20 or 30 people without formal decoration. Following the demolition in 2018, as part of the major new building scheme at the College, of the residential building in which the Chapel of the previous 60 years was located, the way was opened up for the Governing Body to reconceive the College’s provision for religious practice. The decision was taken to establish a multifaith room which would allow for a diversity of religious practice, including the Christian worship that was so central to the College’s founding vision, in acknowledgement both of the traditions of the College and the diversity and internationalism of its current community.

The Sanctuary comprises a self-contained group of rooms located at the south end of the College’s new accommodation block, with windows facing towards the gardens and the riverside. There is an entrance lobby, a small side room (possibly to be used for the storage of objects and utensils for a variety of different faith practices), and a larger space which will form the main room for meeting, worship, and prayer, with a capacity for up to ca. 30 people (seated) and a maximum of 60 (standing).

The role

The College’s Governing Body wishes to appoint a College Chaplain on the basis of a 0.2 FTE stipend (further details below under Terms and Conditions). The role is expected to involve a commitment to being in College 2 days per week (or equivalent hours spread over more than two days) during the University full term, with greater flexibility in the amount of time spent in the College during vacations. As the Directorship of the multifaith space is a new role at St Hilda’s, there is ample opportunity for the appointee to use their creativity, imagination and experience to generate a programme of events in The Sanctuary to embody and project its multifaith vision, possibly (in consultation with the Users Group) to include events aimed at fostering interfaith dialogue and education. Given the innovative nature of the role within the College environment, advice and support will be provided from within the College community together with suggested contacts outside the College to assist the new incumbent.

The duties of the Chaplain will include but will not be confined to:

**Leading the development of The Sanctuary as a College faith space**

1. In collaboration with the Sanctuary Users Group, generating a vision and implementing a plan for the successful operation and day-to-day management of The Sanctuary as a shared multifaith space available for the use of different faith groups within the College’s community as well as for those of no faith for whom The Sanctuary will be available as a place of quiet reflection and contemplation.
2. Providing oversight, and if necessary making proposals to adjust the operation and day-to-day management, of The Sanctuary, including maintaining regular communications with the student representatives of the different faith groups who use it and monitoring the functioning of the room booking system.
3. Leading the termly meetings of the Sanctuary Users Group, comprising the Chaplain, normally two members of the Governing Body, and representatives of the different student groups regularly using The Sanctuary.
4. Maintaining communications with the members of the Sanctuary Users Group at other times, as appropriate.
5. Submitting a termly report on The Sanctuary and its activities to the College’s General Purposes Committee.
6. Participating in the process of annual review, for at least the first two years, of the operation and day-to-day management of The Sanctuary, in coordination with the Sanctuary Users Group, and generating proposals for the management of any problems arising.

7. Providing at the start of the academic year an induction for new students to inform them of the activities and opportunities of The Sanctuary and to welcome them appropriately to the College’s multifaith space.

Chaplaincy

8. Leading the worship, coordinating the faith activities and encouraging and supporting the spiritual growth of the students who are members of the faith group to which the Chaplain belongs.

9. Facilitating and supporting the activities of students of other faiths, in consultation where necessary with the relevant University chaplains and other faith leaders.

10. Safeguarding the interests of all identified groups who use The Sanctuary.

11. Providing personal, individual attention to students seeking support in their faith life and/or with pastoral concerns, while respectfully observing the particularities of their beliefs and practices.

12. Attending the welcome dinners for new undergraduate and graduate students at the start of the academic year.

13. Since the St Hilda’s College By-Laws include a provision for the celebration at least once per term of Holy Communion according to the rites of the Church of England, the Chaplain will, as appropriate, either conduct the service or make arrangements for a visiting priest to conduct the service.

14. Customarily a Roman Catholic mass is held in College once per term, and the Chaplain will, as appropriate, either conduct the service or make arrangements for a visiting priest to conduct the service.

Events

15. The Chaplain may invite into the College guest faith leaders and other visiting speakers to participate in discussions or other organised events, and may host them in The Sanctuary or in other College meeting rooms, within the limit of the Chaplain’s annual allowance for expenses (see below) and subject to the College’s procedures for approving guest speakers.

16. St Hilda’s College Founder’s Day (celebrated on the Wednesday nearest to 17 November, the feast day of St Hilda) customarily includes a Christian service of thanksgiving and prayers for past benefactors which all members of the College are encouraged to attend, regardless of faith and beliefs, and followed by a dinner attended by staff and students, together with Honorary Fellows. The Chaplain will, as appropriate, either lead the service or make arrangements for a visiting priest or pastor to lead it. (A number of former students of the College are ordained Christians.)

17. It is customary in St Hilda’s for a Christian service of evening prayer to be held in the course of the College Gaudy weekend attended by former students of the College each autumn, so the Chaplain will, as appropriate, either conduct the service or make an arrangement for a visiting priest or pastor to conduct the service.

College welfare

18. While it is not envisaged that the Chaplain will be a member of the St Hilda’s Welfare Team as a matter of course, depending on experience, the Chaplain may be invited to become a member of the Welfare Team under the direction of the Dean (who bears responsibility for student discipline as well as welfare support).
Person specification

The following criteria will be used in assessing candidates’ suitability:

**Essential criteria**

- Ordination as a minister or similar institutional recognition as a faith leader in any religious tradition (if in doubt as to what constitutes ‘institutional recognition’, please enquire);
- substantial demonstrable experience of working successfully in a chaplaincy or similar role with students in an educational or higher educational environment;
- the ability to act as a spiritual guide;
- the empathy, broad-mindedness, and open-heartedness to interact with those of other faiths or none, respecting their different beliefs and practices without seeking to proselytize;
- commitment to the principles of mutual tolerance and respect underpinning the direction of a multifaith space;
- the creativity, imagination, and spiritual maturity to work with others to develop a vision for The Sanctuary and the energy and commitment to implement a plan for its successful day-to-day operation, to be modified where this proves necessary.

**Additional desirable criteria**

- Experience of ministry in a multifaith setting;
- experience of educational and/or cultural programming.

**Terms and conditions**

The College seeks to appoint the Chaplain and Director of the multifaith space from 1 September 2020, or as soon as possible thereafter. The Chaplain will be employed on the basis of a 0.2 FTE Grade 7 level stipend per annum (in the range £32,817 - £36,914 pro rata, current rates). The post is permanent with a probationary period of six months. The appointee will be entitled to use an office when in the College in the course of carrying out the Chaplain’s duties.

The Chaplain will report to the Principal as their line manager but will be supported, at least in the initial period, in the conduct of the Chaplain’s duties by an advisory group identified at the time of taking up the employment. The appointee will be answerable to the Governing Body of St Hilda’s College via the termly report to the General Purposes Committee.

In addition to their stipend, the Chaplain will be entitled to an annual allowance of £1,000 to spend on materials or books, on the entertainment of students (e.g. inviting them to lunches), and, where relevant, on the hosting of guests invited to the College as part of the programme of activities of The Sanctuary. The allowance is pro rata for periods of less than three terms, must be claimed against receipts, and is payable per financial year.

The Chaplain will have membership of the Senior Common Room (for which there is a small termly subscription charge) and the right to take up to four meals per week in College (lunch or dinner) without charge during the full term when carrying out duties in College and to attend College dining events (without charge, guests on payment).

The appointee will be automatically enrolled in the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) unless choosing to opt out in writing.

Annual leave entitlement will be the equivalent of 38 days pro rata.

After the successful completion of the probationary period, the length of written notice required to terminate this appointment shall be at least one full academic term on either side but permission to leave earlier will not be unreasonably withheld.
The policy and practice of the College require that entry into employment within 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. Subject to statutory provisions, no applicant or member of staff will be treated less favourably than another because of his or her age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, or maternity. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration.

Application procedure

Applications should be emailed to the Academic Registrar, Mrs Rebekah Unwin at rebekah.unwin@st-hildas.ox.ac.uk by the deadline of 12 noon on Monday 27 July 2020, and should include the following documents:

- an application form (to be downloaded from the College website);
- a letter, of no more than two sides, explaining your suitability for the post and vision for it;
- a curriculum vitae.

Please give the names and contact details of two referees. We will contact nominated referees only for candidates who are called for interview.

It is anticipated that the interviews will take place in the week commencing 3 August 2020. Candidates called for interview will be asked to make a 10-minute presentation on what they would do in their first year in the role.

All reasonable interview expenses will be reimbursed.

Appointment will be dependent upon having, or gaining, the right to work in the United Kingdom.

St Hilda’s College is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

June 2020