

St Helen's Wheathampstead and St Peter's Gustard Wood

Policy on Equality and Inclusion

“It doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Greek, a slave or free, male or female. You are all the same in Christ Jesus.”

(Epistle to the Galatians)

At St. Helen's and St. Peter's, we believe that all people are created in God's image and are loved by God. In his ministry Jesus showed God's love by his openness to all people, including those who were marginalised in his day. This church affirms its commitment to inclusivity and to showing the same openness to all people in today's world.

We offer a friendly welcome to all people attending our services (both regular and special) and our activities (both in church and elsewhere). We hope that people enjoy their time with us, as we enjoy meeting them. In particular, we hope that our door is always open to those who need loving care or fellowship.

We pray that we may see our sisters and brothers as Jesus sees them and that we may love and accept them as Jesus loves and accepts us.

We promote the opportunity for all to participate and contribute fully within our services and activities in accordance with their gifts.

We welcome and serve all people without reference to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

As a church it is our policy:

- to proclaim the essential dignity and equality of all people and to oppose discrimination, persecution and enslavement.
- to nurture inclusive communities where all will be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
- to value the distinctive contribution of diverse cultures in our society generally and in our church community in particular.

In our church life:

- we promote respect for other people and fair treatment for all and we foster inclusive rather than exclusive values.
- we encourage the use of inclusive language and images in our conversation, worship, literature and publicity. In our discussion groups, we encourage all to be open to and to respect the views of others.

- we challenge any instances of harassment, bullying or victimisation.

In making appointments (paid or voluntary) we aim:

- to uphold the principles of Equal Opportunities while accepting that in the church community post-holders may need to demonstrate personal commitment to the Christian faith – in accordance with Employment and Race Directives issued by the Government and ACAS guidance.

- to require a DBS check where relevant to a post-holder's duties.