

Come follow Christ



DIOCESE OF
LICHFIELD

in the footsteps of St Chad



Curacy in the Diocese
of Lichfield



Title post in the
Parish of
Christ Church
Shelton and Oxon



Single church parish on
the edge of the county
town of Shropshire

Evangelical/central

Welcome to Lichfield Diocese

Cradled at the intersection of the Midlands and the North, and the interface between England and Wales, the Diocese of Lichfield is the ancient centre of Christianity in what was the Kingdom of Mercia.

We are rightfully grateful for the inheritance we have from St Chad that leads us to focus on Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism as we live and serve among the communities of Staffordshire, northern Shropshire and the Black Country.

Wherever in the Diocese you may be placed, you will benefit from being part of a wider family, mixing with people serving in a wide variety of contexts – from the grittiest inner-city neighbourhoods of Stoke and the Black Country, to the leafiest rural parishes of Staffordshire and Shropshire, to the sparsest upland communities of the Staffordshire

Moorlands and Welsh Borders.

And we embrace the widest spectrum of church traditions – evangelical and catholic, liberal and conservative, choral and charismatic, as we journey together – as a colleague recently put it, it is our goal to be a ‘spacious and gracious diocese’.

‘...a spacious and gracious diocese

It is my determination and that of my episcopal colleagues that your calling to a title post will be a time of encouragement, ongoing formation, challenge and (while rarely unbridled) joy. Our colleagues among the diocesan staff keenly bring their various specialisms both spiritual and practical to serve our parishes, fresh expressions, schools and chaplaincies.



+Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave
Bishop of Lichfield

As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a Church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find God already at work in the world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a Church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as a people of hope.

(Diocesan Vision Statement)

A caring diocese

Lichfield Diocese is one of the largest in the country, covering an area of 1744 square miles and serving a population of more than 2 million.

The diocese consists of three episcopal areas with three Area Bishops (of Wolverhampton, Stafford and Shrewsbury) ministering alongside the Diocesan Bishop, each overseeing a different geographic area. This indicates the diocese’s commitment to its different contexts, and to the pastoral care of our clergy.

Homes and schools

We aim to provide high quality housing for our clergy with a continuous programme of improvements to houses and responsive, specialist contractors for emergencies.

As well as the 208 Church of England schools in the Diocese, there are many good schools and colleges that will welcome clergy’ children, and a

number of higher education centres can be found in Stoke, Keele, Stafford, Shrewsbury, Telford, Wolverhampton and Walsall.

Vocation and mission of all

Our vision for the diocese is that all people, lay and ordained alike, will grow ever more deeply into their vocation as disciples of Christ. We hope to become a Church where all our members are equipped to know they are called by God to worship and to be the eyes, hands, feet and mouth of Christ in their own contexts.

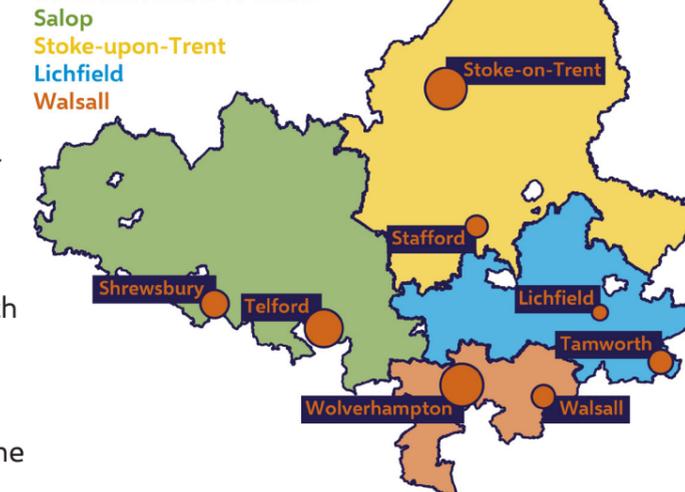
To further these aims, and to develop creative patterns of ministry, we ask all training parishes to offer ‘sixth-day’ opportunities for curates – which might be a chaplaincy attachment (school, hospital, prison or hospice), involvement with local gardening ventures, night-shelter involvement – to mention just a few possibilities.



“Our time as a family in my curacy in rural Shropshire has been one of the best of our lives. I’ve learned that the priestly role is vital in the community. I’m particularly enjoying working with seniors, and enabling the giftings of others which resulted in a successful Messy Church starting in one of the villages. I give thanks to God for this special time, and for everyone who’s been there for me and supported me throughout.”

Revd Jassica Castillo-Burley

The Four Archdeaconries of Lichfield Diocese



Everything but the sea



David Rayner (Wikipedia) / Stoke-on-Trent Bottle Kiln / CC BY-SA 2.0 BY-SA 4.0

Staffordshire prides itself on being ‘the Creative County’: Shropshire is the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution and the Black Country is renowned for its industry and all have significant opportunities for spouses who wish to develop careers in any sphere.

For those days off when you need space away from the parish, the area has everything you could wish for – except the sea: wild landscapes, cultured museums and stately homes. Sports of many kinds (including Premiership football) and at least two theme parks

Shrewsbury Flax Mill – the prototype skyscraper / Tk420 (Wikipedia) / CC BY-SA 4.0



Opening of the Lighthouse Project at Kingsland CE Academy, Bucknall



Road and rail links



For those with family and friends in other parts of the country, the Diocese has great transport links: the M6/M6Toll bisects the centre of the Diocese north-south, and the M5 originates at our southern tip. Heading west, the A5/M54 give easy access to north and mid Wales, while the A50, A5 and M6Toll give swift access to the M1, M42 and A38 for the East Midlands and the south-east.

Rail links are also good with all major towns having direct services to London and Birmingham and four major airports surround our borders – Birmingham, East Midlands, Manchester and Liverpool.



Dovedale (location of one of the Diocese’s two residential retreat centres) / Shaun Dunmall (wikipedia) / CC BY-SA 2.0 4.0

Leisure and pleasure

Lichfield Diocese has everything but the sea. For walkers and climbers, there’s an extensive network of canals, Cannock Chase, The Roaches, and the Shropshire—Welsh borders (for example). If you’re into more organised fun, Alton Towers and Drayton Manor Theme Park

Wightwick Manor nr Wolverhampton / Tony Hisgett (Wikipedia) / CC BY-SA 4.0



can provide it. And then there’s many museums including Walsall’s New Art Gallery and the RAF museum at Cosford; not to mention excellent sporting options for both watching and participating – from Premiership football to the Tamworth Snowdome. Along with Wedgwood, theatres and cinemas, restaurants and superb tea shops just begging to be discovered...



Apedale Valley Light Railway near Stoke with the adjacent country park and Heritage Centre is one of many transport and leisure museums in the Diocese / Simon Jones

If shopping is your thing, there is a range of options, from the chic boutiques at Barton Marina, and Shrewsbury to large malls in or near the urban centres. We’re fortunate in being the home of many fine ales and beers brewed in Burton on Trent (the museum is well worth a visit), and Staffordshire oatcakes are a unique local delicacy to be discovered.



Wulfrun Centre in Wolverhampton is one of many shopping destinations in the region © Roger Kidd -/ geograph.org.uk/p/1171894/ CC BY 2.0

Alton Towers near Uttoxeter / Jeremy Thompson/Flickr / CC BY 2.0



The Parish of Christ Church, Shelton and Oxon



Christ Church Shelton and Oxon is a parish on the west side of the market town of Shrewsbury at the end of the M54 just an hour by train from Birmingham.



Oxon Parish as it is known has grown significantly over the years - from a cluster of villages when the church building was built in the mid 1850s to the expanding housing developments we have today – the population now reaching over 10,000 in a mix of owner-occupied and private rented accommodation, too.

As well as the main Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, the parish is home to Severn Hospice, The Redwoods Centre (Mental Health inpatient care), 3 nursing homes and a large complex of supported living flats for the elderly. There is also one large Church of England primary school with another two (one primary and one special needs school) being built this year

(2023). There are also 2 small shopping centres, a community centre, cricket club, a large nursery, bowls club and a large pub/restaurant.

The parish is a wonderful mix of ages and ethnicities (more so than the rest of Shrewsbury) with many people moving to the area to work in the hospital. In the last few years we have been delighted to welcome a number of doctors and nurses and their families from Nigeria and India to the parish.



Oxon parish to on the west side of Shrewsbury (AChurchNearYou.com/Google Maps)



The Parish of Christ Church, Shelton and Oxon

Services in the church:

The church has two very distinct congregations that meet weekly:

9am Traditional Common Worship Holy Communion with BCP on first Sunday with traditional hymns played by our organist, John. Average attendance is around 35.

11am 'Elevenses' Café Church fresh expression with worship songs, a growing band and the help of a giant tv screen and a monthly all age focus. This service is our primary outreach to families from both Oxon school and those



bringing their little ones for baptism. Average attendance is 28 rising to 40+ on an All Age Sunday. Elevenses tends to take a break during the main school holidays.

Despite their difference in style, the congregations

The Congregations in numbers:

Figures from 2022	
Electoral Roll	124
Average Sunday Attendance Adults	46
Average Sunday Attendance Children	4
Baptisms	13
Marriages	4
Funerals	14

join together for Joint Services at Christmas, Easter, Harvest and other celebrations.

There is potential for occasional evening services but we have found our congregation quite unwilling to come out after dark post covid.

We also have a lovely midweek 'Holy Communion and Prayers' service which is attended by a small but faithful band, some for whom it is the only time they get to church.



The church building is a small, attractive church that was built in the mid 1850s to serve the small rural communities that were cut off when the River Severn flooded, and it is still under the patronage of St Chad's in central Shrewsbury.

1st	9am Traditional Common Worship Holy Communion with BCP	11am All Age, All Together Café Church
2nd	9am Holy Communion (Common Worship)	11am 'Elevenses' Café Church
3rd	9am Holy Communion (Common Worship)	11am 'Elevenses' Café Church
4th	9am Holy Communion (Common Worship)	11am 'Elevenses' Café Church
5th	9am Holy Communion (Common Worship)	11am 'Elevenses' Café Church

The church has most of its original pews including choir stalls with a carpeted section at the back with flexible seating.

The church hall was once the home to the local primary school who moved into their own building in the 1950's. It has been refurbished over the past year or so and gives us a wonderful welcoming space for all the groups that meet there. From Tai chi and pilates, to NA groups and a local support group for new parents, it is well used and well loved by the community.



The Parish of Christ Church, Shelton and Oxon

Your Training Incumbent

Revd Charlotte Gompertz

Oxon Vicarage, 10a Shelton Gardens, Bicton Heath, Shrewsbury.

- **Trained:** St. John's, Nottingham
- **Ordained:** 2016 Lichfield
- **Curacy:** Holy Trinity, Meole Brace. Shrewsbury
- **Vicar since** 2019

Rev Charlotte is a former mental health nurse and youth and children's worker – both of these roles continue to be at the heart of her life and mission in Oxon. She considers herself a 'mellow charismatic/liberal evangelical', is besotted with the Bible and sharing Jesus with everyone. She firmly believes that church is a place where everyone is welcome and has fostered that in her time at Oxon. She is part of the Shrewsbury and Wrekin Deanery Chapter and delivers regular mental health training for Lichfield Diocese.

She knows all too well the value of the curate/TI relationship and is committed to investing in it as best she can. Charlotte wants to support you and help you to grow in your gifts as well as 'have a go' at



being in charge in a safe environment.

Charlotte loves science fiction, Lego and Terry's chocolate orange. She is married to Adam - a pioneer minister, has 2 teenage/young adult children (one at home, one at Uni) and 2 enthusiastic dogs.

Context

Oxon Parish has done nothing but grow numerically since its inception. A constant stream of new housing and development which is set to continue for a few decades to come. This of course can cause controversy, not least the potential building of the 'North West Relief Road' which, if built, is set to cut across the top of the parish.

From a converted psychiatric hospital, to new schools and smaller developments, the face of Oxon is constantly changing as more new people move in. This actually makes it a very friendly place to be with many people moving here from elsewhere and being welcomed into the community. This is supported and assisted by relationships across church, school, cricket and bowls club and beyond.

The primary school is a key draw for new families to the area as it receives an 'outstanding' report from Ofsted and has an incredibly good reputation across the town – as a result it is always oversubscribed. The church links with the school are currently very strong and the vicar has a very good relationship with the Head (himself a Christian) as well as 2 other foundation governors being PCC members.



The ministry

The Parish of Oxon provides wonderful opportunities for a mission and community minded curate. Whether you need schools experience or working with the elderly, occasional offices or creative preaching practice you will find it here. Strong links with local hospitals and hospice chaplaincy teams as well as with the psychiatric hospital could also provide opportunities for ministry.

The ministry 'team' is small but mighty! Our Reader, Helen preaches and leads the 9 o'clock service regularly as well as taking on ministry in nursing homes and regularly using her 'crafting' passions to bring people together. She also leads our 'Eco Church' team who have worked hard enough over the past couple of years to see the church awarded a gold Churchyards award and a Silver Arocha Eco Church award.

Church Wardens, Alyson and Stuart are a great team with diverse gifts, always ready to support the vicar.

Members of both congregations are committed and supportive. The 9 o'clock congregation, while enjoying their 'traditional' service are more than happy with flexibility and enjoy regular 'sermon series' that the vicar imposes on them!

The congregation of 'Elevenses' are very diverse.



The Parish of Christ Church, Shelton and Oxon



A handful of families are committed Christians and have been very much part of shaping the whole thing. Recently we have been joined by a number of young people who have moved here from Nigeria, most to work in the hospital. There are also a number of folks who are committed to seeing church thrive for the younger generations. This 'core group' are joined every week by visitors, baptism families and others. It's been a very exciting 6 months as we have seen God bless and grow this congregation.



"We're really grateful for all the support we got from the Diocese, starting with the DDO, who went out of her way to help in finding a good match, and to work out practical matters.

"My vicar has been very supportive, through planning carefully together and weekly supervisions, where we reflect on different areas of ministry. I have been given new challenges progressively, all done sensitively and fitted to the stage I was at. Our churches have been so welcoming to the whole family, and very supportive of my ministry, even when this involves less regular ideas, like planting a tree during a sermon (only in a pot, I regret to say!)."

Revd John Beswick Pallister

As well as our Sunday services, our 'midweek' life includes 3 thriving small groups -one meets online via ZOOM (and includes members from across the country!), one early afternoon for families with young children and one evening group. The groups tend to choose their own discipleship material but come together with the rest of the church to study particular topics (for example during Lent and Advent).

On Thursday mornings in the Church Hall, we hold a coffee morning drop-in. This space is largely used by people from church, a handful of families and our regular visitors - a group of adults with additional needs from Church Stretton, of whom we have all become very fond.

We are prayerfully considering what else we might use Thursday mornings for, as it feels 'key' to our outreach. We often have 'craft



mornings' run by our Reader, Helen. The vicar is currently prayerfully considering starting a support group for those with family members experiencing significant mental illness.

The church community is fabulous at seeing a need and meeting it. Lockdown gave us plenty of opportunities to do this – from food parcels to activity packs for adults with additional needs. We have continued this past year to support those struggling with the cost of living crisis with our Christmas toy giveaway and regularly collect treats to be given to our local paramedic and emergency staff.

With an incredibly gifted and supportive PCC, Oxon is a unique church, keen to grow in faith and numbers, open to new ideas and willing and able to share God's love with our community.

Housing and Accommodation

The Diocese of Lichfield either has a curate's house in the benefice or a 'strategic' house for curates in close proximity of the benefice. These are good houses, mainly with three to four bedrooms. If there is no curate's house in the benefice and where such a strategic property exists within easy reach of the proposed training parish this will be the preferred curate's house. If there is no strategic housing available nearby the diocese is committed to providing appropriate accommodation for all those entering ministry. We generally do not offer rented accommodation except as an emergency short term measure. Our curates can be confident that their home will be of a consistently high standard. If you wish to know further details about the house, the BDO will be able to provide you with more information.



Curacy in Lichfield Diocese

Supporting learning and formation

Curate learning, formation and development is strongly valued and affirmed in Lichfield Diocese. Curates receive ongoing supervision and reflection on ministry in the parish, complemented by our curate-training programme in which you share with your year-group of peers. The aim of the training programme is to enable each person to flourish in their ministry and inhabit more deeply their vocation as deacons and priests. This programme supports learning and formation through a partnership between the Diocese and The Queen's Foundation. And it takes place in the context of parish supervision and reflection on ministry.

The programme provides space and an environment beyond the parish context in which curates come together with skilled tutors to learn with and from each other's shared experience, so that they can better integrate their practice and reflection, develop their personal qualities, spiritual, ministerial and professional gifts and skills, and deepen their desire to learn.

The curacy experience is very much a collective one, often gathering at Lichfield Diocese's centrally-located Shallowford House for study, prayer, retreat and de-stressing with peers (pandemic permitting): as such, it's a much less scary venue during IME2 than as a base for a BAP!

Pattern of training

The programme focuses on grounded and situated learning and prioritises the Diocese's focus on Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism:

- In Year 1 establishing you in your new ministerial context and practice, and supporting your preparation for ordination as priest.
- In Year 2, deepening your practice and understanding of mission and ministry with the theological tools and skills you need to contextualise this.
- In Year 3 helping you prepare for life-long ministry and to take up a post of responsibility to be entered into with skill and confidence.



IME2 to equip for ministry

At the heart of the programme are residential events which bring together a year-group of curates. They reflect the diversity of the Church, while the different ministry contexts reflect the diversity of the Diocese. This cohort is the primary context for the essential learning and formation to develop your ministries, focusing on ministerial formation, and on the development of relationships which enable mutual flourishing for all.

Opportunities for academic awards

Alongside the IME2 training you may wish to continue studying on an accredited pathway with Common Awards. Curates who already have a Diploma award from IME1 may register for a BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission. Others who already have a degree or higher award or are recognised as potential theological educators have opportunities to further their studies alongside their curate programme.

"We have had amazing support from the diocese over the 6 years through both of our curacies and that's not always been straightforward- particularly when 'life' sometimes gets in the way!

"But the support, through thick and thin has been fantastic, particularly discerning Adam's call to pioneering ministry and curacy under 'pioneer' supervision."

Revds Adam & Charlotte Gompertz



Care for curates and families

The wellbeing of clergy and their families is very important to us. In addition to the supervisory aspects to curacy, we have a free, confidential counselling service (the Listening Ear scheme) for all clergy, diocesan staff and their families.

More info

– contact the BDO (details on back cover) or visit lichfield.anglican.org/curacy



Curacy in Lichfield Diocese

For further information

In the first instance, please contact:

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www.oxonparishchurch.co.uk/

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Come and join us in sharing
God's love with our community



Oxon Parish Church

Sharing God's Love with our Community