

Come follow Christ



DIOCESE OF  
LICHFIELD

in the footsteps of St Chad



Curacy in the Diocese  
of Lichfield

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Title post in the  
Wolverhampton  
Society  
Parishes



Three Society parishes  
around the heart of  
Wolverhampton  
catholic/eucharistic



# 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

**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)

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

## 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

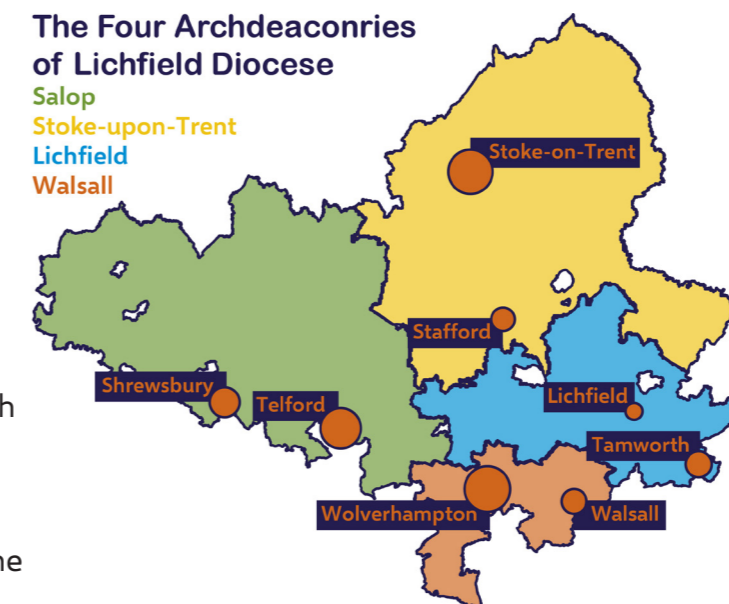
Our vision for the diocese is that all people, lay and ordained alike, will grow ever more deeply into their vocation as disciples of Christ. We hope to become a Church where all our members are equipped to know they are called by God to worship and to be the eyes, hands, feet and mouth of Christ in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



# Everything but the sea



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

The Wolverhampton Society Parishes consist of

- **The Most Holy Trinity, Ettingshall (WV4 6QH)**
- **St Martin of Tours, Dixon Street Rough Hills (WV2 2BG)**
- **St Stephen’s, Hilton Street (WV10 0BF)**

All three parishes have passed the resolution which places us under the oversight of the Bishop of Oswestry (who is a Suffragan Bishop in the Diocese of Lichfield). All three are members of the Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda.

The parishes are supported by three colleagues: Two retired priests (Fr Roger Gilbert SSC and Fr Tony Hutchinson SSC) and Fr Adam Edwards SSC (Assistant CEO, Church Urban Fund).

## Services in the churches:

**Holy Trinity** is located in Ettingshall Park, a housing estate in the south of Wolverhampton. It covers an area to the south of Wolverhampton on the way towards Dudley and Birmingham. The liturgy is Modern Catholic, in a reordered space; The Main Mass is at 9.30am on Sundays. (Midweek masses are offered across the cluster.) There is a Serving Team and a Choir. The congregation is becoming younger and more diverse. The church is perched halfway up Sedgley Beacon and is something of a hidden gem. It is accessed via a flight of steps and/ or a driveway as the worship space is on the ‘first floor’. The Ground Floor is occupied by a Parish Hall which is used by the church and the local community; this is where refreshments are served after Mass. The community served is primarily an estate with mixed housing:

At present the church serves two schools: Spring Vale School and Hill Avenue School. Both were rated ‘outstanding’ in recent OFSTED inspections.

	Holy Trinity	St Martin of Tours	St Stephen’s
Sundays	0930 Sung Mass Monthly BCP Evensong	0915 Said Mass	1100 Mass
midweek	1400 Monday - Mass		1400 Weds - Holy Hour 1500 Weds - Mass

**St Martin of Tours** is a large 20th century church designed by Lavender and Twentyman. It seats over 400. It has an attached Vicarage and a Parish Hall. Worship takes the form of a Said Mass at 0915 for a small but incredibly faithful congregation who gather. The building is also let to the Church of Biserica Ortodoxa Sf. Ioan Valahul, (Romanian Orthodox) and the Parish Hall hosts a rapidly growing Charitable Project known as the Lifeboat Project, co-ordinated by parish nurse Gill Fenner. The project collects and donates clothes, coats and household items to families and others in need. The community is diverse, with high indices of deprivation. The parish serves one Community School nearby.

Worship: Said Mass Sunday 0915: Midweek Mass Tuesday 10am) Orthodox Divine Worship 10am Sunday

**St Stephen’s** Hilton Street has a congregation of around 30, and Mass is celebrated on Sundays at 1100. The church has strong links with the local Church School (also St Stephens). The church also offers time for contemplative prayer during the week. The community is part post-industrial, part residential. The church has close links with St Stephen’s Church of England Primary School, where a PCC Member is the chair and the Incumbent an ex-officio governor. Both lead school worship on a regular basis and the school visits church at least four times a year.

Worship: Sung Mass Sunday 1100: Wednesday Holy Hour 2pm: Mass 3pm

The Daily Office of Morning and Evening Prayer (Divine Office) are offered online throughout the week via our Parish Facebook pages.

As might be expected, all three congregations suffered a good deal from the COVID pandemic, which rendered a number of people housebound and vulnerable. We are developing an outreach scheme to connect with those who are in this situation. Holy Trinity and St Stephen’s have extremely capable lay leaders in place: across the cluster there are two licensed readers and one Parish Nurse. St Martin’s parish is wonderfully served by Parish Nurse Gill Fenner who is part of Parish Nursing Ministries UK. <https://parishnursing.org.uk/>



# The Wolverhampton Society Parishes



Across the cluster full Holy Week and Easter observances are offered. All worship is Modern Catholic Rite. We hope in time to complete a pattern of Daily Mass celebrations across the cluster.

The parishes have a strong online presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Catechesis takes place through Zoom meetings held fortnightly (at present) and at least one sung mass is livestreamed every Sunday via the Holy Trinity Facebook page.

## The Congregations in numbers:

Figures from 2022	The Most Holy Trinity, Ettingshall	St Martin of Tours, Rough Hills	St Stephen's, Hilton Street
Electoral Roll	78	20	33
Average Sunday Attendance - adults	24	7	20
Average Sunday attendance - under16s	2	1	5
Baptisms	2	4	2
Marriages	0	0	0
Funerals	12	6	0

## Buildings / Community

The communities served by each church are urban, including different types of estate ministry and a residential area near to the city centre. All three churches have strong links with local school; all schools bar one (St. Stephen's) are community schools. Holy Trinity enjoys strong links with the residents association and British Legion, as well as local hostelries. At St Martin's, the Lifeboat Project serves a wide constituency across Wolverhampton – these range from overseas students to refugees from Ukraine, Romania and throughout Easter Europe. St Stephen's is strongly linked to a church primary school: we participate in recycling school uniforms and supporting individual students as well as playing a full part in the governance of the Academy Trust.

## Your Training Incumbent

### Fr Damian Feeney SSC

Holy Trinity Vicarage, Farrington Road, Wolverhampton WV4 6QH



- **Trained:** Chichester Theological College
- **Ordained:** 1994 (Diocese of Ripon)
- **Curacy:** St Wilfrid and St Luke, Harrogate
- **Vicar since** 2015

Fr Damian has been at Holy Trinity since May 2015, and has been Interim Minister at St Martin's and St Stephen's since July 2019. He is on secondment from a role as Catholic Missioner in the diocese to fulfil his interim ministry. Before his arrival he was vice principal of St Stephen's House, Oxford for six years, and prior to that a parish priest and missioner in Lancashire where he planted his second new eucharistic congregation in Preston.

He writes articles and book reviews on Catholic Mission in the Church of England and has led mission training in various locations around the country, as well as in Scotland, Germany and Australia. He has been a member of the national Leading your Church into Growth team since 2006, and has been a member of the General Synod of the Church of England, since 2015. He is an Archbishops Evangelist. He is married to Fiona, a primary school headteacher, and they have three grown up children and one grandchild.

# The Wolverhampton Society Parishes

## The ministry

As we are spread across three parishes in Wolverhampton, a car and driving license is desirable. Ministry consists of Occasional Offices, liturgy and worship, visiting parishioners, investing time in the work of the Lifeboat Project, growing in pastoral awareness of the needs both of parishioners and others. The importance of visiting the housebound with Holy Communion cannot be overstressed. Being part of community networks is essential. A newly ordained colleague would take responsibility for links with uniformed organisations at Holy Trinity and have an involvement in school worship. They would also look to develop our growing online presence and contribute to teaching and catechetical programmes.



## Context



"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



All parishes appreciate close involvement of their priests in their ongoing lives, whether through social activities, presence at meetings and gatherings, and the simple everyday business and concerns of the people. A good sense of humour is indispensable. It is never, ever dull!

## 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.

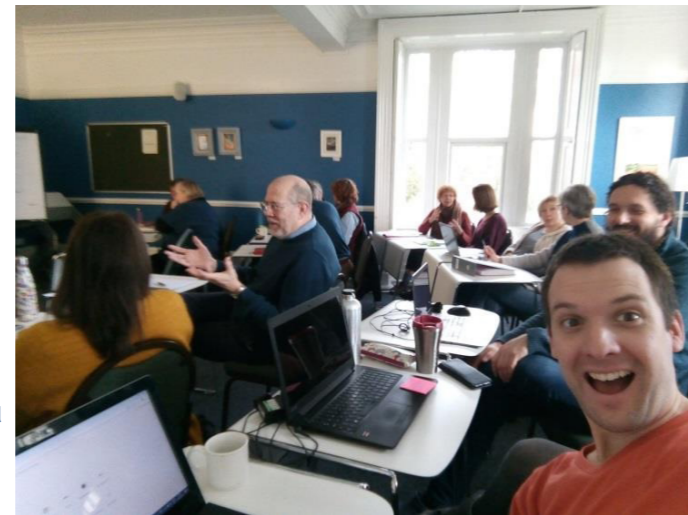
The programme provides space and an environment beyond the parish context in which curates come together with skilled tutors to learn with and from each other's shared experience, so that they can better integrate their practice and reflection, develop their personal qualities, spiritual, ministerial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

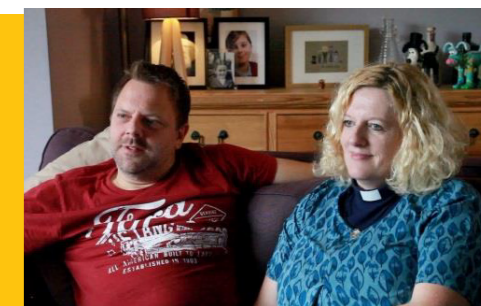


## Care for curates and families

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](http://lichfield.anglican.org/curacy)



# Curacy in Lichfield Diocese

## For further information

In the first instance, please contact:

**The Revd Preb Romita Shrisunder,**  
Bishops' Director of Ordinands  
[M] 07949 033091  
[E] romita.shrisunder@lichfield.anglican.org

### Find us on:

ACHurchNearYou:

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## The Wolverhampton Society Parishes.

A warm  
Black Country welcome  
awaits you.

Ministry is varied,  
and life is never dull!

Come and help lead  
these churches into growth!