



Curacy in the Diocese of Lichfield



**Title Post at
St Edward's Church
in the team benefice
of Leek & Meerbrook**



One of five churches in a mostly market town benefice

St Edward's is of central churchmanship within a diverse team

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

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 spacious and gracious diocese.’

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’.

It is my determination and that of my fellow-bishops 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 Igrave
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

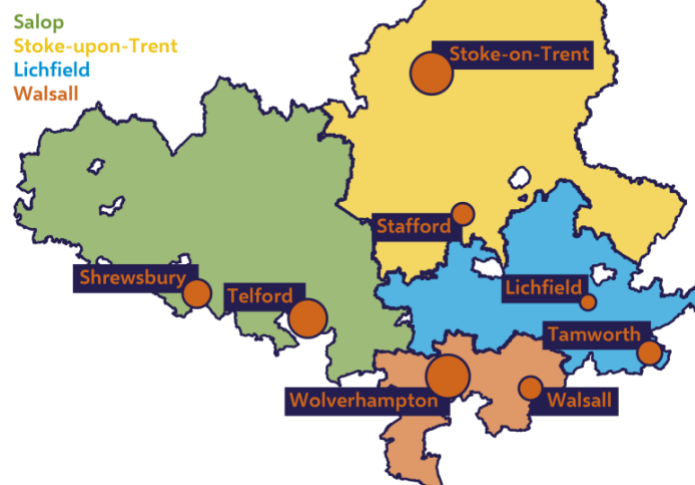
hospice), involvement with local gardening ventures, night-shelter involvement – to mention just a few possibilities.



“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

The Archdeaconries of Lichfield Diocese



Everything but the sea



David Rayner (Wikipedia) / *Stoke-on-Trent Bottle Kiln* / [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

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

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 can provide it. And then there's

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



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 nr Stoke 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



St Edward's Church in the Team Benefice of Leek & Meerbrook



- St Edward's Church is the original parish church of Leek and is one of five churches in the team benefice of Leek and Meerbrook. Our churchmanship is central with a wide range of styles of worship.
- St Edward's hosts the mayor's civic service and the civic Remembrance Service which is an important occasion in the life of the town.
- The team of ministers across the benefice consists of the team rector and two team vicars.
- The market town of Leek is located on the edge of the Staffordshire Moorlands 12 miles from Stoke-on-Trent, and has a population of around 20,000 people.
- It is set in an area of outstanding beauty with a mixture of rugged crags, river valleys, lakes, woodlands and rolling pasturelands.
- Each Wednesday, and monthly on Saturday, a market that dates back to King John is held in the town square. The livestock market on the edge of the town is held every Tuesday.
- There are a variety of shops catering for every requirement with a healthy balance of independent and nationally known retailers.
- St Edward's has strong links to Leek Foodbank and Churches Together.
- The education system includes four church schools within the Benefice and gives results higher than the national average. It has a first, middle and high school system, ages of transfer being 9 and 13 years. Two schools in Leek run successful 6th Forms and there is also a college offering a range of courses both full time and vocational.
- St Edward's seeks to engage with the local community. We run a weekly lunch club and drop-in serving refreshments and light meals, and also a weekly parent and toddlers group. We are working on the development of a programme of concerts and other events in the church.
- During covid we began producing a weekly online service and examples of these can be viewed on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2bwaz2C6hxFpzSQf48fEmw>
- We plan to maintain our online services and to start livestreaming from St Edward's. We also have a presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- During this curacy there would be the opportunity to experience the flavour of ministry in the other churches in the team at St Luke's & St Paul's (low evangelical), All Saints (anglo-catholic) and St Matthew's (a rural village church).

Services in the churches:

In recent years St Edward's has developed a range of styles of worship which enable it to offer a wider spectrum of different ways of meeting with God.

These include:

- ❖ Traditional services of Holy Communion with worship led by the choir
- ❖ A monthly All Age Celebration Service with modern worship songs led by the music group
- ❖ A monthly baptism service which combines both traditional and modern music
- ❖ An evening service once a month which alternates between celtic prayer, Iona and Taizé
- ❖ A monthly sung service of BCP Holy Communion

We have an AV system and images and videos are used to enhance the liturgy and sermons.

Once a term the 720 pupils from St Edward's Academy fill the church for the end of term school service which Years 7 and 8 attend in the morning and years 5 and 6 in the afternoon.

Different churches in the Team Benefice also offer a variety of styles of churchmanship and worship which there will be opportunities to experience as part of the training.

Sundays at St Edward's Church

We are currently in the process of revisiting our service pattern and the information below is based on our current thinking from September onwards

1 st	8.45am Holy Communion – CW 10.00am Holy Communion – CW
2 nd	8.45am Holy Communion - CW 10.00am Baptism Service 6.30pm Holy Communion - BCP
3 rd	8.45am Holy Communion - CW 10.00am Holy Communion – CW 6.30pm Evening Prayer - CW
4 th	8.45am Holy Communion – BCP 10.00am All Age Celebration 6.30pm Iona/Celtic/Taizé
5 th	10.00am Morning Prayer – CW <i>(joint service with Trinity Church)</i>

St Edward's Church in the Team Benefice of Leek & Meerbrook

Welcome to St Edward's Church



a place of Christian worship
for over 700 years

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth
and the life."

Over centuries past this church
has been a gathering place for
countless worshippers who have sought
to follow the way of Jesus,
learn the truth of Jesus
and live the life of Jesus.

We welcome you,
and invite you
to join us.



There has been a place of Christian worship on the site of St Edward's Church since the 9th century. Much of the present building date back to 1320 but extensive alterations have been made over the centuries (and we are planning a few more now!).

The church is open on most days of the week and many visitors come in see the rose windows, the lady chapel window designed by Edward Burne-Jones and the fine silk embroidery work made by the school of Elizabeth Wardle, some of which was designed by William Morris.

All these were made to and for the glory of God, and the church's primary purpose is to be a place where people can feel welcome and learn more about what it means to follow Jesus today.

As well as our regular worship we run a weekly lunch club, drop-in and *Storyfinders* parent and toddlers group. We are seeking to develop the building as a venue for concerts and other events and have recently extended the stage platform area at the front of the church to facilitate this.

We are also looking at ways to enhance the experience of our visitors by using AV and mobile phone technology to provide information about the church and the Christian faith.

Your Training Incumbent

Revd Nigel Irons

24 Ashenhurst Way, Leek, ST13 5SB

- Trained: St John's College, Nottingham
- Ordained: 1997 Lichfield Diocese
- Curacy: St James' Church, Newchapel
- Team Rector: since 2014

Before ordination Nigel worked for 20 years as a senior estimator for an international construction company on projects up to £50 million mostly in the UK and Middle East.

He has trained two curates in his previous parish and having now been in his current post for eight years feels that both he and St Edward's have a great deal to offer.

He likes to work collaboratively and is keen to offer every opportunity for a curate to grow in faith and develop their gifts as they engage with the full range of worship and ministry that happens in the town.

He plays the guitar and enjoys cooking and walking in the local area.



The Context

Leek is a delightful market town with a population of around 20,000 people. Nestled in the Staffordshire Moorlands, Leek sits on the edge of the Peak District National Park, close to the dramatically jagged rocks of Hen Cloud, Ramshaw Rocks and The Roaches.

There are many buildings dating from the 17th and 18th centuries and the town is characterised by pleasingly designed buildings heavily influenced by the Victorian ‘Arts and Crafts’ movement.

The market square and main shopping street hosts a bustling market each week as well as occasional Farmer’s Food & Craft markets.

Major employers in the area include Alton Towers theme park and the JCB company. In addition, Leek has a proud tradition of supporting independent businesses in the locality. Large centres of population and employment, such as Stoke-on-Trent, Manchester and Derby, are within regular commuting distance.

Leek has a wide range of sporting facilities, including a swimming pool and leisure centre, Leek Town Football Club, a cricket club, rugby club and

hockey club and also a sailing club and rowing club at the nearby Rudyard Lake.

In addition to Alton Towers and as part of the expanding tourism industry in the area, other attractions include the Churnet Valley heritage railway, Peak Wildlife Park, Coombes Valley nature reserve and Tittesworth Water.

The Ministry

Recent Statistics for St Edward’s:

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Electoral Roll	165	165	123	123
ASA – Adults	89	76	N/A	49
Children	4	3	N/A	2
Worshipping Community	155	151	166	163
Marriages	4	7	2	1
Funerals	55	53	55	54
Baptisms	11	25	1	5

St Edward’s also holds a weekly 10.00am Friday Holy Communion service and a monthly service of Wholeness and Healing. We have a monthly joint service with Trinity Church and some services take place as part of the Churches Together programme.

St Edward's Church in the Team Benefice of Leek & Meerbrook

The Benefice holds a Team Confirmation Service each year and joint services throughout Holy Week. We also work closely with Churches Together in Leek and District and participate in their programme of events and services throughout the year.

Monthly Holy Communion services previously took place at two Residential Care Homes but these have not yet been allowed to resume.

We have very close links with St Edward's Academy Middle School with regular opportunities to lead Collective Worship. Pupils from the school come to the church for a service at the end of each term and Year 5 visit the church annually for a guided morning of activities.



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

St Edward's has one Reader and one other member of the congregation who preaches on an occasional basis. Around the deanery there are also a good number of retired priests who are happy to assist with services and occasional offices as and when needed. We have two part time administrative support staff who between them work 20hrs per week either in the church office or at home.

We are currently looking at a project to provide permanent wheelchair access to the church and to open up the entrance by removing the small lobby and installing glass doors. We have recently extended the front stage platform to make it more useful for hosting events and to give musicians more room.

We have links with BBC Moorland Radio and Churnet Sound Radio stations and the opportunity to share a monthly Thought for the Day.

St Chad's Retreat House is owned and run by the benefice. It has a regular programme of events each month and is also available for anyone to use as a quiet space by arrangement with the warden.

Housing and Accommodation

Once an appointment is confirmed the diocese will work to provide suitable accommodation.

Mission Action Plan

Our current Mission Action Plan is based on the five principles set out by the diocese as aims and objectives for all parishes:

Discovering the Heart of God

- ❖ Encourage the formation of more small groups meeting for Bible study and prayer
- ❖ Create spaces and occasions where members of all congregations can meet together for fellowship
- ❖ Develop the roles of the choir and music group and encourage more people to join them

Growing Disciples

- ❖ Produce and promote a list of all activities which the church is engaged in to encourage people to see what we are doing and invite them to join in
- ❖ Arrange more informal gatherings such as coffee mornings with speakers
- ❖ Hold special services and encourage the congregation to invite friends and family to come to them

Reaching New Generations

- ❖ Liaise with local schools to find out how we can meet their needs and invite their choirs and drama groups to take part in All Age services
- ❖ Hold live music concerts and events in the church to attract the younger generation
- ❖ Invite people from *Storyfinders* to a special service from time to time
- ❖ Increase the number of family friendly services

Transforming Communities

- ❖ Arrange more meals together for people who are on their own
- ❖ Advertise the Wednesday Lunch Club on Facebook and in the Leek Post & Times

Practicing Generosity

- ❖ Extend and refurbish the Parlour
- ❖ Consider how we can make the church visitor experience even more welcoming
- ❖ Encourage more social activities such as theatre and cinema trips, meals out and other events at which we can invite others to join us



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: 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:

- 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

This programme is accredited within Common Awards. Many curates who already have a Diploma award from IME1 are registered for a BA in Theology, Ministry and Mission. Others who already have a degree or higher award can be registered for a Graduate Diploma. Those who are recognised as potential theological educators have opportunities to further their studies alongside their curate programme



Many second year curates have the opportunity to grow through visits to our link dioceses in Canada, Africa, or Germany– this group enjoying a day on safari.

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 DDO (details on back cover) or visit Lichfield.anglican.org/curacy

“We have had amazing support from the diocese over the past 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



Curacy in Lichfield Diocese

For further information

In the first instance, please contact:

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Find us on:



ACChurchNearYou:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/4353/>

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2bwas2C6hxFpzSQf48fEmw>

Website:

<http://leekparish.org.uk/churches/st-edwards-church/>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/StEdwardsLeek/>

St Edward's Church, Leek

seeking to be open to
the purpose of the Father
the presence of Christ
and the power of the Holy Spirit
in us and in our community



*good news for the poor
freedom for the prisoner
sight for the blind
liberty for the oppressed*