

Come follow Christ



in the footsteps of St Chad



Curacy in the Diocese  
of Lichfield

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Title post in the  
Benefice of the  
Mease Valley



Five villages

evangelical and broad  
churches

# 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.

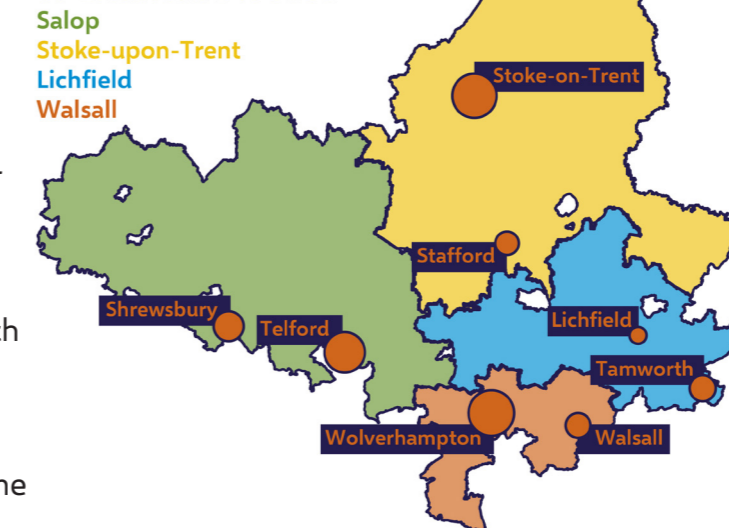
To further these aims, and to develop creative patterns of ministry, we ask all training parishes to offer ‘sixth-day’ opportunities for curates – which might be a chaplaincy attachment (school, hospital, prison or hospice), involvement with local gardening ventures, night-shelter involvement – to mention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

## 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 Mease Valley Benefice

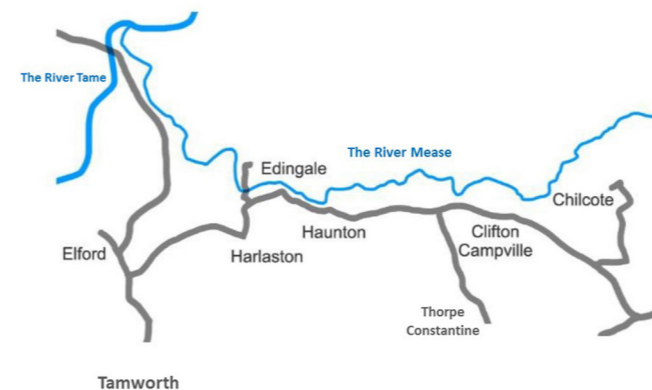
The Mease Valley Benefice is a group of five/ six churches that is situated in a beautiful rural setting which lies largely in Staffordshire, adjacent to its borders with Warwickshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire. Our countryside benefice is just five miles north from the centre of Tamworth town and nine miles east of Lichfield. We sit comfortably between the A38 and Junction 11 on the M42. We have excellent transport links to Birmingham, Leicester, Derby, and Nottingham for example.



The Mease Valley area is one of a gently rolling rural landscape, almost exclusively arable land with some dairy. The river from which the benefice takes its name is small and meanders near to the villages before swinging north to enter the Trent river near to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas. The larger river Tame forms the Western boundary of the parish of St Peter's, Elford as it also flows north into the Trent

The Mease Valley consists of four parishes, one of which has three places of worship within its boundary. We number six church buildings altogether with a crossover between our congregations and our various church buildings.

- **The parish of St Andrew's church, Clifton Campville, with its small chapel-of-ease of St Matthew's, church in Chilcote, (and a further seasonal church of St. Constantine on the Thorpe Constantine Estate.)**
- **The parish church of St Matthew's Harlaston,**
- **The parish church of Holy Trinity Edingale,**
- **and the parish church of St Peters', Elford.**



Our Benefice of villages is around eight and a half miles from Chilcote at the eastern end in beautiful farmlands though country lanes to Elford at its western end.

Many of our congregation members are retired from work and who have chosen to stay in our villages, they form the main stay of our volunteers. Our services follow a traditional pattern of Anglican material. Our congregations sometimes have families present, particularly at school's services, special services like Cafe church or family services and this is something that we would like to encourage as we diversify a little more in our services post covid.

## Population

The overall population of the benefice is around 2600, with the five villages and three hamlets having populations varying between 120 and

600. We have many older people, some who have grown up in our villages and lived here all of their lives, others for example who live at our two care homes found in our villages. We have young families and children who attend our three primary schools as well as schools throughout Tamworth who often move to our villages. With our excellent transport links, our young professionals often work outside the area and travel outside of our villages more. People also travel for healthcare. We have key workers, farmers, drivers, all sorts of jobs represented. We do not have local shops, but we do retain some very popular village pubs and lively village halls and community buildings. Our ethnicity is predominantly indigenous white British.

## Services in the churches:

Services follow a bi-weekly pattern in our four largest buildings

We usually run two - three services on a Sunday morning and one mid-week service of prayer on a Thursday. We also offer monthly Holy Communion services with songs and also games and activities at our two care homes and we also offer occasional Home Communion visits to parishioners.

On the first Sunday of the month we lead an 8.45am BCP service for our traditional



# The Mease Valley Benefice



congregation at St. Matthews Harlaston. This is robed, with organ and hymn books used. Then we follow with two 10.15am services at two of our other parish churches. One service of Holy Communion from Common Worship which is also robed with organ/piano and hymn books, and one service of the word (Praise and Worship, also from Common Worship materials) which is unrobed. Organ/ piano/ recorded music/ worship group and hymn books are alternated during these services which are attended by our main traditional congregations.

The following Sunday we will have services take place at two other churches in our group and we would offer Holy Communion (robed as before) at one church and another sort of service (unrobed). For example, we may hold a family service, or baptism, or café church, or service of the word (Praise and Worship). These have become quite popular and offer variation in our congregations, these appeal to families



	Clifton Campville	Harlaston	Edingale	Elford
1st	10:15 Holy Communion	08:45 BCP Communion		10:15 Praise & Worship
2nd			10:15 Holy Communion	
3rd	10:15 Praise & Worship	10:15 Praise and Worship		10:15 Holy Communion
4th			10:15 Praise & Worship	
5th	A Joint Mease Valley Benefice Service			

Chilcote and Thorpe Constantine only have occasional services

more than our traditional services.

Our churches all have organs or a piano in the most part to lead sung worship; we also have access to a small worship band and also sound equipment to offer some variety. One of our churches has access to a projector screen and this has been used in the past to lead worship. We can offer hot refreshments and some limited kitchen facilities at all of our churches, as well as toilets at five of them. We have great links to our schools and often have school led services and larger gatherings during the year.

We maintained pre-recorded weekly online services for the past two years. These have been creative and fun and wholly enjoyed. As we returned to our buildings, those accessing became fewer and we have recently stopped these. Rector John hopes to explore a monthly video project in the benefice to see how we might build on their success going forward.

## Buildings / Community

A team comprising clergy and lay representation of each of the principal churches provides leadership on spiritual matters and common issues relating to the benefice. Each of our four parishes retains its own Parochial Church Council.

A range of styles of worship at Sunday services is offered, ranging from traditional Book of Common Prayer to contemporary informal services with modern choruses. Parishioners regularly come together in joint services, held at each of the churches on a rotational basis, which may be jointly clergy and lay led. Church members are encouraged to actively participate in the delivery of worship by reading scripture and leading prayers.

### The Congregations in numbers:

Figures from 2019	Clifton Campville	Harlaston	Edingale	Elford	Chilcote	Total
Electoral Roll	40	24	20	52	7	143
Average Sunday Attendance Adults	23	17	18	30	20	108
Average Sunday Attendance Children	3	2	1	4	2	12
Baptisms	3	1	0	0	3	7
Marriages	1	1	1	2	0	5
Funerals	6	0	3	2	0	11

Weekdays provide opportunities for Morning Prayer and two weekly home based informal groups, open to all, which meet for a short time of worship, followed by Bible study prepared by one of the group leaders and include a time for sharing, refreshments and fellowship. Group members are encouraged to increase their numbers by sharing their faith and inviting individuals from the local community to attend. Our monthly men's breakfast meets in a local pub on a Saturday morning for worship, discussion and 'fried stuff.' Our monthly ladies' breakfast meets at our local garden centre restaurant for the same (a wider variety of menu is appreciated of course).

During daylight hours most of our churches are open for private visits and prayer. Historical information is available for visitors to these



## The Mease Valley Benefice

beautiful grade I and grade II listed historic buildings.

A particular focus of church life in the Mease Valley is the strong relationship between the Church and the three primary schools within the valley. School assemblies are taken weekly in two of our schools, St. Andrews CofE school, Clifton Campville and The Mary Howard, Edingale. These are lead by a church leader and services are held in three of our churches on a regular basis for each school.

Each church building remains a focal part of village life, though they are expensive to run and heat and especially expensive to maintain and restore parts that fall off. The pastoral care of residents and older congregation members is a key part of our local ministry and we have access to hospitals and hospices when visits are needed quickly. We have seven churchyards also, these are maintained by church members and villagers or by contract for the larger churches. Some of our churchyards win awards from the diocese as well and these bring many a pastoral conversation with villagers and visitors alike.

The churches remain popular with wedding couples. We often take twelve weddings over the summer. Church bells are a feature of St

Peter's and are rung at most services by the bell-ringing team. St Peter's and St Andrew's churches serve as venues for fund raising events such as concerts, and the recently installed facilities at three of our churches means that events including concerts, craft fairs and small-scale suppers are readily accommodated.

### Your Training Incumbent

#### Revd John Grice

The Rectory, 32 Main Street, Clifton Campville, Tamworth B79 0AP

- **Trained:** St John's Nottingham
- **Ordained:** 2012, Lichfield
- **Curacy:** All Saints Wellington (Telford)
- **Vicar since** 2017

My name is Reverend John Grice and I am Serving as Team Rector for the Mease Valley Churches, Tamworth.

I'm from the West Midlands, happily married to my lovely wife Gemma with a young and growing family. We have three children between the ages of eight and thirteen, they are full of energy and love. We moved to Clifton Campville

from Wellington, Telford, a market town and the small Hamlet of Eyton-upon-the Weald Moors, where we served together in my four-year curacy. I served then as curate in charge until leaving Wellington in 2017.

Prior to this I studied theology full time at St John's Theological College, Nottingham, really enjoying my studies and the shared community life. I enjoy chocolate (fairly traded is best), real coffee, thought provoking films, and reading in front of the fire. I enjoy walks in the woods with my family and a little nature and landscape photography too.

#### My Passion:

I have a passion to see and explore what God is doing in the lives of people, and in the places around about me, I get excited when I see people flourishing, and loving and serving one another in their areas of gifting. I want to build bridges and encourage platforms for the Good news of Jesus to travel and to impact lives here and everywhere that reach into eternity.

#### Ephesians 4.11-13.

**“The gifts that he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body**

**of Christ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.”**

My serving role as rector puts me in a strategic position over our four parishes and small teams and this allows a great vantage point to teach different ways of leading and ministering to different contexts and audiences. I hope to bring adventure and confidence for someone starting out and to offer a friendly hand and good models of practise that can be relied upon, I offer a keen eye for details and promise to be close by when you need me. I am looking to train someone with a genuine heart for God, who comes willingly to learn and to serve in our communities, open and teachable, loyal to God, to our team and to the ministry they hold. I am hoping to see afresh the ministry through their eyes and all that they might bring to the role. I hope that we might become good partners and friends in the Gospel.



# The Mease Valley Benefice

## Context

Our regular congregations, though small in number, are mostly older parishioners but there is a group of enthusiastic younger members who come with their families and are prepared to offer their skills and support to the church community. Our church buildings and older residents have a lot of history and many of our villagers can witness to the help and support and attendance to the church in the years past.

Our challenge is to show that our church communities and service in the community is as relevant now as it always has been, to show God's love in both traditional forms and in contemporary ways that speak to people where they are now. To live for Jesus in the places and in the lives that he has given us to live. Coming out of the covid pandemic comes with a real



"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

uncertainty about our financial sustainability in maintaining the old ways and so many buildings. It also comes with excitement about what God is seeking to do amongst us as we are 'shaping for mission' with his help, for how best to serve and how to renew and refresh what church might look like for the here and now and for the next generation.

## The ministry

We have beautiful calming surroundings and church buildings, that speak plainly about God and his creation in each community. We have plenty of summer weddings. Hospitals, care homes, schools, we have three local crematoriums, and seven open churchyards for burials: our context is ideal for someone called to minister to a variety of people at all ages and stages. We would love for someone with a heart for young families as well as mature believers to work alongside us. We work closely with our ecumenical partners TCC, (Tamworth Christian Churches) for outreach and prayer in our local town and we work in collaboration with our deanery colleagues in Tamworth. As part of 'Shaping for Mission' in our area we have just begun looking at three distinct areas of Tamworth. Our various parishes across the deanery are now playing with the idea of being

three parishes. The North (The Mease Valley) and the South East (Tamworth Central) and the South West (yet to be named). Rector John and Revd. Nicky from our Ministry Team, work as part of this collaboration as we test out shaping and re-shaping for effective ministry across a wider context.

## Our Ministry Team comprises

- **The Rector, Revd John Grice**
- **Our Ordained Local Minister, Revd Nicola Busby** acting as assistant minister / Focal minister for Edingale.
- **Our Licensed Reader Jackie Tyler** who is also Focal minister for Elford.
- The Benefice has a Group Ministry with the neighbouring parish of St Leonard, Wigginton. This parish has one main church and a tiny chapel. The ministry team there comprises the Vicar, an NSM, and a Reader.
- We work with a group of volunteers, wardens and local supporters.
- **We employ the local services of a Benefice Administrator**, and we are good neighbours with our local Catholic church too.

## 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.

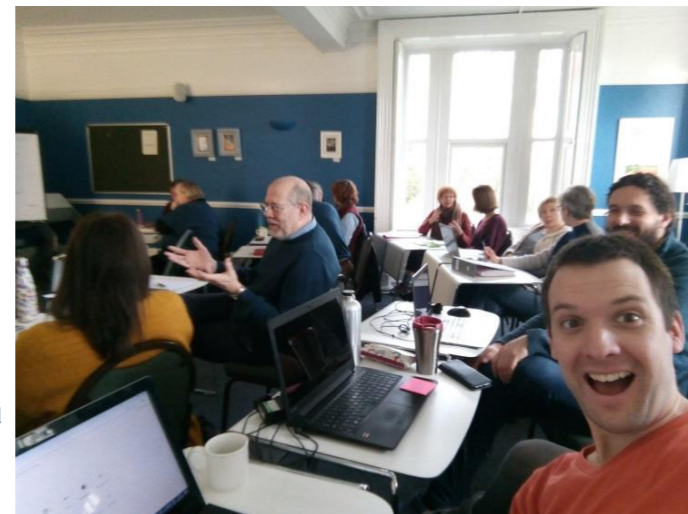
The programme provides space and an environment beyond the parish context in which curates come together with skilled tutors to learn with and from each other's shared experience, so that they can better integrate their practice and reflection, develop their personal qualities, spiritual, ministerial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

Bishops' Director of Ordinands

[M] 07949 033091

[E] [romita.shrisunder@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:romita.shrisunder@lichfield.anglican.org)

## Find us on:

ACChurchNearYou:

**Clifton Campville:**

[achurchnearyou.com/church/4236/](http://achurchnearyou.com/church/4236/)

**Chilcote:**

[achurchnearyou.com/church/4236/](http://achurchnearyou.com/church/4236/)

**Harlaston:**

[achurchnearyou.com/church/4307/](http://achurchnearyou.com/church/4307/)

**Elford:**

[achurchnearyou.com/church/4271/](http://achurchnearyou.com/church/4271/)

**Edingale:**

[achurchnearyou.com/church/4237/](http://achurchnearyou.com/church/4237/)

Website:

[measevalleychurches.com/](http://measevalleychurches.com/)

Facebook:

• [facebook.com/measevalleychurches](https://facebook.com/measevalleychurches)

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[standrewschurchcliftoncampville](https://facebook.com/standrewschurchcliftoncampville)

• [facebook.com/St-Peters-church-Elford-Tamworth-328610717984903](https://facebook.com/St-Peters-church-Elford-Tamworth-328610717984903)

## Mease Ministry

Ours is a ministry among people from all sorts of walks of life, we major at festival times particularly, where events and services can see our buildings teeming with visitors.

We have opportunities to teach all the occasional offices in our Benefice and to fulfil requirements for training. We are only six miles outside of Tamworth town centre where our deanery meets and also the Christian churches across Tamworth work together in joint partnerships.

We can offer breadth and diversity and opportunities in rural, but occasionally also in town ministry too.