

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 you, O 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.



Job Description

Whole Life Discipleship Officer

- Location:** Hybrid. Lichfield Diocesan Office/ home with travelling across the whole diocese
- Responsible to:** Head of Mission and Strengthening Communities.
- Duration:** Permanent
- Salary:** £41,765 p.a. + employer pension contribution of 12% and Life Assurance.
- Hours:** 35 hours per week with some evening and weekend working.

PURPOSE

To support parishes and other Christian communities to develop individual Christian growth at all ages and in all walks of life.

BACKGROUND

The diocese of Lichfield comprises 532 churches, 205 schools, c. 200 fresh expressions and 80 chaplaincies, alongside Lichfield cathedral. Covering the Black Country, Staffordshire and Northern Shropshire, a population of 2 million people, the diocese supports a worshipping community of around 40,000 people.

Our aspiration is that all of those 40,000 people have the opportunity to grow in their faith, week by week, year by year. Growth in faith can be lifelong, begin in childhood, and take many different forms. It may be expressed in different ways. Christian growth is about greater confidence in the gospel and a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ. As a diocesan family, we want to encourage one another as we go deeper into scripture; grow in Christian character; relate to others with increased faith, hope and love; receive spiritual gifts; discern vocation, and grow in confidence to reflect on and speak of our faith.

Our diocesan strategy envisages the development of a culture of discipleship by creating an expectation that all members of our worshipping communities will have the opportunity to explore their faith outside of regular weekly worship, for example in small or home groups that are centred around prayer and study of scripture.

Small groups are a critical part of the formation of many Christians. From the earliest days, when the Spirit fell upon the collected disciples, Christians have never been able to 'go it alone' but have always grown in faith together, led by the Spirit. Small groups can provide safe places for people to build the trust that leads to openness, reflection and growth. They thrive with diversity and can include young people and children. With appropriate safeguarding and governance they can be supported by parish churches or by other Christian communities including schools, chaplaincies and fresh expressions.

Different Christian contexts will need different models of small groups. Many churches and other settings will already have some tradition of small group work to build on. We are looking for someone who can nurture what already exists and help churches that do not yet have small group provision to develop their discipleship offer, sharing good practice across church traditions.

This is a new post, and will be located in the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Finance (LDBF) Mission and Strengthening Communities Team. The postholder will work across the diocese and car travel will be necessary as well as the ability to participate and lead online training and meetings.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES of the post

Working with our Head of Mission and Strengthening Communities, our Strategy Programme Director and other partners, the postholder will work across the diocese to develop discipleship through small groups and other opportunities to explore scripture and a deepening relationship with Christ:

- Identify suitable small group resources for a variety of parish and other settings;
- Meet and consult with parishes and others in a number of deaneries to build relationships and explore what will work in practice;
- Work with parishes and other settings to support them to introduce small groups;
- Maintain a focus on discipleship and Christian growth
- Contribute to annual review and evaluation, in order to develop the programme year by year
- ensure Safeguarding practices are maintained and liaise appropriately with the Diocese Safeguarding team. The postholder will be required to undertake mandatory safeguarding training in line with the diocesan Safeguarding framework.

There will be some allied responsibilities

- Key point of contact in the LDBF for the Community of St Chad
- Take initiative on other forms of discipleship development
- Develop training programmes for parish officer roles such as Churchwarden

Appointment as a diocesan officer brings certain intrinsic responsibilities. Our officers:

- Generate much of their own day-to-day work, using their own initiative to develop approaches that fit the context and meet the purpose of the post
- Work within a diocesan strategy and make themselves aware of others' priorities, making connections and collaborating where advantageous;
- Are accountable through regular 1-1s and membership of the appropriate team (in this case, the Mission and Strengthening Communities Team);
- Work collaboratively in partnership with central sector staff and colleagues across the diocese;

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Character and personal qualities

- a Christian disciple rooted and centred in prayer, worship and the scriptures (it is an occupational requirement in accordance with schedule 9 paragraph 1 of the Equality Act for the holder of this role to be a practising Christian)
- enthusiasm for and commitment to the deepening of others' discipleship
- a recognition that others' discipleship may be explored, developed and expressed through scripture, prayer, character, relationship, service and worship
- a flexible, positive and collaborative disposition, able to work in partnership with others
- a willingness to work positively with people from a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives and church traditions
- a desire to serve the Church of England in the Diocese of Lichfield and a passion for seeing people flourish in ministry
- a self-starter, able to work under supervision and to enable the plans of others
- a facilitative and encouraging disposition
- understanding of safeguarding implementation particularly in relation to small group work

Experience and qualifications

- Experience of delivering group work for formation or Christian growth amongst all ages
- Experience of Christian ministry or leadership, lay or ordained.
- Experience of working with diverse stakeholders with differing viewpoints
- A sense of how different church traditions think about and promote growth in faith
- Understanding of the structure, breadth and dynamics of the Church of England

Skills/Aptitudes:

- ability to think strategically and act pragmatically; able to organise training and development activities without losing sight of the wider context
- leadership and influencing skills with the ability to bring order to complex situations and find innovative ways of solving or pre-empting problems
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to tailor words and pictures to different audiences
- Ability to deal sensitively and diplomatically with a range of people.
- Ability to maintain a high level of confidentiality.
- Ability to travel across the diocese including evening and weekends
- Ability to lead and participate in online meetings, formation and training