



## Curacy in the Diocese of Lichfield

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Title post in the  
Benefice of  
Newport with Longford,  
and Chetwynd



Market town and village |  
central / traditional

Community-focussed congregations in  
rural Shropshire

# 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 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

**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 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*



# The Benefice of Newport with Longford, and



- Newport is a small market town on the Shropshire/ Staffordshire boarder – it is situated between Shrewsbury and Stafford. Chetwynd is its mainly rural next door neighbour.
- Newport has a delightful High Street, wrapped around the beautiful and imposing St Nicholas Church. This is the centre of a bustling town which leads out, into leafy, rural beauty of Chetwynd Deer Park and the glorious county-side made up of hamlets and farms.
- In 2019 our Newport in Bloom team won a Gold prize in the Britain In Bloom Awards.
- The Benefice has a population of over 8000 with new houses being built all the time.
- With prestigious schools like Haberdashers Adams Grammar and Newport Girls High School young families are moving into the area. In fact, all eight schools in Newport are very well thought of.
- Newport is a perfect place to retire to, with the growth of retirement communities, our successful high street, several gyms and exercise classes, flourishing U3A and our proximity to the amenities of Telford and Stafford.
- Demographically: mostly white British with a mix of backgrounds from socially deprived families through to the more middle-class and financially comfortable.
- Newport has a long and interesting history, as well as a vibrant contemporary culture, both St Nic's and St Michael and All Angels (pictured here) are of interest to our historical societies. We also have lots going on in town, from the Nocturn cycle race to Victorian Fayres, Proms and Prosecco to St Georges day plays.
- Newport is home to a number of small businesses as well as Industrial Estates. A Science and Technology Park is currently being built. Many working age people commute to jobs in Stafford or elsewhere in Shropshire.



## Services in the churches:

St Nicholas Church, is a fairly traditional middle of the road church, ministers robe for each service. Just before the 'Lockdown' the PCC agreed to start monthly non-Eucharistic 'family' services each fourth Sunday. We have a worship group and an organist and we sing from Mission Praise.

Two midweek services are held on Wednesdays; 10.30 am Holy Communion alternating Common Worship and BCP.

At 7pm each week we have different styles of service, an Ecumenical Healing Service, a contemporary service with a worship band, a contemplative service and 'contemporary evensong' is being launched in the Autumn Term.

At St Nic's we have facilities for coffee, but there is a kitchen in the Church Parish Rooms for larger occasions.

Our close links with local schools mean that over the Christmas period we have children from all 8 local schools, and local nurseries coming into church. Our church school, Newport Junior School has a service/assembly in church twice a term.

St Michael and All Angels is a traditional BCP loving church, worship is slightly more formal with the Priest reading the Gospel and with little change in the written liturgy.

## Sundays at St Nicholas

1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , and 5 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am Common Worship Communion (all welcome with a children's corner)
4 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am Family Worship
Refreshments available after each service and a bring and share meal roughly every sixth week.	

## Sundays at St Michael and All Angels

1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup>	9am BCP Communion services
3 <sup>rd</sup>	11am BCP Matins service
Refreshments are available after the 4th Sunday services	

# The Benefice of Newport with Longford, and



Both St Nicholas and St Michael and All Angels Churches are steeped in history and are beautiful buildings.

St Nic's is open everyday, between 10am and 3pm. Visitors from across the country and world come in to look at the beautiful stained glass windows and soak up the peaceful atmosphere.

St Michael and All Angels is open during the weekends in summer and takes part in the Ride and Stride initiative. Both churches attract history buffs who come to view renowned artifacts.

St Nic's also plays host to regular meetings of our Knitters group which is becoming a strong force for evangelism and outreach. The group is often in the Shropshire Star (local newspaper), for their displays.



Throughout December, the church is full of School Carol Services and concerts. Local choir concerts, Civic Services and nursery nativities as well as regular school services.





## Your Training Incumbent

### Revd Merry Smith

10 Forton Glade, Newport, TF10 8BP

- Trained: Cranmer Hall, Durham
- Ordained: 2014, Lichfield
- Curacy: St Bartholomew's and St Alban's: Blurton and Dresden Parish, Stoke on Trent
- Rector: since Sept 2018

Revd Merry is an enthusiastic, welcoming, and approachable Rector, she has a heart for developing the gifts of her team and congregations and is excited about the prospect of working with a curate to help them find their feet in ordained ministry and to become the leader God is calling them to be.

Before ordination, Merry was a Senior Head of Department in a large secondary school, teaching RE working with trainee and newly qualified teachers. Merry has a reputation for asking questions which get to the heart of the issue.

Merry loves music and is trying to become better at sewing.

Her particular interests in ministry are varied but Mission and Evangelism rate highly. She is currently



a Vocations Adviser, Transforming Communities Ambassador, Chaplain to various organisations (in Newport) and has taught Reader Training sessions.

Getting married during her previous post, Merry has been both single and married in ministry.



# The Benefice of Newport with Longford, and



## The Context

The context is a Market town centred around the successful High Street of Newport. Newport and district sees itself as separate from Telford. The town itself is full of historic buildings and there is an affection for the high ranking

families who bequeathed money to several Trusts and Charitable bodies to support vulnerable or entrepreneurial local people.

Newport and Chetwynd are community minded, people are friendly and there is no such thing as a quick visit to the shops, someone will catch you for a chat.

Novaportans, as people from Newport call themselves, love living in Newport and many people like getting involved organising events, groups and activities. There are more than five large choirs, a bustling U3A, Rotary Club and Rotary Lite who each do a great deal to support the town. There are Cubs, Scouts, Cadets and Martial Arts clubs. With increasing numbers of families with social needs, people have come together to start a Foodbank and a foodshare scheme.



Our Benefice has a somewhat dubious past with disagreements and one Rector ending up in prison. Memories are very long but we are developing a 'Forgiveness and Reconciliation' project to try to rehabilitate the church's image in the memories of older residents.

With a change of Rector, all the schools in Newport now want to engage with the Benefice. Newport Junior school and other schools in the town, both Secondary and Infants are open to investigating forms of chaplaincy and to strengthen our existing relationships.

There are a number of Care Homes within the Benefice, an ecumenical service is conducted in each once a month. There are also several retirement communities, warden controlled and otherwise into which we are welcomed.

## The Ministry

As St Nicholas is the focal point in the town centre, this provides opportunities. We are involved in the many events in the town, such as the Carnival, Food Frenzy, Christmas Light Switch on etc. Our church is also undergoing a time of growth and optimism where congregation members are eager to get new ideas off the ground.





As a Civic Church we have close links with the Town Council, anointing the Mayor into office each year, holding huge (2000+ people attending) Remembrance Day services and giving and receiving support from the many town activities.

If you are interested in mission and outreach, this is the place to be. With our excellent schools if you are interested in schools work, schools chaplaincy, children's spirituality or teenagers then there is space to develop your calling.

Given the exceptional location of St Nicholas Church, a Town Centre Chaplaincy is also a real possibility and forming a team of lay chaplains from across each of the churches in the town or just from the St. Nic's congregation may be fruitful. We are active members of the Prayer on the Streets

ministry, praying with people every Saturday morning.

With our ministry team of Rector, two Readers, two trainee Readers and a retired Vicar; a variety of styles and approaches can also be experienced here. This also means that learning about and developing collaborative ministry is at the heart of what God is calling us to do in Newport and Chetwynd.

Our tag line 'Putting Jesus at the heart of our community through worship, love and sharing hope' expresses clearly our main aims to reach out, praise God and to be salt and light in Newport and the surrounding area. Both church communities seek to welcome, include and nurture new people who come to services as well as reaching out in new ways to engage with new generations.

There are three house groups from St Nic's and an annual Lent group from St Michael and All Angels. Lent also means ecumenical Lent Groups (this year



# The Benefice of Newport with Longford, and

we used LICC Faith on the Frontlines), creative reflections in Holy Week and a Benefice Maundy Thursday - Last Supper; The Walk of Witness and Churches Together in Newport worship service on Good Friday and Easter Day Celebrations.

As a Benefice we are in the enviable position to have a desire for change and growth; we have recently developed a Messy Church, starting at our church school (NJS); Social/ fellowship groups for our older members - so called DOGs and DOLs. The Decrepit Old Gentlemen's club has been a hit with men of all ages with non-churchgoers developing relationships too. The Delightful Older Ladies began later but is similarly attracting lots of recruits.

A group has been gathered to review our liturgy,



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

and we have a sense of freedom and excitement about worshiping God in new and traditional ways.

There are many new initiatives taking place, Pray Bake Read; a new creche/children's group for during services is starting, Messy Church at the Parish Rooms, Staff Chaplaincy at the Junior School; a new Forest School Garden to be shared between ourselves and Novostart Nursery has just been completed. Plans are in progress for a Peace Garden in partnership with the Town Council too.

Newport has an Environmental Group, is a Dementia Friendly Town and has people engaged in so many different sports and activities that it could be literally possible to engage in developing a partnership with any of these groups. We are discerning how best to work in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and the new Newport Hub.

Internally we are seeking to strengthen our pastoral provision and the support provided to bereaved families; we are hoping to hold a course in the next six months to support parishioners who feel called to this ministry and who want to develop their discipleship in this way.

We are also in the process of developing teams for our different areas of ministry and are having a go at looking at how these groups can help to disciple



those within them. The Warden's Team are engaging in discipleship as the group through prayers and a Bible study as part of their meetings to discuss 'duties' together.

An important part of our ministry for those in the ministry team is to reflect on our sense of vocation, what nourishes us spiritually and what we are learning through personal devotions and study. We have daily prayer in Church, Monday to Thursday and it would be usual for a curate to join with this.

## 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 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 DDO will be able to provide you with more information.

### The Congregation in numbers:

Figures from 2019	St Nicholas	St Michael and All Angels
Electoral Roll	69	31
ASA	45 Adult 2 Children	10 Adult
Marriages	3	5
Funerals	31	6
Baptism	25	1
Messy Church Assemblies	89	N/A

# 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 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.



*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](http://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:

**The Revd Preb Romita Shrisunder,**  
Bishops' Director of Ordinands  
07949 033091 [M]

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

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**Newport with Longford and  
St Michael and All Angels  
Chetwynd**

**'Putting Jesus at the heart of  
community through worship, love and  
sharing hope.'**

***Are you looking for a Church perfectly  
situated for mission and outreach?***

***Do you want to learn the bread and  
butter of Parish ministry while having  
support to take risks and try  
something new?***

***Are you looking to be supported and  
challenged to grow into your calling?***

***Come and join with us as we continue  
where we are with Jesus through his  
Holy Spirit.***