

Come follow Christ



DIOCESE OF
LICHFIELD

in the footsteps of St Chad



Curacy in the Diocese
of Lichfield



Title post in the
Benefice of
Whittington and
West Felton with
Haughton



Two village churches near
the Welsh border

liberal eucharistic/open
evangelical

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

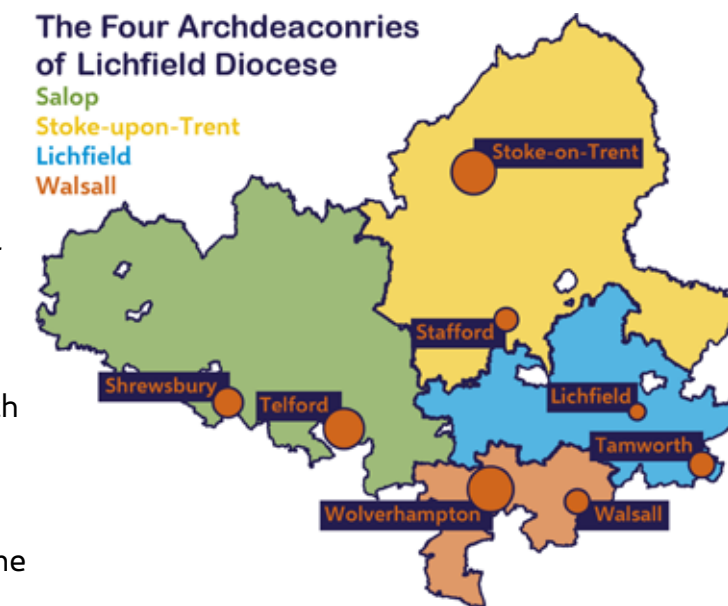
Our vision for the diocese is that all people, lay and ordained alike, will grow ever more deeply into their vocation as disciples of Christ. We hope to become a Church where all our members are equipped to know they are called by God to worship and to be the eyes, hands, feet and mouth of Christ in 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 2.0 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 Benefice of Whittington and West Felton



The parishes lie on the very furthest northern section of the A5 in North Shropshire, just outside of Oswestry and less than thirty minutes from the well known town of Shrewsbury. Across the three communities there is a real mixture of originally built houses and additional housing estates that have been added in the last forty to fifty years.

Whittington

is a large village, boasting its very own castle with a tea room, two village pubs, a local shop and a thriving chip shop which is very popular with not only the local community but also visitors. Additional housing in Whittington has increased the population to 2,592 with new houses popping up all the time.

There is also a thriving Church of England primary school which is in the processes of forming a soft federation with the local primary school in Morda. There are very strong links between the church and school with regular visits both to church and for worship in school on a Wednesday morning.

The transport links not only into the main town of Oswestry but further afield to Birmingham, Shrewsbury and even Chester and Wales are very good and reliable.



Children from the primary school tend to move up to The Marches secondary school in Oswestry or Lakelands in Ellesmere.

West Felton with Haughton

The West Felton and Haughton communities are much smaller in population but not smaller in spirit and sense of community. Additional housing over recent years has swelled the population to around 1,400 including the local hamlets and farms. West Felton is an example of a community split by a major road (the A5). The original hamlet where the church is situated lies west of the A5 and the newer part of the village including the school, shop, local pub and thriving Church of England school, which has a 'good' OFSTED report and is situated on the east side.

Most of the community work outside of the village and although a high proportion of the population are retired, there are increasing numbers of young families. On moving up to Secondary school most children move on to The Corbett school in Baschurch.

Haughton is a much smaller hamlet with surrounding farms and a very small population respectively.

with Haughton

Services in the churches:

All three churches are fairly traditional in their chosen style of worship and also mainly eucharistic. However Whittington particularly are in the processes of trialling a new Family Communion/Service on the first Sunday of the month within which we will include Baptisms as and when it is appropriate and an informal service on the third Sunday which include more charismatic songs and an opportunity to experiment with different styles of liturgy including Celtic evening prayer.



	St John the Baptist Whittington	St Michael's West Felton	St Chad's Haughton
1st	9.30am Holy Communion	No service	11am Family service/Communion
2nd	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am BCP Communion	11am Holy Communion
3rd	9.30am Holy Communion	No service	11am Holy Communion 6.30pm Informal evening service
4th	9.30am Holy Communion	No service	8am Said Communion service 11am Holy Communion
5th	9.30am Holy Communion	No service	11am Holy Communion

Buildings / Community

St John's, Whittington is a Grade II listed building and is one of the largest churches in Shropshire without pillars which makes it a very popular venue for concerts and musical performances. The annual Whittington music festival is very successful and draws people from all over the country and further afield. There are traditional Victorian pews as well as a drop down screen and projector with a fully functioning sound system and the church also has wifi which enables us to stream our Sunday services to our facebook page each week. A number of the pews were removed to make a more accessible space available at the back which is used for our weekly refreshments following the Sunday services and on a weekly basis for CAMEO our drop-in for the community and our monthly Messy church. There is also a small kitchen for making refreshments and a disabled toilet.



The Benefice of Whittington and West Felton



St Michael's, West Felton is a traditional Grade II listed building with existing pews and a small area for providing refreshments and a disabled toilet. We are in the processes of applying for a grant in order to buy a projector and free standing screen to be used at special services and for our school services.



St Chad's, Haughton is a small chapel of ease situated in a beautiful hamlet surrounded by farm land and a few residential properties.



Your Training Incumbent

Revd Revd Suzan Williams

The Rectory, Castle Street, Whittington,
Oswestry SY11 4DF
01691 674948

- **Trained:** WEMTC
- **Ordained:** 2011 Hereford diocese
- **Curacy:** St Lawrence's Church Stretton
- **Vicar since** 2016

Whilst raising a family of four children Suzan felt the prompt to explore the possibility of ordained ministry and went on to be ordained at the age of 39 and served her curacy in an evangelical setting in the market town of Church Stretton in Hereford diocese. She then felt a prompt to explore the possibility of serving within a rural setting and was appointed as a team vicar in a united benefice of 12 churches that comprised the deanery of Wrockwardine - which also meant a move of diocese to Lichfield. She was then appointed as rector of Whittington and West Felton with Haughton in 2020.

Suzan was licensed as rural dean of Oswestry

with Haughton

in January of 2023 and has a real heart for mission and outreach into the local community. She is committed to the support of the two local Church of England schools in Whittington and West Felton and is regularly involved in leading worship in both schools. On arriving in the benefice Suzan supported Jassica, the then senior curate, in her final two years of curacy.

As a training incumbent Suzan would be fully involved in enabling the curate to explore their own giftings and willingness to learn new



skills and be equipped for their own future ministry. This would include regular supervision meetings, opportunities to share in a regular pattern of prayer and worship together.

Her interests include reading various genres of authors, walking and spending time with family. Suzan also oversees the Rural networks for New Wine and is very involved in the local network which seeks to support and enable church leaders within the local area of Shropshire and more widely across the country.



The Congregations in numbers:

Figures from 2022	St John the Baptist Whittington	St Michael's West Felton	St Chad's Haughton
Electoral Roll	104	49	
Average Sunday Attendance Adults	30	12	9
Average Sunday Attendance Children	2	0	0
Baptisms	26	1	1
Marriages	4	3	0
Funerals (church)	15	3	1
Funerals (crem)	4	0	0
Funerals (commitals)	0	2	0

The Benefice of Whittington and West Felton

Context

Whittington and West Felton with Haughton are situated to the north of Shrewsbury and so accessible very easily by most major roads and motorways within easy reach of Birmingham, Chester and North Wales. Whittington particularly is a fast growing large village whereas West Felton is smaller and Haughton is a tiny hamlet.

Both villages are seen as desirable places to live with easy access to local amenities including two secondary schools and supermarkets and doctors surgeries within easy reach.



"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

The ministry

There is a huge amount of potential within both worshipping communities and St John's is particularly engaged with a Messy church and Praise and Play groups meeting both monthly on the second Sundays of the month at 4pm and weekly on a Tuesday during term time for the under fives group. Both are under review at the moment and our intention is to send out a survey to parents to ask what their needs and expectations might be.

In relation to worship style all three churches are primarily eucharistic although St John's is exploring a different style of service on the first Sunday and an Informal Family service. There are also opportunities to go into both primary schools, including an under fives group attached to both schools, in both villages.

Through the Oswestry Churches Together network there are also opportunities to pray and work ecumenically in the area with an annual outdoor carol service on the Bailey Head and an intention to be more visibly present as churches together in the area at wider community events in the town.

Our funeral ministry within the communities has increased in recent years and not only as

with Haughton

a result of the covid pandemic but possibly the increasingly aging population. We work closely with our local funeral directors to ensure families are cared for and an invitation to our annual remembering service is sent to families. We are also seeing an increasing number of people joining our drop in on a Monday morning at St John's which is developing a real buzz about it. The number of Weddings are around 6 a year which has reduced sadly and around 8-10 Christenings across the three places of worship. A sharing of this ministry to families will be part of your role within the life of the church.

We don't have an official ministry team at present however there are a couple of retired clergy who cover holidays and emergencies when needed and lay member of the congregation who are part of the teams that enable our outreach.

Initially a curate would obviously need the opportunity to gain experience in the basics of ministry i.e leading services, taking funerals and Christenings. Over time there would be opportunities to focus on an area of ministry and take a lead where appropriate and obviously after being Priested to Preside at Communion etc.

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



Curacy in Lichfield Diocese

For further information

In the first instance, please contact:

The Revd Preb Romita Shrisunder,
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Find us on:

AChurchNearYou:

Whittington
achurchnearyou.com/church/4627/

West Felton -
achurchnearyou.com/church/4614/

Haughton -
achurchnearyou.com/church/4676/

Website:
whittingtonchurch.org.uk

Facebook:
facebook.com/groups/513808072643089

We would love to welcome you to our parishes to explore what God may be inviting you to come and be part of, as we look to deepen and broaden our connections within the wider communities of our villages and also to strengthen our mission and outreach in a more intentional way.

We are exploring what different worshipping patterns might look like within our established services and also have established teams that offer Praise & Play and Messy church. We would also be excited and interested to know what things you are passionate about and also the possibility of developing our outreach to young people and young adults.

So come and be part of the next season as it unfolds and help us to shape our worshipping communities in a way that is very much focussed on being disciples together and inviting others to join us on that journey.