



Welcome to the Diocese of Leicester

We are delighted that you have retired into the Diocese of Leicester. We hope this short introduction helps you as you settle in and adjust to this new chapter. After a brief introduction to Leicester and Leicestershire, there are a few words on what we feel God has called us to as a Diocese and finally some offers of how we might serve you in mission and ministry.

An introduction to city and county

Located in the beautiful East Midlands, the Diocese of Leicester is mostly co-terminous with the county of Leicestershire and City of Leicester (not including Rutland).

The City of Leicester and Leicester Cathedral

Geographically in the centre of the Diocese, the City of Leicester has a population of around 330,000 people and an elected City Mayor. It is clear from the 2011 Census returns that Leicester in 2014 is now a majority non-white city, in which no single ethnic or religious group forms a simple majority. Nearly half the children in the city's schools have a language other than English as their "preferred" language.

Leicester is proud of its social cohesion and the contribution of the Church, and is slowly growing in confidence and identity. The St Philip's Centre, located in a multi-cultural parish, provides a base for presence and engagement of the Church in a multi-faith society. We are also a young city with many students, including those from Leicester College, Leicester University and De Montfort University.



Leicester has many of the social problems associated with any city within Britain. The results of recent regeneration programmes are obvious in much of the city centre, helping to boost Leicester's role at the heart of both the East Midlands and the wider area (including a major new retail centre, Highcross Leicester, alongside a new theatre and arts cinema). However, there are also many areas and people with significant economic and social issues, into which churches of the Diocese are seeking to play a role in showing the holistic transformation God offers through Jesus Christ. The City Mayor, through the Connecting Leicester Project, has been investing in the historic heritage of the city, an aspiration which has only been enhanced in the light of the rediscovery of King Richard III, whose mortal remains were reinterred in the Cathedral in Spring 2015. Leicester Cathedral's central and symbolic role in the life of the Diocese, co-located next to St Martins House, means that it has regular opportunities to engage in mission with those of other faiths and cultures.

The County of Leicestershire and Launde Abbey

The Diocese of Leicester ministers across a wide range of contexts, with the majority of parishes in the County of Leicestershire being predominantly rural in character or as part of one of a number of larger towns. Around 650,000 people live in the County, with growing but significantly smaller numbers of those of other faiths. Many people are employed in numerous high-tech and other businesses, ranging from those based in people's homes to large warehousing and industrial estates. Village identity, old family estates and large modern farms are also significant factors in our County. Mining has a key heritage in some parts of the Diocese. Some parts of the County (both rural and in market towns) struggle with deprivation and unemployment. On the edges, some county residents tend to look to neighbouring urban conurbations (Nottingham, Derby, Rugby and Birmingham) as the urban places to which they gravitate. A growing and significant number of people commute beyond the County (especially to London).

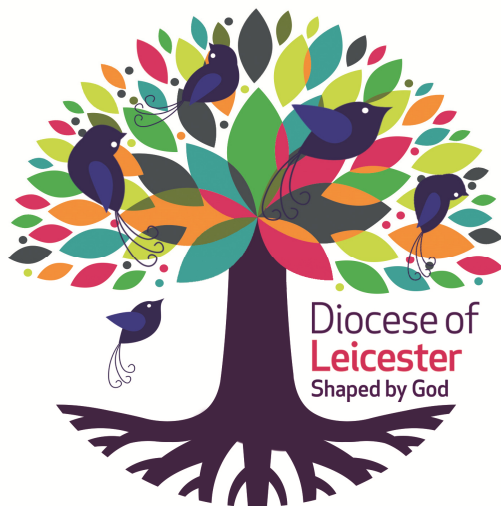
Located in the rolling hills of west Leicestershire, the diocesan retreat house, Launde Abbey (www.launde.org.uk) offers space for reflection and spiritual nourishment to individuals and groups. Recently refurbished it is used extensively by the Diocese for training, retreats and meetings.

Shaped by God...

...is the long term vision of the Diocese of Leicester. Originally discerned in 2005, with two reviews and renewals since, and aided by identifying nine common marks of mission (with auditing and training focused around each), Shaped by God looks to see every church growing in the depth of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, a growth in the numbers of those disciples, and the Kingdom service which leads from it. The Shaped by God strategy is the umbrella under which all mission and ministry in the Diocese exists; all our energies, both as parish and fresh expressions of Church, as local churches and diocesan officers, flow from what it means to have Shaped by God as our diocesan vision.

A short video explaining more of the vision, the report itself, plus a host of different resources (including a Growth Fund) can be downloaded here: <http://www.leicester.anglican.org/shaped-by-God/> or available by post from

barry.hill@leccofe.org or 0116 261 5335. At the heart of our diocesan vision is an image of growth, a metaphor, drawn from the parable Jesus told of the Mustard Tree. The picture to the left is of a seed that has become a tree so big that the birds of the air come and rest in its branches. It contrasts the latent potential of the seed with a plant that has grown and serves creation. This is a picture of the Kingdom of God. If the tree illustrates the growth of God's Kingdom people in number and reach, its roots represent that growth in depth, and growth in service to the world can be seen where the birds rest in the tree's branches.



These three dimensions of growth are at the heart of what we expect to see in our church as we allow ourselves to be shaped by God. We need to be intentional in allowing God to grow his church in this way and the image is intended to be a reminder.

Serving you in mission and ministry

The desire of diocesan and bishop's staff is to support you in the mission and ministry to which God is calling you in and with the context He has placed you. We realise that will look very different person to person and context to context, with some stepping back from more active ministry for a season or more permanently, for others the shape of ministry being more recognisably priestly and for others retirement bringing a calling or desire to explore new forms of mission and ministry. We are available to help you discern what that looks like where you are, rather than just to look at what gaps need to be filled.

As a Diocese, our development and training ethos, is that we work with people specific to and often with those in their context, and that nearly all training and development is open to all (ordained, lay, actively retired, still exploring). Our hope is that what we offer helps the whole people of God to see and be part of the growth in the three dimensions articulated above. So unless otherwise stated, everyone is welcome to all. Where possible, we would encourage you to come with others from your context, but we appreciate that can take time in the early days of being in a new place. Details of how to find out what is on are included below.

We don't want money to be a bar to what God is calling us all to, and so, in addition to nearly all events being offered without charge, we also have a small pot of money to help equip actively retired clergy in their mission and ministry within the diocese. As with other ordained and authorised Ministers, guidelines will help you discern what can be applied for, with a normal maximum grant of £160 in any calendar year. For more information contact Stuart.Burns@LecCofE.org or 0116 261 5354.

There are a number of ways of plugging into news, events, courses and resources which might be of interest:

- ❖ **Diomail** – each week, a single e-mail of news is sent to all that would like to know what is going on. You can sign up for it, if that would be interest, here: <http://www.leicester.anglican.org/misc/diomail-signup>
- ❖ **Annual Mission and Ministry events brochure** - If you haven't already received a copy of the annual Mission and Ministry events brochure, we would love to send you a one off copy or add you to list of those receiving this each July. To receive it on a one-off or annual basis contact claire.stapleton@leccofe.org or on 0116 261 5317.
- ❖ **Termly resources mail** - and finally, once a term e-mail with further events, courses and resources is sent from the Mission and Ministry team. Contact Claire (as above) to receive it.