

St Nicholas' Church, Burton and St Michael's Church, Shotwick



A message from Bishop Mark

Thank you for looking at this post in Chester Diocese. Whatever the Lord has for you, I want to assure you of my own prayers and a deep gratitude that we might get to partner together in this part of the Lord's work.

I have spent ages trying to capture the enormity of the privilege I feel in getting to serve the people of this diocese, and my words cannot bear the weight of that calling. This community of communities ranging from the very richest to the very poorest and the deepest rural to the most industrialised and urban is amazing. The diocese holds together in a shared sense of call to be 'Together in Christ Sharing Hope'. We have a deeply held vocation to serve the 1.5 million inhabitants who have no meaningful connection with a community of faith, and share the feast which has been shared with us in Jesus.

In Chester Diocese this is always going to be worked out locally first and foremost: no-one met Jesus through a Diocese! Lives are changed in parishes, chaplaincies, and new expressions of Christian community, when people are invited in kindness and grace into transformative encounter with the love of the God who made them. Together we focus on our broad strategic aims so that those who know they are the people of God can serve all the people God calls in their everyday living.

We are utterly committed to safeguarding, because every person matters to our God and Saviour more than we know how to express. This is also why we welcome applications from every background for posts in this diocese. We are learning how to do all of this as guest rather than always as host, as we partner to serve the world to which we are sent.

If God is calling you to serve with us, I rejoice! Come, roll up your sleeves, and get stuck in!
If the call is elsewhere then be assured of our gratitude and earnest prayer that the Lord will lead and provide in all things.

Please do pray for us, too – the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

+Mark



Our Offer to You

We are looking for a **part time** vicar to provide Sunday services and 3.5 days of ministry per week. The working days and hours are **flexible**, taking into account the services provided. We understand what it's like to have a part time vicar and recognise prioritisation needs to happen in a part time post. We will give all the admin support we can.

The remuneration is half stipend plus a beautiful large modern vicarage in the heart of Burton.

The funding contribution from the two parishes is approximately 3/4 Burton and 1/4 Shotwick. Both parishes have a separate culture and PCC, but work together in a number of areas, for example safeguarding, study groups and communication with occasional joint events throughout the year. Our Reader and OWLs work across both churches.

We believe this is a lovely place to live and work. We look forward to welcoming whoever God is calling to our communities in this picturesque part of the Wirral.



Who are we looking for?

Our parishes are seeking someone who will:

- Build on opportunities in our relationship with our local communities and CofE (Aided) primary school, thereby work to expand and grow our churches.
- Provide oversight and encouragement to Burton's Children and Family worker, and work collaboratively with them and our Junior Church team.
- Nurture the spiritual growth of individuals and the congregations, helping us to deepen our relationship with Christ and grow in faith together.
- Find joy in enabling people to worship in both traditional and modern services and encourage our congregations to live out our christian faith in everyday life.
- Provide leadership on Safeguarding with the support of the PSO.
- Support, lead and inspire our reader, our volunteers and church members. We need someone with energy and good interpersonal skills to be a hub at the centre of our wheel.

A little about St Michael's, Shotwick

There has been a worshipping community in the rural village of Shotwick for over a thousand years. Within the walls of St Michael's the medieval history is tangible, it holds a fascination for both adults and children.

For many years St Michael's has welcomed people from the parish, over the Welsh border, deep in to Cheshire and across the Wirral. It is always a privilege when a stranger walks through the hefty 15th century door and leaves as a welcomed friend. Our vision is to build on this foundation and support all on their journey of faith.

Our philosophy is to include and support our core membership, to deepen our faith and encourage others to join us to share in God's love and blessing. Our worship is rooted in the Book of Common Prayer and Common Worship. No matter how small or large our congregation is, the feedback tends to be positive. Pastoral care is very much in house via phone calls, cards and hospital and care home visits. Safeguarding is very important to us, and we are committed to keeping St. Michael's a safe space for all.



St Michael's is Grade 1 listed with a tower that boasts a refurbished chiming clock and a ring of six bells. The cherished box pews and pipe organ are two of the features often commented on. The Triple Decker pulpit is a key fabric item, it is in fine condition and used on occasion. We are also gifted with a Trena Cox stained glass chancel window that depicts our patron saint. Our dedicated family pew holds material for children to use and books to be taken home free of charge.

The church is open daily from dawn till dusk thus giving sanctuary to a flow of visitors and those who for many years, have found solace in a quiet time of reflection. Our Visitors Book gives testament to this and the appreciation of our worship.

St Michael's and its surrounds have the necessary facilities to lend themselves well for the calendar of church services and our successful music events, presentations, and Heritage Open Days; these are often well attended and sometimes fill the church. The joint benefice magazine is a perfect way to witness the day to day life of both churches.



Challenges and Opportunities

St Michael's Church

As a small worshipping community, we understand we need to increase our core number, particularly active members, and encourage visitors to join us on our Christian journey. We regularly 'Zoom' our services to people who are not able to attend in person, but we would like to be able to work with a new vicar to find new ways of growing our congregation.



We believe the church building, as the only community space in Shotwick, is a key asset and we regularly host history groups, primary school visits and concerts.

We recognise the need to build on this opportunity, including increasing membership of Friends of St Michael's, to find new ways of generating income to maintain the beautiful church building and its surroundings.

A little about St Nicholas', Burton

St Nicholas aims to provide a welcoming space for people of all ages to explore their relationship with God, whether that is in the church building or in our wider community.

Our priorities are to increase the visibility of our faith within the local community, to strengthen work with children and families, and to nurture and develop the faith of the congregation.

The church community is drawn from the semi-rural villages of Burton and Puddington, as well as the wider surrounding villages and the larger towns of Neston and Parkgate.

Service styles are split equally between traditional and more modern, and now include new styles of worship in our growing provision for Junior Church. Beyond the church, building our faith is sustained through a home group and Mothers Union.



The main Sunday service, with highest attendance, is at 10am and is currently a mixture of modern morning worship and a monthly Holy Communion. This service attracts a wide range of worshippers who prefer less formal forms of worship.

Although lower in attendance, the weekly and monthly Book of Common Prayer services are all deeply valued by those who enjoy the beauty and peace of the worship.



As a church community, we are acutely aware of our responsibility towards the next generation. In August 2024 we appointed our first Children and Families worker (CFW) on a 10 hours per week contract which is fully funded for 3 years initially.

In addition to starting a growing toddler group called St Nics Nippers, the CFW also works with our developing Junior Church team to offer Messy Church to primary aged children. Even though we have an ageing congregation, we see the work of the Junior church as a key priority.

Pastoral care is coordinated through a pastoral care coordinator, and home communions are provided by a small team of lay Eucharistic Ministers. Further outreach is provided by the 'Open the Book' team who visit local schools to act out and explain bible stories, bellringers take handbells to local care homes and we are all responsible to do what we can to help those in need and distress. For a number of years, at least 10% of our income has been donated to local, national and international charities.

The church is represented at Deanery Synod and Neston District Churches Together. A weekly information sheet is both distributed in church and emailed out to those who have elected to be informed. A joint benefice magazine is produced bi-monthly and provides a great way to access the life of both churches.



St Nicholas is a beautiful listed Georgian building. Successive improvements have made the building up to date for modern worship. There is flexible seating in the chancel facilitating concerts and performances, a fully integrated audio visual system with retractable screen, video recorder and live streaming.

The vestry is a clean modern space with a kitchen area and space for meetings and small groups. There are plans in progress to update the toilet to make it suitable for use by young families, and we hope this will enable us to integrate Junior Church more fully into the building.



Challenges and Opportunities

St Nicholas' Church

The progress being made by the Junior Church team is encouraging. 'Crafternoons' for older primary school children are now being offered, expanding on the success of Messy Church. However, these events often take place in the Gladstone Village Hall and there is, as yet, little crossover between attendance at Junior Church and the traditional services held in church. How to link these worship groups is as yet unresolved and this is a key area to explore, especially as we seek to find new people to replace faithful, but ageing volunteers.

St Nicholas has a reputation, from parishioners and visiting clergy as being a kind and welcoming community. However, on reflection, we are not as integrated into the local community as we would like. By living out our Christian faith in everyday life, and revitalising the Friends of St Nicholas, we hope to connect the church more strongly to the local community.

This is an action for all of us as we seek to broaden our membership, and we are seeking someone who will lead and be involved with this aspiration.



Bishop Wilson Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Bishop Wilson School is located in Burton village and has close connections with St Nicholas Church through its Governors and Trustees. Currently three members of the church community serve as Governors and in addition the PCC-appointed Trustee body administers a fund for the benefit of the children of the school. Christian values are interwoven through the curriculum.

The Executive Head, and Head of School are both keen to develop and strengthen links with the church. They discussed the vacancy with pupils and staff and they have provided feedback which indicates a desire to work with our new vicar.

We would like a new vicar who is kind and caring, fun to be around, especially when they come into our school to lead our assemblies. We would love a vicar who is able to tell great stories that keep us interested, while also being informative and helping us to learn new things. Most of all, we want someone who can speak to us in a way we understand and listen to us when we talk.

Our Children and Families Worker has begun to work more closely with the school, taking some assemblies and running a lunchtime makaton choir. The school regularly uses the church building for services, for example Harvest, Easter and Christmas.

The Vicarage

The vicarage was built to a high specification in 2022 and is designed for modern family living.

It is centrally located in the attractive village of Burton and is within easy walking distance of St Nicholas Church, Gladstone Village Hall and Bishop Wilson School, Shotwick is 15 minutes away by car.

The accommodation comprises a large kitchen/dining room, lounge and study,

Downstairs there is also a cloakroom, utility room, generous storage and garage.

Upstairs there are four generous double bedrooms, main bathroom and ensuite.

Outside there is a landscaped, easy to maintain garden.



Our Communities

Burton, Puddington and Shotwick are located on one side of the Wirral Peninsula, overlooking the River Dee. These attractive sandstone villages lie between the market town of Neston and the Welsh border. Close by are Burton Mere RSPB Reserve and Ness Botanic Gardens.



Burton and Puddington have a number of clubs, activities and societies, ranging from gardening clubs to yoga. Some are based in the Gladstone Village Hall where there are tennis courts, cricket grounds, bowling green and children's playground. These facilities are regularly used for church coffee mornings, Junior Church and social events.



Our communities benefit from excellent road access to Chester, Liverpool and North Wales. There is a convenient Merseyrail train service at Neston and Hooton, and Burton is served by a regular bus service to Chester and Neston. For cyclists, Burton Marsh Greenway, at the edge of Burton village, provides traffic free links to West Wirral and Chester.

While Burton and Puddington both have cafes, Neston has a full range of local facilities for shopping, including a weekly market. Doctors, dentists and secondary school can also be found there.



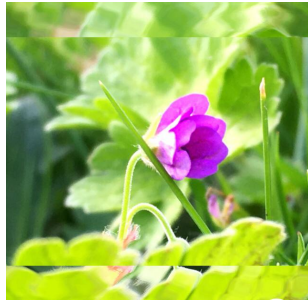
Thank you

Thank you for taking time to read our profile.

More information on our parishes can be found at

St Nicholas' Church burtonchurch.org.uk

St Michael's Church shotwick.org.uk



The photos on this page were taken by previous members of St Nicholas' Junior Church to celebrate the biodiversity in our environment.