Come follow Christ

DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD

in the footsteps of St Chad

Curacy in the Diocese of Lichfield

Title post in the parish of Meole Brace, Shrewsbury (Trinity Churches)

Suburban | open evangelical

Five congregations in three centres in one parish

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 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

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

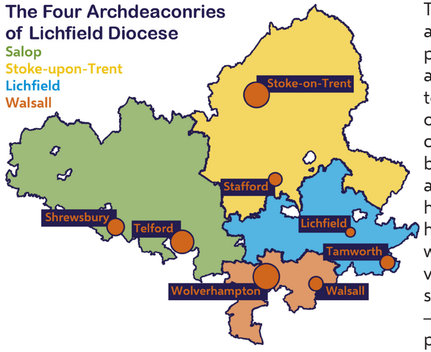
Lichfield Diocese is one of the largest in the country, covering an area of 1744 square miles and serving a population of more than 2 million.

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

Everything but the sea

David Rayner (Wikipedia) / Stoke-on-Trent Bottle Kiln / CC BY-SA 2.0BY-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.

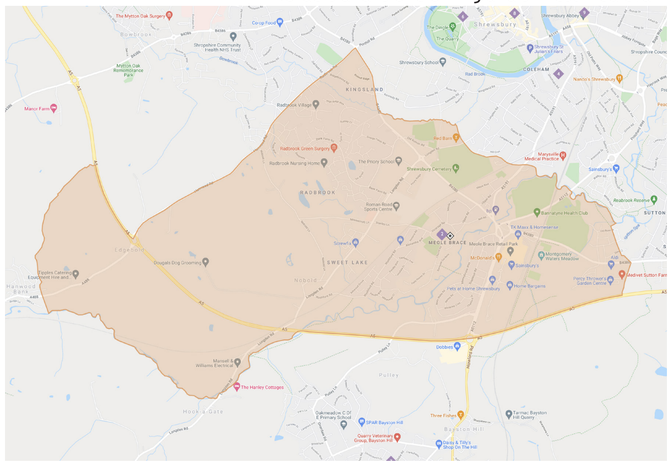
Wulfrun Centre in Wolverhampton is one of many shopping destinations in the region © Roger Kidd -/ geograph.org.uk/p/1171894/ CC BY 2.0

Alton Towers near Uttoxeter / Jeremy Thompson/Flickr / CC BY 2.0

Trinity Churches, Meole Brace

Trinity Churches are a thriving community of Christians in Meole Brace, Radbrook Green and the wider Shrewsbury area. Together we are growing faith, proclaiming hope, and living the love of Jesus.

Shrewsbury is a fantastic place to live, and may well be one of Britain's best kept secrets! With a population of around 100,000, it is set amidst glorious countryside near to the Welsh Borders and is one of England's finest medieval market towns. The town centre is packed with timber-framed black and white buildings, steep narrow streets and alleyways. As well as its famous annual flower show, and summer season festival, the town has a wide range of good shops, excellent schools, a new theatre, cinemas, restaurants and cafes, a new university, and a vibrant night life.



Shropshire is perfect for walkers, history lovers or foodies, to name but a few things the county is famous for! The Shropshire hills, Welsh coast and Snowdonia are easily accessible for day trips. Birmingham and Chester (1 hour), Manchester and Liverpool (1.5 hours) and London and the Lakes (3 hours) are all closer to Shrewsbury than many people think.

The Parish of Meole Brace (Trinity Churches)

The Parish of Meole Brace is on the south west of Shrewsbury and has a population of around 9,000 in five distinct areas of housing: Meole Village, Meole Estate, Radbrook Green, a new housing development known as Sweet Lake, and the hamlet of Nobold.

The Parish is mainly residential, although there is also a small amount of light industry and a large retail park in Meole Brace, and smaller

shopping centre in Radbrook. The parish is also home to two excellent secondary schools, two really great primary schools (including one Church of England), residential homes, and the mighty Shrewsbury Town Football Club.

Trinity Churches is made up of five different Sunday congregations in three different worship centres, each with a particular 'flavour'. We also have a mid-week congregation and a good number of the church consider themselves part of a small group. In 2021 our Electoral Roll was 379 adults.

Services in the churches

Although we continue to rejoice in worshipping and singing together once again, we feel God has taught us a lot about worship during the pandemic. We are blessed with some fantastic PA and AV equipment and are committed to retaining an online worshipping presence alongside a daily 'Six O'Clock live' prayer gathering. Covid has presented us with the opportunity to re-evaluate as we have re-started things, and we've found it as important to keep asking 'why' as well as 'how'.

Holy Trinity Meole Brace

9.00am A morning service of Holy Communion with a more traditional feel. (Common Worship weekly, robed) c55 adults. Worship led by organ and music group.

10.45am A more contemporary and informal service, with groups for 0s-18's+. c110 adults and c35+ children and young people, with another c40 households joining online, led by a worship group. We have a full programme of activities for children and young people, but also really value All Age Worship where we gather together as 'all ages and stages'.

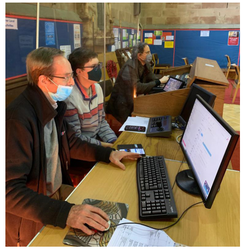
6.30pm An informal evening service, with communion once a month. Services have a 'worship, word and ministry' format. c30 adults, some of whom may have worshipped elsewhere in the morning, either in the parish or at another church.

Christ the King Radbrook Green

10.30am A morning service in Radbrook which meets in Radbrook Community Centre. The service has a contemporary and informal feel. C30 adults with worship led by music group.

The Church in the Meet Place, Meole Estate

11.00am A monthly service which is held in 'The Meet Place' on the Meole Estate, as part of the regular programme of discipleship events



Outdoor Easter morning at Holy Trinity (top); AV team streaming from inside (middle) and; band and congregation inside in normal times (below)

The notable stained glass in Holy Trinity (above) contrasts with the modern buildings of the other congregations:

Christ the King congregation meeting outside the Radbrook Green community centre (right) and;

The Meet Place, a shop unit at the heart of the estate - in the background here while the congregation worships on the green meeting outside.

for people on the local housing estate. Some attend other services at Holy Trinity. About 15 people, mostly senior citizens. Most of the work of the Church in the Meet Place is midweek and in small groups.

We currently have a role in providing ministry support to our neighbouring parish, Holy Trinity, Belle Vue. HTBV meets at 10.30 on a Sunday morning and is a fairly small congregation of prayerful people who love Jesus and desire to see more of the Spirit at work in their lives and community. Monday to Friday, HTBV hosts a flourishing preschool, rated outstanding by Ofsted, where the children worship each day. We are just launching a Messy Church in Belle Vue to equip and encourage the preschool children to take a lead on faith in the home, and to maintain these links with these families into the primary years and beyond.

Buildings / community

There has been a church in Meole Brace for well over a thousand years, and the current Holy Trinity Church is at least the third building on the site. However we strive to be a parish not

just with a long history but also with an exciting future. Recent years have seen the growing impact of Christ the King and of Café Connect in Radbrook Green, fresh expressions of church on the Meole Estate, and the amazing gift that the Trinity Centre continues to be to church and community. In non pandemic times, we would regularly see 1,000 people a week flood through the doors of the Trinity Centre for everything from Bulgarian lessons to ballet classes, giving us an amazing opportunity to offer something

of God's incredible hospitality. It's so good to see many of these things beginning to return and to have the centre once again buzzing with life. The Trinity Centre also hosts the amazing Windfall Project, run by one of our church members, which makes delicious jams and chutneys while offering work based training to adults with learning disabilities.

Labels don't always mean much in church life, but we'd describe ourselves as 'Open Evangelical'. We have links with the New Wine network as well as with Church Army and the Alpha / HTB Leadership groupings, though for many others in the parish they are equally at home in many other networks and out-workings of church life. We've often used the phrase

The Congregations in numbers:

	2021	2020	2019
Electoral Roll	379	377	381
ASA	250 adults; 35 U18		263 adults 40 U18s
Church at home weekly attendance	~40	~230	
Marriages	9	6	19
Funerals	30	41	35
Baptisms	16	6	30

'God's amazing family' which reminds us that we all get to belong, whatever labels we might want to use for ourselves.

Your Training Incumbent

Revd Fiona Iddon

18a Meole Walk, Meole Brace,
Shrewsbury SY3 9EU

- **Trained:** **St Mellitus College, North West**
- **Ordained:** **Lichfield, July 2017**
- **Curacy:** **St George's Frankwell, Shrewsbury**
- **Assoc Vicar:** **since July 2020**

Fi began her working life as a secondary school teacher, taking an active role in mentoring and training both student and newly qualified teachers. Fi sees helping people recognise and develop their God-given gifting and callings as a key part of the priestly role.

Alongside her work as Associate Vicar within the parish, Fi also holds a role as Chaplain to University Centre Shrewsbury (part of the University of Chester). Although there is no expectation that a curate at Trinity Churches would be required to be involved in this ministry, it does provide a great opportunity to experience the role of chaplaincy in an educational setting. It's far more about 'being' than 'doing', and allows for the incredible opportunity of ministry among young adults, many of whom are very open to talking about faith.

Trinity Churches is a really great training opportunity for any curate as there is so much going on, and such a wide variety of different ministry areas in which to gain experience. We have a long and proven track record of doing this well. The staff team is strong, and includes people with specialisms in particular areas of ministry such as youth and children and community work. Fi is really looking forward to learning from a new colleague and their prior experience, and working together to make sure that curacy is as fruitful and fulfilling as it can be. These three years really matter to you as a curate and to us as a church.

Fi and her husband Simon have lived in Meole Brace for many years. He is Assistant Headteacher at the local secondary school, and they have two children who are pupils there. As a family they like being with friends, spending time outdoors and all enjoy a good book!

University Centre Shrewsbury

Context

We are committed to being a parish church to the areas we serve and a vibrant Christian presence across our local communities. Alongside that we recognise the joys of gathering people who live across Shrewsbury, and in many of the villages and areas across this part of Shropshire. We have been encouraged to be resourcing and equipping other local churches, and supporting mission and ministry in this part of Shropshire.

Within the parish itself, each of the five areas has its own distinct identity. Radbrook is an established modern estate with a real centre to it (which includes Café Connect and the Community Centre where CTK meets). Meole Estate is a close knit community of social housing. Meole Village is a mixture of some very old and some much more modern housing. Nobold is a hamlet right on the edge of the parish. The new housing area of Sweet Lake has been built in the last few years. We are very much aware that we don't yet have a church presence here.

This parish a really friendly place. People know one another and look out for their neighbours. Many families have lived here for generations, but newcomers are always welcomed. The parish is an easy place to get around on foot or by bicycle. You'll need to learn to leave enough time to chat to people along the way!

The ministry

Trinity Churches is a parish church. We want to be good news in sharing God's love with those who live here. The high number of occasional offices we are asked to conduct reflects the strong place that the Church has within the community. We consider these to be a vital part of our ministry and mission.

Introducing our staff team to you is a really good way of describing much of our ministry and mission:

Our Vicar, Phil, oversees Trinity Churches alongside his role as Area Dean of Shrewsbury and other commitments within the Diocese and national church. Phil is a great leader and encourager of others.

Valerie is one of our Associate Ministers and heads up the 9am congregation. Valerie is brilliant at walking alongside those who are elderly. She oversees our monthly

Revd Phil Cansdale has been vicar of Trinity Churches since 2009 but may be even more proud to be either area dean or chaplain to Shrewsbury Town Football Club

'Trinity Table' lunch and the pastoral side of our weekly 'Cloisters Café', as well as being brilliant at visiting and making phone calls.

Charles is another associate minister and in his day job is an expert in all things water related. He loves encouraging people to go deeper in prayer, and does so by overseeing smaller prayer groups as well as regular 24/7 prayer initiatives. Charles is really keen to encourage faith in the workplace, particularly for those involved in business. He has recently produced 'In Conversation' podcasts and videos alongside other members of our church about their working lives.

Keith and Amal are our Pioneer Community ministers. They take a lead on our mission on the Meole Estate, and oversee groups like 'Bacon Buddies' as well as some amazing discipleship programmes. During the pandemic, they managed our weekly food delivery service which fed some 80+ households and provided emergency food parcels to those in need.

Cerys is our fabulous minister for children and families. She used to be the Messy Church Enabler for the Diocese so knows a thing or two about engaging families in a wide variety of ways. We are an active presence in both primary schools, particularly Meole Brace

Church of England Primary where there are very natural links between church and school. One of our congregation, Judith, has a role as chaplain here, and works closely with Cerys. Our toddler groups are always busy (supported by our Preschool worker, Carol) and feed into both our monthly Toddler Service and Messy Church. Trinity Kids on a Sunday morning is complemented by mid-week groups for deeper discipleship.

Craig is our minister for youth and young adults. Most recently he has been pioneering some detached youth work on the Meole Estate, partnering with Shrewsbury Youth for Christ, alongside discipling the many young people of Trinity Churches. The last few years has

seen a steady rise in numbers of young adults engaging in all aspects of church life.

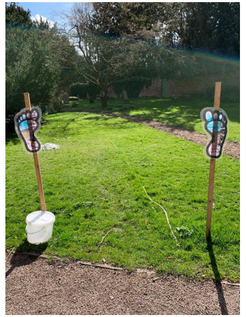
Kevin is our Operations Manager and is responsible for the smooth running of the parish. He does an amazing job of caring for our buildings, which are such an incredible resource for our ministry. Kevin generally keeps us all on the right side of risk assessments, maintenance, finance and all things legal. He is ably assisted in the office by Jenny who oversees finance, and Shannon who is our comms assistant. Shannon helps prepare the IT for our services each week.

Helen is our Trinity Centre and events manager. She oversees the work of the Trinity Centre and the hospitality that we offer here as a church.

The Trinity Centre is often people's first 'step through the door' of any church for many years and we take this responsibility for faith sharing seriously. Helen's husband, Mike, is our caretaker and so is often around the building, too.

Tim is our gardener. Over the last two years we've begun using the churchyard more and more as a place for people to encounter Jesus. Although it's always been a popular community space we've had a variety of different prayer trails available and seen many, many people engage with these.

Café Connect on Radbrook Green is managed by Dave Aberley and has it's own board of directors. This is a really important presence for us as a church in Radbrook Green, and it's a place of welcome that's valued by many people.



The churchyard trails have been particularly appeciated through lockdowns (above).

Some of our young people on a weekend away (below)

Meole Brace is such a great training opportunity for a curate, and we are really delighted that you are considering it. Previous curates would all talk about how positive their time here has been, and how the breadth and scope of ministry and mission in a thriving parish is an incredible foundation for future ministry. The opportunity to work alongside and learn from a range of hugely gifted leaders is such a gift for any curate.

The sort of role that might develop for a particular curate will obviously be informed by their own giftings and previous experience. We would hope that their 'fresh eyes' might well identify new mission areas and opportunities that we have yet to recognise.

"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

Responsibilities of previous curates have included:

- **Leadership of one of the 'congregational leadership teams' across the parish.**
- **Overseeing the development of small groups as integral to the church's vision.**
- **Line management of the Youth or Children's Minister.**
- **Developing a new FXC on the Meole Estate**
- **Leading key strategic initiatives, eg LICC Frontline, St Chad's Rhythms of Grace.**
- **Co-leading training courses, eg Alpha, Lent, Growing Leaders.**
- **Developing preaching series and teaching programmes.**
- **Spending a year on Standing and Finance committees, seeing some of the management and strategic issues of leading a larger church.**

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 DDO will be able to provide you with more information.

The Trinity Centre is an artful blend of courtyard, sympathetic architecture and modern facilites, much used for community and diocesan events

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.

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

"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

For further information

In the first instance, please contact:

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Bishops' Director of Ordinands
[M] 07949 033091
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Website:

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Trinity Churches

Trinity Churches, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury

We are a thriving community of Christians in Meole Brace, Radbrook Green and the wider Shrewsbury area. Together we are growing faith, proclaiming hope and living in the love of Jesus.

Come and join us!

FAITH HOPE LOVE