

The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave

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THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD

2nd March 2026, St Chad of Lichfield

**To: all licensed Clergy and Readers in the Diocese of Lichfield,
and Clergy and Readers holding Permission to Officiate**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I send you warm greetings on the Feast of St Chad. Today marks ten years since I first joined the celebrations of this day in Lichfield, on 2nd March 2016, when it was announced that I had been nominated to be the 99th Bishop of Lichfield. Over those ten years, I have been constantly inspired and encouraged by the example of our first and greatest bishop, and humbled to be numbered as one of his successors. Chad was the first to bring to Mercia the life-giving, peace-making, soul-restoring gospel of Jesus Christ; as we face the challenge of re-evangelising our contemporary Mercia, I am convinced that we can only do that by walking in his steps of kindness, friendliness and humility in the service of others. For the many occasions on which I have fallen short of those values, I ask your forgiveness.

As I have approached this anniversary, I have been reflecting on and praying about my own ministry, and I am writing now to let you know my discernment that this year is the right time, both personally and for our diocese, for my service as your bishop to come to an end. Accordingly, His Majesty the King has graciously given me permission to resign the See of Lichfield at the end of September 2026, and I will be retiring from stipendiary ministry then. Julia and I are planning to make our home in Leicester, a city which we know and love well. At that time, I will be 68 years old, and I will have served in the ordained ministry of the Church of England for 44 years.

I will soon be writing more fully to you about the great joy that the last ten years have brought me in our shared ministry; but I do want to set down here both my appreciation for all the care, support and encouragement that I have received from you, and also my admiration for all the kindness, wisdom and prayer that you bring into the lives of so many people through your varied ministries. I know that I have been blessed over the last ten years to work in one of the friendliest, most down to earth and least pretentious parts of the Church of England; thank you from my heart.



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More detailed information will follow in due course about various matters, including arrangements for the forthcoming vacancy in see. I would ask you, though, to make a note of Sunday 27th September, when I will be at our Cathedral for my last day of active ministry in this diocese. Ahead of that, there will be many opportunities for us to see one another, and for me to express my thanks to each one of you. Please do pray for Julia and me in the coming months and be sure of my prayers for each of you.

In the meantime, I hope that you are relishing this great gift of grace which is the season of Lent. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Chrism Eucharist in our Cathedral on Maundy Thursday, 2nd April; it will be good for us to be together as we prepare to share at the Easter feast in the joy of the risen Lord.

Your brother in Christ,

+Michael Ipgrave



**DIOCESE OF
LICHFIELD**

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