

PIONEERING

Curacy Opportunity

ST. PETERS, ST PHILIPS & SHINE, SWINDON (DIOCESE OF BRISTOL)

We are really excited about the opportunity of having a Curate joining us from Summer 2025. We believe that we can provide a really exciting mix of traditional with exploring new ways of being Church, working with those who have been Christians for a long time as well as those on the fringes who might never go to a church. This is a great place to learn as the Curate will be involved in a really wide range of different experiences inc Schoolswork; Discipleship; Mentoring; Childrens and Youth; Kerbside/Street based work (especially with those at risk of exploitation); Older persons events; Food projects; Pastoral services; Sunday and Mid-week worship, plus many more! This all while with getting great support from amazing communities / congregations; being part of a diverse and growing team; experienced line managers; strong community partners and clergy. This is a fantastic opportunity!

The wider context

Swindon has a long industrial history, first as a railway town and more recently as a manufacturing hub. Employment has always boomed, and the town has continued to expand, although it has recently suffered from the closure of some major employers such as Honda. The population is 233,000 and growing: several major new housing estates are being built on the outskirts of Swindon. While sometimes at the butt of jokes Swindon is actually a fantastic thriving town with a great mix of urban busyness but also surround by beautiful countryside. Our three churches are located on the north side of Swindon, with easy road access to the A419 up into the Cotswolds, not 10 minutes away, or down to the M4 where Bristol, Bath, Oxford and Reading are all in easy reach - and Central London is 45 minutes train journey away.

Of the three Churches Upper Stratton is the longest established community and was initially built in part to accommodate the Arkells work force. The brewery is still a family run, functioning brewery today. Pinehurst is a council estate built in the 1920s with the



adjoining council estate of Penhill built in the 1950s to house those being relocated from London.

St Philip's Church



...is located in Upper Stratton. The electoral roll stands at 55, with a Sunday morning congregation of about 32. The robed choir is a central part of our worship and identity. We have been following the 'Jesus Shaped People' programme as a church during 2024, and are seeking to grow, be more outward looking and serve our community better. The church has had some difficulties over the last 20 years and has fallen into telling itself sad stories about itself to itself, however, we are prayerfully seeing this narrative change and are open to any gifts the curate brings to help us explore new perspectives and continue to move gently forward. A pre-school rents the adjoining church hall, and we would love to build better links with the families as well as the Scouts who use the hall. There are opportunities to develop new missional initiatives as well as to learn to lead traditional church. The worship service is at 11 am and is normally eucharistic, although the congregation is not averse to the occasional service or morning worship or the newly introduced café church. We irregularly run a series of evening Bible study groups.

Shine

...is a Bishop's Missional Order, located in Pinehurst. Started in 2010 it has a vision to be 'Youth-full' – full of children and young people but also following the traits of exploration and risk taking that being youthful entails. Shine has a real commitment to working *with* local people to explore what church in our community might look like rather than doing it *to* or *for*. Therefore, all of what we do is building on the strengths and ideas of local people – led by local people for local people. We also have a focus to working with those most at risk of 'exploitation' – e.g. county and local drug lines, youth violence etc. So, shine has a whole range of activities including Wednesday night 'Youthie' (which attracts about 60 young people), Friday night football, detached youth work across three neighbourhoods, a community pizza project – the 'Wonky Pizza Crew' giving out free pizza to local residents; school holiday projects including HAF (Holiday Activity Funding) and trips/residentials. Shine also has a 'chaplaincy'





ministry to two large local secondary's and two Primary / All-through schools who are part of the same cluster.

Much of our work is based out of a shipping container on the central green, known as The Beach Hut - started as a pop-up response during the first Covid lockdown. Every other Sunday late morning the worshipping community meets outside on the green for 'Shine Breakfast' exploring what 'church' might look like for local people that is sustainable through, and empowers, local leadership. Average attendance is around 12-15. Shine also has a Messy Saturday attracting 50 – 100 each month. Shine is an independent registered charity and attracts external funding for youth work which allows us to recruit

local people – many 19 or under – as sessional workers and recently have taken on one of the young people as an Apprentice for the next 18 months.

St Peter's

...is located in Penhill. It is in the high church tradition, with incense being used every Sunday morning. It is the 173rd most deprived parish in the C of E, a statistic of which the PCC is strangely proud for some reason! The electoral roll is 36, with attendance at the 9 am Sunday morning service hovering around 10 to 15. The congregation is black majority and half of the congregation are children and young people, who act as our servers. We are proud of all of them, including one young lady who is training with the diocesan young preacher scheme. We don't have a LLM of our own, but we have a LLM from one of the other churches in Swindon, who in his own words 'Came on placement and you now can't get rid of me.'



St Peter's puts on a lot of things from the community – from the weekly Food Bank to a monthly disco, and family activities during school holidays. There is potential to do loads more. We have also started a Sunday afternoon creative service once a month and run Messy Church in an afternoon once a month. We hope to develop these into weekly services with the added capacity a curate would give us. St Peter's has a tradition of 'everyone mucking in for everything', and there is plenty of scope to join in with anything and everything, as well as to suggest new initiatives. We are not yet sure what being church together on an estate looks like and are in the process of figuring it out together.



The curacy context

Across all our churches, we are passionate about developing people. Huge doses of stickability, cheerfulness, resourcefulness and energy are constantly necessary, as local people often suffer from anxiety, mental health issues, poverty, lack of self-confidence and complex pastoral situations. Progress is slow and hard won, but we are gradually seeing people transformed into their God given identity through the love of Jesus. There is huge potential for the curate to help in discipleship, mentoring, coaching and 1-1 support of future church leaders who come from non-traditional backgrounds.

We are part of the Swindon Deanery. St Philip's works well with the Baptist Church and Chinese churches which are both located very nearby, and St Peter's has a good relationship with the independent Penhill Community Church. Shine supports some of the local churches in their youth and community work and engagement especially at Nova Hreod Academy.

In terms of occasional offices, we have about 8 to 10 funerals a year between the 3 churches, with slightly more baptisms. We have not had many weddings in recent years, but there was one in summer 2024 and we have one booked in for December 2025. There is opportunity to work with other local churches to 'gap-fill' experience if opportunities don't come.

It is envisaged that the incoming curate would play a full part in the leadership team of each church. We are envisaging roughly 2 days a week each in shine and St Peter's with 1 day a week in St Philip's, but accept that the arrangements will need to be flexible. There may be opportunity to learn and observe building projects as they happen - as St Philip's needs a new roof, and St Peter's in need of a complete re-ordering project.

Currently Simon Halls (Pioneer Minister, Shine Pinehurst) and Lydia Morey (Priest in Charge, St Peter's Penhill and St Philip's Upper Stratton) join with Nick Lines (Rector, St Mary Rodbourne Cheney) at St Mary's for morning prayer at 8 am Monday to Thursday.





Training Incumbent and Supervising Minister

We intend to work together and equally share the role of training, mentoring and supervising the curate as we have worked together for a number of years and have complimentary gifts.

Rev Simon Halls (Training Incumbent)

I am an ordained pioneer minister. Over the last 30+ years I have had the privilege of leading mission and staff teams, both in the UK and abroad. For the last 30 years we have lived on the Pinehurst Estate exploring what Church looks like for those who are often forgotten about or marginalised by society as whole, but especially the Church. For the last 10 years we have run an intern programme in partnership with FEx (Germany) and GVS (Global Volunteer Services) coming to train with us for 6-12 month placements. Both as Director of Swindon Youth for Christ for 12 years and more recently with shine I have led and trained a staff and volunteer team.

Over the last few years, we have trained a significant number of people in mission on the margins in shine. All of them are now at theological college or working face-to-face with young people (e.g. training as teachers or youth workers) or working with those on the margins. All of them report that their experience here has been transformative and they have felt supported and encouraged.

I would describe my leadership style as that of a conductor (maybe a bit too middle class of an example!) - that of helping people join in God's song to the world - giving space and opportunity for people (especially those from the margins) to be able to bring their 'song' to join as a gift to contribute and share with others.

Rev Lydia Morey (Supervising Minister)

I am an unusual breed in the C of E in that I am a SSM incumbent. In addition to earning most of my income through writing and marking examination papers, I work part time in Oxford Brookes university teaching Japanese, and Bradfield College teaching Chinese and Japanese.

I am a highly experienced teacher and trainer. I currently run the Swindon 'Exploring Christianity' group (part of the diocesan lay leader training). I enjoy helping people figure out how what the next 'baby steps' are that they need to take in their own personal growth and helping them achieve those. I worked as a teacher



trainer for a year, and I have acted as school-based mentor for trainee teachers. I am also an ADDO working with candidates for ordination.

Curacy Housing

Housing will be in the vicarage next door to St Peter's Penhill. The bus service into town is very frequent, with the bus stop being just outside the church. There is a doctor's surgery on the estate, as well as a convenience store. There are two primary schools on the estate. There is a choice of three secondary schools within walking / cycling distance.



Curacy Opportunity

We feel this curacy would be of benefit to anyone who wants to have pioneering opportunities, or anyone who has a heart to serve in estates ministry.

There is opportunity to explore church in various contexts, and to contribute to the development of worship as well as missional activities. There is ample opportunity to be creative and innovate.

There is significant opportunity to engage in 1-1 work with those who are marginalised and who may not have had the best opportunities in life.

We ask you to be committed to prayer; open and honest communication; reflection; valuing and learning from every member of the community; resilient for when things don't go as planned and consistently modelling mature Christian behaviour.

If you feel guided to explore this post, please contact the Bristol Diocese Director of Ordinands, Sue Gent, on sue.gent@bristoldiocese.org.