

### A prayer for a Curacy

God of all wisdom, whose Son, Jesus Christ, calls us to be his disciples; form and teach us through the places and people to whom you call us. Help us to learn from one another and from you, that we may grow in discipleship, serve your Church, and ever be renewed as ministers of your kingdom. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Teacher, Shepherd and Lord. Amen.

### The Collect from The Form and Manner of Making of Deacons (The Book of Common Prayer)

Almighty God, who by thy divine providence hast appointed divers Orders of Ministers in thy Church, and didst inspire thine Apostles to choose into the Order of Deacons the first Martyr Saint Stephen, with others: Mercifully behold these thy servants now called to the like office and administration; replenish them so with the truth of thy doctrine, and adorn them with innocency of life, that, both by word and good example, they may faithfully serve thee in this office, to the glory of thy Name, and the edification of thy Church; through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and for ever. Amen.



**St Lawrence Church**  
LECHLADE-ON-THAMES

### Welcome to our new curate, Gareth Griffith

*Gareth is ordained on 27 June 2021- his first Sunday is 11 July 2021*

This leaflet is to help us prepare for their arrival and to support them as they begin a new journey of faith.



**The Griffith  
Family:  
Gareth and Sonia  
with Myfanwy and  
Vaughan**

Gareth is married to Sonia, and they have two children: Myfanwy (6) and Vaughan (4). He grew up in Potters Bar, on the outskirts of London, worshipping in the local Methodist Church, where he first came to faith in Jesus. Gareth studied English Literature at Oxford, where he worshipped at St. Ebbe's church, and was heavily involved in the college Christian Union and chapel. After leaving university, he went to work for a small Christian charity that did aid and development work in the former Soviet Union. After marrying Sonia, he moved to Cheltenham, then to London, then back to Cheltenham, for her work as a civil servant. Throughout this time, he was studying medieval literature at the University of Bristol, where he stayed to teach until 2019. During this time, he had particular responsibility for outreach to under-represented communities, and ran a degree programme for mature students who had no prior qualifications. Gareth and Sonia have been blessed by being part of the church family at an FIEC church in Cheltenham, then at All Souls' Langham Place, and for then for ten years at St. Matthew's, Cheltenham. A long-held suspicion that God might be calling him to ordination finally led to a selection panel in 2018, followed by two years training at Oak Hill College. Gareth and Sonia are both fans of old books and old films, old buildings and long walks. He's on his own when it comes to watching the snooker.



## What can we do to help support and train Gareth, our new curate?

A curate is placed in a training parish for two reasons:

- i. There is a minister suitable to be a Training Incumbent.
- ii. The parish or group of parishes is healthy and able to provide a variety and range of opportunities for the curate.

Alongside this, the parish of Lechlade will pay Gareth's expenses in full, and will also allow Gareth to develop and exercise his ministry throughout the 21 churches of the South Cotswolds Team Ministry and the wider Cirencester Deanery of which we are a part.

There are other things that, as a whole congregation, we can do that will play a vitally important part in Gareth's training:

1. *Tell him when he's got it right.* Affirm and encourage Gareth. Tell him why it worked and how it helped (be as clear and specific as you can). If you have more negative feedback, please offer it first to our vicar, Andrew, who can decide what best to do with it.
2. *Try new ideas.* Gareth will come with lots of new ideas. Some may sound mad and are in fact brilliant. Some may sound really challenging, but will transform the life of the church. Some may just be bad ideas. We won't know which are the brilliant and transformational ones unless we try them!
3. *Share your jobs and wisdom.* Gareth needs to do things. Please give him a chance to do stuff, even if that is normally your role. Share the wisdom you have built up from the ministries you are involved in.
4. *Be generous with your time.* Both Gareth and Sonia will need your patience as they settle in and take on new roles. Support them in this.

5. *Value mistakes.* Mistakes are vital to learning. If Gareth never makes a mistake he will never learn! Mistakes are important things, they should be valued within the loving and supportive environment of our church family.

6. *Learn with Gareth.* Having someone in training is a chance for the whole church to reflect and learn from one another, from the things that we do together, and from the Spirit of God calling us outwards and onwards.

7. *Pray!* Pray regularly for Gareth, Sonia and their children, for Andrew our vicar, and the other ministers and Lay Readers in the Team, and for one another. God has many gifts to give us and many lessons to teach us. Pray that we all might be open to receiving and learning.

## 10 'Top Tips' for supporting a Curate

1. PRAY for Gareth, Sonia and their family in this next stage of their lives.
2. Don't expect Gareth to know your name – each time you meet him introduce yourself.
3. Offer local information to Gareth and Sonia – they are new to the church and to the area.
4. Invite the Griffiths to your home, but not just in the first couple of weeks!
5. Respect Gareth's day off – which is on Tuesday.
6. Take risks in ministry with Gareth.
7. Be ready to learn yourself, as an individual and as part of the congregation.
8. Don't compare Gareth to anyone else.
9. Allow Gareth to show you new things – he brings a whole host of riches to share.
10. Enjoy having Gareth as our curate. His time here is relatively limited (3 to 4 years).



*Why not put this leaflet with your Bible or in the place that you pray to remind you to pray regularly for Gareth?*