



# 1<sup>st</sup> Communion Pilgrimage:

## St Nicholas Church, Boldmere visits Lichfield Cathedral



### St Chad

St Chad was the first Bishop of Mercia – i.e., the area we now call the Midlands.

Chad was one of four brothers –one of whom, Cedd, is also a saint of the Church. He was born in about 634, and died 2 March 672, when he was about 38 years old.

He and his brother Cedd were monks at the Abbey of Lindisfarne, Holy Island, off the coast of Northumbria. He was ordained priest when he was 30 years old.

Sometime after there was a plague in the land and a new bishop was needed for the Northumbrians. First to be called was Wilfred, who went to Europe to be ordained bishop – because to be ordained bishop there need to be three other bishops present, and following the plague there were not that many bishops alive in England. But no-one heard anything of Wilfred for a long time, and it was feared that Wilfred was dead.



### Welcome to Lichfield Cathedral

While here today:

- We will learn something about the beginning of the Church in the Midlands - and about St Chad, its first teacher of the faith and Bishop.
- We will have time to enjoy the beauty of this particular Cathedral church
- We will have time to pray to God: the reason this church and every church is built.

Next Chad was appointed Bishop and was ordained in c664. Imagine the confusion when the next year

Wilfred returned from Europe having also been ordained bishop! For a while, despite embarrassment and difficulty, the two bishops served the diocese together.

However in 669 Theodore of Tarsus was made Archbishop of Canterbury, and felt it was necessary to sort the matter out. He invited Chad to step down in favour of Wilfred, which he did and ‘proper order’ was restored.

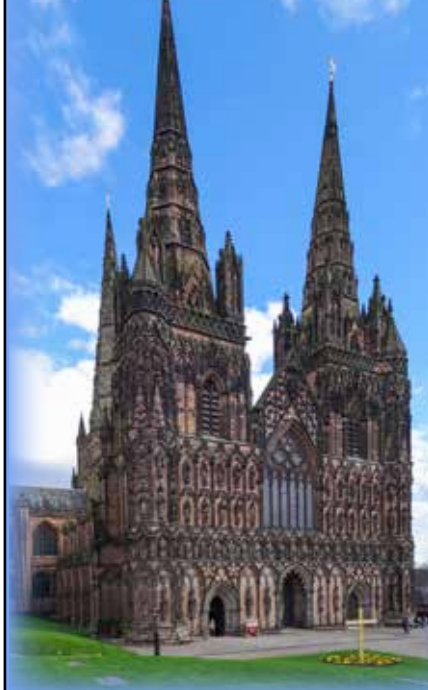
When sometime later the King of Mercia asked for a bishop for his kingdom, Archbishop Theodore who had been impressed by Chad’s humility and obedience appointed him to this new ministry.

Another example of Chad’s humility became famous. Chad would not own or ride a horse. He insisted on walking everywhere. However Archbishop Theodore ordered him to ride at least on long journeys and one occasion went so far as to lift him into the saddle himself.

King Wulfhere donated land at Lichfield for Chad to build a monastery.

Chad was only bishop in Mercia for a short while, but in that time he carried out much missionary and pastoral work ‘in the manner of the ancient fathers and in great perfection of life’. The area he covered was very large, stretching across England from coast to coast. It was also,

### The Cathedral

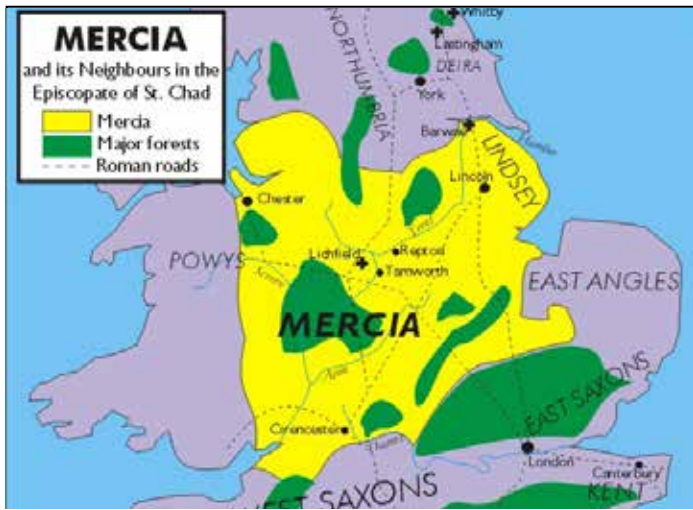


The first Cathedral was built here in 700 AD to house the relics of St Chad.

It has been rebuilt and refashioned a number of times since then. The present Cathedral mostly dates from the 13th Century.

**Why do you think a cathedral is called a cathedral?**





in many places, difficult terrain, with woodland, heath and mountain over much of the centre and large areas of marshland to the east.

Chad built for himself a small house at Lichfield, a short distance from the monastery, sufficient to hold his core of seven or eight disciples, who gathered to pray and study with him there when he was not out on business.

After only two and a half years in Mercia, Chad too died during a plague.

## What might we learn from the example of St Chad?

### The death of Chad

Owin, one of Chad's co-workers, was working outside the oratory at Lichfield. Chad was alone in the oratory, while the other monks were at worship in the church.

Suddenly Owin heard the sound of joyful singing. It came from heaven, and came closer until it filled the roof of the oratory itself. Then there was silence for half an hour, followed by the same singing going back the way it had come.



An hour later Chad called Owin in and told him to fetch the seven brothers from the church. Chad gave his final address to the brothers, urging them to live faithful as disciples and monks. Only then did he tell them he knew that his own death was near. He asked them to pray for him, then blessed and dismissed them. The brothers left, sad and downcast.

Owin returned a little later and saw Chad privately to ask about the singing. Chad told him to keep it secret for the time being, but angels had come to call him to his heavenly reward, and in seven days they would return to fetch him. So it was that Chad weakened and died after seven days – on 2 March, which remains his feast day.

### The relics of the saint

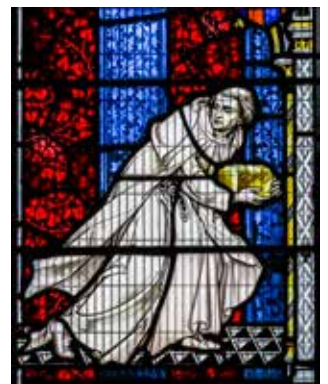
After his death people came to St Chad's place of burial to pray to him, that he might present their prayers to God.

The first Cathedral of Lichfield was built to house his body. It was venerated there for centuries.

In the 16th Century, at the time of the Reformation, when the Catholic Church was persecuted in England, the shrine of St Chad was destroyed. However a priest of the Cathedral in Lichfield secretly rescued his bones, and moved them to safety.

For hundreds of years afterwards the bones of St Chad were first kept hidden and later kept in great reverence in a number of places in England and France.

In the early 19th Century the relics were presented to Bishop Walsh, Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District. It was agreed that the relics of St Chad would be installed in the new Catholic Cathedral which was to be built in Birmingham. And they have been venerated there ever since, in the Cathedral which proudly bears his name and boasts of his patronage.



**St Oswald** (c 604 – 5 August 642) was Anglo-Saxon King of Northumbria from 634 until his death

He became king after defeating the British ruler Cadwallon ap Cadfan, king of Gwynedd, in battle at Heavenfield, near Hexham. He was a great promoter of Christianity in Northumbria.

The night before the battle of Heavenfield Oswald, had a vision of St Columba, in



which he was told to have courage and that his enemy would be defeated and he would be victorious and reign happily.

Oswald shared his vision with his Council, and they agreed that if it came true they too would be baptised and become Christian after the battle.

Before the battle, Oswald had a wooden cross erected. He himself knelt down, holding the cross *Continued on page 3.*

# Exploring the Cathedral

In addition to the features you would expect to find in any great church, Lichfield Cathedral has some particular features that are well worth our exploring.

A. **The West Front** displays 113 religious figures: kings, angels, prophets, bishops, martyrs and other saints. Only five of the figures, high on North tower, are original, the others were added in the 18thC to replace those worn for wear because of damage caused by the weather or because they were damaged in the Reformation.

C. The great **Font** depicts various Mysteries which help us to think about the meaning of Baptism - Noah and the Ark; the Crossing of the River Jordan; the Baptism of Jesus; the Resurrection of Jesus. *How do these things link to our Baptism?*

D. **The Pedilavium** is a space set aside for the sacramental washing of feet once a year, on Maundy Thursday in remembrance of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper. *Why did Jesus wash the disciples feet?*

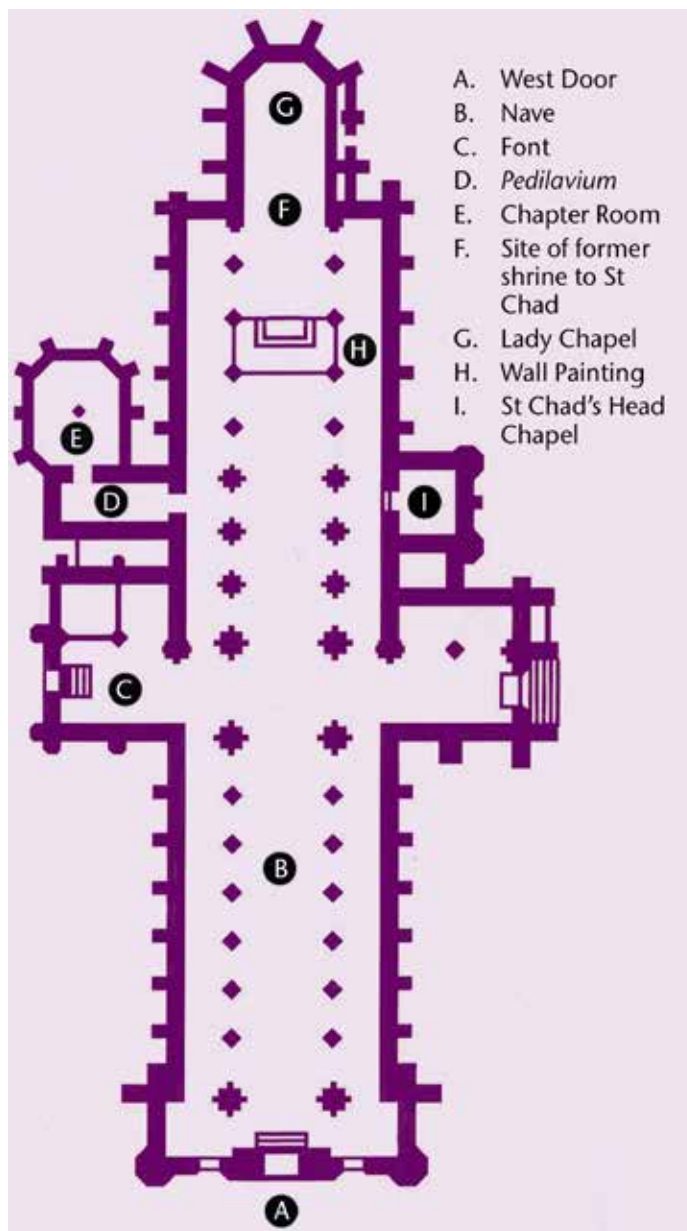


E. The Chapter Room was where the clergy and religious met to conduct the business of the community and the Cathedral. Nowadays it is used to display some of the greatest treasures of the Cathedral. *But look up too - beyond the ceiling is the Cathedral Library!*

- The St Chad (or the Lichfield) Gospels is an Anglo-Saxon volume. It is a remarkable survival from the 8th Century - about half of the original book has survived, the first half. The present volume contains the Gospels of Matthew and Mark and a few pages of Luke - but the rest of Luke and all of John's Gospel have been lost to us

- The Lichfield Angel is an 8th C. stone carving and perhaps is a part of the former shrine of St Chad. It was only discovered in 2003, during excavations in the nave. It is believed to have been

*Continued on page 4.*



- A. West Door
- B. Nave
- C. Font
- D. Pedilavium
- E. Chapter Room
- F. Site of former shrine to St Chad
- G. Lady Chapel
- H. Wall Painting
- I. St Chad's Head Chapel

## The Catholic Church & the Church of England

From the time of Henry VIII to now the Church of England remains separate from the Catholic Church, out of communion with the Pope and the Catholic Bishops.

This is partly because of the politics of the 16th Century and since, but also because the Church of England has departed from Catholic faith particularly regarding the Sacraments.

Yet we remain united in our belief in Christ and about Baptism - the Sacrament that first makes us members of the Church. So we share much in common, and both Churches continue to look for ways in which we might all of us repent of the things which keep us from one another, and find a way to a shared understanding of Church and Sacraments.

This division in the Church is sad for us to live with, but also it gives bad witness to the world: if Christians cannot get on with each other then why should anyone listen to them?

But we work for change and healing mostly because this division is contrary to what Jesus prays for his Church: that we might all be one, in him, as he is one with the Father.

*At the font of the Cathedral pray for Christians to continue to work for the unity of the Church and that together we might help the world to know and love Jesus.*





## Exploring contd

part of a larger stone frieze showing the Annunciation to Our Lady but, if it was, the rest of the frieze has not been found (yet!)



- Most of the Cathedral walls are plain stone these days. In earlier times they were brightly painted, sometimes with decorative patterns only but often with pictures. Look above the Chapter house door and see what remains of a painting of the Assumption. (Additional fragments of wall paintings are found in 'H', the South quire Aisle).



- I. The **Saint Chad's Head chapel**. Here the head of the saint was kept for veneration,. The chapel is now enriched with stained glass angels - reminding of the angels who accompanied St Chad in his dying and journey to heaven.

**Oswald contd** in position until enough earth had been thrown in the hole to make it stand firm. He then prayed and urged his followers also to pray. The battle was won, and the army accepted baptism!

Oswald wanted to encourage the spread of Christianity in Northumbria. He asked the Irish of Dál Riata (the Highlands and Islands of modern day Scotland) to send a bishop to help with the conversion of his people.

St Aidan was sent from Iona, and Oswald gave him the island of Lindisfarne for his Abbey and episcopal see. He had great success in spreading the Christian faith – even though Aidan did not know English well. The historian St Bede tells how King Oswald acted as Aidan's interpreter when the latter was preaching, because Aidan did not know English well and Oswald had learned Irish during his exile.

Oswald lived a holy life, caring for the poor and strangers. On one occasion, at Easter, Oswald was sitting at dinner with Aidan, and had a silver dish full of fine food before him, when a servant, came in and told Oswald that a crowd of the poor were in the streets begging. Oswald

## Prayer

### Opening Song

Jesus, I love you,  
Jesus, I love you,  
Jesus, I love you,  
you are my Lord.

Spirit, I love you...

Father, I love you...

### Scripture Reading

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

#### **Glory to you , O Lord**

*We trace the sign of the Cross on our forehead, our lips and over our heart*

Jesus said to his disciples:

'As the Father has loved me,  
so I have loved you.

Remain in my love.

If you keep my commandments  
you will remain in my love,  
just as I have kept my Father's  
commandments  
and remain in his love.

I have told you this

so that my own joy may be in you  
and your joy be complete.

This is my commandment:

love one another as I have loved you.

The Gospel  
of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### The Lord's Prayer

### Blessing

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immediately had his own food given to the poor and even had the silver dish broken up and distributed. Aidan was greatly impressed and seized Oswald's right hand, stating: "May this hand never perish." Accordingly, Bede reports that the hand and arm remained uncorrupted after Oswald's death.

Oswald was killed by the Mercians at the Battle of Maserfield, (believed to be the modern day Oswestry). Bede tells us that Oswald ended his life in prayer: praying for the souls of his soldiers.