

Missional *Learning* **Communities**

An outline of the process



Diocese of Canterbury
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Missional Learning Communities

Missional Learning Communities (MLCs) follow a three year path that gives churches a framework and resources to help them listen attentively to God and their community and decide what God might be calling them to be and do.

The combination of commitment, spiritual disciplines and practical tools make MLCs a powerful process. The evidence from elsewhere, shows that this kind of process can lead to profound and positive change.

What we do over the three years

Listen – to God and to the community to see where God is already at work inside and outside our church.

Experiment – based on our listening, we try things out with people in the local community, to see and learn from what works and what doesn't.

Focus – based on what we have learned from our experiments, we articulate God's future for our churches. The experimenting can continue too.

Six Spiritual Practices

What distinguishes MLCs is that alongside *doing* things, all those involved commit to spiritual practices. The spiritual practices are ‘faithfully disruptive’ – we can expect to experience positive change.

Dwelling in the Word

A distinctive way of listening to God, Scripture and each other, to discern God’s leading in the ‘here and now’ of each reading. In this way, God challenges, encourages and changes us.

Dwelling in the World

Having conversations with people who are not members of our church to discover what they are passionate about, to get to know them better, and to see if they are people we might be able to join with.

Announcing the Kingdom

Watching out for what we think God might be doing around us, and being bold enough to take the risk of talking about God, and saying what we think we see God doing around us, so that other people can notice it too.

Hospitality

Taking time to welcome people and, perhaps even more importantly, to be welcomed by other people so that we make friends with people who are not members of our church.

Corporate Spiritual Discernment

Paying attention to what is going on among us and in our local community, and what our faith teaches us, so that we can find our way into what God is doing in us and around us.

Focus for Missional Action

Working towards a clear sense of who God is sending us to. So that we can make one thing 'the main thing', and stick to it. This can mean saying 'no' to some good things that are not at the centre of what we think God is calling us to.

Summary

We share the MLC journey with other churches making the same journey by joining with them at four facilitated gatherings in each of three years. The process is led in each church by a group of lay people, supported and cared for by the 'Spiritual Leader', usually the Vicar.

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We are looking to grow the Church in numbers, depth and vitality. We seek renewed ministry and life-giving community partnerships.



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