

Shaped By God Together - Discussion Starter

Since we agreed to the transition into the Minster Communities framework for the diocese, churches and fresh expressions have been asking what to do now that will help them in the early stages of the process. In response to these requests the Parish Transition and Ministry Development Team have put together this discussion starter document as a tool to aid the thinking, prayer and conversations in parishes....



During the first stage of the transition into Minster Communities we are asking all of our worshipping communities to do some thinking and praying. This is designed to help you take stock of where you have been placed by God and who you are as a church.

Doing this gives you a chance to think about what you could offer to a future Minster Community and what benefits you may gain from joining in partnership with other worshipping communities, such as church schools, chaplaincies or fresh expressions of Church as well as other traditional churches. This is about helping each other to continue serving your parish and to build on your own unique identity as a worshipping community.

As you respond to these discussion starters keep in mind the opportunities and challenges partnership working will bring as you continue to focus on our diocesan "Everyday Faith" emphases of prayer, witness and loving service of the world.

What would you identify as your church's biggest strengths?

What could you offer a Minster Community?

Prayer Prompt: Thank God for the skills and gifts that have been given to your community. Ask for God's help to explore how these gifts could be shared generously with others in partnership.

What would you identify as the areas where help is most needed?

What would you hope to gain from being part of a Minster Community?

Prayer Prompt: Thank God for the wide diversity of the church and the opportunity to share in that difference. Pray for patience as we work together in that difference and the courage to explore our weakness.

Where do you currently work meaningfully in partnership with others?

Other local churches (Anglican or other denomination), schools, national or regional church networks (eg. New Wine, Inclusive Church, The Society, Midlands Gospel Partnership), charities, other?

Prayer prompt: Thank God for the partnership you already work in, the fruit that these partnerships have already been seen and the people that you work alongside. Pray that these partnerships will be strengthened through the SGBT process. Pray for the partnerships yet to be formed, that through God's grace we can work across differences and flourish together.

How would you describe your church's mission?

Would the church's leadership and congregation both give similar answers if asked?

Prayer prompt: Thank God for the opportunities for mission in your area and people that have come to know God through these missional activities. Pray for the future and the missional opportunities that can arise out of the Minster Communities.

Questions to continue thinking about as we move forward

Having begun to identify some of our missional priorities, strengths, areas for improvement and where partnership working is already happening what might our next steps be to:

- Build on those strengths?
- Make the most of existing partnerships and discern what new ones might help us in our mission?
- Make sure that our missional values are central to all of our activities as a church community?
- Continue to think about what particular gifts we will bring to a Minster Community and where we hope to be strengthened by membership of one?