

Strategic Priorities

These are the strategic priorities for the diocese in our common life together. They arise out of our diocesan response to the 3 Key Questions (depth of discipleship, numbers of disciples, loving service of the world). Not every church community or school will embody all five of these priorities, but every church is being asked to consider how they are paying attention to them as they 'seek the Kingdom of God' in their 'Everyday Faith'. Each community will have a particular gift which may focus on one or more of the priorities e.g. a village church which feels called to focus on eco-community, or a city church which feels called to focus on interfaith work as part of our reconciling community priority – and each church will do this as part of a wider network, with partnership or gift-exchange an essential element of this way of working.

New Communities



This is a continuation of our calling to have as many fresh expressions of church (or church plants) as inherited churches by 2030. As a diocese we introduced Resourcing Churches as a 'step change' in mission in 2018. This has enabled us to be more intentional about our church plants and to pay attention to those areas that God is calling us into.

This priority remains important for two reasons: firstly, because healthy churches reproduce – they are proactive in sending people out to share the Gospel with those who haven't heard, and they are contextual in shaping church in such a way that people can grow in discipleship within their own culture. Secondly, there is a huge need – whether in terms of the 93% of the population who may not have yet responded to the Gospel, or in terms of the huge new housing estates which are planned all across the county (many of which will have a larger population than our average parish size).

Intercultural communities



This is a continuation of our Intercultural Worshipping Communities programme, and our Racial Equity Strategy. Again, we were making good progress on this before Covid-19, but it is too early to assess the effect of lockdown.

This priority remains important for us for three reasons. Firstly, we believe that healthy churches bring people of different cultures together and enable learning, community and worship. Secondly, because we want our churches to reflect the communities in which they are set, and this includes the diversity of different people and cultures. And thirdly, because people from the global majority are underrepresented in the leadership and governance of the diocese, and unless we are proactive in addressing the barriers which stop people from taking on these roles, we will not see the diversity that is needed.

Eco-communities



This is a continuation of our Environment strategy and our agreed aim of achieving Eco-diocese status and carbon net zero emissions by 2030. Our Youth Council has been influential in challenging our thinking and practices on this area, and we are discovering a groundswell of support and passion to engage with ways to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life on earth.

We want to encourage church communities to be attentive to the distribution of environmental benefits and burdens locally and globally, paying particular attention to the impact on vulnerable communities. We want to invite them to take an active role in fostering greater environmental justice.



Intergenerational Communities

This is a continuation of the discussions begun about 18 months ago about 'Growing Faith' - a programme to encourage schools, churches and households to work together to enable children and young people to grow in faith.

We want to see children, young people and households valued in every aspect of Church life for the lifelong formation of faith in the whole of life.

We want to see our ministry teams working proactively with schools and colleges, households and churches, teaching the faith to those new to the faith, mentoring young people, enabling them to live out their discipleship and witness among their peers, and encouraging them into leadership in the church, all ages learning and journeying together.

We must now move beyond discussion to a clear plan to take forward this priority so that our communities of faith might include and value children and young people as fellow pilgrims.



Reconciling Communities

Reconciliation is a call to restore relationships in every sphere of life. As Christians, we are called to 'be reconciled' and to engage in what is often the hardest, but also the best, representation of the Gospel. As individuals and as societies we need reconciliation at every level. From our own relationship with God, to relationships in workplaces, wider communities and the whole of creation. Each of these is interconnected: fractures at one level can have damaging impact on another.

There are a number of areas of work we are engaged in that are seeking to overcome divides in society or in the church:

- Identity & Sexuality – presently using a suite of resources produced by the national church (Living in Love and Faith) exploring Christian teaching and learning about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage.
- Women's ministry – Under the 'five guiding principles' (agreed by General Synod when legislation was introduced to affirm that women could be bishops) we are continuing to review how we work in a way which respects the theological integrity of different positions and encourages the flourishing of all.
- Racial Equity Strategy - we have developed and adopted a strategy to counter structural racism in the church and ensure that people of all cultures and backgrounds are treated with respect and dignity.
- The St Philip's Centre leading on our interfaith work with an aim of helping communities learn how to live well together.
- Social Responsibility (including Together Leicester) partnering with a whole range of agencies in the city and county addressing issues from homelessness, deprivation, to financial inclusion and disability.
- Supporting ministry in areas that are disadvantaged by experiencing higher levels of deprivation.