

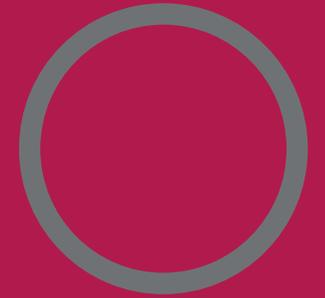
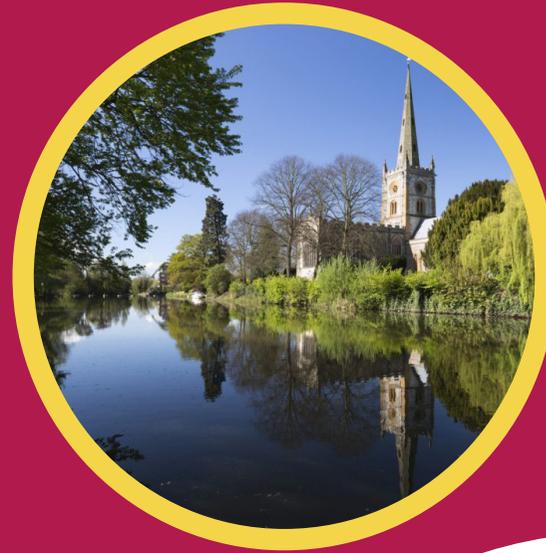


DIOCESE^{OF}
COVENTRY

STATEMENT OF NEEDS 2024

CONTENTS

Welcome	2
A Spirit of Reconciliation	3
Coventry Cathedral	4
Churches	5
Schools and the DBE	7
Chaplaincy	9
Our Context	11
Challenges & Opportunities	17
Strengths & Ministry	18
Going Forward	19
Resources & Finance	22
We are Seeking	23
Prayer	25
LLF	28
Together for Change	29



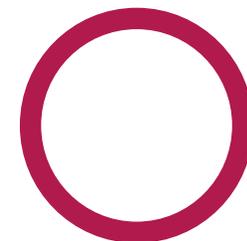
WELCOME

Welcome to Coventry, the diocese in the heart of the country.

It is a diocese of contrasts: urban and rural; industrial and agricultural; old and new; with two quite different cathedral buildings (one pre-Reformation and one post-WWII), two major universities and a creative history where William Shakespeare meets Frank Whittle and George Eliot meets James Starley.

Geographically towards the centre of the diocese, Coventry is known around the world for its Cathedral which is home to the Community of the Cross of Nails, a worldwide network of some 260 churches, charities, chaplaincies, peace-building and retreat centres, schools and other educational and training organisations, all inspired by the Coventry story of destruction, rebuilding and renewal, and active in reconciliation in their own ways.

The spire of the old cathedral church of St. Michael, badly damaged in the war but retaining a glimpse of its medieval splendour, remains the tallest building in the city. Standing next to it, the new Cathedral, which was consecrated in 1962 and which, rising from the ruins of the old, symbolises new life in Christ Jesus, a gospel we boldly proclaim.



As Bishop Christopher wrote in his farewell address to the diocese: “Coventry diocese, inspired by the story of our Cathedral, bears a gift for the world – and, in our times for the Church – to entreat all people with the words of St Paul, ‘Be reconciled to God’ and to go on making known, in season and out of season, the message and ministry of reconciliation that God has entrusted in a particular way to us.”

Evangelical in its tradition, the diocese demonstrates a generous spirit of co-operation across other traditions and styles of worship, a deep reverence for the authority of Scripture and a passion for sharing the Gospel.

In these pages you will find stories of ordinary women and men, clergy and lay, humbly serving God by advancing His kingdom, guided by His Holy Spirit.

We have tried to provide an accurate picture of the worshipping community in the diocese, as it is manifested in many different forms, but we have also been honest, recognising the challenges and opportunities that exist for us and for our new Bishop.

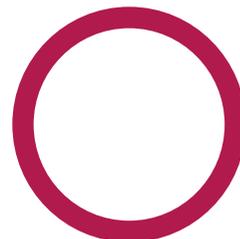
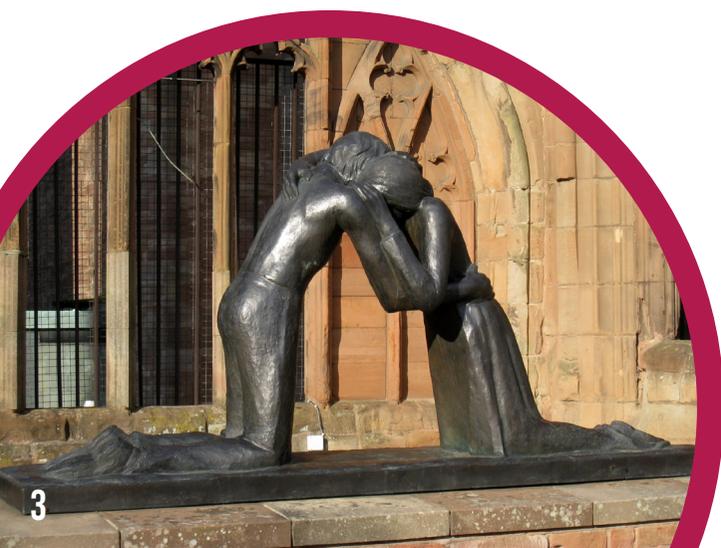
**Since its revival in 1918,
the Diocese has had 9 bishops.
Will you be our 10th?**

A SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...

2 Corinthians 5:18

Coventry is the Diocese of Reconciliation. Reconciliation is our story – embodied visibly in our ruined and rebuilt Cathedral. Reconciliation is our gift and charism in the ministry which has grown up locally, nationally and internationally from this story. Reconciliation is the lens through which we see all we are called to be and do. And our commitment to reconciliation is rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in which we are reconciled with God and with one another, and called to reconcile all creation in justice, peace and love.



Being a Diocese of Reconciliation looks like

valuing the breadth of traditions within the Church of England. While historically an Evangelical Diocese, Coventry has been a place where difference in theological approaches or worshipping styles is celebrated and our need for one another acknowledged.

Being a Diocese of Reconciliation looks like

remaining open to one another in some of the differences which divide the church. In the past, Coventry managed to combine being a diocese which championed the ministry of women, while nurturing those priests and parishes who could not, in theological conscience, accept this ministry. In the present day, Coventry is seeking to find a way to journey well together through the challenges posed by Living in Love and Faith.

Being a Diocese of Reconciliation looks like

having a serious commitment to work for justice. The Together for Change charity transforms communities and provides opportunities in places where there is socio-economic injustice. Our racial equality work seeks to lament and learn from the failures of the past, celebrate the gift of UKME/ GMH Christians to the church today and work together for a shared future. Our Diocesan Synod is deeply committed to environmental justice and has committed significant funds to enable us to work towards Net Zero.

These threads of reconciliation, of valuing difference, of holding together across conflict or challenges and working for justice are woven through the lives of our churches and worshipping communities, chaplaincies and schools as well as our iconic cathedral. We do not get it right all the time, but we believe this is our calling as a diocese.

Might it be your calling to lead, inspire and support us in this vocation?

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL

Coventry Cathedral sits at the heart of our Diocese, just as the reconciliation it symbolises sits at the heart of our shared spiritual life. However, its ministry extends far beyond Coventry Diocese's borders. The Community of the Cross of Nails, which has members across five continents, inspires communities worldwide to commit to the work of reconciliation and peace. The next Bishop of Coventry will have a part to play in this international network as well as enabling our charism of reconciliation closer to home. They shall have their episcopal seat in one of the best-known, best-loved religious buildings in the world.

THE STORY

On the night of 14th November, 1940, Coventry and its Cathedral endured a relentless bombing campaign. Overnight, the 'Moonlight Sonata' offensive destroyed much of central Coventry, hundreds of its people and left its Cathedral in ruins. Only the outer shell of the walls and the tower remained standing.

In the days that followed, two enduring symbols emerged from the rubble: two charred roof-beams which had fallen in the shape of a cross were bound and placed at the site of the ruined altar, and three

medieval roof nails were also formed into a cross, which became the original Cross of Nails (now located at the High Altar in the new Cathedral).

Shortly after, the words 'Father Forgive' were inscribed on the wall of the ruined chancel, and Provost Dick Howard made a commitment to not seek revenge, but to strive for forgiveness and reconciliation with those responsible.

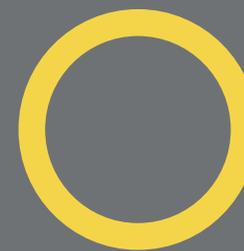


OUR CHURCHES

The Diocese of Coventry is made up of a wide range of parishes. Throughout this Statement of Needs, you will find snapshots of some of our vibrant and varied churches and new worshipping communities. For its relatively small size, Coventry is a diverse diocese.

Its parishes – united in their call to worship God, make new disciples of Jesus Christ and transform their communities – live out their calling in markedly different contexts. As a diocese, we seek to support one another in the task of serving Christ and making him known, recognising that this will not look the same from church to church.

Our parishes serve God from the youthful, multicultural urban city centre of Coventry to the rural communities of Warwickshire; from the market towns of South Warwickshire, to post-industrial areas in north Coventry, Nuneaton and Bedworth; from areas of affluence to communities with high deprivation; in churches which have served their locality for over a millenium and in church plants which are only a few years old, from villages of a few hundred people to new housing suburbs of twenty thousand and growing.



Does the prospect of releasing creative mission in a variety of contexts excite you?

Will you value faithful service in all its different forms?

Will you love our assorted parishes and champion them in becoming all Christ calls them to be?



ST LAURENCE'S, FOLESHILL

When was the ministry/church established?

St Laurence's Foleshill has been a place of worship since 1148 and originated as a chapel of Godiva.

Context

We serve a large and diverse urban priority parish in the North of Coventry.

Key ministries

Our Hope Hub has a food bank, debt support, emotional and practical support, and older people's groups. We have a Midweek Missional Community for children & families which includes Messy & Muddy Church. Also, our community hall supports multiple local independent church congregations and addiction support groups.

Hope for the future

We'd love to explore planting a mission project or space in our local estate precinct in Riley Square, following a Prayer Room in May 2023 as part of 'Thy Kingdom Come'.

SCHOOLS

“Inspiring schools to demonstrate the love of Christ as they educate for life in all its fullness.”

The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE)

There are over 18,000 children in our schools alongside more than a thousand members of staff, governors and other volunteers.



We engage creatively with our 76 schools and academies believing that they are a way for all to experience the love of God and receive an excellent education. The schools also present an exciting opportunity for Mission with some of our schools now being homes for new worshipping communities.

The DBE offices are based in Rugby with a team of seven people committed to serving the students and staff of the schools in the diocese.

ALIVE 2023

In June 2023, 8000 primary school children and 1000 adults attended ALIVE 2023, a massive praise party organised by the Coventry Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) in partnership with Imagine Ministries and Feed the Hungry.

Taking place at the NAEC, Stoneleigh Park, ALIVE 2023 was comprised of four worship concerts and two mass picnics over the two days with over 100 staff, contractors and volunteers to help ensure the day was a success. Many volunteers were local clergy and church members.

Will you see our schools and academies as key opportunities?



“Many of our children attend very small schools, and the Covid pandemic meant that their experience of worship had been quite two dimensional on a screen! I wanted them to experience what it was like to worship God with 1,000's of others, to create a memory to take with them in life.”

“As a DBE we are passionate about local schools partnering with their parish Churches to inspire the next generation to become Kingdom Imagineers. ALIVE 2023 challenged children of all faiths and none to be emboldened and work together to challenge the adults around them to dream big and change the world.”

April Gold, Diocesan Director for Education

“ALIVE 2023 was, by far, the biggest gathering of children praising God I have ever seen! ...It just goes to show that the church of Jesus Christ is very much ALIVE and children are leading the way.”
Shell Perris, Director of Imagine Ministries and ALIVE 2023 Event Manager, Host and Performer

ALCESTER MINSTER BENEFICE & RURAL MISSION HUB

When was the ministry/church established?

The Minster was created in its present form in 2013. The Rural Mission Hub was established in 2022.

Context

Alcester Minster is situated in Warwickshire and serves Alcester and the seven surrounding villages. We minister to a range of communities from those living in the market town to rural villages, the farming community, a historic visitor attraction, the Lord of the Manor, and a retirement village.

Key ministries

We have several services including, Sung Eucharist, Messy Church, and Breathing space. Some of these are new expressions of worship that reach those who have not engaged with church before. We also run a warm space, afternoon teas, lunches, prayer meetings, and LIFE (small) groups.

Hope for the future

Our vision is to enable each person to feel welcome as they engage with us, meeting Jesus and learning to love and follow him so that they share his good news message.



CHAPLAINCIES

Chaplaincy in the diocese takes many different forms. There are currently 17 clergy who are engaged in chaplaincy roles whether that is full or part-time in secondary and private schools, the universities, the three major hospitals in the diocese, and in Rye Hill and Onley prisons. Some of them combine part-time parish roles with their chaplaincy ones.



*photograph: #wellchild2023

3

Hospitals served
with Chaplains.

17

Clergy engaged in
chaplaincy roles.

For a small group our chaplains make quite the impact across the region being available for people in many various contexts serving as a point of peace and hope. In September 2023 the Revd Nell Cockell, a chaplain at South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust, was nominated by Dr Cheryl Adams for a prestigious WellChild award. Nell was selected from hundreds of nominations to win the category of 'Outstanding Professional'.

Nell works across the whole of Warwickshire to provide support to children, young people and their families who have been given a life limiting diagnosis. She supports those she works with by spending quality time with them, trying to understand what they are going through and talking with them to explore their hopes and fears and allow them to enjoy their lives to the fullest.



We are currently thinking about how we can re-shape and re-start something that will offer mutual support and encouragement to chaplaincy. We are also planning to do some work to find out the extent of lay chaplaincy roles in the diocese and how we can resource and support this work at the parish and deanery level.

Will you support our thinking around mutual support and encouragements to our chaplains?



ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, LEAMINGTON SPA

When was the ministry/church established?

The idea for a parish in South Leamington was conceived in 1875, and the building was consecrated in February 1878.

Context

St John's serves the poorest part of the town (with a higher than average rate of child poverty), and is one of the larger parishes in the deanery with 9000 residents. We have three primary schools and a huge number of university students.

Key ministries

St John's offers a daily Mass, a weekly rosary, and several small groups. We also have several other weekly ministries including, Church Lads and Church Girls Brigade, Celebrate Recovery (Christ centred 12 Step programme), Wednesday food kitchen, Friday open access youth group (averaging 40 teenagers per week), parish nurse scheme, and youth mentoring.

Hope for the future

St John's has grown from a congregation of 10 in 2016 to 81 in 2023. Our continued hope for the future is to see the Kingdom of Jesus grow in this place, and for us to faithfully play our part in the wider life of the Diocese of Coventry whilst confidently proclaiming and teaching our catholic tradition.

CONTEXT - OUR REGION

The Diocese is home to around **895,000** people across **Warwickshire** and the **West Midlands**.



30%
Live in rural areas



70%
Live in urbanised areas

70% of the population live across four major urban population areas the largest of which is the multicultural City of Coventry which is home to 384,000 people. Other more populous areas include industrial and market towns such as Nuneaton and Rugby to the north and east respectively, and the historic towns of Leamington-Spa, Stratford-upon Avon, Kenilworth and Warwick with the later two being home to famous castles.



LARGER URBAN AREAS	POPULATION
COVENTRY	384,000
LEAMINGTON	93,000
NUNEATON	89,000
RUGBY	82,000



21,000
Students & staff at CofE Schools



60,000
University Students during term time

Two thirds of our parishes are categorised as rural or semi-rural accounting for a significant amount of the diocese geographically with around 2000 farm holdings in the county managing 160,000 hectares of lands and acres of countryside stretching as far the Cotswolds to the south.



5
Theatres in Stratford-upon-Avon



119,000
Sheep

The Diocese of Coventry has 2 major universities with 60,000 students during term time feeding into the continuing tradition of innovation and enterprise. The diocese is diverse, rich in culture and history, and is the birthplace of both Shakespeare and rugby football.

CONTEXT - OUR DEANERIES & PARISHES

The Diocese of Coventry represents the Church of England in Coventry and Warwickshire. The diocese was re-established in 1918 and currently comprises of 240 local churches, 76 church schools and the Cathedral with its internationally renowned ministry of reconciliation and restoration.

11

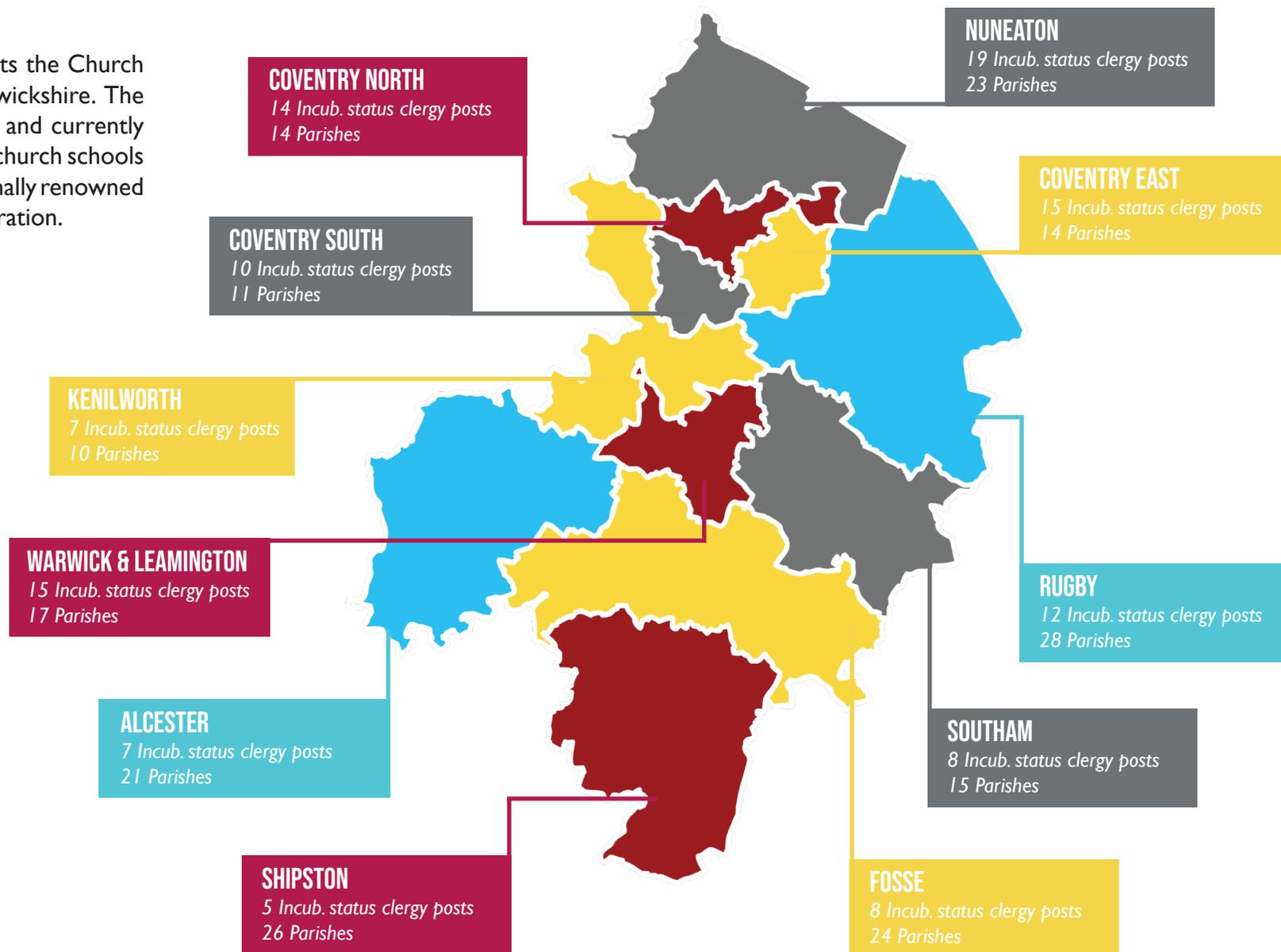
Deaneries

203

Parishes

240

Churches



CONTEXT - DIVERSITY

There is a full range of socio-economic circumstances evident across our region from very wealthy regions to more deprived areas with 25 of our more urban parishes currently in the 20% with the highest deprivation in the UK.

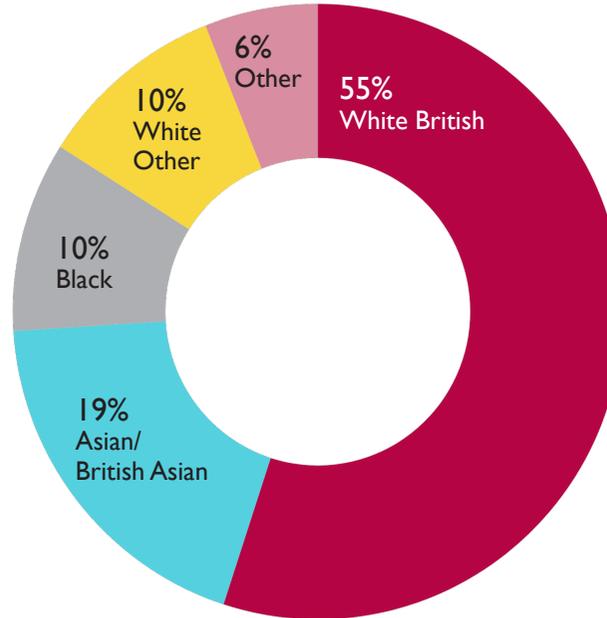
35%

Of people who call the City of Coventry home are from Global Majority Heritage.

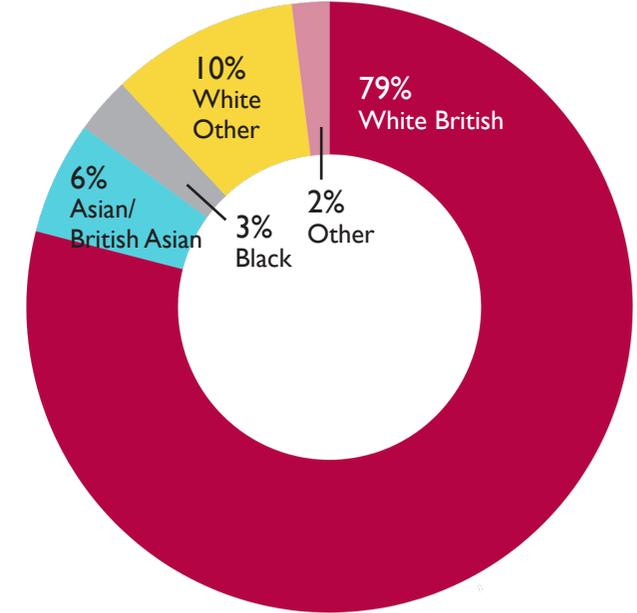
25

Parishes are among the 20% with the highest deprivation in the UK.

ETHNIC DIVERSITY



CITY OF COVENTRY



COUNTY OF WARWICKSHIRE



1.6%

of population in the diocese who attend a CofE church

0.8%

of 145,000 children in the diocese attend a CofE church



CONTEXT - WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY

The diocese has a total worshipping community of approximately 14,400 with an average weekly attendance of 10,600 with 12% being children. In recent years it's been more helpful to use the phrase 'worshipping community' to track church sizes as the average worshipper now attends church on a Sunday less frequently but would still consider themselves an active member of the church community, this is even more so since the global pandemic.

54

Average age of the worshipping community

14,400

Size of the total worshipping community

10,600

Average weekly attendance, down 32% over the last 10 years.

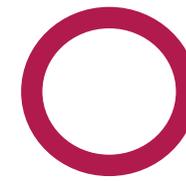
The diocese has 202 licensed or beneficed clergy of whom 106 are stipendiary. And there are 55 non-stipendiary clergy who play a vital role in the mission and ministry of the Diocese. Ministering alongside them are a further 36 Curates, 103 clergy with permission to officiate, as well as around 130 readers and licensed lay ministers. There are also a total of 311 churchwardens and of course innumerable volunteers in each parish who make ministry possible and fruitful.

17

Lay leaders in training at St. Marks Academy.

45

People currently engaged on lay training pathways.



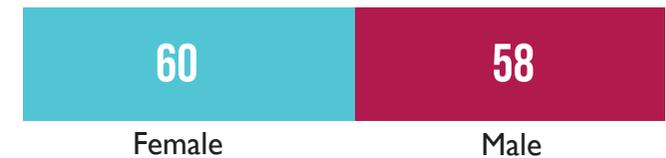
106 Stipendiary Clergy



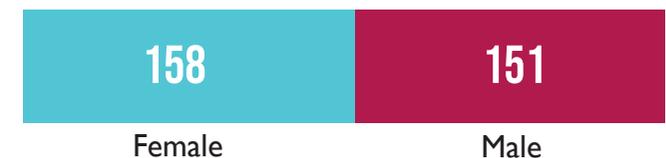
36 Curates



118 Readers

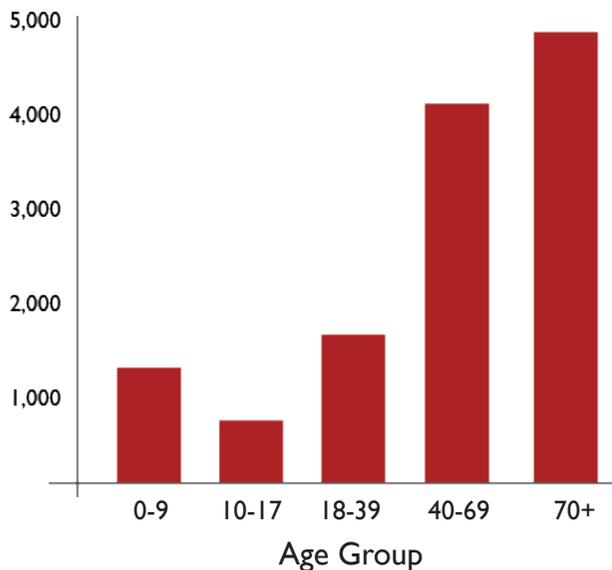


311 Churchwardens



The diocesan office serves and supports the parishes with around 40 people in various full time and part time roles facilitating and supporting the ministry and mission of the diocese.

DIOCESAN AGE PROFILE





SHIPSTON BENEFICE

When was the ministry/church established?

There have been churches in the benefice at least as far back as the twelfth century, and Shipston parish was formed from Tredington in 1719. The four churches came together as a benefice more than 40 years ago.

Context

The main church in this multi parish benefice is in the market town of Shipston on Stour, in the very south of the diocese with traditional rural communities. Shipston is a mixed market town with a combination of affluence and significant pockets of social and financial need. Shipston is also home to several residential homes for the elderly and for adults with learning difficulties.

Key ministries

Two of the villages retain a pattern of traditional BCP services, but Tidmington has combined this with a candlelit SoulSpace service each month, with poetry and art. St Edmund's is an Inclusive Church which hosts the Food Bank and works closely with civic and community groups and increasingly with those on the margins. The monthly Cafe Sunday is growing and attracts families and others not previously engaged with church. Ecumenical links are strong and we work together hosting Messy Church, Holiday at Home and Holiday Clubs.

Hope for the future

We'd love to meet more people from the new housing on the edge of town and continue to explore more mid week groups to deepen our spirituality and encourage engagement with questions of faith. We'd like to be able to make creative and courageous decisions with the deanery for the future resourcing of multi parish benefices.



THE BRIDGE BENEFICE & MISSION HUB

The ministry/church establishment and context

St John's Westwood was built in 1844 in a rural hamlet to alleviate the distance walked by farm workers. As the City and the University of Warwick has grown around it, St John's has become a gathering and planting church.

Two former plants, St Stephen's Canley and St James Fletchamstead are now equal members of a joint 3 parish benefice looking to work together as a multiplying mission hub benefiting from economies of scale and sharing gifts and ministries.

We are a mix of suburban, urban priority, and affluent in the South West of Coventry.

Key ministries

We have over 100 children and youth members of the church across the Benefice, a community of students, people from various backgrounds, whilst many people have key jobs which we aim to support them in. We have The Garden of Hope, (a missionary spirituality project,) Memory Cafe, events for the retired, toddler groups, and run a foodbank

Hope for the future

The church is looking at 2024 as the year to leave our more inward focus on spiritual health after the pandemic and move back out on mission. We have recently appointed a youth worker, plan to start a wellbeing cafe, and are beginning a New Worshipping community for people with addiction. St James will appoint an Associate Minister before Easter and St John's is being joined by Hope Springs Church, a small non-denominational church in a practical and prophetic move to step into ecumenical planting.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGES

The Church of England nationally has many current challenges including numerical and financial decline, division over LLF, past and present safeguarding reviews and historic inequalities and current lack of diversity.

As well as navigating these the Diocese of Coventry experiences various challenges and opportunities more specific to its own context. Most recently these have been identified via focused reporting and listening exercises throughout early 2023.

Our diocesan wide listening exercise showed:

There is significant opportunity for ministry and mission with children, young people and families.

The desire for more leadership development and volunteer training.

An increasing impact of church building management on clergy and volunteers.

A growing need for specialist support for parishes.

An in-depth report of one of our more rural deaneries was commissioned with findings indicating that attendance was in sharp decline due to ageing congregations and fewer young people populating rural areas. An overall decline in volunteer numbers with 83% of PCCs reporting that they have less than 10 volunteers and significant number of parishes being classed as vulnerable with important roles not being filled or filled by only one person.

150

Listed buildings.

With well over 150 listed buildings across the diocese, managing old buildings is a significant strain on an ageing volunteer group and a growing burden on clergy, taking energy and joy away from mission. An estimated £4.5m of repair work needed shows the scale of the issue just in one rural deanery.

£4.5M

Estimated cost of repair work in one rural deanery.

OPPORTUNITIES

Of all the opportunities we have across the diocese working with children, families and young people is seen as the greatest. As well as reaching the 18,000 children in our 76 Church of England schools many churches are ministering within their local context with some employing Children and Family workers. This ties in with the national Church of England's strategy to become younger and value children and young people.

83%

PCCs reporting less than 10 volunteers to call on for key roles.

New housing estates are a key part of Warwickshire County Council's plans for more housing with over 10,000 new houses being built in the Rugby deanery alone over the last 10 years. A missional growth strategy is already underway for the diocese helping to focus energy and resource into growing the church younger and numerically.

51,000+

New houses being built as part of the government planning.

STRENGTHS & MINISTRY

STRENGTHS

The diocese is home to many wonderful clergy who each bring individual talents and gifts to their communities and the wider diocese. There is also a commitment to releasing the passionate and talented volunteers and lay ministers we have by creating more lay ministry pathways.

Reconciliation is central to our mission and ministry. Internationally, our Cathedral is recognised as one of the world's oldest religious based centres for reconciliation, and its work in recent decades has involved it in some of the world's most difficult and long-standing areas of conflict. Today the medieval ruins continue to remind us of our human capacity both to destroy and to reach out to our enemies in friendship and reconciliation.

Our commitment to community regeneration and activities that support the marginalised are a growing feature of the diocesan ministry via TFC and local churches.

In 2023, link with the Kapsabet diocese in Kenya was recommitted, confirming the companionship which exists between our two dioceses.

AFFIRMING MINISTRY

Women Clergy

We value the contribution made by women in all areas of diocesan life. There is an expectation that our new bishop will continue to ordain women to the ministry, in line with current practice in this diocese.

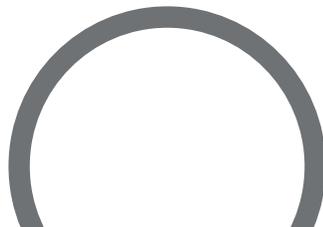
Anglo-Catholic Tradition

Within the diocese there are nine clergy from the Anglo-Catholic tradition who belong to The Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda and several who don't belong. It is a visible example of the way in which the Diocese of Coventry works with people of different traditions, in keeping with the 5 Guiding Principles of Mutual Flourishing.

Many Society clergy are very active in the diocese, valued both as clergy in their own ministries but also as part of the broader life and ministry of the diocese.

Lay Ministry

Lay people, both formally as Lay Readers and informally in other ways, play an important part in the diocese and we look for a bishop who will continue to encourage the laity to use their gifts to the glory of God.



GOING FORWARD

OUR PURPOSE

WORSHIP GOD

MAKE NEW DISCIPLES

TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES

OUR VISION

As we emerged from the pandemic and looked ahead to 2030 Bishop Christopher brought a timely vision for the diocese to be bearers of life, bringers of life, agents of life.

TO BE BEARERS OF LIFE WHO SEE

That we would be a family of parishes and church communities, some ancient, some more recent, schools, chaplaincies, charities, and Cathedral that are life-bearing, life-bringing, agents of God's purposes of life in the world. Partners together, reaching every part of society, with the good news of God's energising, empowering, life-giving love.

RESTORED HEALTH

RENEWED RELATIONSHIPS

NEW GROWTH

OUR SHARED FUTURE

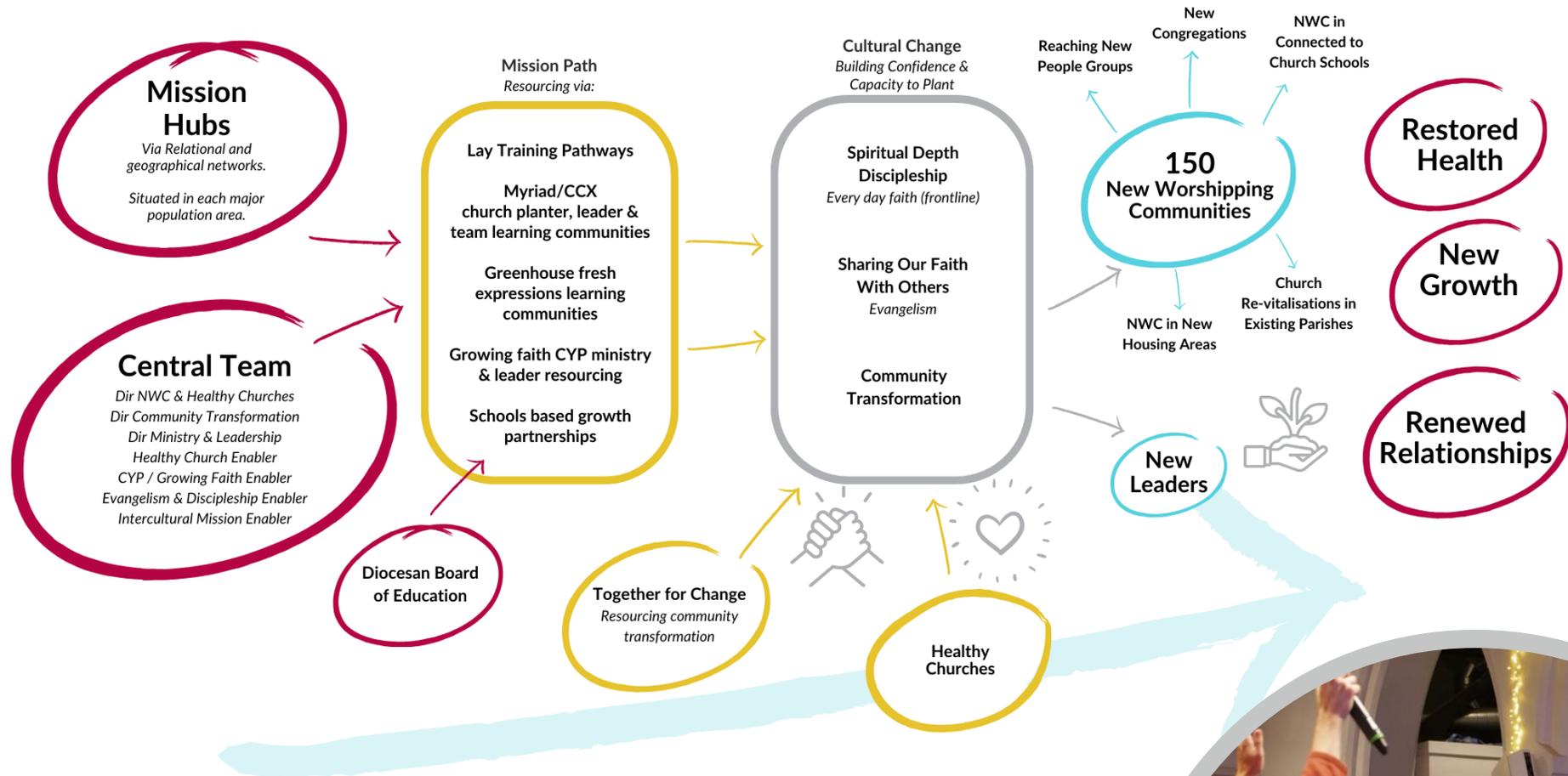
This is our strategic framework setting out how we will achieve our vision and mission purpose.

It has been developed following the listening phase of the annual cycle and responds to the feedback we have received from parishes, clergy and stakeholders who attended the strategy and vision day, or responded to the parish needs survey and the Archdeacons' Articles of Enquiry.

It is a maturing of the key priorities, outcomes and existing key commitments set out in the 2023 framework. These were identified through the engagement we undertook earlier in the year and have been refined with input from the national church's Strategy & Vision Consultant for the West Midlands, to ensure alignment with the national Church's priorities and bold outcomes.

MISSION DESIGN

Numerical Growth, Spiritual Depth



**The Mission Design - 2024 iteration*

Our Mission Design is to serve, support and resource our diocesan family of churches in the shared endeavour of making the Good News of Jesus Christ further known across the communities served by our parish churches.

This support facilitated through the diocesan central team, St. Marks Resource Church (pictured right) and our 6 Mission Hub churches envisions the cultivation of a rich seed bed anticipating growth of the Kingdom of God through lives and communities transformed by the abundant life Jesus promises to all ages, backgrounds and ethnicities.





BEDWORTH PARISH, ALL SAINTS, ST ANDREW'S & LANTERN CHURCH

When was the ministry/church established?

There has been priestly ministry in Bedworth since approx. 1290AD. The church has been rebuilt several times. More recently the churchmanship moved from Traditional Catholic to Evangelical which is where the church finds its theological roots today.

Context

Bedworth is an ex-mining town with high levels of deprivation. It is the largest parish in the diocese and there are many new homes being built which will see the boundaries merge with neighbouring towns.

Key ministries

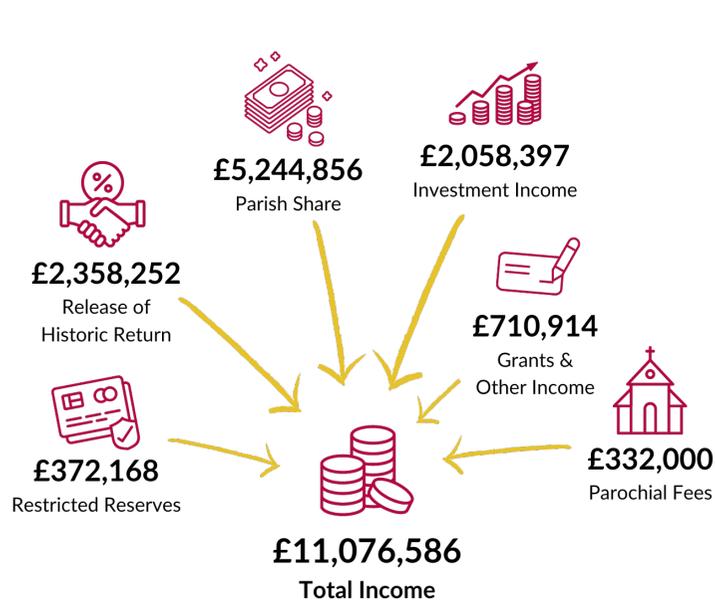
The main church, All Saints, is in the town centre and a large civic ministry. Key mission initiatives include the church plant, Lantern Church taking its name from John 8:12. It has created two new worshipping communities over the last year and hopes to create several more over the next 3-5 years.

Hope for the future

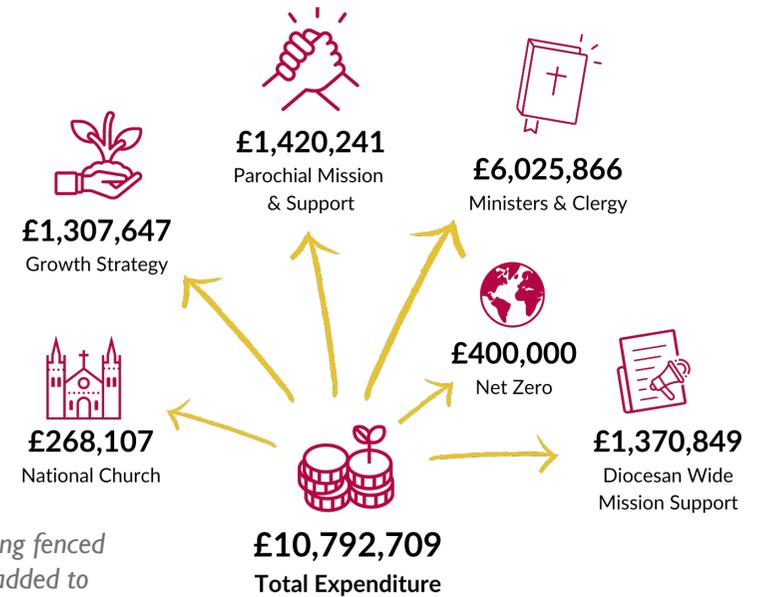
Our hope for the future includes seeing growth in our Sunday services. We are also looking at purchasing a new community centre and church building on one of the new housing estates.

RESOURCES & FINANCE

*Figures from the 2024 budget



**Income includes ring fenced funding from 2023 added to the expenditure for 2024.



Despite the challenging financial landscape nationally and with the rising cost of living significantly affecting households, the Diocese of Coventry continues to be as generous as it can be.

A Parish Share commitment of £5,244,856 for 2024 contributes to the overall diocesan budget.

However, despite this ongoing spirit of generosity, Parish Share will not cover the full cost of ministry in 2024 along with its various activities and support from the diocesan office.

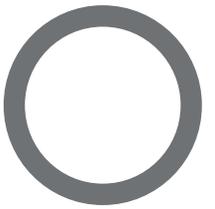
*Since 2019 parish share commitments have declined by 13%.

A growing annual shortfall since 2020 has illustrated that overall giving is down post pandemic and fundamental costs continue to rise. A release from our historic return (rainy day fund) has helped to bridge the gap over the last few years.

The Diocese was blessed with a good portion of historic endowments and assets that have been skilfully managed by the investment committee which has resulted in growth of more than 400% over the last twenty years (c. £14m to £70m). The investments now contribute over £2 million in investment returns per annum as well as providing for the release of historic return from the original capital investment.

The refining of Our Shared Future (the Mission Design) working alongside our national strategy advisor will aid us as we seek further national funding to support and release the works and mission.

This is, as with most diocese, an area of great challenge and a working group of the Diocesan Finance Group is in the process of compiling a robust 5-year financial plan. The plan will look to significantly shrink the operational deficit and remove or dramatically reduce the reliance on the release of historic return going forwards.



FOR OUR NEXT BISHOP, WE ARE SEEKING

Through a process of prayer, discussion and listening the Vacancy in See committee has discerned these qualities are the most desired in the next bishop of Coventry. Our online poll asked the question to all in the diocese, “**What 3 qualities would you like in the next bishop of Coventry?**”. We received over 180 responses which, along with the voices of some of our children and young people, were collated and discussed at workshops with the Statement of Needs drafting group.



**Hear the views of young people from St Laurence's Church, Coventry*

For our new bishop, we are seeking someone who will provide leadership and example to the diocese as we journey together in following Jesus:

A person who models Christian discipleship and is committed to sharing the Gospel with others, whatever their circumstances

A shepherd - who will diligently lead the diocese of Coventry in the truth of God's word as revealed in Scripture

A person of unity - someone possessing a generous orthodoxy, who is able to accommodate different traditions and styles of worship in a loving and sensitive way

An enabling leader - with a desire to release the potential of ministry at the parish level, utilising the gifts of both clergy and laity, male and female.

An encourager - someone who is approachable, compassionate, affirming and a good listener

A person who is committed to mutual flourishing in line with the Five Guiding Principles.

For our new bishop, we are seeking someone who will be looking beyond the existing church organisation as we strive to extend God's kingdom:

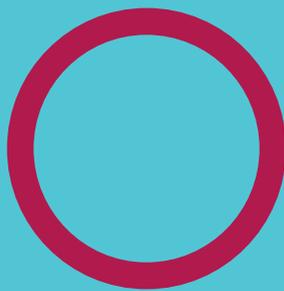
Outward looking - able to communicate the Gospel clearly and lovingly within the diocese, across the nation and internationally

Brave and forward-looking leader - a strategic thinker who can make tough decisions and enable people to seek innovative ways of advancing the kingdom of God

A person who can lead and foster a culture of church growth as fruit of healthy churches

A person with the gravitas to represent the diocese and the Church of England in the public space on a range of issues

A person who inspires people with hope and joy, who demonstrates a Christ-like love for the marginalised and disadvantaged, particularly sections of society who have not felt welcomed by the church



Views of Children and Young People

“what kind of person does the new Bishop need to be?”

“SOMEBODY WHO TEACHES ABOUT THE BIBLE”

“SOMEONE WHO TREATS EVERYBODY EQUALLY AND WITH RESPECT”

“HONEST”

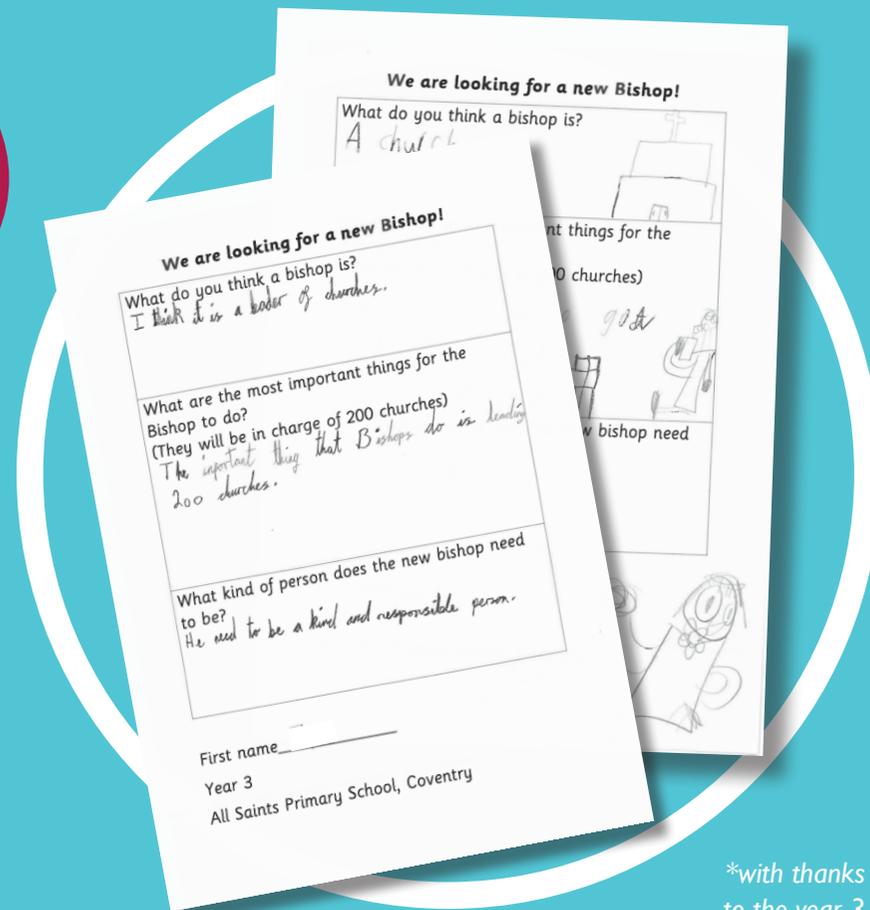
“SOMEONE WHO THINKS OF OTHERS”

“KIND”

“A PERSON THAT PRAISES”

“A PERSON THAT PRAYS”

“...AND THEY SHOULD LIKE THEIR JOB!”



*with thanks to the year 3 students of All Saints Primary School, Coventry

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
Please help us as we appoint a new Bishop in our diocese.
Give us wisdom to see as you see,
to hear your voice and listen to one another.
May Jesus' name be honoured.
May your Spirit guide us in our decisions.
May we do all this with your love,
seeking your Kingdom and your glory,
In the name of Jesus our Lord,
Amen

The Revd Alison Evans, Chaplain to the Vacancy-in-See Committee, created this shorter version of the Committee's prayer for use in schools and public services, particularly family services.

The original prayer was created from prayers gathered at the committee's first social meeting and has been regularly used during the process.



ST CLARE'S AT THE CATHEDRAL

When was the ministry/church established?

St Clare's started in September 2017, as a new worshipping community in the central tradition of the Church of England.

Context

We meet in a building tucked between the ruined and rebuilt parts of the Cathedral, in what was the old Cathedral gift shop.

Key ministries

We are a home to the spiritually seeking, to those who have wandered away from God, to those who never knew God and to those who have lost their faith in the church. Our community is young and diverse, embracing people of various ethnicities, abilities and nationalities. Many of our members identify as LGBTQ+ and several are neurodiverse. We seek to provide a faith community for those who maybe didn't fit in or were excluded from other churches. We meet at midday on a Sunday for a simple communion service followed by a shared lunch. In order to fund the ministry, we run a shop which is a ministry in itself. It is a place of drop in and resource locally and more widely through our online shop, which sells worship resources, spiritual gifts and church supplies to individuals and churches across the UK and beyond.

Hope for the future

We hope to continue to be a place where people can come and seek after Christ, grow in faith and be part of a loving community, building on what we have learned so far, and sharing that learning with others. We also hope to achieve financial sustainability within the next five years, to secure our future.



HOLY TRINITY, ATTLEBOROUGH

When was the ministry/church established?

The church was established in 1842.

Context

We're an evangelical church in Nuneaton. We are an affluent parish compared to most in Nuneaton, however immediately around the church there is a lot of poverty and need.

Key ministries

We have just started a weekly After School Family Club with crafts, games, a Bible story and a hot meal for everyone. We also run a toddler group, a lunch after our midweek service for those who are isolated and, a very busy, twice weekly, foodbank.

Hope for the future

Our vision is to connect people to Jesus and to each other; for the church to grow in all ages and discipleship, loving the Lord and his word.



Eco Church

In November 2023 we appointed a Net Zero Officer to build on the good work already done by our Net Zero Steering Group and to work closely with our Diocesan Environment Officer and Deanery Environmental Representatives working towards our aim to measurably reduce the carbon emissions associated with our activities.

We're pleased to say we have our first Gold award church, St Andrews church Rugby, and are on the road to more.

LLF & HOLDING DIFFERENCE

We are aware that there are people with strongly-held views concerning different aspects of the Living in Love and Faith process and the outworking of latest developments from the November 2023 General Synod. Our belief is that all of us care deeply about Scripture and want to do what honours God by spreading the Gospel, pursuing holiness, promoting justice, and serving the people we are called to love in Christ's name.



Our hope is that the Diocese of Coventry, in the context of its Ministry of Reconciliation, is able to model a form of Anglican discipleship that holds to Biblical and theological integrity whilst having space to accommodate different views. Our desire is that our next Bishop will be able to support and minister to both those who do and those who do not use the Prayers of Love and Faith. That they will also facilitate good disagreement in the context of our emphasis on reconciliation and, above all, help us remain united in our core mission of worshipping God, making new disciples and transforming communities.

We want to encourage the use of the Pastoral Principles, developed as part of the LLF process, in our dealings with one another. By doing so, our aim is to create a loving, generous and sensitive environment, where all can grow in God's word, experience the love of Jesus and enjoy the fellowship of our brothers and sisters in faith by the power of the Holy Spirit both through and beyond LLF.

Therefore, we humbly offer the following values which we would like to promote in this context:

LISTENING AND SHARING

We believe that good conversations are essential to enable people to understand the motivations of the other person and to articulate their own, with love and respect.

GOOD DISAGREEMENT

We believe it is important to be honest about our differences and the nature of those differences, rather than 'sweep them under the carpet', which is neither honest nor respectful to the importance of those different views.

HUMILITY

We believe that we come to any conversation as people who are imperfect and we should temper our behaviour accordingly.

SEEKING SOLUTIONS

We believe that working together towards a solution in love is essential and that, whatever the solution is that we adopt, we shall achieve it in an attitude that is honouring to God, consistent with Scripture and enables people to flourish.

LOVE

We believe that, by God's grace, we can model 'agape' love, as directed by Jesus (John 13:34-35) in this situation and that how we reach a solution will be a model to those outside the church.

TOGETHER FOR CHANGE COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE

Together for Change is a charity working in partnership with the diocese, its churches, charities and local agencies to develop projects that will bring positive change to their communities.

TFC has now been active in local communities for over 10 years working with parishes who sit in the highest 20% areas of deprivation to support creative and innovative projects that help to alleviate poverty.

£5M

Funding secured for churches and projects.

3,534

Food hampers given out in Warwick and Nuneaton since summer 2020



280

Isolated older people supported on average each week during 2023.

280

Refugees and asylum seekers from over 35 countries supported each week throughout 2023.





ST PETER'S, HILLFIELDS

When was the ministry/church established?

Our church has stood at the heart of the community of Hillfields since 1841.

Context

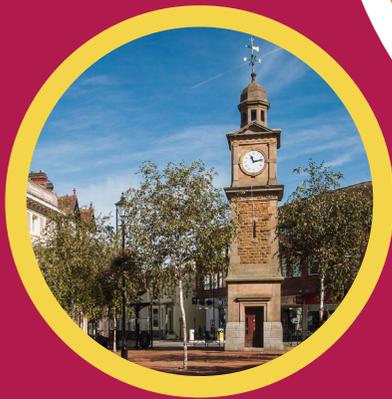
Our worshipping community moved out of the old Victorian church building in 2001 and into a modern, purpose-built facility, which has allowed us to better serve the needs of our local community.

Key ministries

Our morning service is a blend of traditional and modern worship styles, with a congregation that is a mix of age groups and ethnicities. Our Sunday evening “One Family” service is primarily made up of refugees and asylum seekers who have either found faith in Jesus or are getting to know Jesus for the first time. The service takes place in several different languages, often all at the same time! Throughout the week, St Peter’s provides free English lessons, a community breakfast and lunch, and an after-school youth hub for young people at risk of gang violence and knife crime.

Hope for the future

Our heart is to be more proactive in engaging local people out and about in the community, not just inside the church building. We are keen to see more people become a part of our family.



DIocese OF COVENTRY

Worshipping God | Making New Disciples | Transforming Communities

January 2024

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