

## Healthy Churches Development – Update 2, September 2023

**Themes** – I am continuing work on a small number of over-arching themes in 2023/24. Each will promote healthy church principles, and offer tools and resources for learning together. These will be introduced in clergy and lay training, developed as small group resources, and also made available through the Equip Hub for use within church and parish programmes. They fit well within the three colours of natural church development

- (i) **Green** A consultation on ‘*Rewilding [the church]*’ has triggered a range of responses, including a warm reception from churches engaged with Eco Church and other local initiatives; the rewilding theme for the AGM of the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust in June opened up some further possibilities for Away Day content.
- (ii) **Blue** *Passionate Spirituality* (in conjunction with the Diocesan Spirituality Advisor, Craig Grocock) – engagements with spiritual direction, contemplative spirituality and study opening up into a range of more creative engagements in the Autumn;
- (iii) **Red** Biblical reference points for healthy church include the *letters to the 7 churches in Revelation*, and their angels; these are also being integrated into plans for 2024 and beyond. This links very well to the outreach agenda of Leading Your Church into Growth - LYCIG (see below)

**NCD Surveys** – a number have been completed as at August 2023; while others are being scheduled for the autumn and early 2024. The surveys are best integrated with planning cycles in churches, and can lead into workshops and away days based on the key findings; there are still more than ten ‘free’ surveys on offer. Surveys still offer valuable listening to the voice of your congregation and the presence of the eight essential qualities in your church. A survey can lead to more focused work in specific areas of interest, but is also helping validate and celebrate the areas where progress is being made. While comparisons are made with pre-Covid surveys, it seems like they are most useful as a line in the sand for future focus and direction.

**NCD Character Guides** – the international ‘discipleship resources’ within the NCD programme have been re-branded – they link back with the series of books on Spirituality, Ministry (Gifts), Community (including small groups), and Leadership. The *Passionate Spirituality* resource will be a Diocesan focus this Autumn; it was a point of real significance to recognize that within any church/parish there is likely to be a wide range of individuals with different spiritual preferences, which of course is a gift in thinking more creatively about new worshipping communities. [Natural Character Development \(ncd.life\)](https://ncd.life)

**Review** – a root and branches review of the Healthy Church agenda, is starting very soon, as it will be ten years since the original launch of the NCD surveys within the Diocese back in 2013. The process of listening has already begun, and this will be as much about directing energy and effort in the right ways from 2024 onwards in line with your own priorities, along with those of the Diocese.

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**Visioning & Away Days** – attending, contributing, designing, facilitating .... different options are available for working with churches, parishes and benefices. Sessions have been based on the rewilding theme, on NCD survey results linked with a movie (*The Biggest Little Farm*), the angels of churches (Revelation 2), developing networks of small churches; these can be practical and visionary, analytical and creative, depending on your requirements. I am usually able to schedule work in at three months' notice; I'm also available for co-production sessions at much shorter notice.

**LYCIG** - As reported in May I am also enjoying exploring other tools for church health and growth – I attended the Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCIG) conference at Swanwick in June, and am shaping a proposal with senior leaders to make this available to a number of interested churches in 2024. [Leading your Church into Growth](#)

**Vacancies** – I work in partnership with churches going into vacancy, as directed by Barry Dugmore, Archdeacon Missioner. This may include ministry and preaching (which continues to have a healing and prayer ministry dimension), consultancy and some work, if required, on shaping priorities within Parish Profiles.

**Diocesan Prayer Diary** – I take a lead on coordinating the Prayer Diary, with an interest in seeing prayer ministry deepen and develop across the Diocese. I would welcome your suggestions on how this work might have greater traction.

**Training & learning** – Interactive sessions help explore new opportunities for church health, including with Deanery Chapters, with curates and within the Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) programme – this extends to PCCs and other groups for whom Healthy Church is a focus at any point in the year.

**Church Base and 1-to-1 Links** – I am now based out of St James, Fletchamstead, within The Bridge Mission Hub, with whom I seek to pray weekly. I have also engaged in a variety of more informal ways, including networking, with representatives of churches anywhere in the Diocese; careful listening and learning on my part – hopefully building trust and possibilities for partnering in the near future. I am now offering spiritual accompaniment for a small number of people within the Diocesan scheme, and can offer one-to one sessions in other ways too.

*The Church House Bookshop Summer Sale includes some great value books across a wide range of areas; I have picked up ten copies of the 2011 Modem Guide '101 Great Ideas for Growing Healthy Churches' (available at £2.50 (previously £18.99). It is filled with practical wisdom and ideas – 'spiritual' and 'business' perspectives share the contents.*

**Let me know if you would like a copy – FREE – but only ten copies available right now!**

[Our Shared Future - Diocese of Coventry \(anglican.org\)](http://anglican.org)

[Healthy church strategy - Diocese of Coventry \(anglican.org\)](http://anglican.org)

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