



THE VISION

A LIFE-CHANGING MOVEMENT THAT CONNECTS EVERYONE WITH GOD

Creating connections is our response to Jesus' invitation to see His "big idea" of the Kingdom of God become a reality.

Jesus came with a message and a vision for the world.

The message, the Good News, is that we can all be reconnected with God. The vision is of the Kingdom of God, a world where peace and justice reign and the whole of creation is redeemed and restored. This is God's big idea.

As Christians we not only believe in this big idea; we play a part in making it a reality.

In our churches, when we connect with God, we may then connect others with Him: we share Jesus' story; we show what it means to follow Him; we become signs of God's Kingdom in the world.

When we join together to do this across our diocese, we become a life-changing movement that can connect every person and every community with God.

This is our vision for the Diocese of Bristol. It is an audacious vision energised by an all-powerful God.

The plans we have – our strategy – challenge us all to play our part.

Will you join us on this life-changing journey?



Diocese of Bristol; 'Creating connections'

How will you play your part in this vision for our diocese, which is part of God's big idea? How do your parish plans for ministry and mission align to our wider diocesan vision and priorities?

A 'Creating connections' toolkit has been developed to help every parish in the Diocese explore their place in, and response to, this vision. It is available to be downloaded from the diocesan website.

The Diocese of Bristol has a wide range of resources available to

parishes and specialist advisors in a variety of areas of ministry and mission. Please do make use of these resources via the website or by calling the Diocesan Office. Diocesan Support Services are here to support your ministry, mission and response to this vision.

In order to take this vision forward together, we need to strengthen our financial giving to one another across the Diocese as well as to invest in local opportunities.

Through generosity and our financial connections, we are able to honour our responsibilities to one another, resource parochial ministry and support mission in all our parishes.

To be “a life changing movement”, we must be committed, confident and connected.

“From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

Ephesians 4:16



... WITH GOD

For Christians, to be connected with God is primarily about being, as St Paul would have put it, “in Christ”.

This new relationship shapes and empowers our lives and our faith. We journey towards God in worship, through the Scriptures and in prayer. We follow and learn from Jesus’ teaching and example, and can be changed by the Holy Spirit, to become more like Him.

Our vision is to become more like Christ, allowing the Spirit to influence our words, our actions and our interactions with the world around us, and to focus on making new disciples.

We are seeking to build up believers in our Diocese, supporting them

to grow and deepen their relationship with God whilst also making evangelism and witness a priority in our parishes and communities.

We want to ensure that every person in the Diocese has the opportunity to experience the love of God and to respond by establishing and entering into a relationship with God.

... WITH EACH OTHER

To be connected with each other means to reflect the unity and the diversity of the Holy Trinity within the Body of Christ. This unity in diversity can be experienced at every level within the Church.

St Paul tells us that we have to work at this: “Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3). Through the Diocese we form a connected community which supports and challenges each other.

Together, as 165 parishes and 69 schools, we are the Diocese of Bristol. As a diocese we are developing new ways of building stronger connections with each other. We are stronger when we serve together and build one another up for the sake of the Kingdom.

We are developing new ways of learning from one another, sharing best practice and good ideas and working to ensure that we share, bless, support and inspire one another for collective growth.



... WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

To be connected with our communities is to be an incarnational Church. This means we have to start with people where they are, not where we might like them to be.

We participate in the mission of God by being planted and rooted in our local context. The call of the Church of England is to proclaim the Good News afresh in each generation and to be a sign of God's Kingdom in every community.

We must develop a true understanding of our communities. Without research and consideration, we will not be able to become a

Church that connects effectively with the communities we serve, in a way which meets them where they are.

When we reach out to our communities, we participate in God's mission and they are transformed by His love. Every parish and school will be supported to examine how it will address this challenge to engage relevantly with its local context. We will invest by focussing support and resources in those areas that demonstrate a desire to engage with their communities in this way. The possibilities for connecting with

75% OF DOCTORS SAID
THEY SEE UP TO 5 PATIENTS
A DAY WHOSE MAIN
REASON FOR
VISITING WAS
A RISK LONELINESS



OF THE 85% OF PEOPLE
WHO DON'T BELIEVE IN THE
DIVINITY OF JESUS,



and serving our communities are limitless.

The challenge is to discern the right approaches, release appropriate resources and commit to making it happen.

“

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.”

Matthew 5:14

PRIORITISING



*We made a bunch
of disciples!*



Priority #1

MAKING DISCIPLES

We need to encourage greater commitment to following Jesus in discipleship and to take seriously the call of the Great Commission. What would it look like for the Church and our Church schools to be salt and light in the world, demonstrating and declaring the Good News?

Our aim is to call people into a more radical relationship with Jesus. We will encourage discipleship that engages people in both personal and corporate prayer and Bible study, that inspires them to live their daily lives influenced by their faith.

We will invest resources in evangelism and outreach so that lives and communities might be transformed as people are invited to respond to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Priority #2

GROWING LEADERS

Leaders make a difference. The only ship that doesn't need a captain is anchored in the harbour. We need to be intentional about rearing the right kind of leaders, lay and ordained, who are fit for the challenge of re-connecting in a post Christian context.

In the Diocese of Bristol, we believe in the importance of growing and nurturing wise, godly leaders and investing in leadership in our parishes and schools. We are committed to supporting and developing leaders, and providing quality training and development programmes for all those who are serving in positions of leadership across the Diocese.

We also want to invest in a new generation of leaders, helping younger generations to explore their calling to servant hearted leadership and an obedient response to it.



Priority #3

ENGAGING YOUNGER GENERATIONS

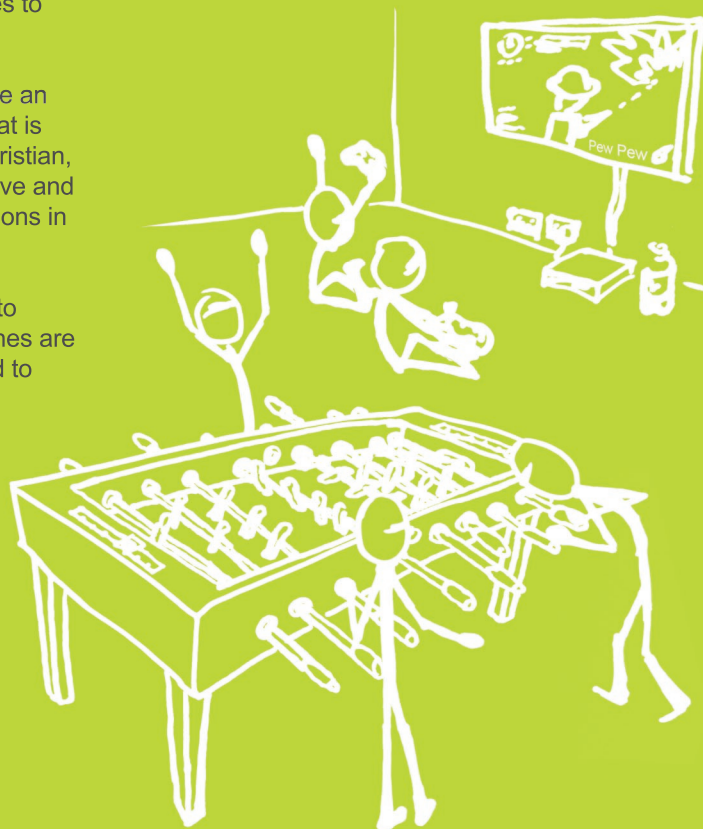
To fulfil our call to proclaim afresh the Good News in each generation, we need to connect far more effectively with those aged 40 and under. We particularly need to develop skills and confidence as we find new ways to engage and make disciples of younger generations helping us to pass on the baton of faith and see lives transformed.

We will prioritise reconnecting with children and teenagers, young adults and families as we explore, discover

and establish fresh approaches to making these connections.

Our church schools will provide an education for young people that is excellent and authentically Christian, and through which we can serve and connect with younger generations in our communities.

We will do everything we can to ensure that each of our churches are safe and welcoming for all and to enhance best practice in safeguarding.



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When our relationships with God, each other and our communities grow stronger, we will see God's Kingdom come. Will you commit to make disciples, grow leaders and engage younger generations?"



Diocese of Bristol
Creating connections

www.bristol.anglican.org/creatingconnections