

At the breaking of bread:

Church growth, relationship and social action.

Hannah Rich

June 2019

Drawing on research from the GRA:CE project, in partnership
between Theos and Church Urban Fund.

GRA:CE Project

- Church growth, social action and discipleship in the Church of England.
- At present: 250+ interviews across 50 case study parishes in total.
- Exploring through qualitative interviews how congregations and church communities understand the connections between the three aspects.
- Quantitative phase beginning Autumn 2019.

Food as central to social action

86%

of Church of England churches are involved in providing lunch clubs, coffee mornings or similar initiatives of hospitality for older people.

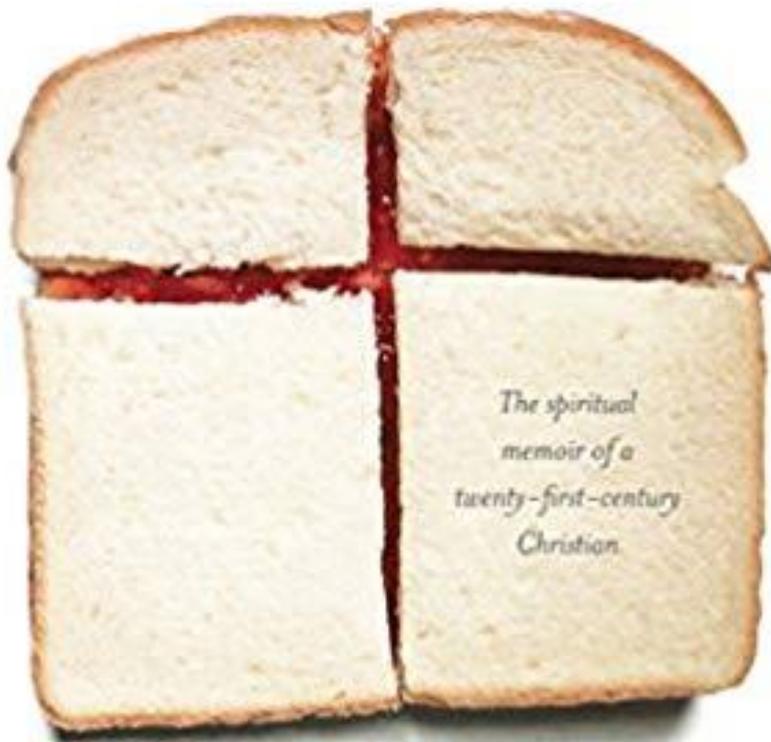
53%

are involved in community cafés.

"The most amazing book."
—ANNE LAMOTT

take this bread

SARA MILES



‘There’s a hunger beyond food that’s expressed in food. That’s why feeding is always a kind of miracle.’

(Sara Miles)

- “Eating together solidifies relationships within the church, so it is that thing about being one body. The Eucharistic stuff isn’t just the Eucharist on a Sunday. It’s the whole ethos of the place, of coming together and breaking bread and sharing a meal and being fed spiritually as well.” (Lay minister)
- “For me, the Eucharist only makes sense as part of a eucharistic community which enjoys eating together and feasting as a way of life.” (Congregation member)

- ‘Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.’
 - Based on 1 Corinthians 10:17.
- Bread is instrumental in creating community.
- Companion:
 - com + pānis; ‘with bread’





Dinner church

Food as part of collective worship, not 'afterwards'.

Lunchtime service – act of worship, focussed on a meal, drawing a new congregation together.

Messy Church as a similar example -

