

On Wednesday 25 March 2020 we hosted the Inspiring Everyday Faith Webinar, replacing planned gatherings in Leeds and London which were cancelled as travel restrictions came into place.

The webinar sought to share learning about creating cultures that enable the whole people of God to live out the good news of Jesus in the whole of life from the past two years of the Setting God's People Free programme, both generally and in the developing context of the Covid-19 outbreak.



Despite a content shift from six hours in person to just under two online, the presenters arrived energised and covered much, from equipping people in their callings to thinking about how to be Christians in all parts of our lives. Under normal circumstances, 98% of Christians in the Church of England spend 95% of their lives out in society and away from church buildings. Now, with church buildings closed, 100% of Christians are spending 100% of the time outside of the physical church, giving us an enormous opportunity to live out our everyday faith.

So what is everyday faith, and how can we inspire people to live out their faith in the whole of their lives?

## **What the presenters had to say**

Nick Shepherd, Programme Director for [Setting God's People Free](#) (SGPF), hosted the event. He gave an overview of the goals of the project, what has been achieved to date, and some of the aims going forward. Nick spoke about how we are sent to serve God's mission in God's world and of the vision for 'enabling ministry for an everyday and a growing faith', where the whole people of God are encouraged and equipped to serve. He also noted that we are starting to see the shifts in culture of the Church of England that will enable more people to live out their faith in daily contexts.

Rachel Treweek, Bishop of Gloucester, noted that buildings are closed but the Church is not. We are being sent out now more than ever, and in new and creative ways. Further, she pointed out that this isn't the first time God has called people during difficult times, reminding us that 'Mary said yes to God amidst so much uncertainty, so much turbulence, but she said yes to God with a hopeful and expectant heart.'

Alison Coulter, Director of Thrive Worldwide and Diocese of Winchester Lay Chair, reminded everyone that the church is wherever God has placed us. God has called us into his world, and what that means differs for each person. Alison used the analogy of oranges and peaches: we are more like oranges in that we tend to compartmentalise our lives into church, home, work, school, and so on, but we should try to be more like peaches, which are whole and undivided. God is – or should be – part of every aspect of our whole lives.

Tina Molyneux, Diocese of Oxford Discipleship Enabler, spoke about Oxford's [personal discipleship plans](#) (PDPs) and how these can equip people to find and use their gifts. The plans come with a questionnaire so people can identify their gifts. This is followed by a conversation with an enabler who is supportive, listens and encourages the person in their gifts. The plans have been very successful. Participants were asked, "Does your church support you to live out your faith Monday to Saturday?" before and after participating. Initially just 35% of respondents said yes, but this rose to 85% after they had participated in the scheme.

Cal Bailey, former Sustainability Director at NG Bailey, spoke about faith in business and transforming business beyond profit, recognising that businesses can enable faith in everyday life. Current examples include people who are producing PPE to protect NHS workers, and keyworkers in the food industry keeping the country fed. Profit becomes what is necessary to keep the business running. He noted that this resonates [with](#)

younger people, and that it should be a topic that all of us are thinking about.

Hayley Matthews, Diocese of Leeds Director of Lay Training, shared the online learning platform for Leeds and its aims of making confident people who can transform communities. Everyone has a vocation and a gift, and the goal is to equip people to find these, as well as encouraging people to look at what's happening in their lives beyond church to see how they're serving God.

Chigor Chike, vicar of Emmanuel Church Forest Gate, spoke about the secular/sacred divide in Western culture, and how God and the spiritual are often marginalised in the Western worldview. He identified the huge opportunity to learn about faith in daily life from cultures of non-Western BAME heritage.

Mary Hawes, National Children and Youth Adviser, talked about the Biblical vision of all people, old and young, together in God's presence. She reminded us to think about where we find children and young people in everyday life, and that we should be growing everyday faith in all parts of life – not just at particular stages.

## **What does everyday faith look like? What does this mean for us as Christians as we go about our daily lives?**

Here are some excellent examples from the presenters:

- Bringing all aspects of our lives to God: friends and family, jobs, money, marriage, lifestyle choices, praying before sending emails, during meetings – and holding it all up to God's standards.
- How we conduct ourselves in challenging times is important – for example, businesses need to care for the people working for them. We should live our whole lives as an act of worship.
- We can transform businesses beyond profit. If your business is producing PPE, it's keeping NHS workers safe. If you work in food supply chains, you're keeping the country fed. Profit becomes what is necessary to keep the business running.
- Ask people what's happening in their lives beyond the church, and see how they're serving God.
- Life outside of church is important to everyone. Use sermons to refer to workplaces and schools, and to make sense of what it means to be a Christian in daily life.
- Theology courses can give people confidence in speaking about church because they're no longer worried about how they might answer

questions that come up if they mention that they're Christians.

- Read about some of the people involved in Oxford's [personal discipleship plans here](#).

Let us know what your church or network is doing to inspire everyday faith for you and others. Email your thoughts to

[inspiring.everydayfaith@churchofengland.org](mailto:inspiring.everydayfaith@churchofengland.org).

**For more information and resources, visit our [Everyday Faith webpages](#) and sign up to the Setting God's People Free [Influencers mailing list](#).**

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