A vision and strategy for the Church of England in the 2020s.

About the Vision and Strategy

The Church of England’s vocation is and always has been to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ afresh in each generation to the people of England. The vision and strategy is an invitation to dioceses and parishes to examine and develop existing strategies and processes in the light of these ideas.

“The overriding aim for the future is that any worshipping member of the Church of England, when asked by their friend where they could go to explore their faith, would be able to recommend an expression of Church locally that would really suit them.”

Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York

Video: Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York, talks about the emerging vision for the Church.
One vision

A Church for the whole nation which is Jesus Christ centred, and shaped by, the five marks of mission. A church that is simpler, humbler, bolder.

Three priorities

- **To become a church of missionary disciples** where all God’s people are free to live the Christian life, wherever we spend our time Sunday to Saturday.

- **To be a church where mixed ecology is the norm** – where every person in England has access to an enriching and compelling community of faith by adding new churches and new forms of Church to our parishes, cathedrals, schools and chaplaincies.

- **To be a church that is younger and more diverse.**

*the mixed ecology describes the flourishing of church and ministry in our parishes, and in other communities of faith through things like church planting, fresh expressions of church, and chaplaincy and online.

Six bold outcomes

From the three strategic priorities we have identified six bold outcomes.

A church for everyone through:

- **Doubling the number of children and young active disciples** in the Church of England by 2030.

- A Church of England which **fully represents the communities we serve** in age and diversity.

A pathway for everyone into an accessible and contextual expression of church through:

- **A parish system revitalised for mission** so churches can reach and serve everyone in their community.

- Creating **ten thousand new Christian communities** across the four areas of home, work/education, social and digital.

**Empowered by:**

- **All Christians in the Church of England envisioned, resourced and released to live as disciples of Jesus Christ** in the whole of life, bringing transformation to the church and world.
All local churches, supported by their diocese, becoming communities and hubs for initial and ongoing formation.

A church that is younger and more diverse

In February 2020, GS2161 was presented to General Synod, outlining the most recent findings on under 16 attendance in the Church of England. Synod requested more insight into the data to understand best practice in a variety of contexts. Research was conducted in early 2022 with over 200 churches who had grown their engagement with young people in a variety of contexts and traditions between 2014 and 2019.

The aim was to distinguish factors that had contributed to the growth, offering principles that other churches could reflect on as they sought to engage with young people. The findings were first presented in a workshop at General Synod in July 2022.

Youth and Children Growth Research – Synod presentation

Youth and Children Growth Research – full research paper

The short film below tells the stories of places that have chosen to prioritise young people, children and families, with case studies from Southampton, Barnet, Eynsham, Blackburn, Fulham, and Loughton.

A church of missionary disciples

In this short film we hear people from different walks of life talk about how they live out their faith throughout the week. Visit the Church of England’s Everyday Faith portal for bitesize resources on topics relevant to you that will help you find and follow God in everyday life.

A church where mixed ecology is the norm

“Mixed ecology will look different in every place. What we see in Suffolk is happening in Rochester where I am leaving, in Leicester where I am going and all over the country, reflecting the diversity of their contexts.” Saju Muthalaly, Bishop of Loughborough

Watch a snapshot of the inspiring ways the Church in the Diocese are connecting communities with the good news of Jesus.
More resources

Blogs

Read a range of blogs exploring what it means to be centred on and shaped by Jesus Christ.

Find out more

Stories

Read a selection of inspiring stories from churches across the country.

Find out more

Webinars

Register for upcoming webinars about the vision and strategic priorities of the Church for the next decade, and watch recordings of our previous webinars.

Find out more
The picture below illustrates the shape of the vision and strategic priorities from the period of consultation with hundreds of people who reflect the breadth and diversity of the Church of England.

Read the commentary from the Archbishop of York that accompanies this illustration.

A VISION FOR THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN THE 2020s

A CHURCH FOR ALL PEOPLE IN ALL PLACES … a Christian vision for every person … … a Christian vision for the world …

“If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation”
(2 Corinthians 5:17)
To help us achieve these strategic priorities we are looking at bringing simplicity and coherence to our governance structures, and the practical ways the Church is organised and gets things done that enable the local church to flourish. Read more about the Emerging Church of England programme.

**Links**

- **Read:** Vision and Strategy – address to General Synod, November 2021, by Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York
- **Read:** Vision and Strategy – address to General Synod, July 2021, by Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York
- **Read:** Update on progress – address to General Synod, February 2021, by Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York
- **Read:** A theological reflection on our emerging vision and priorities by Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford
- **Read:** ‘Simplicity, humility, and boldness’: Archbishop of York outlines ten-year plan for the C of E, *Church Times*, November 2020
- **Read:** Renewal and Reform – a summary of progress and impact, April 2021

Read stories from churches across the country on how they are serving communities.

[Read More Stories](#)

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What do we mean by simpler, humbler, bolder?

- A simpler Church, both in governance and structure and in the way we live and share the gospel
- A humbler Church, recognising our failings and working with others to serve the common good
- A bolder Church energised and enthused by the good news of what God has done in Jesus Christ and sharing that with everyone.

What are the Five Marks of Mission?

The phrase a Jesus shaped life is borrowed from our sisters and brothers in the Anglican Communion and puts the Five Marks of Mission at the centre of our life in Christ. They describe a vocation to be the ones who:

- tell the story of Jesus Christ
- teach the faith of Jesus Christ
- tend to the cares of the world
- transform the unjust structure of society; and
- treasure and safeguard the integrity of God's creation


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