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***God's People Set Free: Living as missionary disciples in the whole of life,
bringing transformation to the church and the world***

November 2021

Executive summary

1. This report reviews the implementation of the recommendations of the 2017 *Setting God's People Free* (SPGF) report¹ as the programme of work to support this draws to a close.
2. SGPF called for a focus on fostering a culture where the whole people of God live out the Good News of Jesus confidently in all of life, Sunday to Saturday. Two culture shifts across the Church of England were recommended that would encourage and equip disciples to follow Jesus confidently in every sphere of life; and affirm and enact the complementary gifting, vocation and mutual accountability in discipleship between lay and ordained followers.
3. There is strong evidence that this is beginning to take place. SGPF has helped identify how an approach to changing culture does enable confident faith in the whole of life. Whilst the named programme of SGPF work has been completed, the shifts in practice and structures called for in SGPF remain a priority within the Church of England's Vision for the 2020s
4. Two new ways of communicating the aspirations have emerged from SGPF – Everyday Faith and Enabling Ministry. These approaches will be in embedding ongoing change. Everyday Faith covers a range of activities and resources that encourage reflection on, and experience of, 'finding and following God in everyday life'. Enabling Ministry focusses on how ministry roles animate the vocation and ministry of the whole people of God and how to better shape formation and ongoing development to support this.
5. The priority areas for action called for in SGPF are:
 - Clearer identification and resourcing of faith in the whole of life in diocesan strategies;
 - Changing the focus of communications to better represent the life of the church in homes, schools, workplaces and the community;
 - Re-modelling the selection, training and ongoing ministerial development in line with the priority of lay formation and discipleship; and
 - Enhancing support and resources for discipleship, calling and vocation in all of life.

Examples are provided of how such actions affect change and how they can help diminish 'initiative overload' by focussing on small shifts in practice.

6. The most significant aspect of SGPF has been the way that the Discipleship Learning Communities have helped accelerate progress towards the clear *diocesan vision for transformative culture change around discipleship in the whole of life* called for in SGPF. The majority of dioceses do now express this and have activities in place to tangibly express this commitment in supporting worshipping communities, individuals and networks in disciple making and calling. The coordination of such work through a *Disciple Enablers Network* (DEN) provides a strong basis for continuing this approach in the implementation of the ongoing priority to be missionary disciples in the whole of life.

¹ GS 2056

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7. SGPF engaged with over 2,500 worshipping communities. Of these, around 400 churches and chaplaincies agreed to be pilot places to help better identify what habits and practices help form and equip people of all ages to live out the Good News of Jesus Christ confidently, in all places, Sunday to Saturday. Survey evidence and qualitative enquiry demonstrates this work proved highly fruitful in *building greater confidence in discipleship and promoting lay/clergy mutuality*. The pilot work undertaken in several dioceses is now being more widely embedded and shared with other dioceses. A common approach to monitor change and identify impact has not yet been established. Delayed by COVID-19, this capacity will be provided from May 2022 as part of the *Church Development Tool*. This will provide significant data for worshipping communities and dioceses on a series of discipleship and church health indicators.
8. A substantial shift in the focus of communications in dioceses and the national church has been observed. Greater attention is being given to the ways in which individuals seek to share the Good News of Jesus Christ and express their vocation and calling in wider societal roles. Similarly, stories from and about worshipping communities more clearly describe 'being church', not merely 'doing church'. Sometimes overlooked as a subtle shift, this change in the stories we tell is vital for nurturing a theological imagination for the vocation, ministry and discipleship of the whole people of God. This theological vision, which has always underpinned SGPF, has been more fulsomely developed in the Faith and Order Commission resource *Kingdom Calling*.
9. Re-modelling selection, training and ongoing ministerial development in line with the priority of lay formation and discipleship has been significantly advanced – and expanded upon within the Ministry Council's vision of *Ministry for a Christian presence in every community*. In addition to the recommendations made around ordained ministry, similar adaptations have been incorporated into the vision and frameworks for lay ministry roles. Supporting the initial and ongoing formation of such roles now follows. Initial work with Theological Education Institutions has provided insight into these next steps. Work is underway to develop new resources for 'enabling ministry' within the Common Awards hub for ministerial formation and training. Dioceses in the learning communities have also identified approaches to ongoing support that are now being made more widely available.
10. Work on a *digital portal* to provide resources for discipleship, calling and vocation in all of life has been undertaken. The Everyday Faith portal went live in January 2022. This was developed iteratively with learning from the work in dioceses and will provide an integrated approach that includes diocesan resources alongside those from the national church and selected partners. This resource is also intentionally designed to help people make connections to local churches and other supportive networks that dioceses are establishing. This portal also includes resources for Faith at Home to connect with the Growing Faith agenda.
11. As the programme of work to implement SGPF draws to a close, the changes it called for remain a priority and are embedded in the Church's Vision for the 2020s. The continuing desire and determination to be a church of missionary disciples – Jesus Christ centred and shaped by the Five Marks of Mission – has been enabled in no small part by the collective work across the church to implement the recommendations of Setting God's People Free.

Setting God's People Free: a shift in culture, not a centrally driven initiative

Over many years, previous reports [on the laity and being confident disciples] ... though laden with sound analysis, solid theology and clear proposals ... resulted in no significant change ... One main reason for this is that these lacked clear implementation plans to address complex cultural issues identified within each report.²

Background and context for Setting Gods People Free

12. This report reviews the implementation of the recommendations of the 2017 *Setting God's People Free* (SPGF) report as the programme of work to support this draws to a close.
13. In February 2017 the General Synod warmly received the *Setting Gods People Free* report (GS 2056) and backed its recommendations that expressed the vision of enabling *the 98% of the Church of England not in ordained or formal roles for fruitful, faithful mission and ministry, influence, leadership and most importantly vibrant relationship with Jesus in the whole of life... not only in congregational activities and projects but in work and schools, in field and factory, Sunday to Saturday.*³ The report was commissioned by the Archbishops' Council and prepared by members of a Lay Leadership Task Group. It concluded that such a change is not primarily a theological or ecclesiastical issue but one of a need for a change in the Church's overall culture – a culture that *over-emphasises the distinction between sacred and secular and therefore fails to communicate the all-encompassing scope of the whole-life good news and to pursue the core calling of every church community and every follower of Jesus – to make whole-life maturing disciples.*⁴
14. SGPF identified two essential shifts in the culture and practice of the church that need to be fulfilled to see the church become more fruitful in “evangelising the nation and transforming society”.⁵ These shifts are enacted by nurturing attitudes and behaviours that consistently:
 - Encourage and equip lay people to follow Jesus confidently in every sphere of life in ways that demonstrate the Gospel; and
 - Affirm, on basis of baptismal mutuality, the equal worth and status, complementary in gifting and vocation, mutually accountability in discipleship and equal partnership in mission of lay and ordained followers.

Eight levers for change were suggested that dioceses and worshipping communities could use to identify the small steps that make a significant difference [see Annex 1].

15. The focus on culture change in SGPF was accompanied by a high-level implementation plan with priorities for action in four areas:
 - National championing of the two over-arching culture shifts – by Rachel Treweek (Bishop of Gloucester) and Dr Jamie Harrison (Chair of the House of Laity).
 - A learning community of ‘pilot dioceses’ prioritising both culture shifts.
 - A national portal (digital resources) to inspire and support every member of the Church of England in ‘all of life discipleship’ and vocational journey.

² SGPF GS 2056 p.9

³ SGPF GS 2056 p.1 ‘Monday to Saturday’ faith is used in the original report. ‘Sunday to Saturday’ is now preferred to better convey the life of the church and our patterns of gathering and sending.

⁴ SGPF GS 2056 p.1

⁵ SGPF GS 2056 p.3

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- Re-modelling the selection, training and ongoing ministerial development of clergy in line with the priority of lay formation and discipleship.

These priorities for action necessarily required coordination with other significant streams of work. A programme for implementation was therefore established as a core part of the Renewal and Reform programme within the Archbishops' Council. In addition to the four priority areas, General Synod also requested that the Faith and Order Commission (FAOC) provide support to SGPF to deepen the theological understanding and framing of the shifts.

16. In the course of work, two new ways of communicating the aspirations of SGPF emerged – Everyday Faith and Enabling Ministry.⁶ **Everyday Faith** originated in several dioceses as a simple but effective way of encapsulating what a Jesus Christ centred and shaped 'everyday life' looks like. Everyday faith is not an initiative but is used to convey a range of activities and resources that encourage reflection on, and experience of, '**finding and following God in everyday life**' – for all ages in a variety of contexts.⁷ **Enabling Ministry** encapsulates a significant part of the shift towards the mutuality of vocation between lay and ordained followers through stressing the role 'ministry' plays in animating the vocation and ministry of the whole people of God. It also affirms the vital role played by people called to ministerial vocations in the life of the church.⁸ This animating dimension of ministry relates to both lay and ordained roles. This also addresses an ongoing confusion around the meaning of lay-clergy mutuality, which can be conflated with the development of lay ministry roles in the life and mission of the church. The notion of mutuality in SGPF not only encompasses how lay and ordained ministry roles function mutually and collaboratively, but that the mutuality of baptismal calling requires a wider recognition of the variety of Kingdom callings that followers of Jesus Christ have across social settings and in family and community responsibilities.⁹
17. The change SGPF calls for has found a high degree of championing and sponsorship – both from the two national champions and from senior leaders in dioceses, national church teams, networks and agencies. The impact of such sponsorship has proven to be critical. Feedback from diocesan staff and leaders highlight that where such sponsorship was observable and consistent, greater change has been possible. Recent research from LICC also indicates that such sponsorship of change is as vital at a local level.¹⁰
18. The following sections outline how SGPF has begun to shape a culture that better enables the whole church to live as missionary disciples. First, by looking at how this has become a clearer priority in the life of dioceses. Second, how change in our communication is helping to collectively shape a richer story of how all God's people are involved in God's transforming work in our world. Third, how small shifts in our practice as worshipping communities, and our resources for families, groups and individuals, are helping us to look beyond and outside church structures to being the church in communities and daily contexts. And fourth, how the reshaping of selection, formation and development for ordained and lay follows is building a

⁶ See [GS Misc 1302 Setting God's People Free update.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#)

⁷ The descriptions of *Faith at Home* and *Faith at Work* indicate Everyday Faith resources, prayers and reflections to support faith in families and households or discipleship and calling in the world of work.

⁸ [Vision for Christian Presence in Every Community GS 1224 \(churchofengland.org\)](#)

⁹ Whilst SGPF affirms the 'vocation and ministry of the whole people of God', the term ministry is more usually perceived to relate to specific roles and activities within the church. Identify ministry more fulsomely as equipping the church for works of service (Ephesians 4:12) was deemed to be preferable to extending this normal use of ministry to Christian living in wider contexts. See [Kingdom Calling GS Misc. 1254](#)

¹⁰ [Sustaining Change: What keeps whole-life disciple making going and growing? | LICC](#)

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healthier and hopeful partnership as a “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9), *continuing Christ’s priestly work of blessing, mediation and reconciliation on behalf of the whole of humanity, to bear witness to, and participate in the mission of God.*¹¹

Implementing a culture of encouraging confident following in the whole of life, and identifying the impact

*What is required is not a set of centrally delivered programmes and resources. Instead, we need a root and branch, top to bottom examination of every aspect of church life through the lens of one question: “How does what we do as a church, ordained and lay together, enable God’s people to grow in their capacity to live out the Good News of Jesus in all of life – in service in the church and in the world?”*¹²

Bottom up and top down change: impact of the discipleship learning communities

19. The initial SGPF implementation plan called for involving 5 of more dioceses to ‘test and champion the eight levers for cultural change’. Response to invitations to participate were so great that four cohorts of the Discipleship Learning Community ran between January 2018 and May 2021. This has enabled 29 dioceses evaluate and explore the actions they need to take to enable and equip the whole church – young and old in a variety of context – in our callings across society.¹³ The DLCs have proven to be a highly effective mechanism for dioceses to engage with the scope and extent of the SGPF recommendations. They enabled dioceses to frame the principles of SGPF within their context, for instance in Manchester into their pre-existing #MoreThanSunday focus. By setting peer-to-peer sharing and accountability at the heart of the action/learning process, the DLCs also facilitated faster sharing of activities that worked well and provided robust feedback to sharpen initiatives.
20. The focus of implementation in SGPF has been geared towards identifying actions that influence changes in behaviour around living out the Good News of Jesus more confidently and courageously in the whole of life. Each cohort brought together diocesan senior staff, clergy and lay representatives to look at their diocesan strategy, structures, training and communications, and find suitable actions in their context to reprioritize the concerns of lay people and their callings/vocations in diocesan priorities, practices and processes. An ongoing Disciple Enablers Network (DEN) is now active to continue to the action and learning function of the DLCs. The DEN includes participants from most dioceses.
21. Through these activities, a majority of dioceses have adapted or adopted a clear *diocesan vision for transformative culture change around discipleship in the whole of life.*¹⁴ Similarly, greater attention is being given to *resource activities in worshipping communities that build greater confidence in discipleship and promote lay-clergy mutuality.*¹⁵ Work with 10-15 ‘pilot

¹¹ SGPF GS 2056 p.1

¹² SGPF GS 2056 p.2

¹³ A number of dioceses who did not join the DLCs were also involved in similar work and regular communication was maintained with these places through the programme.

¹⁴ Survey of DLC participants and Disciple Enablers – reviewing the aims of SGP learning community. This network includes ‘responsibility holders’ for implementing diocesan activities that support discipleship, lay formation and mission. Of these, 80% indicated they had observed “some progress or substantial progress” in this first aim of *articulating, refining and strengthening their diocesan vision.*

¹⁵ 45% of participants who responded to the survey identified “some progress or substantial progress” in activities with local congregations.

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places' was a core aspect of participation. Several dioceses chose to work with higher numbers, whilst others waited until the end of the process to establish clearer diocesan schemes. Through the DLC process SGPF has directly engaged over 2,500 worshipping communities. Adaptions within ministerial training have been slower to observe – a minority of participants indicating 'some progress' in the reshaping of training and the use of ministerial reviews *to support the culture change to enable and equip the whole church*.¹⁶ It should be noted, however, that there is an expected lag-time to making significant change in these aspects of provision. In the few contexts where this was able to be undertaken, this was reported as being highly fruitful.

22. Sheffield Diocese used the DLC process to help frame how the shifts called for in Setting Gods People Free might shape their life together as a whole diocese. Their *Lights for Christ* vision and call to prayer encapsulates how the changes called for in SGPF can be embedded and implemented as part of a diocesan vision and strategy. Lights for Christ calls all in the diocese *to be Christ-like, living as lights for Christ in our everyday lives*, and seeks to practically resource this through training and support for leaders, prayer and study resources for worshipping communities, families and individuals. The Lights for Christ website carries testimonies on what being a light for Christ means for different people in different contexts. For instance, Miriam says, *"My faith in Christ enables me to be authentic about who I am with everyone that comes through my place of work. Owning a gift and jewellery shop has given me the space to be more open about my faith than I have ever been in my whole Christian life"*.¹⁷ Being a light for Christ in public service for Will is, *"driven by what I describe as a 'righteous impatience' with the injustices and inefficiencies I see in the healthcare sector, I have become more and more involved in health politics [in] local and national roles"*.¹⁸ Since the COVID-19 pandemic these stories have also conveyed how congregations have responded to the practical needs of their communities and, most encouragingly, how during this time their prayer community grew by 52%.¹⁹
23. Bath and Wells already had a focus on empowering lay discipleship in their strategy. The challenge was how to encourage this to be central to the life of the diocese and ensure this affirmed a range of callings as well church-related roles. Momentum was found through repurposing the structure of their Archdeaconry gatherings to focus on Everyday Faith. These were moved to Saturdays and invitations given for parishes to send a team of people. The days themselves were structured around why everyday faith needs to be encouraged and resources to promote everyday faith. Changing their archdeaconry days to be more inclusive of a wider lay voice was not an end in of itself, but a means of engaging worshipping communities with the small steps that can make a big difference. One such small shift has been the introduction of Everyday Faith question cards as a simple, easy tool to open up conversations about faith in everyday life. Bath and Wells have intentionally held together their work on Growing Faith²⁰ with that of Everyday Faith. These resources have been used to stimulate conversations in or after church services, as part of collective worship in church schools, and shared with parents and carers as an easy tool to begin conversation about faith with children at home. This latter use proved to be highly fruitful in the first period of pandemic lockdown and was shared as one

¹⁶ Only 30% of respondents identified 'some progress' in this area.

¹⁷ [Working Life stories — Lights for Christ](#)

¹⁸ [Public Life stories — Lights for Christ](#)

¹⁹ [Church Life stories — Lights for Christ](#)

²⁰ Growing Faith is a call for the renewal of hearts and minds so that it becomes second nature to include and value children, young people and households in every aspect of church life for the lifelong formation of faith in the whole of life. [Growing Faith | The Church of England](#)

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of many other resources promoted in the national *Faith at Home* videos.²¹

24. The Canterbury team faced the challenge of how to engage with a diverse range of communities, some of whom it was felt might struggle with the change in focus on *being* church, not only *doing* church. One vicar described the struggle as because, “*talking about our faith, and about how God might be changing our lives, makes us feel uncomfortable. We worry that we don’t have the ‘right’ kind of experiences, or the ‘right’ words.*” A clue to nudge a behaviour change was found in their diocesan vision for changed lives, changing lives. The team worked with their churches to develop a pattern of two simple questions to open a conversation on everyday faith. The questions are encouraged at the start of every meeting held in the diocese and are becoming part of the culture of wider events and gatherings.²² In adopting this pattern for the start of PCC meetings, the above vicar’s fear turned out to be unfounded, as though, “*these were not the normal questions we discussed at PCC. Talking about property, events and even finance felt like much safer territory... 40 minutes later, after a profound discussion about God, prayer, the struggles and joys of life and the place of faith in each of our lives, I had to close the discussion down so we could move onto the business agenda!*”²³ The changing lives conversations ultimately aim to help worshipping communities understand that they are communities of missionary disciples, and help find their own ways to support and equip each other in this calling. Such steps taken in SGPF provide strong building blocks for this ongoing vision.
25. Identifying the impact that such ‘lead changes’ have made on the sense of confidence around faith, and a shift towards a faith that is more evident in ‘every sphere of life in ways that demonstrate the Gospel’, remains a challenge. Dioceses that were able to undertake survey work have seen indicators that their activities did have an impact on both a sense of confidence and of a broader understanding of engagement in mission. The Diocese of Chester reported a significant increase in sense of confidence across nine indicators around ‘living as everyday disciples’ and a deeper sense that their churches were more attuned to and supportive of faith in the whole of life.²⁴ In Oxford, participants in the *Personal Discipleship Plans* work reported a marked increase in support and encouragement for identifying and exercising their giftings in everyday life.²⁵ A clear mechanism for monitoring this foundational culture change has not yet been realised. This is in part due to a delay in the roll out of *The Big Church Survey*, a nationally available congregational survey. Delayed by COVID-19 in 2020, this is now scheduled for launch in 2022 as part of the Church Development Tool. In the future, this will give significant data on a series of discipleship and church health indicators with insights on priority areas for action for worshipping communities and dioceses.

Small shifts for a big difference: forming communities of missionary disciples

26. Over the course of the last four years, over 2,500 worshipping communities have experimented

²¹ [#FaithAtHome - YouTube](#)

²² [Diocese of Canterbury | Changing Lives Conversations \(canterburydiocese.org\)](#)

²³ [Diocese of Canterbury | Risky Conversations \(canterburydiocese.org\)](#)

²⁴ The Chester team survey members of the 29 pilot churches with 550 responses returning initial baseline data and 265 revisiting these after a year.

²⁵ Baseline figures of around 50% grew to over 80% in three indicators of support, knowing your gifts and identifying next steps in expressing this as part of exercising faith in everyday life.

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with the types of small shifts described above.²⁶ Of these, around 400 churches and chaplaincies agreed to be pilot places to help better identify what habits and practices help form and equip people of all ages to live out the Good News of Jesus Christ confidently, in all places, Sunday to Saturday. The Dioceses of Chester worked with 29 pilot places from a variety of traditions and contexts. As with other dioceses, they found one of the most fruitful small shifts was to introduce a *This Time Tomorrow* slot at a suitable point in the service. This provides opportunity in service, or other event, to hear a little more from an ordinary member of the congregation about their roles and interests in everyday life, the challenges and opportunities there, what aspects of the Bible or worship sustain them, and some of their prayer needs. The Chester team also found that one of the most important and influential shifts lay in a more focussed attention to use of formal liturgy, emphasizing the deep resonances this has for our gathering and sending as the people of God.²⁷ One church expressed that by the end of the pilot there was a real sense of a culture shift: evidence of a 'deeper kindness' in relationships, a recognition that Monday to Saturday matters more than people had thought for discipleship. They also felt that the focus enabled space for younger people to find a voice, share stories of answered prayer, and more examples of practical outworking of mission in their community.

27. The Diocese of Oxford found a fruitful way to encourage and resource wider calling through the introduction of Personal Discipleship Plans (PDP). Alongside a range of prayer and reflection resources, the PDPs form a core part of the rejuvenated offer to encourage Everyday Faith. The PDP offers people the opportunity to reflect on their gifts and, through a series of conversations with an Encourager (mentor), identify next steps in their discipleship journey.²⁸ Crucially, these conversations focus on how someone might develop their gifting both in the life of a local church – supporting ministry activities and projects – and in their roles and responsibilities and interests in wider life. One account of the fruitfulness of this process comes from Paul, a scientist who became a Christian in his 20s. After taking part the PDP process, Paul says he found it, *very encouraging as it was really about him and him figuring out what it was I should be looking for*. The conversations with his encourager has helped him, *become mission focused in his local community*, and have a clearer sense of how his faith fits in his workplace.²⁹ Other participants have expressed that the PDPs have offered the first opportunity they have really had to discuss such dimensions of their faith. To facilitate this process, the diocese has recruited and trained over 300 people to act as encouragers and seen hundreds of people take up a PDP. By switching to on-line meeting, the process has been able to continue through the challenges of COVID-19. The diocese is now looking to build on PDPs through a small-group based course looking at how we are CALLED.³⁰ Several other dioceses have also been able to learn from and draw upon the Oxford approach to begin to set up their own versions of this process with their own rule of life or discipleship programmes.

28. The focus on small shifts is a core principle for SGPF. The desire not to be couched as 'another initiative', or to be received as asking people to do more and more, was a concern for all involved in implementing the recommended levers for change. This did not always come across and required constant re-appraising. A focus of discovering an 'ease of first step' in what

²⁶ Estimated from diocesan feedback and purchases/downloads of the Small Steps for a Big Difference resource for worshipping communities. This has been rewritten as an Everyday Faith resource suggesting eight shifts with examples from practice. See [Church Support Hub | Eight Shifts for Everyday Churches](#)

²⁷ See [W 241 Gathered to be Sent: Worship that Connects with Everyday Faith by Andy Stinson - Grove Books](#)

²⁸ [Personal Discipleship Plan \(Oxford Diocese\)](#)

²⁹ [The chance to develop your gifts \(Oxford Diocese\)](#)

³⁰ [Called \(Oxford Diocese\)](#)

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people were being asked to do to nurture different behaviours was crucial, and has led to useful learning.

A renewed vision for the Kingdom: increasing confident stories of everyday faith

29. Collecting and sharing stories of everyday faith is a further ‘lever for change’ – in both diocesan communication and within church communities. Being more intentional in sharing stories that highlight the variety and breadth of how individuals and communities understand and express being missionary disciples is a change in the culture of our communications.³¹ The national church along with many dioceses now include a greater focus on how we are *being church* in our villages, towns and cities.³²
30. The Diocese of Leicester has highlighted such stories through its *Shaped* magazine.³³ Alongside stories of expressing faith at work or school, and sharing faith in the home, one feature focused on three people talking about their hobbies. They describe how these interests and leisure pursuits regularly provide opportunities for Christian witness and to be a Christian presence amongst friends who share their leisure passions. They also explore how faith also enhances their enjoyment of these pastimes. Sharing such stories is crucial as it serves to ignite the imagination as to where God is present and near in daily life, and how each of us might find a deeper sense of our calling and vocation in these places.
31. A theological underpinning for the need to foster such a theological imagination is provided in the Faith and Order Commission report *Kingdom Calling* – commissioned to address the theological deficit SGPF identified around the calling of the whole people of God. A key recommendation from the report was to recover and represent a broader understanding of ‘vocation’ – *to talk about three intersecting areas in particular: social roles, forms of close relationship, and the ministries by which some serve others within the body of Christ.*³⁴ In describing calling and vocation, the national Ministry and Evangelism & Discipleship teams worked together to integrate stories of Kingdom Calling – featuring examples of social vocation alongside stories of lay and ordained ministry. Over the past two years, the importance of social vocation has become more apparent in public consciousness. Stories of social vocations or everyday faith are seen to perform consistently well in readership and social sharing. Continuing to develop an awareness of how calling is expressed in all works of life has a particular resonance in this context.

Ministry for a Christian presence: formation, training and development for enabling ministry

32. A final focus for implementation has been to explore the ways in which ministerial development and training can be adapted, and how the resources and training provided for ‘lay development’ and discipleship might be better positioned to support faith in everyday contexts, in addition to helping people discern and train for ministerial roles.
33. The Ministry Council’s vision of *Ministry for Christian Presence* is grounded in encouraging and equipping the whole people of God. New criteria for ordained ministry now firmly place the

³¹ Teams in the learning communities audited the content of their diocesan communications to identify the balance of stories that focussed on the institutional life of the church or church projects and examples of the influence of being church in wider society.

³² See for example [Every day faith - Truro Diocese](#), [The Calling Podcast \(Bath & Wells\)](#) or [Everyday stories | The Church of England](#)

³³ [Diocese of Leicester | Shaped Magazine](#)

³⁴ [Kingdom Calling GS Misc. 1254 \(churchofengland.org\)](#) p.26ff

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gifting and equipping for such a commission in the criteria for discernment, selection and formation for ordained ministry. However, a challenge remains that the encouragement of lay ministry is often conflated with the aspirations SGPF conveys of enabling the wider vocation and ministry of the whole people of God. Highlighting the importance all ministry roles play in equipping the church will help to negotiate this.

34. Pilot work with Theological Education Institutions (TEIs) has helped to identify shifts in practice that can begin to better inform a theological imagination for enabling ministry. The significant change in the culture of learning and formation colleges and courses are seeking is a shift from the subject-centred orientation characteristic of academic scholarship to a life-centred orientation more appropriate to formation for everyday faith and ministry and more closely aligned with the methods and approach of adult education. Work to support this is essential. Similarly, dioceses have adapted approaches to both initial and continuing ministerial education to prioritise and equip ministry. Greater attention is being given to the training and formation needs in such roles to better enable these ministries in service of the mission and ministry of the whole people of God. A working group on Lay Ministry established by the Ministry Council and The Central Readers Council has aided particular attention to the place of Reader ministry in respect to equipping the whole church in mission.³⁵
35. Almost all dioceses in the DLCs explored different ways to enhance or modify approach to ministerial training and development – to better equip lay and ordained ministers in their enabling roles. Progress in this area was, however, reported as being not as substantial as desired. Several dioceses worked with external partners to find ways of better supporting leaders in adapting to the challenges of leading cultural change in their context. One such pilot, the Flourish Programme, demonstrated a successful partnership model between the Diocese of Gloucester, LICC³⁶ and CPAS³⁷, and brought together a number of church teams with lay and ordained participants to work together through a Learning Hub. This brought together the different expertise around nurturing whole-life disciple making and its practical expression (LICC) and nurturing a healthy culture of empowering leadership within the gathered church (CPAS) and the strategic and contextual needs of the diocese. Qualitative research following the completion of the programme demonstrated clear evidence of tangible cultural change already taking place in each of the participating churches, with a commitment to continue to implement the changes highlighted within each church’s implementation plan. It has been agreed that a second Learning Hub will take place in Gloucester and recruitment is under way for a further 3-5 dioceses to begin Flourish programmes in September 2022.

Finding and following God in everyday life: accessible digital resources for whole-life followers

36. A recommendation and priority for action in SGPF was for “a national portal by which every member of the Church of England can be directly connected to the best available tools, resources, approaches, stories and experts to inspire and support them in their whole-life discipleship and vocational journey”. This was envisioned as a key tool through which specific resources and tools to enable and support lay vocation could be directly disseminated alongside showcasing the best and most relevant resources and tools for whole-life discipleship. It was also hoped that such a tool might be able to connect people to small

³⁵ See [Home - Transforming Ministry Magazine](#) and [Resourcing-Faith-Booklet-April-19.pdf \(transformingministry.co.uk\)](#)

³⁶ [The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity \(licc.org.uk\)](#)

³⁷ [CPAS - Making Mission Possible | Making Mission Possible](#)

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affinity/learning groups for support, discussion and accountability or to expert mentors, coaches and spiritual directors.

37. Initial explorations of existing web-based discipleship resources showed significant disadvantages in such a tool being a lead activity – i.e. the mechanism through which primary change is sought. As such, the development of what is now called the ‘Everyday Faith Portal’ was led by a series of pilot projects linked to the learning and insights coming from the Discipleship Learning Communities about the types of resources and reflections that made a difference. The establishment of the Digital Communications team also provided a more comprehensive re-imagining of how digital media and resources can be deployed. Exploratory work highlighted that such a ‘national portal’ would also need to compliment and extend the digital learning environments that many dioceses had already developed. Feedback from pilot testing confirmed that whilst many resources currently in use purported to enable faith in the whole of life, the experience and use of these were often markedly framed towards areas of service within church activities. Observation of ‘everyday faith work’ in dioceses indicated that a central issue for such resources lay in how to integrate the dimensions of life that are vital to resource such as: nurturing faith at home in line with the aspirations of Growing Faith; providing resources for ‘faith at work’ that may be relevant to a defined group in particular contexts of paid employment; including key areas of personal and public engagement in key missional issues such as racial justice and climate change. Lastly, whilst such a system might broker connection to groups and networks, it was recognised that ongoing engagement in the groups local churches were stimulating, and the networks dioceses were establishing, was a preferable outcome that such a portal might stimulate.
38. The Everyday Faith Portal was launched in January 2022 and has the aim of attracting 100,000 users within the first full year of operation. This accessible and adaptable digital portal from the CofE offers innovative, digital delivery of tailored resources from a range of providers’ resources that equip and encourage an everyday faith. These journeys – featuring reflections, prayers and guidance – are designed to help people find and follow God in everyday life, share this journey in community and live as effective witnesses. A key aim of these resources is to express how the Five Marks of Mission are foundational to personal and corporate witness in the world, and how this finds expression in daily life. The portal is personalised to peoples’ interests and contexts, so that diverse resources can be more easily discovered and shared. It features in-built connectivity to diocesan resources and offers a mechanism for direct delivery of these. It has also been developed to integrate with *A Church Near You* to both re-enforce connection to local worshipping communities and to better enable churches to use the portal as a key tool in their formation and equipping work.

Missionary disciples bringing transformation for the church and the world

The mission and life of the Church of England is critically dependent on the fruitfulness of lay ministry, influence and leadership in wider community and society, as well as within church structures. Lay people in the sent church are at the forefront of mission and evangelism as they live and work in the world – in politics, arts, industry, commerce, public services, local communities and families.³⁸

39. As the SGPF programme draws to a close, work to continue to implement this vision continues to be a priority within the Church’s vision and strategy for the 2020s – and the various ways that this is held and expressed in dioceses and through worshipping communities. This is first

³⁸ SGPF GS 2056 p.8

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and foremost captured in prioritisation of seeking to be a church of missionary disciples – that *God calls every one of us to be a missionary disciple. In the New Testament the same twelve who are named 'disciples' are also called 'apostles'. There is no point when they graduate from one to the other. They are always those who gather around Jesus and follow him. And they are always those who are sent out by him.*³⁹

40. The new vision and strategy includes continuation of the work SGPF has championed in the two bold outcomes envisaged as empowering our calling to be a Jesus Christ shaped church – continuing to seek an all-encompassing culture through which:
- 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; and
 - All local churches, supported by their diocese, becoming communities and hubs for initial and ongoing formation.
41. The aspirations of SGPF are also important in how the priority of a church where a mixed ecology is the norm is approached. The recognition that worshipping communities extend Christian presence across *home, work/education, social and digital* connects with the ways in which SGPF has sought to re-enforce the focus of Growing Faith and emphasise the importance of practices that shape home and family life. In addition, the place of chaplaincy provision and workplace fellowships has been recognised as a vital enabling ministry for faith at work. The small shifts SGPF has encouraged give good indicators of fruitful approaches for ‘initial and ongoing formation’ of the whole people of God.
42. As we seek to be a younger and more diverse church, the conviction highlighted in SGPF of the importance that younger generations place on a ‘whole life gospel’ and a church concerned to seek this seeking transformation encourages a continuation of the Everyday Faith focus.⁴⁰ This is strengthened and deepened by further consideration of how the Five Marks of Mission envision and inform Christian vocation in Kingdom Callings in all sectors of society.
43. *The opportunity that **still** lies before us is to help the people of God live richer lives in Christ in all of life. It is an opportunity to serve our nation, to be the people that our God calls us to be and that our nation desperately needs us to be for their sake and for God’s glory.*⁴¹ In God’s grace, may we continue to walk in this.

³⁹ GS Misc 1307 (missionary disciples group work paper)

⁴⁰ See Perrin R, *Changing Shape: The Faith Lives of Millennials*, SCM (2020) short clip available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T58kP46s5Gw> [last accessed 13/10/2021]

⁴¹ SGPF GS 2056 p.2

Annex 1: Application of SGPF levers for change

INSPIRING EVERYDAY FAITH: FEATURES, PRIORITIES AND LEVERS FOR EFFECTIVE CULTURE CHANGE

Setting God's People-Free identified eight levers to help instill two culture shifts:

- Equipping the whole people of God to follow Jesus confidently in every sphere of life; and
- Affirming the complementary gifting and vocation, mutual accountability in discipleship, and equal partnership in mission between clergy and laity.

The Discipleship Learning Communities developed a model for using these levers to bring about culture change through our leadership, behaviours and structures. Through work trialling approaches to inspiring everyday faith, with deaneries, worshipping communities and networks, we found three priorities for action in each of these areas. The contributors in today's event will be sharing examples.

ENABLING EVERYDAY FAITH AS A LEADERSHIP PRIORITY
 Leaders influence the types of behaviours we want to see. When structures inhibit change in behaviours, leaders can help to transform these.

1. Set the strategic need, and instil a willingness, to inspire everyday faith.
2. Model leadership behaviours that personify everyday faith.
3. Expand leadership capacity through networks that nurture everyday faith.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PRIORITIES TO EMBODY EVERYDAY FAITH
 Everyday faith is a call to adopt behaviours that help us find and follow God in our everyday lives. Behaviour change is best modelled and experienced, and can be inhibited or encouraged by structures.

1. Find ways to start conversations on what everyday faith looks like for different people.
2. Develop tools that help individuals and communities take their own journeys of everyday faith.
3. Share stories of the successes and struggles in seeking to inspire everyday faith.

PRIORITISE STRUCTURE SHIFTS FOR EVERYDAY FAITH TO THRIVE
 Structures include organisational processes, habits for gatherings, formal training and resources. Shifts here are sometimes provoked by changing behaviours or implemented by leaders seeking change.

1. Embed principles that encourage everyday faith in key policies.
2. Change measures to include a focus on everyday faith pointers.
3. Adapt support systems to identify and develop learning.

