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**“Join the Conversation”**

We are all aware of how much life has changed over the past year or so, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our Benefice ‘Stepping Out’ group feel that it is now time to address some questions and issues that might help to define what a ‘new normal’ might look like.

At the same time the Diocese of York, under the leadership of our new Archbishop, has begun to re-shape the Diocesan Vision under the title, ‘Living Christ’s Story’.

During July both of our Parochial Church Councils will be asked to provide responses to nine questions posed by the Diocese.

**We are trying to align both of these initiatives and are asking for your help.**

**Over the next two weeks or so, (*commencing Sunday 6th June & Sunday 13th June*) could you take time to look at the areas mentioned below and think of responses that could be helpful and constructive as we explore a way forward for our Benefice and Diocesan Visions?**

Your responses do not have to be in great detail - we would value your thoughts and views on the questions which you feel confident in addressing.

**From the 21st June** we are hoping to offer different venues (such as parishioner’s gardens, or around the church buildings) where a small number of people can gather safely in a socially-distanced and Covid-secure way to have a conversation about these issues.

Your responses will be valued by the Stepping Out Group and the Parochial Church Councils.

Information about venues and times will be given nearer the time.

If you would like to join such a conversation please contact The Rector

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**Conversation topics**

* A: What do you think our Benefice life will look like beyond Covid?
* B: As a Benefice what do you think is important for our Community life?
* C: Delivering our Benefice and Diocesan Vision
* D: Resourcing our Benefice and Diocesan visions

***Some of the areas in each topic are detailed in the following 2 pages.***

*The final page may be used for your own notes.*

Thank you very much for being willing to give time to this.

*The Benefice Stepping Out Group*

**A What do you think our Benefice life will look like beyond Covid?**

**A1: Worship and Church attendance**

What new habits of worship and church attendance do you think have emerged as a result of Covid-19 and the periods of ‘lockdown’?

Some people may have joined us during lockdown. If so, how would you like to feel part of our worshipping and community life?

For those of us already part of Benefice life what is the most appropriate way of welcoming those who are joining us?

How do we provide for those who are, as yet, unable to return to church, or at a time which is suitable for them?

If your experience of the past year has affected your churchgoing, how can we help to assist your return?

**A2: New patterns of worship**

*We experienced new patterns of worship during lockdown, such as pre-recorded audio and video services, online services via the website and ‘Zoom’. There was also ‘outdoor church’ – displays outside church for various events and themes throughout the past year.*

What do you see as the future for these efforts?

**B As a Benefice what do you think is important for our Community life?**

*Our church buildings may have been closed during this past year, but our church life has remained active. We have strived to maintain our Sunday worship in different ways and have made great efforts to provide pastoral care and support – through our ‘keeping in touch’ e-mails, our pastoral care teams and our ongoing care and prayer.*

**What do you think is most important for our community?**

*[You may like to give each of the following a score from 0 to 10, ‘10’ being of greatest importance and ‘0’ being of no importance.]*

* For the church to ‘be there’ for our ‘cure of souls’ and for support through ‘life’s events’ - such as baptisms, weddings and funerals.
* For pastoral care and social gatherings (eg: healing services, prayer and study groups, bereavement support, Lent lunches, coffee mornings, fundraising events)
* To be more active in such areas as the environment, climate change, and sustainability of creation.
* To tend and transform society by responding to human need or injustice.
* To proclaim the Good News of God’s Kingdom
* To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.

**Where are the ‘touching places’ between church and our community, and how could we develop them?**

*(This might include various areas, for example – our local councils, Remembrance services, lunch clubs, schools contacts, Christmas nativity services, the annual Christian Aid collection, the ‘Outlook’,*

*and more ….)*

**C Delivering our Benefice and Diocesan Vision**

*Our vision as a Benefice is … ‘Stepping out – with God, with each other, and with our local community and wider world’. Also, during July this year, our Parochial Church Councils will be asked to give their opinions on the re-shaping of the York Diocese vision, ‘Living Christ’s Story’.*

*In this light –*

**Are we just reacting to circumstances, or is this the time to be proactive by starting to put plans into place now?**

*The Diocesan Vision encourages us to become ‘Jesus Christ centred and Jesus Christ shaped’*

*(You can find more about this on the Diocesan website, or the link on the Benefice homepage)*

**What are the new stories that we can tell?**

**How can we align our vision to that of the Diocese?**

**D Resourcing our Benefice and Diocesan visions**

**What do we have the resources to deliver …**

**… in the Benefice?**

*(This might include people, church buildings, church halls, finances etc …)*

**… or by drawing on wider support?**

*(This might include the Diocese, other groups in the community etc …)*

**What resources do you think we have for developing …**

* Discipleship
* Lay Ministry
* Mission and Evangelism
* Community use of our buildings

**… and would we welcome information, ideas and advice in any of these areas?**

**Do you think there is a particular focus of ministry for which we would like the Diocese to offer support?**

*(This may include such areas as - discipleship resources, developing work with children and families, reaching 20s, 30s and 40s, developing online ministry, maintenance and use of our buildings, technological advice eg: IT, sound systems, support to deepen the life of prayer, ideas and support for evangelism ….. or other areas ….. please specify.*