



# BEING TOGETHER

**Diocesan Theme 2020 – 2022**

*Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.*

*Romans 14:19 (NRSV)*

A recent survey for the BBC<sup>1</sup> across 27 countries found a majority of people in all but two countries feel their society is divided. Eighty-four percent of Americans believe the United States is divided and 70% of Australians think our society is divided.

Despite these grim results more than half of people globally, 65 percent, think people across the world have more things in common than things that make them different. Forty percent of people globally think mixing with people from different backgrounds, cultures or points of view leads to mutual understanding and respect.

The divisions in society are mirrored in the Anglican Church both locally and at the Communion level. While people struggle to dialogue across their divisions our own experience of using Open Space at Synod 2019 suggests that dialogue can occur, and relationships of trust can be nurtured. It is unlikely however that any real change or sustained unity will be achieved without intentional focus and work.

In order to facilitate this, it is proposed that over the next three years the theme 'Being Together' will be used across the Diocese. This theme is inspired by the General Synod document of the same name, that outlines principles for how faith communities might shape their relationships in positive and life-giving ways despite significant differences. The theme of 'Being Together' will encourage us to explore how we can be together in a way that acknowledges difference and disagreement yet is respectful, communicative and ultimately loving.

Across the three years of 'Being Together', yearly subthemes will focus activity for that period. Each year will explore 'Being Together' in a slightly different way. These themes provide a platform for us to be intentional about learning skills for peacemaking, relationship building and the celebration of difference.

## **2020 - Being Together: Practising Peacemaking**

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Matthew 5:9 (NRSV)*

**Practising Peacemaking** will focus on acknowledging difference and responding to conflict in ways that are congruent with the values of the Gospel.

## **2021 – Being Together: Nurturing Relationships**

*"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. Matthew 7:12 (NRSV)*

**Nurturing relationships** will focus on how, in Christ, we relate to and communicate with each other in the spaces where we are not in conflict so that deep bonds built on trust might protect our unity when differences arise.

## **2022 – Being Together: Embracing Joy**

*For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (NRSV)*

**Embracing Joy** will focus on celebrating the way that our differences help to make us whole and the importance of diversity.

The trajectory of these three themes represent an aspiration to:

1. Address conflict and live in peace despite difference.
2. Build relationships of openness and trust within our differences.
3. Celebrate our differences and see them as a gift.

1. <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/bbc-global-survey-world-divided>