

## New Local Congregations

**Context:**

Making Disciples

**Presented by:**

Bishop Jill

**Action:**

For information

**Key elements:**

Details on the rationale for New Local Congregations and how they are defined as well as how to find out more.

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**Vision 2026** set a target of 50 new church plants.

We revised this in 2018 to be 10 Strategic Church Plants & 200 New Local Congregations to normalise church planting.

### Rationale

New Local Congregations (NLCs) bring such life and hope to parishes. They are a way to reach out to new people, new generations, new demographics at different times and different contexts. These are the most significant way of seeing growth in our churches. We have been continually encouraged over the last months by news of parishes, across all traditions, just having a go. The pandemic has accelerated openness to the Gospel, an interest in prayer, hunger for community relationships and not to mention the therapeutic benefits of singing!

Before the pandemic, stats showed 50 New Local Congregations started.

**Clergy & LLM *Unlock Study Mornings*** in June 2021 featured NLCs

- 6 mornings; 230 participants; 87 people wanted to know more about the #Beacon Course (online 4 week course to inspire starting of NLCs); 34 people offered to help.
- Unlocking buried treasure in the Diocese: rural, urban estates, universities, coastal, *Lyrics & Lunch* (dementia & carers), youth, children, sports.
- Comments received: "I always find when we come together in this way, parish priest, Archdeacons, Bishops, that I leave feeling inspired and re-energised for mission and ministry. I think this is so important, please keep doing these events." "Some great ideas and conversations which we all found so helpful. Good to hear practical examples of how creating new congregations can work in practice."

## What makes a new congregation?

Based on the Church of England definition of Church (*39 Articles, XIX*): “a congregation where the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments are celebrated”. Ambition to meet weekly, grow in maturity. All traditions. #Dare2Dolt: if it doesn't work, it doesn't matter. WHO not HOW is the way-in – build it round their culture.

## Examples post Lockdown

- *Families@4* – Beacon Church Blackpool; St John's Leyland – [4 o'clock live](#); St Michael's Cockerham [new family service](#); Over Wyresdale, Christ Church, [Youth Club for Minis](#)
- *Choir Church* – 7 churches signed up for pilot in collaboration with Blackburn & St Paul's Cathedrals – based round church/school collaboration: [www.choirchurch.com](http://www.choirchurch.com): “through singing, sacrament & justice”
- *Young adults: Gin&Job, Cava&Corinthians*

## Statistics

Up-to-date statistics make such a difference in networking and encouraging. The Church of England *Stats for Mission* form doesn't yet accommodate NLCs so well. We would welcome church wardens including these under *Fresh Expressions* in the October count.

## To find out more

Bishop Jill runs a regular #BeaconCourse on Zoom (4 weeks) to inspire clergy and lay leaders to have a go – with networking and support. Please contact our Being Witnesses Manager, Joy Rushton ([Joy.Rushton@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:Joy.Rushton@blackburn.anglican.org)) for more information.

## Synod Discussion Question

*In your parish, chaplaincy, school – Who might be reached with a New Local Congregation?*

## Synod Motion

It will be moved that:

**“Post lockdown, Diocesan Synod is committed to reaching new people, new demographics, new generations in Lancashire with New Local Congregations”**

+Jill Lancaster & Joy Rushton, October 2021