

**Minutes of a Meeting
of
Blackburn Diocesan Synod**

held on Wednesday 12 March 2025 at St Bartholomew's Church, Ewood

Present

3 Members of the House of Bishops (100%)
34 Members of the House of Clergy (49%)
32 Members of the House of Laity (48.5%)
3 Visitors

Apologies

23 Members of the House of Clergy (32.5%)
21 Members of the House of Laity (32%)

1. Welcome and Opening Worship

The meeting was chaired by **Bishop Jill** who welcomed Synod. This was followed by worship led by **Rachel Fielding (Hospital Chaplain, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust and Curate at Darwen St Cuthbert with Tockholes St Stephen)**.

2. Presidential Address

Bishop Philip gave a presidential address reflecting on world events, the war in Ukraine, peace, justice and the power of prayer. His presidential address is attached to the minutes.

3. Synod Survey Feedback

Bishop Jill and Stephen Whittaker (Diocesan Secretary) introduced the paper on the results of the Synod Survey in October 2024.

Some group discussion on the results followed.

Carol Backhouse (General Synod and Lancaster & Morecambe Deanery HoC) asked why the survey had not covered other areas such as gender balance or church tradition. She also pointed out that the number of clergy respondents could have skewed the number of members with higher level qualifications.

Stephen Whittaker explained that the survey was created to cover class disparity among members and racial diversity following a question raised by Synod. It was not intended to cover other areas although Synod Business Group will consider widening the survey of membership.

Paul Bye (Kirkham Deanery HoC) asked whether there had been any detail received around barriers to opportunity regarding diversity.

Joseph Brookfield (Preston Deanery HoL) asked whether the survey response rate had been substantial enough to be meaningful.

Stephen Whittaker explained there had been 74 respondents which was significant enough to draw some conclusions. Whilst there had not been much of a response around barriers to opportunity in terms of diversity, some headlines on the key barriers were barriers to women and some church traditions.

4. The Diocesan Renewal Programme

Bishop Joe spoke about the recently renamed Diocesan Renewal Programme (previously the Parish Renewal Programme) which can offer many churches resources, input, structured thinking time and encouragement to grow spiritually and in number.

During the programme's first phase, invitations were sent to parishes that were finding things especially demanding. Moving into the second phase, with more nationally funded resources and staffing available, the programme will be offered to many more parishes regardless of their missional journey, tradition or size.

Bishop Joe encouraged parishes who receive an invitation to accept, other parishes who are interested should get in touch.

5. Youth Forum Video and Reflections

A video from the Youth Forum followed. The video is on the Diocesan Website and can be accessed [here](#). In the video, the Forum explain what they feel Diocesan Synod should be discussing.

Synod were asked to consider which messages from the video came across the strongest and which messages were unexpected. The following points were highlighted:

- Advertising the church – Ask the Youth Forum how they would do this.
- Evangelism, the Forum's conviction that there is good news to tell, they want people to know about Jesus and to come to church
- They want people to know about the church's financial situation.
- They are looking forward into the future
- Communication and safeguarding were mentioned several times in the video
- The environment and social media were not mentioned in the video

6. Vision 2026 Review and Discerning the Future Vision

Carolyn Barton (Director of Vision Delivery and Deputy Diocesan Secretary) reflected on the successes of Vision 2026 and outlined the next steps in discerning the new Diocesan Vision.

Parishes have already been invited to contribute to the formation of the next Vision and this feedback is currently being shared with every deanery synod. A parallel exercise is being undertaken within our schools. Other groups are also being consulted including the Youth Forum, Chaplaincies and the Racial Justice Group.

The Vision and Strategy Group will consider the feedback received from across the Diocese in May and the high level proposal for the next Diocesan Vision will be brought to Synod in July.

Questions were invited.

James Nash (Preston Deanery HoC) pointed out that many fruits that had come out of Vision 2026 and felt there is a need to push forward along the same lines with the new Vision.

7. Racial Justice

Chigor Chike (Archdeacon of Lewisham & Greenwich), Rachel Smith (Head of Strategic Programme Implementation, Southwark Diocese) and Carole Miller (Church Engagement Manager, United Society Partners in the Gospel) were welcomed to the meeting.

A presentation on Racial Justice from Chigor and Rachel followed. They covered what we can all do to make a difference and what Southwark Diocese has done to embrace racial justice including the formation of their Anti Racism Charter and Parish Study Resource. Their slides are attached to the minutes.

Synod discussed what they what they could do differently and what they would like to see the Diocese do differently.

Simon Lloyd (Accrington Deanery HoC) asked if there is an agreed definition of racial justice in the Church of England.

The question was deferred and answered directly following the meeting.

Matt Guilder (Tunstall Deanery HoC) suggested all clergy should receive iHasco training on Racial Justice.

Claire Cooke (Lancaster & Morecambe Deanery HoC) explained that Emmanuel Theological College are looking at diversifying their learning material. She suggested that individuals could think about their own learning materials and consider how diverse these are.

Andrew Teather (Blackpool Deanery HoC) spoke of his past experiences as an Area Dean in a diverse borough of London, explaining we need to be less territorial and more aware of who we have living nearby.

Anne Beverley (Kirkham Deanery HoC) highlighted the need for white people to accept their power and to open our eyes to how we may be contributing to the institutional racism within the church.

Leah Vasey-Saunders (Lancaster & Morecambe Deanery HoC) spoke of Lancaster's history of transatlantic slavery and the need to learn from and support each other.

Bishop Jill commended the Priory's excellent "Facing the Past" exhibition in 2024 which also drew in schools in Sierra Leone.

Munawar Din (Burnley Deanery HoC) described his experiences, pointing out that white power and privilege is real, and the need to be actively anti-racist and not passive anti-racist.

Chigor Chike thanked Synod for their comments. He had put together a recommended list of reading which will be circulated with the minutes.

Carol Miller spoke about the missional work of the USPG and how the organisation values GMH voices. She recommended two resources for reading, the USPG “We Believe” study guide and the USPG Prayer Diary written by their partners from across the globe.

8. Proclamation of Canons

None.

9. Questions

Seven questions had been received. These questions and the answers provided are attached to the minutes.

Supplementary questions were invited.

Carol Backhouse (General Synod and Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery HoC) asked for the DBF’s views on several parishes putting constraints on how £0.25m of parish share is spent, given that parish share is used to further mission and ministry across the Diocese.

Stephen Whittaker (Diocesan Secretary) pointed out that Parish Share is a gift and that churches can choose how they give it. The DBF is happy to receive all gifts and will honour any restrictions put upon them although it is preferable that they come without restrictions.

10. Motions

None.

The meeting closed with a hymn.

+ Philip Blackburn

Signed:

Dated: 25th March 2025

Presidential Address to Diocesan Synod

March 2025

It is a privilege as always to be able to address you as president of the Synod. Just two things before I start. First there is sometimes an uneasy silence when I finish, but there really is no need to applaud a presidential address. And second, the views I am about to express are my own and you are entirely free to disagree.

In the first few weeks of 2025, the world has been turned upside down with consequences that no one can yet predict. The Trump presidency has seen the dramatic tearing up of the post-war alliance between Europe and the United States and a sudden rush across Europe to increase defence budgets and re-arm. Trade wars between the US, Canada, China, Mexico, the European Union and now the UK threaten the stability of the global economy, and as we learnt in 2008 and 2020, when the world economy is shaken, the people who fall out of the tree are always the poorest.

But perhaps the most frightening impact is on Ukraine, the victims three years ago of an unprovoked attack from Putin's Russia which has left hundreds of thousands of people dead and has seen many more lives destroyed and traumatised. Of course some of you here have direct connections with that battered country, having made space in your homes and churches for refugees.

The news of a possible ceasefire in Ukraine is very welcome and we must pray that Russia also agrees to it as an important first step. However the pressure that has been placed on the Ukrainians and in particular Volodymyr Zelenskii, a man of raw courage who has led his people with such distinction, has been alarming in the extreme. It has included the public humiliation of a shouting match in the White House, the sudden withdrawal of military aid leading to needless loss of life and the condition of signing an unfavourable minerals deal as a bargaining chip for the restoration of that crucial aid.

Such tactics might lead to an uneasy ceasefire, but this kind of bludgeoning can never be the foundation for peace. For peace is about more than the cessation of violence. Peace can only come with justice, and for there to be justice, then stolen land must be returned, reparations must be paid and future security guarantees must be in place. I hope that European leaders will not weaken in those basic demands.

As Christians, it is so easy to feel powerless against such a backdrop. We watch on as world events unfold with very little idea what to do or say. The words of Jeremiah, which many of us read on Monday morning, all too often come to our lips.

My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain!

Oh, the walls of my heart!

My heart is beating wildly;

I cannot keep silent;

for I hear the sound of the trumpet,

the alarm of war.

Disaster overtakes disaster,

the whole land is laid waste.

But for the Christian, whilst we may be tempted to despair, we know it can never win the day. If Jesus has won the victory, there can only be hope. So in such dangerous times, what do we do?

First we pray. I am delighted with the way that our Year of Prayer for Growth and Renewal has captured imaginations across traditions in every part of the Diocese and the resources which have been made available on the Fruitful app by our outstanding discipleship team are being hungrily devoured. Prayer gives us a superpower stronger than any weapon, any aggressive social media post, any war-mongering diplomatic communication or any trade tariff. Prayer throws open for us the court of heaven and brings God's kingdom breaking into the present. Prayer silences the powerful and raises the lowly high.

We are offering prayer this year for the growth of our churches, and we are also surrounding the process to discern our future strategic vision with prayer. But at the same time we must go on praying and fasting with conviction for a fair and lasting peace in Ukraine.

Second we strive for justice. The scriptures offer us a rich vision of human dignity and of human flourishing. Jesus, by his Incarnation, demonstrates to us the infinite preciousness of every human person made in the image and likeness of God. And then, in the common life of the community he builds, he models for us right relationship with God and with each other. That vision of God's kingdom is the heart of our understanding of justice as Christians. That is what motivates our work with schools, our community projects, our pastoral care and our passion that all should know right relationship with the God we meet in Jesus.

We may not be able to engineer justice in Ukraine. But we can bear witness to God's kingdom in the way we strive for justice in our own parishes and in our daily lives. I am delighted that our theme in this synod will be racial justice, because lying behind the work of the Church of England's Commission for Racial Justice is a rich vision of God's kingdom. In the same way our desire to be a safe church and repent of safeguarding failures expresses our desire for the justice of the Kingdom in which all are precious, all are beloved and all know the safety of God's eternity. Fr Alex Frost's work in battling against the scourge of ketamine on our estates is another vivid example of Christians bearing witness to God's justice. So what can you do to build justice locally?

And third, we work for peace. We are in the season of Lent. Very soon we will be at the table of the Last Supper with the Lord when he will promise the disciples a '*Peace the world cannot give.*' Then just three days later, having endured the cross and risen from the tomb, he will return to the same Upper Room to greet them twice with the words, '*Peace be with you.*' That peace which he promised at the table will be the gift he shares with them.

The peace which Christ gives is not a peace that the world can give because it flows from the cross. It is a peace that is rooted in the defeat of sin and in restored relationship with the Father. It is peace with each other only because it is first and foremost peace with the Father, wrought through the blood of his Son.

That is our gift to the world. The greatest contribution we can make to global peace is to introduce people to Jesus Christ so that they can know in their lives that peace which is the gift of the cross.

A frightening world. It is so easy to start to believe that the loudest voices will be those that hold sway and that we in our little churches can do nothing. Don't believe that for a moment. Keep praying. Strive for the justice of the Kingdom. Share the peace that comes from Christ. And in a world of fear, we will be bearing quiet witness to a deeper truth, the truth of God's own kingdom.

+Philip Blackburn

March 12th 2025

RACIAL JUSTICE

**Chigor Chike, Archdeacon of Lewisham & Greenwich
and
Rachel Smith, Head of Strategic Programme
Implementation, Southwark Diocese**

Introduction

- **Ven Dr Chigor Chike**
- Archdeacon of Lewisham & Greenwich
- Member of Board of USPG
- Served on the Archbishops' Racial Justice Commission
- Written on racial justice

Introduction

- **Rachel Smith**
- Head of Strategic Programme Implementation
- Most recent of these programmes is the £29m fund spread over 9 years
- Secretary to the Southwark Diocesan Racial Justice Committee

Introduction

- **Carol Miller**
- Church Engagement Manager, USPG
- Passionate about seeing the local parish church get inspired by USPGs partnership orientated global mission

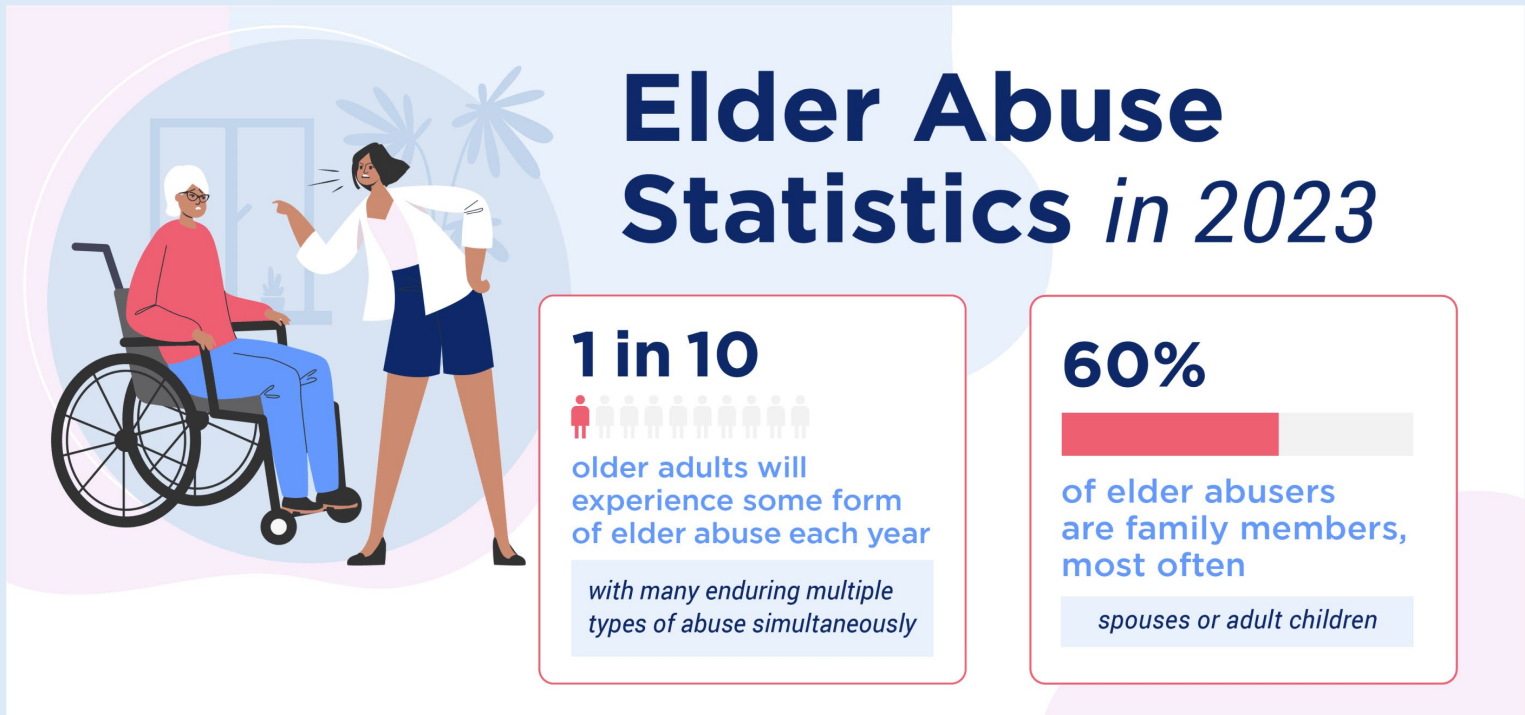
USPG has in recent years been working hard to make amends for its part in the enslavement of Africans

Why should we care?

We would not like to live in a world where...

...people are
carelessly
destroying the
environment





Children and vulnerable people are being abused

So, why would
we not care
about being
part of a
society or
church where
people are
subjected to
racism



Why should we care

- Because of God
- The Bible tells us that God made all people in his image. As people who love God, we should love God's creation.
- The Psalms also says that Justice alongside righteousness are the foundations of God's throne. Worshipping God goes with fighting for justice

Why should we care

Many people are now troubled by this,
including those around us

Why should we care

- The young people in Blackburn Diocese



Why should we care

We would love it if Synod talked about how to engage people of all ages and races and how they ensure that churches are growing instead of having less people in church. We feel that they should also focus on the safeguarding, not only for the youth but for everybody.

Participant, Blackburn Youth Forum

Example from Board of Education, Blackburn Diocese

- Statement
- We in the Board of Education strongly believe that diversity builds richness and is better for society and the well-being of all.

We will actively work for equity for those of UKME/BAME backgrounds and are committed to identifying and removing of all forms of racial discrimination, whether implicit or explicit, from all areas of the work we do by changing systems, structures, policies, practices and attitudes and by influencing all the partners with whom we work.

- A document which sets out their strategy
- Commitment to prioritising and budgeting towards this yearly
- Detailed, measurable goals
- Have run workshops and conference on Racial Diversity, Equity & Justice

- Have staff trained on DEJ, who can support others
- Seeking funding to expand the work
- Supporting network on staff/heads across the NW
- Supporting other Boards of Education in other dioceses

Why should we care

The practice of diversity and inclusion produces positive outcome

Why should we care

- Example from Business



85% of the economy is made of small and medium size businesses

Baroness Martha Lane Fox
President of the British Chamber of Commerce

Why should we care

Our members at British Chambers are always thinking of diversity and inclusion because they know that it is a route to more financial success. Your listeners will know this well, but diverse teams leads to 25% better financial results.



Why should we care

And we know that in this incredibly complex market when you are looking for the best people all the time, across different sectors, that it affects 76% of all potential employee decision about whether to look at particular company.



Why should we care

This is not just about fairness and about social justice, this is also about economic empowerment and about making better products and services and about making better decisions...It is about making sure the UK is the most competitive and has access to the best talent.



Why should we care

- The Experience of Southwark Diocese
- The Diocese is finding that its racial justice work is having a positive impact in its mission and ministry.

Buz in twos

What do you make of what you have
heard so far?

What can we do?

1. Be aware of your power and use it to help

Be aware of your power

- There is a fearfulness with which many white people approach discussions of racism that can lead to the tendency to put up defenses.
- Sadly, these defenses have proved incredibly effective. They have successfully defended Racism for many centuries

Be aware of your power

A common example of the defense, is where a white person gets upset or angry during a racism awareness training. In some cases, this person leaves the session, sometimes in tears.

Be aware of your power

The effect of this is usually so strong that what then happens is that all the energy of the group is diverted to making sure the person is okay. And the result is that the issue being address, that is the racism in the organisation, is left alone and intact

Be aware of your power

Robin Diangelo named this “white fragility”. The white person has feelings such as being singled out, attacked, silenced, guilty, insulted, angry or outranged.

Be aware of your power

This shows in such behavior as crying, physically leaving, emotionally withdrawing, arguing or avoiding. And this functions to hijack the conversation, protect white privilege, close off self-reflection or take race off the table.

Be aware of your power

The issue here is not whether these feelings and behavior are genuine or not. Rather, it is to say that people should become aware of the impact of their action on efforts to fight racism.

Be aware of your power

People of colour, especially black people, experience the harmful effect of racism constantly in both emotional and physical ways, sometimes in a way that limits life opportunities, and in some cases, life itself. A white person who is committed to fighting racism should be prepared to go through some discomfort.

Be aware of your power

It might also help to become aware of how much this is related to privilege. Black and Minority Ethnic people cannot afford to stop talking about racism because in a manner of speaking, they are the ones with a knee on their neck. But white people can.

Be aware of your power

- As stated by Professor Rich Vodde and quoted by Diangelo:
“If privilege is defined as a legitimation of one’s entitlement to resources, it can also be defined as permission to escape or avoid any challenge to this entitlement.”

Be aware of your power

- A commitment not to use one's privilege negatively is necessary if progress is going to be made. (Diangelo, 2019)

What can we do?

2. Get involved

What can we do?

- Become an “anti-racist” (Ibram Kendi)
- “It’s not enough for us as Christians to simply not be racist; instead we are called to actively seek justice and equality for all people.”

Bishop Rosemarie Mallett, of Croydon

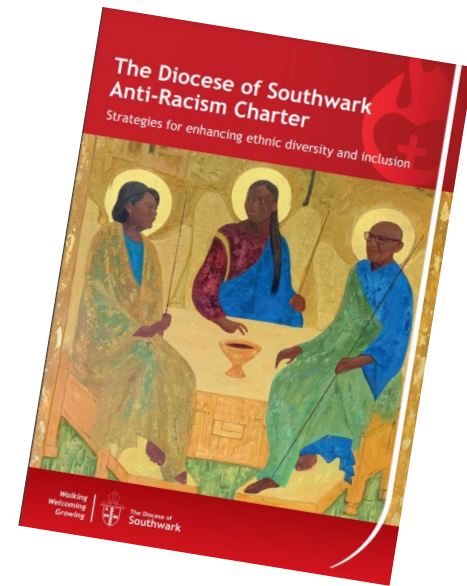
The perspective of Southwark Diocese

What can we do?

“Being anti-racist is not the same as simply not being racist. It is not enough as a diocese to not be racist but to actively counter, disrupt and oppose racial injustice.

This isn't an easy task, it takes introspection as well as continued intentional action and is not a static description of ourselves”

Southwark Diocese Anti Racism Charter 2021



Southwark Diocese Anti Racism Charter (ARC)

Key Principles:

An explicit theological understanding that God's kingdom is multi-ethnic, and that it is through our baptismal covenant we recognise and respect the dignity of every human being and our unity in Christ.

Southwark Diocese Anti Racism Charter (ARC)

Key Principles:

An intentional focus in our theological studies, liturgy, teaching, prayer, word and work to take strategic and practical actions to combat racism and racial inequality.

Southwark Diocese Anti Racism Charter (ARC)

Key Principles:

A clear strategy for increasing and sustaining diversity in our governance structures at diocesan and parish level, so as to ensure representation and participation of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds at all levels of our organisation.

Diocesan Anti Racism Charter (ARC)

- Our ARC is active and intentional.
- It is embraced and adopted within SDBE structures, and we are increasingly seeing many of our schools, contextualise and incorporate the ARC.



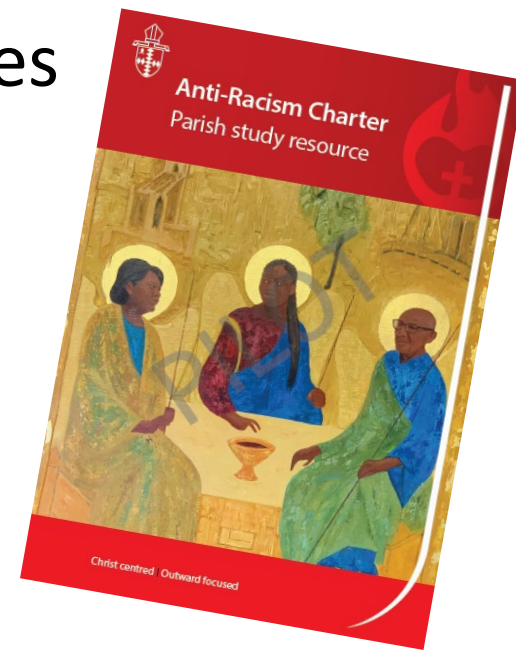
Diocesan Anti Racism Charter (ARC)

- We are now intentionally focusing on enabling our parishes to practically embed the ARC within Deanery and Parish structures and develop their own action plans to respond to racial justice needs in their specific local context.



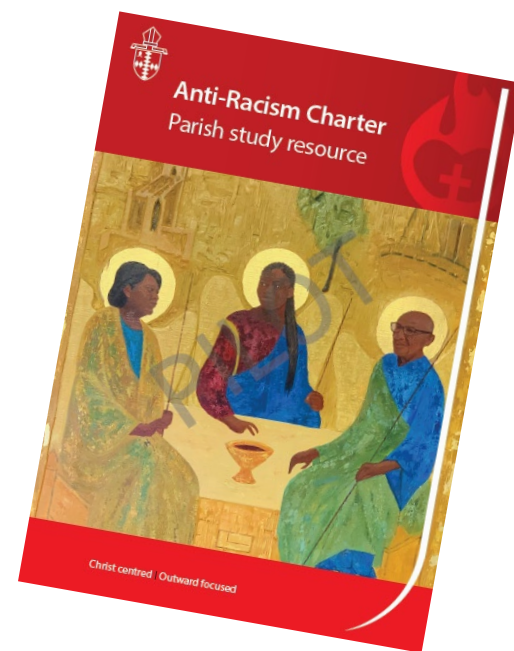
ARC Parish Study Resource

The Anti Racism Charter Parish Study Resource is designed to help parishes explore how to embed the ARC principles in their daily discipleship.



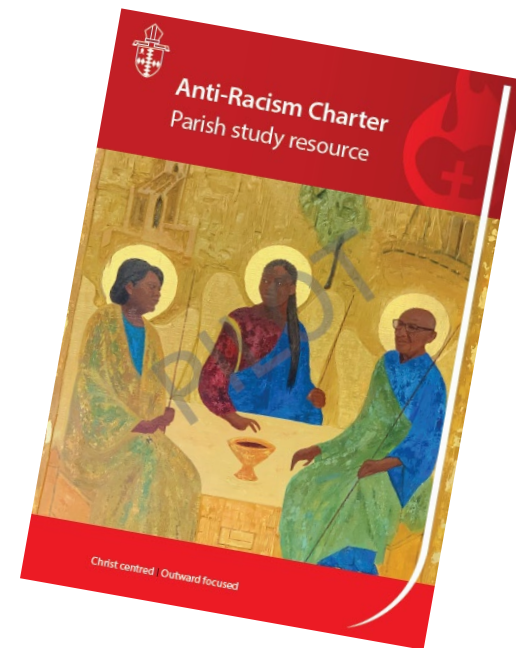
ARC Parish Study Resource

Three of the four sessions concentrate on one of the three principles of the ARC and the fourth is a call to action, to challenge racial injustice.

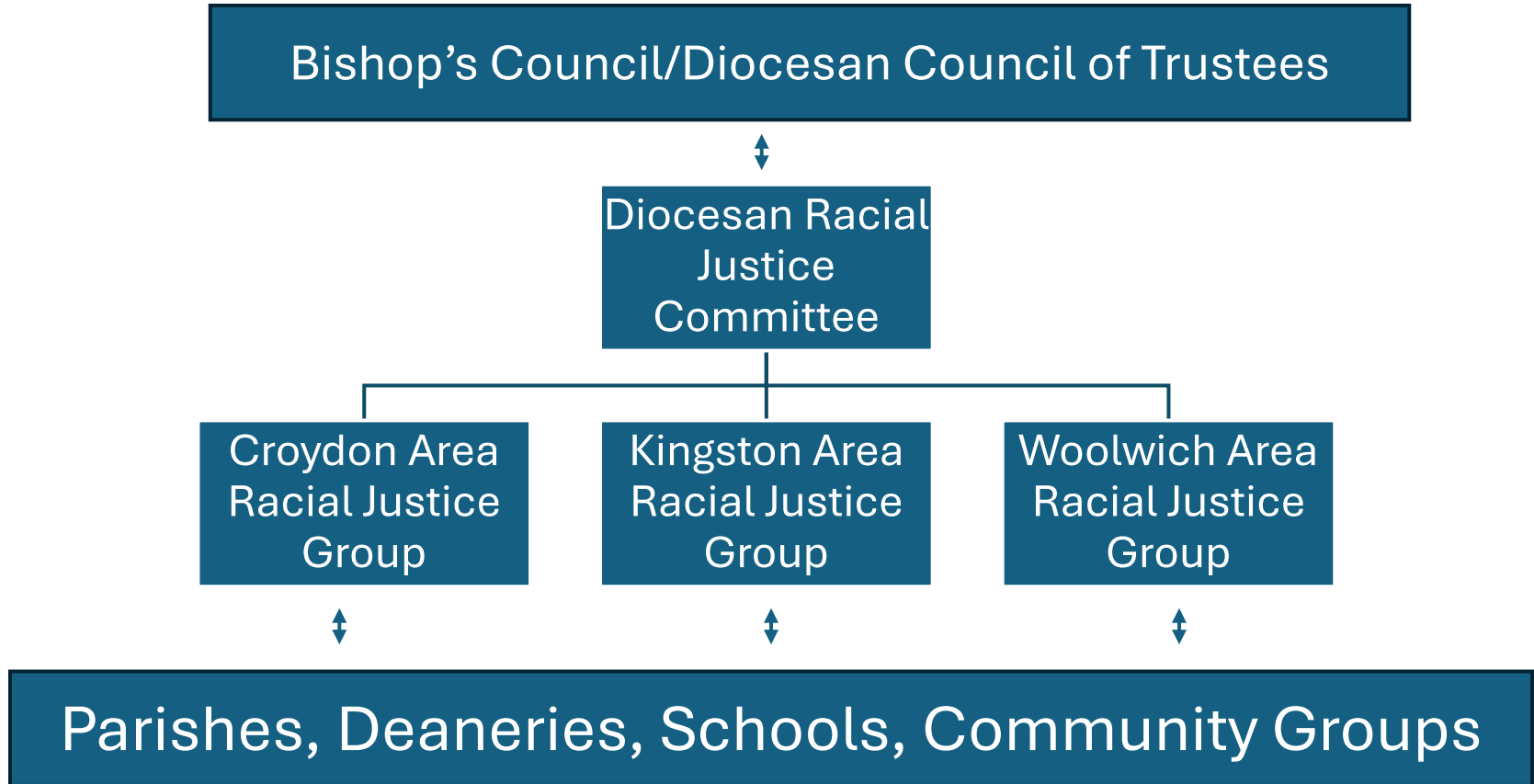


ARC Parish Study Resource

Rooted in scripture, each session has questions and activities to help people think reflect and pray about the principles under consideration.



Racial Justice Integration into Southwark Diocese



What can we do?

- Strategic Review
- Ethnicity Data
- Racial Justice Funding

What can we do?

- At Individual level
- Be more curious, don't be held back by fear, read and explore (Book recommendation)
- Be an ally, don't stand aside or take over, stand with GMH
- Seize this opportunity and see it as a journey

Discussion/Q and A

Diocesan Synod on 12 March 2025

Questions Received

From	To	Question	Response
Susan Procter (HoL, Pendle Deanery)	David Barlow	<p>There are parishes which are solvent currently but can see in the future, because of the shortfall between income and expenditure, that they will not be.</p> <p>What can be done to enable these parishes to continue to be solvent and pay their parish share?</p>	<p>All parishes face the same challenges regarding finance and it is encouraging that those parishes in the past that have seen expenditure exceeding income are now getting onto a firmer financial footing.</p> <p>Whilst this has included regular Generosity and Giving campaigns, the evidence suggests that the key elements are a deeper discipling of church members, underpinned always by prayer. There is no one size fits all but prayer and a better understanding of the Biblical principles about stewardship and giving makes a real difference, particularly when churches are attracting new younger members.</p> <p>The Board of Finance will continue to support all parishes to help them remain solvent and work with the national church to encourage more financial support for parishes. However, the ultimate solution will remain at a local level, with faithful congregations who recognise the generosity of God in their lives and respond accordingly, including with their giving. Hence the continuing DBF support for maintaining and strengthening local ministry.</p>

Susan Procter (HoL, Pendle Deanery)	Bishop Philip	How are we commemorating the 1700th anniversary of the Synod of Nicaea?	<p>On the 12th – 14th September Blackburn Cathedral will host an ecumenical programme of events and services which will celebrate the 1700th anniversary of the Synod of Nicaea and consider what it means for us today.</p> <p>Whilst the DBF has no plans to create resources of its own we will point to those made by other groups such as USPG and the Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda which we hope will inform and encourage people using the Synod as a basis.</p>
Carol Backhouse (HoC, Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery)	David Barlow/Stephen Whittaker	<p>How many churches in the diocese are placing limitations on how their parish share contributions can be used, by withholding parish share, donating through the Ephesian Fund or similar third party, or through a special arrangement with the diocese, such that their contributions cannot be used to support all churches and clergy in the diocese?</p> <p>How much money is affected by these arrangements?</p>	<p>At present no parishes are withholding funding from the diocese in relation to a theological objection. There are a number of parishes that do not fully contribute share due to financial constraints but not to restrict their support to other parishes.</p> <p>A number of parishes have chosen to make their parish share payments through the Ephesian Fund operated by the Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC). In 2024 a total of 7 churches paid funds through the Ephesian Fund with the restriction that the funds be applied against mission and ministry in churches who have signed up to the CEEC statement of faith. A total of £271,902.69 was donated in this way and was applied against stipends and curacy costs for churches who meet the restriction.</p>
Simon Cox (HoC Blackpool Deanery)	Bishop Philip (as Chair of the Bishop's Council)	<p>In the recent elections to the Diocesan Boards and Committees there were few actual elections, very few engaging in voting in those elections and an unprecedented number of vacancies.</p> <p>Would the Bishop as Chair of Bishop's Council</p> <p>1. identify the causes of this lack of engagement,</p>	<p>I wish there were elections to every synod seat and for every place on a board or committee; sadly this has not been the case in living memory and was not the case again this year.</p> <p>However, the data shows that we had greater engagement with synod this last year in relation to the</p>

		<p>2. confirm whether the boards and committees are quorate and viable and 3. indicate how these weakened bodies are now to undertake the effective scrutiny with which they are charged of the unelected and unrepresentative bodies where decisions are made?</p>	<p>number of people standing for synod itself, with a similar number voted on the committees. This was in part down to the work of our communications team on social media and online for which I am grateful.</p> <p>Vacancy levels on our boards and committees are similar to what they have been in the past. Bishop's Council is full at first time of asking which is not always the case. As such, all boards and committees are viable with one exception which is the Vacancy in See Committee for which we have not yet sought nominations. Our Property Committee is in the weakest position in terms of vacant seats but, as with last triennium, action is being taken to seek further nomination. It is, however, currently viable and functioning.</p> <p>Whether a committee is quorate or not is determined by the number of people present as a determined proportion of the total membership, it is therefore determined at each meeting and I cannot comment on that. We have not had an instance of a committee or board having to cancel a meeting due to it not being considered quorate.</p>
Simon Cox (HoC Blackpool Deanery)	Bishop Philip (as President of Diocesan Synod)	<p>Given the contribution by retired clergy to the clergy workforce and the deliberate national suppression of their voice in the Synodical system, what steps can and will be taken to ensure their voice is heard at the highest levels of decision making in the Diocese by representatives accountable to the body of retired clergy?</p>	<p>We value our retired clergy immensely and their contribution to the diocese is immeasurable. I am glad that the voice of retired clergy can be heard in our Diocesan Synod.</p> <p>I am hugely grateful for our two retired clergy officers who have attended deanery chapters and offered pastoral care across the diocese.</p>

David O'Brien (HoC Blackpool Deanery)		Following the motion raised by Alex Frost about working class vocations at General Synod in February 2025, together with the results of our own Synod Survey Feedback (DS 2091); what adjustments do you feel need to be made for Blackburn Diocese pipeline for vocations in accordance with Vision 2026?	Both +Philip & +Jill have worked with Fr Alex in supporting his motion to General Synod and we were absolutely thrilled that it was a key highlight of General Synod and gained such unanimous support, including press publicity. Alex has been working with our Growing Leaders team and is himself working with some of our working class candidates. We are fully supportive of this motion and keen to work to enable more vocations from working class backgrounds. The M-Power course has been an important enabler for such vocations, which alongside the SMMI bid to enable the employment of urban lay leaders are both useful in terms of raising the profile of leadership in our more deprived Parishes. Whilst as a Diocese, we can work hard to raise leaders in this context we still struggle to enable them to successfully navigate the national selection process. Therefore Fr Alex's motion is vital to enable change in this area. Should the sponsoring Bishop wish to overturn a national panel recommendation, the candidate's training has to be funded by the local Diocese. For a poorer Diocese, such as Blackburn this is prohibitive, therefore it is essential the national selection panels are geared towards understanding urban leaders.
David O'Brien (HoC Blackpool Deanery)	Bishop Philip	It's been some time since Bishop Philip led a rallying cry at General Synod (2019) to abolish wedding and funeral fees. Is there any update which will reflect our new diocesan vision going forwards?	<p>I claim no credit for the rallying cry which emanated from Blackpool Deanery Synod resulting in a motion that was brilliantly introduced to General Synod by Tom Woolford and was overwhelmingly passed.</p> <p>It appears however that this matter has lost momentum within the legal offices of the Church of England and I will need to seek further information as to next steps before being able to reply to you more fully. I am very happy to do this and be in touch to discuss what I have found out.</p>

			<p>The consultation as to what should feature within the next diocesan Vision is still underway and if this is something that you feel is important to be included please do make sure it is fed in.</p>
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