

How do Festival Churches connect to Everyday Faith & our diocesan ‘Three Key Questions’?

Everyday Faith:

The Diocese of Leicester wants to encourage every church and every deanery to consider how they resource baptised Christians for “everyday faith”. This is not a new vision for the diocese. This is about how we go deeper into our existing vision to be a diocese 'Shaped by God' seeking to see The Kingdom of God come on earth as it is in heaven.

By exploring the concepts of seasons and jubilee, Festival Churches can free existing congregations to live their faith every day, throughout their home, work, school, leisure, and community life. It reminds us that God is interested in more than our buildings, our money, our church services. Engaging in a deeper, more meaningful, way with the local community enables this living of everyday faith in the community context. Opportunities are created to pray, to witness, and to serve, at all times and in all places.

Question 1: How are you growing, and enabling others to grow in the depth of their discipleship?

Festival Churches offer the opportunity for a re-energising and re-focussing on Everyday Faith among a congregation that may be struggling to maintain the status quo. By engaging the local community, and where present, local schools, they create opportunities to share their faith and grow in the number of disciples. Significant community events linked to church and local festivals create opportunities for the wider community to engage with the Christian faith, explore their spirituality and become involved in the life of their local church, again growing numbers of disciples.

Question 2. How are you enabling growth in the numbers of disciples of Jesus? An important aspect of becoming Festival Church is to ensure that the existing regular congregation are signposted to alternative places of worship when there are no Festival Services. Consideration should be given to how these are sign posted and made accessible, in order to enable people to continue to grow in depth of discipleship. By working together with other local churches, and where appropriate local schools, a Festival Church can explore opportunities for shared discipleship or nurture courses, home or study groups, prayer groups and other opportunities to deepen discipleship and faith. By encouraging and enabling local leaders, Festival Church can help discern and foster local vocations and locally authorised or other ministries.

Question 3. How are you serving your community, and enabling others to love and serve those around them? By seeking to use the building as a community resource, open and available for the wider community to use and feel a part of, opportunities can be created to engage in loving service to the wider community, or indeed the world. Examples from other dioceses include Festival Churches that now operate “pop-up post offices”, local community run shops, or a visiting library service. Buildings may be used for activities such as a resource for schools, children's groups, a community café or a foodbank, depending on local needs and context. Similarly, freeing the congregation to focus on key events rather than maintaining an unsustainable rhythm, creates opportunities to explore new and creative ways to serve the local community.