

Many Voices, One Song

Practical tips and tools for the intercultural church journey

Developed by the Diocese of Leicester Intercultural Worshipping Communities project (2019-2026)

Diocese of Leicester







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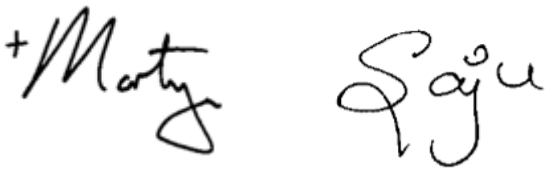
Introduction from our Bishops

In Scripture, we glimpse God's future: a crowd from every nation, tribe, people and language, gathered in worship before the throne. Many voices. One song. As the Bishops we hold that vision in prayer, and we hear it as a call.

Intercultural worship is not just a programme. It is gospel practice. Jesus breaks down walls and draws people into one body. Intercultural church life goes beyond having many cultures present; it allows us to shape our shared life, leadership, and worship. It makes room at the centre. It resists assimilation. It asks honest questions – who chooses the songs, whose prayers lead, whose stories shape the room – and it lets love do its work.

This handbook is a companion for the journey. It offers an Intercultural Matrix, stories from churches that have tried, learned, and tried again, and practical steps you can use. You may think your setting is "one-culture," only to discover new bridges and friendships. In God's eyes, no community is without culture, and every act of reaching across a divide carries life.

May the Holy Spirit guide you as you walk by faith, not by sight – and may our worship become a sign of God's kingdom: many voices, one song.



The Rt Revd Martyn Snow and The Rt Revd Saju Muthalaly, Bishops of Leicester and Loughborough

Introduction from the Intercultural Ministry Director

It has been a pleasure to lead the Intercultural Worshipping Communities (IWC) Project over the last couple of years. This project began following a research phase which identified that some of the churches in the diocese could more closely reflect the cultural and ethnic makeup of their local areas, and that engagement with UKME/GMH communities could be strengthened.

However, this is not merely a project; it is about enacting God's vision – to see all nations come together to worship the Lord. The gospel has always been for all people, and we have the opportunity to make this a reality wherever we find ourselves.

Throughout the IWC project, we have tried new approaches, learned many lessons, faced challenges, and celebrated joys. I am deeply grateful to the wonderful IWC Project Team who have faithfully worked alongside me to deliver this project and to develop this intercultural vision into something that becomes Business As Usual. I have also been greatly encouraged by the commitment of our project churches and their willingness to lead their congregations on this journey.

The project ends – but the vision continues. As a diocese, we remain committed to our strategic priority of 'Intercultural Communities', and producing this handbook is one way in which we seek not only to sustain this priority but also to inspire new centres of activity.



Whether you are reading this as part of an intercultural church or simply out of curiosity, we hope you will be inspired by the stories we have gathered and the approaches taken by churches who have dared to try. We hope it gives you plenty of ideas for you to consider implementing into your contexts.

This handbook contains practical tips and resources, structured around the Intercultural Matrix developed during the project. This framework helps churches to articulate where they are in their journey and to stimulate new ideas. We encourage you to use this handbook, as you are able, to do the same – whether individually or with others in your worshipping community who are interested.

Jessie Tang
Intercultural Ministry Director

Intercultural Matrix

Introduction

Developing intercultural ministry is not linear, and at times needs to be responsive to change in order to best change culture. Although the vision is simple (Rev 7:9), the outworkings can be complex and challenging, so in 2023 we created a matrix like this to express that complexity in a simple and clear way. It has been developed by practitioners, for practitioners. This matrix exists as a reflective, living document that allows a worshipping community to see the overall picture, giving opportunities to pay attention to various areas at different times. It may help a community to plan for the future or devise strategies around developing things interculturally.

We recognise that not everyone is able to score themselves, but these numbers have been left in for those who like to use numerical data to take a temperature check on where their worshipping community is interculturally. Scores may also change over time depending on changes in congregational and local community demographics.

The questions and considerations in each box are to stimulate further thinking and are not conclusive. Some comments may be more appropriate than others, depending on a community's context.

How to use the Intercultural Matrix

- Use it at a steering group or leadership team meeting to take the temperature of where your worshipping community is interculturally.

- Use it as an overview of the outworkings of intercultural ministry in our churches. See what is possible!

- Use it as stimulus for new ideas when developing your community interculturally or reaching out to the community around you.

Questions to ask yourself

- Where do you see the Kingdom of God at work?

- How do these themes help you create a safer church that cares for the vulnerable and the broken?

- What is distinctively intercultural about what you are expressing?

Theme	A	B
1/. Cultural Understandings	**Spiritual Practices** 1/. What intercultural spiritual practices for all ages take place? 2/. Prayers/intercessions in multiple languages and mediums (e.g. messy prayer) Score out of 4:	**Intercultural Awareness** 1/. Assess congregational intercultural awareness and competence eg using matrix/questions 2/. Encourage personal reflection of intercultural awareness and competence 3/. Explore how to build intercultural awareness within all ages and cultures in the church. Score out of 4:
2/. Promoting Unity	**Welcoming Strangers** 1/. Representation in church publicity/communications e.g: website, emails, leaflets, artwork, term booklets, welcome posters. 2/. Engaging with relevant intercultural resources across what it means to be church (e.g; Lent, home groups, book groups, as a youth group). 3/. Exploring reasons for church leavers and addressing common factors. 4/. Celebrating life events in a way that engages those of other cultures and generations (e.g; baptisms, weddings, funeral). Score out of 4:	**Developing Intercultural Fellowship** 1/. How does the church value the stories of others and seek to make them part of their wider story? 2/. Gathering across cliques e.g: eating together, bring & share sessions, small groups 3/. Exploring how to promote unity through pursuing racial justice and reconciliation eg listening groups 4/. How does your community listen to the voice of new arrivals without probing? (because it could be inappropriate to do so). Score out of 4:
3/. Celebrating Diversity	**Intercultural Worship** 1/. Worshipping God using different cultural expressions of music, dance and art forms 2/. Congregation suggesting worship songs 3/. Exploring and learning new theologies which are not Western-centric 4/. Proactively engaging across multiple ages and cultures in communal worship Score out of 4:	**UKME/GMH Discipleship** 1/. Investing in UKME/GMH members by developing effective & contextualised discipleship 2/. Exploring alternative learning styles, be these cultural or generational Score out of 4:
4/. Intercultural Communities	**Serving Diverse Communities** 1/. Continued interfaith dialogue and engagement 2/. Engaging in social action and social justice initiatives in the parish e.g: Tearfund's research "burning down the house". 3/. Alignment of financial giving with intercultural and racial equitable ethos/vision Score out of 4:	**Intercultural Mission** 1/. Receiving training around witnessing to other faiths e.g. Al Massira 2/. Resourcing for new believers from other faiths as they explore Baptism and Confirmation 3/. How is your community a safe place of landing/belonging for those who are broken? Score out of 4:
5/. Intercultural Sustainability	**Sharing Intercultural Learning** 1/. Networking regionally and nationally 2/. Creating and maintaining resource lists/hubs 3/. Putting on events Score out of 4:	**Embedding Cultural Change** 1/. Creating policies, best practices and guidance e.g: safeguarding 2/. Pursuing interculturalism at the heart of all ministries (e.g: Children's/Youth work, homeless ministry, festivals) 3/. Advocating for a diversity of voices and representation within the wider diocese e.g: Minster Communities, Deanery Synod, Diocesan Synod Score out of 4:

C	Total out of 12
Cultural Engagement 1/. Anti-racism and unconscious bias training to church leadership & PCC every time a new person joins 2/. Engaging with cultural issues as a church e.g: vision casting sermon series 3/. Noticing wider events affecting global diaspora communities 4/. Creating a safer church culture in the fullness of what this means. Score out of 4:	
Interculturally Intergenerational 1/. Are you intentionally and regularly engaging with and connect with UKME children and young people? (e.g: youth groups, school's ministry, all age services, messy church) 2/. Where are the intergenerational, intercultural voices within the churches decision making spaces? 3/. Engagement with intergenerational events Score out of 4:	
Leading Intercultural Churches 1/. Diversity within wider church leadership (e.g: Sunday school, youth groups, home groups). 2/. Formal church leadership (e.g: PCC, deanery reps) is as diverse as parish 3/. Discovering ways to redress the underrepresentation Score out of 4:	
Intercultural Church Planting 1/. Planting new communities with an intercultural leadership and intentionally 2/. Understanding how other themes inform church planting Score out of 4:	
Review and Renewal How can you sustain intercultural practice? Score out of 4:	
Total Score out of 60:	











CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Spiritual Practices



INTRODUCTION

As churches become more culturally diverse, a key challenge emerges: how to create a worship environment where people from different nationalities and backgrounds genuinely feel at home. While many attend services, traditional services do not always reflect the cultural and spiritual expressions of those present. This can create a gap between participation and true belonging, especially for those far from their countries of origin.

Churches in the project discovered that belonging deepens when people can express their faith in culturally meaningful ways. Worship becomes more authentic and compelling when individuals can pray, participate, and encounter God using familiar languages and practices. This vision is rooted in the biblical image of a diverse worshipping community in Revelation 7:9, reflecting a glimpse of heaven where all nations and languages are united in worship.

Stages of Approach:

1. Encourage Prayer in Different Languages

Churches began inviting people to pray in their own languages, particularly through prayers such as the Lord's Prayer. While this sometimes led to moments when different languages did not perfectly align in timing, it became a powerful expression of unity in diversity. People felt recognised and included when they could speak to God in their heart language.

2. Welcome Diverse Cultural Expressions in Worship

Church services made room for different cultural practices within worship. For example, in some traditions, removing shoes before approaching the altar was honoured as a sign of reverence, echoing biblical encounters with the holy. These practices helped individuals bring their whole selves into worship rather than leaving behind parts of their cultural identity.

3. Integrate Diverse Leadership and Voices

Many churches who participated in the IWC project have embraced a variety of training programmes, including Intercultural Worship, Embrace the Difference (Unconscious Bias), Racial Literacy, and Global Voices. These initiatives have empowered Church members from diverse cultures to actively include individuals from Global Majority Heritage (GMH) and UK Minority Ethnic (UKME) backgrounds. As a positive outcome, churches are increasingly incorporating diverse voices into their worship services and purposefully inviting preachers and leaders from different cultural backgrounds to enrich their regular Sunday services. This approach fosters a more inclusive and vibrant community. This created opportunities for mutuality, where different voices, perspectives, and spiritual practices were shared within the life of the church. Rather than keeping diversity at the edges, it became part of the core worship experience, helping to reshape how worship was expressed and experienced by the whole congregation.

4. Integrate Faith into Daily and Seasonal Life

Churches encouraged practices that extended beyond Sunday services. This included seasons of prayer and fasting during Lent, as well as sharing meals in homes during important life events such as birthdays, anniversaries, and housewarming. Inviting clergy into these times strengthened relationships and embedded faith into everyday life. In addition, some churches, especially All Saints' Belgrave and Church of the Martyrs, developed regular intercultural New Year's Eve or midnight services.

A Simple Summary

When people are free to express faith in their own language and culture, the church becomes a place where everyone can truly belong.

Tips

- Invite people to pray in their own languages during services.
- Incorporate shared prayers (e.g., the Lord's Prayer) in multiple languages.
- Be open to appropriate cultural expressions within worship.
- Invite preachers and leaders from different cultural backgrounds.
- Create space for shared meals and home-based fellowship.
- Observe and learn from the cultural practices within your congregation.
- Develop special intercultural services or gatherings.
- Start small and grow as confidence and understanding increase.







CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Intercultural Awareness



INTRODUCTION

True intercultural church life grows when people are given space to bring their own cultural expressions into worship and leadership, allowing diversity to shape discipleship, worship, and fellowship in shared ownership rather than token inclusion.

Stages of Approach

1. Create intentional spaces for inclusion and belonging

Hope Hamilton Church has intentionally developed a pattern of celebrating diversity and promoting unity by marking key cultural and faith-based occasions that reflect the lived experiences of its diverse congregation. As part of the IWC vision, the then minister and other church members created intentional spaces for inclusion and belonging, where different communities could see their cultures recognised and valued within the life of the church.

This included the celebration of Orthodox Epiphany alongside cultural celebrations such as Nigerian Independence Day and Chinese New Year. Each of these occasions provided an opportunity not only to acknowledge cultural identity but to bring it into shared church life. These events were shaped to be participatory, allowing members of those communities to contribute meaningfully and share the significance of their traditions with others.

Food became a central part of these gatherings, with members bringing dishes from their own cultures to share with the wider congregation. This created a relaxed and welcoming environment where people could connect, learn from one another, and build relationships across cultural differences. Through these shared experiences, individuals felt seen, represented, and valued, and were encouraged to contribute their gifts, particularly through hospitality and storytelling.

By creating these intentional moments of celebration and exchange, Hope Hamilton Church strengthened its intercultural fellowship, enabling the congregation to grow in understanding, unity, and a shared sense of belonging within a diverse parish community.

One way churches can create intentional spaces for communities is by identifying who belongs to their community and what major landmarks attract people to the area.

St Chad's church, Leicester, near one of the hospitals, has recognised a need and opportunity to connect with local communities and families who work in the hospital. This includes reaching out to those who accompany patients or support families during their visits.

To foster this connection, the church identified a number of Christians who work at the hospital, initiated conversations with them and organised an event to create a space of belonging. The goal was to understand how the church can support these individuals and create a welcoming space where they can relax, experience a sense of community and God's love.

St Peter's Highfields Church, which is intercultural in its nature and has a diverse congregation, many from African and African Caribbean heritage, has organised programmes in collaboration with local nurses and police. There are numerous ways a church can serve its community and welcome newcomers. Ultimately, it is essential to understand the demographics of the parish and identify the significant landmarks around the church that draw people to the area.



2. Embed cultural storytelling and intercultural worship

Church of the Martyrs marked Black History Month through a journey of celebrating diversity and promoting unity, beginning with the launch of the SISTERS ministry in October 2022. The first event was a women-only gathering designed to create a safe, welcoming space for connection among women from diverse cultural and generational backgrounds, including young mothers and university students. Around 40 women participated, engaging through storytelling, shared resources, and conversations that highlighted the lives and contributions of Black women. This created an environment where diversity was recognised, valued, and openly celebrated.

The gathering included a time of worship and paired prayer, allowing women to connect both spiritually and relationally. Sharing food together further strengthened this sense of unity, as participants contributed dishes and experienced fellowship across cultures in an informal and welcoming setting.



Building on this foundation, the following year deepened this approach through the SISTERS "Takeover Service," intentionally designed to celebrate diversity within worship and promote unity across the Body of Christ. The service focused on honouring Black history as a reflection of God's diverse creation, while also promoting racial reconciliation and educating the congregation about the contributions of Black Christians.

It included multilingual worship, with a wide variety of African songs accompanied by drumming, creating a vibrant and participatory atmosphere. Intercessions and Bible readings were offered in multiple languages and powerful testimonies were shared.

Leadership was also intentionally shared, with women from different backgrounds actively shaping the service. African women from the congregation prepared and hosted a shared meal, which became a significant moment of fellowship. For many members of the older congregation, this was their first experience of tasting African food, which led to joyful conversations, cultural exchange, and deeper relationships after the service.

Through these two connected activities, Martyrs Church demonstrated how celebrating diversity can lead to deeper unity, moving from creating welcoming spaces to enabling shared leadership and intercultural worship that reflects the whole community.

3. Expand participation through co-created intercultural worship

In August 2025, Martyrs Church hosted a special Eucharist to mark South Asian Heritage Month, bringing together around 140 people from UKME/GMH churches and wider partner congregations. This event was initiated by the Intercultural Pioneer Minister who led a collaborative process of planning and shaping the service, ensuring shared ownership and meaningful participation across all communities involved.

The service reflected a rich diversity of expression and set an intergenerational tone, from children leading the welcome to multilingual prayers and songs, and other cultural arts. It was intentionally all-age and accessible, enabling full participation from children, young people, and adults.

The celebration concluded with shared South Asian food, extending fellowship beyond worship and creating space for conversation, relationship-building, and cultural exchange. Through this collaborative approach, Martyrs Church demonstrated how celebrating diversity leads to deeper unity, where intercultural worship becomes a lived expression of shared faith and belonging.

4. Deepen unity through embodied cultural and spiritual expression

The final stage involved fully integrated intercultural worship, in which cultural practices were embodied within the liturgy itself. This included a shared procession, the symbolic removal of shoes as an act of reverence led by Bishop Saju, and inclusive worship experiences led by children and youth. Multilingual prayers and culturally diverse performances created a shared spiritual experience, strengthening unity while visibly celebrating cultural diversity within a single act of worship.

CULTURAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Cultural Engagement

A Simple Summary

Intercultural awareness, worship and shared leadership have enabled churches to celebrate cultures in the church while building unity, belonging, and active participation across cultures and generations. Being seen helps members to build trust and deeper connections, and empower those from different cultural backgrounds to contribute and lead.

Tips

- Understand the demographics of the community and identify significant social hubs.
- Celebrate cultural heritage months like Black History Month and South Asian Heritage Month in worship.
- Celebrate relevant national days and festivals that reflect the community's make-up.
- Use multilingual prayers, songs, and readings in services.
- Include music, dance, and art from different cultures in worship.
- Share leadership with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Involve children and young people in visible roles during services.
- Plan events collaboratively with other churches and communities.
- Use food and shared meals to build relationships and fellowship.
- Encourage student and local school participation.
- Keep worship inclusive, participatory, and reflective of the community.



In St. Peter's Glenfield and St Crispin's, intercultural awareness and cultural engagement are best developed through long-term ecumenical relationships, where trust is built gradually through shared space, worship, and collaboration. Large intercultural events (like Pentecost) are most effective when they grow out of these sustained relationships rather than being one-off initiatives.

Stages of Approach:

1. Start with hospitality and presence

The initial intercultural engagement at St Peter's began through a simple but intentional act of hospitality. St Peter's opened its church building to the St George's Indian Orthodox Church congregation, creating a regular shared space for worship. This regular presence established the first and most important layer of relationship—familiarity through proximity rather than formal programme-based engagement.

Over time, informal meetings were introduced between representatives of both churches, alongside occasional social gatherings. These early meetings were not focused on events or outcomes, but on getting to know one another as communities. This gentle approach naturally fostered trust and laid the foundation for deeper collaboration.

Churches' leadership also played a key role in structuring this emerging relationship. The then rector brought together a small group drawn from existing Churches Together networks and the St Peter's–St George's liaison committees. This group helped establish early coordination, ensuring that communication and collective understanding started to develop in a structured yet relational way.

2. Build relationships through exchange and participation

As relationships strengthened, both St Peter's and St Crispin's began to deepen engagement through mutual participation in worship and church life.

At St Peter's, this included continued collaboration with St George's Indian Orthodox Church and partnerships with Glenfield Methodist Church, where members began attending one another's services and participating in shared social moments. These experiences helped people encounter different styles of worship and cultural expression in a direct and personal way.

At St Crispin's, similar relational development took place under the vicar, who encouraged openness by hosting multiple congregations, including the Marthoma Church, Syrian Orthodox Church, and Grace Caribbean Church. Members from St Crispin's were invited to attend these churches, while those communities were welcomed into St Crispin's worship, creating a reciprocal flow of engagement.

This stage focused on exchange rather than joint events. The emphasis was on exposure, listening, and participation, supported by clear communication to ensure respect for different traditions and expectations. These shared experiences helped reduce the distance between communities and built growing confidence for deeper cooperation.

3. Co-create worship and shared events

As trust deepened, the churches moved toward intentional collaboration in worship and public celebration. St Peter's, St Crispin's, and other churches began co-creating significant events such as ecumenical Pentecost services.

These events were not led by a single church but were jointly planned. Representatives from each congregation contributed to shaping the format, leadership, and content of worship. Each church offered its own gifts—different languages, music styles, liturgical traditions, and cultural expressions—creating a shared act of worship that reflected the diversity of the global Church.

The ecumenical Pentecost services became a visible public witness of unity across difference, demonstrating to the wider neighbourhood that churches from different traditions and cultures could come together in shared faith and fellowship.

4. Grow into a deeper partnership and cultural exchange

Over time, these ecumenical relationships matured into long-term partnerships, some of which developed over nearly a decade. At St Crispin's, for example, ongoing relationships with the Marthoma Church, Syrian Orthodox Church, and Grace Caribbean Church gradually expanded beyond worship into wider shared life.

Churches began organising joint church-led days where communities shared responsibility for worship, hospitality, food, and activities. These included cultural expressions such as shared meals, arts, and informal gatherings that strengthened relationships beyond formal services.

Both St Peter's and St Crispin's also encouraged participation in wider diocesan and cathedral-based intercultural events, including the Global Carol Service and intercultural worship celebrations. These experiences provided further opportunities to encounter the breadth of the global Church and helped deepen intercultural awareness across congregations.

Through this long-term, relational process, attitudes began to shift. Cultural differences were no longer seen as barriers but as part of the richness of shared worship. Over time, this has contributed to a deeper sense of belonging as well as a more embracing understanding of church life—where worship increasingly reflects "many tongues" gathered in unity.

A Simple Summary

Long-term ecumenical relationships have builds intercultural understanding, shared worship, stronger unity, true collaboration and belonging across diverse church communities.

Tips

- Start with simple hospitality: Begin by offering space and welcome before planning events
- Prioritise relationships over events: Focus first on small, consistent interactions such as informal meetings
- Build ecumenical partnerships intentionally: Work through existing structures such as Churches Together groups
- Encourage mutual participation: Invite congregations to attend each other's services
- Co-create worship, don't just host it: When organising joint services, ensure all churches contribute to planning, leadership, and content so ownership is shared rather than centralised
- Communicate clearly and early. Agree on expectations, roles, and responsibilities
- Use culture as a bridge: Food, music, dance, sport, and arts are powerful tools for connection
- Take a long-term approach: Recognise that intercultural and ecumenical relationships develop over time—often years—not through one-off events.
- Create opportunities for shared responsibility: Move beyond participation to shared leadership in events, where different churches help plan, resource, and deliver together
- Engage wider diocesan and global church life: Encourage participation in Cathedral intercultural services, diocesan intercultural events, and Global Carol Service to broaden awareness and learning

PROMOTING UNITY

Welcoming Strangers

Representation in the Church's Publicity



INTRODUCTION

Cultural understanding and unity in church life grow through simple, accessible practices that allow people to experience faith in their own language, culture, and comfort, creating belonging through inclusion rather than complexity.

Stages of Approach

1. Enable accessible worship through simple resources

St Theodore's Church developed practical ways to strengthen intercultural fellowship within its worshipping community by using simple and accessible resources. When live musicians were not available, the church adapted by using MP3s and recorded music, ensuring that worship remained inclusive, participatory, and consistent for all who attended.

This approach also allowed the church to introduce a wider range of musical and linguistic expressions within services, supporting greater engagement across a diverse congregation. By removing barriers created by limited resources, the church created a more welcoming worship environment where people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds could fully participate and feel included in shared worship life.

2. Introduce multilingual spiritual expression

With support from the IWC project, St Theodore's Church introduced multilingual spiritual resources into worship, such as The Lord's Prayer and other key prayers available in both downloadable MP3 format and written texts, including liturgy in the Persian language. These resources were carefully selected to reflect the languages represented within the congregation.

This simple but powerful practice created moments of recognition and inclusion during services, as individuals heard and saw familiar words within a shared act of prayer. It helped deepen cultural understanding within the congregation and allowed people to connect in their mother tongue.

3. Strengthen cultural visibility in worship spaces

Over time, the church intentionally worked to make worship spaces more culturally visible and inclusive by introducing multilingual materials and visual resources, particularly during key festivals such as Christmas and Easter. These resources included banners, prayers, and printed materials in a range of languages represented within the local community.

This approach had a particularly strong impact on children and school groups, including pupils from Sandfield and Herrick Schools, who visited the church during major services. Many children were able to recognise and identify their own languages within the worship space, creating moments of personal connection and pride within a shared spiritual environment.

For the wider congregation, these resources also helped bridge connections with the diverse communities they serve. They enabled intergenerational and intercultural engagement, allowing people from different faith backgrounds, languages, and cultural traditions to feel seen and included within worship. This gradual strengthening of cultural visibility deepened a sense of belonging and encouraged the congregation to embrace the richness of its diverse community life.

4. Develop welcoming physical and shared spaces

The church identified the importance of its physical environment in shaping how people experience welcome and belonging. With support from a grant, the church lounge carpet—after 46 years of use and significant wear—was renewed, improving the comfort and quality of this shared space.

This simple but significant change had a noticeable impact on church life. The refreshed lounge quickly became a more inviting and flexible space for community use, particularly for the toddlers' group, where parents and carers could sit comfortably on the floor to sing, play, and interact with their children.



The improved environment also supported visiting congregations, including Grace of God Ministries (Gujarati), who meet in the church hall on Sunday evenings. The upgraded space provided a more welcoming and comfortable setting for fellowship after worship, strengthening relationships and encouraging a sense of shared ownership of the building.

Through this development, the church demonstrated that even small improvements to physical spaces can play a significant role in fostering hospitality, intercultural connection, and a sense of community belonging beyond formal worship.



A Simple Summary

The church used accessible and multilingual worship resources to make services more inclusive and welcoming, helping people experience prayer in their own language and strengthening cultural understanding and belonging.

Tips

- Identify the languages, cultures, and ages in your parish.
- Include these in worship and church life.
- Use multilingual prayers and resources.
- Make worship accessible for everyone.
- Open church halls for community groups and small churches.
- Work with local schools and invite visits.
- Include children and young people in services.
- Create activities that bring generations together.
- Regularly check who is included and who is missing.

Creating Belonging Through Language And Accessibility

INTRODUCTION

All Saints with Holy Trinity in Loughborough came to a simple yet transformative vision: belonging begins when barriers are intentionally removed. This is the key to intercultural engagement - rather than expecting individuals to adapt to existing structures or forms of practices, choose to adapt the church's environment. The church leadership recognised that congregational participation could be significantly broadened. They focused on accessibility as a core expression of welcome, hospitality, and mission.

Stages of Approach:

1. Start by Removing One Barrier

The first step was to address the most immediate obstacle in the church: the challenge of understanding spoken language in worship. All Saints Church Loughborough, and St Paul's Church, Oadby, introduced live translation tools such as Speaksee and Breeze Translate, integrating them into the sound system so that sermons and spoken elements could be translated in real time. These were made accessible via personal devices, with tablets available for those without smartphones, and simple QR codes ensured easy access. This practical step enabled individuals to follow services in their own language and also supported those with hearing difficulties, transforming the experience from passive attendance to active participation.

2. Make Your Welcome Visible

Alongside practical accessibility, All Saints Church Loughborough, and St Paul's Church, Oadby, recognised the importance of visibly expressing integration. They introduced multilingual banners displaying "Welcome" in the various languages spoken within the congregation, as well as seasonal signage reflecting the community's diversity. These were placed prominently within the church building, creating an immediate sense that this was a space where different cultures and languages were recognised and valued. This visible expression of welcome helped people feel acknowledged even before any interaction, strengthening a deeper sense of belonging. This model was used in various churches, especially St Theodore's church, with the help of the then Intercultural Pioneer Minister at St Paul's, who came alongside St Theodore's for a large part of 2025. The best impact came



from the young children at Sandfield and Herrick School, who came into the church at Christmas and Easter and were seen to be picking out their own first language from the welcome banners.

3. Provide Tools for People to Engage

To support ongoing engagement beyond the service itself, All Saints Church Loughborough introduced simple yet meaningful resources, such as Bible keychains with QR codes linking to scripture in multiple languages. These were made available at Welcome stations, enabling individuals to explore faith in their own language and at their own pace. This approach recognised that engagement does not stop at the end of a service; rather, it continues in personal and everyday contexts. By providing accessible tools, the churches created pathways for deeper spiritual connection and discipleship.

Hope Hamilton Church also created a devotional list for their diverse congregation – a printed sheet with a list of Bible apps and study materials (e-links from various cultures) – to help the congregation engage in their daily devotions and to study the Bible in small groups.

4. Extend Welcome Beyond Sunday

The commitment to accessibility goes beyond Sunday services to the wider life of the church. Translation features were added to church websites in numerous settings. The Church of the Martyrs first promoted language translation through its website and was highlighted in the project's Community of Practice, where other churches were encouraged to use mediums like this to engage with their diverse congregations. St Paul's Church, Oadby, also initiated the use of translation for their website. Publicity materials were designed to reflect the parish diversity, and congregation members distributed them within the neighbourhood, combining invitation with prayerful outreach.



The Parish of the Resurrection, Leicester, introduced a Prayer Walk with local churches aimed at developing intercultural fellowship among churches in their parish area. In this way, the church could value the stories of others who seek to promote unity in the wider community.

The Church of the Martyrs gave out international student welcome packs during a university's Fresher's Week, and delivered a welcome event which included tips on how to live in a foreign country when their first language is not English.

These examples show how people could encounter the church in accessible ways even before attending a service, making it easier for those of diverse backgrounds to take the first step towards connection.

IMPACT

Promoting unity, through these intentional changes led to a significant shift in the life of the churches. Individuals who had previously found difficulty engaging with services began to do so with greater confidence, and those from diverse cultural backgrounds experienced a stronger sense of belonging, including school children in the parishes. People with hearing difficulties were better able to participate fully, and the churches increasingly reflected the diversity of their local communities. The wider community also responded positively, recognising the churches as intercultural, welcoming and safe. What began as a response to practical barriers developed into a deeper transformation of how the churches understood promoting unity through participation, belonging, and community life.

A Simple Summary

Remove barriers, make welcome visible, and provide accessible intercultural methods—so that strangers can participate, and participation leads to belonging.

Tips

- Identify one key barrier (language, hearing, or understanding) and take a practical step to reduce it.
- Introduce simple translation support using available tools or printed resources.
- Make your welcome visible through multilingual signage or inclusive visuals.
- Provide accessible faith resources (e.g. multilingual scripture, liturgy and discipleship tools)
- Ensure your website and communication are accessible in multiple languages.
- Use simple outreach methods to connect with your local community.
- Start small, review regularly, and build gradually.

PROMOTING UNITY

Developing Intercultural Fellowship

Valuing the stories of others



INTRODUCTION

The community around All Saints with Holy Trinity Church in Loughborough is incredibly diverse – comprising of long-standing local families, students from Loughborough University, and people from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, including those seeking asylum.

The church plays an important part in bringing this community together. It acts not just as a place of worship but as a civic and social hub, hosting events, supporting local charities, and providing space for reflection and support. Similarly, All Saints Church in Belgrave, Leicester, also has an important local function, which will be explored in further sections.

The experience of All Saints with Holy Trinity Church, Loughborough, and All Saint's Church, Belgrave, demonstrates that unity in a diverse church is not achieved by simply bringing people into the same space, but by intentionally shaping that space so that different cultures, generations, and perspectives are genuinely seen, heard, and valued. When individuals are enabled to contribute their own gifts—whether through music, art, or storytelling—they move from being passive attendees to active participants in the life of the church. Shared creative projects and learning experiences then become powerful meeting points, where relationships are formed, understanding deepens, and mutual respect grows. In this way, unity is not about reducing differences, but about interweaving them together into a richer, more connected community, where belonging is experienced collectively and across generations.

Stages of Approach

1. Welcome Strangers through Music and Participation

Krithika, a Carnatic musician, arrived as a stranger in the church, but through the church's intentional welcome, she became an integral part of the community. To enable her to fully share her musical tradition, the church recognised the lack of a suitable veena (a South Indian stringed instrument) in the UK and invested time and resources to bring one from India. This practical act of hospitality went beyond words, removing barriers so that her cultural expression could flourish.

Through her music, Krithika introduced a tradition rarely heard in UK churches, enriching worship and community life. She has shared Carnatic music across multiple settings, including All Saints Loughborough, Leicester Cathedral, Martyrs Church, and John Storer House. In doing so, the church intentionally created open and accessible spaces where new audiences could encounter both the Christian faith and diverse cultural expressions. What began as an act of welcome grew into meaningful participation, as Krithika became a valued contributor to the church's intercultural worshipping community.

2. Share Artistic Expression

At All Saints with Holy Trinity, Loughborough created its We're All Saints project in September 2025, and commissioned artist Eddy Aigbe to create four paintings of "saints, inspirational people, both ancient and modern, from the Christian faith around the world". One of the paintings depicts St Martha of Bethany, which Mr Aigbe described as containing "bits of Martha, bits of us, bits of Loughborough". Visual art played a central role, with commissioned paintings of global saints reflecting the worldwide church and expanding representation within the building.

The artwork of the global saints was unveiled on one particular Sunday eucharist, where the Bishop of Loughborough, the Rt Revd Saju Muthalaly, presided. The project manager, Kate Burns, who led the initiative, said that his sermon "summed up and communicated the heart of the project, that God invites us all to be saints, in all our diversity and to come together around the heavenly throne in worship".

See appendix for links to the project.

Martyrs Mosaic: Intercultural Arts & Music Festival

In September 2025, Martyrs Church hosted a two-day

celebration of intercultural arts and music. This festival was inspired by the We're All Saints initiative and featured a variety of artists from the church, along with a special celebratory service.

On Saturday, the church organised a full day of events showcasing various arts, cultures, and cuisines. The day included workshops on African headscarves, table mats, Sri Lankan dance, Indian mehndi, and music. Additionally, there were exhibitions featuring portraits created by nearly 200 children from Shaftesbury Junior School, who participated in a portrait project. Several artists from our church contributed by showcasing photography and pencil portraits, as well as an installation of a church mosaic.

Jo Pearce, along with nearly 55 volunteers, completed the Martyrs Mosaic depicting Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. The Martyrs mosaic was created from a photograph taken at the church, featuring the congregation in their traditional attire. The festival concluded with a celebratory service that included prophetic art, followed by a fellowship dinner.

Martyrs Intercultural Arts & Music Festival successfully brought together people from diverse cultures and backgrounds, strengthening relationships within the church and the wider community. This festival provided a space for creativity, shared learning, and cultural appreciation, encouraging participation from all ages. This also deepened the sense of belonging and celebrated the rich diversity within our congregation and community.



3. Developing Intercultural Fellowship through Schools and Learning

The We're All Saints project extended into local schools, with Lat Blaylock, an RE expert, engaging over 500 children from four local schools and using two of the paintings as a springboard for art and spiritual writing about their own 'Inspirational People'.

Children from Loughborough C of E Primary School created triptychs of inspirational people, including Martin Luther King, the founder of Islamic Relief, Dr Hany El-Bana, and members of their own families.

Students aged 8 and 9 from Rendell Primary School created a 30-piece "stained-glass" installation featuring inspirational figures, including Rosa Parks and David Attenborough.

At Cobden Primary School, pupils of the same age built an installation of more than 90 lightbulbs, answering the question "who lights up my life?" Visitors could design their own lightbulbs as part of the artwork.

One of the 240 students at Rawlins Academy, who contributed to the exhibition, based their work on the fairtrade movement, drawing a chocolate bar and the Earth. In total, 240 students from the academy contributed.

Loughborough University also joined in the project, with its Master's in Illustration Arts students creating 'virtual medieval murals' for the church under the guidance of lecturer Dr Karen Sung, who also created a 'virtual All Saints' and collected the stories of faith and connection to the building.

The church became a learning space where theology, creativity, and personal reflection intersected. This created a form of intercultural fellowship where ideas, beliefs, and creativity were shared across educational, cultural, and generational boundaries.

4. Intercultural and Intergenerational Community Building

All Saints Church in Loughborough also hosted a 3-day festival, intentionally bringing people across the community to see the exhibition within the church building. Around 40 percent of visitors were under the age of 16.

The 3-day festival had a concert of classical Indian music featuring Bhindarjit Neer (tabla), Daljit Neer (voice and harmonium), and Kretthika Parthiban (veena), and string players from the Loughborough Schools Foundation. Mr Neer also spoke about the plane crash in Ahmedabad that killed 242 passengers.

The evening was celebrated by children, students, adults, and older members of the community, with guests including representatives from a Leicester Sikh community, Loughborough Council of faiths and schools, university partners, artists, and local groups. There was a buffet featuring food from a local Indian and Nepalese restaurant, alongside music and art, creating informal spaces for conversation and relationship-building.

The church building itself became a space where diversity was not only present but celebrated, seen, and experienced.

IMPACT

- There were exchanges of east-west musical learning, with Krithika learning violin and western notation and teaching Carnatic music in return.
- Schools connections: The church established excellent connections with 5 local schools, which are ongoing, with further funding for another round of spiritual creative projects with even more schools.
- University link: It also built a friendship with a community art worker and lecturer from the university who is pursuing separate funding for a heritage project with the schools and the church. New partnerships with university staff and community groups
- GMH welcome and representation: All Saints with Holy Trinity church windows have many white saints; now, it reflects some stories and art from across the globe. Many individuals have been deeply moved by the paintings. Their themes and colours reflect the church calendar. There is increased visibility of intercultural worship and identity.
- Sharing of resources: The paintings have taken on a life of their own, having toured throughout the Diocese of Leicester and beyond, to services, conferences, exhibitions and an Iranian vigil at Loughborough University. They have inspired many talks, sermons, and emotional reactions, and have also raised the profile of All Saints' Church's intercultural values.
- Community links: Through this event, a local Nepalese restaurant, Leicester's Sikh community, and Loughborough Council of faiths created good links for the church and congregation.
- Revenue for further Intercultural Worshipping Community work: The church printed postcards with a link to the narratives and profits are being ploughed back into the church's intercultural ministry.
- Increased visitors: Over the festival weekend, around 1000 people visited, and almost half were young people.

Most importantly, the festival demonstrated that unity can be built through shared creativity, mutual learning, and intentional welcome, offering a model of church life that is both rooted and open.



A Simple Summary

Churches can build unity by actively welcoming diverse cultural gifts and creating shared spaces of music, art, and learning across generations.

Tips

- Start with who is already among you. Notice the cultural gifts, skills, and stories present in your congregation and community.
- Use music and art as bridges, as creative expression can connect people across various backgrounds more easily than formal structures.
- Create shared experiences, not separate events.
- Partner locally with schools, universities and community groups to widen impact and broaden relationships.
- Encourage mutual exchange across traditions in the parish or community.
- Include all generations intentionally. Design activities where children, young people, and adults contribute together.
- Celebrate visibly and joyfully.
- Build for the long term.





Preparing the Ground

INTRODUCTION

The Church of St Philip and St James, located in the villages of Ratby and Groby, has been largely monocultural in its congregation and leadership. However, there is a growing awareness of cultural diversity and a desire to engage more intentionally with different backgrounds and experiences. The church started introducing intercultural expression by purchasing multicultural children's books and dolls which represent various ethnicities, intentionally utilising these resources in regular toddler and children groups, assemblies and whole school services. It started making a difference in a way that diversity would be a normal part of church life. In one context, one of the children said, "The baby doll looks like me!", which was an important opportunity for the people in the church to be able to see and experience something from their cultural background.

The church was entering a new season with the arrival of a curate, Rev Riffat, from a different cultural background. The incumbent of the church recognised the need to prepare the existing congregation for this intercultural experience with the new UKME/GMH individual as one of the ordained leaders in the church.

This mitigated against the possibility of a series of challenges. For example, churches may be less familiar with accepting cultural diversity, especially after being monocultural for many years. They sometimes have limited exposure to different worship styles, particularly how people from various cultures worship and grow in their faith. Additionally, churches may find it challenging to integrate new leaders or members from other backgrounds. Without proper preparation, this can result in misunderstandings, disconnection, and missed opportunities for unity and fellowship.

Key Insight:

Intercultural unity must be prepared for; it does not happen automatically. The congregation needs to build awareness to foster relationships and facilitate exposure before integration, establishing relationships before unity.

Stages of Approach:

1. Prepare the Ground:

Before the curate arrived, the church initiated conversations about intercultural ministry. This helped the congregation anticipate the forthcoming changes and encouraged openness to new expressions of church that would become part of their community. These discussions allowed the church to prepare effectively and reduce anxieties surrounding new cultural expressions.

2. Create Intercultural Awareness

Once the curate arrived, the church introduced her background to the congregation. This process helped people understand her cultural and church context, presenting the diversity as a gift rather than a disruption. Encouraging curiosity helped foster relationships within the congregation.

3. Facilitating Real Experience

After the curate's arrival, the church organised a group visit to her sending church, All Saints Belgrave. The congregation travelled together to attend a Pentecost Sunday service in a different cultural setting, allowing them to experience new forms of worship. Sharing food and conversations provided the congregation with a lived experience of intercultural engagement.

Facilitating real experiences is important. Sometimes the church needs to go out to have that experience, and sometimes it involves inviting individuals who can share their genuine cultural backgrounds. During South Asian Heritage Month, Rev. Riffat and Angie organised an event called "Biryani & Bhangra," which was first organised by Church of the Martyrs. This lively event brought together 60 attendees, including many members of Rev. Riffat's family. Guests enjoyed a feast featuring Pakistani biryani, sweet rice, samosas, salad, and various dips. As part of the activities, the children played a game to learn where Tanzania (a link diocese) is located, but the highlight of the night was the dancing, with Michael and Ephraim teaching everyone simple Bhangra steps. For more details, see the appendix.

A Simple Summary

Churches can build unity by preparing their congregation for diversity, intentionally fostering intercultural awareness, and facilitating real experiences that celebrate different backgrounds.

Tips

- Start early conversations about intercultural ministry to prepare the congregation for new expressions and leadership.
- Introduce and celebrate the backgrounds of new leaders or members, framing diversity as a gift.
- Provide opportunities for the congregation to experience other cultural worship settings and engage in shared activities, such as meals and group visits.
- Use inclusive resources—like multicultural books and toys—in children's ministries to normalise diversity from a young age.
- Encourage curiosity, listening, and mutual respect as core values for building authentic intercultural fellowship.

Listening to the voice of new arrivals without probing

INTRODUCTION

St Andrew's Jarrom Street is an Anglo-Catholic parish whose identity is deeply shaped by its unique urban context, situated between Leicester Royal Infirmary and De Montfort University. This location continually places the parish at the heart of encounters with international students, staff, patients, visitors, and people of no faith.

As a result, the parish's life is not only intercultural within its congregation but is also shaped daily by the surrounding context—regularly engaging with people from across the world, many of whom are temporarily in the city with little or no previous connection to the church. The parish context thus demands ongoing openness and flexibility.

Additionally, as part of its parish mission, the church building hosts De Montfort University events—bringing in people who might never otherwise enter a church space. This offers a valuable parish opportunity for gentle, non-pressured exposure to sacred space and Christian worship environments.

In Fr Johannes words, "Being intercultural' is not a value in itself - it's a by-product, not a motivating factor. The Mass and other Catholic ways of worship are, by definition, always intercultural. Interculturality is not the aim in itself, but a natural outcome of faithful worship, welcome, and the "care of souls".

Key Insight

The parish's aim remains the care of souls and the growth of the church. Interculturality is not an end in itself, but a natural outcome of faithful worship, radical hospitality, and shared parish life in Christ. Some parish activities highlight its aims and promote unity among its diverse congregation.

In this parish context, many congregation members experience belonging deepened when people are not only included, but when their presence, culture, and gifts are recognised, and when the church is experienced as a place of genuine welcome, especially for those who are new, transient, or without a faith background.

Community is formed through worship, shared participation, shared celebration, and shared journey.



Stages of Approach

1. Radically Welcome (Hospitality as Formation)

- Creating immediate belonging for all who enter the church space.
- Clear and accessible communication, including awareness that English may be an additional language
- Visible hospitality reflecting the diversity of the congregation and visitors
- Consistent welcome practices for parishioners, students, hospital visitors, and event attendees
- Inclusive and accessible physical environment

2. Move From Welcome To Meaningful Contribution Of Gifts

- Active involvement in liturgy (music, readings, intercessions, procession)
- Valuing cultural expression in worship (language, dress, music, movement)
- Encouraging contribution rather than passive attendance
- Ensuring children, newcomers, international residents, and students are visibly included

3. Cultural Exchange

The May Festival is St Andrews' biggest event of the year. In 2025, Fr Johannes conducted research into why this festival remained predominantly white. During the IWC project, this event became more culturally attractive. The St Andrews team built on the success of the previous year's festival and enhanced the event's appeal.

This event included various elements of celebrating the diversity of gifts, practices, cultures, and hospitality: Diverse members of the congregation brought ingredients and food for the festival. A variety of performances were included in the event, including dhol drummers, classical Indian dance, brass quartet, flower arrangements, children

in the procession, encouragement to wear national dress and international food selection.

This stage builds unity through shared celebration, where cultural contribution becomes belonging.

4. Shared Pilgrimage

The National Pilgrimage to Walsingham is a major expression of shared parish life beyond the church building. St. Andrew's Church has a Cell of Our Lady of Walsingham in the parish formed by those who regularly travel there. It is a place soaked in prayer and unfailingly touches many parishioners in ways difficult to explain.

Around 130 people travelled together by two double-decker buses to Walsingham on a shared pilgrimage in 2025. It created a rare opportunity for people of different cultures, ages, and economic backgrounds to spend a full day together in a shared journey and prayer.

Key to its success were financial subsidies which removed barriers to participation for all groups.

This event created belonging through shared journey, shared rest, and shared care for all the members of the church. The underlying reason the church fed 200 people with biryani was not to be more intercultural, but to foster a sense of togetherness and belonging, not least for those who did all the work: their contribution, culture, input and specific gifts are valued and treasured. The overarching goal is to 'save souls' in the parish.

IMPACT

This approach builds a parish shaped by hospitality, participation, and shared life across cultural, social, and institutional boundaries.

- The parish becomes a natural place of welcome for international students, hospital visitors, and people with no church background
- Cultural diversity is visibly expressed and integrated into worship
- Children, including SEND children, are fully included and supported
- The May Festival becomes a major expression of shared identity and joy
- Pilgrimage strengthens real relationships across differences through lived experience
- The church building itself becomes a place of encounter, not only for worship but also for those attending university events or simply entering the sacred space for the first time

Summary

This parish has a vision of unity in Christ shaped through radical welcome, shared participation, intercultural celebration, intentional inclusion of all ages and ethnicities, and a communal pilgrimage .

Tips

- Treat your location as a gift, not a constraint
- Make welcome visible and immediate
- Move people from attendance to contribution
- Use one big event as a "focal point" (like the May festival)
- Build community through shared experiences and not just services
- Remove financial barriers intentionally where possible
- Let culture be shared, not performed
- Use your building as a bridge





DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL FELLOWSHIP THROUGH GOING AWAY TOGETHER

Just like St Andrew's Church, various other churches who were involved in the project took their congregations away on trips.





Hope Hamilton Church's Day Trip To Derby

Ailsa Hunt was an active member and ordinand, deeply involved in parish life. She regularly led services, preached, and supported Sunday worship and the church community, becoming a trusted presence among congregants. When the news came that Ailsa's ordination was scheduled for June 2023 in the Diocese of Derby, the congregation was filled with excitement and pride for her new chapter. The church community organised a coach trip on the ordination day so that many could travel together and witness Ailsa's ordination firsthand.

The trip allowed Hope Hamilton to experience a High Church service in the Church of England and facilitated new relationships across cultures and generations. The group connected with the Derby congregation and leadership, who showed interest in their intercultural worship and vision. The visit deepened mutual understanding and reaffirmed Hope Hamilton's commitment to diversity and connection. Afterwards, the Bishop of Repton contacted our diocese to arrange a visit for diocesan representatives to learn more about the IWC vision.

St Christopher's Church Away Day

St Christopher's Church hosted a church away day. The day included laughter, lively conversations, shared food, and togetherness, bringing people from different backgrounds together.

A particularly meaningful moment occurred when church leaders asked West African members about aspects of worship they missed from their home churches. Many expressed that sharing testimonies during services was central to their faith experience. In response, St Christopher's invited testimonies, deliberately honouring their guests' spiritual practices. This gesture enriched the gathering and marked a significant step in shaping St Christopher's vision for an intercultural worshipping community—one where diverse stories and traditions are woven into church life. The away day left everyone with a sense of joyful belonging, setting a foundation for ongoing intercultural fellowship and deeper unity in faith.





The Martyrs Church Holiday



The church went on a 5-day holiday at a Christian retreat centre in Wales. It consisted of fun activities that fostered connection with one another, daily devotionals in multilingual styles and prayers led by various members of the church. On some days, some of the members prepared international namkeens, sweets and snacks - everyone was welcome to share, taste and have conversations around the table. Mealtimes were delicious times when families sat together, getting to know each other, sharing surprises, and discussing cultural expectations about food, table manners, and more laughs.

During the holiday a new family artwork emerged. There was a large canvas spread across two tables; each day, members were invited to imagine what God has been showing them. All attendees, including children, participated very well. The artwork symbolises unity, connection, and joy. Every brushstroke represents an individual contribution to a collective expression of faith, creativity, and fellowship, capturing the spirit of collaboration and the beauty of diversity within the congregation, inspired by Revelation 7:9. This canvas reflects the vision of God's inclusive and vibrant kingdom.



The holiday was unforgettable for all, strengthening old friendships and building new ones, many of which shared learning about culture and diversity and enjoyed intercultural fellowship throughout the holiday. Finally, the beautiful, colourful banner was installed on the church wall, expressing how everyone engaged with and cherished their time away on the church holiday. It also serves as a reminder of the diversity of people, gifts, and hospitality within our community.

PROMOTING UNITY

Interculturally Intergenerational

Creating Safe and Hospitable Spaces

INTRODUCTION

Both the Church of the Resurrection, in Belgrave, and the Church of the Martyrs are located in incredibly diverse, and often deprived, areas. This diversity creates both opportunity and challenge. There is a need to celebrate cultural diversity and make discipleship meaningful for UKME/GMH communities.

The diversity of local faiths and languages means church engagement and discipleship must be culturally informed. Building intercultural awareness for all, not just leaders, is important to building a safe and welcoming church culture. Traditional methods for discipleship and engagement have limits across cultures and generations, causing gaps in participation and spiritual growth.

Key Insight

The churches discovered that creating simple, consistent spaces where people feel safe, heard, and valued opens the door for deeper engagement. Hospitality, when practised intentionally, becomes a powerful tool for building trust, developing intercultural understanding, and enabling faith conversations to emerge naturally. Investing in UKME/GMH members by developing effective and contextualised discipleship is key for the growth of an intercultural church. It is also recognised that intercultural awareness must be developed across the whole church – not just among leaders. When the wider church grows in understanding and adaptability, it becomes a safer and more welcoming environment for everyone.

Stages of Approach

1. Recognise Diversity and the Need for Change

The Church of the Resurrection began by recognising the cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity within the parish, particularly among long-established Asian communities that are predominantly from non-Christian backgrounds. Coffee and Conversation is a weekly gathering creating space for people from different cultural and religious backgrounds to meet and build relationships. The focus is not on programmes but on presence – giving a space where people could come as they are and begin building relationships over time. Hospitality is central to the approach; through food, tea, and shared meals, they build trust and meaningful relationships across cultures.



Bishop Meet & Greet: Twenty university students from local universities met Bishop Martyn and shared their hopes and dreams at the Student community hall. It was organised by Martyrs intern Sangeetha Malladi (Ministry experience Scheme participant) to create a conversational, safe space for students with the Bishop. Students appreciated that Bishop Martyn took time to intentionally listen to their hopes and dreams and to enjoy pizza during conversations. To read more, see the appendix.

A new service was introduced in the Martyrs Church on 31 December 2023. The majority of members of the UKME/GMH families joined for a joyous New Year's Eve Watch Night Service. This service is part of exploring alternative ways to engage the diverse communities of faith and non-faith and includes multilingual worship, prayer, receiving Bible promise cards, and sharing the Lord's table, ending with a shared meal where many families bring their own country's cuisine. Every year, the number of people (mostly non-church attendees) is increasing.

2. Create Safe, Relational Spaces for Belonging

The Martyrs Church's Intercultural Pioneer Minister initiated a weekly Community Prayer – a simple, informal space where people could come, be heard, and belong. Fresh coffee and croissants are a good start for healthy conversations, good laughs, and, of course, a time of shared prayer for the wider community. This is a place for many vulnerable individuals and the local community to grow in friendships. One of the attendees, Tony Shelley, says, "I believe my medicine is prayer and good health. One of the biggest things for me is my faith and prayer itself. I fight my illness with lots of prayer, and I don't give up."

Emmanuel Watch: A regular intercultural prayer gathering at the Church of the Resurrection brings people together across cultures. Active participation is encouraged from diverse cultural groups by inviting people to lead prayers, share testimonies, read Scripture, and contribute to worship in their own languages and expressions. There is a growing sense of belonging and community, especially

among those who were previously isolated. This has led to a growth in congregation to over fifty regular worshippers, increased lay participation and emerging leadership. There is a greater sense of shared ownership of vision and mission.

3. Build Trust through Intentional Hospitality

The Martyrs Church's 6.15 gathering on Sunday evening provides a relaxed, welcoming and interactive 'Café Style Church' to help people engage with God and with each other. This gathering regularly welcomes new university students and young adults, with several of them coming from a different faith or no faith background. Some of them have shared how these gatherings are providing them with the chance to deepen their understanding of the Bible by having meaningful conversations with people from different nationalities around the table.

Some of the Martyrs members are very intentional in inviting university students and new families to their homes for a meal. These informal conversations over meals help new members in the church to recognise the value of learning through hospitality and building trusted relationships to grow in their faith.

4. Embed Diversity Across Church Life and Leadership

Intercultural fellowship and participation are not limited to one initiative but is embedded across church life. This included Sunday schools, youth groups, and home groups, as well as intentional attention to diversity within formal leadership structures such as the PCC and deanery representation.

IMPACT

There has been increased participation from UKME/GMH communities, particularly within previously underrepresented groups, alongside stronger relationships across cultural and intergenerational lines. The churches have grown in intercultural awareness, with greater openness to faith conversations, deeper trust, and a more visible sense of belonging. New friendships developed, and congregations showed more interest in diverse leadership in leading services and engaging in conversations after the service at the coffee fellowship time. Discipleship has become more contextualised and relational, contributing to the development of a safer, more inclusive church culture

Finally, discipleship is most effective when it is contextualised—shaped by people's cultural backgrounds, lived experiences, and preferred ways of learning—rather than expecting individuals to conform to a single model.



A Simple Summary

Building intercultural discipleship through hospitality, relational spaces, and contextual learning has helped the parishes become a safer, more inclusive church environment where diverse communities can belong, engage, and grow in faith.

Tips

- Listen to your local community and understand its cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity.
- Identify gaps in belonging, participation, and discipleship across different groups.
- Start a simple, regular gathering (e.g. coffee, tea, or shared meals) focused on relationship-building.
- Create safe, informal spaces where people can come without pressure or expectation.
- Use hospitality (food, drink, welcome) as a key tool for building trust.
- Encourage conversation before teaching—prioritise belonging before belief.
- Equip the whole church, not just leaders, to grow in intercultural awareness.
- Adapt discipleship to include different learning styles (including storytelling, discussion, mentoring)
- Actively include UKME/GMH members in church life and leadership.
- Create clear models/methods for underrepresented groups to participate and lead.
- Keep gatherings consistent and long-term to build trust and relationships.





Nurturing and Bringing the Voices of UKME/GMH Young People

INTRODUCTION

As churches grow interculturally, they are also beginning to recognise the intentional effort required in intergenerational ministry. This is a crucial aspect as churches develop throughout diverse cultures and languages. There is a noticeable increase in ethnic diversity among children and young people within our churches. When we look at local schools, we see how many languages are spoken and how varied these communities are.

However, without intentional action, young people can remain on the margins, and their voices may not always be heard or reflected in the life and leadership of the church.

Key Insight

Churches are increasingly recognising that intercultural growth must include intergenerational inclusion. When children and young people are given space to express themselves and see reflections of themselves in church leadership, they tend to engage well. Creating space for their voices is essential to building a healthy, sustainable, intercultural church.

Stages of Approach

1. Establish Spaces for Children and Young People

Some churches have actively seized the opportunity to engage children and young people in an intercultural context. For example, All Saints Belgrave has encouraged children to take part in listening activities as part of an ongoing diocesan initiative. They also hold regular youth meetings where young people come together to spend time together. These meetings provide a platform for them to express their thoughts and perspectives on issues that matter to them.

Many of our churches also welcome children and families during special occasions such as Christmas, Easter, and New Year's. Children from local schools actively participate in church activities, exhibiting their talents and creativity. It is important to create spaces where children can freely express themselves and feel appreciated.

2. Strengthen Church–School Relationships

Churches like Hope Hamilton have recognised the importance of building strong connections with schools. A Church-school Link Minister was appointed to work part-time in both the school and the church, supporting children, young people, and families, and helping them take part more fully in Sunday services.

St Mary's Humberstone Church, which is surrounded by many local schools (including those not affiliated with the Church of England), has also seen this as an important opportunity. When visiting schools, they involve individuals who can speak the children's languages, enabling better connection and engagement. They also create opportunities for young people to share their views on how the church can better serve them.

3. Bring Young Voices into Leadership

Churches are recognising the importance of including young people in leadership and decision-making. The Church of the Martyrs has encouraged two young people to serve on its PCC in 2026, ensuring their voices are included in key decisions. This shows a growing awareness that young people are not simply participants, but contributors to the life and direction of the church.

Young leadership has been supported through initiatives such as the MES (Ministry Experience Scheme) programme in the Diocese, which has helped foster leadership among younger generations (18-30 year olds). Churches are encouraged to recruit MES participants for a 10-month internship.

4. Invest in Discipleship and Intercultural Formation

Churches recognise the need for training and intentional





discipleship. Some have sent potential leaders in children and youth ministry tho programmes such as the Catalyst training offered through Ridley Hall. Over two years, many participants—particularly from intercultural churches—have benefited from this training, gaining the skills and understanding needed for effective ministry.

The growing number of international students has also created significant opportunities for intercultural ministry. Many intercultural churches have become homes for students from across the nations who come to Leicester. Churches have welcomed them, invited them into homes, and offered fellowship over food, recognising that many miss their families.

The Church of the Martyrs and the Parish of the Resurrection have spent meaningful time listening to these students, recognising their gifts and talents as valuable to the church. Through discipleship and support, students have been given opportunities to explore their calling, including participation in the MES programme and group visits to our link diocese's in Tanzania and Trichy. These experiences have enabled them to connect with the global church and discern how God might be leading them.

IMPACT

These initiatives have developed over time through intentional effort. Churches are increasingly identifying individuals from different cultural backgrounds who can contribute their gifts to support children and young people. As a result, young people are more engaged, feel more represented, and are beginning to see themselves as part of the church's present and future.

International students have experienced a feeling of belonging and support, even during short stays. Many have grown in their faith, built meaningful relationships, and contributed to the life of the church. Churches themselves have grown in awareness of the complex cultural and social realities young people navigate today, enabling them to respond more effectively.

A Simple Summary

Nurture young people intentionally, include their voices, and invest in their discipleship—so that intercultural churches grow among generations.

Tips

- Create safe and regular spaces for children and young people to gather and express themselves.
- Build intentional relationships with local schools and families.
- Include young people in leadership and decision-making structures.
- Identify and support leaders from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Invest in training and discipleship for children's and youth ministry.
- Welcome and support international students through hospitality and community.
- Create opportunities for global learning and mission exposure.
- Develop a culture where young voices are heard, valued, and acted upon.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Intercultural Worship



INTRODUCTION

St. Nicholas Church in the heart of Leicester have created their own songbook, reflective of the diversity in their community. They initiated conversations with those who attend their worship services and started working on the various aspects of creating the songbook and implementing this musical worship resource.

They collected stories and songs from their congregation, transcribing them into sheet music. Some traditions sing without musical notation, and others are dependent on them, and so to make the songs more accessible they felt creating a songbook could be a crucial resource for the wider Church. A collaborative approach meant that the songbook is a contextualised resource where members of the church are seen and valued.

IMPACT

- Sunday services are more inclusive and celebrate the community's representation.
- People feel seen and affirmed in their cultural songs and are appreciated for being part of the church.
- Sunday worship services are more flexible in accessing resources (songs in multiple languages with musical notes) and have become easier to attend.
- Relationships were developed through the process of singing and transcribing one another's songs.



Tips

- Celebrate different languages in worship.
- Invite congregation members to share songs and cultural expressions.
- Collect and document songs from various cultures into a shared resource.
- Value contributions from members as part of worship, not just participation.
- Create simple resources, such as a songbook, to support intercultural worship.
- Embrace non-traditional music and oral traditions.
- Begin with conversations to understand your congregation's diversity.
- Collaborate with your community when planning worship.
- Seek support or funding to develop intercultural worship resources.
- Reflect the diversity of God's Kingdom through worship.
- Keep worship flexible and accessible for all cultures and languages.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

UKME/GMH Discipleship



CORE CHALLENGE

As discipleship is one of the key areas in the life and mission of the Diocese, we continue to ask three important questions:

- How are we growing in the depth of discipleship?
- How are we growing in the number of disciples?
- How are we growing in the loving service of the world?

For these questions to be fully answered in IWCs, we recognised that alternative discipleship models are very much required. People from different cultures grow in faith in different ways, and it is important to understand how discipleship happens across cultures and how these different approaches can support one another.

Key Insight

Churches began to recognise that people connect with God in many different ways. Even within one culture, individuals experience faith and discipleship uniquely. Therefore, discipleship needs to be culturally relevant and adaptable, allowing people to grow in ways that are meaningful to them, while also learning from others across cultures. It may require exploring alternative learning styles—such as storytelling, discussion-based learning, mentoring, and relational formation—drawing on insights from intercultural church practice.

Examples of contextualised discipleship pathways

The Journey in Faith (JiF) course, discipleship resource created by the diocese, has been translated into various languages and the Parish of the Resurrection are using it in English and Hindi, using a bilingual approach to ensure participants can engage in their heart language. Journey in Faith is expected to deepen understanding of faith, encourage lay ownership of vision, nurture vocation, and lead to more meaningful participation in the life of the church.

At the same church, the 'Rooted' young adult gathering is bringing together young people from British and Asian backgrounds to explore faith and identity. People were invited through existing relationships, social media, and word-of-mouth, ensuring diverse participation.

YA Explore at Church of the Martyrs brings university students together each week in a warm, welcoming space, whether at a leader's home or a cosy church hall. With drinks and tasty bites, the group dives into Bible study, exploring fresh themes tailored to the unique backgrounds and questions of everyone present. The Bishop of Leicester has also visited the group. Once a year, the group embarks on a special discipleship day out.

"I joined YA in August 2025, when I started university. Even when I'm tired and hungry after placements, there's always a warm welcome and a safe space to relax, learn about Christ, and connect with others. YA is simply the best!" – Favour, DMU student

Stages of Approach

1. Listen to People's Faith Journeys

Churches started asking questions within their congregations about how people have grown in their faith. How have they experienced God, and how have they developed as disciples and leaders? They also explored how individuals share their faith with others from different cultural backgrounds. This listening process helps uncover the different ways discipleship and evangelism are lived out across cultures.

2. Recognise Different Cultural Expressions of Discipleship

It became clear that every culture has particular ways of practising discipleship and evangelism. Some people come from oral cultures and connect through storytelling, while others come from written or structured traditions and prefer courses. Some grow through personal conversations, while others connect with God through silence and reflection. Churches recognised these



patterns and appreciated the diversity of ways in which people engage with God.

3. Explore Alternative and Creative Models

One key initiative was organised by Leicester Cathedral in collaboration with the IWC Project Team, called Following Jesus Across Cultures. A full day event consisted of multilingual worship, stories of faith encounters with Jesus from diverse cultures and faith backgrounds, an input to help understand purpose and importance of intercultural discipleship; oral cultures vs written culture in discipleship; as well as global perspectives on the cost of discipleship. Alternative methods were introduced, including discipling people through art and creativity.

4. Support and Resource Through Collaboration

These explorations were supported through diocesan resources, including the work of the Discipleship Enabler. Churches were encouraged to reflect on what helps people connect with God, considering language, culture, imagery, and devotional practices. Consider learning from other churches and bodies and share best practices.

IMPACT

Churches are becoming more confident in making disciples from all nations, reflecting the call of Jesus, and are seeing growth not only in numbers but also in depth of faith and diversity of expression. Faith is growing across cultures.

A Simple Summary

Recognise that people are discipled in various ways, and create flexible, culturally relevant pathways so all can grow in faith.

Tips

- Ask people about their faith journey and how they have grown as disciples
- Recognise different cultural approaches to discipleship and evangelism
- Offer a variety of ways for people to grow (courses, conversations, storytelling, reflection)
- Use creative approaches such as art and storytelling
- Create opportunities to learn from people of different cultures
- Adapt discipleship practices to your local context
- Use diocesan resources and training where available
- Be open to exploring and experimenting with new models

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Serving Diverse Communities with Intercultural Mission



CONTEXT

All Saints Church in Belgrave and St Paul's Church in Oadby are in multifaith, multicultural neighbourhoods. For more context on these churches, please see the appendix.

At St Paul's, initially, the church faced challenges in engaging beyond its existing congregation, which hindered the building of meaningful relationships across diverse faiths and cultures. There was a lack of confidence in sharing faith sensitively and respectfully. However, the incumbent and Intercultural Pioneer Minister, with support from the IWC Project Team, enabled the initiative to take several key steps in their context. They addressed a core challenge common to many churches in similar settings: the hesitation to engage with people of other faiths due to uncertainty about how to communicate one's own faith with love, compassion, and confidence in an intercultural setting. This often led to an inward-facing approach.

The model implemented directly addresses these challenges. It employed a two-part strategy, beginning with raising awareness and equipping individuals within the church—especially those who have expressed a desire to engage in faith conversations. The "Ambassadors" Training Programme was designed to equip church members to understand intercultural and interfaith dynamics, communicate their faith with confidence and sensitivity, listen well, and build relationships. The focus was on love, awareness, confidence, and relational engagement—not monologue, but dialogue.

Following this, external engagement occurred through a specific neighbourhood event: "Choosing Joy." This community-focused gathering was aimed at being opening and welcoming to all cultures and faith, offer interactive experiences in a safe environment and enable natural conversations about life and faith in general.

Stages of Approach:

1. Prepare Before The Event:

The 'Ambassadors' training was critical, as one of the principles is that people generally need formation and awareness before participating in mission. This created confidence in interfaith contexts, as participants were equipped to engage without fear, speak naturally about their faith, and respect differences while remaining authentic. Consequently, participants' confidence in their interactions reduced withdrawal.

2. Take A Simple And Relational Format:

The Neighbourhood event was not overly complex or structured, allowing people to feel a sense of belonging, which grows through informal human interaction. Food and activities for kids made a difference in attracting communities around the Church.

A family who had moved to Belgrave in Leicester, shaped by a different faith tradition, encountered the pastoral team at All Saints Church, Belgrave and gradually entered a deeper spiritual search. Through a shared video, late-night conversations about Christ as present, and online worship, they found themselves returning to a sense of





welcome that crossed distance. This grew into personal connections—phone calls, prayer, and space for honest questions—where their concerns about family, culture, and change were met with patience. In time, a shared journey emerged, leading to Easter Day in 2026 when four family members, along with many others, were baptised at All Saints, with Martyn Snow, the Bishop of Leicester, leading them through the waters of baptism.

In relation to God's intercultural mission in All Saints Church, Rev. Sunny George writes, "God knows Sunny George is a man of limited abilities and capabilities. That leaves a lot of room for God's grace. The Missio Dei sends people. The real question is how we perceive, receive, and respond - how we embrace difference."

3. Be A Gentle Faith Presence:

At All Saints Church, Belgrave, some of the most powerful sermons are never spoken—they are seen. During Advent, the church quietly glows against the winter darkness, its Christmas lights offering a gentle sign of hope. Then, at midnight on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, fireworks light up the Leicester sky, bold and unmissable. These moments of visibility speak to the whole neighbourhood—to the nearby temple, the Wyvern pub opposite, the Lidl behind, and to a community largely shaped by Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim families, alongside long-standing local residents. For many, the message is simple but profound: the church is still here, and it still matters.

In St Paul's Oadby story, since the event was held in the church, faith was present but not imposed. This created an invitation rather than pressure, which proved to be very effective.

The IWC team provided training with a few external speakers who could speak from their own experiences of interfaith dialogue.

IMPACT

- Increased confidence among church members in intercultural & interfaith engagement
- Greater interaction between the church and the local community
- Positive responses and openness from neighbours
- A desire for ongoing gatherings and deeper connections

Tips

- Equip your congregation with basic intercultural and interfaith training.
- Build confidence before expecting people to engage outwardly.
- Encourage listening and dialogue, not just speaking.
- Create safe spaces to practice faith conversations.
- Start small with simple, relational community events.
- Keep events welcoming, informal, and accessible.
- Use food and children's activities to bring people together.
- Make faith present but not forced.
- Use both digital and personal connections to journey with people.
- Let visibility be a mission—your presence can speak before your words.
- Focus on building relationships, not just running events.
- Make space for belonging before expecting belief.
- Partner with experienced teams or speakers for support
- Encourage authenticity while respecting other faiths.
- Follow up to build ongoing relationships, not one-off events.
- Celebrate publicly—joy can be a powerful witness

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Interfaith Dialogue and Engagement



During the years of the IWC Project, both St. Deny's and St. Mary's Church, with their work among multicultural communities, built up to a special 'Music & Faith' event in their respective parishes, bringing together communities across cultures and faiths, making music a common language. This demonstrates how to serve diverse communities by fostering togetherness instead of segregating.

Christ Church Thurnby Lodge also hosted a beautiful, moving and inspiring event celebrating the arrival of the SS Windrush in Tilbury Docks on 22 June 1948. The service brought together congregations from the Ascension Team of Churches and St Matthew's Seventh Day Adventist Church, and they were joined by Bishop Saju.

Key insight

Music, shared culture, and hospitality connect diverse faiths and cultures, which can foster genuine relationships.

Stages of Approach

The churches' vision to serve diverse communities and advance ongoing interfaith dialogue led it to establish a model featuring three integrated elements, each strategically crafted to foster meaningful engagement and strengthen interfaith relationships.

1. Share Cultural Expression (Music)

Church leaders intentionally invited diverse faith and cultural groups, aware that cultural engagement offers a stronger entry point than formal worship. Music served as a universal language of connection, enabling each group to contribute authentically and ensuring that unique traditions were visible and valued. This shared expression created a sense of belonging and helped break down barriers between communities.

2. Have Intentional Interfaith Inclusion

Champion visible inclusion from multiple faith communities, affirming that representation fosters belonging.

The churches partnered with schools, communities and organisations such as St Philip's Centre, boosting credibility and ensuring respectful, sensitive collaboration.

3. Practice Hospitality and Share Experiences

Hospitality was prioritised through shared meals and informal interaction, creating time and space for attendees to sit, talk, and connect across faith boundaries. The purpose was to turn attendance into genuine relationships, using hospitality as a bridge for deeper connection.

For leaders, prioritise building relationships over logistics or presentation. Connection is valued most. This approach ensured everyone felt included and heard, fostering a welcoming environment for continued interfaith dialogue.

IMPACT

The churches' approach increased engagement across faiths and cultures, strengthened mutual understanding and respect, fostered deeper ongoing interfaith dialogue, fortified community relationships, established a reputation as an inclusive, welcoming church, and enabled regular intercultural events.

A Simple Summary

Intercultural music and hospitality events enabled churches to move from community contact to meaningful, ongoing interfaith relationships.

Tips

- Use music and shared culture as accessible entry points—people may engage more easily through culture than formal worship.
- Ensure visible representation and inclusion from multiple faith communities; representation creates belonging.
- Partner with interfaith organisations to increase credibility and sensitivity.
- Prioritise hospitality—shared meals and informal time help turn attendance into genuine relationships.
- Build on existing trust and networks; begin engagement where relationships already exist.
- Focus on connection and relationship-building over event logistics or performance quality; inclusion and presence matters the most.





INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITIES AS SAFE SPACES

Challenges of a "super-diverse" city

Leicester is the first city in the UK where no single ethnic group forms a majority. The 2021 census found 59.1% of residents are from minority ethnic groups and 41% were born outside the UK. While rich in culture, new students, refugees, and families face challenges with housing, cohesion, and navigating services. The city has long been a place of migration, from the Irish and Italians in the 19th century to refugees in modern times, with over 70 languages spoken and 240 faith groups, making language barriers a significant hurdle for refugees and families accessing education and healthcare. Students, particularly international ones, may face cultural gaps and "identity issues" in schools and universities. Finding affordable housing is a primary struggle. Newly arrived communities may face difficulties settling into neighbourhoods, with some areas having very high concentrations of ethnic minority households.

The key insight:

The core aim of Intercultural Worshipping Communities is to promote unity and celebrate diversity within the wider church, creating spaces where all members feel safe, included, and valued.

Stages of Approach

1. Identify the needs of the local communities (including refugees and asylum seekers) growing in awareness and engagement

Many churches are reaching out with empathy, listening to personal stories, and inviting refugees and asylum seekers to participate in church life. Churches like St Peter's Highfields and All Saints Belgrave have regular food banks for communities, and other churches support charities and help members who need support. Many refugees and asylum seekers attending Sunday services are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the wider life of the church. Some of the churches have mentioned many activities and have created space to reach out and support them, for example:

- Welcoming them into the services, home groups and Alpha courses (providing translation services)
- Providing hospitality, such as delivering food and giving initial support while they wait for their status in the hotels or temporary accommodation
- Pastoral support and looking after their well-being
- Free coaching classes in music, languages, science, and mathematics as gifts of empowerment
- Providing temporary work to those who have refugee status
- Valuing their contribution to be included in the voluntary and leadership roles (children/ youth /women ministries/ PCC)
- Observing Refugee Week in the Sunday services to promote unity





2. Support And Integrate International Students And New Families

Many churches welcome international students and new families with children who are making their homes in our parishes. International students and new families often face challenges securing jobs due to a lack of funds to cover rent or visa issues. Churches are providing pastoral support through various events and programs to encourage their Christian faith and that of people of no faith, too. Supporting and integrating by encouraging every individual, regardless of background, to engage in worship, fellowship, and leadership roles, fostering a sense of acceptance and shared purpose. Many churches also witnessed the flourishing of these people's faith through baptisms and confirmations.

A few examples are:

- Hosting welcome events for international students
- Providing initial pans, pots/accessories/ gift vouchers
- Hosting meals and temporary accommodation
- Provide volunteering and internship opportunities
- Joining in ministry teams or PCC

Speaking after an international student gathering, Bishop Martyn said: "*I was so encouraged to see the spirit of curiosity and learning among this diverse group of young adults.* "It was a real privilege to receive their hospitality and welcome. And it was great to be reminded that in the midst of all the changes going on in the world, young people today are searching for purpose and meaning in the same way as previous generations. "*The question for me is whether we as a church are willing to journey alongside young people and share the Gospel with humility and generosity.*"

We heard many stories of flourishing, building lasting relationships that empower all members, celebrating diversity, and providing ongoing sanctuary for those in need.

A Simple Summary

Intercultural church communities offer safe spaces for those broken, refugees, international students, and new families, transforming lives by providing belonging, practical support, and shared purpose to people from all backgrounds.

Tips

- Actively seek out and welcome those who may feel broken or isolated, especially asylum seekers, refugees, new families, and international students.
- Provide practical support—accommodation, food, and financial aid—without barriers or judgment.
- Ensure worship and community activities are inclusive and affirming of diverse backgrounds.
- Invite intercultural participation in every aspect of church life, including leadership and decision-making.
- Celebrate the richness of different cultures through shared meals, storytelling, and traditions, reinforcing the church's role as a sanctuary for all.

INTERCULTURAL CHURCH PLANTING

Enabling Intercultural Leadership

The Church of the Martyrs birthed the SISTERS initiative where all women from various backgrounds come together monthly to pray, reflect, support one another and enjoy deep fellowship.

Key Insights

An intercultural, women-led ministry can transform church life and outreach by creating spaces where diversity is embraced, voices are honoured, and faith is expressed in ways that resonate across backgrounds. Through integrating cultural representation, shared stories, intentional hospitality, and visible leadership, churches can foster belonging, deepen relationships, and encourage new forms of spiritual engagement for all generations.

Stages of Approach

1. Build relationships and share vision (Foundation stage)

The journey started by recognising the need for intercultural leadership among women. The Intercultural Pioneer Minister, Shobha Gosa, initiated this through intentional one-to-one and small group conversations, often over chai and samosas. These informal yet meaningful encounters created safe spaces to share the IWC vision, listen to women's stories, and build trust. This stage was crucial, as it allowed women of diverse backgrounds to be heard, valued, and open to belonging, forming the relational foundation for everything that followed.

2. Form a diverse core and create safe spaces (Belonging stage)

From these conversations, a core group of women from India, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, and Poland emerged. This variety was intentional and reflected the wider church community.

The SISTERS gatherings turned into spaces where women met regularly for breakfast, storytelling, and prayer, fostering natural relationships. A leadership team—comprising a Pioneer Minister, an IWC intern, and lay members from GMH backgrounds—began planning monthly activities.

This stage was important in creating safe, intercultural spaces of belonging, where barriers were broken, and women began to grow together in faith.

3. Launch through cultural celebration and shared identity (Visibility stage)

The official launch of SISTERS in October 2022 during Black History Month marked a key moment of visibility. Nearly 40 women gathered for a women-only event that combined storytelling, table discussions, worship, and shared food. Women read stories of Black heritage, shared their own hopes, and exchanged handwritten messages of encouragement.

This stage demonstrated how celebrating diversity can strengthen unity, making cultural identity visible and valued within the life of the church.

4. Deepen participation through worship, fellowship, and outreach (Participation stage)

The ministry continued to grow through regular activities, such as International Women's Day celebrations, during which women of all ages and backgrounds gathered in joy, reflection, and prayer.

A key development was the SISTERS Takeover Service, where women from diverse cultures led worship through multilingual songs, prayers, Bible readings, and African liturgical expressions. Shared meals, especially hosted by African families, deepened fellowship.

The ministry also extended outward through initiatives like "Waffles and Walk", where women engaged in public worship, prayer, and conversations in the city centre.

This stage was significant in moving women from attendance to active participation, leadership, and outward mission.

5. Invest in discipleship and nurture leadership journeys (Growth stage)

Alongside building relationships and creating spaces for fellowship, there has been a strong and intentional focus on discipleship and leadership development, particularly among UKME/GMH women. The vision of "52 Weeks Growing Together" has been lived out through monthly breakfast and brunch gatherings, where women come together to share life, reflect on scripture, and support one another in their faith journeys. An important moment within this was the SISTERS Gather Day, where women connected deeply through worship, teaching, and fellowship, creating space for both spiritual progress and relational depth.

During Lent, individuals of all ages engaged in reflections from the book "40 Unseen Women of the Bible." Each participant read a chapter and shared their reflections, allowing women to explore overlooked stories in scripture and relate them to their own lives. This created a powerful space where voices were heard, experiences were shared, and faith was deepened through collective learning.

In addition to these gatherings, there has been a commitment to developing leadership through training and mentoring. Some women participated in the Preaching Well course, a nine-month learning journey that enabled UKME/GMH members to grow in confidence, communication, and leadership within the church. Practical discipleship and ongoing mentoring have played a key role in strengthening leadership not only within the church but also in wider relationships and engagement with non-Christian friends.

The impact of this investment is most clearly seen in the individual stories of transformation and leadership. Magda, from a Polish background, became an active member of the core team, offering hospitality by opening her home for gatherings, sharing her journey, and creating a welcoming space through food and fellowship. Sangeetha, an IWC intern from India, continued her journey beyond her placement, growing in confidence and leadership, particularly in a context where women are not traditionally encouraged to speak or preach. Her journey reflects a deep transformation, both culturally and spiritually, as she now supports and mentors other young women.

Samy, originally from Zimbabwe and working as a mental health nurse, stepped into leadership through encouragement and relational support. Through the SISTERS ministry, she found confidence to share her faith and now leads monthly gatherings, particularly supporting other young mothers who are new to the country. In her own words, the SISTERS group has become a place where she feels safe, supported, and able to be herself.

Similarly, Rose Marie, a long-standing member of the church, found deep belonging through the ministry. Attending a gathering in a café, she connected with women she had never met before and left feeling part of a wider family. Her reflection—coming alone but leaving with "twelve sisters"—captures the heart of the ministry.

A Simple Summary

Building relationships, sharing stories, and celebrating culture helped develop intercultural leadership among women, creating a welcoming sisterhood where they belong, grow in faith, and lead together.

Overall Impact

- Deep relational transformation: Women from diverse cultural backgrounds formed strong, supportive relationships, creating a genuine sense of belonging and sisterhood
- Intercultural unity in practice: Diversity was not just acknowledged but actively celebrated through worship, storytelling, food, and shared leadership
- Growth in confidence and leadership: Women (especially UKME/GMH) grew in confidence to lead, speak, pray, and take visible roles within church life
- Safe spaces for authenticity: Women felt able to share vulnerabilities, life experiences, and faith journeys in an encouraging environment
- Discipleship and spiritual growth: Regular gatherings, reflections, and training strengthened faith and encouraged ongoing learning
- Breaking cultural and gender barriers: Women stepped into leadership roles that were not always culturally expected or accessible to them.
- Missional confidence: Outreach initiatives helped women engage with the wider community and share their faith naturally
- Intergenerational connection: Younger women, students, mothers, and older members built meaningful relationships across age groups
- Sustainable ministry model: A core team now leads and sustains the ministry, showing long-term impact beyond initial setup

Tips

- Start with listening and informal conversations to understand people's stories.
- Build a small, diverse core team to lead and shape the ministry.
- Create safe and welcoming spaces where people feel they belong.
- Use food, storytelling, and shared experiences to build relationships.
- Celebrate cultural moments (e.g. Black History Month) to affirm identity and fellowship.
- Encourage shared leadership, especially from underrepresented groups.
- Include multilingual and intercultural elements in worship.
- Provide regular discipleship and learning opportunities.
- Invest in mentoring and leadership development over time.
- Create opportunities for outreach and real-life faith conversations.
- Value and nurture individual journeys and testimonies
- Be patient—intercultural ministry grows through trust and consistency.

Forming New Communities

INTRODUCTION

All Saints Church in Loughborough recognised a growing diversity within its context, including people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, as well as individuals facing challenging socio-economic circumstances and additional needs. Sometimes traditional Sunday structures were not able to engage everyone effectively, and there was a need to create new, more informal spaces where people could gather, build relationships, and explore faith in ways that were accessible and culturally relevant. At the same time, there was a desire not only to welcome people but to enable leadership to emerge from within these new and diverse communities.

Stages of Approach

1. Create a New Informal Gathering

Early in the project, a new informal Sunday evening gathering called The Table was launched. Project funding was used to purchase a screen and projector, and to provide a hot meal each week. The sessions were led by Marek, an ordinand, who helped foster a small but close-knit community. More recently, a large rice cooker was purchased, and the church continues to provide a meal once a month. The gathering was intentionally informal, centred around shared food, conversation, and worship, making it accessible to a wide range of people.

2. Enable Intercultural and Lay Leadership

As The Table developed, leadership began to expand beyond one individual. Lay leaders became actively involved, contributing to different aspects of the gathering, including leading discussions and shaping the community. A small live band now provides contemporary musical worship, and the Work of the People film series, featuring diverse contributors and themes such as racial justice, was funded for two years and is now led by lay leaders. This development enabled leadership to become more shared and reflective of the community's diversity.

3. Build Community Through Hospitality and Inclusion

Hospitality has been central to The Table's life. The shared meal created a space where relationships could develop naturally, particularly for those who might otherwise feel lonely. Over time, the gathering has grown into a monthly community of around 20 people, with approximately 35% from Global Majority Heritage backgrounds, including individuals with special needs and others facing challenging socio-economic circumstances. Hospitality has created a welcoming and inclusive environment where people can connect, belong, and participate.

4. Develop Contextual Intercultural Ministry (Iranian Community)

In 2022, five Iranian asylum seekers joined the All Saints community, and since then, the church has offered welcome and a sense of safety to around 35 Iranians, walking with them through very difficult circumstances. In response, a contextual intercultural ministry developed. An Iranian pastor built relationships within the community, taught in Farsi, and led a weekend retreat at Launde Abbey. Many Farsi Bibles and books were also provided.

Three baptism classes have been held, led by lay leaders and clergy, and many meals have been shared in homes, including Nowruz celebrations. As many asylum seekers lack access to cooking facilities and miss home-cooked meals, these gatherings often involve cooking together, fostering meaningful cultural exchange and hospitality. Over time, this ministry has become deeply relational, rooted in shared life, faith, and cultural expression.

Impact

The Table has continued to evolve and grow in both size and diversity. It now gathers around 20 people regularly, with a significant proportion from GMH backgrounds, and includes individuals from a wide range of circumstances. It has become a space where people can explore faith in a relaxed and relational environment, with growing participation and shared leadership.

The Iranian ministry has had a profound and lasting impact. Strong friendships have formed, and even those who have been relocated continue to stay in touch, with some returning regularly to All Saints. Faith has grown within the community, and many have found a sense of belonging during challenging times. The church has also been enriched through the inclusion of Farsi songs, and members of the Iranian community have contributed by translating parts of English worship songs.

This ministry has also reshaped the wider church. It has raised awareness of the realities faced by asylum seekers and the Iranian people, making these issues personal and visible. Intercessions have become more globally aware, and this increased understanding has inspired action, including involvement in teaching refugees and leadership within Loughborough's Town of Sanctuary. It has also influenced creative projects within the church, such as including the story of an Iranian martyr in the We're All Saints project.

Overall, these experiences have strengthened and informed the church's wider intercultural mission.

INTERCULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

Embedding Cultural Change



A Simple Summary

Create simple, hospitable spaces where diverse people can gather, and enable leadership to grow from within—so that new intercultural communities can take root and flourish.

Tips

- Start a simple, informal gathering alongside existing services.
- Use shared meals to build relationships and community.
- Invest in basic resources that enable participation (e.g., equipment, hospitality)
- Identify and support emerging leaders from within the community.
- Create space for leadership to be shared between clergy and lay people.
- Respond intentionally to specific cultural groups in your context.
- Provide resources and teaching in people's heart language where possible.
- Allow the community to shape the gathering's direction and rhythm over time.



Pursuing Interculturalism At The Heart of All Ministries

St Paul's Church Oadby, St Nicholas Church, St Mary's Humberstone, and The Church of St Philip and St James, Groby and Ratby run Children and Toddler Groups which are well-attended and valued as a space for families in the community. However, the churches began to recognise that many of the resources available—particularly books and toys—did not reflect the cultural diversity of the children attending. While families were present and welcomed, there were limited opportunities for young children to see themselves represented in the materials they engaged with. This created a subtle but important gap in helping children feel fully included and recognised from an early age. The church began by acknowledging that resources used in children's ministry play a significant role in shaping a child's sense of belonging. They identified the need to move beyond generic materials and intentionally include resources that reflected the diversity of the children attending the group.

Stages of Approach

1. Source Inclusive Materials

They introduced Bible storybooks that featured children and families from a range of ethnic backgrounds, alongside dolls representing different skin tones. Care was taken to ensure that these resources were both engaging and reflective of real diversity within the community.

In Hope Hamilton Church, children began picking up books from the church cupboard, noticing that the pictures resembled their own cultures. This recognition sparked curiosity and led them to start conversations with other children, sharing stories and experiences.

Embedding these practices in children's ministry plants the seeds for an inclusive church culture that grows and sustains itself as children carry these values forward. Through these simple yet powerful moments, the children's ministry became a space where diversity was visible, celebrated, and naturally woven into friendships and learning.

2. Provide Bibles in Multiple Languages

St Paul's Church, The Church of the Martyrs, and Hope Hamilton Church took active steps to provide Bibles in various languages, making them accessible for Sunday services. During worship, scripture was read not only in English but also in other languages by native speakers from within the congregation, allowing everyone to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity. Additionally, Hope Hamilton Church compiled a list of Bible apps and daily devotionals from various cultural backgrounds, making these resources easily accessible to the congregation.

Impact

The introduction of culturally representative resources had a strong and positive impact on both children and families. Young children began to engage more confidently, recognising themselves in the materials around them. Parents appreciated the intentional effort to reflect diversity, and the Toddler Groups became an even more welcoming and inclusive space. These small but thoughtful changes helped foster a deeper sense of belonging at an early stage of life, shaping how families experienced the church community.

Tips

- Review your children's resources and identify what is missing in terms of representation
- Introduce books and toys that reflect the diversity of your community
- Ensure these resources are part of everyday use, not occasional additions
- Observe how children engage and listen to their responses
- Be willing to expand resources based on interest and need
- Start small—even a few items can make a meaningful difference
- Involve parents and caregivers in shaping inclusive environments



Sustaining Intercultural Practice Through Investing in Leadership

THE CORE CHALLENGE

Embedding cultural change is one of the key factors in sustaining intercultural ministry and vision within churches. Over the past 6–7 years, churches have engaged in many programmes, events, and intentional conversations. As seen through various stories, each church has developed intercultural change at different stages and in different ways.

However, churches have come to recognise that, for this vision to continue beyond the project, it is essential to sustain cultural changes that have helped grow interculturally, rather than relying solely on programmes. Some churches have found this to be a long journey with challenges along the way. Still, many now see intercultural vision as a vital part of their local mission and ministry, emphasising the importance of ongoing commitment and resilience.

Key Insight

Churches have discovered that intercultural vision is sustained not just by people, but by measurable progress in leadership diversity and cultural competence. It is people who bring their culture, spirituality, and lived experience into the life of the church. Therefore, embedding intercultural ministry requires intentional investment in people, leadership, and culture over time, with clear indicators of growth to guide ongoing development.

Recognising that leadership looks different across cultures helps churches appreciate diverse leadership styles, fostering respect and inclusion essential for their intercultural vision.

Stage of Approach

1. Form Intentional Structures for Change

One of the early steps in embedding intercultural change was the formation of IWC Steering Groups, particularly within IWC core churches. The steering groups providid support alongside incumbents and Intercultural Pioneer Ministers to help congregations understand the intercultural vision through ongoing, intentional conversations, making members feel supported and confident in embedding change.

2. Recognise and Adapt Leadership Across Cultures

Churches began to recognise that leadership is expressed differently in many cultures. This required a shift in understanding and practice, moving away from a single model of leadership to a more inclusive approach.

Leaders spent meaningful time with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, seeking to understand their perspectives and identify their gifts. Some individuals already had leadership capacity but needed support in articulating and expressing their leadership within the church context. Others required additional encouragement and training to grow in confidence.

3. Investing in Leadership Development and Opportunities

Churches intentionally encouraged members—especially from Global Majority Heritage (GMH) backgrounds—to engage in training and development opportunities. These included programmes such as CPAS, evangelism training, discipleship and leadership courses, preaching courses, church planting programmes, children and youth ministry training, and the Ministry Experience Scheme (MES). Church leaders and steering groups actively identified and invited individuals into these opportunities, recognising that sometimes the barriers lay in the church's culture, or a lack of confidence, rather than ability. Through encouragement and support, many began to grow into leadership roles.

As a result, several churches now have UKME/GMH representation within their PCCs, and in some cases, individuals from UKME/GMH backgrounds are serving as churchwardens. Some have also been encouraged to explore vocations, including ordination training.

4. Create Pathways for Participation and Growth

Churches also focused on creating simple and accessible pathways for people to get involved and grow. This often began with small steps—inviting individuals to read the Bible, lead prayers, sing, share testimonies, or take part in events.

Diverse congregants were encouraged to explore their gifts gradually, whether through practical roles such as helping at the AV/sound desk or with worship, hospitality, gardening, outreach/evangelism, or setup help during special services and church cafes, or through wider involvement in diocesan programmes. Churches intentionally asked individuals what they could offer, what they were interested in, and how they might like to grow.

Alongside this, appropriate training—such as safeguarding—was prioritised to ensure safe and supportive environments. Over time, these small steps enabled individuals to grow in confidence, discover their calling, and take on greater responsibility within the church.

Impact

- Intercultural vision grows as leadership becomes more diverse and representative.
- Shared leadership strengthens when different cultural voices shape decision-making.
- Recognising varied leadership styles enriches the life of the church.
- Confidence grows as individuals discover their gifts and step into leadership.
- Lasting change comes through patient, long-term investment in people.
- Embedding intercultural values into church culture sustains the vision.
- Persistence, not speed, is key to meaningful intercultural transformation.
- Diverse leaders influence beyond the local church into wider ministry spaces.
- Intercultural leadership helps shape and inform diocesan life.
- The vision spreads as more leaders model and share it with others.

A Simple Summary

Sustain intercultural vision by investing in people, nurturing diverse leadership, and embedding change into the culture of the church.

Tips

- Form a small team to guide the intercultural vision in your church intentionally
- Create space for ongoing conversations about culture, leadership, and inclusion
- Recognise and affirm different leadership styles across cultures
- Identify and encourage emerging leaders, especially from diverse backgrounds
- Provide access to training and development opportunities
- Start with small, practical opportunities for involvement
- Support people to grow gradually in confidence and responsibility
- Ensure safeguarding and good practice are in place
- Focus on people and relationships, not just programmes
- Be consistent and patient—embedding change takes time



IWC Project Team

FINAL WORDS FROM THE INTERCULTURAL MINISTRY ENABLER

As we reach this phase of our journey with Intercultural Worshipping Communities, I want to praise God, our Lord Jesus Christ, for His faithfulness in guiding our Diocese with His Holy Spirit in our journey towards Intercultural vision. I extend my sincere thanks to the Bishops and the Programme Board for enabling us and our churches to journey in this Intercultural Mission. As we share and reflect on these stories, we are reminded that this is God's work—transforming our churches to reflect His kingdom.

The vision of *"a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne"* (Revelation 7:9) is becoming increasingly visible through the commitment of our churches. While we are still on this journey, we thank God for every small and significant step toward this reality.

I want to express my appreciation for Jessie Tang and Claire Bampton for their guidance and the support and work of our Intercultural Worshipping Community team: Dinta, Lesley, Alastair, and Luke, in preparing these stories of legacy.

It's an incredible joy to work with all of our project churches in this Intercultural Mission. Your dedication and patience, which have been invaluable, especially during challenging times. We encourage you to continue persevering. As Galatians 6:9 reminds us, *"Let us not become weary in doing good."* Your efforts are significant, and their impact is unfolding in many ways. While many acts of faithfulness may not be captured in this document due to various limitations, we recognise and appreciate the countless ways you have contributed. God sees every sacrifice and act of love; nothing done for His kingdom is wasted. Engaging with these stories has been a joy, showcasing the resilience and courage of our churches. Remember that, as stated in 1 Corinthians 15:58, *"your labour in the Lord is not in vain."* And as we believe in 1 Corinthians 3:6, God gives the growth, and He is at work among us.

I also want to thank everyone across the Diocese for your contributions through leadership, participation, prayer, and service. Together, we are shaping churches that reflect the beauty of God's kingdom.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Shobha Gosa, for her unwavering support throughout this journey. Her encouragement has allowed me to engage meaningfully in this work. I am grateful for all that God has done and will continue to do through our churches in the years ahead.

Michael Jawahar B Ravuri

FURTHER RESOURCES

WELCOME & HOSPITALITY

• **Experiences of Welcome – Diocese of Leicester**
Six video stories exploring intercultural welcome
https://www.leicester.anglican.org/about-us/our-strategic-priorities/intercultural-communities/

• **Welcoming the Nations Among Us – Via Nations**
Biblical framework for engaging diaspora communities.
https://vianations.org/

• **Resource Hub – Welcome Churches**
A Christian organisation dedicated to welcoming asylum seekers & refugees
https://welcomechurches.org/resource-hub

• **Signposting for asylum seekers and refugees in Leicester**
Signposting – support services for asylum seekers and refugees
https://cityofsanctuary.org
www.openhandsleicester.org.uk
www.babybasicsleicester.co.uk/making-a-referral
www.choiceadvice.org.uk
https://www.facebook.com/TheCentreProjectLeicester

SUNG WORSHIP & INTERCULTURAL WORSHIP

WEBSITES:

• **Songs2Serve EU**
Multilingual worship songs, training, and intercultural worship planning tools.
https://songs2serve.eu

• **Arts Release**
Multicultural albums and recordings
https://artsrelease.org/en/resources/multicultural-worship

BOOKS:

• **An Intercultural Worship Handbook** – Ian Collinge
Practical guide for designing worship that reflects multiple cultures authentically

• **The Next Worship: Glorifying God in a Diverse World** – Sandra Maria Van Opstal Combines theology and practical steps for leading worship in culturally diverse contexts

• **Worship Together in Your Church as in Heaven** – Nikki Lerner & Josh Davis
An informative book on how to build organisations and music ministries in churches cross-culturally – practical and foundational resource for pastors and worship leaders of all kinds.

• **Diverse Worship Matters Workbook** – InterVarsity Press
Practical interactive workbook:
Diverse Worship Matters Workbook | InterVarsity

ARTICLES:

• **Corporate Worship Expressed Interculturally** – blog
https://interculturalchurches.org/blog/corporate-worship-expressed-interculturally/

• **Articles on Evangelical Alliance website:**
https://www.eauk.org/search/results?q=intercultural+worship

• **Why and how should we sing interculturally?**
https://voicestogetherhymnal.org/2020/01/30/why-and-how-should-we-sing-interculturally/

CHILDREN & YOUTH

• **Culture Kits for Children and Young People**
https://www.sim.org/resources/christian-mission-resources-youth/

• **Intercultural Worship with Children & Families**
Intercultural Worship with children and families - *Google Drive or*

• **Jippii Children's Mission (Jippiimissio)**
Children's worship songs in multiple languages: https://jippii.fi/en/

• **Anti-Racism Conversations – Youthscape**
Youth-focused race and identity resources: https://www.youthscape.co.uk/

• **Whistlestop Tales** – Krish & Miriam Kandiah
A book filled with ten stories telling how God uses people from all over the world in his global adventure

• **Heroes of Hope** - Sharon Prentis, Alysia-Lara Ayonrinde
22 inspiring stories of Christians from around the world:
Heroes of Hope - West Midlands Racial Justice Initiative

• **Various artwork and resources for Children's Ministry and for the Church**
Artwork from the Benedictine Sisters of Turvey Abbey depicts Jesus Christ from diverse backgrounds: https://www.paulineuk.org/browse?Keywords=Turvey / www.mccrimmons.com

CULTURE & CONTEXT

• **Resources, Training & Event**s – Diocese of Leicester
https://www.leicester.anglican.org/about-us/our-strategic-priorities/intercultural-communities/resources-training-and-events/

• **Intercultural Mission Hub** – St Paul's Slough
https://stpaulsslough.org.uk/reaching-out/intercultural-hub/

BOOKS:

• **The Culture Map: Decoding How People Think, Lead, and Get Things Done Across Culture**s – Erin Meyer
Cross cultural aspects in the business environment

PRAYER & GLOBAL LITURGY

• **The Lord's Prayer in Many Languages:** https://www.nhmministrants.org/

• **Various Christian Prayers in 60+ Languages**:
https://praylingo.com/language-list/

• **Ecumenical Prayer Cycle – World Council of Churches**:
https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/prayer-cycle

• **Book of Common Prayer in Multiple Languages:**
Holy Eucharist according to the Diocese of Mauritius
https://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/mauritius.html

• **Liturgical Resources for Racial Justice Sunday**
Annual liturgical materials designed to help congregations reflect on racial justice and celebrate diversity in worship.
https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/liturgical-resources-racial-justice-sunday

• **Liturgical Resources for Black History Month**
Worship services, prayers, and reflections designed for use during Black

History Month with attention to racial justice and unity.
https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/liturgical-resources-black-history-month

Resources from Churches Together in Britain & Ireland:
https://ctbi.org.uk/racial-justice-sunday/

- **Tips for intercultural prayer:**
https://stpaulsslough.org.uk/shaping-up-for-intercultural-prayer/

ARTICLES & THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

- **Building Intercultural Local Churches** – Unreached Network
https://unreached.network/
- **God's Transforming Call to Intercultural Ministry** – Mennonite Church USA
https://www.mennoniteusa.org/resource/gods-transforming-call-to-intercultural-ministry/
- **Intercultural Competence Research** – ScienceDirect
https://www.sciencedirect.com/
- **What does global culture awareness look like?**
https://stpaulsslough.org.uk/what-does-global-culture-awareness-look-like/
- **Can We Imagine a Future Together?**
Intercultural lessons for Living in Love and Faith
https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2025/27-june/books-arts/book-reviews/book-review-an-intercultural-church-for-a-multicultural-world-reflections-on-gift-exchange-edited-by-martyn-snow-can-we-imagine-a-future-together-intercultural-lessons-for-living-in-love-and-fait
- **Why Colourblindness Doesn't Help the Church**: https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/why-colourblindness-doesnt-help-the-church
- **Representatives from intercultural congregations across the Diocese of Sheffield came together on Intercultural Church Growth and Challenges**
https://www.sheffield.anglican.org/intercultural-church-growth-and-challenges-testimonies-across-the-diocese/

BOOKS

INTERCULTURAL CHURCH TEXTS

- **An Intercultural Church for a Multicultural World** – Martyn Snow
- **Polyphonic God: Exploring Intercultural Theology, Churches and Justice** – edited by Israel Olofinjana, Usha Reifsnider, David Wise. Multi-authored volume from a British perspective.
- **Intercultural Church** – Safwat Marzouk
- **Multicultural Kingdom** – Harvey Kwiyani
- **The 3D Gospel** – Jayson Georges
- **Global Humility** – Andy McCullough
- **Book list recommended by the One People Commission**
https://www.eauk.org/what-we-do/networks/one-people-commission/recommended-reading-by-one-people-comission

THEOLOGY, RACE & IDENTITY.

- **Ghost Ship: Institutional Racism and the Church of England** A.D.A France-Williams
- **God Is Not a White Man and other revelations** – Chine McDonald
- **This Here Flesh** – Cole Arthur Riley
- **Is God Colour Blind? Insights from Black Theology for Christian Faith and Ministry** – Anthony Reddie

INTERCULTURAL PREACHING

- **Crossover Preaching: Intercultural-Improvisational Homiletics** – Jared E. Alcántara Explores improvisational preaching methods that embrace cultural diversity and dialogue. A conversation with Jared is available on the Preaching Well podcast.
- **Preaching with Cultural Intelligence** – Matthew D. Kim. Offers a framework for understanding cultural dynamics in sermon preparation and delivery.
- **A Postcolonial Conversational Approach to Preaching** – Scott Donahue-Martens. Introduces a conversational model for preaching that resists colonial patterns and fosters intercultural engagement.
- **Guide to Planning and Leading Intercultural Services** – Intercultural Churches Network. Offers practical tips for inclusive liturgy and preaching in multicultural congregations.
- **Multicultural Liturgies – USCCB Guidelines.** Catholic resource for planning
- **ICC Sermon Starters: Promoting Intercultural Competency in Preaching – GCORR**. Practical sermon prompts to integrate intercultural awareness into preaching.

GLOBAL BIBLE COMMENTARIES

- **Global Bible Commentary** – Edited by Daniel Patte. Interprets every biblical book through voices from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and beyond.
- **The Africana Bible** – Edited by Hugh R. Page Jr. Offers African and African Diaspora perspectives on the Old Testament.
- **The New Testament in Colour: A Multiethnic Bible Commentary** – Esau McCaulley et al. Brings diverse cultural insights to the entire New Testament.
- Return to Babel: Global Perspectives on the Bible – John & Priscilla Pope-Levison. Features global interpretations of key biblical texts.
- **A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings** – Fernando F. Segovia & R.S. Sugirtharajah. Applies postcolonial criticism to the New Testament for liberative readings.
- **Postcolonial Commentary and the Old Testament** – Hemchand Gossai. Engages Hebrew Bible texts through postcolonial lenses.
- **The International Bible Commentary** – Edited by William R. Farmer. Ecumenical commentary with global scholarly contributions.
- **Postcolonial Perspectives in African Biblical Interpretations** – Musa W. Dube et al. African feminist and liberationist readings of Scripture.
- **Asia Bible Commentary Series** – Asia Theological Association. Contextual commentaries written by Asian scholars for Asian contexts. The New Testament part is edited by Dr Jacob Cherian.
- **Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible** – Various Global Contributors. Blends theology and exegesis with contributions from non-Western voices.

SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

- **Journey to Truth (JTT):** *https://journeytotruth.co.uk/*

- **Visions of Justice and Hope**

An insightful resource designed to help churches and leaders navigate conversations on racial justice and unity: Visions of Justice and Hope - Evangelical Alliance

- **SENT: grow transformational leaders**

A small group course equipping public leaders to be transformational in their workplace: SENT: grow transformational leaders - Evangelical Alliance

PODCASTS

- **Across Culture Podcast**

https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/across-culture/id1525745568

- **Preaching Well Podcast** – Hosted by Saju Muthalaly

https://www.leicester.anglican.org/preaching-well-podcast/

- **Serve Asia Podcast** – OMF United Kingdom

https://omf.org/uk/serve-asia-podcast/

- **Tent Talks**

https://tent-talks.simplecast.com/

- **Grace Podcast** – HeartEdge

https://open.spotify.com/show/0KXmWGEm7l2py4WCHJmhUD

VIDEOS & COURSES

- **Global Voices**

Webinars put on and recorded by the Diocese of Leicester:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUihyZjJKkKaMjMLs-nhYSSS_Rn43U7y-

- **Two-Way Street:**

Steps to Intercultural Life & Mission - Diocese of Birmingham
https://www.cofebirmingham.com/pathways/

- **Deconstructing Whiteness** (YouTube): *https://www.youtube.com/*

- **Believers from Iran and Hong Kong explain what Intercultural Church means to them** : *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOjVb0kNhIU*

- **Interactive Q&A session with Pedro Rubalcava:**

Webinar: Intercultural Liturgy Questions & Answers

- **Experiences of Welcome –** Diocese of Leicester

Six video stories exploring intercultural welcome
https://www.leicester.anglican.org/about-us/our-strategic-priorities/intercultural-communities/

IMAGES OF JESUS FROM VARIOUS CULTURES

Search collections via: *https://mikefrost.net/picturing-jesus-part-v-does-it-matter-what-color-jesus-is/*

AFRICAN, ASIAN, AND EUROPEAN BAPTISMS AND FUNERALS

https://stpaulsslough.org.uk/african-asian-and-european-baptisms/
https://stpaulsslough.org.uk/african-asian-and-european-funerals/



APPENDIX

Further information about a church's context can be found here, as well as relevant links.

• **The Church of the Martyrs** is located just off Narborough Road in Leicester, a well-known international and culturally diverse hub of the city. The parish sits within an area characterised by a wide range of ethnicities, languages, and faith backgrounds, reflecting Leicester's wider multicultural identity. It is closely connected to nearby De Montfort University (DMU), hosting and engaging with a significant population of local and international students, as well as Shaftesbury School, where pupils speak more than thirty languages, which contributes to regular intergenerational and educational links with children and young people. This context creates a naturally diverse parish environment where daily life is shaped by cultural exchange, learning, and encounter. The church, therefore, serves as a place of welcome and hospitality, supporting intercultural engagement across students, families, schools, and wider community groups.

• **Hope Hamilton Church** is located in the Hamilton area of Leicester, a large and growing residential parish known for its significant cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. The community includes many families from global majority heritage backgrounds, creating a naturally multicultural and intergenerational parish context. The area is served by several local schools, which play an important role in community life and provide opportunities for the church to engage with children, young people, and families. Within this setting, the church is well placed to connect with a wide range of cultures and generations, responding by creating welcoming spaces, inclusive worship, and community activities that reflect and serve the diversity of its parish

• **St Peter's, Glenfield**

St Peter's parish church is located in Glenfield, on the edge of Leicester. The church describes itself as a welcoming community for people of all ages and backgrounds and is actively engaged in worship and local community life. Its context offers opportunities to engage with a diverse, intergenerational population. The Church Centre has been the largest venue in Glenfield since the 1970s and is used for many community and church events

• **St Crispin's, Braunstone**

St Crispin's Church is in Braunstone Town, Leicester. It is an active community church offering regular events and activities open to all ages, creating opportunities for people to meet, build relationships, and engage in church life. Its context within Leicester provides opportunities to engage with a diverse community. At the heart of St. Crispin's Church are training apprentices who will, in turn, lead smaller church communities.

• **St Theodore of Canterbury Church** is a parish church in the Rushey Mead area of Leicester, serving a diverse, multicultural residential community. The parish reflects a mix of families, older residents, and newer migrant communities, shaped by the area's broader social diversity. The church describes itself as a welcoming, family-friendly congregation with informal worship and strong community engagement, including activities for children and families. This context provides ongoing opportunities for intercultural engagement, hospitality, and community-based ministry within a diverse urban parish setting.

• **All Saints with Holy Trinity Church** in the Diocese of Leicester, rooted in Anglican liturgy and sacramental worship, sits at the heart of Loughborough, a town famous for its diverse and changing population. Today, the area includes long-standing local families, students from Loughborough University, and people from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This diversity creates a strong sense of community and also means the parish serves people with different experiences, beliefs, and needs.

• **We're All Saints project**

University: *heritage for tomorrow, today – Loughborough's Lemonade Stand*

Morning Service unveiling the third and fourth painting: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2lgIVX4YcQ*

Church Times article: *https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2025/20-june/news/uk/artwork-by-loughborough-school-pupils-celebrate-rich-diversity*

• **The Church of St Philip and St James** is located in the villages of Ratby and Groby (often referred to locally in connection with the wider parish context), serving a suburban and semi-rural community on the edge of Leicester. The parish includes a mix of long-established residents and newer families, with increasing cultural and generational diversity shaped by the area's broader growth. The church is connected to local schools, community groups, and village networks, creating opportunities for intergenerational engagement and outreach. While the context is less visibly multicultural than inner-city settings, there is a growing awareness of cultural diversity and a desire to engage more intentionally with different backgrounds and experiences. Within this setting, the church is exploring ways to build inclusive community life, develop intercultural awareness, and create welcoming spaces that reflect the changing nature of its parish.

• **Celebrating South Asian Heritage Month Around the Diocese -** *https://www.leicester.anglican.org/news/celebrating-south-asian-heritage-month-around-the-diocese.php*

• **The Parish of Resurrection Church** is recognised as the biggest parish in the Diocese of Leicester. It is home to many Asian communities who migrated to Britain years ago and are now well-established, with many working as business owners and vendors. The parish has a wide range of cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Such diversity is reflected in parish events and active participation from members of all backgrounds and ages. The church offers a variety of opportunities for congregation members to serve both within the parish and in the wider community through initiatives such as food drives, youth guidance programs, and support groups.

• **Martyrs YA**: *https://www.leicester.anglican.org/news/young-adults-meet-and-greet-with-bishop-martyn.php*

• **The St. Nicholas Church** is recognised as the oldest place of worship at the heart of Leicester, a multicultural city. They partner with the Intercultural Worshipping Communities Project to celebrate the many different languages and cultures within our community by praying the Lord's Prayer in various languages, teaching one another their songs, and learning from one another. In doing this, they immerse themselves in the beautiful diversity of the Kingdom of God.

• **All Saints Church,** Belgrave, Leicester, is not simply a multicultural congregation where people from different backgrounds gather, but an intercultural community in which diversity is actively engaged, honoured, and woven into a shared sense of belonging. Situated in Belgrave—one of Leicester's most vibrant and diverse areas, known for its strong South Asian heritage, thriving local businesses, and rich traditions such as Diwali celebrations—the church reflects the life of its wider community. Within this context, All Saints has become a place where age is no barrier to transformation, resistance is met with patience rather than frustration, and cultural apprehensions are approached with wisdom and tenderness. In a community facing multiple deprivations—economic hardship, social fragmentation, and the pressure of cultural change—the visible presence of a living church has become a beacon.

• **St Paul's Church** is located in Oadby, a suburban area of Leicester known for its relatively affluent setting and growing cultural and religious diversity. The parish includes a mix of long-established residents alongside newer communities from a variety of ethnic and faith backgrounds, including significant South Asian and international populations. The area is also shaped by nearby schools, local businesses, and community organisations, creating opportunities for engagement across generations and cultures. Within this multifaith context, the church is situated among people of different religious traditions, which presents both opportunities and challenges for meaningful engagement. St Paul's is therefore developing its intercultural mission by seeking to build relationships beyond its existing congregation, creating welcoming spaces, and equipping its members to engage confidently and sensitively with the wider community.

• **St Deny's Church** is located in Evington, on the eastern edge of Leicester, and forms part of the deanery structure of the city and serves the local parish community of Evington. The church describes its mission as serving the local community in the name of Jesus Christ and growing as a people of prayer at the heart of Evington. St Denys is an historic place of worship that continues to serve a contemporary and diverse local population, with facilities and accessibility features that support engagement from a wide range of people, including families, older residents, and community groups.

• **St Mary's with St Barnabas Church** is situated in Humberstone, on the eastern side of Leicester. The church actively engages with the vibrant residential neighbourhood, which includes families, older residents, and long-established local communities, all of which reflect the settled suburban character of Humberstone.

Each year, the church hosts a spring festival that effectively unites adults, children from local schools, families, and diverse communities across various faiths and cultures. This celebration not only showcases their gifts and artistic talents but also fosters a sense of belonging and collaboration among communities. In line with its commitment to growth and outreach, the church has chosen to take part in the Partnership for Missional Church Program. This initiative is designed to enhance their mission at St Mary's, strengthen connections with the local parish, and exemplify the Kingdom of God in action within the community.

• **St. Peter's Highfields**

St Peter's Highfields is a vibrant and inclusive church located in the Highfields area of Leicester. It serves the community with traditional and inclusive worship services, which are streamed online. The church offers a warm welcome to all, including those of other faiths and none, and provides hospitality to the whole Highfields community.

• **St Chad's Church** is a traditional Church of England parish church located on Coleman Road in a very diverse context, It serves the local community in the Catholic tradition of the Church of England, operating under the pastoral care of the Bishop of Richborough within the Diocese of Leicester

• **St Christopher's Church**

St. Christopher's Church is a welcoming Anglican community (Church of England) located within Tudor Grange Samworth Academy in Leicester. The church shares the school's facilities and has a diverse and mixed-age congregation with a strong vision for growing disciples of Jesus Christ.

• **Christ Church Thurnby Lodge** Moving and Inspiring Windrush Day Celebration - *https://leicester.anglican.org/moving-and-inspiring-windrush-day-celebration.php*

• **Intercultural Communities as Safe Spaces**

References: *https://www.leicester.gov.uk/about-council/how-we-work/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/equality-and-diversity-strategy-2024-2028*

https://leicester.cityofsanctuary.org/2025/02/09/back-to-the-kitchen

https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2023/01/10/leicester-a-super-diverse-city/

https://www.leicester.anglican.org/news/refugee-week-2024.php

https://www.leicester.anglican.org/news/young-adults-meet-and-greet-with-bishop-martyn.php



NOTES

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Many Voices, One Song

Practical tips and tools for the intercultural church journey

Diocese of Leicester