

# Church of England Birmingham: Growing Vocations Strategy

*A Strategy for Raising and Releasing Leaders for the Renewal of the Church*

## Vision

At the heart of the Church of England Birmingham is our calling to *grow churches at the heart of every community*. To do this, we must raise up Christ-centred, biblically rooted, missionally engaged leaders — men and women of all ages and backgrounds who will serve the gospel with courage, creativity, and conviction.

This strategy seeks to cultivate a flourishing culture of vocations, marked by prayerful discernment, bold leadership development, and joyful commitment to Christ's mission in our city and region.

We believe that leadership is a gift to be stewarded for the renewal of the church and the transformation of society. We commit ourselves to identifying, nurturing, and releasing leaders who will bring the hope of Christ to every corner of Birmingham and beyond.

## Strategic Goals

### 1. Increase the number of vocations to ordained ministry

- A year-on-year rise in those entering discernment and training for ordained ministry.
- Special focus on younger candidates (under 30) and older candidates (Caleb Stream, aged 50+).

### 2. Develop a clear Accelerated Leadership Pathway

- A tailored, rigorous programme to fast-track potential church planters and missional leaders to enable our revitalisation ambitions.
- Collaboration with theological colleges to ensure flexible, high-quality training.

### 3. Strengthen our Discernment and Formation Processes

- Early, intentional investment in individuals showing leadership potential.
- Robust, transparent processes from initial enquiry through to ordination, curacy, and first post.

### 4. Attract and Retain Ambitious Leaders

- Help to make Birmingham an outstanding diocese for emerging leaders who are ambitious for the gospel and kingdom of Christ.
- Offer excellent training, placements, mentoring, and leadership development opportunities.

### 5. Embed a Culture of Prayerful Discernment Across the Diocese

- Equip clergy and lay leaders to identify and encourage vocations at every level.
- Pray consistently and publicly for new workers for the harvest field (Luke 10.2).

## Key Initiatives

- **Pathway from Discernment to Deployment:**
  - Personalised discernment journeys
  - High-quality placements and curacies shaped around gifting
  - Targeted leadership development during IME (Initial Ministerial Education)
- **Young Vocations Focus:** Investment in school leavers, university students, and young professionals through internships, fellowships, and discernment programmes.
- **Accelerated Leadership Pathway:** Shortened yet intensive pathways to release high-potential leaders, equipping them to lead and revitalise parishes in CofE Birmingham.
- **Caleb Stream:** A dedicated track for those aged 50+, affirming second-career vocations and valuing the wisdom and experience they bring.
- **Vocations Champions:** Appoint vocations advocates in every deanery to spot, nurture, and support potential candidates.
- **Communications Strategy:** Stories, testimonies, and short videos to inspire vocations, showcasing a diverse range of leaders.

## Culture

Above all, we seek a culture that is:

- Rooted in Jesus Christ
- Rich in biblical wisdom
- Prayerful and Spirit-led
- Bold in mission
- Joyful in hope

This is the culture we pray God will grow among us as we raise up a new generation of leaders.