

Covenant for Racial Justice

This covenant is intended to be a 'charter for change' across the diocese of Guildford to enable leaders and congregations to deal with issues of racism within our churches.

This covenant, agreed and published by the Bishop's Council of the Diocese of Guildford, is intended for adoption by all PCCs on a biennial basis. Churches are urged to display the four principles prominently with a link to this document on the diocesan (and/or parish) website. The leadership teams of churches are expected to recommit themselves to the Principles of this covenant and its implementation at least every two years which will be included in the Archdeacon's visits.



Our strategic objective

That our Cathedral, churches, schools, Church House and diocesan structures – including their leadership – reflect the racial diversity of their communities.

Principles

Sustained, restorative change towards racial equality and equity requires commitment.


- I. **DISCIPLES:** We commit to be disciples of Jesus Christ (as individuals, as churches and as part of society)
- II. **DIVERSITY:** We commit to encourage, build up and celebrate the racial diversity of the Body of Christ across Guildford Diocese.
- III. **REPRESENTATION:** We commit to improve the representation of UK Minority Ethnic /Global Majority Heritage (UKME/GMH) people in our congregations and in our lay and ordained leadership and our diocesan staff.
- IV. **ACCOUNTABILITY:** We commit to accountability and transparency in parish and diocesan systems, structures, and processes, with clear goals for racial diversity and inclusion

Rationale

I praise you, for I am
fearfully and
wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your
works!
(Psalm 139:14)

Embracing diversity is not a new agenda, nor is it merely a political movement. Rather, it is the longstanding project of the church, just as Growing Diversity is central as one of the three key strands to Guildford's strategy of 'Transforming Church Transforming Lives'.

It begins from the foundational conviction that each and every human being bears intrinsic value in reflecting the image of God, and it culminates with the reconciling work of Jesus in breaking down dividing walls of hostility to build a body from every tribe and tongue. This is the gospel, the good news we have received and seek to share.



So God created
humankind in his
image, in the image of
God he created them.
(Genesis 1:27).

The earliest Christian writings insist that in the Messiah 'there is neither Jew nor Greek'. The book of Revelation envisages Jesus' followers as an uncountable family from every nation, tribe, people and language. At the climax of his greatest letter, St Paul urges Christians 'to welcome one another' (Romans 15:7) across all social and ethnic barriers, insisting that the church will thereby function as the advance sign of God's coming renewal of all creation. (N.T.Wright)

In the Diocese of Guildford, we commit to worship, teach and relate in such a way that we grow in our discovery and delight of God's multi-ethnic, culturally- and socially-diverse Pentecost people. We celebrate diversity across the diocese. We seek to uncover and repent of the sins of omission and commission through which our 'minority' sisters and brothers have suffered discrimination or are being failed in the church or through the church. This may be owing to any of number of factors – and we are committed to Growing Diversity on many fronts – though the prompt for this current Covenant is to do with race.

As the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce report puts it: *Addressing systemic and institutional racism and racial sin in the church is not a theological addendum. It is a missional imperative of the Church of England as set out in the Anglican Communion's fourth mark of mission, 'to transform unjust structures of society': to restore the equal dignity of each person as holding the image of God. The Christian narrative of reconciliation offers us an invitation to confess the sin of racism, and to acknowledge our past and present complicity in various forms of ethnic discrimination and racial prejudice, so that we may truthfully and honestly work together to build the kingdom of God here and now. (From Lament to Action, 2021)*

Measuring progress

We celebrate the progress that we have made to embrace and increase Racial Diversity but we want to know that we are making progress towards the leadership structures of our churches reflecting the communities that they serve. The diocese will gather data on the racial identity of its diocesan staff, clergy and parish leadership while respecting the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations. This data will be reported to Bishop's Council every February and compared to the latest national Census Data at parish and deanery and diocesan level. The 2023 baseline will provide the basis for setting goals and objectives

The Racial Diversity Toolkit

This Toolkit offers churches a variety of practical resources for putting these commitments into practice. Their outworking will include:

- Teaching and learning in such a way as to build the vision and enable the reality for the whole multicultural Pentecost people of God.
- Identifying potential, recognising gifts and graces and nurturing all, especially minority ethnic people, to increase mutual flourishing in the Body of Christ.
- Committing to identify and address instances of racism – individually or corporately – with the aim of bringing recognition, repentance, and reconciliation, leading to changes in attitudes, language and behaviours.

Addressing Racist Concerns

Racism is a form of hate crime which is covered by legislation.¹ The formal means for addressing this begins with reporting it to the police, after which prosecution may follow.

The church has established systems for addressing complaints. These include:

- For Cathedral Staff: Guildford Cathedral Complaints Policy
- For Church House staff: the GDBF Complaints Policy
- For a licensed minister (LLM or clergy) – the LLM and Clergy Complaints Policy Measure and where necessary, the Clergy Discipline Measure.

For any matters that could involve safeguarding matters, the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser should also be apprised.

The Parish commits itself to the principles and implementation of this covenant:

Name <u>Ben Perkins</u>	Name <u>Gillian Fernandes</u>
Role <u>Vicar</u>	Role <u>Churchwarden</u>
Date <u>13 May 2025</u>	Date <u>12 May 2025</u>

For queries, contact the Diocese's Racial Diversity Advisory Group via Geoff Andrews - geoffrey.andrews@cofeguildford.org.uk

¹ Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and section 66 of the Sentencing Act 2020.

