

6th Cohort

Reconciling Mission 2026

A dynamic learning and
development programme



WHAT IS RECONCILING MISSION?

- A learning and development programme for small groups of diocesan and cathedral clergy;
- A programme which resources participants with a vision for mission:
 - as a journey towards greater reconciliation in the world,
 - marked by deeper engagement with local communities,
 - drawing on an asset-based community development approach.
- *Note: this is not a process for training a diocesan mediation team, or for equipping participants with skills for handling conflict.*

WHY IS THIS NEEDED?

The church currently faces a significant missional challenge:

- There's a need to respond to social hardship, which has:
 - increased since the economic crash of 2008;
 - been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic;
 - intensified through the recent cost-of-living crisis.
- There is also a need to address:
 - the ongoing climate emergency; and
 - persisting racial inequalities.

Reconciling Mission has been developed to address this context. We offer:

- a vision for the emerging future of the church, following the Covid disruption;
- an approach which connects with the enduring Anglican Five Marks of Mission, and
- a distinctive asset-based treasure-seeking approach focussed on local partnerships.

WHO IS RECONCILING MISSION FOR?

- Experienced parish and cathedral clergy, or diocesan officers, of diverse theological traditions;
- Clergy from both rural and urban ministry contexts;
- Leaders wanting to explore fresh approaches to missional engagement with local communities, in a learning community with others; and
- Anglican Dioceses wanting to incorporate diverse approaches to the current missional challenge, and draw on external resourcing.

“ When leading woolly Anglicans in the fluid ... theological space of parish life – where people’s theology is ‘who they are and what they do’, and not ‘what they say and preach’ – Reconciling Mission is helpful as it gives an articulation of our participation in the wider reconciliation of God. This puts a more robust framework around an alternative model of evangelism to the traditional ‘go preach’ model. ”

PARTICIPANT IN COHORT 2



WHAT SORT OF GROUP?

- A group of 4 or 6 participants, including ideally one from the Cathedral;
- Identified by the Bishop, Dean and senior staff against criteria such as:
 - An even mix of genders;
 - Experienced leaders, people of emotional maturity;
 - Collaborative leaders, who welcome working in partnership with those outside the church;
 - Participants representing the ethnic and other diversity of their Diocese;
 - Participants of relative geographical proximity, for ease of face-to-face meetings;
- Ideally, participants will previously have:
 - Completed foundational training in handling conflict; and
 - Developed group process and facilitation skills.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

1. A week-long residential course of learning, at the outset;
2. On-going coaching over 18 months, meeting regularly online in small groups;
3. One additional online webinar;
4. Two in-person day-conferences, usually at Coventry Cathedral, occurring mid-way and at the end of the process.

WHAT DO PARTICIPANTS NEED?

- A commitment to learning, and to engaging with the entire programme, over a 2-year process;
- An enthusiasm for reaching out to local neighbours and organisations;
- A desktop or laptop computer with a webcam, for online Zoom meetings; and
- A mobile phone with the WhatsApp app, for communication with facilitators and diocesan group.

WHAT'S THE RESIDENTIAL COURSE?

A dynamic adult learning process, integrating:

- Theoretical input;
- Theological and Biblical reflection;
- Experiential learning; and
- Anglican worship;

The venue is Bestwood Lodge in Nottinghamshire, offering:

- a fruitful learning environment;
- a space which facilitates community-building.

Facilitated by a highly experienced team:

- **Alastair McKay**: director of RI, with 30 years' experience in leading adult learning;
- **Anita Beeden**: an education consultant, teacher and facilitator with many years' experience of facilitating adult learning and training;
- **Al Barrett**: rector of Hodge Hill Church in Birmingham, with over 10 years' experience in applying an asset-based approach to community development;
- **Paul Wright**: a community animator and street connector, with many years' experience in community-building in Birmingham.

Visiting speakers will include:

- A speaker from HeartEdge, Together for the Common Good, or Partnership for Missional Church (CMS)
- An Anglican Bishop or leading theologian of global majority heritage

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES?

The overall programme objectives are:

1. To introduce a vision for the church's mission within a wider understanding of God's reconciling work in the world;
2. To offer key frameworks and practical tools to enable the church to engage deeply with local neighbourhoods, using an asset-based approach;
3. To resource participants for taking action in their local context, grounded in listening to the community;
4. To nurture collegiality and contribute to a creative missional movement in Anglican Provinces in Britain and Ireland.

The planned learning outcomes for the residential are that participants will have:

- Reflected theologically and located the church's mission within the arc of God's reconciling work, connecting with the Five Marks of Mission;
- Worked with a theoretical framework for engaging with social divisions and injustices, and mapped existing outreach onto this;
- Explored a theologically-grounded ABCD model, drawing on a community's gifts and strengths;
- Developed a provisional plan to begin implementing a collaborative community-building approach in their own context.

““I deeply appreciated the thoughtful and prayerful way the initial residential was led and structured. The process fostered reflection, authentic dialogue, and meaningful connection, and offered solid input and good group engagement. The leadership created a safe, inclusive space where diverse voices were honoured, and participation was encouraged over passive listening. The conference modelled a Spirit-led, reconciliatory journey rooted in community and theological depth.” **”**

PARTICIPANT IN COHORT 5

HOW IS IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORTED?

After the initial residential, there's an 18-month process of follow-up coaching:

- Participants provide regular short video updates, to enhance accountability;
- Participants form part of regular online gatherings, with a group from another Diocese;
- Groups meet on a rotational basis to facilitate dialogue with all groups in the cohort;
- These gatherings are action learning groups, using a group coaching process, led by an RI facilitator.

By the end of the process, each group should also develop a plan for sharing some of their learning with others in their Diocese.

WHAT'S SPECIAL?

Distinctive features include:

- A hopeful and practical theology, drawing on an asset-based approach;
- A broad vision of God's reconciling work;
- A focus on serving local neighbourhoods and addressing issues of injustice;
- An investment in leaders who can share learning with others;
- Intentional mixing of diverse people to form a supportive learning community;
- Designed for small groups attending together for more effective support, follow-through and implementation; and
- A setting to develop good practice, identify next steps, share learning, and move churches into a deeper engagement with their local communities.

“ Working alongside and serving ‘with’ rather than ‘to’ means that the church has a humbler place in its involvement with the community. Not talking down and giving prescriptions; but being a listening and supportive partner in what’s already going on. As a humbler listener, co-worker and partner, that will be a much better place from which to be able to share God’s loving, and our faith... **”**
This process has driven us deeper into community partnership.

Participant in Cohort 2

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Independent research with the first three cohorts highlighted the following benefits:

- Peer support and non-competitive collegiality in the process of addressing missional challenges;
- Connection with fundamental questions about mission, ministry and sharing good news, and articulation of the value of working with local people;
- Prioritising the work of listening, to peers, congregation members, local people and the Holy Spirit, to discern how God is at work; and
- The evolution and development of existing and new outreach to local neighbourhoods, in partnership with a wide range of organisations outside the church, as part of contributing to reconciliation in society.

WHAT'S THE COST?

The invited diocesan contribution for the 6th cohort is £1,150 per participant, and coverage of travel and associated expenses. This contribution:

- Covers around two thirds of the delivery costs;
- Gives full participation in the whole programme, including:
 - The initial residential (excluding travel costs);
 - The follow-up group coaching sessions;
 - The two day-conferences (excluding travel and hotel costs).

The balance of the delivery costs is covered by RI, from our reserves.

WHAT ARE THE KEY DATES AND DEADLINES?

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| By 15 December 2025: | Provisional indication of interest |
| By 16 February 2026: | Firm commitment by senior staff to sponsor a group, and details of identified diocesan groups of 4-6 |
| By 2 March 2026: | Deadline for Cohort 6 applications from all diocesan nominees |
| March/April 2026: | Preliminary online meetings with Cohort 6 groups + senior staff rep. |
| 17-22 May 2026: | Cohort 6 residential at Bestwood Lodge, Nottingham |
| June 2026 - January 2028: | Online action learning groups |
| 16 March 2027: | Day conference at [Coventry Cathedral – TBC] |
| 21 March 2028: | Day conference at [Coventry Cathedral – TBC] |

OUTLINE OF RESIDENTIAL
17-22 MAY 2026. BESTWOOD LODGE

| Typical Times | | Sunday 17 May | Monday 18 May | Tuesday 19 May | Wednesday 20 May | Thursday 21 May | Friday 22 May |
|-----------------|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| | | | 7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:15am Breakfast | 7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:15am Breakfast | 7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:15am Breakfast | 7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:15am Breakfast | 7:40am Contemplative prayer; 8:15am Breakfast |
| 9:00-10:45am | Travel to Bestwood Lodge from home location | S1: Intro to two theological models, echoed in the RM theoretical framework, with an exploration of related theological themes | S1: Intro to two theological models, echoed in the RM theoretical framework, with an exploration of related theological themes | S1 (9:00-10:30am): Bible study, led by Bishop or theologian of global majority heritage | S1: ABCD4: Nurturing a neighbourhood ecology, including identifying & nurturing 'connectors', 'bumping spaces' and interconnections | S1 (9:00-10:30am): <i>Reconciling Mission</i> stories: learning from previous cohorts | S1: Presenting provisional plans, in plenary, and being commissioned for next steps |
| 11:15am-12:45pm | 12:30pm Arrival at Bestwood Lodge | S2a: Reflecting on 'detours' and God's integration in our lives S2b: Categorising exercise, of existing projects and initiatives, using the RM framework | S2 (11:00-12:45): ABCD1: Intro to an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach for engagement with a local neighbourhood Al Barrett & Paul Wright | S2: ABCD5: Accompanying churches in a 'journey outwards', including being interrupted and adopting a new stance towards leadership | S2 (11:00-12:45): Exploring wider issues about moving towards reconciliation in society today | | S2: Closing programme elements 12:00pm: Eucharist |
| 1pm Lunch | | | | | | | |
| 2pm - 3:30pm | S1: Participant introductions, and intro to the Reconciling Mission (RM) programme | S3: Mapping our local neighbourhoods, and relating this to our understanding of 'community' | S3: Free time | S3: Free time | S3: Free time | S3: Individual time reflecting on next steps and preparing a provisional plan for what going to take forward on return home | 1:00pm Departures from Bestwood Lodge |
| 4:15pm - 5:45pm | S2: Intro to the RM theoretical framework of mission as a journey towards greater reconciliation, connecting with the Five Marks of Mission | S4: New approach to Christian mission today: Speaker from HeartEdge, T4CG or PMC/CMS | S4: ABCD2: Exploring missional economies (and institutional pressures) of 'counting in' and 'giving out', and their relationship with power and its use | S4: An introduction to and experience of Action Learning Groups, led by Alastair McKay & Mina Munns | S4a: Sharing provisional plans in diocesan groups S4b: <i>Space to plan diocesan group contributions to the evening party, e.g. a game</i> | | Travel back to home location |
| 6.30pm Dinner | | | | | | | |
| 7:30pm - 9pm | S3: Free time | S5: Free time | S5: ABCD3: Discovering abundance in our communities, and engaging in 'good life' conversations | S5: Leading when you don't know where you're going | S5: Party, incorporating participant planned activities | | |
| 9pm Compline | | | | | | | |

