

MARCH 2026

The Three Priorities

For the Lyn Valley
Mission Community



Presented by
Rev'd Miles Welborn



What's this and why now?

I have repeatedly been asked about my vision for Lyn Valley Mission Community, to which I have always replied, 'my vision is that God will inevitably intervene and change every vision regularly and when we least expect it!'

However, with the publication of the Bishop of Exeter's vision for the Diocese and five strategic priorities, I've been presented with a framework to describe the ongoing and future work of LVMC.

So, having lived with, grown with, journeyed with, and worshiped with you all over the last 18 months here is my vision as I have discerned it.

The descriptions of the three priorities I offer are not exhaustive but seek to put into words what I (and I think what others) have observed as the areas I feel God is calling us to prioritise in our Mission Community.

Rev'd Miles





**CHILDREN,
YOUTH, AND
FAMILIES**

Children, Youth, and Families

At a time where young people were often a burden until they came of age, they were a priority for Jesus. He used them as examples for 'true' faith, emphasizing their humility, openness to God's Kingdom, and inquisitive natures. The last, to Jesus, were the first.

Children, young people, and families are the future of the church and as Christians it is a fundamental part of our calling to enable them to encounter Jesus, grow in faith and relationship with him, and grow in themselves.

We are doing this! In the last 18 months we have been a part of planting the youth church SoulSpace. This is our response to that call from Jesus, and the growth and flourishing of SoulSpace is testament to listening to God's call.

We are now responding to the needs of young families and pre-school children with the launch of Bubble Church. This will enable them to encounter and grow with Jesus.

We are blessed as a community to have the West Exmoor Federation that encourage and enable the holistic and spiritual growth of primary age children. This, combined with weekly collective worship and termly services in church, currently provides a space for primary age children.

However, we also need to provide a space for primary and secondary age children to worship with their families. This will be a priority once Soulspace and Bubble Church are secured and sustainable.





The Wider Community

As an Ancient Jew, Jesus would have spent countless hours in Synagogues and the Temple worshipping, listening, and teaching. However, accounts of these hours in the gospels are very limited. Instead, the gospels focus on Jesus' ministry meeting people out where they were. Not just physically in the world but also in meeting people who were outcast and in the fringes of society.

For us to be true to Jesus and also to flourish, we must remember again that the church is us, the people, who gather together in a building before being sent back out into the world. Each of us are already meeting people where they are in the wider community. Becoming more conscious of these relationships and more confident in following Jesus' example will enable our mission and ministry for the future.

Through institutional failures and lack of trust, and perhaps irrelevance that has grown over decades, it's vital that we now as the body of Christ explicitly live, and proclaim the good news of God's love. The world we live in needs faith and relationship with Jesus now, so much.

It's also important that we focused on what unites us as the body of Christ in this place rather than our differences, and work more closely with other churches and Christians. Together there are quite a few of us! Soulspace and Bubble Church are an incredible example of what this unity can look like.

Our buildings also need to return to their pre-Victorian roots in being a centre of the community. They are resources to facilitate connection as well as our worship: buildings that offer home for local groups and clubs, for community events, for meetings and public consultations, and even campers! Many of our churches now have flexible spaces with refreshment and toilet facilities, or have access to a hall with these.





**TRADITION
FIT FOR THE
FUTURE**

Tradition Fit for the Future

Jesus ministry was radical, shocking, and he turned customs and expectations and ideas on their heads, often to deliberately provoke the religiously comfortable. But importantly, he didn't just do away with traditions. Rather, he reminded the people of the roots of their traditions and refocused them on the true reason behind them.

The previous two priorities will look different from traditional worship in approach and style to be fitting for our 21st century North Devon children, families, young people, and wider communities.


Alongside these Fresh Expressions, our traditional styles of worship and ministry must remain. Holy Communion has been central to Christian worship since the Last

Supper and always will be. Our agricultural, maritime, and other services and festivals are rooted in our history, traditions, and identity which will not change.

As a popular holiday destination, our seasonal ministry to visitors and pilgrims is a vital part of our ministry here. We do this alongside following the call of Jesus to pastorally and spiritually support older and more vulnerable members of our year-round community, and seeking out those who are hidden and on the fringes.

We continue to invest our resources into traditional mission and ministry but we do so conscious that they are currently smaller and resources are finite. A major part of improving our sustainability will be reflecting on our governance structures and the way we work with each other across LVMC.

Every single one of our eight churches has an ongoing ministry and a mission in 21st century North Devon. Their individual ministries have changed over the years, and will change again, but each one can have an exciting future and ministry ahead as we invest our resources sustainably.



Further Reading

I would strongly encourage you to read Pray Grow Serve 2035: A 10 year vision of transformation for the Diocese of Exeter which I have published alongside this booklet.


This vision for the diocese is a really exciting one that has a direct impact on our ministry and mission. The Bishop of Exeter's Five Priorities directly inspired these LVMC Three Priorities.

Prayer is the foundation of all that we do. Through prayer we grow in relationship with God and seek to discern his call for us. I have listed a few bible passages I used while discerning and praying into these priorities. I invite you to read, pray, and reflect on them with the three priorities in mind.

Children, Youth, and Families
Matthew 18: 6-9, & 19: 13-15

The Wider Community
Luke 10: 1-11

Tradition Fit for the Future
John 6: 22-59





**CHILDREN,
YOUTH, AND
FAMILIES**



**THE WIDER
COMMUNITY**



**TRADITION
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