



FAQs

About the 100 Days of Listening

Travelling Well Together – Sustaining Ministry

What is 100 Days of Listening?

Sustaining Ministry 100 Days of Listening is an invitation to pause, pray, and talk together following on from our 100 Days of Prayer. It is a time to listen carefully to the lived experience, hopes, concerns, and wisdom of people across the Diocese of Chelmsford, so that together we may discern how God is calling us to sustain ministry and mission into the future.

Prayer involves listening, and listening involves prayer. The separation of the 100 Days of Prayer and the 100 Days of Listening is not intended to divide the two, but to help us give time and attention to both. We listen to God in prayer and through scripture, and as we hear one another speak.

Why are we listening now?

Change is already part of our lives when we follow Jesus as disciples. The world around us is changing, our communities are changing, and those changes impact us. In March 2025 we shared with our Diocesan Synod four topics that impact many of our parish communities. The four topics are vocations, wellbeing, buildings, and finances.

However, the 100 Days of Listening is not limited to those four topics. In your deanery, archdeaconry, or episcopal area, one or two of the topics may be more important than the



others and you will want to give more time to those. Your episcopal area team might suggest some topic questions to focus on. There will also be topics you want to talk about that are specific to your parish or deanery.

You will see that in the 100 Days of Listening there is a fifth topic called “What’s missing?” to identify and talk about the challenges that matter where you are.

What are some of the key questions?

There are some overall questions that shape our listening process as a whole; they sit alongside the suggested “talk together topic” questions in each of the four topics of vocations, wellbeing, buildings and finance.

- What sort of church is God calling us to be in this place and at this time?
- How can ministry and mission be sustained in our parish, worshipping community, deanery and diocese?
- How can we encourage and nurture vocations, both lay and ordained, locally?
- How can clergy, licensed ministers, lay leaders and volunteers be supported to flourish?
- How can we care wisely for our church buildings, governance and finances in ways that serve mission?
- What might need to change if we are to remain faithful, hopeful and outward-looking?
- What are we hearing from God, from one another, and from the communities we serve?

These questions will be encountered differently in different places. With each topic area we’ve included some suggested questions for “talk together topics”. You can use these questions, or you can create your own. The important thing is to take time to pause, pray, and talk together. There are no perfect answers.

Who are we listening to?

We are listening to one another across the whole diocesan family: in PCCs, small groups, youth groups, Deanery Synods and Chapters, Bishops’ Council, Diocesan Synod, and other places where people gather for prayer, reflection and conversation. We especially want to hear from people in different parish and worshipping communities, because the challenges and opportunities we face are experienced differently in each place.



Listening well means making space for a range of voices, including those who may not usually speak in formal church meetings. It means listening with curiosity rather than defensiveness, with prayer rather than anxiety, and with the expectation that God may speak through the experience and wisdom of others.

How should conversations happen?

The encouragement is to frame every conversation in prayer. We are reminded in scripture that our prayers rise before God. As we gather, Christ is with us and the Holy Spirit is present. The 100 Days of Prayer resources will continue to be available through the Sustaining Ministry webpages to help you talk and listen together.

Good listening is not the same as debate. It is not about winning an argument, defending a position or rushing to a solution. It is about creating space for people to speak honestly, to be heard respectfully, and to notice together what themes may be emerging. Conversations may happen in different ways in different contexts, but they should be shaped by prayer, humility, kindness and hope.

How will what we hear be shared?

Towards the end of the 100 Days of Listening, an online survey will be shared to help collect what people have heard as they have prayed, talked and listened to one another. A survey tool is not perfect, but it will help draw together voices from across our large and diverse diocese.

What is shared through the survey will help identify themes, questions, hopes and concerns arising from local contexts. The aim is to listen carefully before making decisions, and to allow what has been heard to shape the next stage of shared discernment.

Is there already a diocesan plan?

No. This is not about imposing a single model or solution. The Diocese of Chelmsford is made up of diverse and complex communities. There is no one size fits all answer to the challenges we face. Sustaining Ministry is about prayerful readiness, shared listening and local discernment as we prepare to meet the challenges ahead and join in God's mission to the communities we serve.



What are we being asked to do?

- Continue to pray for your parish, worshipping community, deanery and diocese.
- Gather people together to talk and listen in ways that fit your local context.
- Use the questions to reflect honestly on vocations, wellbeing, buildings, finances and mission.
- Make space for people whose voices may not always be heard.
- Notice what gives life, what creates pressure, what needs courage, and what gives hope.
- Share what you have heard through the survey when it becomes available.

What happens next?

After the 100 Days of Listening, the hope is that prayerful conversation will continue in parish and worshipping communities across the diocese. Sustaining Ministry – Travelling Well Together is about how we seek to be an enduring missional presence in the communities to which God has called us.

In Summer 2027, a report of what has been heard through the online survey will be presented to Diocesan Synod. This will enable Synod to pray and discuss the themes that have emerged, as we continue to discern our future together.