

A NEW  
MISSIONAL  
NETWORK



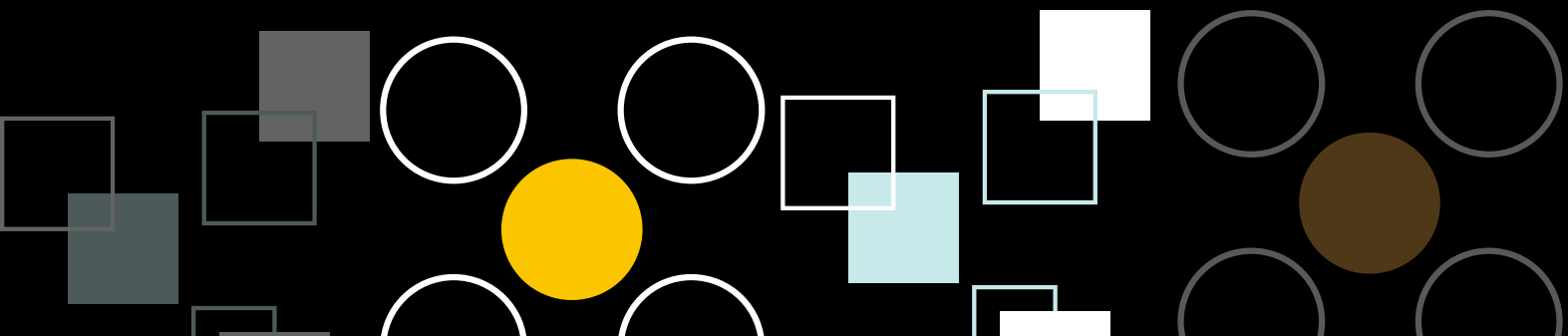
# WELCOME

We believe God's heart is for Leicester and that he desires to reach every person in our city and county with the Good News about Jesus Christ and for his transforming kingdom to come. God is calling us to a particular focus on the young, intercultural mission, and the poor. God is calling people and churches to play their part in this bigger purpose.

His method for reaching regions has always been through disciple-making networks of worshiping communities with a missional vision for a region. We believe God is calling us and others to play our part by fostering a relational network where new worshiping communities are started and existing churches/communities are strengthened and renewed.



As we work out our calling as Resourcing Church and seek to work with the grain of the Minster Community formation process, we want to explore with churches with whom we share a relationship and missional ethos whether the Holy Spirit is calling us to be part of such a relational network. This brochure summarises our vision for this network. It describes how we envisage working with the grain of the Minster Community process.





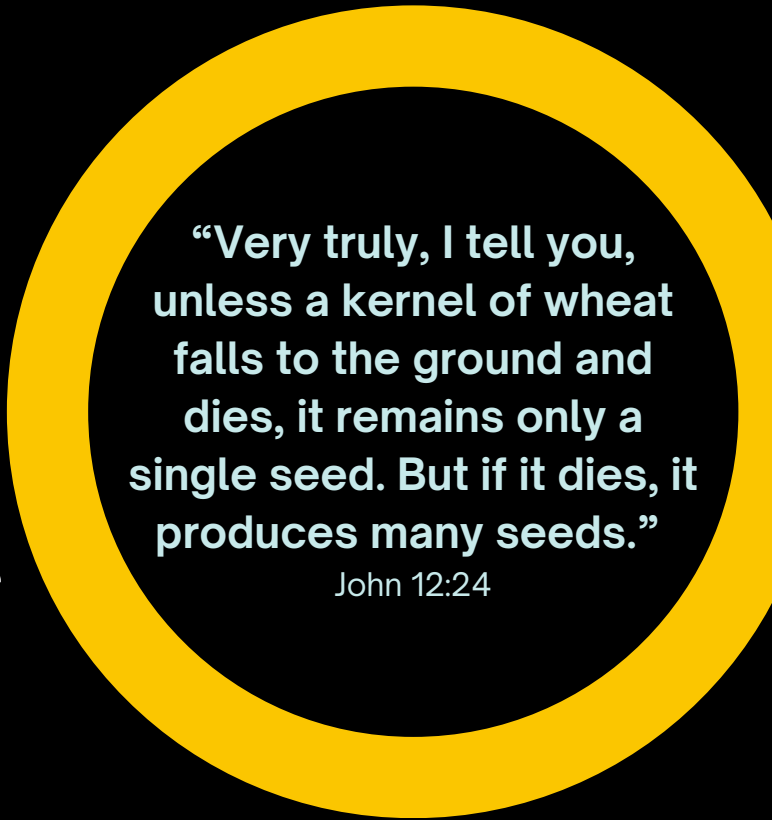
# MAKING THE “NET” WORK

There are no egos in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus’ model of leadership is self-denial for the sake of the kingdom.

A network’s core value must be to choose kingdom priorities over the desires and needs of individuals or individual churches.

A kingdom network is not an empire where one church or individual is especially favoured or seen as more important. Instead, it’s a biblical pattern of relationship and leadership that prays and works that the kingdom may come.

We envisage six significant characteristics of this Network.



**“Very truly, I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”**

John 12:24

# Shared Missional Ethos and Vision



A kingdom network is a network of dynamic missional communities and more established churches that share an ethos, values and posture alongside a geographical focus.

Each church seeks to play its part in the overall mission to reach every person in a geography and see real demonstrable transformation of lives and communities.

The heart of the shared ethos will be a commitment to disciple-making, pioneering, strategic leadership development, strengthening and renewing existing church communities and the planting of new worshipping communities of different shapes and sizes.

Such a network would be radical, and wholly dependent on prayer and the Holy Spirit.

## Relational & Spiritual



We believe networks are most potent and effective when built relationally and spiritually.

Our priorities are to be Spirit- and vision-led and to form a network based on friendship and relationship. Structure, though important, must always be secondary to these factors.

The New Testament illustrates a pattern of church life and mission where networks of churches understood the body of Christ in an area to consist of a network of individual churches who shared a deep relationship and a missional vision to reach an entire region.



# Strategic Oversight Ministry



Oversight ministry is biblical; when it works effectively, it is a gift to the churches it influences. Oversight ministry is team-based, servant-hearted, future-orientated, strategic, relational, not hierarchical, and carries the regional vision. Oversight ministry focuses on developing strategic and relational pathways for enabling and developing individuals and churches for the kingdom's sake. We believe that the oversight ministry is a critical enabler for kingdom networks. We must explore how to enable it in a network.

## Value Add – We are Better Together!

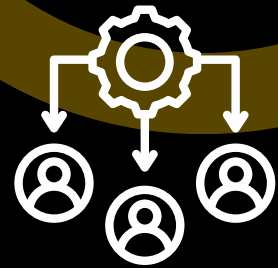


A network is not about one church having all the resources and directing all the activity. Nor is it about one church taking over or controlling others. Kingdom networks are highly empowering of leaders and churches.

Individual churches in these networks hold each other accountable to the Gospel and are free to express a pattern of worship and mission appropriate to their context. It is about all churches belonging, benefiting, and contributing. We are better together! We can do more together! We are happier together! All churches have strengths and gifts that can contribute to the broader life and mission of the network.



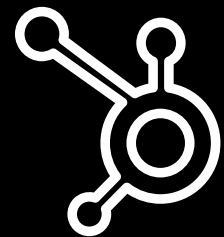
# Resourcing the Mission



We must find ways of resourcing our mission.

We do not want to be on the back foot – God’s Kingdom is ever-growing and advancing. The kingdom expands as we foster a culture of sacrificial generosity, trust God for provision, and seek him for a method for resourcing the mission. We need to explore new models of leadership that are financially more efficient, such as enabling lay and bi-vocational leadership. We must find new ways of fundraising.

## Mixed Ecology



We envisage a mixed ecology network comprising parish churches, church plants, fresh expressions, schools, and chaplaincies. Each has a part to play and enriches the whole.

### St Peter’s Oadby

St John’s has been working with St Peter’s since 2020 when a partnership agreement was signed. Through this partnership, much progress has been made with revitalisation of St Peter’s mission and ministry. People have come to faith on Alpha, a new Sunday evening and a Sunday afternoon family congregations have begun, a youth group has started, a new worshipping community has been planted, and much more. Without churches working together, none of this would have been possible.



## **What Could a Network Look Like?**

Based on the foundation of this vision and these values, we are beginning to envisage practically what a network might look like and what things we could work towards that would further the mission. We have six priorities.

### **1. Developing Leaders**

Helping growing disciples discern how Jesus is calling them and then supporting, equipping, and developing them in that call is critical. We envisage expanding the Catalyst offering to run multiple leadership pathways, including pathways for lay planters and lay leadership teams of existing churches. We plan to run an annual kingdom conference, develop internships, and ways of networking and developing volunteer and paid children's workers and sung worship leaders.

### **2. Strengthen and Plant Churches**

Existing churches will be empowered and strengthened to follow God's call through such a network. Churches will be encouraged and supported to return to the biblical roots of their faith, refine their vision, develop their teams, and engage in mission. New worshiping communities, reach new people in new places in new ways. Every church can start a new worshiping community, some churches are called to start many new worshiping communities. Encouraging and fostering new community formation will be a particular focus of this network.





### **3. Communities of Leaders**

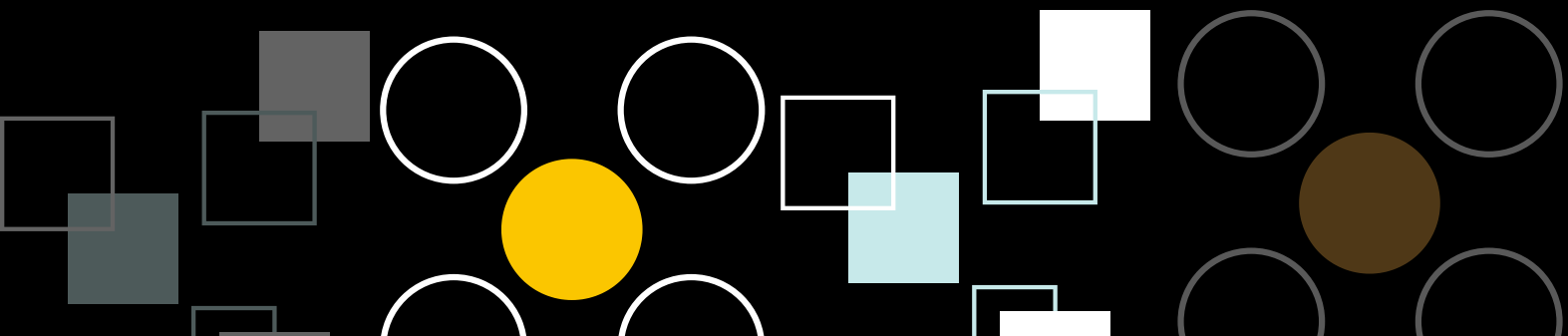
Parish priests frequently feel isolated and carry a heavy burden of leadership. At the heart of this network will be a regular rhythm of connection and prayer for senior leadership teams. We also anticipate a bi-annual gathering for a wider group of leaders.

There is the opportunity to form gatherings and provide input and mentoring for sung worship and children's worker teams. Pastoral care will also be provided. We envisage a community of leadership.

### **4. Operational Enablement**

Critical to mission and ministry is operational enablement. There is an enormous opportunity to make administration & operations more effective and efficient.

Back office systems can be standardised and replicated. Certain functions could be centralised. Financial, media, facilities, and legal/compliance (inc. safeguarding) services can be offered to parish churches or fresh expressions with limited capacity to run their own.



## **5. Reaching the People**

Churches across this network will have different missional foci and areas of specialism.

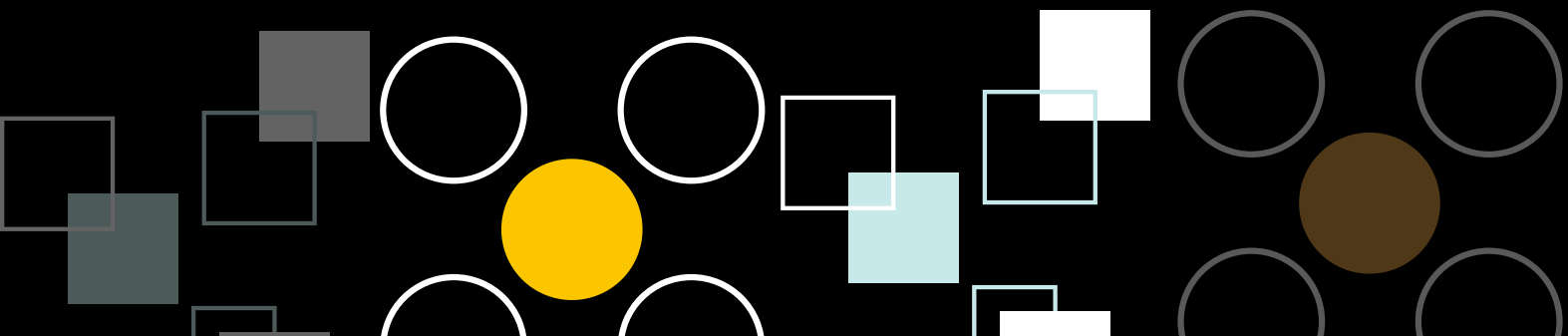
Some are developing expertise in cross-cultural mission and ministries, others in compassion ministries, and still more so with children, families, and schools. There is enormous potential to cross-fertilize, partner, encourage, and equip one another in critical ministries.

A particular area of focus will be developing the role of a Growing Faith strategic lead who can catalyze the three ways of growing faith partnerships (church/family/school) across the network. We envisage multiple effective church-school mission partnerships.

## **6. Partnerships**

Fostering partnerships with key external agencies will be crucial to the success of this network and its finding its place on the broader landscape.

An ongoing and mutually beneficial cooperation with our diocesan colleagues and other Minster Communities is paramount. Additionally, many different possibilities for partnership exist, such as with New Wine and CCX.





## **Next Steps**

Our focus is on developing relationships among us. We plan a summer BBQ (7 pm, Wednesday 21 August), and we are inviting all members of PCCs and staff teams if you have them. (Sign up required)

This will be informal and a chance to get to know one another.

Additionally, we will continue a monthly rhythm of prayer on Tuesday mornings for key leaders. We plan to engage with our diocesan colleagues to discuss our vision for this network in early Autumn.

## **Final Word**

We are better together. Being together, in a relationship, in a network, is how it should be. God designed us for relationships. We believe the Spirit is at work, calling us again to share his vision of reaching every person in our city and county and bringing about kingdom transforming. This is his work, his project, his call, and we are totally dependent on him for the wisdom and power to fulfil this. We continue humbly and prayerfully, by saying, 'Here we are, send us!'



**For more information**

[www.sjbchurch.co.uk/network](http://www.sjbchurch.co.uk/network)