



## ANGLICAN FUTURES

THINKING TOGETHER

# LOCKDOWN LEARNING

1. **Responding to a Crisis - Learning from the Experts**
2. **The Two-Year Horizon - Avoiding Reactive Thinking**
3. **Learning from Lockdown - Shaping the Future**
4. **Ideas Exchange - Continuing Community**
5. **Planning for Change - One Step at a Time**

Gafcon UK provides hope and a home to all who affirm the 2008 Jerusalem Declaration.

Anglican Futures is one way in which we equip faithful Anglicans by encouraging us all to:

- Think Ahead (in the light of today's evidence)
- Think Afresh (in the light of eternal truth)

Gafcon UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (no. 1187303 Find out more at [www.gafconuk.org](http://www.gafconuk.org))



## Lockdown Learning

### 1. Responding to a Crisis - Learning from the Experts

Covid-19 is a global disaster with far-reaching local repercussions and, as with any crisis, effective recovery will depend on recognising what is important at the different stages of our response.

Those involved in disaster or crisis management point to a series of stages that follow any event.

1. REVELATION - The discovery stage. What has happened? Who has been effected? What are the implications? The 'Revelation' stage for Covid-19 has been somewhat unusual because much of the disruption has been caused, not by the disease itself, but by the restrictions placed on us by the government, as they in turn seek to respond to new evidence.
2. RESPONSE - (0-3 months) - The pragmatic stage. Decisions are made on the basis of immediate need and with limited information. It is an adrenaline-fuelled, fast-moving phase with little time for consultation. With Covid-19, church leaders have had to respond to the practical difficulties of buildings being closed; the pastoral needs of their congregations - some of whom were grieving or in a state of fear; and some churches have had to consider whether to furlough staff or risk increased financial pressure in the future. Gafcon UK used their experience of working online to help church leaders get to grips with using Zoom so they could keep in touch with their church family<sup>1</sup>.
3. RECOVERY - (3-12 months) The adjustment stage. Longer term decisions need to be made to work out how to operate in the 'new-normal'. People have recognised that things won't just go back to how they were before and everyone is adjusting - church leaders and church members - workplaces, schools, families, friends. The 'honeymoon' phase, is over; issues that have been seen as less important during the initial response start to re-emerge and differing expectations about the future can lead to conflict. Three things should be remembered during this time. First, those who have been at the frontline may need a rest<sup>2</sup>. Second, there is time to review, time to plan and time to consult - to use the recovery time to lay the foundations for the church you want to rebuild. Third, one benefit of a crisis is that there is a window of opportunity where people expect change.
4. RECONSTRUCTION - (6-24 months) This is the re-building stage. Some models describe this as the 'wiser living' phase. It may involve new ways of doing things; it will certainly require us to identify and equip leaders and disciple members .

**The question is - what kind of church do you want to rebuild?**

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.gafcon.org/sites/gafcon.org/files/news/pdfs/guide\\_to\\_building\\_church\\_using\\_zoom.pdf](https://www.gafcon.org/sites/gafcon.org/files/news/pdfs/guide_to_building_church_using_zoom.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://johndobbs.com/the-coming-pastoral-crash>



## Lockdown Learning

### 2.The Two-Year Horizon - Avoiding Reactive Thinking

Churches are often quite stable institutions; change happens slowly, programmes are planned months in advance. We flow from Advent to Christmas to Lent to Pentecost with a predictable pattern of events and activity.

Yet, paradoxically, people are unpredictable, which means church leaders are used to having to react to interruptions; a funeral, a pastoral crisis, a broken boiler, a resignation. It is these interruptions that often control a church leaders' life, which means reactive, rather than proactive, skills are valued and consolidated.

When faced with a crisis, reactive leaders are very useful. They don't panic, they make quick decisions, they are often compassionate, they get things done. But there is always a danger that reactive leaders will be tempted to remain in response mode. In the context of Covid-19, it is easy to fall into those reactive patterns. After all, every government announcement, every blog post, every email can feel like another revelation, demanding another decision, that may, or may not, take us in a different direction to the last one. This is not only exhausting for the people making the decisions it is also confusing for all involved.

Successful recovery and rebuilding will require us to be more proactive. We will need to be clear about our priorities and assess new information in the light of our long term goals. This can sound rather too 'corporate' and we must keep in mind Proverbs 19:21, "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand." And yet, it is not the making of plans that James corrects (4:13 - 17), but the boastful assumption that we can determine our future without reference to the Lord's will and purpose.

So, perhaps one way of becoming more proactive is to ask, "What, under God, are we trying to rebuild?" or "How could we reflect His purposes more faithfully in this new context?"

#### What do you hope your church will 'look' like in two-years time?



It is a big question. Many of us need to think in concrete terms, so this model may help get you started. You can ask these questions about the whole church family or any area of church life:

- Children, Youth, Students, Families, Elderly
- Music, Technology, Outreach, Community Projects
- Staff, PCC, Safeguarding, Finance, Buildings



## Lockdown Learning

### 3. Learning from Lockdown - Shaping the Future 1

For the past three months, we have been forced to 'do' and 'be' church differently. It has been a time of unprecedented innovation; we have had to learn new skills and adopt new ways of working. Strengths, as well as weaknesses, of the way our church families relate to one another have been revealed.

Now, three months on, we have the chance to take a breath and evaluate those changes. One exercise that many of those who joined us for the Lockdown Learning Ideas Exchange found really helpful was to reflect on the gains and losses of the past three months, with one eye on the future. We used this grid<sup>1</sup> to guide our discussion, the detail of which can be seen on the next page.

<b>What have you 'gained' that you would be happy to lose?</b>	<b>What have you 'gained' that you would like to keep?</b>
<b>What have you 'lost' that you would be happy not to see again?</b>	<b>What have you 'lost' that you miss and want to have back?</b>

Since the first Anglican Futures forum, several churches have used this grid as a way of starting a conversation with their church members - either in a PCC meeting or as a 'survey' to all members.

But keep in mind these wise words from one of the Anglican Futures breakout groups:

*"If we keep everything we're doing now and everything we used to do – we'll explode – so we have to lose something."*

<sup>1</sup> I am told this grid originated from CPAS - but have not found the original link.



## Lockdown Learning

### 3. Learning from Lockdown - Shaping the Future 2

#### What have you 'gained' that you would be happy to lose?

Increased screen-time:

Spending all day on Zoom - it's exhausting, emotionally draining and particularly hard for single folk, with no other interaction.

Time spent video-editing or creating other online resources (though recognising we have reached new people we may need to continue).

Need for 'hyperactive' online youth ministry - is time consuming to create.

Online services:

'Church in PJs' received in consumer style and promoting a lack of commitment.

Breadth of choice online confusing and can promote unfaithful teaching.

Need to work out how to 'lose' / hand on people who have joined us from hundreds of miles away.

Juggling family interruptions.

Centralised leadership (more clerically led) so all falls to the minister.

Extra demands for pastoral care/ support.

Extra "essential" reading (because we don't know what we're doing and so read things hoping they'll tell us).

The burden of 'carrying' the responsibility.

#### What have you 'gained' that you would like to keep?

Connectivity of Church Family

More aware of each others' needs more regular sharing

Virtual visitors

Higher attendance of 'regulars' - return of 'Fringe'

People stepping up to meet pastoral needs

Online presence

Drawing in new people via social media and Zoom

Easy access for vulnerable (inclusive)

Church going into non-Christian homes

Democratization of online church - No longer just the 'mega churches'

Focus on attractive invitations

Distant church family/ mission partners joining us

Providing online answers to searcher.

Engaging with non-Christian forums and being able

to share videos and invitations to online events

New Website / tools e.g. online giving.

Changes to 'Sunday'

Move from paper to e-notices—more efficient

Discipline of shorter talk/ sermon time

Informal/Conversational nature of leading and teaching

Easy to interview 'guests' from all over the world.

Lay reflection/ testimonies

Children and Parents ministry is a partnership

Option of online meetings for efficiency and attendance

Online Prayer Meetings/ Bible Studies

Good for young couples—no babysitter

New initiatives - 'weekly thought', daily morning prayers, midweek prayer meeting

Christianity Explored on Zoom

Changes to working week

More family time in the evenings

Empty diary

More time in the Word

Family devotions prioritised

Gospel partnership with others

Greater collaboration between parishes/ clergy etc

Seeing other churches

International bible study/ support

Shape the future. Join Gafcon UK and help us to gather, equip and support faithful Anglicans in the UK and Europe

Gafcon UK is a registered charity (1187303). [www.gafconuk.org](http://www.gafconuk.org)



## Lockdown Learning

### 3. Learning from Lockdown - Shaping the Future 3

What have you 'lost' that you would be happy not to see again?	What have you 'lost' that you miss and want to have back?
Demand for so many meetings Inefficiency Those that meet socially - due to inertia Those that meet purposelessly Deanery / Diocesan Meetings Travel Time Social events Church building It seemed a necessity to church life—not so now Cold church buildings Several Services Hoping to bring morning services together in future	Loss of face to face contact Pastoral visits Being the Body of Christ together Meeting in person Time with people Chats at the door/ over coffee Engaging with people I like and don't like - ie church Sharing Food Hugs- physicality Some key regular folk—who have not engaged online Singing Hospitality - pastoral visits Holy Communion Variety of 'services' / expressions of worship Ability for new folk to get involved Vision of where we are going

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of this exercise was the extent to which people were so positive about the changes that have taken place and wanted to find ways of incorporating many aspects of the 'new' way of doing things in to the future.

This led us to start talking about the 'phygital' world: simply put 'phygital' refers to the blend of physical (onsite/ in person) ministry and digital (online) ministry.

- Why might we want to do this?
  - Who would we be serving?
  - What might be the benefits?
- How might we go about it?
  - What technology would we need? What training?
  - How would we bring people from digital interaction into the physical?
- Should we do this?
  - Would it be a distraction to keep some aspects of our ministry online?
  - Would online 'church' undermine the intrinsic nature of the 'gathering' or ecclesia?
  - Would we encourage an individualistic, consumer culture?

**So, that will be the topic for our next Anglican Futures Meeting**

**June 24th 10.30am or 7.45pm (sign up [here](#))**



## Lockdown Learning

### 4. Ideas Exchange - Continuing Community

For most people the loss of personal contact has been one of the most difficult parts of Lockdown, so it was really encouraging to hear a whole range of ideas that people had tried, or were planning, to keep people connected to one another. We have listed a few of the ideas mentioned below, obviously they need to be done in accordance with safeguarding and public health regulations.

#### Sharing Food:

- One household preparing food for another or arranging for a takeaway to be delivered to them.

#### Not-so-secret-Santa

- Pairing up different households each week for one to bless the other with a treat or a phone call or a letter or a socially distanced visit.

#### Sharing Life

- Netflix Party (and other providers) allow two or more households to watch a film/TV together.
- Drive or walk pasts to celebrate birthdays.
- Older people with 'delivery slots' using them to care for others who are struggling.
- Making use of the 6 people meeting outside and inviting people over for coffee or lunch in the garden (with gazebo if necessary).

#### Photo/ video connection

- Intergenerational socially distanced Tik-Tok .
- Many churches are creating Private Facebook pages or WhatsApp groups - where people are sharing images or videos of their everyday life.
- Socially distanced music groups or other videos - this one doesn't require any musical ability - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=3&v=Ag6CYY0cbFc&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=Ag6CYY0cbFc&feature=emb_title)

#### Training/Learning together

- Lots of organisations are running online conferences/ webinars at the moment - sign up together - and if the weather/wifi is good enough a small group might even be able to watch it together.

#### Proclamation

- Taking the gospel to the community AKA Pat Allerton's [Amazing Grace](#).

#### Provision

- Advertising a hardship fund.
- Some suggest that regulations allow for appropriate pastoral visits (6(2) (d) or (f))

**What else can you think of?**



## Lockdown Learning

### Planning for Change - One Step at a Time

All church leaders will need to manage change over the next couple of years.

Even if you believe that the Lord is calling you to return to a model of church that looks very similar to what was happening in February 2020, we need to recognise that does not mitigate against the need to lead people through change.

It is unlikely that there will be a single day when churches are able to reopen, and we will be able to experience the physically gathered church with singing/children's groups/communion/coffee etc just like before. Instead, we will need to plan the transition carefully, caring for the most vulnerable, bringing the 'weaker brother' with us. Some may decide that no one returns until all can return.

We need to recognise that those gathering have been through an experience that will have changed them - they may have lost their job, they may have lost a parent or spouse or child, they may have been refreshed by lockdown or they may be in desperate need of restoration. God willing, there will be new people coming through our doors. Old habits have been lost, new habits have been formed and many may find social interaction awkward at first.

Change is inevitable. As church leaders we can just keep reacting or we can be proactive and think how we can best help our church family through this time of transition.

Five brief thoughts:

- Know where you are heading - keep the vision of what you want to rebuild clear in your mind.
- Plan ahead - start with the goal and plan backwards.
- Teamwork - build that vision with others, share that vision with the church family. Use all the gifts of all the people to glorify God in your community.
- Equip the saints for the work of ministry - identify, train and encourage the congregation to serve one another.
- Celebrate steps along the way (here are just a few excuses to celebrate the Lord's goodness)
  - First 'formal' gatherings of 6 outside
  - First wider gathering
  - First gathering in your building
  - First celebration of the Lord's Supper

*<sup>20</sup> Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, <sup>21</sup> equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through*





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# SHOULD WE GO PHYGITAL?

'Phygital' : blending digital experiences with physical experiences,  
taking the best aspects from each space to create  
the optimal experience.

We'd Love You to Join the Online Discussion

Wednesday 24th June 10:30am

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/110124752098>

Wednesday 24th June 7.45pm

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/110127771128>

Priority given to Gafcon UK Members

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