

## Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policy

### 1.0 Policy Statement

St. John the Apostle and Evangelist Church (St. John's) is committed to encouraging equity, diversity, and inclusion within our Church and team, and eliminating discrimination. As a worshipping community, we are committed to treating all people with love, dignity, and respect. In the collective life of the Church, we will seek to promote equity and look to create an environment in which all can flourish, where everyone is treated with respect, and congregants feel they belong. We recognise that it is within all of our best interests to promote diversity, actively embody inclusion, and eliminate discrimination within all areas of our work and ministry.

The **Equality Act 2010** states that discrimination against the following protected characteristics is unlawful: age; disability; sex; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race (including skin colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin); religion or belief; and sexual orientation.

However, we recognise that individuals can also be discriminated against on the basis of characteristics not currently protected by law, including: appearance; mental or physical health issues not legislatively recognised; geographical location; housing; language and communication barriers; caring / dependents status; socioeconomic status; immigration status; offending background; or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.

As a Church, we therefore aim to go beyond our legal requirements to ensure that all individuals, with protected characteristics and characteristics not protected by legislation, do not receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of their personal or social characteristics. We will take steps to identify and proactively challenge any form of discrimination.

For a glossary of terms used in this policy, see **Appendix 1**.

### 2.0 Theological Underpinning

St. John's Church upholds the belief that every human being is valued as part of God's creation, made in the image of God. Every person in the world is loved by God, who is the God of love. God so loved the world that Jesus was sent to break down all the barriers that divide us from that love and our love for each other. Love is the key to our understanding of how we relate and behave towards one another. As God loves all people unconditionally, we too at St. John's seek to live out that unconditional love in every part of church life.

### 3.0 Policy Principles

All individuals are of equal value, irrespective of their background. Diversity is a strength which should be recognised, respected, and celebrated by all.

Equal value and dignity for an individual does not mean treating everyone in the same way. All individuals deserve to thrive and this is why we have chosen to use the term 'equity' over 'equality', meaning we will sometimes need to undertake positive action to address inequalities to achieve equality of value and opportunity.

We value everyone for who they are and recognise differences, so individuals feel understood and accepted whatever their ability or background. We believe that we can become more inclusive by increasing our ability to understand the needs of those from marginalised and minoritised communities.

#### **4.0 Speaking Up**

If anyone experiences, or witnesses, discrimination whilst working with us, in our communities, or in our congregation, we want to know.

We aim to create an environment where individuals can:

- Make a complaint relating to discrimination and harassment without victimisation.
- Feel confident and able to challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.

All complaints will be taken seriously, dealt with promptly, and investigated as appropriate. Please refer to our Complaints Policy [insert link once ready] for further information on this.

#### **5.0 Responsibilities**

The PCC commits to:

- Create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all members are recognised and valued.
- Create a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for every member.
- Not tolerate any form of intimidation, bullying, or harassment, and to discipline those that breach this policy.
- Promote equality and equity in the workings and activities of the Church.
- Encourage anyone who feels they have been subject to discrimination or who has witnessed discrimination to raise their concerns with the Vicar and Churchwardens in the first instance (where appropriate).
- Encourage new members to treat everyone with dignity and respect by fostering good relations between all people.
- Regularly review all our policies so that fairness is maintained at all times.
- Designate an EDI Champion on the PCC.

#### **6.0 Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner in response to new legislation, regional and / or national policy development, or specific demand and feedback, at the first PCC meeting after the APCM to ensure that equality, diversity, equity, and inclusion are continually promoted.

#### **7.0 Relevant and Related Legislation, Policies, and Resources**

- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulations 2019

- Pastoral Principles, CoE 2020
- Living in Love and Faith, CoE 2020
- Safeguarding Policy 2018 (to be updated)
- Complaints Policy 2024
- Anti-Racism Policy 2024

## 8.0 Version Control

Version #	Author	Date	Summary of changes
01	Meg Murphy	September 2024	New policy

## Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

**Belonging** is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group. It is when an individual can bring their authentic self to spaces they occupy.

**Bias** refers to the tendency, inclination, or opinion that is preconceived or unreasoned that hinders impartial judgement. Bias can be unconscious, conscious, or systematic.

**Direct discrimination** is when you treat someone less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic, whether the person possesses that protected characteristic or not. For example, not employing someone because they are a woman, or a particular race.

**Diversity** refers to characteristics of differences and similarities between people. Diversity includes factors that influence the identities and perspectives that people bring when interacting at work. Diversity can support the development of workplace environments and practices that foster learning from others to gain diverse perspectives on inclusiveness.

**Duty** to make reasonable adjustments is where a provision, criterion, or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to others who are not disabled. The church has a duty to take reasonable steps to avoid the disadvantage, including changes to physical features and providing information.

**Equality** refers to a state of being equal, especially in status, rights, opportunities, or outcomes.

**Equity** refers to the principle that policies, processes, and practices should be fairly applied, and individual needs recognised.

**Harassment** is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive working environment.

**Indirect discrimination** is when a policy, practice, or procedure that applies to everyone has an effect which particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

**Intersectionality** is a term which refers to the interconnected nature of different aspects of a person's identity and how together they can affect, determine, and compound a person's experience of discrimination.

**Micro-aggressions**, micro-behaviours, and micro-inequities are small, subtle differences in treatment that communicate over time that someone has less value.

**Positive action** is proportionate steps taken to enable or encourage people who share a protected characteristic to overcome or minimise a disadvantage, to meet their needs, or to participate. For example, using the pronoun that someone has asked you to use.

**Positive discrimination** refers to making a decision in someone's favour because of their particular characteristic. Positive discrimination is usually unlawful, unless it falls within one of the very limited exceptions contained in the anti-discrimination legislation in relation to disability or as a genuine

occupational requirement. A typical example within the Church would be the post carries a genuine occupational requirement to be a practising Christian.

**Protected characteristics** as listed in the Equality Act 2010 are sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, disability, and pregnancy and maternity.

**Victimisation** is the act of singling someone out for cruel or unjust treatment. We ALL should be able to speak up without victimisation.