



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
BIRMINGHAM

People
Pl&ces



Oversight Ministry

Making Sense
Taking Shape



Sense of him



The *sight* of him would be
gentle light of a child's face,
bright flame in cold dark
warming us.

The *sound* of him would be
steady beat of the sleeper's breath,
calm voice in a wild storm
taming it.

The *smell* of him would be
unwashed, acrid, from the road,
fish off his friends' boats
repelling us.

The *touch* of him would be
rasp of worker's calloused hands
graze of rough cloth, damp,
becoming glorious.

The *taste* of him would be
sweet yeast of shared bread, torn, passed:
desert food, salt tears
filling us.

Introduction

Our participation in God's life and saving work is always fresh. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our co-operation takes new shape and forms of expression in response to human need and mission opportunity in different times and contexts. As Church of England Birmingham, being a dynamic community of faith is in our DNA, as we bring the grace of Christ in each generation.

"The Church of England is part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation... your inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to those in your care."

- The Church of England, Declaration of Assent

Oversight Ministry is one way of responding to the Church of England's missional imperative, fostering ministry and leadership within the church which helps the whole people of God to bear witness to Christ in the present generation.





Bishop David, exercising the ministry of oversight in his invitation to explore *Being the Church of England Birmingham Here and Now* (2018), sets out a vision of church where new christian communities and new patterns of ministry will take their place alongside established

communities and ministries in a vibrant, outward-facing church, rooted in a dynamic Anglican missional ecclesiology. This connects with the national CofE vision for a mixed ecology church.

This is the common ecclesiological ground in which Church Planting, Fresh Expressions and other mission initiatives flourish alongside and in complementarity with established ministry and mission in parishes, chaplaincies and schools. **The work of re-shaping, rooting and integrating established and newer forms of church is the ministry of oversight taking shape in the diocesan, deanery, parish and local expressions of church.**



Ecclesiological

Is a term used to describe theological reflection about the make up of christian communities and their relationship to the work of God in Christ.



Insights on Oversight Ministry in Scripture

Writing to the church in Philippi, Paul and his colleague, Timothy address the whole congregation, including ministers described as episcopoi (often translated 'bishops') and diakonoï (often translated 'deacons').

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

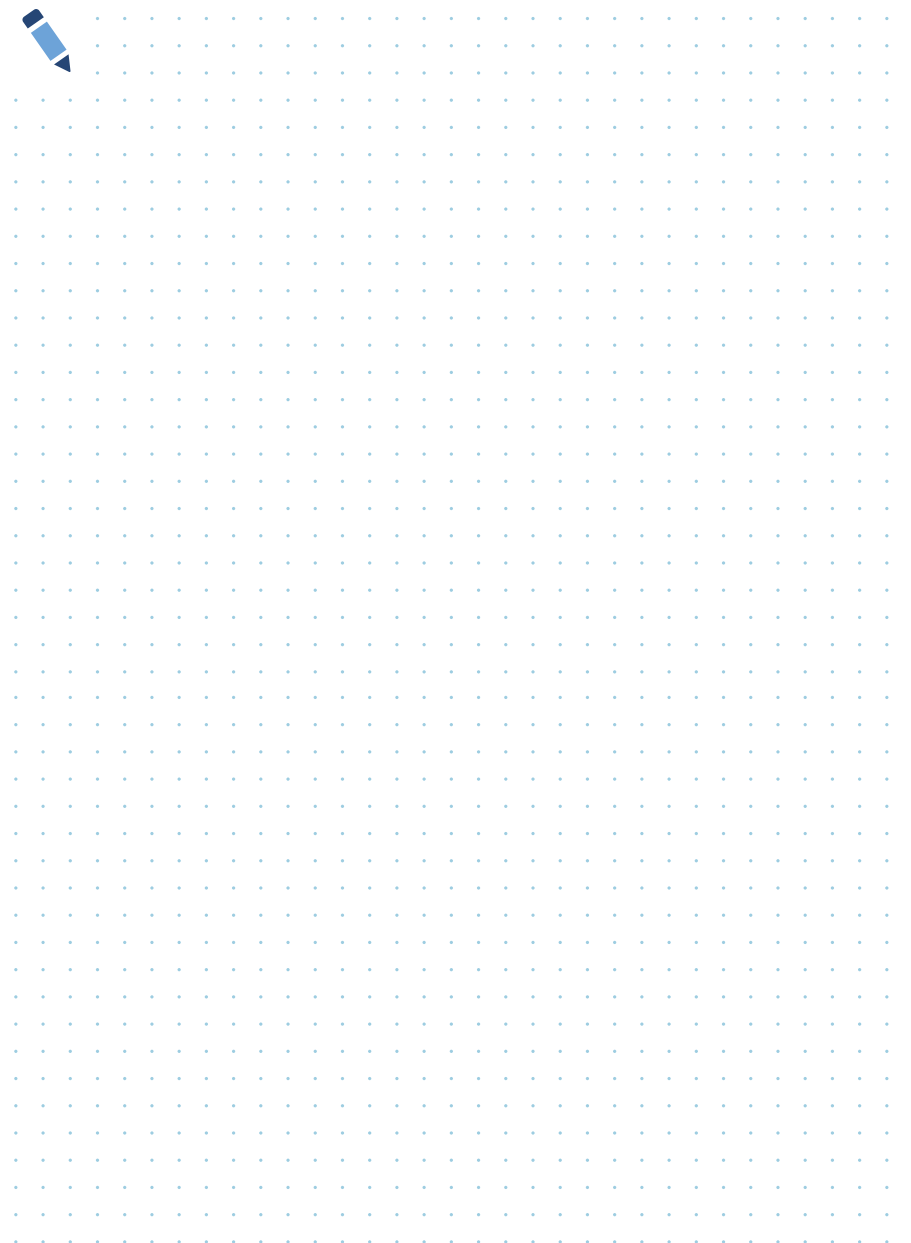
To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Philippians 1:1-11 (NRSV)

Patterns of shared ministry and oversight are deeply rooted in our Jewish Christian heritage.



Moses worked with Aaron to establish an **oversight system of dispersed and accountable leadership** for the pilgrim community of Israel.

At that time I said to you, “I am unable by myself to bear you. The Lord your God has multiplied you, so that today you are as numerous as the stars of heaven. May the Lord, the God of your ancestors, increase you a thousand times more and bless you, as he has promised you! But how can I bear the heavy burden of your disputes all by myself? Choose for each of your tribes individuals who are wise, discerning, and reputable to be your leaders.” You answered me, “The plan you have proposed is a good one.” So I took the leaders of your tribes, wise and reputable individuals, and installed them as leaders over you, commanders of thousands, commanders of hundreds, commanders of fifties, commanders of tens, and officials, throughout your tribes. I charged your judges at that time: “Give the members of your community a fair hearing, and judge rightly between one person and another, whether citizen or resident alien. You must not be partial in judging: hear out the small and the great alike; you shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God’s. Any case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it.” So I charged you at that time with all the things that you should do.

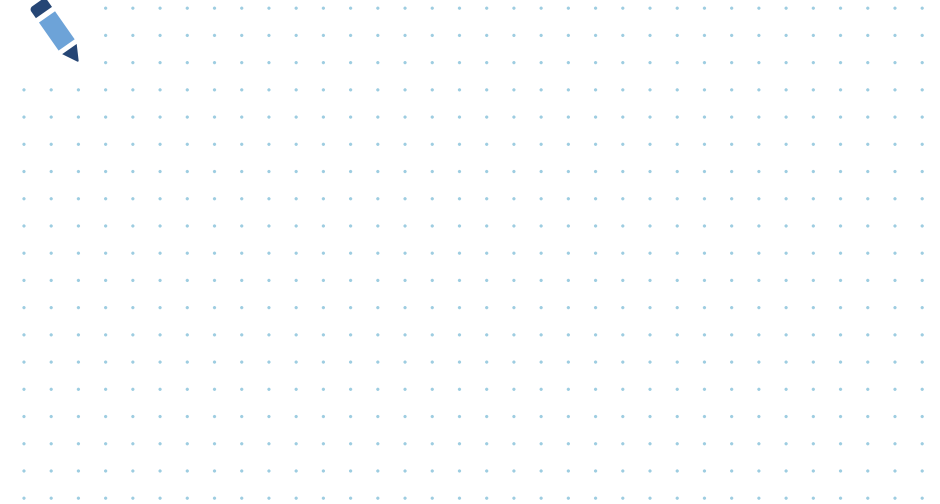
Deuteronomy 1:9-18 (NRSV)



Moses and Aaron developed structures which shared out responsibilities within the community. In his earthly ministry, Jesus followed the same pattern calling the twelve disciples.

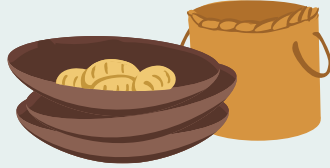
Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means “sons of thunder”), Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Mark 3:13-19 (NIV)



It's easy in leadership to be overwhelmed with responsibilities or feel we have to take on all the decision making. The ministry of oversight can help us to **rest in Christ** as well as do our work for him.

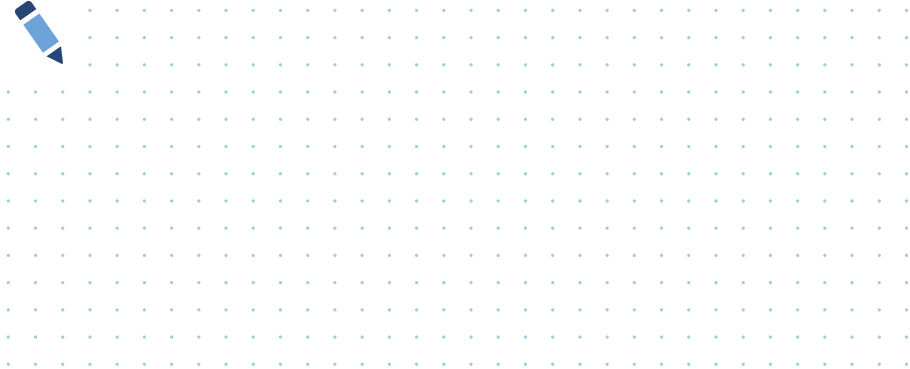
As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"



"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed - or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Luke 10:38-42 (NIV)

Sometimes we need someone to help us slow down, enjoy one another's company and appreciate one another's gifts.



After his resurrection, Christ commissioned a small group with the ministry of sharing the good news with the apostles.

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright, the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

Luke 24:1-10 (NIV)

The risen Christ promised his presence and power for this followers as they work together in sharing the gospel.

Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: "God authorised and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."

Matt 28: 18-20 (MSG)



Much of what we read in the Scriptures is relational.

Watching over the people of God, praying for them, balancing tasks, identifying ways of wellbeing, and feeding disciples.

The most enjoyable meals include a host or hosts, who encourage everyone to share, helping one another to have enough and ensuring that nobody's contribution gets lost or taken for granted.

In the same way, Oversight Ministers host, connecting churches and ministries, making sure everyone is welcomed and catered for, helping the guests to serve one another, understanding needs and dietary requirements, keeping an eye open for people being left out. Hosts encourage people to enjoy one another's company and even starting conversations with people they've never

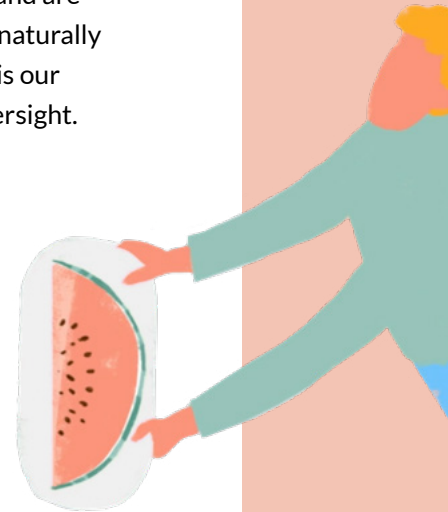


met before. At the best parties, people mix freely and are enabled to host one another. Hospitality happens naturally because the culture and atmosphere is right. This is our vision for church communities as they share in oversight.

Hospitable churches are supported in listening for what the local community is hungry for, with all the guests at ease, confident to invite others to join.

This relational, hospitable way of being church is already happening within Church of England Birmingham: you'll recognise it in different forms in different places.

We are participating in one another's lives and in the life of God.



Examples of Oversight Ministry in practice

Oversight is already built into our existing structures and processes as church. The ministry of oversight – episcopate – is exercised within the diocese by the Bishop, extended through the ministries of Archdeacons, Area Deans and lay officers. At local level, oversight is exercised by clergy and licensed lay ministers serving as incumbents/ministers-in-charge commissioned by the Bishop to lead parish churches.



Emerging patterns of Oversight Ministry in CofE Birmingham

Oversight Ministry takes a number of structural forms. In multi-parish benefices, multi-church parishes, and team ministry parishes, oversight is exercised within and across a number of distinct church communities.

"Having oversight ministry is great because you are **not on your own**. There is help and encouragement if we need it."

- Ann Knight, Tyseley / Springfield - Local Minister (Ordained)

"We are very blessed with our Oversight Minister. Having been without a vicar for so long, it's been really encouraging knowing that Tom is always **willing to listen and advise us when necessary.**"

- Dot Pooler, Tyseley / Springfield - Local Minister (Lay)

"Being an oversight minister is a brilliant way to learn and grow yourself as you **see others flourishing in their own unique and God-given ministry.**"

- The Revd Tom Thomas, Vicar of St Christopher's, Springfield, supporting St Edmunds, Tyseley

"It is always a privilege to share in the formation of any ministry, **to give and to receive** in different areas of learning. It has been exciting and fruitful as an oversight minister to help hold a creative safe space in which Jill could practice, play and explore how to share Jesus, serve her community and bring hope."

- The Revd Mike Sermon (Reflections on Oversight working with the Revd Jill MacDonald, Local Minister (Ordained) St James, Rounds Green)

"The real joy of working with Martin as oversight minister is having an experienced colleague to share things with but who also gives the **authority and freedom** to get on with things as God's Spirit leads"

- Ian Crockford - Local Minister (Ordained), St Michael's, Hall Green

"Working as Ian's oversight minister at St Michael's Hall Green remains a great privilege. What is particularly inspiring has been to **see a vocation grow, being nurtured** from within the church congregation.

It has been one of the most rewarding times of my 40 years in full time ministry to be a small part of Ian's journey with St Michael's."

- The Revd Canon Martin Stephenson, Vicar of St Peter's, Hall Green and Priest-in-Charge St Michael's, Hall Green

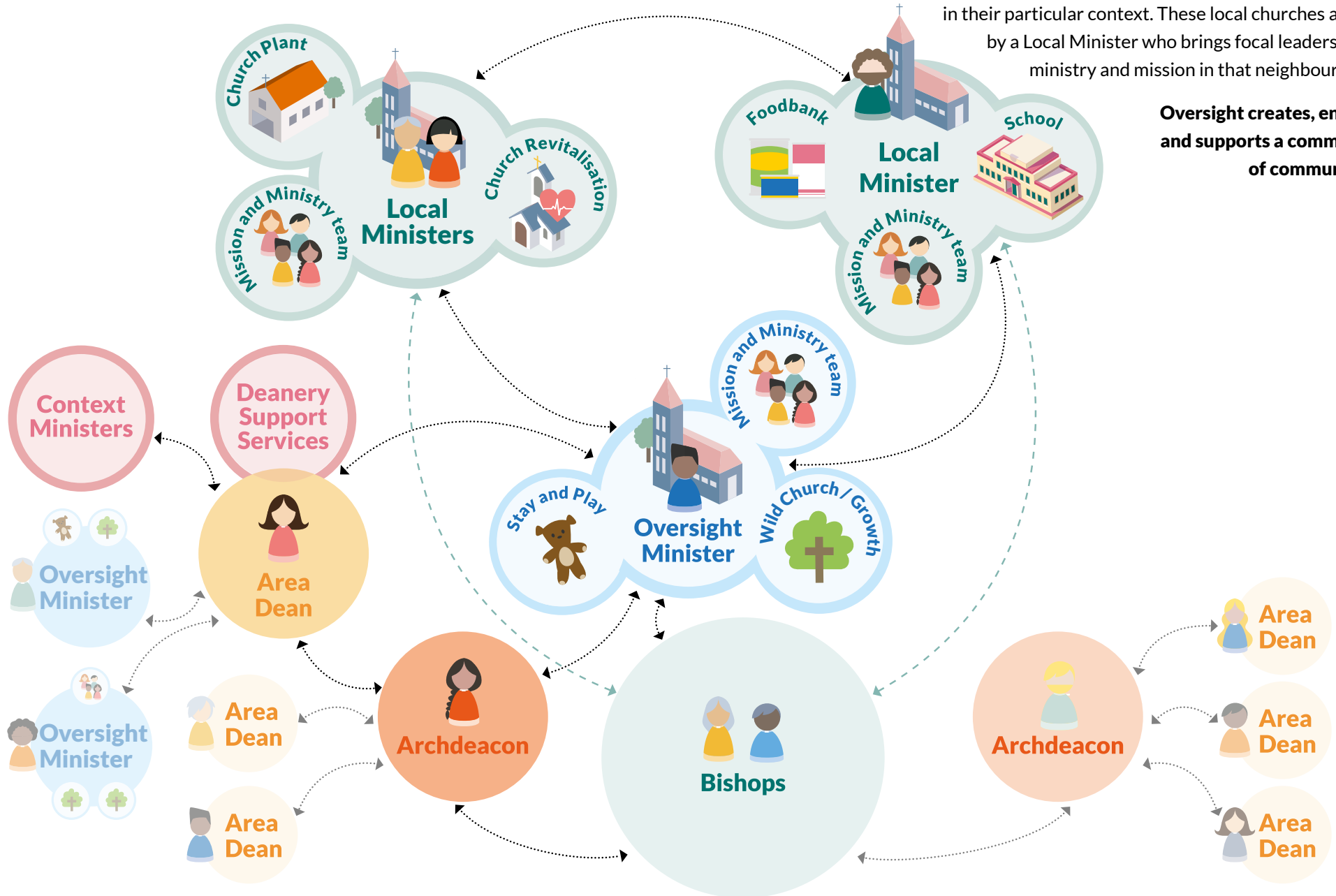


Oversight as a Community of Communities

Interrelationship within an Oversight Area

Oversight areas are made up of a range of expressions of church and service in the community. Oversight Ministers oversee a number of local churches in worship and witness in their particular context. These local churches are led by a Local Minister who brings focal leadership to ministry and mission in that neighbourhood.

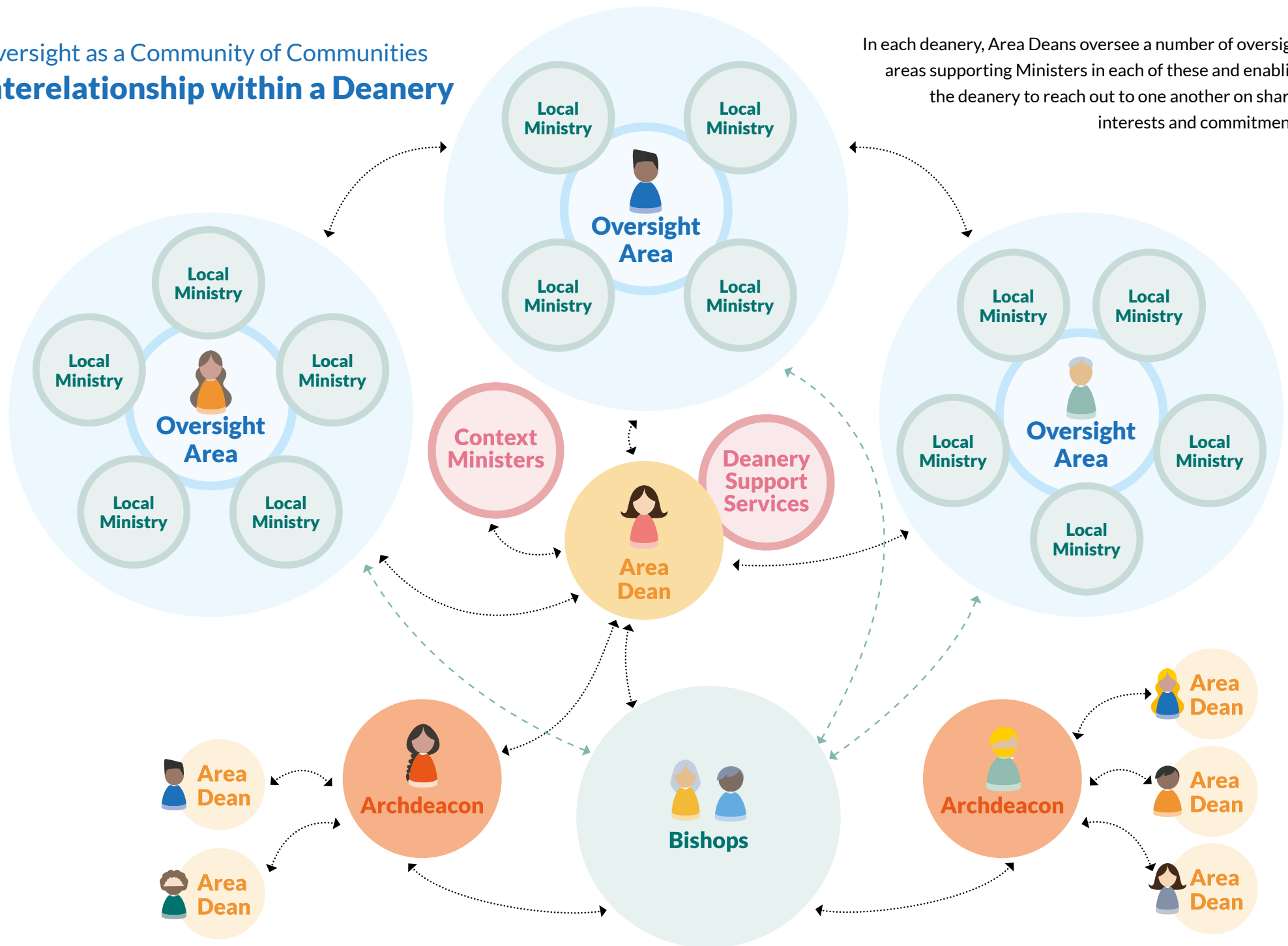
Oversight creates, enables and supports a community of communities.



Oversight as a Community of Communities

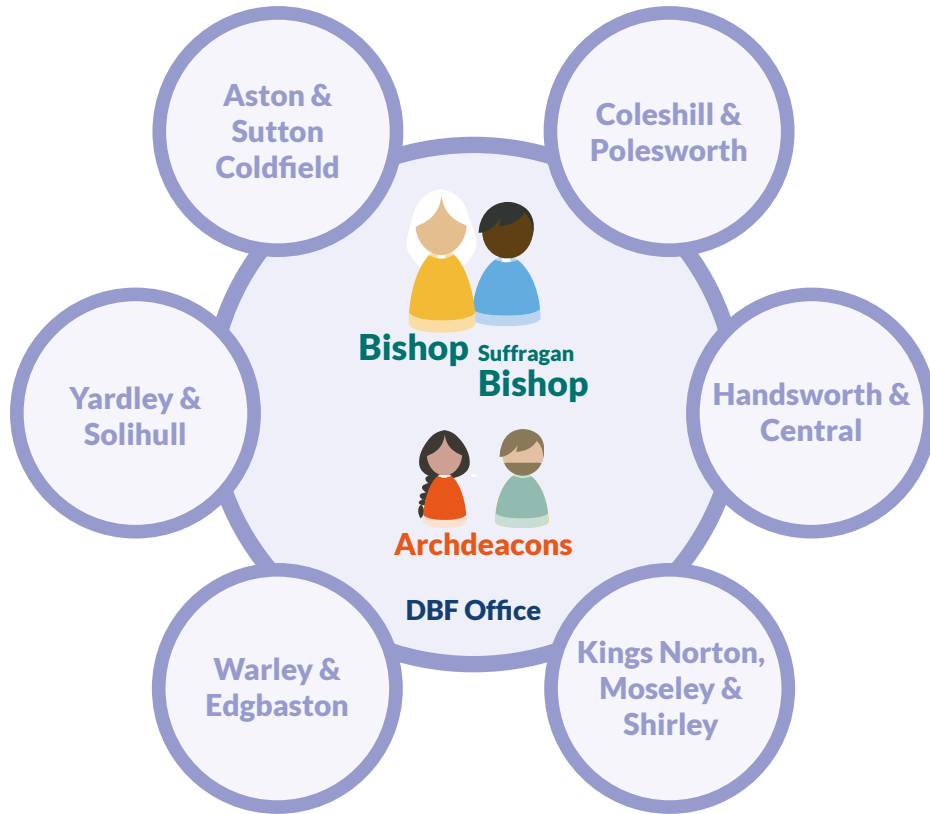
Interrelationship within a Deanery

In each deanery, Area Deans oversee a number of oversight areas supporting Ministers in each of these and enabling the deanery to reach out to one another on shared interests and commitments.



Oversight as a Community of Communities

Interrelationship within the Diocese



What does your Oversight area look like?

A large grid of small blue dots, intended for writing or drawing a response to the question 'What does your Oversight area look like?'.



Resources

This document on Oversight Ministry is one of a number of key supporting resources:

- Practical Theology of Oversight Ministry, 2020
www.dio.org.uk/PracticalTheologyofOversightMinistry
- Oversight Ministry Animation, 2021
www.dio.org.uk/OversightMinistryAnimation
- Bishop David's Invitation to Explore
Being the Church of England Birmingham Here and Now, 2017
www.dio.org.uk/CofEInvitationtoExplore
- New Pathways for Licensed and Authorised Ministry booklet, 2020
www.dio.org.uk/LicensedandAuthorisedMinistryPathways
- Transforming Ministry website
transformingministry.co.uk
- Transforming Church webpage
www.dio.org.uk/CofEBTC
- People & Places webpage
www.dio.org.uk/CofEBPandP



References

'Sense of Him' A poem by Revd Canon Mark Pryce
— from Journeying with Luke, Woodward, Gooder & Pryce, SPCK 2012, p.41.

Image by Graham Sutherland (1903-1980) of 'Christ's face'. (National Trust Photo Library/ John Hammond) copyright Estate of Graham Sutherland 2006.

'Kingdom ways of counting' A poem by Revd Canon Mark Pryce — from Journeying with Matthew, Woodward, Gooder & Pryce, SPCK 2013, p.90-91.

Who to contact

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• People & Places

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When examining disciples,
how does the teacher
mark success?
Take as the measure
not right answers, but the life that is lived.

When testing the medicine,
how does the doctor
know who's healed?
Look deep into eyes, to find
compassion for the sick.

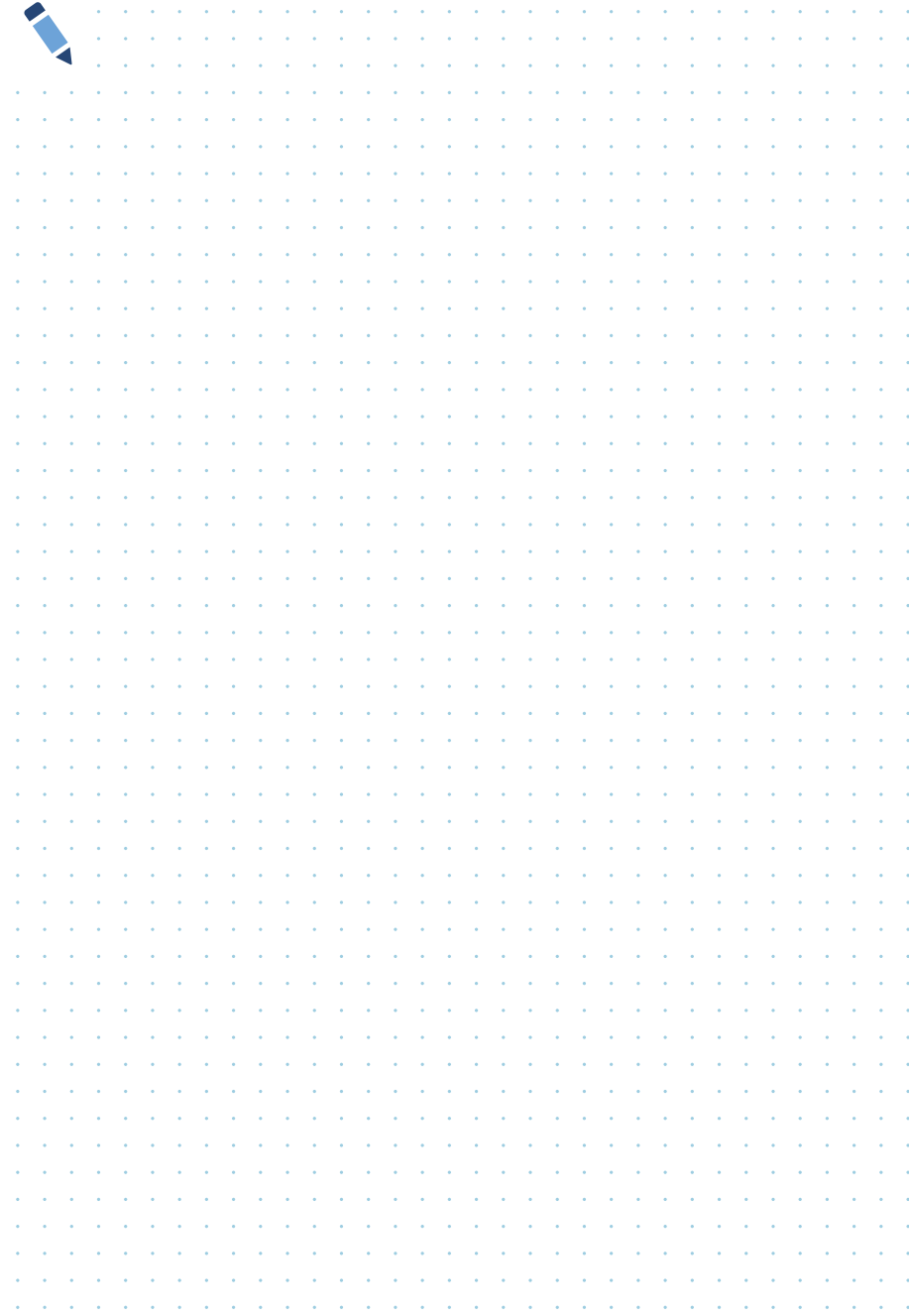
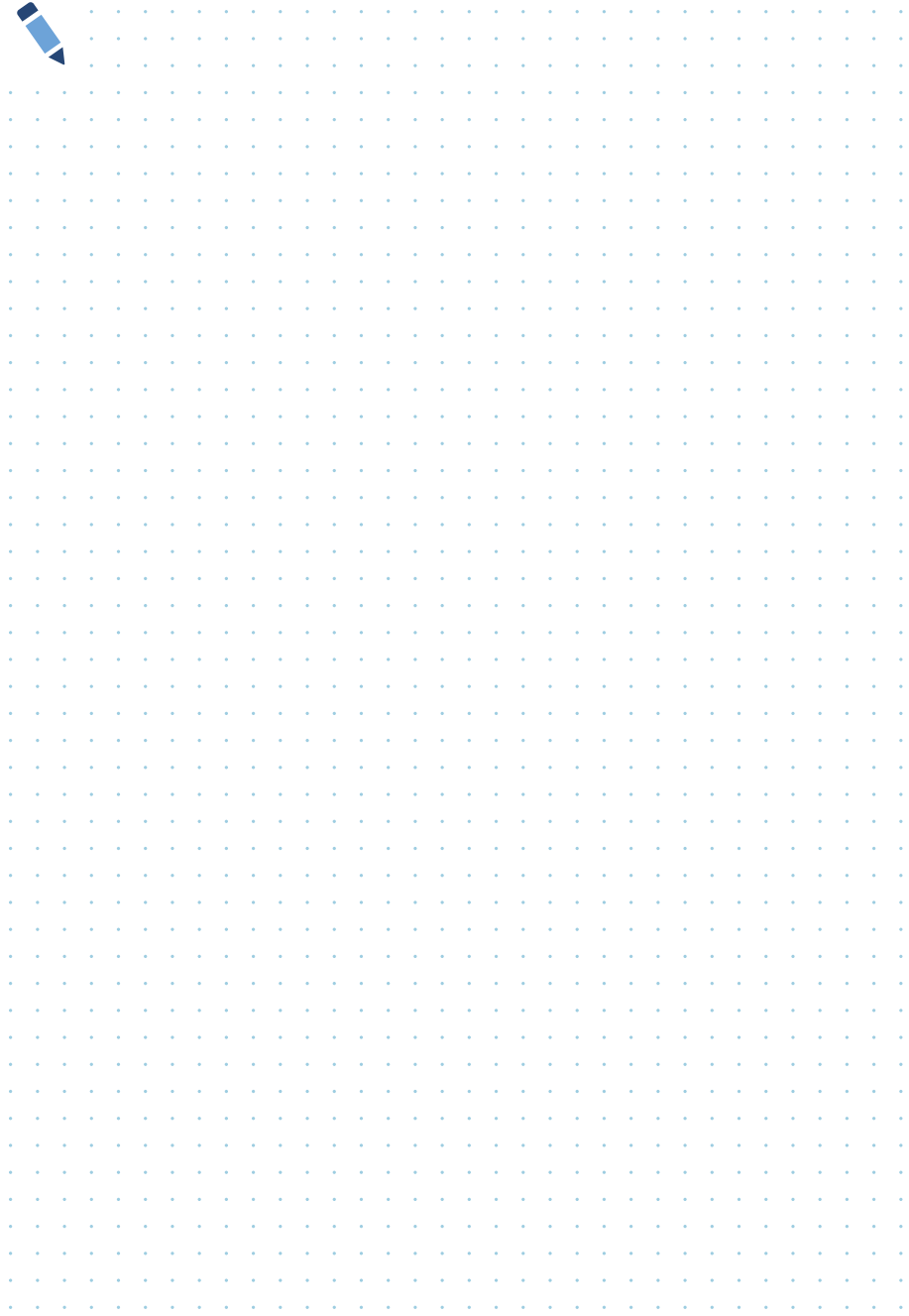
When hearing the beloved talk,
how does the lover
sound out truth?
Listen for night whispers called
in cold light of day.

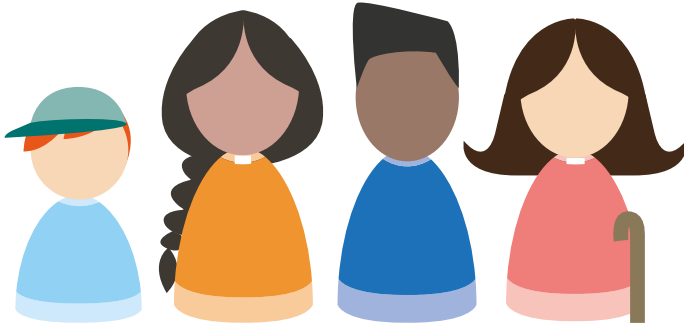
When estimating harvest,
how does the farmer
gauge the yield?
Plan for weeds and wilting barren parts,
then sow generously the whole field.

When guiding hungry people,
how does the leader
feed the crowds?
Bless what they have to give,
make their little God's enough.

Kingdom Ways of Counting

Inspired by: Matthew 7:21-29, Matthew 9:9-13, Matthew 10:24-39, Matthew 13:24-30, Matthew 44:13-21





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