

Session 6: Sixth week of lent

Community - Crime/Integration

“Community Integration is the opportunity to live in the community and be valued for one's uniqueness and abilities, like everyone else.” (M. S. Salzer)

Worship

Responses

Make way for the one who comes in the name of the Lord,
who enters Jerusalem riding on a humble colt.

What does the Lord require of us?

To do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.

Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread,

because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; God will not fail you or forsake you.

What does the Lord require of us?

To do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.

Poem: The body of Christ (or building community)

An open table, round in shape,
no head, no feet, no sharp corners to bump against.

Conversations take place here,
without the need for agendas.

No one cares about your shape,
your colour,
your accent,
your income.

No one needs to know
how big or small your house is,
how many mistakes you have made,
what car you drive.

People want to know,
what makes you giggle,
what makes you dance,
what makes you cry.

People notice you
care for you
listen to you.

You might sit next to someone who makes you feel
comfortable
angry
concerned

That's okay, that is grace -
you may make the person next to you feel all those things and more.

This is community
common brokenness
and shared optimism
that together we are wiser
more loved and more loving

No one can remember who are the hosts and who are guests
we are all one messy, creative, chaotic
mass of fellow travellers
building a community of love.

What else is worth any effort at all?

Prayer

Gracious God,
Creator of all,

We pray today for the community we live in. We give thanks for the diverse experiences of so many people, for the gifts each person brings and the contribution many make to enriching society here in London. We pray for places of tension and fear and ask that you help us to remain open and loving to those we consider as different or do not understand. Help your Churches to be places where community is built, barriers broken down and love of neighbours is central to all that we do.

In the name of Christ.

Amen

Scripture reading

Isaiah 25:6-9

Reflect:

Imagine the feast of God's Kingdom, as described by Isaiah.

What do you see, hear, smell...? How do people organize themselves? How are they behaving? What are they eating? What are they talking about? How is food shared?

What sort of a feast most resembles:

- your church?
- your local community?
- London at large?

Some Thoughts and Background:

The Gospels are full of stories of meals and hospitality which often become a focus of dissent and hostility. One of the common features is not just the sharing of food but that Jesus hears the story of the person welcoming him and recognises them. Think, for instance, of Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10), or of the woman at the well (John 4:1-42). In these and other instances (can you think of any?) restoration or creation of community only came with the full recognition of the person and not from the imposing of perceived common ideals which may have been oppressive or unreal. Of course it is possible that in receiving the hospitality of others and listening to them, we may feel ourselves disregarded or criticized. Think of all those who condemned Jesus for the company he kept. Any love modelled on the divine love of Jesus will not be cautious, narrow, or safe. It will make room for others, especially those who come to us hungry, forsaken, homeless, or alone. It will expand and not shrink the horizons of our love.

In the report 'Creating the conditions for integration' ¹ there is a clear statement of the need for integration for the health of our communities, government and country:

However, the report makes it clear that central to this integration should be an acceptance of a set of centrally held values. It goes on to give 5 factors which it believes contribute to social and community integration:

Common ground

A clear sense of shared aspirations and values, which focuses on what we have in common rather than our differences.

Responsibility

A strong sense of our mutual commitments and obligations, which brings personal and social responsibility.

Social mobility

People able to realise their potential to get on in life.

Participation and empowerment

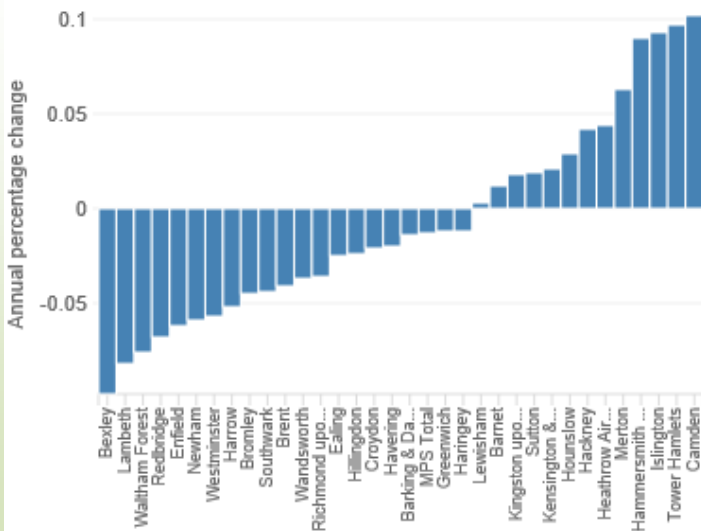
People of all backgrounds have the opportunities to take part, be heard and take decisions in local and national life.

Tackling intolerance and extremism

A robust response to threats, whether discrimination, extremism or disorder, that deepen division and increase tensions.

London Community – Crime stats

Violence with injury, robbery, theft from person, burglary, theft of motor vehicle, theft from motor vehicle and criminal damage



There was a total of 92,225 crimes of burglary in London in 2012-13 and 85,225 in 2013-14, a fall of 7.6% on the previous year. These figures include both theft and attempted theft from buildings and homes, including damage caused by someone attempting to enter a building without permission

There were 770,443 crimes (all notifiable offences) committed in London in 2012-13, and 699,686 in 2013-14. this is a 13.2 per cent reduction

Violence with injury, robbery, theft from person, burglary, theft of motor vehicle, theft from motor vehicle and criminal damage



There were 106 homicides in London in 2012-13 and 99 in 2013-14 - the lowest it has been for 40 years

London has one of the highest number of CCTV cameras of any city in the world. London's 33 councils operate approximately 7000 public CCTV cameras. By comparison, Paris has 326 equivalent cameras

London Community Integration stats

London is one of the world's most ethnically diverse cities - 50 non-indigenous groups have populations over 10,000

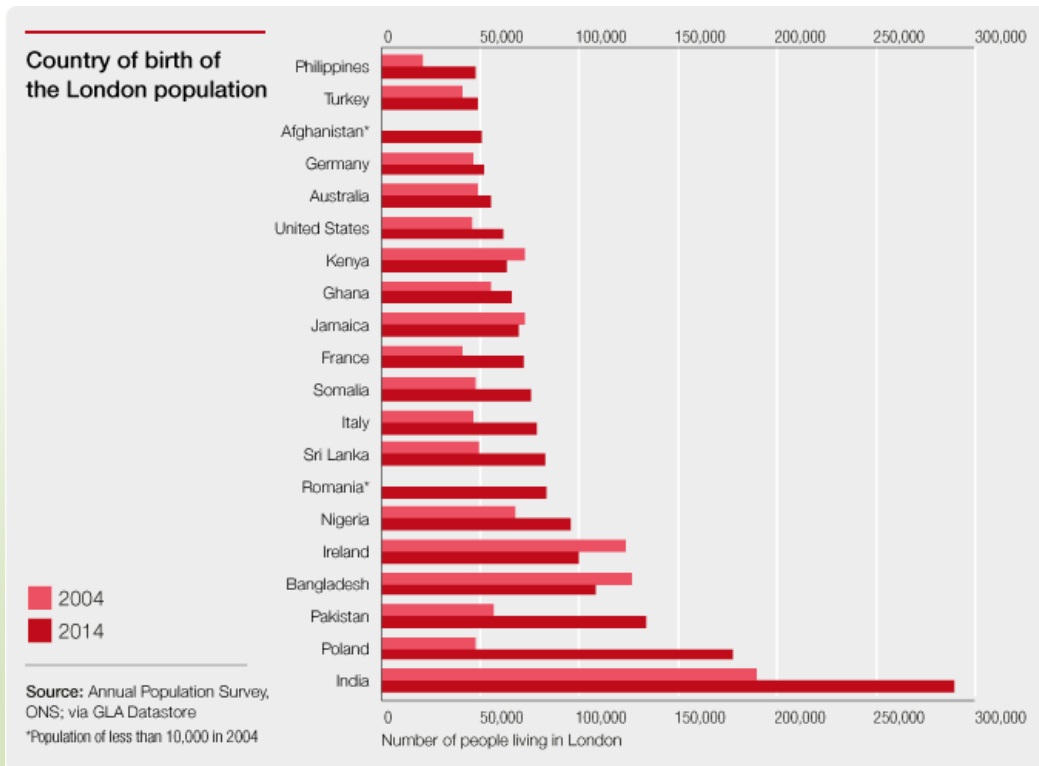
More than a third of Londoners (nearly three million people) were born outside the UK and one third of migrants will have arrived in London aged between 16 and 24

London has the largest number of community languages spoken in Europe. Over 300 languages are spoken in London schools with Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Cantonese and Mandarin most common

In 2011 Census year the Black African population (576,000) surpassed the Indian population (545,000) to become the biggest BAME group in London. Projections suggest that by 2021 the 'Other Asian' population will reach 726,000 to become the biggest individual BAME group

Around 3.3 million of London's population are Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and 4.9 million are White. The White population of London is forecast to remain at around this number throughout the next decade and increase slightly thereafter to 5 million in 2014

Just over half (52.9 per cent) of Londoners gave their religion as Christian in the 2011 Census, the second most common religion in London is Islam with 13.5 per cent of Londoners identifying as Muslim



Discuss:

- If the primary way in which community is created and restored is in the receiving of hospitality, in putting ourselves into the hands of the other, in hearing their stories and in accepting what is important to them, how does this support or contradict the factors promoting integration listed above?
- Could Jesus' model of divine love shape the ways in which we approach our diverse community?
- How can we all be part of restoring and creating community?
- How do we ensure a feast to which all are invited and all feel welcome?
- How are needs balanced and voices heard, even when they disagree?
- How is fear and risk to be recognised as well as the hope and possibility?
- How do we ensure that all have the opportunity to live in the community and be valued for their own uniqueness and abilities?
- What happens when some find values oppressive that we feel are essential and fundamental to the life of our community?

And finally.....

What specific stories, experiences or points relating to Community – crime/integration would you like to bring to the attention of the Mayoral candidates?

ⁱ (2006). Introduction. In M.S. Salzer (ed.), *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Skills in Practice: A CPRP Preparation and Skills Workbook*. Columbia, MD.: United States Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association.