



Bible Study for Local Use

# Invites & Deepens Life in Christ

## *Introduction*

From the beginning, the deep listening process of the Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG) has been rooted in scripture. Every listening group session began with Bible study.

In that same spirit, you will notice the prominence of scripture in the Transformational Aspirations video series being released over Fall 2022 and Winter 2023 on [anglican.ca/changingchurch](http://anglican.ca/changingchurch).

Each video has an accompanying Bible study for use in dioceses, parishes, and other Anglican contexts across the country.

We encourage repeated reading of the scripture passage out loud as you consider each question in turn. We also encourage open sharing, uncritical listening, and welcoming acceptance of each participant's contributions.

A new Bible study will be made available each month on [anglican.ca/changingchurch](http://anglican.ca/changingchurch), alongside the release of each video in the Transformational Aspirations series.



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*Matthew 22:36-40, 28:19-20 (NRSV)*

‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’ He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.’

‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’

### *Commentary from Archbishop and Primate Linda Nicholls*

As a parish priest, I always enjoyed celebrating baptisms. In the service, the candidate or baptismal family commit to a life of learning and transformation as they follow Jesus Christ. I particularly love the Baptismal Covenant. The whole community joins in—not just the candidate(s) or families—for we are all on a lifelong journey of learning and growing and need to be reminded and encouraged!

Together, we declare what we believe about God, Jesus and the Spirit framed in the Apostle’s Creed. Then, in an important transition, we are asked how we will show in our lives what we have declared with our lips. In the next six questions, we are asked how our lives will reflect the life of Jesus Christ in words and actions.

Celebrant: Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

People: *I will, with God’s help.*

Celebrant: Will you persevere in resisting evil and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

People: *I will, with God’s help.*

Celebrant: Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?

People: *I will, with God’s help.*

Celebrant: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbour as yourself?

People: *I will, with God’s help.*

Celebrant: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

People: *I will, with God’s help.*

Celebrant: Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of God’s creation, and respect, sustain and renew the life of the Earth?

People: *I will, with God’s help.*



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Our lives constantly change with our age and situation. The world around us changes and requires new or different responses. We certainly found ourselves reflecting differently on the gospel and its call in the midst of the pandemic! In every season, we are called to deepen what it means to follow Jesus 'now'. New insights into scripture emerge with age and maturity. Personal and corporate suffering invite us to reflect afresh on God's presence and call.

The Church is called to deepen its life in Christ through theological reflection, self-critique, and commitment to the whole body of Christ in community. It is summed up succinctly in the two passages from the Gospel of Matthew: 'Love God and love your neighbour' and 'invite others into this rich life of discipleship!'

Our aspiration to be a church that invites and deepens life in Christ is at the very heart of our life as a church. All the other aspirations flow from that commitment, which must be intentional. As Anglicans, we often assume growth in discipleship is happening through the

rich gifts of our liturgical worship and calendar and maybe inviting a friend to church. However, the intentionality we need now in exploring discipleship and growth requires more.

We need to claim a joyful confidence in the good news of the Gospel through exploring it personally and corporately, so that we can confidently invite others to see, hear, taste and touch the Good News with us and through us. We have rich resources around us to assist that exploration in forms of Bible study, prayer, retreats, worship, service and ministry. How will you and your parish, deanery and diocese nurture our life in Christ and deepen our baptismal calling in the coming months and years?

With St. Paul, it is my prayer that this aspiration will find fertile soil in our lives in the coming months: "*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.*" (Colossians 2:6-7)

### *Questions for discussion*

1. Looking back to your baptism—whether as a child or adult—trace the journey of your discipleship. Draw a timeline noting key places, events, people, insights.
  - When and how has your discipleship been nurtured best?
  - Who were your mentors?
2. How does your parish, deanery or diocese deepen its life in Christ now?
3. Reflect on each of the baptismal questions. How do you live into each one?  
How does your parish, deanery or diocese live into each one?
4. How do you and your parish/deanery/diocese invite others into life in Christ?
5. What is needed in your life or that of your parish/deanery/diocese to deepen life in Christ now and into the future?



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