**The Body of Christ is neurodivergent**

What comes to mind when someone talks about ‘accessibility’? You might think about ramps or hearing loops – which are great things by themselves – but not all disabilities are physical. The NHS estimates that 1 in 7 people in the UK are neurodivergent. This means that someone’s brain processes information differently; examples include autism, ADHD, and dyslexia.\*

So, how can we make our churches or buildings accessible with neurodivergent people in mind? Here are three things to think about:

1. **Space**

Sometimes the crowds, lights, and noises in church services or groups can be overwhelming. Is there a quieter place in your building where people can go if they need some time to themselves? This could just be a church hall or a side room, it doesn’t need to be anything fancy. Equally, is there space for people to move around comfortably? Not everyone can sit still for extended periods of time.

1. **Explanations**

Some people – especially autistic people – struggle with changes to routines. Explaining why things might be different, for example due to a change in liturgical season or a sermon series, can help both neurodivergent people and those who might be new to your church. It can also help you to reflect on *why* you do the things you do every week.

1. **Communication**

Clear communication is key to ensuring everyone can understand what is going on. Reflect on your language – are you using unnecessarily large words in sermons? Is it obvious what will happen in a service, and what people are expected to do? Even small actions like letting people know when to sit down, stand up, or kneel can be really helpful.

This isn’t is an exhaustive or ‘must-do’ list; hopefully it can aid reflections and discussions as we work towards making our churches and buildings accessible for all.

To find out more about making your building accessible, visit: [dioceseofyork.org.uk/buildings-accessibility](https://dioceseofyork.org.uk/buildings-accessibility).

If you’d like to chat about accessibility in general, contact Lou at lou.dover@yorkdiocese.org.

\*People with these conditions might not always refer to themselves as ‘disabled’, it’s an individual choice.

God, we thank you for the beautiful diversity of your creation. Help us understand those whose minds work differently to ours, as we shape our communities together.