St Ethelburga's
Centre for Reconciliation and Peace

St Ethelburga's principles for convening conversations across difference

At St Ethelburga's our mission is 'Bridging Divides, Loving Earth.' We believe the urgency of the climate crisis calls us to reach out across divides to seek collaborative solutions, for the sake of our love for our common home, Earth.

Survey data shows that while the UK public may be divided on many issues, political/cultural tribes tend to be united in their concern for climate and ecology. Those issues which divide us, however, are often sharply painful, and we are becoming more polarised because of them. These divisions are playing out in our news headlines, our social media feeds, and also in our personal relationships and family lives, where conflict can be especially heartbreaking to navigate.

We invite ourselves and our communities to observe the following principles for how we engage with difference:

- We respect one another despite differences of opinion, background, culture, religion, politics, and other differences of all kinds.
- We speak our views honestly, in good faith, with the expectation that we will receive a fair hearing.
- We seek to listen generously to one another, hopeful that we may hear something that we can understand in what another person has said.
- We try to put down our preconceptions, stereotypes and projections when we listen to one another. We know that none of us is perfect and we try to practise intellectual humility when we engage with different ideas.
- We hope to learn from one another, and try to meet disagreement as an opportunity for deeper understanding.
- We look for what we have in common and try to build bridges and collaborate where we can.
- We trust that even when disagreement is uncomfortable, a deeper purpose is served when we are able to stay in conversation with one another.
- We come together for the sake of our care and love for our shared home, Earth.