

# **St George's Day: Inclusion, Courage and Christian Witness**

## **Guidance for Churches**

April 2026

# St George's Day: Inclusion, Courage and Christian Witness

This short guide offers a framework for thinking about St George's Day in a way that reflects Christian values of courage, welcome and dignity.

St George's Day is an opportunity to celebrate England and give thanks for our communities. It also invites reflection on how we live out Christian values of welcome, dignity and justice in today's context.

This year especially, churches are encouraged to mark the day thoughtfully, ensuring that our witness reflects the love, welcome and justice at the heart of the Christian faith.

## Why St George's Day Can Feel Difficult for Some

In recent years, national symbols, including the St George's Cross, have sometimes been used by groups or voices that promote:

- Exclusion or hostility towards migrants and refugees
- Narrow definitions of who "belongs"
- Fear-based narratives about identity and difference

As a result, some people, particularly those from minoritised ethnic backgrounds, migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, may experience national celebrations not as joyful, but as unsettling or excluding. This can affect not only migrants or refugees, but anyone who feels overlooked, unwelcome, or unsure of their place.

Naming this honestly does not diminish England or its traditions. It reflects pastoral awareness and Christian integrity.

## Reclaiming the Flag with Christian Values

Displaying the St George's flag does not belong to any political ideology, for churches, the flag can be reclaimed as a symbol of:

- The Church's calling to serve all who live in this land
- A commitment to justice, dignity and peace
- An England shaped at its best by Christian values

How the flag is framed matters as much as whether it is displayed.

## Tips for Displaying the Flag Inclusively

If your church chooses to display the St George's Cross:

- **Pair it with words of welcome**  
For example: *"We give thanks for England and welcome all who call this place home."*
- **Include it within worship, not as a stand-alone symbol**  
Embed it in prayer, scripture and reflection rooted in Christ.
- **Avoid language of "defence", "taking back", or "protecting"**  
These phrases are often associated with exclusionary rhetoric.
- **Balance national symbols with visible signs of inclusion**  
Multilingual welcomes, prayers for refugees, or symbols of hospitality help communicate intention.

## Avoiding language that creates exclusion

Churches are encouraged to avoid:

- Framing England as "under threat"
- Implying some people belong more than others
- Using "Christian values" to exclude rather than include
- Silence when exclusionary narratives are shared unchallenged

Christian patriotism is not about superiority or fear, it is about responsibility, compassion and love of neighbour.

## A Positive Christian Framing to Share

Churches might choose to say something like:

"On St George's Day, we give thanks for England and all who live here. As Christians, our love for this nation is expressed through welcome, justice and care for the stranger, following the example of Christ."

This affirms England without excluding anyone.

## St George: A Helpful Reminder

St George himself was not English and lived his faith courageously across cultural boundaries.

## **A Prayer for This Year**

God of all nations,  
we give thanks for England and its people.  
Where fear and division grow, plant compassion.  
Where symbols have been misused, restore their meaning.  
Shape us to be a Church of courage, welcome and hope,  
faithful to Christ in all we do.  
Amen.

## **In Summary**

St George's Day this year calls the Church not to retreat, but to lead:

- Leading with honesty
- Leading with hospitality
- Leading with Christian love

By marking the day thoughtfully, churches can model a vision of England that is confident, compassionate and rooted in Christ.

**This guidance can be used alongside the 'Practical Ways to Mark the Day' resource.**