

# Embracing Diversity & Inclusion in Our Christian Journey

## Introduction:

Welcome, everyone, to tonight's session on "Diversity & Inclusion." As Christians, we are called to embrace the rich tapestry of humanity that God has created. Tonight, we explore how diversity and inclusion are principles to uphold and integral aspects of our faith journey.

## **Biblical Foundation:**

The Bible unequivocally affirms the equality of all humanity. Galatians 3:28 reminds us that in Christ, there is no distinction based on ethnicity, social status, or gender. We are all one body, as emphasized in 1 Corinthians 12:12-14. Our call is to love one another as Christ loved us (John 13:34) and to pursue peace with everyone (Hebrews 12:14).

# Diversity & Inclusion (Bedford)

## **Understanding Diversity**

Diversity isn't merely a concept; it's woven into the very fabric of our faith. From the early church to today, we see a beautiful mosaic of individuals from various backgrounds coming together in fellowship. Bedford, a microcosm of diversity, showcases over 80 nationalities, reflecting the global mission field our churches represent.

# Diversity & Inclusion (Bedford)

The ground-breaking book written by John Brown and published in 1970 is titled “The Un-Melting Pot” Bedford: An English Town and its Immigrants. A study of diversity and inclusion in Bedford.



Joe Clough (The First Black Bus Driver in the UK.)

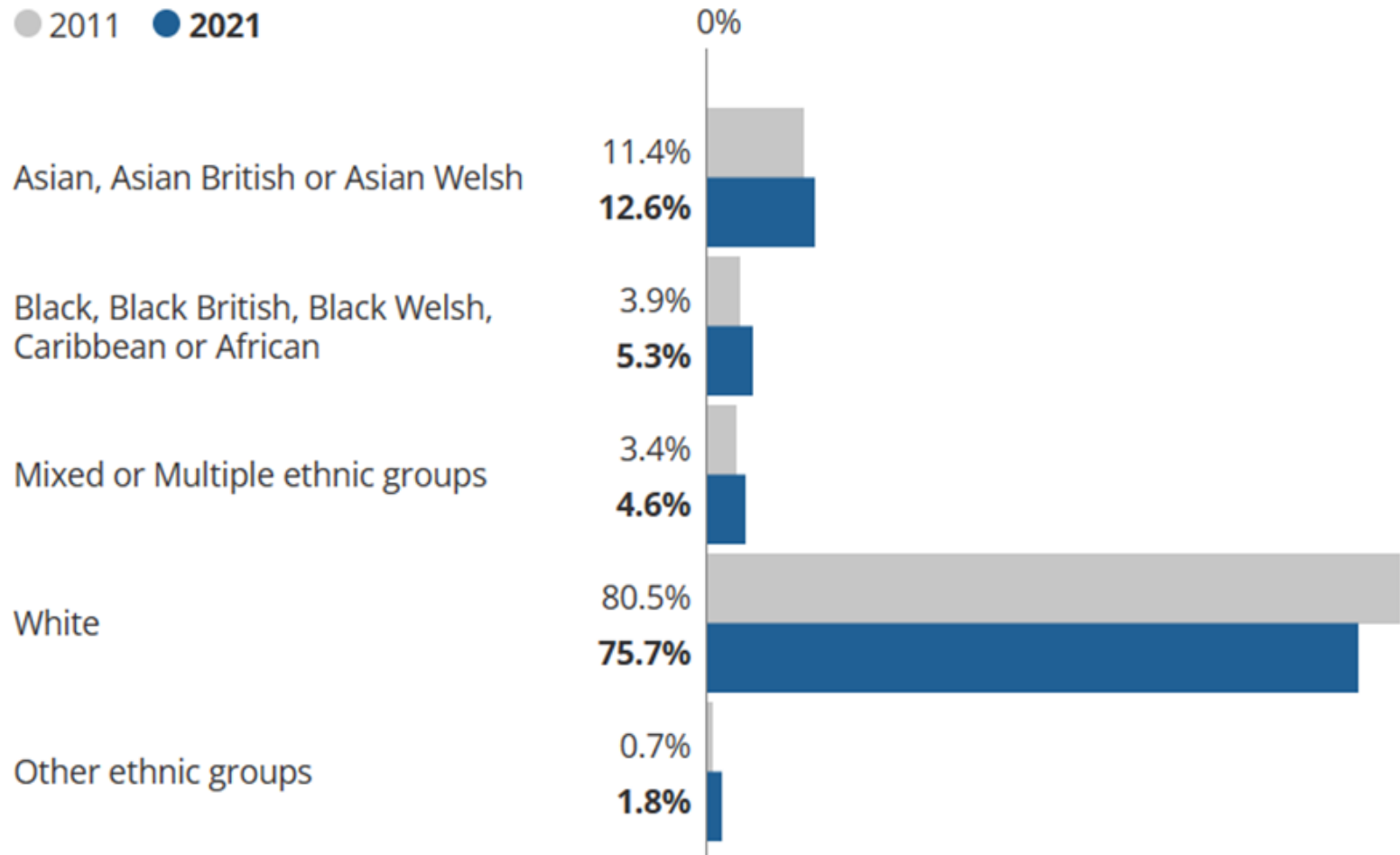
# 2021 Census, the population of Bedford reached nearly 190,000

- The population of Bedford is 187,466, according to mid-2022 population figures published by the ONS.
- In Bedford, diversity is vividly evident, with the population boasting a rich mix of ethnicities: White (75.7%), Asian (12.6%), Black (5.3%), Mixed (4.6%), and Other (1.8%).
- Despite this, residents are increasingly identifying with "No religion" (34.1% in 2021).

# 2021 Census, the population of Bedford reached nearly 190,000

Percentage of usual residents by ethnic group, **Bedford**

● 2011 ● 2021



# How Can We Make a Difference?

Purpose of Diversity & Inclusion:

Diversity isn't just beneficial; it's essential for our growth as individuals and as a community.

Through diverse experiences, we deepen our understanding of God's love and broaden our perspectives. Celebrating diversity is a testament to the vastness of God's family.

As we journey through Lent, let us reflect on the profound call to embrace diversity and inclusion. By living out God's love for all people, we enrich our communities and bear witness to the transformative power of Christ's love. Together, let us commit to building a more inclusive and diverse church, reflecting the beauty of God's kingdom here on earth.

# How Can We Make a Difference?

1. **Intentionality:** We must be deliberate in fostering diversity and inclusion within our churches.
2. **Education:** Rise awareness of racial justice issues and challenge unconscious biases.
3. **Collaboration:** Partner with other churches and faith groups to promote inclusivity.
4. **Awareness Events:** Mark key events like Black History Month and Race Equality Week to foster dialogue and understanding.
5. **Addressing Community Needs:** Respond to the practical needs of our communities, tackling issues like poverty and inequality.



# Questions

1. how does the biblical foundation of equality and unity in Christ influence our understanding of diversity and inclusion within the church?
2. In what ways does the demographic makeup of Bedford exemplify the diversity present within our communities and churches?
3. What practical steps are mentioned in the presentation for promoting diversity and inclusion within church communities?

# Questions

4. How can churches effectively partner with other faith groups and organizations to foster greater inclusivity and diversity?
5. How can churches address practical needs such as poverty and inequality as part of their commitment to diversity and inclusion?
6. What are some potential barriers to achieving diversity and inclusion within church communities, and how can these barriers be addressed?