

Diocesan Mission

2019 Diocesan Synod Report



The Diocesan Mission Team has a clear purpose of inspiring, enthusing and serving churches in Mission, seeking spiritual and numerical growth across generations. We continue to explore a fresh and vibrant vision to grow the Kingdom of God, energising churches to ensure there is a growing and sustainable Christian witness

Matthew 5: 14-16 (MSG)

You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand - shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

in every local community. In partnership with clergy and laity across the Diocese, we promote healthy churches, ensuring we are appropriately resourced to evangelise and grow disciples of Christ, as well as develop welcome, worship, stewardship and buildings strategies. We are excited about exploring

changes in society regarding culture and shifting attitudes and ensuring we are resourced, theologically, practically and financially, to tackle the evolving shape of the Church to meet the challenges of mission in coming decades. We promote existing and new models of church, encouraging a blended economy, to grow congregations that flourish through serving each other and our communities. The team focused its work around four critical mission priorities in 2018;

Being Rooted in Prayer; Inspiring Young Generations and their Families (in church, at school and in community); Developing a Culture of Whole Life Discipleship and Confident Evangelism; and Urban Transformation in Critical Mission Priority Areas.



Mission Priority One: Being Rooted in Prayer

Prayer underpins Mission and all we do. We had the most amazing time as the Diocese participated in *Thy Kingdom Come*, the global wave of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost, with many of our Parishes organising numerous creative prayer events, daily prayers at Foxhill House and Woodlands, prayer walks and a pilgrimage on Pentecost Sunday from Foxhill to the Cathedral. This all culminated in



a special National Beacon Event at the Cathedral, as we prayed for many more people to come to know Christ. We hope this acts as a catalyst for an even deeper corporate prayer life in the Diocese for years to come. As we seek to go deeper in prayer, the Mission Team reminds you that the first Thursday of each month has been a day to encourage prayer for young generations in parishes.

Mission Priority Two: Inspiring Young Generations

The Diocesan Missioner and Youth, Children and Families' Missioner have made significant progress in developing strategy and identifying the critical mission priorities amongst young generations, specifically supporting parishes, deaneries and mission hubs in their mission and ministry, continuing to build a real momentum around the Diocese. As we see a positive attitude cultivated in parishes towards children, young people and their families, we expect to see a corresponding level of growth. We've had great fun being present beyond the 'church walls' at such events as Creamfields, led by churches from the Great Budworth Deanery, Geronimo Family Festival and at the Cheshire Show. We already have over 50 employed parish Youth, Children and Family Ministers. The Diocese also currently has six chaplains in schools seeing approximately 6000 students every week.

We are delighted at how our Young Generations Mission and Strategy Hub and Network is flourishing as we pray, worship, develop strategy and plans, engage as a learning community and have fun together. Further support and training was provided by the National Life Events Team to parishes through the *Baptism Matters*

training day attended by 70 people; and *the Identity, Mental Health and Young People* training day, attended by 40 people, run in collaboration with the Social Responsibility and Ministry teams. During 2018, we have established a 'Millennials Giving' working group to consider how we might best encourage generous giving from young adults.



Mission Priority Three: Developing a Culture of Whole Life Discipleship and Confident Evangelism

The Diocese of Chester became a pilot Diocese for *Setting God's People Free* in January 2018. This allowed the Diocesan Mission Team the opportunity to further develop partnerships with *Lead Academy*, the *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC)*, *Jesus Shaped People* and *National Weekend of Invitation*. These partnerships enable the DBF to offer quality teaching resources suitable for all parishes and contexts. Over 120 people have benefited from being part of LICC Imagine Day training in 2018; 9 of our large (300+ people) churches completed a 2-year Lead Academy journey exploring spiritual and numerical growth.

As we explore opportunities to connect with our communities, we are excited about how sports and fitness can not only encourage us to be a healthier diocese, but to creatively engage with unchurched people through evangelistic opportunities. The Sports and Fitness Mission and Strategy Hub are developing this work supporting parishes to engage in sports and fitness mission.

The Mission team continue to offer dedicated support to Parishes in vision, strategy development, implementation planning, whole-life discipleship, evangelism, young generations, stewardship/generosity and buildings for mission. The Diocesan Mission Team provided 96 parishes with direct 1:1 support. We continue to provide training events monthly (except July and August) and regularly share knowledge and experience via Deanery Synod presentations.

Parish groups attended the *Big Church Day Out* together at Capesthorne Hall, resulting in well over a 1000 strong diocesan group and the largest group ever to book nationally. This acted as a great witness to the energy and vibrancy of the Body of Christ in our region.

Mission Priority Four: Urban Transformation in Critical Mission Priority Areas

Urban Mission Areas remained a priority for the Diocesan Mission Team in 2018 as there is such alarmingly low church engagement in densely populated areas, often with significant social deprivation. The *Restore Runcorn* Strategy was developed based on conversations with church leaders and Christian organisations in Runcorn, ready for implementation starting in 2019. Mission development work in Birkenhead is ongoing, and the Mission Team is seeking to develop stronger partnerships in other urban centres across the Diocese, learning from what is being trialed in Runcorn.

The Diocesan Mission Team has thrived, operating at different levels:

Contributing at a National Level

We have built relationships contributing to the National Mission Agenda:

- *Thy Kingdom Come* beacon dioceses and champions consultations.
- *National Weekend of Invitation* advisory group and consultations.
- Continued consultation with the *Northern Province Missional Youth Church Network*, *National Youth Evangelism*, *Scripture Union*, children/youth advisers.
- National and northern regional Missioners consultations.
- Blended Economy, Pioneer and *Fresh Expressions* networks and consultations.
- Pilot diocese in *Setting God's People Free* national diocesan learning community.
- *Ministry of Sport* network and consultations.
- Serving as part of the Archbishop of York's Cumbria Mission in March 18.
- Pilot Diocese in the *Taylor Review Pilot*, exploring the sustainability of church buildings for the Greater Manchester area (in partnership with the Diocese of Manchester and Historic England).

Contributing at a Diocesan Level

- Development of the Mission Programme of diocesan events and activities.
- Completed two-year Lead Academy (church growth cultural change journey) with 300+ church leaders and ongoing learning community and clergy network.
- Diocese of Chester recognised as a *Thy Kingdom Come* National Beacon exemplar.
- Developed the *National Weekend of Invitation* Pilot Programme being rolled out in 2019.
- Leaders of Young Generations Hub and Network growing and developing with quarterly worship, prayer, networking and teaching events for leaders across the Diocese.
- Developed the whole-life discipleship toolkit and delivered several LICC Imagine Training Days to 120 people.
- Promoted and hosted a very successful pilot *Journey of Generosity Retreat*. A second pilot will be promoted in 2019.
- Ran a successful *Digital Giving Evening* for Parish Giving Officers and others with an interest in developing and promoting new forms of giving, including on-line giving and giving by card.
- Developed a good working relationship and our knowledge with national Research and Statistics Team to ensure improvement in our Mission quantitative and qualitative measurement systems and research.
- Led *Foundations for Ministry/IME/CMD* Mission training days.
- Buildings for Mission training days delivered, including buildings maintenance, fundraising, church building projects and opening church buildings for visitors, with presentations at church warden's training days and at the majority of deanery synods.

Contributing at a Deanery Level

- Planning continues with the Runcorn Mission Area, identifying the strategy for growth going forward based on *Restore Runcorn*.
- Continued review of next steps following the Believe in Birkenhead Mission.
- Our desire is to drive a culture of continuous dialogue for mission development, so we contribute on a regular basis to CAMPC, MAMPC, Deanery Synods and Chapters, Parishes and Church Services.

Contributing at a Parish Level

- Facilitating Parish Vision, Strategy and Mission Planning Days.
- Ongoing consultancy and support regarding growing Ministry and Mission amongst young people.
- Support in developing and recruiting roles for young generations leaders.
- Encouraging prayer with, among and for young generations in local areas.
- Consultancy on Mission and All-In Worship with ongoing development of Worship Audit Toolkit.
- Fundraising support to churches that are planning building projects exceeding a total of £4.5million.
- 1-2-1 support to realize the potential of church buildings for mission and ministry.
- Ongoing support of Parish Giving Officers.
- Ongoing work of advising, supporting and encouraging parishes in Christian giving matters including, advice and assistance with 'Parish Giving Initiatives' and 'Annual Reviews of Giving'.
- Support and advice for pastoral reorganisation.

Revd. Lyn Weston, Diocesan Missioner

March 2019

The Great Commission - Matthew 28:16-20 (NIV)

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go 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 I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."