

# The Vision and Strategy of the Diocese of Canterbury

## An Introduction and Summary

The vision and the strategy for the Diocese that is presented in the accompanying document has developed over a number of years. It builds on values that have informed and inspired the work of the diocese – in its parishes, chaplaincies, schools and diocesan organisations – over the last decade.

This is an exciting time in the life of the diocese as we look to refine our strategy and build ways and means to put it into action. The end point and goal is the growth of the Kingdom of God in East Kent and we want and expect to see more people reached, more lives changed and more disciples grown in revitalised parishes, benefices and deaneries over the life of this strategic plan.

The building blocks of this document are our Mission, Vision, Strategy, Outcomes and Implementation.

- **Our Mission** is encapsulated in the phrase Changed Lives → Changing Lives. At the heart of all we do is a vision of transformation: of ourselves and of our communities through an encounter with Jesus Christ.
- **Our Vision** is that, by God's grace our churches will be a people who are:
  - Confident and creative disciples of Christ
  - Rooted in scripture and drenched in prayer
  - Living gratefully, giving generously, caring for creation and sharing the gospel
  - Growing in number and expectations – of God and ourselves
  - Motivated by justice and love, open to the Spirit and ready for adventure.
- It is at the local level – in parishes and communities – where the people are and where the ministry of the church can change lives and grow disciples. These can, in turn, contribute to changing other lives.
- **Diocesan Strategy**, therefore, is to enable the local church to share in God's Mission. Our strategic commitment is, therefore, to develop tools and resources to promote and enable growth in mission and ministry at the local level.
- **Our Outcomes**, described as 'bold', are how we will see that our strategy is working. These Three Bold Outcomes are:
  - Doubling the Number of Children and Young Disciples
  - 200 New Christian Communities
  - Every Parish, Benefice and Deanery showing signs of Revitalization

These outcomes look to 2030. They are bold in their ambition and deliberately so.

## Current Projects

The Diocese has been working to this Vision and Strategy over recent years. More recent analysis and consultation have been undertaken which leads us to some specific future strategic priorities (see below) but these do not come from nowhere. A number of current projects show that the Diocese has been working to enable the flourishing of God's Church in East Kent. Examples include:

- Successful Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB) funded **Resourcing Churches** in Margate and Maidstone. Each is showing good growth, not least among children and young people. They are also developing future leaders to support revitalization elsewhere in the diocese.
- A programme of **Youth Ministers**, again SMMIB funded, to provide seven posts across the diocese. We currently have five of these filled.
- **Ignite**, known as 'Church, but not as you know it', developed from the ministry of St Paul's, Cliftonville, Margate. This is a successful model for establishing new Christian communities in areas of high deprivation. Previous funding (SDF) enabled the planting of Ignite Hubs in Maidstone, Ashford and two in Herne Bay. There are now also, thanks to further external funding, additional hubs in Aylesham and Canterbury.
- In partnership with **Leading your Church into Growth** (LyCiG) we have put on day courses for clergy and lay leaders from around the diocese. Evidence of growth is already being seen in places where work with families with children is prioritised.
- The **Social Justice Network** is a charity which co-ordinates the diocese's social responsibility work. Priorities have included extensive work with refugees, prison leavers, the homeless and the poor.

## Consultation

In the last year we have undertaken three specific exercises in consultation.

- Under the title 'Three Things' each parish has been encouraged to undertake an exercise in Mission Action Planning. These plans have been collected and analysed at diocesan level to identify common and cross-cutting themes with a view to identifying what support might be needed.
- Area Deans and Lay Chairs have undertaken Health and Vitality Reviews with the Archdeacons to begin to identify where support might be needed to help the church locally engage with the strategy.

- A Clergy Welfare Survey has been undertaken to ascertain the wellbeing and the needs of the clergy.

These exercises have led us to refine our strategic priorities.

### **Future Strategic Priorities**

The future priorities of the Diocese of Canterbury fall into the following four areas, with a fifth, cross-cutting, area:

- Children and Young People
- Attendance Revitalization
- Leadership
- Finance

And, running through all four, a Diocesan Rural Ministry Strategy.

Fuller details of all this are in the strategy document.

### **Conclusion**

In Matthew 28. 19-20, Jesus says to his disciples at the Ascension:

*Go therefore 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 that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'*

Making disciples is at the core of our diocesan strategy. Making disciples happens best at the place where those disciples are found – which is locally, where the churches are. The priority for central diocesan structures is to support and build up the local. We wish to see more disciples of all ages, and we wish to see those disciples growing in faith and in confidence. In addressing the four priorities above we expect to see this wish turning into reality by God's grace and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

**Will Adam**

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