

Living Christ's Story **Setting the Framework for Deanery Planning**

Presentation to Deanery Synod

February 2022

***“Lord, what do
you want of
me?”***



Arca de la Cruz



***“Lord, we do not
know what to do,
but our eyes are
on you.”***

We believe that we have a God whose story we are called out to live out in the places where we are:

- Transforming lives
- Transforming communities
- Transforming the world

We believe that we will be Living Christ's Story if we:

- Become more like Christ
- Reach people we currently don't
- Grow churches of missionary disciples
- Transform our structures and finances

We start with a mixed picture of church life across the diocese:

Real signs of hope – churches serving their communities, lives being changed, extraordinary resilience and creativity through the pandemic

But overall:

- we are getting smaller and older,
- we see increasing pressure on our leaders (clergy and church officers),
- we have significant financial challenges at parish and diocesan level

We know we have to change:

We want more people to know Christ and to be part of his church

We want God to stir up our:

- Clarity of vision – seeing things as they are and how they could be
- Imagination – we serve a Creator God
- Boldness – God has promised he will always be with us as we step out in faith
- Decisiveness – we need to embrace change where change is needed – standing still is not an option

What is needed next?

- A Deanery Plan 2022 - 2031
- A 10 year plan, not a quick fix
- Planning to see:
 - Growth in health and numbers
 - Release and renewal of ministry
 - Transformation of our structures and finances, balancing the diocesan budget
- ***Your*** plan for ***your*** deanery – led by DLT, supported and approved by Deanery Synod, in conversation with the Bishop and Archdeacon

Our overall aim is to see growth in the diocese...

...but we know it won't happen everywhere

We need to have a variety of different approaches for the varied contexts in our deaneries

**Revitalize
Parishes**

Hub Church

**Church
Planting**

**Mission
Communities**

**Reduce
Provision**

**Simplify
Structures**

Online Church

Your Ideas



In the Parish Consultation you told us that clergy and other ministers are feeling burdened by the amount of administration needed to run their churches

We will be working to:

- Simplify parish structures
- Provide clear, easy-to-access support and advice
- Share more tasks across deaneries or Ministry Units

Money is not *the* thing but it is *a* thing – and we can't keep running widening budget deficits forever

We have made the decision to use Diocesan reserves over a 10 year period to invest in missional growth and in achieving financial sustainability

This will mean we need to see:

- an increase in Free Will Offer from 2019 levels – our aim is that each Ministry Unit will be able make a Free Will Offer which is above their direct cost of ministry by 2026
- a small reduction in the total number of stipendiary posts and diocesan costs
- reimagining how and where we resource mission and ministry

We will review this strategy in 2025 to see if it is working.

What is the alternative?

Carry on as we are:

1. Steady, attritional decline in stipendiary clergy numbers to try to avoid running out of money
2. The majority of our churches getting smaller and older
3. Constant anxiety

We have asked Deanery Leadership Teams to:

- Engage with *all* parishes to create a plan for health and growth
- Pay special attention to Ministry Units which are struggling in terms of attendance, church life or finances

We need all parishes to engage with this process if this ambitious plan to grow is to be achieved.

DLTs are starting to work on Deanery Planning process
consultations with parishes will be key

May: DLTs will share initial thinking with Deanery Synod

July: Deanery Synod to be asked for approval for Plan

August / September: Deanery Plans will be consolidated into a Diocesan Plan for consideration by Diocesan Leadership Team, Archbishop's Council and Diocesan Synod

Questions?

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