

The Diocese of St Albans



Easter Monday Pilgrimage

A Statement by the Vacancy in See Committee for the Crown Nominations Commission

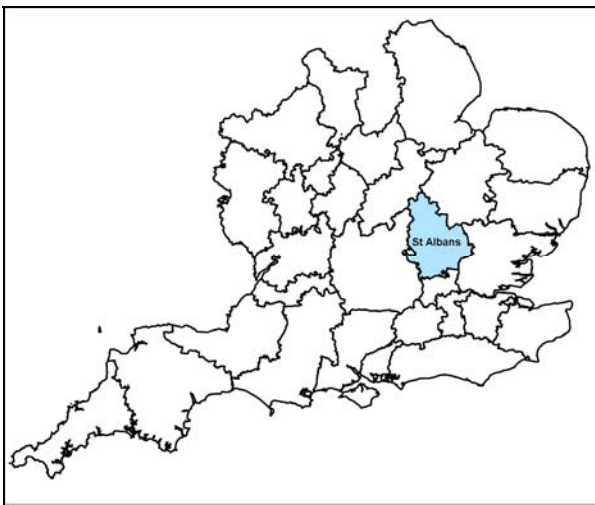
THE DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS

The first part of the Statement of Needs contains an outline of the geographical and social factors relating to the Diocese of St Albans and how those factors affect the work of the Church of England. The second part suggests some of the issues where the role of the Bishop will be critical and the third part sets out the qualities sought in the new Bishop.

Part 1

Factual Information about the Diocese and its organisation

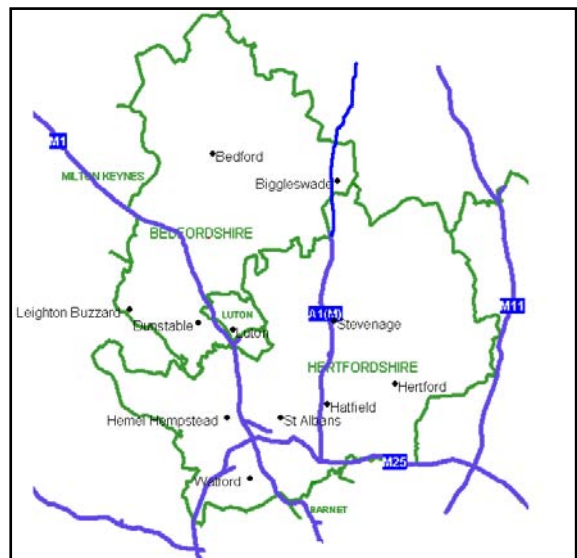
1. The Diocese of St Albans stretches from the northern half of the London Borough of Barnet through the Counties of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. Communications are generally good, so that all parts of the Diocese can be reached within one and a half hour's travelling time from the Bishop's house at St Albans.



Map of the Province of Canterbury

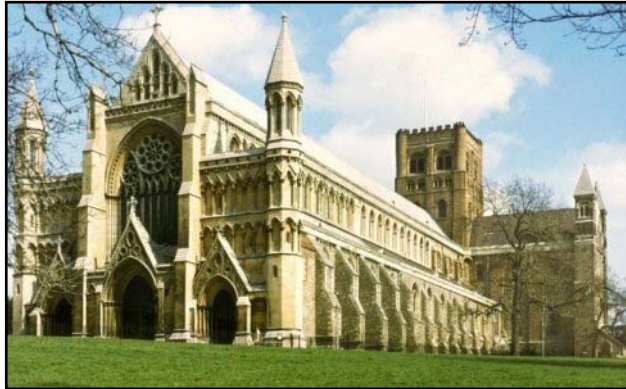
Geographically, the escarpment of the Chiltern Hills lies midway between north Hertfordshire and south Bedfordshire causing something of a north-south division, with the northern part looking towards Bedford and the southern part looking towards London. Perhaps surprisingly, for regional government purposes, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire are both in the Eastern Region.

2. One third of the diocese is rural - with the attendant issues of small numbers and small resources, eg in Sharnbrook deanery (population 15,853) in north Bedfordshire, 24 of the 28 churches are Grade I listed. There are great contrasts between the more sparsely populated rural districts of east Hertfordshire and north Bedfordshire, and the modern industrial conurbations of Luton and Dunstable (population 241,901), Watford/Rickmansworth (population 102,291) and the north London suburbs. The Diocese includes the new town areas of Stevenage, Hemel Hempstead, Letchworth Garden City, Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield, the larger towns of Bedford, Hitchin, St Albans, Leighton Buzzard and a number of smaller market towns. There are many small and large villages, mostly now with commuter populations, and there is a large minority ethnic population, notably in Bedford, Luton and Watford. Many of these are of the second or third generation, and they are mainly Asian and African Caribbean families, although there are also considerable Italian communities in Bedford and Watford, and Irish and Polish communities in Luton.



Map of the geographical boundaries within the Diocese of St Albans

3. Total populations recorded for 2006 are; Bedfordshire 578,061; and Hertfordshire and Barnet 1,080,701. Bedfordshire has the highest national birth rate, and Hertfordshire has the highest national divorce rate. Within the Diocese, employment in general tends to be in modern light engineering, computers and service industries. The airport at Luton is a major employer. The new Universities of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire have substantial student populations. However, the population is highly mobile, with large numbers commuting to work outside the Diocese, significantly to London, by rail or car.
4. The See of St Albans was founded by Order in Council in 1877, but the foundation of the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban is much more ancient, dating from 793 A.D.

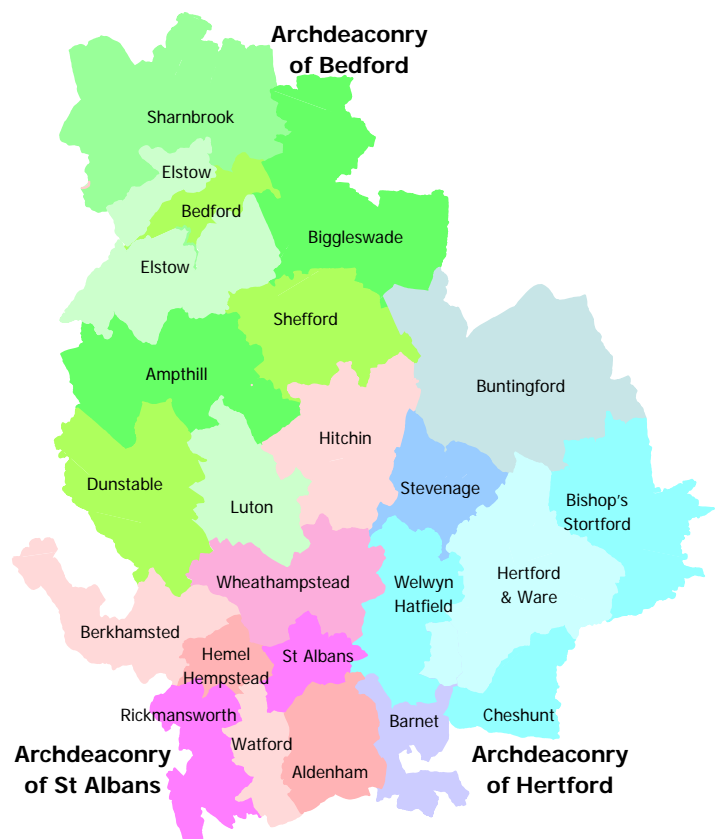


Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban

Much of the present building was constructed in Norman times, with a major restoration during the 19th century. St Albans Abbey, as it is more commonly known, draws very large numbers of visitors, nearly half a million at the last annually recorded count. The Chapter House providing visitor facilities, library and offices was opened by the Queen in 1982, enabling the Abbey to play a full part as the Mother Church of the Diocese. The Abbey is also a thriving parish church with a large regular congregation. It is much used for diocesan events, e.g. the Easter Monday pilgrimage, and for local and community purposes, e.g. degree ceremonies.

5. Administratively, the Diocese is divided into three Archdeacons; St Albans and Hertford in Hertfordshire, and the Archdeaconry of Bedford in Bedfordshire, corresponding roughly with the County boundaries.

The Suffragan Bishops of Hertford and Bedford each carries out their ministry in the appropriate County as well as having specific diocesan responsibilities but there is no formal system for area bishops.



Archdeacons and Deaneries of the Diocese of St Albans

6. There is a total of 580 clergy, who are beneficed, licensed, or hold the Bishop's permission to officiate. Of these, the stipendiary parochial clergy currently number 270, and about one third of them are engaged in rural ministry, some with multi-parish benefices in their care.

	2005	2006	2007
• Stipendiary clergy	271	272	270
• Non-stipendiary clergy	91	85	100
• Clergy with Permission to Officiate	*	*	210
• Readers	214	226	220
• Accredited lay ministers	*	*	25

7. The Diocesan Pastoral and Mission Committee (DPMC) is actively reviewing its pastoral policy, including the deployment of clergy, seeking new ways of providing ministry as the number of stipendiary clergy is falling. Presentation to 61 benefices is suspended. A particular challenge will be supporting mission and ministry in specific new development areas where the population is forecast to increase very significantly between 2006 and 2016.

For the last twelve years, the Diocese has used a Deployment Formula based on the number of places of worship, the size of the population and the church membership to determine whether and how parishes need to be combined to ensure a fair distribution of the reducing number of parochial clergy available. Each deanery uses this Formula in reviewing future staffing levels and makes a report to the DPMC every four years. Each of the Deaneries, currently 8 in Bedfordshire and 15 in Hertfordshire and Barnet, has its own pastoral committee.

Mission Statistics			
	2004	2005	2006
Electoral Roll	41,300	41,800	42,100
Usual Sunday Attendance:			
adults	*	*	22,700
children and young people	*	*	4,600
total	28,500	27,000	27,300
Baptisms and thanksgivings	4,600	4,400	4,200
Confirmations	911	979	920
Marriages and blessings	1,990	1,870	1,840
Funerals – church and cremation	6,880	6,450	6,400
Easter communicants	32,200	31,300	33,400

** figures not yet available*

Although most stipendiary clergy are engaged in full-time parochial ministry, the Diocese has maintained its interest in the non-parochial and ministry support sector. There are some forty persons so engaged, including a team of four full-time chaplains working in ecumenically based workplace ministry. In addition there are some ten full-time hospital and hospice chaplains, four full time prison and immigration removal centre chaplains and some eighteen licensed university, college and school chaplains in the independent sector. The Diocese has a substantial interest in church schools, there being seventy-eight voluntary aided schools and fifty-five voluntary controlled schools. These figures exclude the independent schools.

8. The administrative support and advisory staff of the Diocese are mainly based at Holywell Lodge in St Albans, close to the Abbey and the Bishop's House. They include the officers of the two statutory Boards, the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Board of Education, and two statutory committees, the Diocesan Advisory Committee and Diocesan Pastoral and Mission Committee. A review of structures in 2000 has led to the current constitutions for two non-statutory Boards, the Board for Church and Society, which includes areas of Social Responsibility, and the Board for Christian Development, whose staff work more widely across the Diocese but are based at Holywell Lodge.

The Board for Christian Development is responsible for the training and support of ministry in the Diocese which has had and will continue to need the active commitment and encouragement of the Bishop. Recent changes have brought about the reorganisation of the work of the former St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course, and training is now conducted through the Eastern Region Ministry Course based on the Cambridge Federation of Colleges and Courses. It aims to train men and women for a variety of ministries, lay and ordained, in the Church of England and in other denominations. Last year six students were ordained priest and nine deacon. There is a theological college at Oak Hill, on the edge of Barnet on the diocesan boundary. The Diocese has also developed a training scheme for lay Christian discipleship, creating parish based Local Ministry Teams.

9. Relationships with other Christian denominations are good; there is an Ecumenical Committee covering each county, with separate organisations for Churches Together in Hertfordshire, and Churches Together in Bedfordshire. There are over sixty local "Churches Together" groups and twenty-five local ecumenical partnerships. Sixteen Church buildings are shared with other denominations at varying levels of formality. Some of the urban parishes have formed good relationships with local black Christian Churches and there is a Diocesan Inter Faith Adviser.

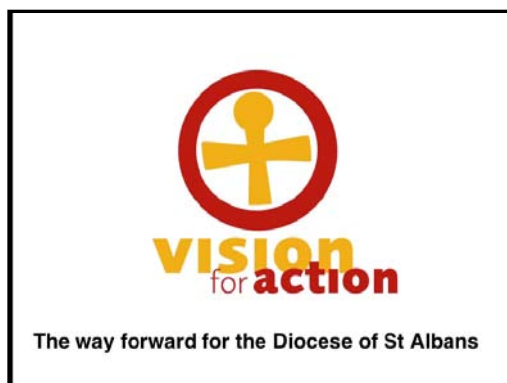


St Patrick's, Grenada

The Diocese has developed thriving formal partnerships or links with overseas churches and dioceses, most notably with the Anglican Dioceses of the North Eastern Caribbean and Aruba (1986), which may extend to include Windward Islands, Belize and Guyana;

the Lutheran diocese of Linköping (2007) in Sweden; three Roman Catholic dioceses - Fano, Urbino and Pesaro in the Marche region of Italy (2008), and a Meissen link is developing with the Protestant Church at Paderborn in Northern Germany. Many individual parishes also have links

10. All patterns of worship in the Church of England are well represented. They vary from the regular forms of traditional worship in small, rural or town congregations to the modern forms of worship to be found particularly in the fast growing eclectic congregations in some of the larger towns. Some of the latter may well seek Mission Area status. Taken as a whole, across the Diocese, there is a long established pattern of Eucharistic worship in many parishes, with much variety in ceremonial and liturgy. A joint Anglican-Methodist Synod has been held to study "Fresh Expressions" in worship. Half of the parishes in the Diocese have begun a fresh expression of church.
11. The ordination of women to the priesthood has led to sixty-nine women priests now holding stipendiary posts and forty-four non-stipendiary posts. The outgoing Bishop and his staff have been strong supporters of the ordination of women to the priesthood. They also exercise pastoral care and consideration for those who feel unable to accept the General Synod decision. Of the three hundred and thirty four parishes, ten have been granted extended episcopal oversight. This area of Church life has deep emotional roots and will continue to need sympathetic care and sensitivity, particularly with regard to appointments.
12. As well as a long established system of Ministerial Review undertaken largely by the Suffragan Bishops and Archdeacons on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop, the Diocese has a separate well established Assisted Self Appraisal scheme on a voluntary basis, for Clergy and Readers, which gives them a chance to review problems and get them into perspective, in peace and quiet and in complete confidence with an "outside" Assistant..
13. The Diocese is often perceived as wealthy. In fact it has only very limited sources of historic income and the loss of the historic contributions from the Church Commissioners has had its effect upon the diocesan budget. Personal incomes vary widely, from areas of considerable affluence to larger areas of social deprivation such as Luton which suffers from low wages and high unemployment in a multi-faith area. As a percentage of personal income, levels of giving to the Church are relatively low and a major Stewardship initiative is to be launched in autumn 2008 to encourage more realistic giving. The role of the Bishop, supported by the Stewardship Development Officer, will be key.
14. The Diocesan Synod has recently agreed to consider whether the current Parish Shares Scheme could be improved. Approximately 330 parishes will in 2008 be asked to contribute some £10.34million, as against £10.03million in 2007. In 2007 the current scheme managed to produce around 94% of the total sum requested and it is hoped that any changes to the current scheme may result in a higher collection rate. The stipend for an Incumbent will rise to £21,900 per annum on 1st April 2008.
15. The need for a continuous review of priorities and structures in the light of a realistic assessment of available resources, has led to a programme for development in the Diocese entitled "Vision for Action" which presents the challenge of 'Proclaiming the Kingdom of God'. It sets out aims for the diocese, its boards, committees and parishes in five priority areas:



- MISSION – To work together in love and commitment to proclaim the Kingdom of God
- MINISTRY – To encourage, support and develop the ministry of each person
- CHURCH BUILDINGS – To encourage each parish to develop the use of church buildings as places of worship and mission
- STEWARDSHIP – To strengthen the commitment to stewardship amongst clergy and laity in order to further the mission of the church
- CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - To encourage and develop the necessary skills within parishes and deaneries to bring the Gospel to children and young people through worship, schools and other contexts

It has the potential for being a considerable inspiration for change under the leadership of the Bishop.

Part 2

Issues facing the Diocese

Vision for Action was developed as a response to changes taking place both nationally and locally, within the church and in the wider society. These changes are not unique to the Diocese of St Albans although their relative significance for St Albans may differ from other dioceses. Some of the particular issues where the role of the Bishop will be critical include:

1. **Developing a strategy for mission and ministry and actively encouraging its implementation.**

The priority for the new Bishop will be to provide leadership and vision for meeting the challenges and changing needs of the church. Like other dioceses, St Albans faces a reduction in the number of stipendiary clergy, pressure in maintaining a pattern of regular worship, especially Eucharistic, increasing stress on clergy and their families, and pressures on many parishes with expensive historic church buildings. In order to address these issues, the Diocese will be:

- i) seeking new opportunities, for example through Fresh Expressions and the use of Bishop's Mission Orders,
- ii) nurturing Christian discipleship through the encouragement and introduction of Local Ministry teams, lay education, and the enhancement and extension of a culture of shared learning amongst clergy and lay people, and
- iii) supporting pastoral reorganisation to achieve the most effective and equitable distribution of ministerial resources.

2. **Ensuring the Church has a presence in major new developments arising from increases in population.**

The Diocese has a significant number of large and new residential developments planned within its boundaries. Several of these are large enough to have populations of about 10,000 and may require the development of new styles of

ministry. The Bishop will have a key role in furthering ecumenical links to ensure a Christian presence in each development from its outset. It will be important for the Bishop to relate to structures of society beyond the church to ensure due recognition is given to the spiritual needs of those moving into new communities.

3. **Providing strong pastoral support and oversight to leaders in the church, particularly clergy and their families.**

Reduced numbers of stipendiary clergy and significant changes facing the church are having a serious impact on the welfare of those currently in post. The role of Bishop as pastor is seen as critical to maintaining the morale of clergy and enabling them to cope with the pressures and changes they face. Whilst it is recognised that the Bishop will need to rely on senior staff, counsellors and other professionals to share in this task, it is important that he has good and supportive relations with clergy and staff, and is personally accessible when appropriate.

4. **Developing a more realistic understanding of Christian giving.**

In comparison with other dioceses, the level of financial giving by parishioners in St Albans ought to be significantly improved. A diocesan-wide stewardship campaign is planned for the autumn of 2008, and this is seen as an ongoing initiative where the leadership and teaching of the Bishop will be critical in raising expectations.

5. **Holding together the differing views of church members in the Diocese on issues which concern the Anglican Communion as a whole.**

In common with other parts of the Anglican Communion, the Diocese has experienced tensions and differences created by diverse views on issues of human sexuality and the ordination of women. While having clear views himself, the new Bishop will need to be sensitive to those with differing convictions. As the focus of unity, his capacity to hold the inevitable tensions in a spirit of grace will be important in order to proclaim the love of Christ to the world.

Part 3

Qualities sought in the new Bishop

The Diocese therefore seeks:

- a. A leader with vision, enthusiasm and passion who will inspire and encourage the people of the Diocese.
- b. A person of stature, willing and able to fulfill national (and international) responsibilities, but actively and visibly engaged in the life of the Diocese.
- c. A person with parochial experience and aware of the problems, opportunities, challenges and joys of parish life.

- d. A proven teacher and preacher, able to interpret and articulate the wisdom and faith rooted in Scripture and the teachings of the Church which he has worked out in his own life.
- e. An effective and adept communicator who will engage with those within and beyond the Church through lively and informed debate.
- f. A person with a heart for mission and evangelism, recognizing the sense of risk at the heart of the gospel, and exploring with the diocese the contemporary nature of the *Missio Dei*, seeking where God wants us to be.
- g. A person self-confident enough to take tough decisions, to "grasp nettles" and take risks for the sake of the Kingdom.
- h. A pastor of his people, able especially to give active and sensitive support to the clergy and their families both personally and with others.
- i. A conciliator and consolidator, who will strive to sustain the balance which is at the heart of Anglicanism, working across, and valuing, the range of traditions contributing to this balance.
- j. A person of conviction, but sensitive to, and able to build bridges between those holding differing views.
- k. An enabler who will draw on the ministerial and administrative gifts and skills of others.
- l. A person with an open and warm approach to our partners in other churches, valuing the richness of ecumenical engagement.
- m. A person able to recognize and value multi-faith communities as an important presence in the diocese and willing to engage in inter-faith dialogue.
- n. A realist who will work within financial and legal frameworks but with the ability to use them imaginatively, encouraging people to 'dream dreams'.
- o. A person who will interpret the work and witness of Jesus Christ so as to engage the spirituality of those outside formal faith systems.
- p. Above all a person whose life and ministry is rooted in prayer.