
The new, combined Board for Mission and Ministry began at the beginning of last year, chaired by the Rt Revd Bishop Michael Beasley.

Formerly, there have been separate diocesan boards undertaking governance and oversight of the two diocesan departments, Mission and Ministry. The introduction of this one new Board has brought about a breadth of understanding between departments and the benefits of cohesive and shared communications.

The work outlined in this Annual Report is presented for the two departments.

Mission Department

Aim of Mission Dept: In support of the diocesan vision, *Living God's Love*, to resource churches to respond to God's mission in their local context and help develop flourishing Christ-centred communities where people are inspired to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Highlights and Achievements

Flourishing Churches - Mission Action Planning / Stewardship

The new Flourishing Churches Team started work at the beginning of 2018. The first few months were spent listening to parishes - requests and concerns - which helped to shape the methods of work the Team offer. The methods of work include:

- i. Learning Communities, where parishes are invited to participate in a specifically characterised group, in which they can share, receive training and support each other,
- ii. Work with individual parishes, as identified in the Mission Action Planning process.

The intention of these new methods are that ongoing, meaningful relationships can be established, which will last for around 12 - 14 months, and so bring appropriate challenge and accountability to the development of work in the parish. Past experience has shown that longer-term relationships with a parish will bring more positive outcomes, than single interventions.

So far, the Flourishing Churches Team have worked with 17 individual parishes and 2 Learning Communities, which have included 19 clergy.

Our third main mode of work is training. Running workshops and events to engage and support attendees. In 2018, 157 people were engaged across all the workshops offered: LYCiG (Leading your Church into Growth), Growing Medium Sized churches with Bob Jackson and Growing Generous Giving. We are delighted that feedback has been wholly positive.

Growing the Faith of Children and Young People

- A Development Pack, supported by training elements has been introduced this year. This has begun to be piloted in several parishes. The idea is to help churches identify next steps, celebrate progress, and focus their ministry on where real difference can be made wherever they are.
- More structured support for parishes. A specific focus on one particular deanery has led to three small grants being made for work in those parishes, the creation of a Pray and Play corner, and several churches beginning to think of themselves as capable of doing children's ministry.
- Multiple training events, including a Baptism day for curates which was called "the most inspiring IME session I've ever been to" on one feedback form.

- A first event around those engaging young people in sacramental ways, which were inter-generational and fun, called 'Serve Them Right!'.
- A key highlight, in partnership with three other dioceses, was the invitation from the United States of Mark Yaconelli, who has written a deeply influential book felt both on sides of the Atlantic. He led a retreat day, an evening with volunteers and engaged young people at a youth event in St Albans. It is hoped that these catalytic events were ones that encouraged clergy, youth ministers, both employed and voluntary, and young people in enjoying the presence of Christ in non-anxious ways.
- The visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury to St Alban's Thy Kingdom Come Beacon Event, was a challenging and extraordinary event on many levels. A significant moment was when the Archbishop gathered those facing exams to bless a prayer-box of exam requests brought by young people. This was our highest social media moment and garnered attention but also made the relevance of what young people were grappling with and not just another 'youth' event.
- In 2018, 214 people engaged in training provided by the team and 93 churches engaged in consultancy and learning communities to support the development of youth and children's work.

Transforming Communities and Social Justice

- The Bishop of St Albans' Harvest Appeal 2018 'Give peas a chance' supported a project in Malawi helping farmers to grow a thriving crop of pigeon peas, in the changing, challenging climate, which had formerly destroyed their regular crops. The churches and schools of our diocese have shown generous support to this Bishop's Harvest Appeal, and we again look forward to announcing a total donated in excess of £50,000. *Pictured: Frank standing by his mature pigeon pea plants just before harvesting begins.*
- The CJNI Conference – held Sat 6th October 2018 – 'Welcome & Inclusion – exploring how churches can be more welcoming of people who live with Mental Ill-Health'. A professional and widely-experienced group came together to host this day conference, open to all, to bring greater awareness to the issue and difficulties associated with mental ill-health. Most importantly, workshops and discussion were encouraged to give consideration to ways in which we, in our churches, can extend a positive welcome to people living with mental ill-health. *Pictured: The Revd Vanessa Kerswill of Soul Survivor Church, Watford, explains how their Connect Café, welcomes 'everybody' in a non-threatening environment, with coffee, newspapers, table games, lunch and an invitation to Bible study.*

Reaching New People - Making new disciples of Christ through fresh expressions of church

Throughout 2018 there has been an encouraging level of engagement within the RNP project (see [Appendix A](#)).

Vision Days

In 2018 the Reaching New People team ran two Vision Days, in May and October respectively, and these saw 294 people attend across the two days.

Initial engagement

Over the last year 965 people made an initial engagement with one of our Fresh Expressions Officers.

RNP Training

Across the year 411 people engaged with a piece of RNP training, whether the Mission Shaped Ministry Course, or our bespoke training based on the RNP development cycle.

Indicator packs

By the end of 2018 there were 25 fresh expression churches using our Indicator Packs and reporting back to the team.

Grants

There were 12 fresh expressions either receiving a one off grant in 2018, or another instalment of their three-year grants, and a further 15 applications for grants.

2018 Christmas Advert and Welcome Campaign

Participating in the national C of E Follow the Star campaign, we implemented a project to enhance the welcome offered to visitors at Christmas. This included the Advent Calendar of Helpful Tips, sent to all parishes, which was accompanied by the successful and hugely popular Christmas 2018 diocesan film. The film was shared widely via social media and viewed by many thousands of people unconnected to church.

Thy Kingdom Come - Global Prayer Initiative

This global focused prayer initiative was promoted in our diocese again this year, culminating in the Beacon Celebration on Saturday 19th May at St Albans Cathedral along with Archbishop Justin Welby and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. Over 3,000 people from across Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire joined this great celebration, which was hosted in collaboration with Soul Survivor Watford.

Mission Department Goals for 2019

Flourishing Churches

- LYCiG (Leading your Church into Growth) residential conference in March,
- 3 new mission-focused Learning Communities:
 - 1. Multi-Parish Benefices
 - 2. Medium Sized Churches (self-selected from the Bob Jackson Training event) and
 - 3. Clergy new to post.
- A review and renewal of the MAP process, alongside running Mission Action Planning workshops
- A repetition of the Growing Generous Giving workshop
- Recruit a new P/T Church Growth Officer, and induct the new Officer starting end of January 2019
- Improve our recording of work and discern further the lead measures needed to accurately record the change and impact the work is having.

Youth and Children

- To implement across the diocese the use of the youth and children's work Development Pack and the accompanying training and follow-up procedures.
- To continue the training and consultancy work, and ensure it supports churches wherever they are on the journey of ministry with children and families, also ensuring progress is tracked. This includes the first residential conference, which will be on children and worship across a variety of contexts.

Reaching New People

Grants

In 2018 the structure of RNP grants was re-assessed and updated, with pending applications paused. In 2019 the project will be seeking re-applications for these grants in order to reach more people and equip more leaders.

Becoming church

In 2019 the project will be encouraging the fresh expressions we engage with to start seeing themselves as church; to introduce communion and baptism within the fresh expression itself.

Modes of work

There are six ways that fresh expressions and leaders can engage with RNP: training, consultancy, grants, indicator packs, coaching and learning communities. In 2019 we will be seeking to increase the number of modes each leader or fresh expressions is engaged with.

Prayer

The most important way people can support the RNP project is by praying for us! In 2019 we will be encouraging people to pray for new disciples, particularly by attending one of our regular prayer events.

Discipleship

The goal of making new disciples doesn't stop once people walk through the door! In 2019 we will be making the ongoing discipleship of new Christians a priority. We will be encouraging our fresh expressions in their discipleship; whether through an evangelism course, small groups or Bible studies, we'd love all our fresh expression to be going deeper into God.

Ministry Department 2018

Aim of the Ministry Dept: to support *Living God's Love* by:

- encouraging the growth of all Christians as disciples of Jesus Christ;
- enabling mission-focused ministry throughout the Diocese; and
- equipping all God's people to discern and fulfil their vocation and ministry.

Vocations Team

- In 2018, 18 candidates were ordained **Deacon**, of whom 12 were stipendiary. A further 20 Deacons were ordained **Priest**, of whom 13 were stipendiary.
- In the autumn 2018, 14 candidates started **ordination training**, making a current total of 41 diocesan Ordinands.
- A further 38 **candidates** (the same number as last year) are currently in conversation with a Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO) or Associate DDO (ADDO), and another 16 are seeing a Vocations Adviser.
- During 2018, the Vocations Team ran a number of events aimed at supporting candidates through the processes of discernment, selection and ordination. In particular, the Team held its annual **Archdeaconry Vocations Event** in London Colney. The Team is planning two similar events early for 2019, one in Bedford and one in St Albans.
- Significant work took place to encourage **BAME Vocations**, including agreement of a joint action plan with the Diocesan CMEAC, a consultation day on "Encouraging inclusion and diversity in our churches" and Unconscious Bias training for all Vocations Officers and Advisers.
- The annual **Seeking the Way** course again attracted a diverse attendance.
- In November 2018, Revd Em Coley, one the Associate DDOs, announced that she is moving on to become the national Young Vocations Officer for the Church of England. During 2019 measures will need to be put into place to manage the vacancy, and thought will be given to the future structure of the DDO Team.

Ministry Development Team (MDT)

- In June 2018, 5 people were admitted and licensed into **Reader ministry**. In the academic year which began in the autumn, there were 25 people training alongside Ordinands, with 7 due to be licensed in July 2019.
- The **Periodic External Review** of Reader Training, which was conducted by Ministry Division in 2017, had concluded that the reviewers had confidence in the diocesan Reader training programme. There were, however, 20 recommendations made – the majority of which are minor. In 2018 work began on these recommendations, with 4 being complete, and a further 4 being in progress.

- In 2018, there were an average of 53 curates and 24 Readers in **Initial Ministerial Education (IME) Phase 2**. Training has covered a wide range of topics including: mission; prayer and spirituality; managing yourself in ministry; basic parish management; funerals and ministry to the dying; baptism and Christian initiation; the ministries of healing and reconciliation; and supporting those with mental ill-health.
- The programme of **Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) events** covered a wide variety of topics. Among these were: safeguarding, leadership, becoming more invitational, Preaching on the Gospel of Luke, and pastoral care when babies and children die.
- The MDT provides **grants** for clergy and Readers to undertake training. This year, 132 clergy benefited from grants, with each receiving on average £128. Likewise, 21 Readers received grants with £60 being the average amount given. Furthermore, five retired clergy received grants averaging £80. Thus, the total spent on grants was down on the 2017 figure by about £1,000.
- The MDT supports clergy taking **Extended Study Leave (ESL)**. In 2018, clergy undertook a wide variety of projects, including: developing skills in biblical counselling; exploring the theme of “saintliness as difference” in the Book of Revelation; visiting the Anglican Diocese of Chile; and gaining a deeper understanding of Christian witness in the Muslim majority countries represented in Luton. In total, 18 ESL grants were given with the average grant being £1,028.
- This year 95 clergy went through the **Mission and Ministry Development Review (MMDR)** process. Feedback included: “I wish to place on record my thanks to [my consultant]. She is excellent at conducting reviews [...] approachable, kind and supportive yet honest, plain-speaking and firm. She is able to combine and balance encouragement and affirmation [and] doesn't allow [me] off the hook too easily!” And: “[My consultant] was really helpful and started some thought processes about my workload/health situation that are proving productive.”
- In 2018, a process of **MMDR for Readers** was introduced. This is in its early days, but has been well-received so far.
- Training for **Lay Leaders of Worship (LLWs)** continues to be well-received and their ministry is having a positive impact in their home churches. In 2018, 20 new LLWs were commissioned and a further 15 received training.

Other Areas of Work

- The **Diocesan Worship and Liturgy Committee (DWLC)** continues to organise study days and offer support, training and inspiring ideas to help parishes enhance the quality of their worship. In 2018, the DWLC produced several ideas sheets for creative worship based around seasons and festivals, facilitated study days, supported liturgical teaching as part of IME1 and IME2, and spoke at Deanery Synods to encourage deaneries who had highlighted “Improving the quality of our worship” as a primary focus.
- The **Prayer and Spirituality Resourcing Group (PSRG)** continued to produce the diocesan prayer diary and to run “Holy Listening” – the diocesan course for new Spiritual Directors.
- **Support in your Ministry (SIM)** continues to provide confidential support to ministers across the diocese. In 2018, 120 ministers used the scheme, supported by 60 volunteer assistants. A draft General Synod paper entitled “A Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing”, published late in 2018, makes recommendations for the support of ministers which SIM has been addressing since its inception in 1990, and a submission has been made to Church House advising them of how SIM works in our diocese.