

ST ALBANS DIOCESAN SYNOD

12 MARCH 2016

STRATEGY FOR LAY MINISTRY

1. The *Strategy for Lay Ministry: towards more intentional discipleship*¹ (DS/15/05) was considered by Synod in March 2015. It was well received. The paper made several recommendations, including that time was found on Deanery Synod agendas during the remainder of 2015 “to address both the opportunities afforded, and the challenges raised, by a developing Strategy for Lay Ministry in the Diocese, and to report by 31st March 2016.”
2. This item on the agenda will take the form of an update for Synod. There will be a short opening presentation by The Revd Jeanette Gosney, Parish Development Officer, following which Synod members will be invited to participate in informal ‘buzz’ groups to consider how best they might contribute to the further development of the strategy in their context. There will be a concluding plenary session for feedback, led by The Revd Canon Dr Tim Bull, Director of Ministry.
3. It is not intended that the diocese will develop another strategy that would stand apart from our overall mission. The focus of work over the last 12 months has been on working with the deaneries to obtain views and develop the strategy and, since the October 2015, examining how best to integrate that strategy with *Living God's Love 2020*. The goal is that by 2020 increasing numbers of lay people will be consciously living out their discipleship and responding to Jesus' call to play their part in mission and ministry across the diocese.
4. The diocese is drawing on the work of the National Church in this area. Renewal and Reform is about renewing the Church of England for the 21st century. It consists of several work streams, including Resourcing the Future (finance) and Resourcing Ministerial Education (vocations, ministerial education). A key paper which has influenced our thinking to date is *Developing Discipleship (GS 1977)*². This aims to renew and deepen a conversation about discipleship across the Church of England. One of the ways the paper suggests to move the discussion forward is to commend to dioceses and parishes the *Ten Marks of a Diocese committed to Developing Disciples* (see below). They are very much provisional and represent work in progress. Dioceses are invited to further develop and explore them as a contribution to good practice.
5. Another of the Renewal and Reform work streams is Lay Leadership, addressing how to release the gifts of lay leaders both within and beyond

¹ www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/DS-15-05-Lay-Ministry-Strategy.pdf

² www.churchofengland.org/media/2144200/gs%201977%20-%20developing%20discipleship.pdf

the church. 'It is clear that we need to develop a richer understanding of some of the more profound areas of change and transformation. These will include thinking on how the whole people of God are helped to discern and develop their vocation, how to facilitate lay leadership within and from the church, how to reflect theologically on future patterns of ministry needed in and for different contexts and how to grow disciples in every place who are committed to conforming their own lives to the pattern of Christ and to sharing their faith with others.'³

6. Members of Diocesan Synod are encouraged to play their part in the evolving strategy for the key areas of developing discipleship and lay leadership. It is the role of the Council for Discipleship and Ministry to continue to coordinate this work and bring further proposals to Synod in due course.

Anthony Archer
Chair
Council for Discipleship and Ministry

TEN MARKS OF A DIOCESE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING DISCIPLES **In a diocese committed to developing disciples**

1. ...A lifelong journey of discipleship and growth in Christian maturity is supported and modelled by all.

The diocese offers opportunities for nurturing faith, prayer and discipleship across all generations, so that all Christians continually grow as followers of Jesus in their understanding and their actions.

2. ...The importance of discipleship in daily life is affirmed.

Events, publications and statements at all levels of diocesan activity highlight and support the role of Christians living out their faith as they seek to build the Kingdom of God in the wider community, workplace and home.

3. ...Gatherings for worship celebrate the discipleship of all the baptised.

The discipleship of the whole people of God is celebrated in the liturgy by word and symbol in the worship of congregations and on diocesan occasions such as the induction of ministers into parishes.

4. ...Disciples are equipped to help others to become followers of Jesus.

The diocese offers deliberate planning and resourcing to enable congregations and individuals in their witness to Christ, and develops support networks with those involved in ministries such as lay evangelists or lay pioneers.

³ www.churchofengland.org/media/2442565/gs_2020_-_resourcing_ministerial_education.pdf

5.Diocesan work on vocations is based on the principle that all the baptised are called into God's service.

Vocations advisers strategically promote opportunities to work with all Christians to discern and develop their calling and ministry in both the world and the church.

6. ...Good practice in facilitating learning and formation is developed.

Laity, clergy and parishes are regularly resourced and equipped with high levels of expertise in using facilitation skills, learning methodologies and approaches to catechesis and formation.

7.Gifts of leadership are recognised and developed among all the baptised.

A share in spiritual leadership, governance and witness in the wider community is affirmed by lay and ordained alike, and such affirmation is embedded in diocesan processes (e.g. Articles of Enquiry, Mission Action Plans and Ministry Development Review).

8. ...Innovation and experiment are encouraged in mission, ministry and discipleship.

The diocese promotes and affirms new developments in forms of church life, in which disciples – lay and ordained alike - grow as they are released into new areas of active service and ministry.

9. ...Specific diocesan policies and plans promote discipleship development

As an integral part of diocesan strategy there are current theologically rooted plans, projects and programmes in place to encourage and resource discipleship development.

10. ...Diocesan resources are committed to the development of the whole people of God. Resources of staff and money and time are allocated, and their effectiveness in enabling discipleship development of all regularly reviewed and assessed.

Final version of the Ten Marks: produced by Education Division, Ministry Division and MPA following wider consultation with diocesan networks. December 19 2014