

Transforming Presence

[Draft for Synod, November 2015]

Introduction from Bishop Stephen

When *Transforming Presence* was launched in 2012 it was mostly a set of questions. We knew we couldn't carry on as were. Nearly half our clergy were retiring. Some churches felt beleaguered, unsure of their role or mission. Thousands of people were growing up in the communities we serve knowing little or nothing about the Christian faith and having little or no contact with the church. Our world was as muddled as ever.

Following a large conversation around the diocese which culminated in our first *Time to Talk* consultation, we identified four priorities –

- **Inhabiting the world distinctively**
- **Evangelising Effectively**
- **Serving with accountability**
- **Re-imagining ministry**

At this point none of us were entirely sure what these priorities meant nor where they would lead. But there was a great deal of consensus around the idea that the church needed to be transformed, and that this was part of God's great work of bringing transformation to the world. This idea has stuck and given us a title: *transforming presence*. We, the church of Jesus Christ, are called to be a transforming presence in every community. For this to happen we need to change and grow and allow God's Holy Spirit to shape and transform us.

Since then a good deal of flesh has put on the bones, and at the second *Time to Talk* conference in 2015 we collected a huge amount of information and feedback. So it is now time to reflect on the journey so far and see what the road ahead looks like.

This new document is therefore doing two things. It is mapping the journey of the last three years – celebrating the energy and creativity of the diocese in responding to this great missional challenge so faithfully, and learning from what we have done. It is also mapping the journey ahead – seeing how the good things that have happened in one place might be applied in another; and emphasising and underlining what our priorities mean and how we might put them into practice. Parts of the road map are still unclear, but I suspect this has always been the case for a pilgrim people whose hearts are always restless until they find their final rest in God.

Running through this document are three reflections that I hope will help us work with all that follows:

Luminous and transparent

I have found it helpful to think about our vocation to be a transforming presence as something which is both **luminous** and **transparent**; that is a vocation to shine brightly in the world but also to be open and transparent to each other and to God.

The priorities to inhabit the world distinctively and evangelise effectively are about being a **luminous** church. It is about being a church whose members and ministry shine brightly with the reflected glory of God, for “*all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit*” (2 Cor. 3. 18).

The priorities to serve with accountability and reimagine ministry are about leading a **transparent** life. They are about what it means for each Christian community to faithfully live out its vocation with a deep mutual accountability to one another within our diocese, and for us to develop patterns of ministry that meet the needs, and work within the constraints, of our current missionary situation.

Formed in order to be sent

Second, I want to share a reflection I had with colleagues following a pilgrimage to Holy Island earlier this year. It was from Holy Island, off the Northumbrian coast, that the great missionary St Cedd brought Christianity to a place we now know as Bradwell-on-Sea in Essex in the 7th century AD.

We retraced the steps of St Cedd back to the place where he was formed and sent. We were deeply affected by the idea that Holy Island, and for that matter Bradwell itself, are not places of arrival, but places of *departure*; not only places to which we travel on pilgrimage, but places *from which we are sent* on mission. What Cedd experienced on Holy Island and then replicated in Bradwell, Tilbury, Southminster and Upminster; what then happened at Barking and Waltham Abbey, was 'being formed in order to be sent'.

It is the very pattern Jesus speaks about in St John's gospel on the night before he dies, when he says to his friends, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you" (John 15.9), that is 'I have formed you as a community by the love that I receive from the Father and share with you'; and then on the first night of Easter, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20.21): the community that is shaped and formed by love is now sent out to share that love in the world as representatives of Christ. We continue the ministry of Christ by being his transforming presence in the world.

More church for more impact

Finally, I know from thousands of conversations I have had across the diocese that I speak for every parish when I say we want the church to grow. Even though church growth is not something we can engineer or control, we do need to be clear it is what we desire and what we believe God desires. But it can never be an end in itself. We don't just want a bigger church because the world has somehow taught us big is beautiful. We want there to be *more* church so that there can be *more* impact. Therefore, more church may mean bigger congregations, but it could also mean small congregations having a more focused, prayerful and effective and replicating ministry. It should mean a more diverse church with 'fresh expressions' alongside traditional models of church. It will mean a church in which all of God's people use their various gifts so that the church can flourish and be a blessing to our communities (see Romans 12:5-8).

So although the priorities of *Transforming Presence* have not changed the time has come to look at these continuing priorities afresh and with these three perspectives in mind –

- **Luminous and transparent**
- **Formed in order to be sent**
- **More church for more impact**

+Stephen

I. Inhabiting the world distinctively

This began with exploring the idea of a rule of life; that is, some sort of agreement for all Christians in the diocese to follow a certain set of commitments and disciplines about what it means to live a distinctive Christian life in the world today. But of course there is more than one way of doing this, and much of what each person does and the way they live out their faith each day depends on personality and circumstance.

So although a rule of life remains a good idea for each Christian, there's no plan for a grand diocesan scheme. Instead we have produced something very simple and accessible: a holding cross, and distributed over 10,000 of these through every parish. Many of these holding crosses have been made in our link dioceses in Kenya as part of a small social enterprise project. Thousands of them were blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury in Chelmsford Cathedral when he visited the diocese in 2014 as part of the diocesan centenary celebrations. There is a text from scripture on each cross which is Jesus' own summary of what it means to be faithful: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength ... Love your neighbour as yourself"* (Luke 10.27).

Holding onto faith

The holding crosses are now being used across the diocese to teach people about the importance of a rule of life and open up the issues about day to day faithfulness and discipleship. They are also being used in a number of other ways to communicate the gospel. They promote the principle that the Christian faith is first of all a life to be lived. They also tangibly demonstrate that the Christian faith is something to be held onto in times of need and celebration.

The crosses are being taken into every church school in the diocese. They are being presented to the newly confirmed and the baptised. They are being given to wedding couples and the bereaved. Many Christians in the diocese now carry a cross in their pocket or handbag as a matter of course. This is only a beginning; but it is about becoming a church that holds onto the cross and that sees in this scripture the foundation of all Christian living. The 'Holding On' course (available free on the diocesan website) has been developed as an accompaniment to help us all explore what it means to hold on to a rule of life.¹

More work is needed on this priority, particularly exploring further aspects of missionary discipleship and of what it really means to love God and neighbour in those areas of life where there is injustice, poverty, inequality and exclusion. Also, what does this mean for a creation which is so endangered by humanity's lack of regard for the earth itself? The Environment Group, chaired by Archdeacon Martin Webster, is coming up with some challenging and imaginative ideas for taking this agenda forward. Issues of climate justice are relevant to everyone and particularly important for Christians who have been called to be stewards of the earth. Bishop Roger is also giving fresh thought to other issues of social justice and faith in action. This is all part of a transparent Christian life, where what we do each day as individuals and as Christian communities speaks of the loving purposes of God for the world.

A people of prayer

With this, there is a great desire for us to be a more prayerful church. This was a major conclusion of the recent *Time to Talk 2* consultation. Teaching people how to pray must therefore become a priority for every church. The Diocesan house of prayer at Pleshey, and

¹ www.chelmsford.anglican.org/discipleship/chelmsford-holding-cross

other places in the diocese, and places open as part of the Quiet Garden movement, can offer help and provide spaces for rest and re-creation. In the chapel at Bradwell the diocese is blessed to have a place of pilgrimage and formation – a place to learn how to be sent. Our Cathedral, under the leadership of the Dean, Nicholas Henshall and Canon Theologian Edward Carter will be taking a lead in helping the whole diocese raise its spiritual game. We are supporting our schools in developing their distinctive Christian ethos and teaching religious education.

There is a need for a greater knowledge of and confidence in the scriptures. Many Christians are unsure of their faith and feel hesitant about being able to give an account of the hope that is in them (see 1 Peter 3. 15). All this argues for a renewed emphasis on teaching and forming people in the Christian faith and as disciples of Christ. Making sure that every church is helping people grow in their faith is part of this priority, and the need for this has become clearer over recent years. The *Pilgrim* course, partly developed in the Chelmsford diocese and piloted by about twenty of our parishes, is one of a number of resources that can help in this ministry.

A people of action

Prayer is not about changing God's mind on something, but allowing God to change ours. Therefore we should be ready to become the answer to our own prayers by making sure we put our faith into action in every aspect of our lives: being a disciple of Christ in a missionary church means participating in God's purposes for the world. The faith we celebrate and believe in should always be visible in the lives we lead.

There is a spiritual direction network in the diocese headed up by the Revd Ann Coleman. Some sort of spiritual direction is an excellent way of ensuring Christian formation is into the likeness of Christ and God's priorities for God's world.

Moving forward

As we move forward, the Diocese of Chelmsford must carry on holding onto the Christ who holds onto us. In the coming years the churches of the diocese should aim and expect to become more prayerful, more transparent, and more engaged with their local community and with the global issues that affect the local. It should become more evident that Christian people are living out their vocation in such a way that the faith we celebrate on Sundays shapes and overflows into the whole of life.

The church should be more generous. Part of a distinctive Christian life is to give to support not just the ministry of the church, but its wider mission at home and across the world. At the same time the church must play a full part in society including involvement in charitable work alongside other groups and faith communities that also make a positive difference in the world. The outward living out of faith each day will be the sign and the fruits of an inner, spiritual holding onto Christ. The church will have been formed in order to be sent.

Inhabiting the world distinctively

- Using the holding cross as a means to explore prayer and rule of life
- Regular pattern of nurture and discipleship courses in each worshipping community
- Enabling the faith we celebrate on Sunday to shape the life we live on Monday
- The Retreat House at Pleshey as a centre of teaching on prayer
- Distinctive Christian ethos in schools
- Challenging ourselves on our care for the environment and our giving
- Local parishes supporting schools through the development of Chaplaincy, Prayer Spaces, and initiatives such as Open the Book

Indicators

If we are doing all this, what might we expect to see? Some of the indicators might include:

- A prayer life that listens and responds to the need of a community
- Greater personal focus on discipleship in daily lives
- Use of the Chelmsford holding cross privately and collectively
- Growing numbers exploring vocations
- Increased numbers taking the opportunity for Retreat or spiritual direction
- Proportionate personal Christian giving
- Church-sponsored work in the community
- Each of our Church Schools being confident in its distinctive Christian ethos

Some of these we can measure and perhaps others we could survey from time to time. Individual worshipping communities might like to think about the most relevant indicators of progress locally.

Some stories from around the diocese

Prayer needs to be at the heart of all we want to do and be for God. The Revd Ruth Patten describes a prayer event held in summer 2015 in Great Dunmow.

We held a “Day of Prayer” at St Mary’s, Great Dunmow. The Church was open throughout the day and we supplemented our usual services of Morning Prayer and Holy Communion with Midday Prayers, Evening Prayer and Compline.

We set up prayer stations around church to help people to explore praying differently. Each station offered something to think about, something to do and something to take away. Our church school provided a prayer station about journeys and our Youth Group devised one with a giant iPhone that they re-named “iGod!” Our beautiful “Vine Window” provided the inspiration for another prayer station. We’re close to Stansted airport, so we had a “baggage check-in” to help us lay our emotional ‘baggage’ before God. We helped people to explore “prayer beyond words” with images, objects and music. There was also a guided prayer walk outside.

Experienced ‘listeners’ were available in a quiet, private space for those who wanted to talk or wanted somebody to pray with them. Our Diocesan Bookshop also provided a book and gift stall for the day. Bishop Stephen joined us for a light lunch and a “Q & A” session on prayer. People of all ages, including children from school, enjoyed quizzing Bishop Stephen and seemingly simple questions provoked lots of deep insight for us to ponder.

The Chelmsford Holding Crosses have inspired people of all ages to think about, and share, their faith in all sorts of different ways. Nick Hutchings, Head teacher at St John's CofE Primary School in Colchester, recalls the impact they made on the pupils there.

In April 2015, Bishop Roger visited St John's CofE Primary School in Colchester. The school had a wonderful morning, where he shared a story and talked about the Chelmsford Holding Cross, and then visited each class and presented them with their own cross.

This caught the imagination of the pupil-led worship team at the school. This team of five children run an act of worship for the whole school once a week. No adult is involved in the planning or running of the worship; the children plan it from the opening phrase, to a closing prayer, based on the school's values of Courage, Peace, Hope, Faith, Respect and Compassion.

The team were due to lead an act of worship at Dedham CofE Primary School, and now they had their idea for the theme for that. They talked to Bishop Roger, and asked if they could have a holding cross to use for the act of worship at Dedham. In June the team duly ran the act of worship, and presented the cross from St John's to Dedham. It was a great way to build links of Christian faith between the schools, and memorable for all the children and staff involved.

Serving our communities, showing the love of Jesus in tangible ways, is a key way in which the Church can be a transforming presence. Mark Webb shares how St Andrew's, Westcliff, sought to do that in their context.

St Andrew's Church, Westcliff has been running Open House for a number of years now. On Sunday evenings Open House is a place where homeless or vulnerable people and those on the edge of society can come along and feel welcomed.

We provide a hot meal for all that come, and a place for them to feel safe and part of the local community. Around 25-30 people come along each week and as this ministry has developed it has been wonderful to see relationships develop, not just between those we serve but between the volunteers and those that attend as well. Over the last 12 months we have had over 120 different people attend at one time or another.

Open House also operates on two afternoons during the week. The common theme across the midweek and Sunday groups is that it is a place where those who come can be open, and share their stories and worries in a safe environment without prejudice.

Our aim in leading Open House is to try to incorporate the ministry of Jesus into what we do and to share God's love with those we encounter. We have been blessed by God time and again with the resources to enable us to run Open House through volunteers, donations and prayer.

2. Evangelising Effectively

Transforming Presence has always been an agenda for mission and particularly for evangelism. There has been a sober acknowledgement across the diocese that many parishes weren't necessarily very good at evangelism. Most of the models being used rested on the premise that either people knew about the Christian faith and were just waiting for an invitation to sign up, or had lapsed from faith and might one day return. There was an agreement that the diocese needed to start again with some basic training.

And that's what happened.

In 2013 and 2014 very nearly 5,000 people took part in training events across the diocese. We made the centenary of the diocese a year of outreach and mission. Hundreds of parishes put on 'Mission Weekends', that is some sort of celebration event that included opportunities for people to experience something of the Christian community, find out more about the Christian faith, and be invited to take a next step. All this was a tremendous success; as the stories below show, many parishes did new things and reached out to their communities in new ways.

But there is still a long way to go.

What happened in 2014 needs to be followed up: small scale 'do it yourself' evangelistic events - and all that is needed to prepare for them and follow them up - needs to be the new business as usual.

To support this we aspire to having an evangelist or an evangelism enabler in every Mission and Ministry Unit. Brilliant work has taken place to train these people: Newham deanery has a particularly imaginative training scheme as described below. Some of our evangelists are now members of the wider Church Army mission community. We are in the process of setting up two centres of mission at Collier Row and in Colchester.

Doing evangelism needs to be as normal as the Christmas market or the Harvest supper. This is beginning to happen, but further work is needed to train lay people and clergy, and to get the discipline of evangelism into the bloodstream of the local church.

Understanding evangelism

A lot has been learned. In particular reflecting on the ministry of evangelism both after the year of mission and as a result of *Time for Talk 2* it can be concluded that evangelism seems to happen when –

- A small group of people take responsibility of this ministry – that's why every benefice should have an evangelist or an evangelism enabler.
- The local church puts on regular evangelistic events – that's why it's still important to think about having a mission weekend (or something like it) every year.
- There is proper follow up – pastoral and catechetical. People become part of the church when they feel they belong. This is about pastoral care. People nowadays know very little about the Christian faith, therefore for most of them becoming a Christian is like a journey. This about ongoing nurture and catechesis. Therefore every local church needs to provide opportunities for people to find out about the Christian faith and to explore it with others. This is why nurture courses like *Alpha* or *Pilgrim* or *Christianity Explored* are so important. Every church – or group of churches in a Mission and Ministry Units – ought to be putting on a course at least once a year.

But there are other ways of evangelising that we can explore.

Fresh expressions

We have already achieved much; work by the Church Army shows that Fresh Expressions in this diocese are being successful in drawing in those who once went to church and those who have never been to church. In March 2014 the Diocesan Synod passed this motion:

'This Synod welcome the Audit of Fresh Expressions and rejoices in the effective mission exercised by a good variety of Fresh Expressions in our diocese. We therefore: (a) Reaffirm our commitment to becoming a 'mixed economy church', developing both new and inherited forms of mission and ministry; one of the principles set out in Reimagining Ministry, (b) Urge deaneries, benefices and parishes to actively consider what mix of Fresh Expressions, pioneer and inherited forms of ministry is appropriate in each of our Mission and Ministry Units, and ensure deanery resourcing plans take full account of these, and (c) Commit to on-going evaluation of coverage and effectiveness of Fresh Expressions and pioneer ministries through the Area Mission and Pastoral Committees and Archdeacons visitations.'

Archdeacon Annette Cooper is heading up the further development of this ministry alongside Charlie Kosla.

Mission Priority Areas

A Mission Priority Area is –

- a planned (or existing) housing estate that isn't really being served by any of the parishes or one that straddles several parish boundaries.
- a people group such as young people or men or families that many churches struggle to attract.
- a social need that is particular to your deanery and that could be met in some way if the churches worked more closely together.
- a community drawn from a different cultural or ethnic background, some of whom may be Christians
- a church which is really struggling, perhaps unable to pay its share and with an ageing and dwindling congregation, or making a low impact in terms of average attendance relative to the size of the population.
- a successful church on the threshold of break-through to higher numbers or planting out.
- a local FE College, Secondary School or cluster of Primary Schools

One of the next stages of the strategy for growing the church is for every Mission and Ministry Unit to work out its priority areas, and begin to think which ones to focus on first.² One of the signs of this working will be the emergence and development of more new churches and fresh expressions of church right across the diocese.

There is a close connection between evangelism and social justice. The more we are engaged effectively in the world the more people will see and be challenged by the gospel of Christ.

As with each of these four priorities it is important to see the overlaps between them. The distinctive living out of the Christian life by individuals and church communities will be one of the

² See the *Simple Guide to Mission and Ministry Units* www.transformingpresence.org.uk/resources/mmu.pdf

surest ways in which those outside the church see the influence and attractiveness of Christ and will be prompted to want to find out more.

Worship and evangelism

There are also liturgical implications; that is implications for the way the church worships. What sort of welcome do people get in our churches? How geared up are we to welcome new people? How might our worship, whatever the tradition of a particular church, be renewed so that it can be the very best offering possible? These are all questions that require more work and development. If the church delivers dull and uninspiring worship no amount of evangelism will help.

Moving forward

As we move forward, longing to share with others the good of the gospel that we have received, we would expect to become a church which is more confident about its faith and better equipped to tell its story. Evangelistic ministry will be business as usual. Worship will be diverse, welcoming and engaging. There will be more churches, not less. The number of adults being baptised and confirmed each year should increase as should the overall attendance per head of population.

Evangelising Effectively

- every unit identifies mission priority areas
- evangelism enabler in every Mission & Ministry Unit
- regular, annual evangelistic events
- a nurture course run at least once in every benefice every year
- training in the parishes for people to be able to tell their faith story
- worship that encourages people to stay and learn more

Indicators

What might be the indicators that we are evangelising effectively? Potentially there are many, including:

- How many Mission & Ministry Units have Evangelism Enablers or similar
- Identified Mission Priority Areas
- Adults coming forward for baptism and confirmation
- Growth of church plants and fresh expressions
- Availability of enquirer and nurture courses locally and take up
- Reach in the population – attendance at all forms of church as a proportion of the population

We can't make this happen. God is the evangelist not us. But we do believe that our faithfulness to these first two priorities will make us **a luminous church**, that is, a church which shines brightly with the brilliance and beauty of the gospel because it is living a faithful, distinctive Christian life in and for the world and because its wanting to share that life with others. In the Bible faithfulness leads to fruitfulness. Our task is simply to be faithful in these things that God has set before us. Then we trust, that in his good time, the Lord of the Harvest will gather in the crops that we have sown.

This is also the apostolic vocation of the church. God has called us in order to be sent, and it is those ministries of witness in daily life, faith in action for the building of the kingdom of God in the world, and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ that are the **'sent out'** bit of our Christian vocation.

Some stories from around the diocese

As St Saviour's, Westcliff, discovered, evangelism can start with quite unexpected aspects of church life, as a way to reach out to the immediate community and those further afield. Churchwarden Robert Palmer tells their story.

The World War I memorial in St Saviour's Church contains the names of 196 men who lost their lives during the course of the war. Every year in November, the church congregation would stand in front of the memorial and say that 'we will remember them'. But in 2014 we realised that, 100 years since the start of the war, we actually knew nothing about any of them. So as our response to Bishop Stephen's call to mission, we decided to find out as much as possible about these men and, if possible, to find any living relatives.

For some, only rank and regiment could be found, but for others we also identified the place of burial, and a number of living relatives have been tracked down and invited to visit the church. We gathered together all of the information into a book which was sent to relatives. The project is still ongoing, and has enabled the church to make contact with people within the local community and beyond who are grateful that the sacrifice made by relatives has not been forgotten. We knew it had all been worthwhile when, last Christmas, a card was received from a lady in Belgium which said, "Thanks to you our grandfather has somewhere to be remembered".

The 'Hope on Sea Mission' was the name given to the Southend Deanery's response to Bishop Stephen's call for 2014 to be a time for Missionary Initiatives. The Revd Canon Stephen Burdett describes what took place.

Our Deanery decided on a joint venture in addition to any that the parishes were undertaking on their own. It took place in the last week of September so as to incorporate 'Back to Church' Sunday, and nearly all the parishes of the Deanery took part. We were supported & encouraged by the Missionary Organisation 'Through Faith Missions', 24 members of which stayed with our congregations for the week.

Our Mission was called 'Hope On Sea' so as to copy the Council's branding of events in Southend such as 'Fun on Sea', 'Art on Sea', 'Jazz on Sea', etc. We advertised widely including large posters on bus stops throughout the Borough.

There were many outdoor events, including Beach Missions and a permanent group of us in the Royal Shopping Centre where we conducted a 'Faith Survey' and offered opportunities for prayer, including prayers written on sea shells hanging from a fishing net.

Bishop John gave an inspirational talk on his crossing of the Atlantic with 20 others in a small vessel. This took place at the Thorpe Bay Yacht Club and involved many visitors who did not go to Church. It was a splendid week, with the added bonus that our Churches worked closely together and it has left us thinking about what we can do next.

Archdeacon John Perumbalath tells the story of how we are becoming a multi-lingual diocese by reaching out to different communities.

We have had well-established Urdu (Forest Gate, Ilford) and Filipino (Walthamstow) congregations in our diocese for some time. Over the last two years we have established Malayalam (East Ham),

Bulgarian (Stratford), Portuguese and Spanish (Barking) congregations. These congregations enable the migrant Christians to worship and celebrate their sacraments in their mother tongues. They function effectively as a congregation of the parish church where they worship under the general pastoral care of the host incumbent but draw people from different parts of East London and beyond. These congregations include former members of Anglican Churches overseas and through them we are now exploring how our ties with their mother churches could be made more effective and concrete. Where liturgical provision in their own language is not available within the Church of England, these congregations use liturgy in their vernacular language as authorised in their mother churches. These developments have helped us as a diocese to move towards being a global church in our own context, offering hospitality to many migrant Christians and in turn being enriched by their vibrant faith and practice.

I take a personal interest in this work and, as the only Malayalam speaking priest in this diocese, celebrate the Eucharist with this particular congregation.

The Revd Ann Mackenzie tells about a mission event at the Church of Our Saviour, in Chelmer Village, Chelmsford.

Having been inspired at an evangelism training session in 2013 led by Bishop Stephen, one of our members suggested holding an Art Exhibition as he and one or two other church members are amateur artists involved with local art clubs. This idea grew to include a children's art competition on the theme of My Essex, a craft fair and an evening reception with Bishop Stephen as our guest speaker – four different events to attract different groups of people.

We took over a year to plan and put the event on and combined it with fundraising for our new building project. It was a lot of hard work for the organising team – encouraging church members to get involved and making connections with the local community – but in the end we would all say it was very worthwhile as we were able to open our church, welcome several hundred people and share something of our faith in Jesus too. On reflection we may have been a bit ambitious with the four different events happening at once but nothing ventured, nothing gained.

The Revd Sarah Haywood tells an astonishing story of unexpected and profligate growth at St Paul's Braintree and the establishment of a new congregation through Messy Church.

God worked a miracle here at St Paul's Church, Braintree. The Toddler Group needed something fun and free to do in the summer holidays. Parents told us not to organise something for a weekend, because lots of children go to their dads then. They told us the sorts of things that work for them. And they told us that what mattered most was to be welcomed with friendly faces and not have their children frowned upon for making noise or being messy. We LISTENED.

Our Messy Fun Day ran on a Thursday, with advertising that emphasised the invitation to "Come dressed to get messy" and pictures of children having a wild time. None of us expected to see over 238 children and their grown-ups piling in to church – more than 500 people in total. Like feeding the 5,000, or casting our nets for a big catch, it was truly a miracle.

The greatest miracle is that we gathered over 50 volunteers in a church with an electoral roll of 42, and that these volunteers from church and community are still coming to the subsequent Messy Church where over 100 people turn up and engage with a simple Gospel truth each time. AMAZING!

3. Serving with accountability

This is probably the priority that is least understood and where progress has been slowest. The two words 'serving' and 'accountability' are both important. Let's start with the word 'serving'.

Jesus called his disciples first and foremost to be with him but he also commissioned them to 'proclaim the good news, cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and cast out demons'. Jesus demonstrated his love for people by laying down his life for others, but he also called his disciples to do the same. Following Jesus is about service.

The disciples didn't always understand this. Sometimes ambition got the better of them. Jesus told them that 'the greatest among them must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves' (Luke 22.26). He later demonstrated this by strapping a towel around his waist and washing the feet of the disciples. At other times, it was self-pity that diverted the disciples from the way of self-sacrifice and service. When the rich young ruler showed that he was unable to meet the demands of following Jesus, Simon Peter said 'Look, we have left everything and followed you' (Mark 10.28). Following Jesus is about humility and self-sacrifice.

Humility, self-sacrifice and service should be the hallmarks of how we deal with one another:

"Teams that trust one another... and hold one another accountable are very likely to set aside their individual needs and agendas and focus almost exclusively on what is best for the team. They do not give in to the temptation to place their departments, career aspirations, or ego driven status ahead of the collective results that define team success."

– Patrick Lencioni (leadership and management guru) 'Five Dysfunctions of a Team'

So accountability is also really important. We never follow Jesus in isolation. We are members of one body. The Christian faith is far too important and far too precious for anyone to think they can go it alone. It is always 'our' church, not 'my' church. We are responsible for each other. This mutuality is a key component of the church. When we speak of accountability then we are talking about our mutual responsibility; what we give to others and what we receive from them.

For too long, the church has tended to operate in isolated parochial silos. Often our mutuality has been restricted to the occasional synodical meeting or to the payment of parish share. However, few parishes can survive alone and none should have to or want to. The development of Mission and Ministry Units has the potential to bring together a wider range of human and financial resources, to consider mission beyond parish boundaries, and to share expertise, prayer and encouragement for the good of the whole church.

Becoming a healthy church

This closer collaboration will mean that we should expect to hold ourselves accountable to one another over the things of the gospel that are most basic. In this respect we are making progress. In 2015 the Archdeacons' Visitation documents that are sent to every parish through the Churchwardens and the parish priest, contained a paper on Serving with Accountability requesting that each parish should address nine questions and report back to their Archdeacon by the end of November.

1. Worship: What are you doing to make worship the central focus of the life of the Church?
2. Spirituality: What are you doing to teach people to pray?

3. Nurture: What are you doing to teach people the faith and help them in their discipleship?
4. Evangelism: What are you doing to share faith with others and what have the results been in the past year? Does your Church have a place of nurture?
5. Vocation: What are you doing to nurture and develop the ministry of the whole people of God including enabling people to come forward for authorised lay and ordained ministry?
6. Service: How is your Church a blessing to the community you serve? How is it witnessing to God's kingdom of justice and peace?
7. Hospitality: What are you doing to ensure that your Church is a place of safety and welcome for all ages and for people of all backgrounds?
8. Interdependence: How are you working in partnership with other Christian communities in your locality and at diocesan, national and global level?
9. Generosity: What are you doing to ensure that your Church is showing signs of generosity towards the wider Church and community as well as becoming financially secure?

The questions are designed to help each church get to the heart of what it means to be a healthy church and provide some sort of agreed yardstick about what is expected of every church. Parishes don't need to tackle all the questions at once but should make them part of their annual review to see what progress is being made over the forthcoming years. It is clear that many parishes are getting to work on these questions and examining how best to become more accountable to God and the wider Christian Community.

This conversation needs to continue so that we reach a point where every church is conscious that in the Diocese of Chelmsford there is a shared expectation about ministry and mission. How churches respond to these questions will of course vary enormously from place to place. There is no expectation of a one size fits all solution. In fact it is hoped that there will be a greater diversity of response as each church discerns how best to develop its worship and outreach etc. in its particular context, according to its particular ethos and tradition, and with the resources at its disposal. This is not about setting up some sort of ecclesiastical Ofsted, but a deep mutual accountability where every church, every minister and every individual Christian has an understanding of what responsibilities they carry. Serving with accountability is therefore a deeply spiritual issue. There is no reason not to be honest with ourselves; after all God knows all the secrets of our hearts.

Turnaround project

The development of this priority has also led the diocese to look at those churches most in need of support and development to help them flourish in mission. We bid for and won a substantial mission grant from the Church Commissioners to develop a project where specific, focused help and intervention can be offered to churches that are struggling in some of these areas. This work has begun under Bishop Peter's leadership. In time it will make a big difference as additional help goes where it is most needed with the expectation of local transformation and from it mutual belonging, mutual support and self-evaluation which is at the heart of what it means to be a healthy church.

Mutual accountability

Accountability runs three ways: to ourselves, to each other and to God. It is about everyone recognising their responsibilities within the body of Christ. This vision of the church, which is so central to Paul's theology, tells us that no one part of the body can be superior to another, and no part is dispensable: "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you'" (1 Cor. 12. 21). This must therefore mean that the bishops are as accountable to the rest of the church as is the PCC or the individual baptised Christian. We are in it together, each with a part to play and each expecting to be held accountable for the ministry we undertake.

The new diocesan share scheme is also about our serving with accountability. Mutual support remains a key principle with the invitation to both give and receive. Generosity is fundamental.

Moving forward

As we move forward we would expect to become a church that is more confident about its own responsibilities, happy to be held accountable and expecting to be challenged and stretched.

Serving with Accountability

- Regular self-evaluation using the criteria
- Holding ourselves accountable before others
- Greater financial responsibility and increased generosity
- Clarity about what a church is called to be and do

Indicators

The nine questions themselves provide some good indicators for how we are doing locally and collectively against this priority. In addition indicators of progress might include:

- How many parishes and fresh expressions are in the practice of self-assessing against the nine questions
- Church and fresh expression attendances reflecting the demographic of the community
- The extent to which we share resources of all sorts with our neighbours
- The proportion of parishes generating new ministers
- We collectively achieve the total parish share request and thus can resource ourselves collectively

Some stories from around the diocese

Serving with accountability encourages churches to think creatively about their ministry and their responsibilities to their community so as to see God's kingdom grow. The Revd Helen Gheorghiu-Gould tells the story of what has been happening in Nazeing.

Nazeing, on the borders of Essex and Hertfordshire, has two church buildings: All Saints, a beautiful 12th century church two miles out of town, and St Giles, an unattractive building in the centre of the community. St Giles had been a place of lively family worship, but was closed as a worship centre a few years ago. On arrival, Helen's first reaction was that it needed bulldozing!

But God had other ideas. One of Bishop Stephen's missionary journeys in 2014 came to Nazeing, and by coincidence this was planned for the 50th anniversary of St Giles and the week of the feast of St Giles. Nazeing had suffered from a breakdown in church and community relationships, and while

Bishop Stephen was there he called people to be healed and reconciled. He presented Chelmsford holding crosses, and at St Giles, people were amazed to 'get this warm feeling' as the crosses were passed round from hand to hand.

Since then, the church community has been through a 12-month process of listening and reconciliation. Monthly worship has restarted at St Giles, and from autumn 2015 that will become twice a month. Far from needing a bulldozer, a programme of refurbishment is now being planned for St Giles, which aims to transform it into a missional hub for the community, with a new pre-school and a wider range of community activities.

St Paul's Stratford has been on an exciting, if not always easy, journey discovering more of what it means to be church with those from different denominational and ethnic backgrounds. The Revd Jeremy Fraser shares their experience.

At St Paul's, Stratford we were renting our hall to a Bulgarian Christian fellowship, some 40 strong. From the start they were friendly and were happy to join with our congregation in mission projects. After a few months, though, they asked to see me, and I expected them to say they were leaving. But instead, to my great surprise, they sat down and said two things: we have been praying; and we have decided as a fellowship to become Anglicans.

Since then we have taken over 50 Bulgarian Christians into membership, baptised 15 of them, and ordained two of their leaders as curates. It has not always been easy for any of use, but we have chosen to trust each other and have looked for God in all our plans and worries.

As Anglicans, we have been always been good at attracting people who were historically from the Anglican commonwealth, but European immigration means we are now attracting people who don't know us at all. The Bulgarian Christians were either Orthodox or American evangelical in origin, and as it turned out, the Anglican Church was the one that could encompass all of their faith journeys.

At St Matthew's, West Ham the Revd Christiana Asinugo tells how the idea of healthy church is enabling the church to grow and develop.

17 March 2013 was my first Sunday after being licensed at St Matthew's, and the lectionary reading was Isaiah 43: "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" These words have been prophetic for us as a church, as we have prayerfully sought God's way forward for us.

We started by identifying the gifts of church members: from technology to welcoming. One of the key developments has been in our children's ministry, which has grown from 4 to 17 children most Sundays. Our young adults (25-30s) are encouraged to lead and speak on 5th Sundays, and we have recently started a youth ministry.

In March 2014, we had series of teachings on Healthy Church, using *The Healthy Church Handbook* by Robert Warren to help identify our strengths and weaknesses. As a result we are doing more on our welcome, and trying to become more outward looking. A community questionnaire was developed and we have begun knocking on doors to introduce ourselves to people who live within the parish. An Evangelism team from St John's supports us as we build up our courage.

We are also trying to build on other outcomes of the Healthy Church discussion such as worship, pastoral care, prayer and bible study. We are a work in progress and I am grateful to the Church wardens and other members who work with me on this.

4. Re-imagining ministry

Much has happened in the area of re-imagining ministry and it is probably where there have been the biggest headaches and the most painful heart-aches. It is one thing to believe that ministry belongs to the whole people of God and that each person must play their part in the great orchestra of God's church; but it is quite another to face the painful and difficult decisions about pastoral and missional re-organisation that come with falling numbers of stipendiary clergy, a proliferation of lay and authorised ministries, and different ways of exercising priestly ministry.

But first of all thanks; it is amazing how much progress has been made. Most of it has settled around the new ways that churches need to relate to each other and the world. At the heart of this is the local church. But with the development of fresh expressions we want *more* local churches. Chiefly it has been about the organisation of the church from the bottom up into what have come to be known as *Mission and Ministry Units*.

Mission and Ministry Units

Mission and Ministry Units are not necessarily new legal entities. They range from formal team ministries to very informal clustering of parishes and all sorts of other covenant arrangements in-between. There is no expectation that they are formally called 'Mission and Ministry Units'. This is an internal term and each Mission and Ministry Unit is encouraged to choose its own name.

Every deanery needs to come up with a plan, and this needs to happen as soon as possible. Some deaneries have virtually completed their plans already, which is a fantastic achievement. Others are still working away on theirs, and that is fine. But without a plan the process will only become more uncertain and breed much greater confusion. Therefore completing a deanery plan is the most immediate priority.

Implementation may, of course, take longer. That is why the *transforming presence* priorities talk about where we will be by 2025. It will take time to make many of the changes envisaged. Furthermore, a plan is a living thing. Circumstances change. New opportunities emerge. As the plan is implemented so it needs to be reviewed.

A priest for every parish, and a ministry in every place

Each plan will be different. Mission and Ministry Units will vary in size and scope according to the vast differences we enjoy across such a large and diverse diocese. However, each Mission and Ministry Unit will have a team of ordained and lay people working together; and each will have someone with oversight responsibility.

Each individual church will have a ministry and an Incumbent. Often the Incumbent will have shared responsibilities, but there will always be a local ministry. By working together there will be more scope to plant new churches and new worshipping communities.

As was promised three years ago, the salami slicing of the last fifty years whereby deaneries were always being told to lose a few more clergy will come to an end. Even with the increase in ordinations of the last few years we cannot avoid the implications of the huge wave of clergy retirements across the whole Church of England that will be a fact of the next decade. So rather than cut, this diocese will have a sustainable number of stipendiary clergy from which more can be grown. There will be a share system that will match this aspiration, encouraging every Mission and Ministry Unit to pay its way but also contribute into a fund for mutual support and mission development. The local will be affirmed. But churches will operate more collegially

within the natural networks and belongings in which they serve. Ministry will be provided in every place. In short, there will be a priest *for* every parish, and a ministry *in* every place

There will be different types of clergy. Some will be leaders of the Mission and Ministry Units; others will be pioneers and church planters. Other will be in a supportive role. Some will be stipendiary. Many will be voluntary/self-supporting and locally deployed.

A huge proliferation of lay ministry

There will be different types of lay ministry. The starting point for everyone will be the same: because of our baptism we are called to be part of God's mission. But there will be Readers, Licensed Lay Ministers, Authorised Preachers, Pastoral Assistants, Evangelism Enablers, and more besides. We need to recognise that Christian school governors are also living out a vital lay ministry, as indeed are parish or Mission & Ministry Unit administrators.

Just think: even five years ago there were no Authorised Preachers in the diocese, no Licensed Lay Ministers, and no Locally Deployed Clergy. Now there are loads. A lot has been achieved in short time.

The feedback from *Time to Talk 2* made clear, however, that we need to keep making sure we provide the right training to enable this proliferation of lay ministry – training that is relevant and accessible to different people in different contexts across the diocese. We want people to be confident, equipped and supported for the roles they are taking on. Some of that training will be organised for the diocese, and some may be organised more locally, by deaneries or units.

More clergy still needed

This sort of change is always unnerving. Meanwhile, though rightly alerting the church to the huge increase in clergy retirements, in the diocese of Chelmsford we are doing something about this. There has been a big increase in the number, of all ages, of those coming forward for ordination, and the hard work and imaginative faithfulness of our DDO team needs to be celebrated. There is an obligation on all parishes to call forward the next generation clergy; it cannot be right that just one third of parishes are expected to produce all the ordinands.

There is still an urgent need for more black and minority ethnic clergy. There needs to be a proper balance of men and women. Many of our excellent women clergy need to be helped into appropriate positions of leadership and responsibility. God already seems to be blessing the strategy. The diocese is not far away from ensuring that the sustainable number of clergy identified can be delivered. If the church now organises itself in such a way that the Mission and Ministry Units ensure a sustainable and flourishing ministry in every church then we are well on the way to transitioning into a new shape of church which is simpler, more collaborative and, we believe, more missionally effective.

Just as with lay ministry, the right training is going to be essential if ordained ministry is going to be as relevant, flexible and contextual as we need it to be. This includes releasing young people into ministry, and helping those clergy who don't always find it easy to use the lay ministers they have, learn how to grow and utilise the ministry available. Working this out is a priority.

New patterns of belonging

The local church will continue to be a focus for belonging and for ministry and outreach across this diocese. Each person will continue to be part of a local church, and this local church – be it

a parish church or a fresh expression – will be part of a Mission and Ministry Unit. These units will be part of an archdeaconry and a diocese. This new pattern and is already emerging.

For the moment, the parishes and deaneries of the diocese deserve thanks and commendation for the tremendous progress that has been made in one of the most difficult and painful areas of change.

In the next phase of development, the Mission and Ministry Units need to get properly established making sure every local church has a future and that new churches are planted into the Mission Priority Areas that have been identified. This is not just about better management of the church, but missional change. At the same time there may be one or two places where the church building is in the wrong place or is disproportionately expensive and may have to close. But this will probably be the exception. There is no agenda to close church buildings, but there is permission for each worshipping community to think differently about their building.

Everyone is called to missionary discipleship within God's church. The church must be ordered and managed so that the resources of people, finance and plant are deployed to the very best effect so that the gospel of Jesus Christ may be proclaimed.

Our booklet *A Simple Guide to Mission and Ministry Units*, says more about what Mission and Ministry Units are and what you need to do to make them happen.³

Moving forward

As we move forward every local church will have discovered God's call to them to ministry and mission in their local community. They will be led and enabled by an active and outward looking team of individuals who themselves have discovered their own vocations as stipendiary priests, SSMs, LDSSMs, LLMs, Readers, ALPs, Pastoral Assistants, Evangelism Enablers, school leaders, and the many and varied ministries which God is raising up. The old model of a vicar who does everything will have gone but each and every local church will have the support and oversight of an ordained priest. And if the money keeps coming in – and if we are able to raise just a little bit more – there will be additional stipendiary resources, lay or ordained, that can be used for youth work, administration, church planting and evangelism or whatever is the particular need of the church in that Mission and Ministry Unit. A new tier of ministry will have been created, but others will readjust accordingly and in some cases fade away. The diocese will have become better able to respond to a complex and mobile society. Ours will be a more missionally-focused church with a ministry that belongs to everyone.

Re-imagining Ministry

- Develop a plan for Mission & Ministry Units as the sustainable basis for future mission and ministry
- Proactively call out vocations
- Use the permission given

Addressing these questions of accountability and ministry are key responsibilities for a church which strives to be **transparent**. We want to be open and accountable to each other and to God over the things we believe God is calling us to do and to be. We want to shape the ministry of the church on the belief that all belong to Christ within the body of His church, and

³ www.transformingpresence.org.uk/resources/mmu.pdf

all have gifts for ministry. By focusing on these two priorities we will be **'formed'** in order to be sent.

Indicators

Indicators that show we are Re-imagining Ministry might include:

- How many deaneries have a plan
- Proportion of the diocese living as part of a commissioned Mission & Ministry Unit
- Ordinations
- Identified, authorised or licenced lay ministers
- Availability of local training for ministry
- The diversity of clergy, better reflecting the communities we serve

Some stories from around the diocese

Saffron Walden Deanery is on a journey towards becoming a Mission and Ministry Unit. The Revd David Tomlinson explains what they are doing.

The primary reason for the deanery becoming a Mission and Ministry Unit is the way we are collaborating together. We've held two very successful day conferences, focused on the Transforming Presence strategic aims, and have another planned for 2016. We're about to launch our second Growing Leaders course (CPAS) to foster lay and ordained ministry. With the same aim in mind, we've made having a locally based Christian Studies course a priority, and are now seeing a third cohort enter their final year.

A project called 'pathways in prayer' is aimed at helping people to pray and to encourage churches to innovate. Annually, there are three events offering particular experiences of prayers, including Ignatian prayer and intercessory prayer. Worshipping together annually has been a key feature of the common life of the deanery since 2011. Last year, Dr Rowan Williams preached on incarnational mission, and, as usual, some examples of good practice from around the Deanery were showcased.

Our deanery, which in 2012 was a pioneer for the Mission Weekends, has a wide and varied series of evangelistic events from 'Big Dinner, Big Questions' – a dinner for parents of young children to think about the difficult questions of life – to a 'Forest Walk' with a talk and reflection on the wonder and beauty of God's creation.

We look forward to discovering new opportunities to support each other and work together in Christ's mission and ministry in beautiful North West Essex.

Time to Share is the Evangelism course run in the Deanery of Newham from February to August, yearly. The coordinator, the Revd Chigor Chike, describes their approach.

In the past three years, Time to Share has trained an average of eight people to become Parish Evangelists in the various churches in Newham. The style of the course is to use the experience of participants rather than top-down teaching. Participants learn why and how to share their Christian faith with others, the place of prayer in evangelism and examples of evangelism in the Bible, among other things. In the second term, participants undertake a five-week placement in an establishment other than their own church, learn about team-working and carry out a project.

Ann, a participant in 2014 said: "Looking back, I am amazed at how much I learnt in a relatively short time, both from the tutors and other participants. I feel it has helped me to grow and mature as a Christian and given me more confidence to speak about my faith. "

Another participant, Jonathan, said: “Having been awarded a certificate as a Parish Evangelist, recognised by the Diocese of Chelmsford at a special celebration presided over by the Bishop, is an added bonus. To God be the praise and glory.”

At All Saints’, Wrabness, it was clear that new lay leadership was needed, but Laura Garnham hadn’t anticipated being the solution to that problem. She shares her story.

The Rector at All Saints’, Wrabness, retired in 2008, and was not replaced at the time. My husband, who had been the Reader for the benefice, died in 2007. It seemed clear to me that Wrabness needed a Reader, but when I looked around, I seemed to be the only remote possibility, having done the Course in Christian Studies many years before.

So reluctantly and unexpectedly I applied for Reader training, and was surprised to be accepted. Some rewarding years at St Mellitus College followed, and a very helpful placement at St Stephen’s, Colchester helped me, along with the wise words of the Rector there: “When God calls you out of your comfort zone, He will resource you”.

Seven years down the line we are still without an incumbent. But the parish has some gifted and generous people, and we work together with a vision of hospitality and welcome. Replacing the pews with chairs has meant that we can invite people to community lunches and summer teas. We also hold concerts, poetry evenings and other special events. The prayer and worship of the church is sustained through active lay involvement and the generosity of three retired clergy.

The village has many visitors: it is on the Essex Way; it has “Julie’s House” (of Grayson Perry fame); and there is a natural burial ground. We take every opportunity to show Christ’s love through offering hospitality – including “help yourself” drinks while the church is open, and use of a Portaloo.

Canon Philip Need, the Diocesan Director of Ordinands shares his reflections on the growth in numbers of those offering for ordination and other ministries.

The work done with vocations to ordained ministry recently has been very exciting. The vision of the Diocese has become a reality as more people offer themselves for ordained priestly ministry.

The number of those in the discernment process has grown and we now have more Area Ordination Advisers and extra DDO capacity to handle this. In the year 2014/15 well over fifty people went through the selection process with three quarters being recommended for training. For the second year running we had three ordination services in the Cathedral as 28 new deacons were ordained to serve in our parishes.

Our new ordinands and deacons represent a cross section of church traditions; from rural, urban, town, inner-city, sub-urban and seaside parishes. They range in age from early twenties to late sixties and each of their stories tells of their commitment to the Gospel as they offer themselves in response to God’s call. There are those whose sense of vocation has been dramatic, and who have only recently come to faith; others have lived the Gospel life quietly and carefully for generations; and some who have come kicking and screaming because God kept on nudging and prodding them. Some offer themselves for ordination to work in their home parishes and will play a huge part in our plans for the future. Others will be deployable as self-supporting and stipendiary priests and all will have a tremendous impact on tomorrow’s emerging church.

The development of Mission and Ministry Units in the Epping Forest and Ongar Deanery became focused in 2013 with the coming together of the two separate deaneries of Epping Forest and Ongar. Following consultations at synod meetings and through the Mission and Pastoral Committee, three potential Mission & Ministry Units were identified; Ongar, Epping Forest North and Epping Forest South. Revd Dr Joyce Smith,

the Area Dean, explains how the proposed Ongar Mission & Ministry Unit is being developed.

In the proposed Ongar Mission & Ministry Unit, vacancies through clergy retirements and moves to new posts, have enabled us to reimagine ministry and carry out pastoral reorganisation to form a grouping which includes most of the old Ongar deanery, with three parishes from the former deanery would will join teams in the Epping Forest North Unit.

To provide ministry in these six parishes/benefices, with 20 churches, is a challenge which is being embraced by the clergy and laity. It is proposed that there will be 4 stipendiary clergy and one house for duty. In addition we currently have a pioneer minister, one curate, one SSM, one retired member of the clergy with PTO and one Reader.

In the multiple-church benefices a considerable amount of work has been carried out to look at different service patterns which will be sustainable with the reduction in clergy numbers. Lay-led Services of the Word are being developed and a training programme for lay people is being held this autumn. Clergy are already praying and working together and this was particularly evident in the willingness to provide cover during vacancies. With vacancies being filled and a unit leader-designate in post, we are now looking forward to collaborative working throughout the unit.

A final word from Bishop Stephen

So where we might we be in 2025?

By 2015 it is my hope and prayer that we will be a church which exhibits these marks –

- Evangelism, and the on-going ministry of teaching people the faith, nurturing them into the life of the church and helping them live as disciples of Christ will be business as usual. Every local church will be a school of missionary discipleship.
- These local churches will be more diverse than they are at the moment. There will be lots that are just like the ones we have always known, and they will be flourishing. There will also be lots of other sorts of churches, large and small. They will be planted into new neighbourhoods and different networks. Some will be lay-led. But they will all have a *local* ministry and they will all be sacramental communities with the ministry of a priest.
- All local churches will be part of Mission and Ministry Units and the leaders of these Units (mostly, but not exclusively clergy) will be key strategic leaders taking on a sort of 'episcopal' role in the ministry of the church.
- We will pay our way. Numbers attending church will have increased. So will giving. We won't think of paying the parish share as a tax, or even a gift. We will be paying for the church we love and the ministry we are part of; we will do it out of thanksgiving. We will give; but it will be to other things such as the missional development and outreach of the church in new places across the diocese and overseas; and for the relief of poverty and the pursuit of justice.
- There will be a ready acknowledgement that there are just some things that every church needs to be doing, and we must be honest with ourselves about how well we are doing them. We must always be a people of prayer, and teaching people to pray will always be a first priority. We will worship God, and that worship will be solemn, joyful, invigorating and compelling. In many ways it will be our best evangelism. But it will also be diverse; we will find ways of worshipping that fit different cultures, and we will become expert at this cross cultural worship and mission. Other ministries, such as pastoral care, catechesis and other sacramental provision will thrive. We will put children and young people first. Our schools will be an even more important part of our mission and outreach.
- Every Christian will have a ministry. They won't necessarily have a title; in fact most of them won't; but they will know that baptism means something. They are part of God's mission of love to the world. There will be more church, and it will have more impact. This will happen because we will have been formed as missionary disciples ready to be sent and used by God to bring his rule of justice and peace to bear in the world.

What do we need to do to get there?

- Each local church to place making disciples at the heart of its strategy and develop its ministry of evangelism, its prayer and biblical literacy, and its service of the local community.
- Each Archdeaconry and deanery to finalise its plans for Mission and Ministry Units
- Each Mission and Ministry Unit to work out its Mission Priority Areas and plans to develop and maintain a healthy and diverse ministry team
- And for the whole diocese? In 2016/17 we are planning a series of events, similar to the evangelism training, under the heading of a **School for Disciples**

A School for Disciples

Our aim is that every church should be a school for disciples, that is a church where people become Christians and grow up in the faith so that their lives have an impact in the world. Building on the evangelism training we have already done, in 2016 and 2017 we will put on events across the diocese to encourage this understanding of the local church and teach about these inter-related ministries –

- Prayer
- Stewardship
- Evangelism
- Catechesis
- Ministry

These are starting in Lent 2016 with a series of lectures by the bishops on the main themes of *Transforming Presence*.

Further Resources

For more information and resources about *transforming presence*, including more stories, films, information about Holding Crosses, the Short Guide to Mission & Ministry Units, the visitation papers on serving with accountability, and much more, please see the website:

<http://www.transformingpresence.org.uk/>