

## DIOCESAN SYNOD

Title: **'SETTING GOD'S PEOPLE FREE'**  
Author: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE & DIOCESAN SECRETARY**  
Date: **18 NOVEMBER 2017**

---

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Lay leadership and discipleship is one of the strands within the Church of England's Renewal and Reform programme.

The lay leadership task group produced the attached report: 'Setting God's People Free' which was overwhelmingly endorsed by General Synod in February 2017.

Discipleship is central to our *Transforming Presence* priority, inhabiting the world distinctively. On the back of our own School for Disciples programme, this report now comes to Diocesan Synod for consideration, reflection, and stimulus for our future work.

### 2. PREAMBLE TO THE REPORT

"The Task Group was originally asked to review lay leadership, in particular beyond the walls of the church. To do so, it became clear that we needed to broaden our focus to encompass lay discipleship. We see the report as marking the start of a vital journey.

"A great opportunity lies before us. It is the same opportunity that has presented itself to the Church in every decade for the last 100 years. It is an opportunity that arguably has not been fully grasped since the days of Wesley.

"Will we determine to empower, liberate and disciple the 98% of the Church of England who are not ordained and therefore set them free for fruitful, faithful mission and ministry, influence, leadership and, most importantly, vibrant relationship with Jesus in all of life? And will we do so not only in church-based ministry on a Sunday but in work and school, in gym and shop, in field and factory, Monday to Saturday?"

The report is attached. Both the summary and full report may be downloaded from the CofE website at: [www.churchofengland.org/renewal-reform/setting-gods-people-free.aspx](http://www.churchofengland.org/renewal-reform/setting-gods-people-free.aspx)

### 3. OUR SYNOD DISCUSSION

Our guest speaker, Dr Nick Shepherd, will give a presentation on the report. Dr Shepherd is a Lay Minister and was, until recently, the Assistant Director of Discipleship

& Ministry for the Diocese of Southwark. He is now the Programme Director for Setting God's People Free.

Following Dr Shepherd's presentation there will be an opportunity for discussion.

#### **4. WHAT NEXT?**

A small team will be participating in a learning community with other dioceses to look at the issues in the report in more detail and explore how we might take the themes forward. This group, led by Elizabeth Jordan, will report to Bishop's Council.

However the issues raised in the report are for the whole diocese. The School for Disciples invited parishes and mission and ministry units to consider practical ways in which every church can be a school for disciples.

#### **5. MOTION**

*That this Synod take note of the 'Setting God's People Free' report*