Transforming your community through Christ’s presence

Each church is being transformed by receiving the good news of Christ. The same good news is transforming each local community. Each church is teaching and nurturing people to be missionary disciples.

In 2016 we equipped all our parishes with a range of Transforming Presence resources to demonstrate, in churches and schools, how our shared priorities are God’s gift to us all in order that we might be God’s gift to the world.

Ten Interim Ministers are helping parishes find a way forward when they are struggling with challenges as part of a wider programme of transformation which has been made possible by a grant from the Church Commissioners.

Some 43 parishes have signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme that enables regular donations for parishes as part of their Stewardship work.

New churches and schools will be planted in four vast new housing areas in the diocese, with the financial support of the Church Commissioners, following another successful grant application.

We have introduced chaplaincy services into the East London University Technical College.

Our 141 church schools are our partners in mission. John Crane was appointed Chief Executive of Vine, our Multi-Academy Trust, which is helping 12 academies to improve.

Everywhere we live, study or work we are all part of God’s transforming mission of love to the world.

We give thanks to God for the faithful commitment of every one of us.

More Vocations, ordained and lay, are being followed by more women and men. In 2016 some 30 women and men were ordained as Deacons, two more than in the previous year. A further 38 people were licensed or commissioned as Lay Ministers, Evangelism Enablers and Pastoral Assistants.

Mortgage finance has been secured to enable extra curates’ housing to be purchased.

Our new Mission & Ministry Units are a growing movement of lay and clergy teams who want to work together and support each other in mission and ministry to all in their communities. Eight were approved in the year.

Church school, Barking: “We like going to school with our friends.”

Our aspiration is to be a transforming presence in every community – see www.transformingpresence.org.uk
Street pastors, Billericay: “We’ve just finished the night caring for an unconscious guy in a dark place.”

Pop-up shop, Leytonstone: “We’re sharing our blessings with our community.”

Upload your stories to our new look website - www.chelmsford.anglican.org

Annual briefing for parishes

Vital signs of growth

The average all age weekly attendance in our churches is up by nearly one per cent in latest year for which figures are available compared to the year before. This contrasts with the overall long-term national picture of church attendance gently declining between 10 and 15 per cent over the past 10 years.

One in three parishes is consistently growing.

Churches are serving communities in new and innovative ways that are not captured by the official attendance figures but are nevertheless vital signs of growth.

For example, Fresh Expressions of Church are thriving such as Messy Church, a creative form of church for children and adults, adding about 6,200 people to the attendance figures.

We are training our teachers to use Understanding Christianity, a new resource to help children in our schools learn the building blocks of the Christian faith.

Our three Sparrows nurseries provide Christian child care in a happy and safe environment to families of all faiths and none.

We are training and supporting our children’s, families and youth workers to equip churches to serve new generations in exciting ways.

Our Retreat House has been refurbished. The House now offers 27 bedrooms, of which 18 are ensuite, and a lift to the first floor. More people are enjoying an attractive programme of events. A strategic review of the Retreat House has been completed.

The first-ever Bradwell Festival took place. It has been transformed from the Bradwell Pilgrimage and is described by some as a ‘mini-Greenbelt’.

Our staff took part in diversity, inclusion and unconscious bias training in line with a resolution of our Synod.

Grants have been given from our appeal fund to assist the welcome and resettlement of refugees.

Pressure was maintained to safeguard child refugees in the Calais camp and admit some of these children to the UK.

Farm, Great Bardfield: “Three generations of our family gathered for the blessing of our new combine harvester.”

Refugee action, Colchester: “Churches are part of our campaign to welcome refugee families.”

SOLID youth festival, Upminster: “There was lots of food, laughter, worship.”
Sharing in God’s mission

Thousands of people are giving generously of their time, talents and money each week.

Our parishes receive about £45M in income each year and spend £42M, of which Parish Share payments come to about £15M. At around £17.5M, we spend more on parish ministry than we ask for in Share.

Investment income, parochial fees for weddings and funerals and funds from the Church of England help to bridge the gap. However, funding from the CofE is going to reduce.

Our average weekly planned giving is around £12 a head, which is above the national average and is rising, but this is relatively less than in other dioceses where giving has increased.

A new Share scheme has been approved by our Synod that will make the cost of ministry more transparent, make the Church an even more transforming presence, and support growth. Mutual support and generosity remain key features of the new scheme.

As we give of our time, talents and money we embody God’s mission of love to the world.

Prioritising mission

Income 2016 £23,069,000

Expenditure 2016 £23,321,000

The figures above had not been audited at the time of going to print.

- We made a small surplus on our General Fund.
- Clergy vacancies were higher than expected.
- The Share shortfall was down for the third successive year.
- Investment income has improved.
An amazing year in numbers

340 stipends of curates and clergy were financed.

420 houses, principally for clergy, were maintained and improved.

On average, 38,404 people (84 per cent adults, 16 per cent children under 16) attended services and acts of worship each week in our churches in 2015, the latest year for which figures are available.

A further 6,153 people attended services for schools in our churches each week.

6,200 children attended church each week, and 4,500 children attended a school service in church each week.

Usual Sunday attendance was 30,469 people; 84 per cent adults, 16 per cent children under 16.

The worshipping community of our churches was 44,399 people; 20 per cent were aged under 18, 53 per cent were aged 18-69, and 27 per cent were aged 70 or over.

50,195 people attended our churches at Easter; 73 per cent received Communion.

104,634 people attended our churches at Christmas; 31 per cent received Communion.

During Advent, 95,934 people attended special services for the congregation and local community, and 123,403 people attended special services for civic organisations and schools.

There were 4,885 baptisms and services of thanksgiving for the gift of a child; 1,843 marriages and services of prayer and dedication after civil marriages; 2,685 funerals in our churches, and a further 3,065 funerals at crematoria/cemeteries.

Last year a further 30 people were ordained as deacons and 38 people were licensed or commissioned as lay ministers.

8 Mission and Ministry Units were commissioned or approved.

We trained more than 1,600 church leaders and workers face-to-face. Almost 1,100 more received Safeguarding training online.

Welcome and farewell

In a year that saw many changes Elizabeth Snowden succeeded David Lowman as Archdeacon of Chelmsford, and Mina Smallman retired as Archdeacon of Southend.