A strategy for serving and transforming our society and God’s world

2012-2015
The Diocese of Sheffield is called to grow a sustainable network of Christ-like, lively and diverse Christian communities in every place which are effective in making disciples and in seeking to transform our society and God’s world.

This short booklet is one of three key strategy documents for the Diocese of Sheffield for the next part of our life together.

Each unpacks part of our vision statement.

Growing the Body of Christ is about how we grow a network of Christ like, lively and diverse Christian communities

Re-imagining Ministry is about how we develop sustainable patterns of lay and ordained ministry to serve and lead God’s people.

Salt and Light is about how we seek to transform our society and God’s world.

The material in Salt and Light is a summary of a more detailed document which emerged from a listening process across the Diocese led by our Board of Faith and Justice. The full document and its recommendations were agreed by our Diocesan Synod in July 2012. You can find the longer document on the Diocesan website.

Please read Salt and Light carefully, discuss it with others in your church and take some action together. We commend the strategy to every parish in the Diocese of Sheffield.

Bishop Steven, Sheffield
Bishop Peter, Doncaster

‘You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. 14 You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.’

Matthew 5 v 13-16

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Why are we called to be Salt & Light?

God calls his people to pray for the coming of the kingdom and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

**In the Old Testament**
- God called Abraham so that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed
- The law which came through Moses is a law which upholds the rights of widows, orphans, refugees and the poor of the land
- The prophets call God’s people back to that law again and again and challenge unjust structures

**In the Gospels**
- Jesus came proclaiming God’s kingdom: the reign of God characterised by peace and justice
- Jesus in his earthly ministry served others, relieved suffering and challenged those in power
- Jesus calls his disciples to have an impact beyond their own community as salt in the earth and lights in the world

**In the rest of the New Testament**
- The Church is called to be an example and a blessing to the communities in which it is set
- The Church is empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a channel of God’s grace and love

The call to serve our society and transform God’s world is a key part of our discipleship. It is also a key part of our witness to the difference Christ makes in our lives and helps draw others to faith.
We asked people across the Diocese what needs changing as we pray for God’s kingdom to come. These are the issues our Diocese is most concerned about.

**Across the world we care deeply about:**
- Climate change and its impact on the most vulnerable people on the planet
- Poverty in the developing world and the growing inequality globally
- War and violence and recognising our national responsibility as a major player in the arms trade.
- A sense of powerlessness in the face of huge structures and systems which bear down on the poorest

**Across our nation we care deeply about:**
- The many who continue to live in poverty
- Levels of inequality that are growing
- Increased inequality undermining cohesion in communities
- Levels of care available to an ageing population

Some of our smaller churches whose numbers are declining often carry the pain of their particular parish; places which can not see clearly how their future will unfold. Their faithful prayers come from this authentic incarnational experience.

**In our own communities and neighbourhoods we care deeply about:**
- Family breakdown
- Lack of hope and disengagement experienced by many young people
- The treatment of asylum seekers
- Those with disabilities, the frail and the elderly
- Those with mental ill health
- Local inequalities
- Environmental degradation
- The impact of the economic downturn
- **Unemployment** registered with nearly all as being the most significant issue for us locally

**Ourselves**
We do not believe as a Church that we are perfect or better than other people. We are part of the society we live in and share the need for repentance, forgiveness and healing.

The things that get in the way of us doing more are often within us: our own weariness, apathy, greed, hopelessness, the distraction of churchy things, feeling inadequate, hurt or powerless.

**We are aware of negative values impacting on us all:**
- Materialism
- Individualism
- Selfishness
- Lack of gratitude
- Fear and suspicion of others
Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Isaiah 58 v 6
Where do we see God working already?

There are signs of hope and grace across the Diocese as Christians work together to love their neighbours, build community, serve our society and transform God’s world.

**As Individuals**

More than 20,000 Christian disciples make up the worshipping community of Christians in the Diocese of Sheffield.

Most of what we do as individuals to love our neighbours is hidden from public view and consists of acts of, kindness, generosity, gratitude, abstinence, and careful, prayerful choices about the way we live and behave. Like a root system in a forest, the largest part of the ministry of the Church of England is below the surface, deeply embedded and interwoven into the life of communities and places of work.

When we gather together on Sundays and in the week around the word and the sacraments we can be sustained, inspired, renewed and equipped for being salt and light in the world.

Worship, preaching, prayers, honest friendships and other ministries help support the Body of Christ in this work.

Sheffield Church Action on Poverty triggered the campaign that led to the Diocese committing itself to pay a ‘living wage’ to all its employees.

**As local churches**

At least two thirds of our parishes actively engage with community and neighbourhood issues.

Examples include:

- Lunch clubs for the elderly
- Visiting the lonely or the isolated
- Activities for young children and their carers
- Provision for young people
- Service to the homeless
- Teaching English and supporting asylum seekers

Church members at St Peter’s, Askern, are part of the ‘Open The Book’ project which involves church members in their local schools and the Transform project which helps with bad relationships among families and teaches parenting skills.

Doncaster Minster provides a venue for Arts & Musical performances which benefit the church and the community.
Working out of Church House the ‘Who is your Neighbour?’ facilitates conversations and discussions with any one willing about what lies beneath prejudice and how we can free ourselves and our communities from it. Set up to counter the BNP it has an interfaith and ecumenical management committee.

Great Houghton St Michael & All Angels, hold a youth club for children of the village and an after school club for local primary school. They hold ‘cinema nights’ in local sheltered housing, lunch club and a baby café.

St Aidan Wheatley Hills, along with others, still operates a door to door collection for Christian Aid.

Through Partnerships

Many Christians and local churches are involved in partnerships with others to make a difference.

These partnerships are expressed:

• Through prayer and giving
• Through membership and sharing in mission partnerships
• Through supporting the work of Tear Fund, Christian Aid and other development agencies
• Through supporting the Children’s Society, Mothers Union or other national charities
• Through support of campaigning groups such as Church Action on Poverty, Amnesty and Green Peace
• In partnership with other local churches through Churches Together
• In partnership with other local faith groups, statutory agencies and community groups

As a Diocese

As a Diocese we work together to serve and transform our society in many different ways:

Through the Board of Faith and Justice and its subgroups working on:

• Mental Health issues
• The Environment
• Asylum seekers
• Tackling prejudice

Through our Board of Education we support the work of 40 schools with over 8,000 students and staff.

Through Together for Regeneration we support parishes and other groups in setting up community and regeneration projects.

Through our chaplains in hospitals, prisons, education, sport, the workplace and in many other contexts we support individuals in moments of greatest need.

St Michael and All Angels Brodsworth estimate they have considerably reduced their carbon footprint by having a device fitted to their boiler which allows them to operate it with a text message.

Pitsmoor Christ Church, have several projects directed at asylum seekers. They also have projects that seek to help the homeless, vulnerable women, families and children, the elderly and lonely.
The Five Marks of Mission

The Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion are one way of unpacking what it means to be salt in the earth and light to the world.

What can you see happening in your own local church for each of these marks of mission? For all of us, this is work in progress.

THE FIVE MARKS OF MISSION

1
To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
This is seen as the “headline” which is unpacked by the other four.

2
To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
The strategy, ‘Growing the Body of Christ’, unpacks what it means to put this Mark of Mission into practice in an annual cycle of:
- Sowing the seed of the gospel outside the church community (summer to autumn)
- Offering a nurture group for enquirers at least once a year (November to Easter)
- Growing the faith of every disciple (Easter to the summer)

‘Salt and Light’ explores response to the other three Marks of Mission.

3
To respond to human need by loving service
As illustrated throughout the booklet there is a great deal going on across the Diocese in individual lives and in the lives of parish churches.

4
To seek to transform unjust structures of society
Christians are involved in this Mark of Mission in the choices they make in their own lives and in partnership with others.

However our research shows we are not as active as churches under this Mark of Mission as we are in simple acts of service.

This Mark is harder to put into practice.
- Some feel the issues are too big or difficult to tackle
- Some feel uninformed about questions of poverty or justice
- Some are cautious about political involvement

We need to develop ways of encouraging one another in local churches and across the Diocese through:
- Responding, even in only small ways, to the things that trouble us
- Good information woven into our worship and study
- Creative partnerships
- Effective leadership through Deaneries and the Board of Faith and Justice
- Encouraging small, initiatives which build confidence
To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

Again there is some good work going on through the efforts of individuals, some churches and the Diocesan Environmental Group.

However much more could be done through:

- Building the number of Christians that support and encourage one another to live more simply
- Greater engagement in the ‘Shrinking the (Carbon) Footprint’ campaign
- Deepening our spiritual commitment to the environment as also created by our God
- Increasing the number of eco-congregations

Parts of Finningley churchyard are conserved as spring meadow, not cut until July, and parts are conserved as summer meadow, not cut until September. There is mown access for visitors and to the graves. Shrubs and wild flowers were added to create extra sources of food (nectar and berries) and habitats for wildlife. Bird boxes were put up, log piles were created and 2 compost heaps have been maintained within the churchyard, all with the aim of attracting a variety of small animal, bird and insect life.

Worsbrough St Mary, encouraging the community to join social activities, have a ‘drop in’ open to all along with ‘Messy Club for Adults’. And have began to create a ‘Quiet Garden’.

Conisbrough St Peter’s activities include coffee mornings, mother & tots and also Steptoes Charity Shop.

St Paul’s Mosborough reach out to their community by hosting a lunch club and soup kitchen. The parish contains a diverse population and has a good relationships with people of different cultures.

St Mark’s church Broomhill has been the first to erect solar panels to reduce their fuel bills and their carbon footprint.

The Sheffield fair trade group led a ‘coffee crawl’ through the city, raising awareness and promoting those retailers who sell fair trade coffee.
Working with people of other faiths
The Church of England has a particular responsibility as the established church to create partnerships with other faith communities.

Statutory Agencies and voluntary and community sector
We need to be open to increasing our partnership with these agencies who also seek to serve our communities.

Partnerships
Partnerships are a vital part of being salt in the earth and light to the world. Many of these issues are too big for a single parish to tackle. Partnerships will include:

Mission Partnerships
Mission Partnerships with other Anglican parishes in the area. This will be an increasingly common way for parishes to work together in all areas of mission.

Ecumenical partnerships
Ecumenical partnerships with other Christian churches to address issues of concern.

St James Anston is involved with a children’s community choir through local schools. They have Messy Church, weekly café drop in sessions and outreach to the community at Easter and Christmas by delivering invitation cards. They also hold a monthly communion service at a local residential home.

The Diocesan Environmental Group co-hosted two successful series of lectures with Sheffield Campaign against Climate Change (SCACC).

The congregation at Christ Church, Dore, regularly send postcards in support of Tearfund and Micah Challenge campaigns. The postcards are given out in the service (pens and pencils are provided), one of the World Mission Team explains the campaign message and the congregation are invited to fill in their postcard. The postcards are gathered up, there is prayer for the campaign and the postcards are then sent off together.
In Doncaster, raising awareness of the needs of the environment, the ecumenical Christian Aid group organised a march through the city to the minster, held a special service of commitment and hosted a question and answer session with local MP.

The challenge of distinctiveness
Partnerships can be complex. They create issues of power: who is in control? How do we work together?

They also raise questions of distinctiveness: our goals may be the same as other people’s but our methods of working and incentives might be different.

Jesus anticipates these questions in his image of being salt in the earth. Salt must not lose its distinctiveness – yet it must be spread around if it is to do its work.

Rotherham Interfaith has established a community garden and vegetable plot outside the unity centre – they organise a series of litter collections during lent and opportunities to hear about perspectives of different faiths through out the year.

Barnsley Church Action on Poverty have set up a starter pack scheme for people who move into accommodation after being homeless.

The Private Sector and the Business Community
Previous generations of Christians have been much more confident in engagement with business than we are today. We need to rekindle this confident spirit to work together for the common good.

Together for Regeneration, a team working across the Diocese has partnered with Voluntary Action Barnsley to support local community action in Goldthorpe.

Churches across the Diocese pray regularly for their communities, remembering businesses, schools, families, those who are alone, who grieve, who suffer. Day by day we bring these before God seeking his mercy and wisdom.
For Individuals

We ask all Anglicans in the Diocese to pray for a renewed openness to the suffering of the world and to listen to the particular things the Spirit lays on our hearts.

For Parishes

Please could you identify in each parish someone to be a Faith and Justice link?

The role will be to act as a 2 way channel of communication and not necessarily involve further action. It might be useful for this person to be welcomed on to the PCC. We ask that all parishes at least once a year find ways of listening to the concerns of individual members around these issues.

This can feed into the prayers of the church but also the parish Mission Action Plan. This part of the plan along with other issues that churches do not feel equipped to deal with on their own, will be fed upwards to the Deaneries.

Through this recommendation we will be able to hear the issues and concerns on the hearts of individual members of our churches, network people together and raise awareness of issues.

For Deaneries

Please could you identify in each deanery someone to be a Faith and Justice Link.

The Deanery Links will draw the insights of the parishes together and help the Deanery explore whether there is ground on which a campaigning strand of mission might emerge or whether to develop a particular piece of service. The Deanery might want to focus debate in an area or offer some training. This person will be asked to gather with other Deanery links twice a year.

Recommendations

Theses recommendations are designed to address issues already raised and ensure that our Church structures and agendas support the response of individuals and parishes to the call to be ‘Salt of the earth’, to be ‘The Light of the World’.
For the Diocesan Board of Faith and Justice

The Board will explore ways of connecting all of these links together.

The Board will then be able on the basis of these links to raise issues at Diocesan level, to network people together in different interest groups and offer help and support to deaneries and parishes.

Facing up to Unemployment and the local economy

Our Bishops will draw together a wider conversation with local business people and others and develop a task group with clear aims and objectives to address questions of unemployment in the local economy.

Other recommendations in the main report address issues already raised by parishes and individuals consulted. They cover:

- Statutory and voluntary sector engagement
- Presence and engagement with other faith communities
- Relationships with national partners
- Deepening our commitment to the environment
- Refocusing on global inequality and the Millennium Development Goals
- Learning together and
- Dealing with complex Issues
- Regular review

‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? \( ^{38} \) When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? \( ^{39} \) When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

\( ^{40} \) The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

Mathew 25 v 37-40
What Next?

Please take this Booklet and discuss its recommendations and the background strategy within your parish. We know many of you are already active and confident in this part of discipleship and church life, but your Parish’s engagement will help others who are less so.

Late Autumn 2012 will see the restructure of the Board of faith and justice with elections for Diocesan Synod representatives in January 2013. The Board will develop an action plan for the delivery of the recommendations for which it is responsible and report to Diocesan Synod in November 2013 on its progress.

In the late Autumn 2012 and early part of 2013 we will be contacting Parishes and Deaneries for contact details of their Faith and Justice links.

Crosspool St Columba, welcome a wide range of people using their facilities throughout the month, including non-church activities. They hold a weekly church-based youth group for 14-18 years, a luncheon club, mother & toddler monthly meetings and services, poetry group and women’s group. They are also involved in setting up links with a local surgery to assist with pastoral care needs.
During the 10 days of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost we will ask parishes to undertake a listening exercise to help hear the concerns of parish members for their community and the world. This could inform their mission action planning.

Deanery links will gather the feedback from parishes within their deanery, both registering what is being planned, what is of concern — and where further help or collective action are needed.

At any stage in the above we ask that any individual or parish or deanery involved who feels daunted or unsure or ill equipped contact us. Every area will deal with these recommendations in slightly different ways and we are here to help think through what works best for you.
Help for the Journey

We need to help each other in parishes and deaneries and across the Diocese as a whole. There is a lot of good experience around.

Kate Plant
Director of Faith and Justice leads the work of the Board of Faith and Justice and stands ready to help with her team.
01709 309136
kate.plant@sheffield.anglican.org

Julia Alder
Oversees applications for;
• CUF Mustard Seed grants for projects that wish to tackle poverty,
• Vicars Relief fund – small amounts for those with fundamental needs such as bedding and shoes
• St Agatha’s fund which provides small grants for community activities and projects.
Julia also recruits and organises training for volunteers who wish to help out in Major Incidents such as flooding, heavy snow, flu pandemics etc.

Together for Regeneration
This team will help you support your ideas and help you find ways of putting them into practice.
With existing projects they can help you develop good practice, find like minded partners and consider ways of raising money where necessary.
Iain Cloke in Sheffield and Rotherham, Shahida Siddique in Doncaster and Teresa Gibson in Barnsley are all available to support groups and projects who are talking some of the issues in their communities or who are wanting to do so. They can all be contacted through Church House on 01709 309100

We also have Advisors to the Bishop on
World Development – Dr Jackie Butcher
Environment – Rev Dr Michael Bayley
Black Anglican Concerns – Carmen Franklin
And the Chair of the Mental Health Working Team – Julian Raffay

There is lots more on the special section of the Diocesan website

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