

Archdeacon for Regeneration and Mission

Introduction: At the writing of this report, I have been in the role of Archdeacon for Regeneration and Mission for 15 months. My activities and initiatives have been shaped substantially by the DMAP which has to do with the regeneration and renewal of our parishes and the whole Diocese. I have tried to be an enthusiastic advocate for this vision.

I have been blessed to have a Reference Group who have given me invaluable feedback, advice, and support. The group consists of Carolyn Robertson, Bruce Deam, Lucy Flatt and, until he moved out of the Diocese, Michael Holdaway.

Major Activities: I have given a presentation of the DMAP to 27 Vestries and often followed this with a parish meeting to develop a Mission Action Plan. I am also meeting with Vicars I worked with last year to hear about progress, sticking points and to offer further support. I have sought to resource individuals and parishes and tell stories of regeneration through my YouTube channel and fortnightly email. I have set up a number of Missional Clusters where a small number of clergy meet with a Missional Coach for support, learning, prayer and accountability. The Faith Empowered Course, which offers training in personal evangelism, has been valuable for the 18 people involved. Mission Impact Reviews are now well established with Nicky Lee now helping me with these. 3 were undertaken last year and 11 are scheduled for this year. The 'Leading your Church into Growth' conference in October last year was a great success with 115 people present. A number of parishes have used the LyCiG local material to inspire and resource their parishes for regeneration and mission. I have also encouraged parishes to develop a digital strategy, undertaken digital audits and offered a range of other resources and advice.

Major Initiatives for 2023-24: There have been a number of training events planned for this year. I have arranged a Coaching Training Seminar with John Eatwell and a Digital Communications Presentation by communications firm Hail. Clergy Conference will take place from 26–28 June at College House and we will have a second 'Leading your Church into Growth Conference' from 12–14 October at St Christopher's. All parishes are again being invited to this very significant conference and to bring a team of six leaders for inspiration and learning about the tools we need for the regeneration of our parishes.

Emerging Issues: Although the DMAP offers a blueprint for the regeneration of our Diocese, we're all aware that people coming to Christ and joining the Church is a spiritual process that must be undergirded with prayer. This is the most important priority if we want to see renewal.

Other needs and priorities have emerged in my work as Archdeacon for Regeneration, and I list them below.

First of all, we must continue to be challenged and shaped by the costly call to follow Christ. Without disciples who are growing in faith and experiencing the regeneration of the Holy Spirit there can be no regeneration of our Diocese. Therefore, we must help our people to continue to grow in faith so that we become communities of missional disciples.

Secondly it is clear that we need to do much better at reaching Millennials—the generation who are now in their late 20s to early 40s—which include singles and couples, many of whom are busy raising families. Research shows that the transmission of faith takes place in families and if we can support families by offering a rich community of all ages, we can support the faith formation of their children and they will stay engaged with the Church and indeed new families will join the Church.

Thirdly, it is a truism to say that we are in the middle of a communications revolution. The challenge for our churches is to see the digital world as an emerging mission field that we need to engage with. This will involve developing websites, email and social media content that is sympathetic and helpful—presenting Christianity with humility and hope. This will expand our reach and help us connect with a broader audience.

I want to trial a form of distance education later in the year whereby clusters of people meet in a 'hub church' for university level theological education. This will lead to greater confidence in the gospel and spiritual renewal. I will be working with Theology House on this project. Finally, I am working on an intentional discipleship project based in two or three of our parishes. This will help us grow these basic skills of mentoring and one on one discipleship.