

MEMO TO CLERGY AND LAY LEADERS OF THE DIOCESE

DATE: 3 November, 2022
FROM: Archdeacon for Regeneration and Mission
TO: The Clergy and Laity of the Christchurch Diocese
RE: Report on the 'Leading your Church into Growth' Conference, 18 – 20 October, 2022.

INTRODUCTION

The 'Leading your Church into Growth' (LyCiG) conference took place between the 18 – 20 October 2022 at St Christopher's Church. It was an outstanding success with the great majority of attendees feeling encouraged and empowered to work towards the growth and flourishing of their parishes with renewed energy, insight and practical ideas. The two presenters from the Church of England, Ven. Rhiannon King and Rev Harry Steele, spoke extremely well and authoritatively as they shared their experiences and wisdom. The LyCiG material presented has been honed over a period of 25 years of ministry in the UK and was very relevant and helpful in our New Zealand church context.

The conference was organized by a small team consisting of the Archdeacon for Regeneration and Mission and the Bishop's EA Veronica Cross. Other groups contributed to the conference including the worship team, the catering team and the staff of St Christopher's who managed the venue. Veronica was joined by Heather Fraser as a conference support person.

MAIN CONTENT

The conference was structured around seven modules as follows; (i) Creating a prayerful culture of growth (ii) Implementing the 4 Ps – Prayer, Presence, Proclamation and Persuasion (iii) Practicing fruitful evangelism (iv) Developing engaging worship (v) Becoming an inviting and welcoming church (vi) Making a pathway for seekers to become disciples and (vii) Begin a planned journey of growth. An of the overarching theme of the conference was the need to pray, to be intentional about growth and to prioritize the engagement with those who don't attend church using the 4 P model. There was also a strong emphasis on developing a simple, step by step, discipleship pathway which might include Alpha or some other course.

The seventh module involved each person writing down three action points they committed themselves to achieving in the coming months. One participant wrote the following three point plan (i) Introduce 'Prayer for Growth' into our daily and Sunday services (ii) Re-read the manual and write a report to Vestry (iii) Create an accountability team and plan a sermon series.

ATTENDANCE

There were a total of 115 registrants at the conference, 11 of whom were from Dunedin (3), Nelson (2) and Wellington (6) Dioceses. Two representatives were from Te Waipounamu. Of those who attended from our Diocese 31 were ordained clergy and 71 lay leaders. 33 of our parishes were represented. There were 40 vicars or priests-in-charge present. 7 parishes were represented by lay leaders without their Vicars or Priests-in-charge being present. The average parish team consisted of 3.2 people although no fewer than 10 parishes sent a team of 4 or more leaders. Notable examples were the parish of Burwood-Shirley who sent a team of 10

people and Addington who sent a team of 4 people – a higher proportion of representatives to Sunday attendance than any other parish.

SURVEY RESULTS

Conference participants were invited to complete a 13 question survey and 84 responses (73%) were received. Registrants were in the following age bands; 19-25 years (3%), 26-39 years (10%), 40-59 years (30%), 60-79 years (53%) and over 80 years (4%). 80% strongly agreed and 20% agreed that the conference was an enjoyable and positive experience. 53% strongly agreed and 44% agreed that the conference would make a positive difference to their parish's ministry and mission in the future. 92% strongly agreed and 8% agreed that overall, the presenters were interesting, accessible and engaging. 74% strongly agreed and 26% percent agreed that they would like to run a shortened parish version of LyCiG called 'LyCiG Local'.

FOLLOW UP

It is vitally important that clergy and lay leaders embed the learnings gained as soon as possible following the conference. If this fails to happen individuals may be 'inoculated' against attending other conferences, growing their leadership capacity or having a positive vision and hope of leading a growing parish.

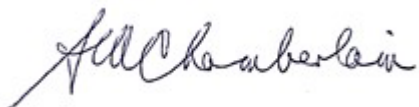
The Archdeacon for Regeneration and Mission will take the following steps to ensure that the positive benefits and learnings of the conference are implemented and growth momentum in the diocese is maintained.

- Post video clips and reminders about the conference on social media
- Make postcards with the LyCiG prayer available to parishes
- Ensure that topics for discussion and accountability in existing Missional Clusters involve the learnings and decisions made at the conference
- Meet one on one with the 12 clergy who were at the conference but who are not currently in a Missional Cluster to receive feedback about the conference and to enquire about what decisions have been made to implement learnings from the conference.
- Make the 'LyCiG Local' material available to the clergy who were at the conference and encourage them to use this material in their parishes

FUTURE PLANS

Because of the need to continue reinforcing the lessons learned at the conference and to invite those who did not attend the conference this year, it is deemed advisable that we have another conference at about the same time next year. North Island bishops could be encouraged to host a LyCiG in the North Island shortly before or after so that costs could be shared.

Other learnings include the following; Printing a conference worship booklet worked well; Proactively place people on tables in parish groups; Widen the organizing group; Advertise the date 9 – 12 months in advance; Consider offering childcare facilities; Consider using a ticketing website for both registration and payment; Reduce sessions to a maximum of 3 in a single day; Consider running the conference on Friday night, Saturday and Sunday afternoon; as trusted and known presenters invite Rhiannon and Harry to be conference speakers again; arrange various parishes to undertake LyCiG local next year.



Archdeacon for Regeneration and Mission