

OUR MESSAGE
IS AS RELEVANT
TODAY AS IT'S
EVER BEEN.
HOW CAN WE
ENSURE THAT
WE ARE?



Our mission is to make our message of God's love heard amidst the noise of the modern world. We want to reach out to individuals and communities across our diocese, and engage them in a new conversation that's absolutely relevant in their lives. In order to do this, we need to recognise that the world has changed – therefore the way we deliver our message and engage people needs to change too.



HOW CAN THE CHURCH OF TODAY BECOME THE CHURCH OF TOMORROW?

Society today is under constant pressure – we live in an exciting but uncertain era of change where nothing stands still for long. Technology makes us more connected yet more distant than ever before.

The economy is uncertain. World issues such as equality, poverty and immigration are as important as ever. As individuals, we have less time and more responsibilities competing for our attention. Our priorities are shifting and the question we need to ask today is how do we as a Church respond to these?

How do we broaden our appeal without diluting our message? And in a busy, crowded and diverse region, how do we ensure that our message of faith, hope and love is heard?

When it comes to answering these questions, we're guided by our vision. This document sets out our values, inspiration and goals, which in turn inform our actions and approach.

OUR VISION


A worshipping, growing and transforming Christian presence at the heart of every community


Our Values Faith, Hope and Love		Our Approach Fit For Mission
Our Inspiration We run with perseverance the race that is set before us... with our eyes fixed on Jesus		Process to strategically assess what we need to do to be the growing, nurturing, serving Church of the future. – In ministry – In structure – In resources – In processes
Our Mission Goals - to be a Church which is		
Growing	Growing new disciples in missionary church communities which are younger, more diverse, active and spiritually engaged	
Nurturing	Increasing vocations, nurturing new and existing disciples, increasing financial giving	
Serving	Present for all, speaking and acting prophetically for justice, supporting pastorally especially the vulnerable, deprived and excluded	

The Diocese of Manchester will face some specific challenges in the coming years:



28,100

 Attendance figures in the last five years have dropped by **15%** to **28,100**. What will this figure look like in another five years' time?


 Around a third of our churches have fewer than **35** weekly attendees, though **33** churches have more than **100** in weekly attendance.



35



12%

 In less than five years' time, the number of full time Stipendiary Clergy available in England will reduce by around **12%**.

CAN THESE CHALLENGES BECOME OUR OPPORTUNITIES?

In 2011, the Bishop's Council began an extensive and long term process to identify the key issues facing the diocese. Some of these issues will probably be familiar to you – such as responding to an overall reduction in weekly church going and finding sustainable financial support.

We also face a number of practical challenges – how do we engage people and reach the communities surrounding us, when we have fewer clergy and fewer suitable worship spaces than ever before? The question of 'how can the Church of today be the Church of tomorrow' is driven by these key issues.

As serious as these challenges sound, they are also the basis of our transformation and development. Now we have identified them, we can begin to move forwards and consider how we can continue delivering our message of faith, hope and love in a relevant and sustainable way.

There are many examples of how churches are already responding to community needs: about a third regularly support or run their local food bank, for example.

THE START OF OUR CONVERSATION

Faith, hope and love. The values at the heart of our Church have never been more relevant or contemporary in today's society.

As people become busier, communities become more diverse and life becomes more demanding, it's more important than ever to reach out and embody our new vision: to become a worshipping, growing and transforming Christian presence at the heart of every community.

In delivering this mission, we can become a resilient, focused and relevant Church for a different world.

In order to do this, we're focusing on a five key areas. Growth is key, whether we're working hard to engage everyone in our parishes, or supporting the clergy and congregations we already have. Our buildings may not always be fit for purpose so we're heading out into the community, delivering our message in a timely and relevant way.

And in order to drive these changes, we're working towards a mixed model of Church – where more people can take an active leadership role.

This is an opportunity for everyone within the diocese to get involved and face some key challenges together. To start the conversation, we've focused on five key areas that we're currently facing as a Church and as a diocese.

- 01 DELIVERING CHURCH**
- 02 ADDRESSING SOCIAL INJUSTICE**
- 03 NURTURING PEOPLE**
- 04 SPREADING SPIRITUALITY**
- 05 TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY**

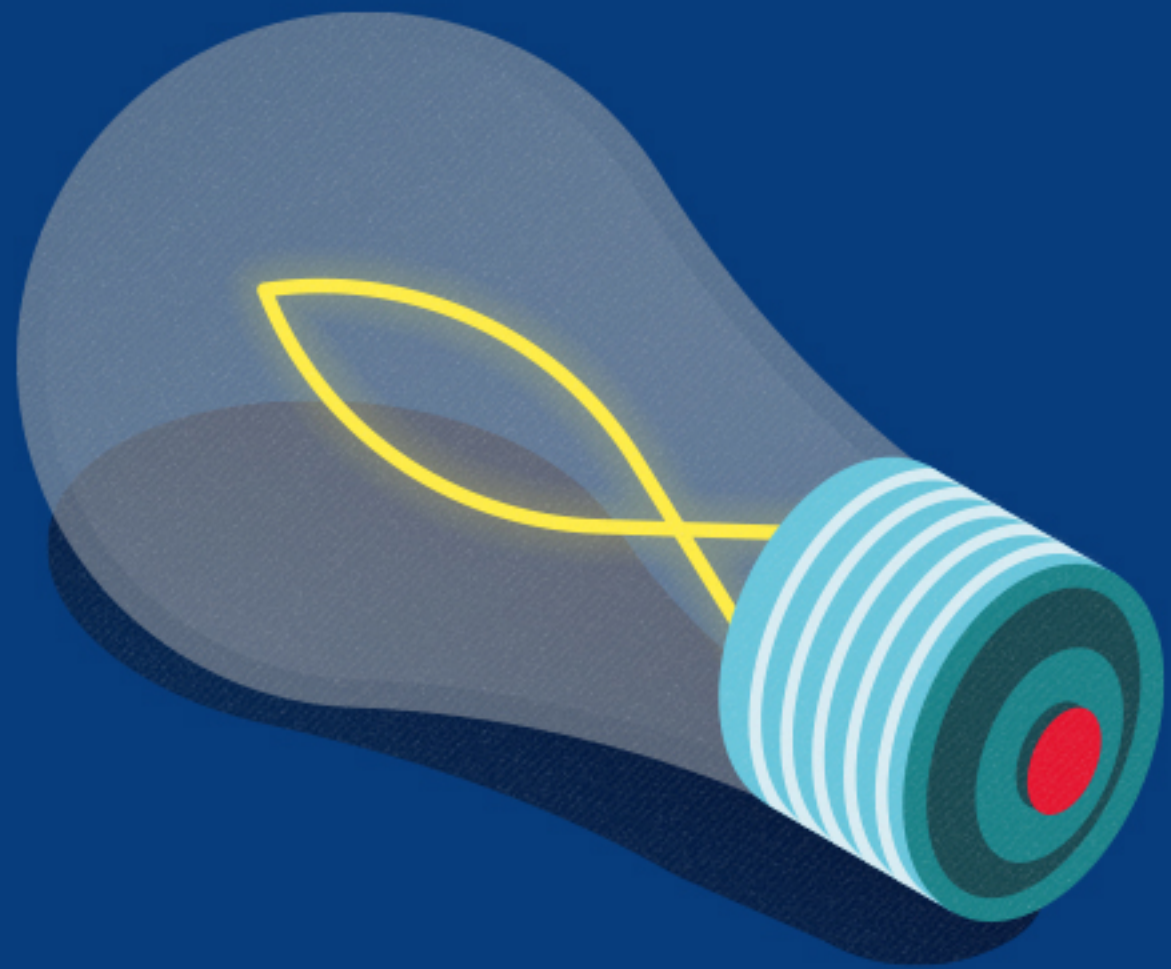


01 DELIVERING CHURCH

WE'VE USED SERMONS, PULPITS AND VOLUNTEERS. IS IT TIME TO USE OUR IMAGINATION?

To be vibrant and alive in the 21st century, the Church has to start reaching people in new ways. Can we be more flexible in our approach and consider how we can change a little ourselves?

Some of our parishes have already begun to consider how they can develop their lay leaders, build networks to share resources, and take a long, hard look at their buildings. In today's busy world, others are doing Messy Church and mid-week services, enabling them to engage with a whole new audience. How else can we imaginatively deliver Church?



02 ADDRESSING SOCIAL INJUSTICE

IS IT ENOUGH TO PRAY FOR A BETTER SOCIETY?

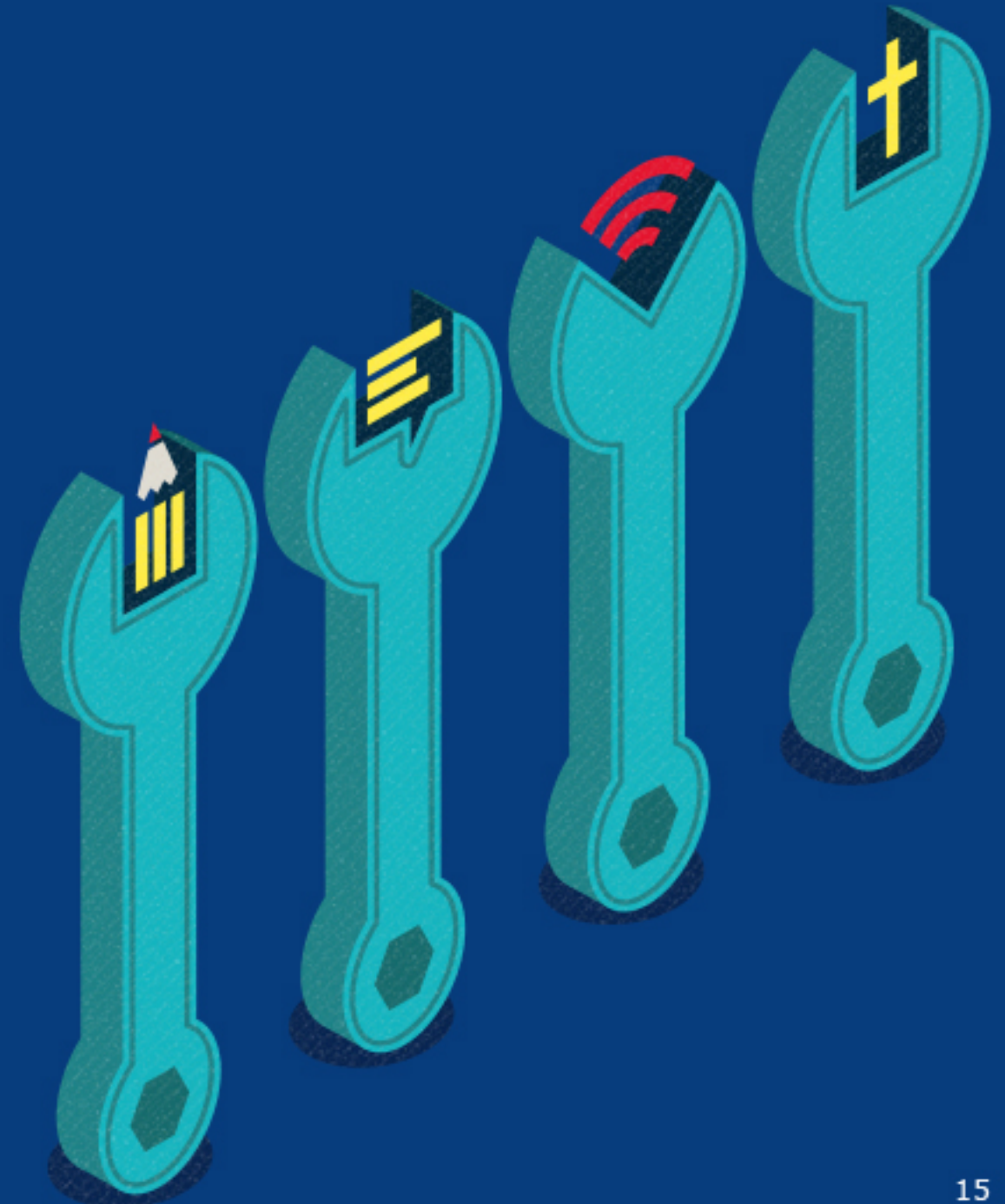
The Church has always been on the side of the vulnerable and deprived. How do we continue to be an active force for change into the 21st century? How can we reach out to the disadvantaged and excluded in our communities? How can we engage with the widest possible range of groups to champion equality and celebrate diversity? And how do we best support each other in making the world a better and a fairer place?



03 NURTURING PEOPLE

DOING GOD'S WORK. HOW COULD WE HELP DO A BETTER JOB?

The Church exists to serve others. We help people in any way we can: spiritually, personally and practically. We can support one another by sharing our gifts and experiences. Whether that means additional training, learning to aid personal growth or just a shoulder to lean on when people need one. Together we'll equip our present and future leaders for their ministry. In what ways can we support each other to be better able to care for local people?



04 SPREADING SPIRITUALITY

JOHN 3:16. CAN IT BE MEANINGFUL TO DONNA, 23 AND MIKE, 52?

We all know that the Church can't stand still. To grow, we need to attract and nurture new followers of Jesus Christ. We believe our core biblical values of faith, hope and love have never been more relevant than they are today. So how can we talk to a younger and more diverse audience in a way that's meaningful to them? How can we engage new people in our conversation – in their communities, in Church and online?



05 TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

HOW CAN A CHURCH IN EVERY PARISH BECOME A PRESENCE IN EVERY COMMUNITY?

God's love and the Church are there for everyone in our diocese. How can we retain or regain our place as the beating heart of our community? Are we open and welcoming for all? How can we build networks with other groups in our community and between Churches to maximise our impact? Can we transform our local communities without changing a little ourselves?



Church for a different world

WILL YOU JOIN THE CONVERSATION?

This book is the beginning of our wider conversation about making our message of God's love heard within a busy, modern society. It's a conversation that we need everyone to join, as your thoughts, concerns and opinions are critical in helping us to build our Church and move forwards.

How can you join the conversation?

Website: manchester.anglican.org

Twitter: @DioManchester

Facebook: Church of England
(Diocese of Manchester-official)

manchester.anglican.org