



Bishop
Christopher's
**Call to
Mission**

Further Information

November 2011

Bishop Christopher is looking forward to meeting with the incumbent (or their representative) and colleagues from the educational communities and other chaplaincies across the Diocese to launch his **CALL TO MISSION** in the first few weeks of the New Year.

Throughout our Diocese we are all called to nurture and to grow the presence in each place of parishes, schools, chaplaincies and other local expressions of church, both traditional and innovative, with clergy and laity together called to be

Communities expressing faith.

We witness to our faith in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen from the dead, and we confess him as Lord and God. When many are confused or unsure, we try to help people articulate the faith for which they seek.

Communities bearing hope.

We look to an imperishable hope, which will not disappoint us. whilst many voices speak of anxiety and despair, we try to point people to signs of real and transforming hope in their lives.

Communities embodying love.

We love because He first loved us, and the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Spirit he has given us. In a world of loneliness and division, we try to give and to receive true love in all our relationships with people.

As we seek to live by faith, hope, and love we know we cannot rely on our own strength. We also know we often fail to show people the authentic way of Christ. But we believe God's grace is always freely given to forgive us and restore us, and we treasure the word and the sacrament which give us strength and guidance for our journeying alongside people.

FAITH HOPE LOVE will have three phases in the life of the Diocese

- to individual Christians (children, young people and adults), launched around Candlemas 2012, inviting reflection on faith, hope and love in our lives during Lent, bringing responses to churches, schools and our other communities in the Easter season.
- to local churches and schools, beginning at Pentecost 2012, asking them to reflect on these values in their life together as worshipping and learning communities and in the life of their local communities, bringing responses together in deaneries by Advent 2012.
- to deaneries, inviting them to engage in the same process from Candlemas 2013, bringing responses to Bishop Christopher by Advent 2013.

The **CALL TO MISSION** is not a 'strategy' or a 'programme' but rather an invitation to respond individually and together to God's call to his people to mission in His world. The resources that will be suggested to support this call are ideas to stimulate thought, and individuals, parishes and deaneries will be free to develop their own approach to the **CALL**.

The Launch Event

In each Episcopal Area there is a launch event scheduled for late January/early February to which one representative from each church (ideally the incumbent) and school and other communities have been invited.

At these events, hosted by each Area

- Bishop Christopher will set out the vision and scope of the whole process
- the first phase, the CALL to individuals, will be described in more detail
- the role of the clergy and others in supporting and facilitating this phase will be explained
- the material offered to every individual from the Bishop will be described and distributed
- there will be an act of worship - in the context of Midday Prayer, with a homily
- lunch will be enjoyed together

(In the Croydon Area, there will also be a presentation on ‘Signs of Growth’)

The call to individuals - a taste of what's involved

- full details will be explained at the Launch Event!

The Invitation

Bishop Christopher will be writing a message to each individual. Copies will be provided in envelopes for each parish which will be asked to put names on them and distribute them to individuals before Lent. Included with the message will be some suggested questions to consider; a **FAITH HOPE LOVE** prayer and a response card. There will also be some suggestions of individual resources and of how to explore more possibilities on the Diocesan website.

Sample Questions

- How do I express my **faith** in my personal life of discipleship through my actions and words?

Christian discipleship is about following in the footsteps of Jesus. How do I hear God and know what he is asking of me?

What things do I find difficult to understand about the Christian faith - and how might I take steps to explore these?

- What is the message of **hope** that I have to share with others?

When have I experienced fear and anxiety and what has helped me to face those times?

What resources do I draw on to encourage me?

- How do I play my part within a loving community? In what ways do I show **love**?

How do I show appreciation and value? What one thing might I do to encourage someone else?

Who is the person I find most difficult to love in my church, school or wider life? How might I change my attitude to them?

Clergy Involvement

FAITH HOPE LOVE in the call to individuals is not asking parishes to put on special programmes of events but to use the rhythm and pattern of the life of the church to facilitate and enable people to respond - this might include time for prayer and reflection in worship during Lent or encouragement to take time in daily life to consider the questions suggested by the Bishop. There will be a special prayer for the Call and it will be good if that can be used regularly in worship.

For parishes or Churches Together groups who have Lent Groups, there happens to be a York Course called “These three...faith, hope, love” (see www.yorkcourses.co.uk) There is a new course produced by Church House Publishing for 2012, written by Bishop Steve Croft called “Experiencing God’s love - five images of transformation” (see www.chpublishing.co.uk).

Suggestions of further resources will be posted on a special **FAITH HOPE LOVE** page on the Diocesan website to coincide with the first Area launch event on January 24th.

Responding to the Call

Individuals will receive a ‘Response Card’. These are designed to help people to focus on a significant step that they may have taken in their own Christian journey. One suggestion is that people might be able to bring these to a service at Eastertide to be offered in one of the regular acts of worship. The response is intended to be personal - not a list of helpful things that the church might do! However it may be that this will help creative engagement with the next corporate stage of **FAITH HOPE LOVE**.

And a date for the future...

The Diocesan Clergy Study Day for 2012 is on Tuesday October 9th at which our Bishops will be exploring the themes of faith, hope and love from a theological and biblical perspective.

