



DIOCESAN SYNOD

Minutes of the Meeting held 5 December 2020 Via Zoom

The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, the Bishop of Southwark, and 119 other members signified their presence.

09/20 WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER

1. Members of Synod were welcomed to their second remote Zoom meeting during the pandemic. Lotwina Farodoye was welcomed aback to Synod as Bishop Christopher's nominee since her ordination as deacon and Sir David Beamish was welcomed as the newly elected Vice-Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance. Sophia Jones (new Director of Press and Communications) and the Revd Jeremy Clark-King (Lead for IME2) were also welcomed as observers.
2. It was noted that there were to be four commissionings during midday prayer: Esther Foss, Elizabeth Newman and Katie Thomas as Advisors for Women's Ministry and Timothy Bryan as Advisor for Bishop's Chaplaincy.
3. The Diocesan Secretary was invited to open the meeting in prayer.

10/20 ANNOUNCEMENT & NOTICES

4. Members were updated on the various elections in 2021 which included, Diocesan Synod, General Synod and various Board and Committees.

11/20 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

5. The Bishop of Southwark gave his Presidential Address, the text of which can be found at Appendix A.

12/20 ANNUAL OBJECTIVES

6. The Diocesan Secretary, with members of the Senior Management Team, gave an update on the progress of the 2020 Annual Objectives and a forward look to the 2021 Annual Objectives and themes which were to be formalised at the Diocesan Council of Trustees in January. Member were encouraged to send addition comment to the Diocesan Secretary following the meeting. PowerPoint Slides used for this presentation can be found at Appendix A.
7. The Bishop of Woolwich, the Bishop of Croydon, the Revd Canon Simon Buter (Battersea Deanery), Brian Wilson (Merton Deanery), the Revd Canon Jonathan Sedgwick (Southwark & Newington Deanery) and the Archdeacon of Lewisham & Greenwich spoke to this item.

13/20 2021 BUDGET & 3 YEAR FORWARD VIEW

8. The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance presented the 2021 Budget and 3-year forward view to recovery, which would be the first deficit budget in many years as a result of Covid-19. Although a deficit budget had been planned for there was optimism as the parishes had been generous in the Parish Support Fund pledges, which was attributed to the close relationship between parishes, staff at Trinity House and the Archdeacons. PowerPoint Slides used for this presentation can be found at Appendix A.
9. The Bishop of Croydon, James Reid (Croydon Central), Andrew Moughtin-Mumby (Southwark & Newington Deanery), Neil Harvey (Merton Deanery) and the Revd Dele Ogunyemi (Camberwell North Deanery) spoke to this item.
10. The Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance moved a motion that the consolidated budget for 2021 be considered and that:

“this Synod approve the total 2021 budget expenditure of £25.32m which is based on total 2021 budgeted income of £22.53m.”

11. An electronic vote was taken with overwhelming support for the motion.

14/20 DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENTATION

12. Colin Powell, the Chief Executive of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE), gave his annual update to the Synod. Despite trying circumstances with Covid-19 church schools had remained open during the lockdown to support key worker and vulnerable families and used the opportunity for mission. PowerPoint slides used for the presentation can be found at Appendix A.
13. This was to be Colin’s last presentation to Synod following the announcement of his retirement. Bishop Christopher, Bishop Jonathan and Bishop Richard expressed thanks for his work and commitment to the SDBE and church schools, of which the fruits of his labour can be seen across the Diocese.

15/20 GROWING FAITH INITIATIVE PRESENTATION

14. The Revd Canon Jay Colwill, Canon Missioner, Colin Powell, the Chief Executive of the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) and Aike Kennett-Brown gave a presentation on the Growing Faith Initiative which included a video of young people’s experiences. The Growing Faith adventure encourages a renewal of hearts and minds so that it becomes second nature to look at every aspect of mission and ministry through what it means for our children, young people and households. This flows from the relationships encouraged between schools and churches, and how these are developed to resource and support households to grow in faith together. Members were encouraged to feedback to Aike any ideas or comments following the presentation. A copy of the PowerPoint slides used can be found at Appendix B and the transcript of the Youth Forum’s video at Appendix C.

16/20 GENERAL SYNOD PRESENTATION

15. April Alexander, General Synod member, gave an update on the November Group of Session for the General Synod which was held via Zoom. This included important updates to the Cathedral’s Measure, the Education Measure, a report on Living in Love

and Faith, and important discussion from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse report's recommendations.

17/20 ELECTIONS TO DIOCESAN SYNOD

16. The Chair of the House of Laity presented a paper detailing the number of seats for both clergy and laity in each deanery to be elected to the Diocesan Synod in 2021. Due to a reduction in number for electoral rolls the specific formula was altered to ensure a balance of clergy and laity within the Synod.
17. Due to pressures encountered with Covid-19 the papers for this item were not circulated in the usual timeframe and Bishop Christopher agreed to review this at the next President's meeting.
18. The Bishop of Southwark and Carl Hughes (Wandsworth Deanery) spoke to this item.
19. The Chair of the House of Laity formally moved that:

“This Synod take note of the Diocesan Secretary's evaluation of membership for the 2021 triennium prior to certifying, to Deanery Secretaries, their allocation of seats formally by the end of December 2020, including the revised formula of 1 in 450 (min 2) in order to maintain approximate balance of the Hoses of Laity and Clergy.”

and

“This Synod agrees, as in previous years, that the format of election will be First Past the Post.”

20. An electronic vote was taken on both items with overwhelming support for the motions.

18/20 SYNOD QUESTIONS

21. Formal questions and answers were presented to members and the Notice Paper which will include supplementary questions and answers can be found on the website.

Diocesan Synod: Presidential Address 5th December 2020

Members of Synod, my brothers and sisters in Christ, Advent is a wonderful season, full of hope and promise as we focus on God fulfilling his loving purposes in the coming of Jesus Christ both in his Nativity and in his coming return which we await with eager longing. It is therefore a time for waiting, watching, listening and learning, themes I wish to pick up in my Presidential Address this morning.

I speak to you in the last month of what has been a strange, testing and troublesome year in which there has been suffering, isolation and every sort of adversity. Thankfully our National Health Service has not been overwhelmed, those responsible for front line delivery of services have responded with utter dedication and in the coming days vaccination programmes will commence in earnest. We hope and pray they will be effective and in the new year things will begin to turn round for the better. In the Diocese our learning has been about realising that to work together for common purpose, to bear one another's burdens and extend a helping hand to those in need, has not only strengthened relationships as we strive to build the kingdom of God, but also borne unexpected but very welcome fruit.

Southwark is an extremely diverse Diocese in so many ways - we are one of the largest in the Church of England. Whether you are here representing one of our poorer parishes, or one of our most affluent areas, you will have seen that the Diocese has been one of the most successful - in fact placed second across more than forty dioceses - for maintaining its levels of parish giving during the pandemic, providing in our case for mission and ministry across South London and East Surrey through the Parish Support Fund. Parishes have worked hard and held faith with their Deanery teams, with the Archdeacons, as well as with the Finance and Giving teams in the Diocesan Office, to maintain generous levels of giving and this a magnificent testament to our work together in testing times where the impact on and uncertainty for parish finances has been considerable. As we conclude this eventful year we anticipate to be just 4% down on what we had been expecting to receive prior to a pandemic that has so blighted our economy. A 96% + level of giving is a truly exceptional achievement for which we can give heartfelt thanks.

We have learned too that the changes Synod approved in 2015 which streamlined governance and established clarity and transparency have enabled diocesan governance and management to continue uninterrupted throughout the pandemic and I thank our Diocesan Secretary and those who have worked with her in our management teams together with our trustees, particularly Michael Hartley, Chair of our Audit and Risk Committee, Nick Burt, Chair of the Policy and Finance Committee and Alan Saunders, Chair of the DBF for working so supportively together. I am grateful to the Diocesan Secretary for keeping the Diocesan Office open for part of each week, respectful of national directions.

We have learned more deeply the need for diocesan teams to have an ethos of serving parishes, of enabling and equipping them for mission and ministry, as we navigate our way through these challenging times. The strength of our inter-relatedness has been particularly strong. I also hope that the Coronavirus Task Group I set up in March has given useful guidance and a steer to clergy and lay leaders in our parishes across a complex web of guidance and instruction from Government and I have served on the Recovery Group chaired by the Bishop of London which has issued national church guidance to each diocese.

We give thanks for Zoom and all manner of virtual communication, on-line, live-streamed and pre-recorded worship, whatsapp prayer groups and much creative pastoral outreach which have all played an amazing part in holding our praying communities together and in many places extending them; but in the loss and deprivation of the physical we have also learned to value afresh face-to-face communication, touch and physical presence. Whatever good and lasting developments there will most certainly be for on-line interaction - which we have increasingly come to depend on in recent months - we have a powerful theological steer in this season of waiting to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour - of the sheer physicality of the Christian faith. It is that physicality which has spurred us on to be ever more aware of the needs of our neighbours particularly those experiencing food poverty or isolation and to hold before us the injunction of Matthew 25: to reach out to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison in whom we find and see Christ.

A week ago I joined a very inventive Sleep-In for the Robes Project, of which I am Patron, working with homeless people in the Boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark


where rather beautifully those who come for shelter are called 'guests' and are indeed honoured guests. In recent years a vast throng of between two and three hundred people have slept out in the Cathedral churchyard to raise funds to pay for the key worker. This year we asked people to 'sleep-in' at home or in their gardens for the same purpose, while I joined the Dean at the Cathedral and made the best of a corner of the retro-choir for the night. There are so many inspiring stories of response in this Diocese during recent months and I hope they will long continue to be told.

Just under a month ago, the Living in Love and Faith resource was published. At the time of its publication, the College of Bishops wrote to all the clergy of the Diocese commending the materials for study and reflection, and committing ourselves to a process of listening and learning. I have now asked the Bishop of Croydon to convene a small group, representing the diversity of the Diocese, to help steer us through this process over the next year or so. We will also undertake to provide extra support for those for whom this process and conversation is especially difficult.

If we are to engage well with LLF, it is essential that all voices are heard, that everyone is able to tell their own story of faith while listening respectfully to voices that differ. There is a wealth of resources on the LLF website, which I encourage you to look at, including material which might be used in small meetings such as Lent study groups. Across the Diocese, we will, during 2021, provide wider opportunities for learning.


We have in Southwark established a good and godly practice of seeking to speak well of one another: this is something I have commended continuously with heartfelt sincerity during my now ten years serving as Diocesan Bishop. Together with my episcopal colleagues, I would like to invite you into this learning exercise in that spirit - both to speak and to listen well. I remember saying some time ago that I do not envisage a change to Canon Law in relation to marriage in my lifetime. LLF is not a legislative process; but I do see room for vast improvement in the way we encounter and live with very obvious difference in the realm of relationships and human sexuality. Engaging in this conversation will not

compromise anyone's deeply held beliefs. It is not intended to. Nor will it prejudice any future discussions about the Church's teaching or practice. Its fruit I pray will be to deepen awareness and understanding of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. My hope is that we will grow closer together during this coming year, learning more about the faith that unites us in love across the wonderful diversity of the Diocese, the Lord being our helper.



DIOCESAN SYNOD


05 DECEMBER 2020



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12/20


Annual Objectives



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2020 Themes: Pre-Covid reminder!


- Growth: Push ahead confidently in delivering Southwark Vision
- Cautiously budget in a year of greater uncertainty economically - manage 1% variation income and costs
- Continue to build infrastructure and resilience, with safeguarding a priority
- Continuing to focus on initiatives for parishes, serving them, confident in their support through PSF and recognising communication is key
- Continue to invest in and maintain repair on clergy housing recognising its role in clergy wellbeing



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2020 Annual Objectives

1. Budget & Finance


- To achieve a balanced budget within 1% of annual turnover. **x**
- To maintain Diocesan investment in Southwark Vision and the synodical initiatives for the triennium. **✓**
- To control costs on a baseline budget of 1% increase in PSF from parishes, through controlling cost increases to 1% where possible. **Controlled costs but in a different financial scenario**
- To continue to build reserves in line with the 2019 revised Reserves Policy. **Very challenging but Covid-19 has reinforced its significance**



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2. Giving

- To join Parish Giving Scheme (PGS). Delayed by COVID-19; pilot commenced summer 2020 and launched fully across the Diocese in November 2020 ✓
- To serve parishes well by providing opportunities for constructive giving, including contactless giving, PGS, a dedicated resource for parishes and active engagement with national initiatives. Encouragement of good practice and innovative ideas throughout lockdown to support all parishes (adoption of online giving, appeals). Working collaboratively with Archdeacons and finance teams to support several parishes through the crisis. Secured funding from National Giving Strategy for additional Generous Giving advisor and made appointment. ✓

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2. Giving

- Give renewed energy for Parish Support Fund (PSF) especially principles of informed generosity, aspiration for self-financing for those that can. Continued message through digital PSF resources, and encouragement through conversations with parishes. Further work in progress on moving to two-thirds self financing aspiration within 10 years
- To encourage deaneries to reach out and share good practice as Deanery Leadership Teams develop and can also focus on resourcing mission. Specific work with deaneries started but fuller roll-out delayed due to Covid-19. ✓
- To provide for direct giving to the Diocese for Southwark Vision, including the 'Fairer Shares 'Arrears' policy. Variety of gifts received in 2020 but Fairer Shares Arrears impacted by Covid-19. ✓

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3. Southwark Vision

- To successfully launch the first 6 projects of SDF2 ✓ and complete the submission for funding for 6 more. X Decision to focus only on one further area, Croydon Central potentially 2022
- To successfully embed the Lay Council: ✓ to develop a matrix of affirmed lay ministry opportunities, reinvigorated and new Commissioned and Licensed ministries including pathways for Pioneers and Children and Youth Ministry. In progress (✓)
- To ensure Lay and Deanery initiatives complement each other and Southwark Vision, including a Lay Champion for each Deanery Leadership Team. Some achieved (✓)
- To implement the Diocesan action plan for Turning up the Volume for our minority ethnic clergy and also for lay leaders. In progress through DMEAC
- To establish and launch a clear strategy for pioneer ministry as part of reimagining ministry. ✓

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4. Safeguarding

- To deliver the mandatory Past Cases Review 2. Impacted by COVID-19 - started September
- To maintain a focus on the prevention of harm to vulnerable groups in our worshipping communities. ✓


5. Data and IT

- Implement the move to cloud based IT systems following review. ✓
- Discontinue proposed Blue Box installation following review and focus on replacing finance system 2021 and develop in-house property management system. ✓
- Continue move to online recording of parish information and direct parish updating of data. parish information review successfully implemented also PSF pledges ✓

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6. The web & digital communications

- To successfully launch the communications strategy, diverse communication to meet the needs of the diverse diocese, including Apps. **In Progress** ✓
- Design and launch a new website with enhanced search and interaction. **Due end of January 2021** ✓
- Review and relaunch diocesan communication 'The Bridge' ✓

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7. Property

- Complete parsonage condition surveys, develop 5 and 10 year maintenance plan and plan the reintroduction of quinquennial inspections. **Impacted by COVID-19 will be completed in 2021**


8. Mission and Justice

- Progressing measures to combat knife crime collaboratively with dioceses and other partners. **MoU signed up with Synergy, set up social justice with parishes in Reigate Deanery linked to knife crime - SDBE piloted training programme on SYV on 10 schools report to be finished** ✓
- Agreeing priorities for Eco-Diocese.

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Strategic Objectives (1)

There are five strategic objectives which have been approved by the DCT and Synod. They are as follows:

- to grow our average weekly attendance by 5% by 2025, partly through having each church develop a high-quality MAP which includes a course for evangelism and discipleship

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Comment on Strategic Objective 1

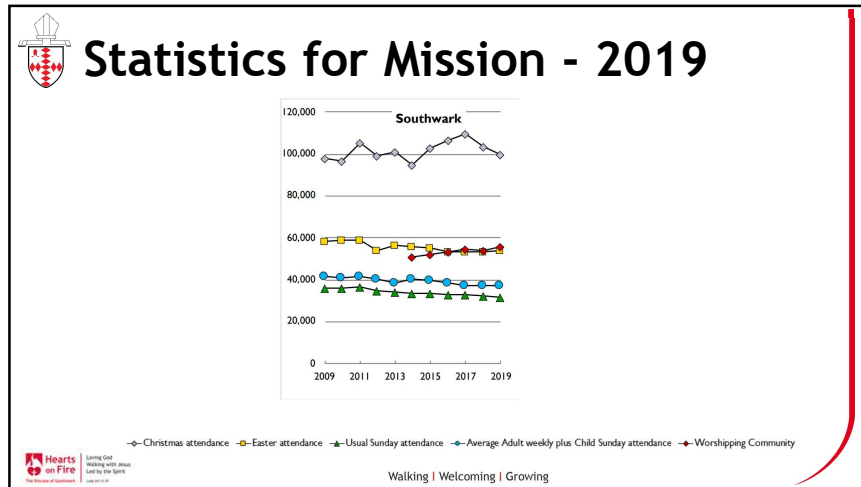
Statistics for Mission - 2019

- Report released in Oct 2019
 - Shows that over recent years, attendance at Church of England services has gradually fallen.
 - Overall pattern of gradual decline masks differences in experience of individual dioceses and parishes and we are undertaking detailed analysis.
 - As we develop future questions on attendance we will need to think about church in terms of engagement rather than attendance. The 'metric' of worshipping community is a step in this direction.
 - While the Worshipping Community - i.e. those who attend regularly - has fallen by 3% from 2014 to 2019 across the CofE, in Southwark we have seen a 10% increase.

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Strategic Objectives (2)

- by 2025, to increase the number of worshipping communities with a primary focus on areas of population growth, through investment in Fresh Expressions of Church (FxC) in the areas where the data suggests that existing congregations are increasingly unrepresentative of the resident community and therefore unlikely to be successful in reaching them without intentional intervention

Progress includes 25 new worshipping communities on estates as part of the Urban Estates work

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Strategic Objectives (3)

- to grow a financial resource base that allows investment in growth for the future. Key measurable objectives include maintaining an annual financial surplus, building working financial reserves equivalent to three months' operating costs by 2020, and 1% of Diocesan turnover annually being dedicated to major Diocesan mission and ministry projects beginning in 2016, rising to 2% by 2020
- 1% Diocesan turnover maintained
- Building reserves
- Post-Covid19 Financial surplus to be achieved by end of 2023

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Strategic Objectives (4)

- to grow the number of ordained and lay vocations by 50% by 2025 by enabling and discerning ordained ministers; by expanding opportunities for licensed and commissioned lay leadership; by affirming and growing other forms of lay ministry (for example, worship leaders, families and youth leaders, and spiritual directors);
- Ordained Vocations achieved
- Lay Council
- New commissioned pathway for Pioneers, children & family ministers to go to Lay Council Feb 2021
- to offer relevant, enriching training, and to create networks of support and celebration which reflect the diversity of the Diocese and our commitment to evangelism and discipleship; and to deliver fully integrated and pioneering church growth and Fxcs
- Progress includes increases Bishop's Certificate;
- Reorganisation of the team to focus on Discipleship, Lay Ministry and CMD

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Strategic Objectives (5)


- by 2025, to grow leadership and representation that reflects the rich diversity of our Diocese, especially focusing where the data suggests that groups are currently under-represented through ethnicity, age (especially 18-40s), educational opportunities, material well-being and tradition.
- Progress include BAME ordained vocations, staff in Trinity House, lay ministry paths for children and youth work will attract 18-40s, developments in “non-book” ministry



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2021 Themes Covid-19 Continuing Uncertainties


1. Growth: Continue to focus on delivering the Southwark Vision, for example through pioneering ministry and the rollout of SDF2 (include MAPS, Deanery Leadership Teams and Growing Faith)
2. Strategic Ministry, Vision and Deployment (reviews underway) as part of delivering Southwark Vision
3. Budget for a year of certain deficit and uncertainty economically with a more settled financial environment from 2022 onwards.
4. Seek to maintain infrastructure and building financial (in the Diocese and parishes) resilience with now fewer posts (2020 redundancies)
5. Continue safeguarding as a priority
6. Service to parishes, clergy and lay leaders with regard to wellbeing, discipleship, mission, growth, and changing patterns of worship post-Covid
7. Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation into our wider Diocese as part of *Christ Centred and Outward Focussed* mission and ministry in challenging times



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Key Streams of Work linked to Strategic Ministry Vision & Deployment


- Review of churches where uSa of 50 or less adults, in light of pioneer, hub and resourcing church work
- Review of churches not self-financing (i.e. pledge not covering their indicative costs of ministry)
- Review of Curates' provision
- Continuing work through the Lay Council, new pathways expected 2021



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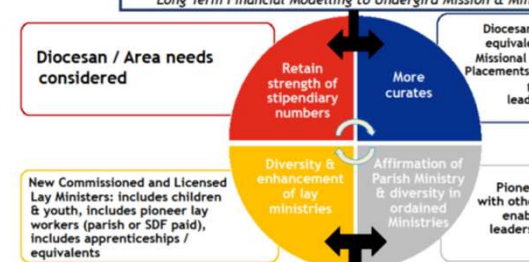
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Strategic Ministry Vision and Deployment

Long Term Financial Modelling to Undergird Mission & Ministry

Diocesan / Area needs considered




Diocesan Pipeline through CEMES equivalents, vocational renewal, Missional Ordinands for Southwark Placements with culture of informed generosity, supporting lay leadership/ministry, speaking well of each other

New Commissioned and Licensed Lay Ministers: includes children & youth, includes pioneer lay workers (parish or SDF paid), includes apprenticeships / equivalents

Pioneer Ministry, Parish posts with other ministry, e.g. mission enabler, H.E Chaplain, TUTV leadership pipelines and BAME enhancement

Including Pioneer Ministry, Lay and Ordained


Southwark Vision: Christ Centred and Outward Focused



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4. Southwark Vision

- Continue growth focus, with the Strategic Vision on Ministry and Deployment an integral part of Southwark Vision
- Continue the rollout of SDF2
- Continue to embed the work of the Lay Council, for example pastoral lay ministry following Covid-19, and establishing new pathways for pioneer lay ministry including urban estates.
- To implement the Diocesan action plan for Turning up the Volume for our minority ethnic clergy and also for lay leaders, mindful of *Black Lives Matter*. This will include updating our databases


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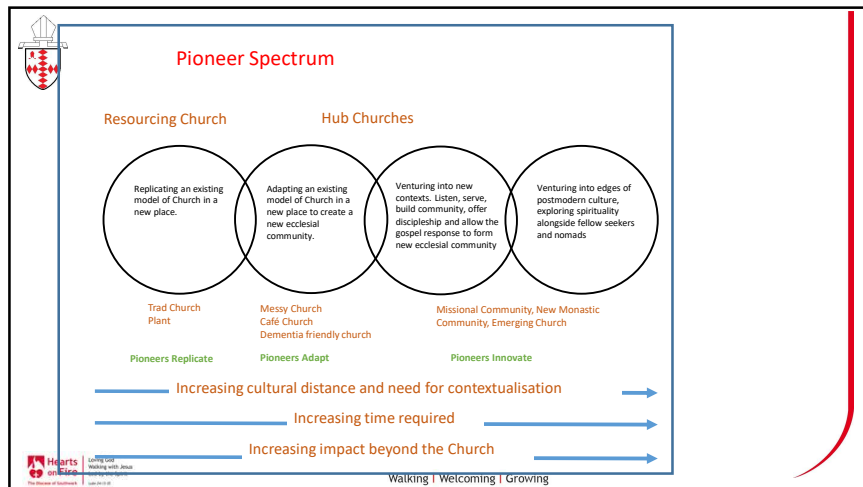


5. Southwark Vision


- To establish and launch new Hub and Resourcing churches to encourage and support churches with mission and starting fresh expressions of Church/ new worshipping communities
- To undertake reviews of smaller congregations - uSa 50 or fewer adults
- Mission Action Planning - enable parishes to create COVID Mission Action Plans which are Christ-centred and Outward-focused.
- To encourage deaneries to reach out and share good practice as Deanery Leadership Teams develop and can also focus on resourcing mission (or a rewrite for refreshed objective. (include an actual target)
- To review the churches not yet self-financing as part of the Strategy for Ministry Vision and Deployment

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2021 Annual Objectives: in light of suggestions and comments from PFC

1. Budget & Finance

- To manage expected deficit budget during an uncertain environment: plan prudently
- To maintain Diocesan investment in Southwark Vision and seek to respond well on the synodical initiatives as we conclude the triennium.
- Controlling cost increases wherever possible.
- Try to maintain reserves in light of the recent financial difficulties in line with the 2019 revised Reserves Policy.

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 **2. Giving**

- To build up newly launched Parish Giving Scheme (PGS).
- Give real focus and energy for Parish Support Fund (PSF), especially principles of informed generosity, aspiration for self-financing for those that can. This will include the review, with Archdeacons, of parishes which do not yet cover their indicative ministry costs
- With additional staff resource to build up giving and financial resilience of parishes
- Collaborative working with deaneries, archdeacons and parishes on new giving initiatives and opportunities within our *new normal*


3. Property

- Complete parsonage condition surveys, develop 5 and 10 year maintenance plan and plan the reintroduction of quinquennial inspections.

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 **6. Safeguarding**

- To deliver the mandatory Past Cases Review 2.
- To continue the focus to building a safe church for all in our worshipping communities.
- To implement, as required, any new actions following the IICSA Report (October 2020)


7. Data and IT

- Continuing to develop our integrated database, including property, parish vacancies, and Turning up the Volume work and services to parishes.
- work with the National Church and fully participate in the implementation of the new People Data system, that will provide the information for the National Register of Clergy (due mid 2021) and the rollout Big Church Survey when available from the National Church.

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 **8. The web & digital communications**

- Launch new website in early 2021 to aid the communication and resourcing of our parishes and with digital materials
- Develop digital communications as part of a refreshed communications strategy
- Review and update the Communications Strategy


9. Mission and Justice

- Progressing measures to combat knife crime collaboratively with dioceses and other partners.
- To continue our work on the environment - both Eco Diocese and developing a plan for reducing Carbon emissions within Diocesan control
- Including significance of Black Lives Matter & Launch of Anti-Racism Charter for Southwark

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 **Social Action Data**

- A one-off question asked about involvement in social action and community outreach.
- Number of Southwark churches involved was greater than the national average (88% vs 77%)


Involvement in social action projects (percentage of churches)

Category	Ran	Hosted	In partnership	Supported
Southwark	60%	10%	10%	20%
National	45%	10%	10%	25%

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Key Messages for 2021-2023

- Focus on growth and developing fruitful churches
- SDF continued investment, providing opportunities for replication plants, for example St Matthew's at the Elephant
- Ongoing commitment to support our deprived communities, including 25 new worshipping communities on estates. Examples include Thamesmead
- Confidence in impact of innovation, flexibility, pioneering, examples include St Hellier and St Peter
- Continue to focus on delivery of Southwark Vision which includes cultural changes for diversity and innovation within the parish and deanery structures.
- An intentionally cautious budget on revenue with a 3-year trajectory to balanced budgets showing significant improvement over the 3-year period ahead




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14/20 2021 Budget & 3-Year Forward View

Alan Saunders , Chair of the DBF .




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What reserves does the Diocese hold?

Investment Assets per Capita for Church of England Dioceses
showing Southwark's relative position (as of end of 2018)




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Financial History


SoFA Results 2012 to 2020 and Budget 2021

Year	Income (£m)	Expenditure (£m)
2012	£20.5	£23.8
2013	£21.0	£24.2
2014	£21.5	£24.8
2015	£24.5	£19.5
2016	£26.5	£21.0
2017	£26.0	£22.0
2018	£27.0	£24.0
2019	£24.5	£20.5
2020	£23.5	£24.5
2021	£22.5	£25.0



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Resourcing the Vision

2021 Income vs 2020 Forecast

	2021 Budget £m	2020 Forecast £m * Using Sept 2020 actual results
Parish contribution	15.4	15.6
Parochial fees	0.4	0.2
Investment income	1.0	1.0
Property income	0.8	0.8
Grants & other income	4.0	4.5
Gains on disposal of assets	1.0	1.4
Total income	22.6	23.5

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Walking | Welcoming | Growing

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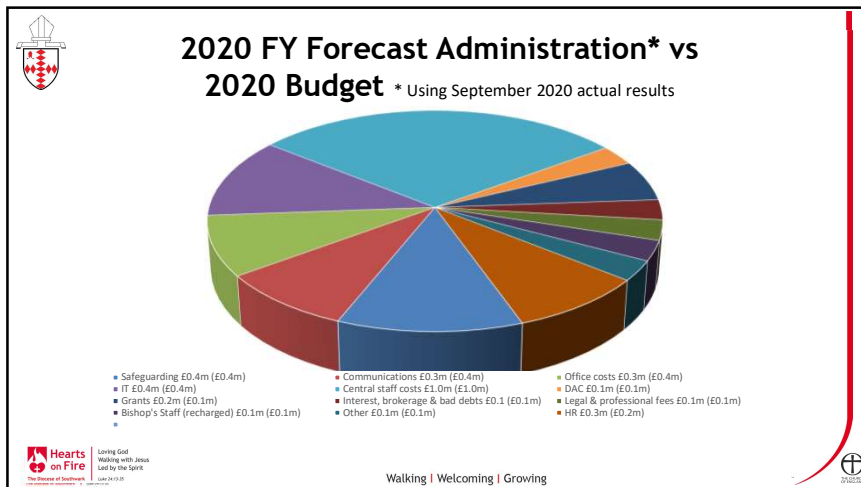
2021 Expenditure vs 2020 Forecast

	Budget £m	Forecast £m * Using Sept 2020 actual results
Stipends	12.5	12.7
Housing Costs	3.6	3.3
Vocations, Training & Other Ministry Support	6.8	6.7
Strategic Development	0.7	0.3
Contributions to National Church	1.7	1.6
Total Expenditure	25.3	24.6

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- ### PSF 2020 in the light of COVID-19
- **Thank you.** Parishes continue to support their pledge payments with a collection rate of 96.5% at the end of November (98.9% November 2019).
 - Very grateful for parishes' faithfulness and generosity.
 - Most parishes are facing loss of income e.g. reduced hall rentals and offerings.
 - We are thankful that some parishes are using their reserves to fulfil their pledges.
 - The collection rate is better than anticipated. We are faring better than other dioceses: National average -7.8% in October
 - **We continue to work in partnership and support the parishes through this challenging time.**
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- Walking | Welcoming | Growing


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 **PSF: 2021 pledges in the light of Covid-19** ³⁷
(2020 comparisons as at early December 2019)


- PSF material and timetable delayed by Covid-19
- 300 pledges, 93% of churches, received totalling £15.26m as at 2 December 2020.
- As at 2 December a decrease of -3.7% on 2020 pledges (2019 increase 0.1%)
- Other changes to note
 - 72% (89%) of parishes have increased or maintained their 2020 pledges
 - 28% (11%) have decreased
 - A decline in hall income is the principal reason for decreases in 2021 pledges
 - More than 11% of pledges, have increased by more than 5%
- Parishes have responded with generous but realistic pledges

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 **Sharing the burden - Diocesan Redundancies**

- Operational restructuring with a view to securing the future resulted in 6 employees made redundant in June 2020 (2 full time, 4 part time)
- In addition 4 vacancies not filled (including Head of Property and Deputy Diocesan Secretary) work distributed among existing staff
- Annualised saving including employers NI and Pension £495,000
- 23 staff furloughed (30% of staff) during first lockdown


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 **2021 Principal budget assumptions 1**

Income

1. 1.4% reduction in Parish Support Fund on September 2020 FY forecast of £15,600,000 (budget was £16,468,000)
2. Parochial fees of £354,000 (September 2020 FY forecast £254,000)
3. 1% increase in grants from Trust for London
4. Trinity House room booking income of £17,000 (2020 forecast outturn £16,000)
5. Wychcroft income of £100,000 (September 2020 FY forecast outturn £37,000)
6. 2% reduction in property rental income on September 2020 FY forecast of £791,000 due to changes in shorthold tenancies effectively precluding the letting of parsonages during interregnums of less than a year.


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 **2021 Principal budget assumptions 2**

Income

7. Investment income broadly unchanged from 2020 forecast (September 2020 FY forecast £1,023,000 compared to 2021 budget £968,000)
8. No purchase or sales of investments.
9. Gross gain on disposal of property of £1,000,000 (September 2020 FY forecast £1.4m)
10. Donations received of £50,000 to Southwark Development Fund.
11. Strategic Development Fund 2 grant income of £664,000 (this reflects a slower rollout due to the impact of Covid-19, but funds come in dependent on Diocesan spend)
12. Strategic Ministry Funding of £68,000 for Curates from June 2021 (this is new for the Diocese)
13. No additional grant funding from the National Church (2020 - £600,000 sustainability funding, no knowledge of such a fund next year)

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2021 Principal budget assumptions 3

Expenditure

- Clergy and stipend changes


- 0% increase in stipend. (1% in 2020)
- 0% increase in curate stipend (this was 0.5% in 2020)
- Clergy pension contribution rate unchanged at 39.9%
- Incumbent Stipendiary clergy headcount unchanged from forecast December 2020 complement of 240 (the formal complement is 245, this assumes a working practical assumption of fewer posts due to longer interregnums)
- Incumbent Stipendiary clergy vacancy rate of 24.5 based on annualised historic levels for stipend calculations. (based on 2020 experience was 19.5 pre-Covid-19)
- Decrease in Ordinand numbers to 46 from 55 in 2020 (based on actual data)
- More than a 5% increase in contributions to the National Church confirmed (The increase in 2021 is due to the pooling arrangements)
- 0% increase in DBF salaries from January 2021 (compared to 1% in 2020)




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2021 Principal budget assumptions 4

- DBF staff cost and headcount changes


- Defined benefit pension scheme contribution rate for lay DB staff scheme increase to 40.1% from 39.9%. (Note: the number of staff who are members of the scheme continues to fall. The scheme will close to existing members from 31 December 2022).
- Defined Contribution pension scheme rate for lay staff unchanged at 15%.
- All staff leavers replaced on a like-for-like basis
- The DBF headcount reduces compared to budget 2020 as a result of the redundancies made in July 2020




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2021 Principal budget assumptions 5

Other cost changes


- 13.1% increase in other costs.
- £100,000 Fresh Expressions grant (50% funded from Church Commissioners Strategic Development Grant 1).
- Rent of 2 additional properties funded from the Diocesan contribution to Strategic Development Grant 2.
- Area Mission grants of £180,000 (£60,000 per area) from All Churches Trust grant.
- £60,000 for JPIC/MEACC mission and ministry work, funded from All Churches Trust grant (this includes Together Southwark)




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2021 Principal budget assumptions 6

Other cost changes


- 18.0% increase in grant to SDBE (this has been budgeted for by the SDBE)
- £50,000 reduction in grant to Welcare (this is expected)
- Allocation of property department payroll costs for staff whose sole or principal responsibility is the management and support of clergy housing, to the Diocesan Pastoral Account.
- No revaluation gain or loss.
- No increase in interest rates.



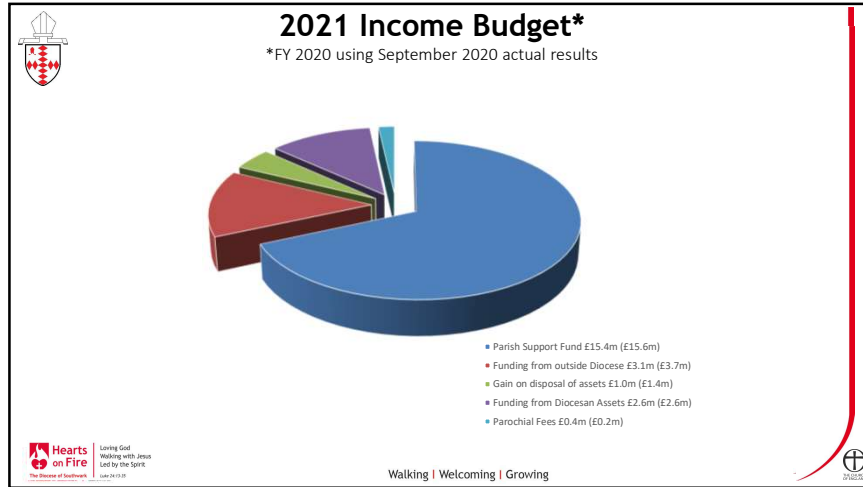
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- ### Key Movement in Expenditure
- Property Costs increase : due to necessary completion of condition surveys and anticipated Council tax and Utility rises
 - Ministry and Discipleship: increase in Reader training and development grants for clergy. Vocations decreases due to fewer ordinands
 - Mission decrease due to reduction in Welcare Grant. JPIC increases supported by ALLChurches Trust Grant
 - Increase in Strategic Development costs due to recruitment delayed from 2020 but covered by increased grant from Archbishops' Council
 - Administration increase includes accounting software upgrade, provision for loan interest and increased professional fees. IT & Establishment increased with cleaning, repairs & maintenance, MS cloud-based costs and some reallocation of staff
 - HR decreases: anticipated fall in recruitment, legal and redundancy costs
 - Increased contribution to the National Church, non negotiable
- Walking | Welcoming | Growing

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3 Year Forward View

	2021 £m	2022 £m	2023 £m
Parish Support Fund	15.4	15.8	16.4
Fees, Grants, Investment & other income	5.4	5.6	5.8
Property income and gains	1.8	1.8	1.9
Total Income	22.6	23.2	24.1
Stipends	12.5	12.5	12.3
Housing Costs	3.6	3.5	3.6
Vocations, Training & Other Ministry Support	6.8	6.7	6.8
Strategic Development	0.7	0.7	0.4
Contributions to National Church	1.7	1.7	1.7
Total Expenditure	25.3	25.1	24.8
Provisional deficit	(2.7)	(1.9)	(0.7)

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Potential for Uplift

September 2020 FY Forecast loss	(£1,085,000)
2020 Board property revaluation gain	£475,000
Potential revised deficit to December 2020	(£610,000)
Budget 2021 loss	(£2,798,000)
PSF unchanged from 2020 FY forecast	£200,000
Increase in gains on property disposal	£500,000
Property & investment income unchanged from 2020 FY forecast	£75,000
2021 Board property revaluation gain	£475,000
Potential revised deficit to December 2021	(£1,548,000)
Plan deficits 2022 and 2023	(£2,669,000)
Reasonable Board revaluation gains (for 2022 & 2023)	£950,000
Potential revised deficit to December 2022 & 2023	(£1,719,000)
Potential Cumulative revised deficit to December 2023	(£3,877,000)

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Financial Reserves & Liquidity to 2023


Reserve Movements	£
Unrestricted funds at 31 December 2019	£6,813,000
Potential Cumulative revised deficit to December 2023	(£3,877,000)
Potential free reserves December 2023	£2,936,000

- Liquidity - helped with proceeds from the capital plan and if necessary borrowing




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The Chair of the DBF to move that the consolidated budget for 2021 now be considered and that:

“this Synod approve the total 2021 budget expenditure of £25.32m which is based on total 2021 budgeted income of £22.53m.”




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14/20


SDBE Presentation



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Southwark Diocesan Board of Education



Education Update

Diocesan Synod

5th December 2020

The SDBE – Developing Church of England Education

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Performance



- 93 % good or better (OFSTED)(86%NA)
- 32% outstanding (OFSTED)(19%NA)
- 100% good or better (SIAMS) (94% NA)
- 69% excellent (SIAMS) (30% NA)
- 14 foundation governor vacancies
- 0 school chaplaincy vacancies
- 35 maintenance projects taking place this summer

The SDBE - Developing Church of England Education

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Celebrations



So much to celebrate:

- Strong provision
- Positive leadership engagement
- Business as normal during 'lockdown'
- Serious Youth Violence project
- Eco Diocese engagement

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- Diversity and Inclusion
National/International network
- New website

Publications:

- Trauma guidance
- Bereavement guidance
- Safeguarding guidance
- Relationships and Sex Education guidance

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Growth and Sustainability



- Financially secure (small surplus/reserves)
- More services to schools within the partnership agreement
- Additional staffing
- Commissioning of work
- Additional support for inspection
- Working in areas that were previously the responsibility of Local Authorities

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Income (2020)



- **Diocesan Grant** **20%**
- **Other grants** **1%**
- **Additional traded income** **4%**
- **Partnership Agreements** **29%**
- **Fees and recharges** **3%**
- **Investment dividends** **5%**
- **Rental and letting income** **38%**

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New provision/ Pupil numbers



Kingston Voluntary Aided Secondary School

Decrease in population across South London (retaining proportionality of Church of England Places)

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Buildings and Property



- **Shift from LCVAP (Locally Controlled Voluntary Aided Programme) to VA-SCA (Voluntary Aided School Capital Allocation)**
- **£6,511, 896 (100% terms) allocation 10% to be found by schools**
- **Investment property development**

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SDBE Multi Academy Trust



- **10 schools in the Trust**
- **3 sponsored academies**
- **Organic growth and development**
- **Strong range of services**
- **Positive feedback (Schools and DfE)**
- **Financially self sustaining**
- **Aligned with the Board**

The SDBE - Developing Church of England Education

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Thankyou



- **Headteachers and Senior Leaders**
- **Governors**
- **Board and Sub Committee Members**
- **Bishop's Staff Team**
- **Synod**
- **Our Local Authority partners**
- **Staff Team**

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15/20

Growing Faith Initiative



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GROWING FAITH

Diocesan Synod 5th December 2020

The Revd. Canon Jay Colwill - Director of Mission

Mr Colin Powell - Diocesan Director of Education

Mrs Aike Kennett-Brown - Mission Support Officer
(children and young people)



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What do we mean by *Growing Faith*?


The Growing Faith adventure encourages a renewal of hearts and minds so that it becomes second nature to look at every aspect of mission and ministry through what it means for our children, young people and households. It will flow from the relationships encouraged between schools and churches, and how these are developed to resource and support households to grow in faith together.



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Growing Faith

Why does it matter?

Southwark Diocese has AWA of 7,600 0-16s (2019), representing approximately 2% of the CYP that live in our Diocese.


37,000 CYP attend one of 92 Anglican primary schools, 11 secondary schools, or 2 all through schools in Southwark Diocese. 6,500 attend a weekly school service.



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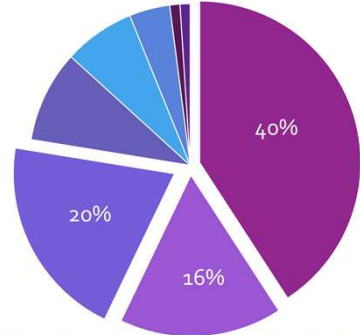

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Age at coming to Faith

Under 5 years	40%
5-10 years	16%
11-18 years	20%


BUT 37% of former Christians stopped being a Christian between 11-18 years

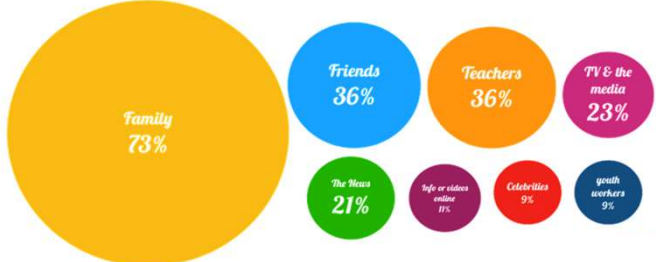
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Who or what influences the way you think about faith or religion?




Gen Z, Youth for Christ: Rethinking Culture



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Faith at Home

Among Christians parents who say that religion is very important in their lives, only **36%** listed religious faith as an especially important quality that children can be encouraged to learn at home, compared to good manners (94%) or tolerance and respect (83%).

[Faith in the Nexus Research animation](#)

European Values Study, quoted in Voas and Watt, The Church Growth Research Programme Report



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Church of Today




And Church of Tomorrow

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Mr Colin Powell Diocesan Director of Education

- Growing Faith Champion
- Building on the many strengths that are already in place
- Having an overview
- Being an irritant!
- Attending National events
- Holding conversations
- Reporting

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Conversations/Actions so far...

- Awareness raising - BSM, The Bridge
- Archdeacons - Articles of enquiry question & Archdeaconry agenda
- Jay Colwill - MAPs, CYP seminars, CYP survey 2020, signposting resources & partnerships
- Mandy Ford - Leadership project
- Vocations team - Placements during training

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Conversations/Actions so far...

- Capturing stories of outreach from church and community will be a feature of the new Diocesan website in 2021
- Growing Faith session for curates IME training & new incumbents
- Cathedral discussions
- SDBE discussions

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National Meetings

- Growing Faith National Team - Aike Kennett-Brown secondment
- Trailblazer dioceses
- Diocesan approach, theoretical and theological input, role of Growing faith Champion
- Research
- National younger leadership groups - Southwark students
- Digital resources - Faith at Home <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/faith-home>

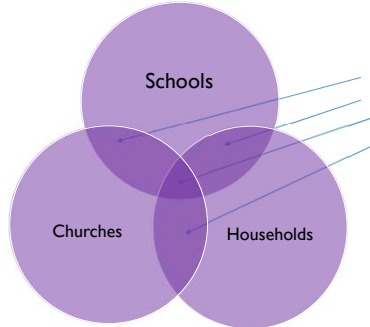
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How do we resource Growing Faith?



Can the intersections of church, household and school become places for encountering Christ?

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Growing Faith Principles

- 1) Connected Communities
Relationships, People, Conversations, Belonging
- 2) Spiritual Encounters
Encountering God, Noticing moments of grace
- 3) Imaginative Practices
Creating a new way of ... thinking, doing Church

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Some ways Church can support parents/ carers to share faith in the home

- Pray
- Parenting for faith course, book, podcast
- Help parents with their kids questions about God
- Take home faith activity to engage households
- Junior and Adult church follow same topic
- Intergenerational worship
- Encourage adults and children to share their God story
- Baptism preparation <https://churchsupporthub.org/baptisms/>
- Supporting new parents
- What else?

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Ways Church can support local schools

- Festivals
- Assemblies/collective worship
- Supporting aspects of RE Christianity teaching
- Pray for schools
- School pastors/mentors
- Chaplaincy
- Join in with school festivals (Summer fair)
- School gate ministry
- Cake ministry - for teachers
- School governors
- Lunch clubs/after school provision - safe space

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Ways schools and households can support Church?

Schools: share leadership skills; teaching methods; good practice regarding equipping, training young people to have meaningful roles within their community (school council, leading Collective Worship).

Households: pray, volunteer, make a meal for youth group, get CYP to activities, work in partnership with the church, bring along other families.

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The Growing Faith Adventure

How could we change our thinking and actions in the roles we hold, so that it becomes second nature to look at all daily life decisions, school & church activities through the lens of what it means for our children, young people and households?


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16/20

General Synod Presentation



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1 Cor 12:13

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1 Cor 12:13

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Transcript of Conversation at Woolwich Youth Forum 7/11/2020

Topic: The 'Growing Faith' Adventure

Participants:

The participants are part of the Woolwich Youth Forum and are regular attendees at CofE churches in the Woolwich Episcopal Area. This conversation was hosted by Aike Kennett-Brown and Keli Bolton Mission Support Officers (Children and Young People) Southwark Diocese, who were silent observers. The participants include: Mariam (female, black British, 16 yrs in year 12 of CofE girls secondary school) Dan (male, white British, 16 yrs, year 11 community secondary school) Aidan (male, white British, 15 yrs, year 11 community secondary school) Noah (male, mixed race, 15 yrs, year 11 community secondary school)

SCHOOL

What's it like being a Christian in secondary school? (Mariam)

Dan: I feel like it depends if you go to a Christian secondary school but if you don't, then it depends on the friends you have around you. If you have supportive friends around you then its definitely a lot easier.

Noah: It's a combination of your close friends and a lot of the time it's the people around you in general, which can be similar between schools but also quite different depending on the area. Most of the time it is friends.

Dan: I find it also changes depending on how open you are about it. If you're open about it straight away to some people, then it's much easier being a Christian because you don't have to explain yourself afterwards. If you feel like you keep it to yourself, then it can be harder to get it out because it's harder to say "*well actually I'm a Christian and I'm not going to that/something like that*" if you haven't said it already.

Noah: Yeah (agrees).

Aidan: I feel like also sometimes it's like you're representing all of Christianity. Like friends who don't know much ask you questions, and there's a lot of hard questions because they really go for the deep ones that not many people know and have a good answer to. Sometimes it feels like you're the representative of Christianity.

Mariam: Well I go to a CofE school so like when people have questions we just go to our Reverend or the Father we have at that moment. But then I guess it's also that thing of you have to constantly be trying to be the best Christian, which is a great thing but it's also like you kind of feel pressure because everyone around you is also like... not judging, but it feels like... because they know what you're meant

to be doing. Which is great because it helps develop you but sometimes it can be like 'Oh my gosh'.

Aidan: Sometimes it's like "oh you're a Christian, you shouldn't be doing that" or "why are you doing that? Is this allowed?"

Do you have other Christian friends at school ? (Dan)

Aidan: I have a few but most of them aren't in school. Most of my school friends aren't Christian.

Mariam: Yeah, same.

Noah: Yeah, same. I don't really have many. I could think of a couple of people, but I don't really have Christian friends at school. Most of them are outside school, which doesn't make talking about it at school any easier really.

Dan: I don't know if it's the same for any of you guys but there are people who are Christian in your school and in the year that you know but you're not Christian friends your just like friends and you don't have the same kind of relationship like you would have with someone from your youth group. You both might be Christians but you don't discuss Christian stuff.

Mariam: I mean most things I'll talk about to people who are Christian in my school, like *Soul Survivor*, you know, like when it was on. Or any good Christian camps you know of and stuff like that.

Is there a space where you can talk about faith at your school? (Mariam)

Aidan: At my school I don't know of one apart from going to the other people I know who are Christian.

Noah: Yeah, I think the church that's close to our school, like once or twice a year one of the youth workers will come over and for a few times in the week they'll have a place where you can go to talk about stuff like that but they don't have a permanent place where you can go to in my school.

Dan: Yeah, there's definitely no place other than everywhere when you want to speak about it, but there's no specific person or a specific place.

Mariam: I mean, we have Christian union on a Friday morning and stuff like that. But then generally when we go - because we have to go to some church services, they're usually at Westminster Abbey, and because of how strict they are in the Abbey you can't really talk about the service when you go. So you can attend services, but besides one club once a week, no one really gets to have that conversation.

What makes it difficult to have faith conversations at school? What would help you to have faith conversations at school? (Aidan)

Aidan: I feel like what makes it difficult having faith conversations at school is the same thing that hinders you in real life is I guess some people aren't as open to talking about it and there's always that kind of worry that people will judge you, I guess. Maybe a more open environment would help me, and a place to talk about it at school would help to have those kind of conversations.

Dan: I feel like people have preconceptions about Christians. For example, they might think that because you're Christian you've got your life together. So then they might try and prove that you don't have your life sorted. Or some people don't go into the conversation as a discussion but as an argument and that's not really fun in any way when that happens.

Aidan: Its got to be a conversation. There's got to be a mutual understanding from both sides.

Mariam: In our friendship group it gets kind of complicated. For example, I'm Christian, my other friend is Catholic, the other three people are strongly Atheist, another is Buddhist and another one is a Muslim. We've got like loads of different beliefs and we all respect each others religion but if you have a conversation then its more on the basis of knowing stuff rather than exploring our faiths.

Noah: Similar to that, most of my friends are atheists so there's not really much of a chance for me to bring it up but because like with Mariam there'd be people on each end to contribute, whereas it would be me and then everyone else, so it would be like me trying to hold up the conversation by myself and I don't really think I can do that. And even with that, I don't really get many opportunities to talk about it.

Are there opportunities at school for a spiritual encounter with God? What does this look like? (Aidan)

Mariam: I'm going to say no. It sounds bad considering we are surrounded by church stuff and we even have a chapel but when I'm at school its been so chaotic, especially with all the Covid stuff my school has been shortened and everything is just a rush so its kind of like you get in, you do your lessons and you just leave unless you have a detention. So, it feels kind of crazy and I know I should make time for it but like everyone's rushing between the sites and everything so not really.

Aidan: There's no time to try and pray to God in the day, which I get because if there was it would be a bit odd because not everyone's Christian and that

wouldn't really be fair. I feel like there are as many opportunities to have a spiritual encounter with God as there are in the real world.

Dan: Yeah, I think I'll agree with you, there's not like the school has created an opportunity but like God and the Holy Spirit are still working there so there are opportunities. Like when you speak to someone and you find out they are a Christian, there are so many different opportunities. But I wouldn't say the school facilitates them.

Mariam: I remember once I was walking to school after I had my knee injury and a girl approached me and she was like "*I don't know if you're a Christian but I've been praying for your knee*" and I mean that was a great moment, but that kind of happened outside of school for us. So it's kind of like I'll know you from school but we wouldn't talk if we were inside the building.

Aidan: And also, God happens when He wants to happen. I mean that's kind of big stuff but having a conversation with God you have to kind of think about it at school if you want to.

Noah: Yeah, I think it's just a lot harder to notice because at school its just a condensed real world in terms of like God can appear as much as he does in the real world but with school it's just that much harder to notice it because of all the other stuff that might be going on.

Dan: I think one good thing about school is that I particularly notice in lockdown than when we were at school is when you're at school, you're with so many different people and interacting with them... every time you interact with them that's another opportunity. So, I definitely noticed when I wasn't at school, I wasn't telling people about God at all because I wasn't seeing them. But being in that environment when you're forcibly close with people that you wouldn't naturally be friends with or be close to, I think that is an opportunity in itself.

Is your Church connected in any way to your school? If so how? (Aidan)

Noah: Like I said before, sometimes the youth workers come in and that is one way but besides that there isn't much. Like our church in particular, they are much more connected to the primary schools that are nearby because it's just that much easier with all the children's work stuff with our church. Since I've been going to secondary school, there are some thing but especially now with all the Covid stuff, there haven't been many opportunities.

Dan: With our church, I've seen our youth worker a few times. I think he does somethings which are less about Christianity and more about youth work in general.¹ I think my church supports me with like my resources and stuff to talk to

¹ Prior to Covid19, the church youthworker ran a weekly group mentoring session for at boys at risk of exclusion in this school.

my friends about it. So, it's not like they're actually there. I found that there were some people who were very interested in what Christianity was about and then my church gave me some resources that I could use with them.²

Aidan: My church isn't connected in any way to my school. Like you said Daniel, I feel like having resources to help deal with people asking questions. Churches can't always be in secondary schools, so it's better to equip us to deal with the questions and to be representatives of our church.

Mariam: Our school is linked with Westminster Abbey. I feel like secondary schools are more connected because they have the services they go to and they have a service in every assembly. But then when it comes to sixth form, our attendance is different so we don't have to go to those services and we're not expected to go to them so we have less of a connection with church. But I guess yeah, the same in that the church tries to equip us and make that connection in our school.

How can the church or your household support you better to be a confident Christian at school? (Aidan)

Noah: I think it's harder now but I think at the same time sort of easier but it would depend on if like people at the school have access to the internet but it wouldn't be very hard to set up some sort of meeting, maybe a one time thing where a school or a church can set up a meeting (maybe like a zoom meeting) for people who are Christian or people who aren't Christian and are just interested to talk or have a session or something.

Mariam: I think sessions would be better than assemblies and stuff because I find a session is more interactive and people can actually get their view across whereas in assemblies, people who don't necessarily agree with Christianity or haven't heard much about it tend to think "*oh my gosh that was so cheesy*" when someone says something like "*I found hope in Christ*" but you didn't get to fully explain it and they can ask the questions they want to know the answers to. I think that's a great idea.

Aidan: With assemblies it's all about all coming at you, there's no giving back.

Dan: Like a space to discuss after having those assemblies. I kind of find even though our school doesn't do Christian assemblies there are still assemblies about the future and things like determination and even then, that would still be good to discuss and you could then say what that means as a Christian if you had the opportunity.

² Inspired by Soul Survivor, Dan has set up and run a Bible explore group for the past year, which continued via Zoom during lockdown. There are between 3-10 participants, who profess to be atheists but are continuing to explore the Bible and Christianity.

Aidan: And also, a lot of the values at my school that they want you to have are quite aligned and parallel with Christian values anyway.³

HOME

What helps you grow in your faith? (Noah)

Noah: I think for me having like youth groups on Sundays helps me because I'm... It might be I'm going over something I learnt once before or I'm learning something new. But just being around Christians my age helps me because its like a community thing as well, so over the lockdown when nothing was open, not even schools, it was a lot harder for me to maintain strong faith because I didn't have the thing that helped me the most.

Dan: Yeah, so maybe that something you don't always have at home; you don't have someone that doesn't have the same experiences as you.

Aidan: What gives me a lot of hope is seeing God working in people that don't even know he's working in them and because all my family are Christian; I don't get that at home during lockdown.

Dan: One good thing about lockdown is that there's so much more online stuff. Like YouTube videos, most churches have YouTube services so I've kind of found that like watching those has definitely helped grow my faith. Sometimes when you're at one church and you always watch the same service from the same people you don't always get different ideas. I think there's so much more resources now online, I think that's helpful.

Mariam: I would say just praying and spending time with God, and at home we get to do that because I'm also in a Christian household and we pray together each night, I guess also having people my age to talk to is very useful and has the most impact because sometimes you can't always relate to the parents or siblings but you can relate to your friends and the stuff they're going through. And as Aidan said, seeing God work through them is also like "*wow, that's amazing*".

Do you talk about faith or have family worship, bible study, prayer at home? What does this look like? (Noah)

Aidan: Quite often in my house it's just like what was said on Sunday, and just talking about that. Because my mum runs our youth group talking about what we could do there as well, and the way God is working in the wider world.

Mariam: We used to have a bible study in my family, I think that was a couple years back when I was younger and that was cool. It really depends on the

³ The headteacher of this community secondary school is a Christian and is married to a vicar.

moment. Like if something big has happened, we tend to gather more formally and have a meeting of worship especially because my uncles a priest or something. Then usually there would be a small prayer just coming with good news and saying “we should thank God for this”.

Dan: I don’t know if you find, but because you’re with your family the whole time, you get on other people’s nerves. Which make talking about faith kind of harder. But when you do, I feel like it brings you closer to your family.

Aidan: Yeah. God binding everyone. Going back to what Daniel was saying about it kind of being a bit easier online, there were some people that used to live in our area and come to our church but they had to move away. So it’s really nice, them being able to join. We wouldn’t have them there if it was in real life, so I guess that makes it a bit easier.

Is it easy/natural to talk about faith with the people you live with? What would help? (Dan)

Noah: I would say it is because everyone in my family is a Christian so it’s easy to start a conversation about something. Although since a lot of the time the people in my family, we all just end up doing our own thing like especially on school days so it’s easy for them to happen, but they don’t happen very frequently. Which isn’t as good.

Aidan: I feel like because everyone in our family is Christian it is quite easy to talk about faith but if not everyone in your family is Christian, I imagine it depends on who’s in the family. But if they’re quite outspoken, there would be a lot of discussion about faith and Christianity. But if they’re not, then the topic may just be glossed over.

Mariam: I feel like it’d be easy to talk about, but my mum and I have different ways of exploring our faith and doing our stuff. So for her it’d be like - she finds it really important to go to morning services and starting the day with a church service whereas I find it easier to have it in the evening and stuff like that. It’s nice that everyone’s Christian and we can talk about it and it’s easy to have conversations about the bible and how God acts, but it’s harder to have ways on discussing how we strengthen our faith or what we do to help our Christianity. Like sometimes we clash and it’s not as nice or as easy.

Dan: I think it’s even harder if you’re not Christian, so I had a friend and I remember him saying “*this is cool but I can’t have a conversation with them about this because*” - because their parent died when they were this age and they can’t really deal with that there might be a loving God. “- *So, I just will never be able to have this conversation*”. I feel like for them it must be really hard to speak to their family about it.

Aidan: I imagine the frequency of talks about faith and conversations about faith in families that aren’t Christian or don’t believe in a God are a lot lower.

How does the church support you and your family relate faith to everyday life at home? How could this be improved? (Noah)

Noah: I think our church has done some things good, like the online services. You can watch them at any point, so it's just that much more accessible for families that can't watch it at time and can at other times. They also have some children's work online which gives access for young people. I think those things are good. During lockdown they also had, like one once a day they would post a short bible study that you could do which was good because it's just like adding that one bit each day.

Dan: One thing I've noticed is that churches do a lot more *young children and family* type of things, but when you get to youth age they don't necessarily have the same thing. Because we don't need our parents to help colour something in. I don't know, maybe there could be a way that they could do that.

Aidan: I think also, it's potentially easier to talk about faith issues with younger children because there's less problems that you're not completely oblivious, but you're not as aware or as independent as you are when you're a teenager. It's harder to have conversations, I imagine, about faith with teenagers.

Mariam: Churches are supporting us. Like the home groups I think they were really good, but another thing I'd say is it depends what type of church you go to. Like how it is set out. So St Johns is a great church, it's lovely and really family orientated and there's loads of young kids and people in secondary but one thing is that my mum at one point, because she is a single parent and the home groups had couples in them, so it'd always be couples going to a groups together or being in stuff together and then her only going alone. I guess it's more things like that. Which it's no one's fault, it's hard to notice if you're not in that position but then it's more things .. also stuff like.. in my year particularly, there's only three of us whereas in the year above us there were like 5 people. The year my sister was in, there were a lot more people so it was easy for her to make friends and stuff.

Aidan: I think you're right about different churches doing different things because at my church there aren't many families. There's a lot more elderly people so they did 9 o'clock in the morning and then in the evening, a morning and night prayer which is just like a quick 15-minute sort of thing. That was really nice I imagine, helping a lot of people just start and end their day, and that kind of thing making a home... not a sacred space but making a home more than just where you live. In lockdown that's just as important because you can't go to church or anything like that.

Dan: Maybe being in lockdown might of helped us have more family conversations because sometimes when you go to church you all do your separate things, like you go to your group, but when you're all watching at home together I think that can help with things at home.

Does your school encourage you to do faith activities at home? Would you want this? (Dan)

Aidan: Mine doesn't because we're not a Christian school but there is a heavy emphasis on moral values which I guess is good. It's the next step I guess.

Dan: I feel like if the school gave you something then people would see it as like homework but then at the same time, if your school is designed to teach you then maybe also allow you to explore what you believe and facilitate that. I'm not really sure if I'd want it or not.

Noah: It might be a bit of a small thing but in our school there's a lot of people from different backgrounds so if a school started with one thing on Christianity, the people of other faiths may feel like they're not getting noticed which of course wouldn't really be true but at the same time may cause frustration. Like you said, if it was work based then not many people would like it because they wouldn't want to really be doing more work. Even small things like having a session every month or two months would probably be better because it's just recognising the people who just need support in extra things.

Aidan: The church is there to help you grow in your faith and be pastorally present. London is such a diverse place, if they just gave out Christian stuff to do, even in a Church of England school, I don't think that would be fair because there's more than one religion. It wouldn't sit right.

Mariam: Our school doesn't give it to us specifically, but they encourage general stuff like charity or helping the poor. I think we also donate in church where you send Christmas gifts to people who wouldn't be able to afford them. You'd have to do that at home and bring it into school. They have more things like that throughout the year. Like 'Sponsor A Child' - each form gets to work with another form to sponsor a child in a developing country so she could get education. I feel like that is related to Christianity but even other religions and even atheist people could take part and still agree with it. So yeah, it encourages it but doesn't label it as Christianity.

Is there an overlap between the spheres of church, school and household? If yes, what is working well? If not, what could work? (Dan)

Dan: So kind of like an overview, are they coming together?

Aidan: Yeah, a little bit. So Noah goes to the same school as me but no one from my household goes to the same school as me. I guess there is a little bit and that seems to be working alright but not a whole lot other than that.

Noah: Yeah, I think the most prominent one most recently has been the sphere of church in the household because all of your church has been taking place in the household. It's quite directly overlapping but I really don't think school has overlapped with any of the spheres. At least for me because there's not much of a connection between church and school.

Dan: I think with church and school it kind of up to us to make those spheres link because I don't think they're linking anyway so I like how household and church have been made to link during lockdown. I think at school, we tried this one where you have to then bring what you did on Sunday into school with the people around you.

Aidan: Potentially, a bit of separation between church and school might be a good thing because it's quite hard to be the same person in such different environments.

Mariam: I agree. If I knew someone who needed a church and was nervous to go in by themselves, I would invite them to come with me to *Legacy*⁴ or something. Generally, with all parts of my life, I tend to keep them a bit separate. It's not like I don't carry my faith with me. I'm a Christian wherever I go, it's just I have church, school etc. I seem to prefer it that way. But if it meant someone having the experience of church for the first time or something like that then I'd be willing to take them.

Dan: I think that for lots of people that are non-Christians, the idea of those spheres mixing really scares them. They might be okay to talk about what it's like to be a Christian in school but as soon as you invite them to church that's one step too far. But as soon as you say "*why don't you speak to your parents about it*" I think that there's a bit of fear that when they mix it's not going to work.

Noah: Particularly between church and school it is kind of up to you but at the same time it would be useful to have a bit more of a connection between churches and schools, which obviously is more difficult now but at the same time something could be done. I do agree with you Aidan, it is difficult to be the same person in different scenarios. That's part of the reason why it's hard to talk about church in school because it's another side of you that you're bringing into a different environment.

Aidan: Not everyone is as respectful at school as they are at church. Church is quite a friendly environment and school isn't always, sometimes it is but it's not as open and respectful

⁴ Legacy is the name of the youth discipleship group that meets on a Sunday evening at Mariam's church.

