



## DIOCESAN SYNOD

### Southwark Vision 2023-2035 & The Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP)

1. Southwark Vision 2017-2025 is coming towards the end of its timeline and we are now evolving the Vision to evolve it for its next phase.
2. The planned Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP), funded by the Church Commissioners (which Synod has previously been presented), is the successor to the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) but is very different.
3. Unlike the SDF, which has a specificity of place, named parishes and detailed project plans, the DIP is described as a **partnership** between the Church Commissioners and dioceses. The DIP specifically looks to visions and strategies which align nationally for growing **Simpler, Humbler, Bolder** and in the spirit of the National Church's objectives.
4. Southwark is regarded as a Diocese with a mature strategy based on **Southwark Vision** and our excellent governance. As such, our funding partnership with the Church Commissioners is expected to be among the longest (available up to 9 years).
5. Southwark Vision 2023-2035 is being evolved under Bishop Christopher's steer and consultation has already begun. There has been initial consultation with the Area Deans, Deanery Lay Chairs, Diocesan Council of Trustees, and the Bishop's Senior Staff. A small Group, chaired by Ruth Martin, is coordinating the development and consultation will continue until early October.
6. It extends beyond the 9-year partnership with the National Church and encompass Net Zero Carbon (NZC), which is also strategically important to this Diocese. We are now in a position to present our Vision through the next 12 years to Diocesan Synod for feedback and consultation.
7. Following the Diocesan Synod, Episcopal Area will now undertake the consultations locally in their Areas.
8. A finalised Vision will then be presented to the November Diocesan Synod and will be the basis of the significant application for the 6-9 year funding partnership with the Church Commissioners which we plan to apply for in February 2024.
9. Attached overleaf is a summarised version of the work that has been undertaken and Diocesan Synod members will be asked for their own reflections. The item will also include groupwork, led by the Director of Communications to ask the following:

What excites you?

What concerns you?

What ideas do you have?

*Ruth Martin*  
*July 2023*

# Christ Centred | Outward Focused

## Southwark Vision 2023-2035



*The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside to lodge and get provisions, for we are here in a deserted place.” But he said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.” For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, “Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” They did so and had them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke them and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled, and what was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces. (Luke 9:12-17 NRSV)*



When Christ is at the heart of our life together, amazing things can happen - and the hungers of a world in need can be met from what can appear to be meagre resources.

**Southwark Vision is Christ centred, outward focused.** This next evolution of our vision comes as we continue to walk together, discerning God's wisdom and guidance in our shared pilgrimage of faith. Keeping Christ as our centre and the focus of unity, we will continue to turn outwards - seeking to support, encourage, resource and learn from one another as we serve our parishes and God's world.

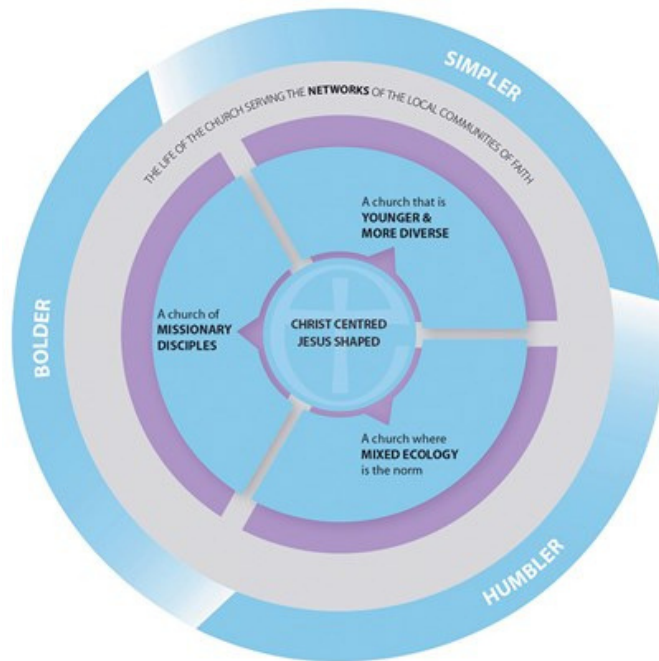


The Diocese of  
**Southwark**

# Our context

The Church of England's vocation is and always has been to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ afresh in each generation to the people of England. Its [Vision](#) is to be a Church for the whole nation which is Jesus Christ centred and shaped by the five marks of mission: a church that is simpler, humbler, bolder. This vision is expressed in three priorities:

1. To become a Church of missionary disciples where all God's people are free to live the Christian life, wherever we spend our time Sunday to Saturday
2. To be a Church where mixed ecology\* is the norm - where every person in England has access to an enriching and compelling community of faith by adding new churches and new forms of Church to our parishes, cathedrals, schools and chaplaincies
3. To be a Church that is younger and more diverse



Our vision and strategy for Southwark Diocese reflects these priorities and focuses on ways in which we might enable God's church to grow, especially in our own rich and diverse context.

Through the Diocesan Investment Programme (DIP), we will be intentionally resourcing this growth across our whole Diocese. The National Church is making available significant sums of money, some of which we'll be seeking to access for specific projects and initiatives. There is a separate grants stream to support dioceses as they work to reduce their carbon emissions and tackle the climate crisis - and we'll be looking to access that, too. Of course, we'll also be investing our own resources as we work to build a flourishing future for all of our parishes and communities.

\* The mixed ecology describes the flourishing of church and ministry in our parishes, and in other communities of faith through things like church planting, fresh expressions of church, and chaplaincy and online.

# Our shared values

Our values determine how we relate to one another and to God's world. Christ is both at the centre of all that we do and the pioneer of all that we are seeking to become. In the power of the Holy Spirit, he is constantly calling us to join in the bigger story of God's reconciling and healing mission. Our values seek growth in our discipleship, in our churches, schools and worshipping communities and in the kingdom of God.



## Our priorities for the future

We have come a long way as a Diocese over the past ten years - embedding generosity, speaking well of each other, innovating and taking risks. We have continued to be able to resource our parishes through growing our financial resilience. Our vision for 2035 builds on all we have done and seeks to respond to what God is now doing in our midst.

In particular, our priorities for this next season will be:

- **Maintaining the highest possible number of stipendiary clergy and growing lay ministries**

We are committed to ensuring that our parishes are served by well-resourced and well-supported clergy, and will continue to foster and grow our lay ministries

- **Growing our existing churches and establishing new worshipping communities**

We want to see our churches surpassing pre-pandemic levels in the next five years and growing a further 10% by 2035

- **Becoming younger and more diverse**

We wish to see our churches evolve to better reflect the communities in which they serve and the gifts of the whole people of God

- **Deepening our discipleship**

Christ is at the heart of our faith and we will only grow by being intentional about going deeper in our journey with him

- **Seeking the healing of our communities and our world**

Christ's call for healing and reconciliation requires us to grapple with many of the issues that we face as a society including social justice, racial justice and care for creation

To make these ambitions a reality we have set ourselves objectives against each of these priorities to enable our parishes and congregations to play their part in growing God's Church and blessing God's world:

### Stipendiary clergy and growing lay ministries

- Being attentive to clergy wellbeing and seeking to address concerns before they become critical
- Encouraging more parishes to identify and develop lay ministry vocations
- Working to increase the diversity of our candidates for lay and ordained ministries
- Ensuring more visibility of diversity among representations of our clergy and lay ministers

- Working closely with parishes to address their ministry needs and identify ways in which those needs might best be met

### **Growing churches**

- Creating a culture of missional innovation and risk taking in a mixed ecology Church
- Every church having a well thought through Mission Action Plan
- Encouraging churches to start evangelism and courses on catechesis to help people explore and share the Christian faith
- Reversing the decline in occasional offices and seeking to be more effective in offering baptism, wedding and funeral ministry
- Appointing 100 lay and ordained pioneers over the next five years, leading to more healthy fresh expressions of church (fxc)
- Identify appropriate contexts where Hub or Resourcing Church models might bring fresh life and replicate good practice
- Continuing to embed financial generosity to enable our churches to grow
- Sharing Christ through serving our parish communities, engaging in partnerships and shared mission

### **Becoming younger and more diverse**

- Churches being places of the formation, resourcing and releasing of disciples in the whole of life - including a greater focus on discipleship of young people
- Encourage a growth of vocations that reflect the diversity of our communities
- Diocesan and parish leadership to reflect the diversity of our Diocese and parishes
- Developing our engagement with children and young people across the spheres of home, school and church life
- Prioritising mission and ministry in low-income communities and estates
- Developing an internship ministry programme, with a particular focus on young school leavers
- Encouraging a broader range of ages in lay vocations and church leadership
- Reviewing our church buildings to ensure that they are fit for mission
- Reviewing our property and housing strategy to meet our needs

### **Deepening our discipleship**

- Sharing resources with parishes encouraging and equipping people for life-long Christian discipleship and mission in our homes, work, neighbourhoods and social lives
- Encourage more lay people to join the Bishop's Certificate course on Christian theology and practice
- Working in partnership with the SDBE on the Growing Faith initiative
- Moving towards two thirds of our parishes supporting the more deprived one third
- Audit our assets and continue to develop good stewardship
- Create digital strategies supporting parishes in discipleship, faith formation and mission

## Healing

- Continuing to prioritise and improve safeguarding practice in every area of our shared life
- Developing our commitment to transparency and openness, seeking to learn and improve our practices
- Supporting churches and other groups in their work with those who are poor, vulnerable or marginalised
- Using our influence to advocate for justice and peace in our communities, our nation and our world
- Working to protect vulnerable young people from involvement in serious youth violence
- Prioritising the wellbeing of our lay and ordained ministers - identifying and offering resources that can help them to flourish
- Continuing to embed the principles of our Anti-Racism Charter in the lives of our worshipping communities
- Seeking to identify and overcome unconscious bias wherever we encounter it
- Working to achieve our shared goal of achieving carbon net zero carbon by 2035
- Encouraging individual churches to engage with and respond to theologies safeguarding the integrity of creation



We will achieve these goals by aligning all the levers at our disposal under the leadership of our Bishop and the Vision Team:

- Growing the Parish Support Fund to move towards two thirds of parishes covering their own ministry costs and giving generously towards our poorer parishes
- Training and communications strategies & practices which inspire, resource and liberate leaders and congregations to develop our culture
- The development of a range of 'enablers' to support specific types of mission and ministry
- A new Property Strategy to renew the physical infrastructure of our Diocese and reduce our carbon footprint
- A range of proven mission tools and resources to reflect our diversity of traditions - with space to innovate and learn from one another
- Clear pipelines and plans for the calling, equipping, deployment, ongoing mentoring and support
- Realistic - but ambitious - plans for our giving to grow to support our mission
- Clear plans to prioritise mission and ministry with children, young people and families

