



DIOCESAN SYNOD

Christ Centred | Outward Focused

Southwark Vision 2024-2035

The Bishop of Southwark to move that:

“THIS SYNOD approves and endorses ‘Southwark Vision 2024-2035’, setting out our priorities as a basis for the objectives of the Diocese, and the outcomes we seek, and requests the Diocesan Secretary to begin implementation with regular reports to the Diocesan Council of Trustees and the Diocesan Synod.”

1. A commitment was made at the July Synod, following the presentation of the draft Southwark Vision 2024-2035, that Episcopal Areas would undertake local consultations and a finalised Vision would be presented to this Synod.
2. The feedback from the groupwork at the July Synod was overwhelmingly positive. There has been significant local consultation through the Episcopal Areas over the summer and into the autumn.
3. Christ Centred | Outward Focused - Southwark Vision 2024-2035 has evolved under Bishop Christopher’s steer and is now presented to Synod for its endorsement and approval. The Vision document is attached, and there will a presentation by members of the Project Group.
4. The Vision period takes us though to 2035 and reflects our priorities as the basis of the outcomes sought.
5. Synod is aware that the Vision also reflects the significant potential for strategic funding though the National Church Diocesan Investment Programme, and so the Church of England priorities, nationally, with which Southwark aligns well, are also included as part of the context.
6. Our Diocese is one of five dioceses invited to enter into a strategic partnership of up to nine years through the Diocesan Investment Programme and our funding application will be made in May 2024.
7. A presentation will be made to Synod about the Diocesan Investment Programme in March 2024 following due processes through the Policy & Finance Committee and the Diocesan Council of Trustees.

Ruth Martin
Bishops Lead for Strategic Development

Christ Centred | Outward Focused

Southwark Vision 2024-2035



As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him, and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was

opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. (Luke 24:28-35 NRSV)

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.

Church is formed when people gather around the person of Jesus Christ, drawn to worship him and join in his work as he meets human hurts and hopes. Jesus walks with us and is also waiting for us in places of mission, healing, reconciliation, learning and worship.

To be Christ centred means to be aware that we always need to be discerning Christ's presence in our context, seeking to be attentive to his work and his calling, trusting him to be present with us. We are called to be attentive and genuinely open to the new mission and future to which God beckons us. We are called to listen to God in scripture, as well as to the movement of the Holy Spirit, to those outside and within the Church to guide us. When Christ is at the heart of our life together, our hope is continually renewed, our vision restored and we find ourselves re-orientated towards the people and the world that God loves.



The Diocese of
Southwark

*Image: Ceri Richards, The Supper at Emmaus from the Methodist Modern Art Collection © TMCP, used with permission.
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Our shared values

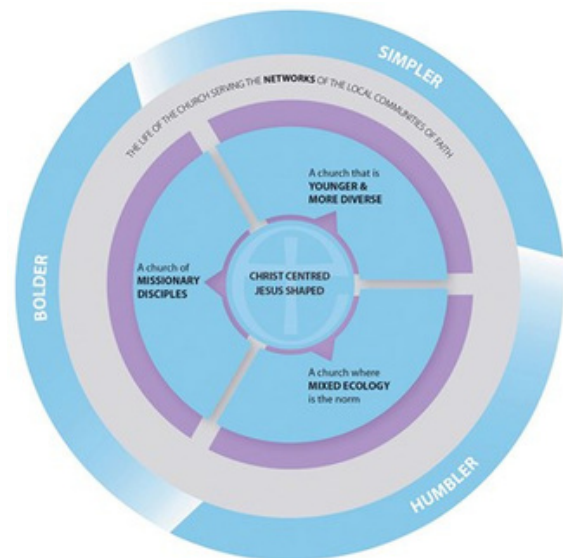
Our values determine how we relate to one another and to God's world. Christ is both at the centre of all that we do and the pioneer of all that we are seeking to become. In the power of the Holy Spirit, he is constantly calling us to join in the bigger story of God's reconciling and healing mission.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



Our 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. We will be intentionally resourcing this growth across our whole Diocese ourselves and through the National Church which is making available significant sums of money through the Diocesan Investment Programme and other funding initiatives, which we will be seeking to access for specific projects and initiatives. In these ways, we will be working to build a flourishing future for all of our parishes and communities.

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:

P

Parishes

We value all our parishes and are committed to enabling and serving them, so they can minister to the whole people of God in their local context.

- Equipping all our parishes for mission and ministry
- Offering new training and development opportunities
- Increasing opportunities to apply for grants for new initiatives
- Identifying and offering specialist advice, support and resources to enable them to be fruitful and flourish

M

Ministry

We will maintain the highest possible number of stipendiary clergy and grow our lay ministries. We will ensure that our parishes are served by well-resourced and well-supported clergy, and we will continue to foster and grow our lay ministries including new pipelines for children and youth workers in ministry.

- Being attentive to clergy wellbeing and addressing concerns before they become critical
- Encouraging more parishes to identify and develop lay ministry vocations
- Focus on increasing the cultural diversity of our candidates for all ministries

G

Growth

We will grow our existing churches, including revitalisation initiatives, and establish new worshipping communities. We want to see our Diocese surpassing pre-pandemic levels of attendance in the next five years, to include mixed ecology of worship patterns Sunday to Saturday and grow a further 10% by 2035.

- Creating a culture of missional innovation, revitalisation and risk-taking in a mixed ecology Church, including Mission Action Planning
- Appointing 100 lay and ordained pioneers over the next five years, leading to more, healthy, fresh expressions of Church
- Identifying contexts where Hub or Resourcing Church models might bring fresh life and replicate good practice

Y

Youth & Diversity

We are committed to becoming a younger, more diverse Diocese. 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.

- Developing our engagement with children, families and young people across home, school and church life
- Investing in Apprenticeships, and other training and internship programmes to give focus on discipling children and young people
- Prioritising mission and ministry in low income communities and estates
- Encouraging a broader range of ethnicity and age in church leadership (lay and ordained), using the Bishop's Certificate as an exemplar

D

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, replicating our learning and sharing our resources.

- Equipping people for life-long Christian discipleship and mission in our homes, work, neighbourhoods and social lives
- Continue to extol financial generosity across the Diocese to provide financial resilience across our diversity
- Provide advice and expertise on church buildings for mission and in fundraising
- Create digital strategies that support our parishes in discipleship, faith formation and mission

H

Healing

We will seek God's healing for our communities and our world. Christ's call for healing and reconciliation requires us to grapple with many of the issues that we face including safeguarding, social justice, racial justice and care for creation.

- Advocating for justice and peace in our communities, our nation and our world, especially the poor - including the protection of vulnerable young people from involvement in serious youth violence
- Continuing to embed the principles of our Anti-Racism Charter in the lives of our worshipping communities and those we serve in our parishes
- Working to achieve our shared goal of achieving Net Zero Carbon by 2035

Our levers

We will progress this work by making use of all the levers at our disposal under the leadership of our Bishop:

- Growing the Parish Support Fund
- Training and communications strategies and practices which inspire, resource and liberate leaders and congregations
- Developing a range of 'enablers' to support specific types of mission and ministry

- A revised property strategy to renew the physical infrastructure of our Diocese and reduce our carbon footprint in our housing
- A range of proven mission tools and resources to reflect our diversity of traditions and contexts - with space to innovate and learn from one another
- Clear pipelines and plans for the calling, equipping, deployment, ongoing mentoring and support of clergy and lay ministers
- Realistic - but ambitious - plans for our giving to grow to support our mission
- Clear plans to prioritise children, young people and families

Our outcomes

As we offer ourselves and seek to make the most fruitful use of the resources God has given us, we are prayerfully committing ourselves to a number of outcomes to help steer our day-to-day decisions. These are not targets by which we will judge ourselves or others - God's fruitfulness and generosity cannot be reduced to our efforts and ambitions - and we always need to be open to the new and unexpected places to which Holy Spirit leads us. It is in that spirit of trust and openness that we seek to work towards a number outcomes, confident that God will surprise us and that his fruitfulness will always exceed the limits of our imaginations.

We will also seek specific funding from the national Church to grow initiatives which will enable us to work with and for those less well-represented in our churches and our leadership, including young people, those of Global Majority Heritage and those living on our estates. We will focus on initiatives that can be replicated and adapted for other parishes and worshipping communities, and so grow our communities of faith in numbers and discipleship. We recognise that not everything we try will succeed, but we are committed to learning from our experiences and one another.

We therefore set ourselves the following objectives, each of them linked to a number of our priorities for the future:

1. As we have sought to update and revitalise Southwark Vision for the period until 2035 so we wish to revitalise Mission Action Planning to help parishes with their mission and ministry. We will seek to do this by:

- Using tools such as *Leading your Church into Growth* to offer to our parishes to help them thrive and grow
- Offering consultancy and targeted support to help parishes to create a Mission Action Plan that is meaningful and followed through
- Subject to the outcome of a pilot, by 2033 to have enabled 25% of our parishes to participate in a two-year intensive and facilitated programme of change, enabling them through more authorised lay ministries and lay leaders to support missional activities for their particular context, to achieve revitalisation plans

2. By the end of the 2029 financial year to have achieved pre COVID levels of adult church attendance, taking into account new mixed ecology worship patterns Sunday to Saturday. By the end of 2031 to have exceeded 2029 levels of attendance and by 2035 to have achieved further growth.

P M G Y D

3. Taking into account the new initiatives and the mixed ecology of worship patterns, by the end of 2028 to have reversed the decline in attendance from children and young people and by 2031 to have increased by 10% (from 2028 figures), with new worshipping communities and other mixed ecology initiatives, leading to a 20% increase by 2034.

P M G Y D

4. By 2026 to have researched, developed and established new pipelines for ordained and lay ministry to increase the numbers offering themselves for ministry, particularly those underrepresented from our communities, and to have seen a measurable increase in discernment, enquirers and vocational journeys from our underrepresented communities by 2029, with outcomes in authorised and licensed ministry by 2033.

P M G Y D H

5. By 2035 to have achieved our Diocesan objective of Net Zero Carbon. **P H**

6. By 2033 to have identified at least 12 Hub churches and to have at least 14 churches that have been resourced by Resourcing churches as an essential means by which we can develop mission across the Diocese. **P M G Y**

7. By 2035, to have enabled 25% of our parishes to have benefitted from a trained minister specialising in children's and youth ministry, lay or ordained, or to have had a funded Apprenticeship in children's/youth work. These opportunities will be made available annually from September 2024, except for the apprenticeship scheme, which will be launched by late 2025. **P M G Y D H**

8. By 2033 to have made measurable progress in the strategic goal of seeing a growing number of parishes fully covering their own ministry costs through the Parish Support Fund (PSF) and giving generously through the PSF to support other parishes less able to cover their ministry costs. **P G D**

9. By 2025 (subject to funding) to have launched the 'Christ Centred Outward Focused' Innovation Fund, which will provide for substantial projects each year (up to £250k) and connect with smaller innovative projects of Fresh Expressions of Church.

P G Y D



**Lord Jesus Christ,
come be the centre of our lives,
re-making our hearts, directing our hopes
and healing our pains.
Then send us out in the power of your risen life,
to share your love and serve your world
that your name may be glorified in all the earth.
Amen.**



**The Diocese of
Southwark**