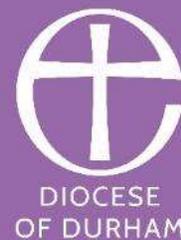




Diocesan Transformation
A summary of the presentation to Synod
Saturday 14th May 2022



DIOCESE
OF DURHAM



Putting Diocesan Transformation in context

Addressing Synod in November 2021, Bishop Paul commented..

‘Declining numbers of regular worshippers have been a regular part of our life for many years. Some churches have bucked that trend and grown, or at least held steady. However, the stark reality is that declining numbers continue and the pandemic has apparently accelerated that truth in many places.... Realistically the situation is grave.

Unless we see new growth over the next 10 years there will be many more closures. So the time to act is now. There is a window of opportunity.

This means that we have to grapple hard together with what really is the best shape for parishes in the years ahead. There is no proposal to abolish the parish but as has happened throughout our history the parish system has to adapt to a new era. We have to ask how best we equip the whole people of God for all the works of service to which God calls us’



Our decline is a cause for concern, prayer and action.

Far fewer people attend a church of England church in our Diocese than would be typical nationally (attendance here is about half the national average). That pool of people attending church is shrinking fast.

Church attendance statistics for the five years from 2014-2019 show that attendance locally has declined at a rapid rate – about twice the national average. Smaller churches find it harder to grow, harder to fill key roles and harder to maintain local mission

	National Av.	Durham
Adult attendance	-11.7%	-18.9%
Child attendance	-16.7%	-29.6%

Table I. Changing Sunday attendance in the Church of England, 2014 - 2019.

Why has this happened?

The declining numbers of people attending church is not just a challenge for churches is **part of a wider pattern** of changing religious attitudes – across the UK & Europe less people regard themselves as Christian or religious. This change is a mixture of wider social trends, local challenges & missional issues.

Our society in general is less religious. Christianity does not shape our culture or lives in the same way it did 50 years ago. Less people want to marry or have their children baptised in church. Families are more fragmented. Working patterns and schooling has changed and Sunday is rarely a day of rest. Generally there is a scepticism towards 'meta narratives' ('truth claims' about God/creation/an overarching meaning of life) and more hostility towards established religion and the church.



Our local communities are changing. People are move more, rarely live near family or know their neighbours. Our communities are more diverse and far less familiar with church. As a result FAITH is not transmitted from generation to generation in the same way.

Our Churches have often found it hard to adapt to this. People no longer 'turn up' automatically. For people to discover Christ we need find new ways to 'go' to and engage them in different ways if we are to restore a Christian presence in our communities.

Doing this requires creativity, collaborating, embracing change and letting go of some things.

Where Churches embrace this call to mission they can regrow. But if we don't adjust how we do things the decline will get worse..



Projected change in a local Deanery 2019-2029: Attendance

At the start of 2020 we studied changing Sunday attendance in all our churches from 2015 to 2018 to produce a projection of church attendance for the next 10 years. This is data from one of our urban Deaneries (population currently about 107,000).

By the end of the 2020's only 3 of the current 12 churches would have viable congregations. Whilst we do not know exactly what the impact of Covid is, it is likely to have accelerated this decline.

Church Name	Moderatd av. yrly change in USA 2015-18*	Sunday Attendance											Mod. annual change as %
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	
St A's	-1.00	15.0	14.0	13.0	12.0	11.0	10.0	9.0	8.0	7.0	6.0	5.0	-6%
St B's	-4.00	22.0	18.0	14.0	10.0	6.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-15%
St C's	-3.00	45.0	42.0	39.0	36.0	33.0	30.0	27.0	24.0	21.0	18.0	15.0	-6%
St D's	-3.50	30.0	26.5	23.0	19.5	16.0	12.5	9.0	5.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	-10%
All Saints	-7.00	72.0	65.0	58.0	51.0	44.0	37.0	30.0	23.0	16.0	9.0	2.0	-6%
All Angels	23.00	191.0	214.0	237.0	260.0	283.0	306.0	329.0	352.0	375.0	398.0	421.0	14%
Christ Church	-2.00	21.0	19.0	17.0	15.0	13.0	11.0	9.0	7.0	5.0	3.0	1.0	-9%
St M's	-2.50	19.5	17.0	14.5	12.0	9.5	7.0	4.5	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-11%
St L's	2.00	51.0	53.0	55.0	57.0	59.0	61.0	63.0	65.0	67.0	69.0	71.0	4%
St J's	-4.00	64.0	60.0	56.0	52.0	48.0	44.0	40.0	36.0	32.0	28.0	24.0	-6%
St Saviours	-3.50	35.5	32.0	28.5	25.0	21.5	18.0	14.5	11.0	7.5	4.0	0.0	-9%
St P's	-8.00	47.0	39.0	31.0	23.0	15.0	7.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-12%
Totals		613.0	599.5	586.0	572.5	559.0	545.5	535.0	533.5	530.5	535.0	539.0	

Table 2. Projected Sunday attendance in one of our Deaneries 2019-2029 (churches anonymised)

Projected change in a local Deanery: Effects on Finance

Church Name	Projected USA		Parish Share	
	2019	2029	2020 Pledge	Proj. Pledge 2029
St A's	15.0	5.0	£ 10,500.00	£ 6,016.45
St B's	22.0	0.0	£ 7,938.00	£ -
St C's	45.0	15.0	£ 8,946.00	£ 5,126.01
St D's	30.0	0.0	£ 17,550.00	£ -
All Saints	72.0	2.0	£ 43,155.00	£ 18,467.31
All Angels	191.0	421.0	£ 14,400.00	£ 46,828.06
Christ Church	21.0	1.0	£ 14,333.00	£ 6,133.52
St M's	19.5	0.0	£ 14,050.00	£ -
St L's	51.0	71.0	£ 25,200.00	£ 35,867.46
St J's	63.0	23.0	£ 23,166.00	£ 13,274.00
St Saviours	35.5	0.5	£ 30,282.00	£ -
St P's	47.0	0.0	£ 18,170.00	£ -
	612.0	538.5	£ 227,690.00	£ 131,712.80

Table 3. Changing church attendance by Parish and the effect on parish share

Assuming average giving and other factors stayed constant) the declining number of worshippers would have a significant impact on parish incomes and parish share (through which we finance ministry).

By 2029 Parish share from this deanery would have contracted by about £95k/year (compared to 2020).

Without growth in the remaining churches the situation would be worse. Whether growth balances out decline depends a lot on the context.

In this Deanery, the growing churches are both in much poorer areas, with lower average household incomes. Where growth comes from people becoming Christians, people do not immediately become givers – they tend to move from occasional giving to more regular giving and then tithing over a period of time.

This pattern is likely to be the same in most of our Deaneries. Overall we project a 1/3rd decline in Sunday attendance from 2020-2029.

The National Church has encouraged our Diocese to consider how we might structure ministry differently and what long term changes might help sustain ministry **and grow.**

Three other Dioceses have been awarded Strategic Transformation Funding to enable them to develop similar schemes, making changes necessary for growth to be sustainable and to flourish in the longer term. The National Church describes STF as -

*‘£45m has been allocated by the Archbishop’s Council to help those dioceses facing significant financial challenges and planning a major restructuring programme to provide a platform for the Church’s sustainable growth... to support major change programmes which fit with dioceses’ strategic plans and make a significant difference to their mission and financial strength’**

Since September we have been considering whether to undertake a similar scheme and what this might look like. Locally we are describing this as *Diocesan Transformation*

*Source: www.churchofengland.org/about/renewal-reform/funding-mission-and-growth/strategic-transformation-funding



As a Diocese (under the oversight of the Bishops Council) we are beginning to develop our ideas, ahead of submitting a *stage one* bid to the national church, to outline our ideas and solicit their feedback.

We are working on the basis that for any scheme to be credible and be genuinely transformative it must be -

- **Ambitious** (meaningfully attending to the problems we face and the vision we have)
- **Attainable** (not pie in the sky – but consistent with our gifts and based on deep local commitment; rigorously thought through and worked out).
- **Astute** (i.e. mindful of the national vision and other work)
- **Authentic** (Authentically Christian, authentically Anglican, authentically pioneering and authentically ‘*in the accent of the North East*’ – reflecting who we are, our story and context).



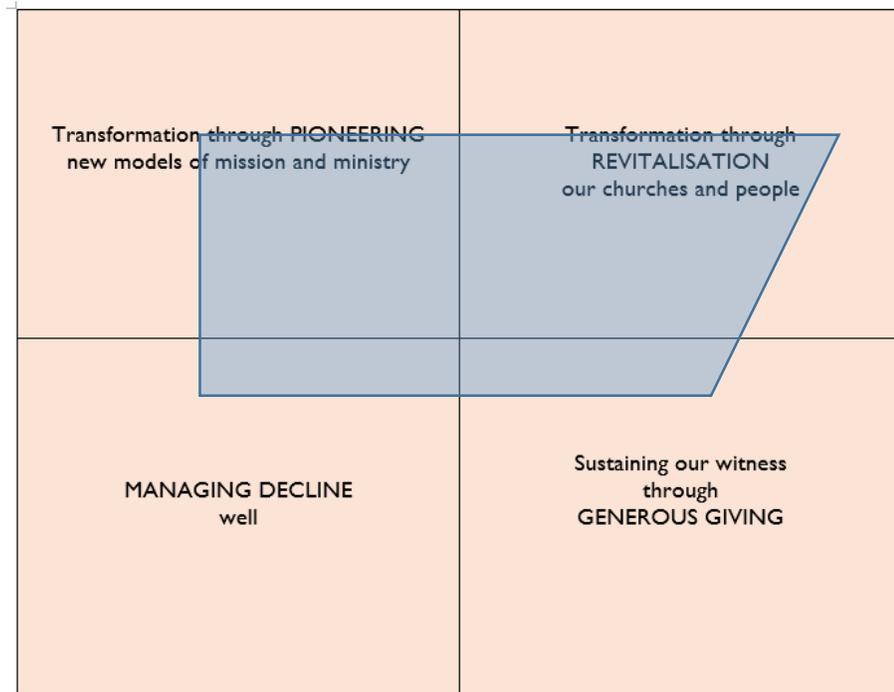


Focusing our energy: Which way ahead?

Building on the Diocesan wide **Waymark** consultation and our work to develop the **Diocesan Priorities** (which involved extensive consultation), Bishops Council consulted Area Deans, Lay Chairs and other stakeholder groups. Together they explored 6 different models, asking *how we should focus our energies* in terms of our *people, prayers* and *pounds* (finance).

There was a unanimous consensus that whilst we need to give some energy to managing decline well and encouraging generosity, **transformation can only come through -**

- Energetic Pioneering
- Revitalising *missional* local churches





We think there are **5 key things** we need to address and invest in if we are to operate **sustainably** and **enable growth** across the diocese long term.

These are -

1. Changing our **Culture**
2. Investing in the **Discipleship of all**
3. Piloting **Minster Hubs**
4. Developing **Chaplaincy to Youth & Young Adults**
5. Developing **Support for Local Reorganisation**

Culture Change

Focus: Communal & corporate

Q: How should we (as a Diocese, churches, clergy & congregations) respond to..

- Our changing context, congregations & changing resources
- Our unchanging mission and purpose as the people of God
- The challenge to develop Mixed Ecology & Missional Disciples

Outcome?

Reorienting & re-organising ourselves to invigorate our witness in a changing, post Christian context

Discipleship of all

Focus: Individual, home & holistic

Q: How do we help one another to..

- Understand who we are and 'Whose' we are
- Our gifts and contribution
- What **Everyday Faith** means at home, work, school
- Grow as confident witnesses
- Understand God's call & presence in all of life

Outcome?

Helping one another to grow in confidence as lights for Christ (2 Corinthians 3-5)



Piloting Minster Hubs

Minster Hubs would group together local churches in key locations whose congregations and clergy are united by a shared mission and **want** to work collaboratively to serve their area through developing ministry, service and evangelism. They would share leadership & resources in order to extend mission and grow locally in a way that they could never do alone.

‘Minsters’ are -

- Deep in the Anglican Tradition
- Characterised by collaboration. They have an outward, missional vision and use their resources to pioneer and serve across a wider region.
- Flexible & contextual

A successful STF bid would finance additional missional and operational resources to boost local capacity for mission.

Depending on the context, Hubs would integrate some functions (safeguarding, admin, buildings maintenance, etc) and might share buildings or form joint PCC’s/etc., in order to generate capacity for mission, evangelism and discipleship. Every Hub would be growth focused (not just maintenance motivated!).



Piloting Minster Hubs

We are early in our thinking on this but think the key building blocks would include....



Support for Local Reorganisation

Many of our PCC's struggle to find officers, navigate Pastoral Reorganisation, make vital decisions about buildings, stay up to date on finance or lack the capacity to make changes towards Carbon Net Zero. Fewer volunteers and increasingly complex requirements compound this.

A successful STF bid would enable us to provide better support to -

- Churches in vacancy
- To enable PCCs and congregations to navigate change (disposal of buildings, develop simpler structures, adapt buildings or *merging, reshape, plant or close*)
- Engage with Environmental change
- Strengthen governance & safeguarding



Developing Youth & Young Adult Chaplaincy

Since 2014 we have grown our work with children but struggled to engage teens and young adults. Some churches long to reach these groups but lack a 'way in' or volunteers to lead. Finding new means and resources to do this is critical.

Collaborating locally to deliver mission to youth & young adults will enable us to do more together than we could ever do apart. It would need to feature -

- Collaboration between churches to develop joint chaplaincy teams
- Building local knowledge, support & skills
- Developing Chaplaincy presence in every college of FE
- Strengthened connection to local churches
- Evangelistic drive
- Protected time for clergy to develop Children, Youth & Young Adult mission





What next?

Over the coming months we are asking everyone to join us in prayer - transformation will be one of the key focusses of our monthly Diocesan prayer meetings – please join us!

Over the summer, drawing on Synod's advice and insights, Bishops Council (the standing committee to Diocesan Synod) will oversee the development of a 'stage one' proposal (an outline vision and account) to share with the national church in October. Subject to their approval and feedback we will begin to develop a more detailed plan/proposal which we will be bringing to Synod for consideration and advice in November ahead of formulating the more substantive *stage two* bid. Should we proceed, the final plan would be submitted to the national church in Spring 2023.

You can feedback your thoughts, prayers and questions by emailing Duncan.podbury@durham.anglican.org