
Our Strategy

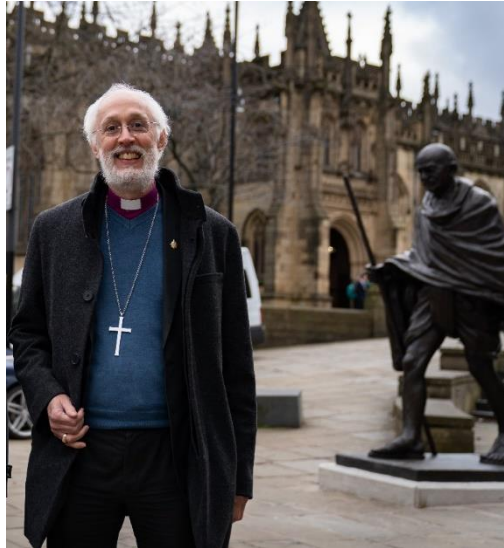
2020 – 2030

Reviewed and updated June 2023

Our work together grows out of Jesus's **Great Commandment** which is to 'love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...and love your neighbour as yourself.' (Matthew 22:36-40)...

... and out of His **Great Commission**, 'to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Mathew 28:19-20).

FOREWORD



It is now over three years since we agreed our ten-year strategy. It has provided an important framework within which we have been able to develop more detailed plans – at parish, mission community, deanery and diocesan level – to inform our priorities and ensure we stay completely focused on mission, individually and locally and as part of the wider church.

We have taken the opportunity in recent months to review our progress and our priorities together – at Bishop’s Leadership Team, with our Area Deans and also at Bishop’s Council and Diocesan Synod. This time of reflection has enabled us to celebrate the very positive changes that are taking place across our diocese and to reflect joyfully on all that has been achieved over the last three years.

We have also been able to consider the serious challenges still facing us as a diocesan family. Whilst we rejoice at those who have come through Covid and are now back worshipping among us, we also recognise that congregation numbers are not back to where they were in 2019. We face financial challenges too and some are wearied by the demands of sustaining buildings that were built in a very different era. True joy however, is to be found, not in the absence of the ‘tough stuff’, but in the attitude with which we address it. We find joy in facing our challenges undeterred and with our praise of God undiminished.

Most of this refreshed strategy remains unchanged from the version we signed off at the beginning of 2020. Our vision for 2030 and our values are still the same. Our three mission goals of *Growing*, *Nurturing* and *Serving* still underpin all our work together in this diocese. We have taken the opportunity to update some of the approaches within these mission goals in the light of experience and all that we’ve learned as we’ve journeyed together. Most significantly, since 2020 we have been awarded substantial additional funding from the national church.

All this is reflected in the document before you, which sets out the ever greater opportunities for us to work together in the fulfilment of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission that have been handed down to us by Jesus himself.

With every blessing

+David Manchester



Our Vision

To be a worshipping, growing and transforming Christian presence at the heart of every community.

Our Values

Faith, Hope and Love

Our Mission Goals

To be a Church which is:

Growing – new disciples in missionary church communities which are younger, more diverse, active and spiritually engaged.

Nurturing – new and existing disciples

Serving – present for all, speaking and acting prophetically for justice, supporting pastorally especially the vulnerable, deprived and excluded.

Focusing on these three priority areas will enable us to bring about the fundamental changes we need to make to ensure our church flourishes and thrives.

Our Transformation Programme

What we need to develop to be the Church of the future, with our skills, resources, structures and processes.



OUR THEOLOGY

'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind...'

God the Holy Trinity creates the world in gracious and abundant love and invites his creation to respond in kind. His defining gift is himself in Jesus Christ, who comes that all may have fullness of life. The diocese's strategy flows from an understanding that all humanity is made in the image of God and is called into the likeness of Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit.

As we seek to be growing, nurturing and serving communities in Manchester, Jesus provides the words of life to guide and form us. Jesus summarises the Law of God thus: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22.37-39). Jesus reminds us that to live in love is to live in God. Jesus invites the people of God to find the connective tissue between loving God and loving neighbour, without forgetting to appropriately care for oneself. The desire to grow congregations, nurture disciples, and serve communities in need issues from the Church's adoration and hunger for God the Holy Trinity.

'Go ... and make disciples ...'

Jesus calls the Church to embody a Great Commission: 'Go ... and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you' (Matthew 28. 19-20a). In its Latin root, commission means 'entrust'. Thus, Jesus entrusts the people of God in every place with a mission to bring the world into deeper relationship with God the Holy Trinity. The mission of the Church, in Manchester and everywhere, is to discern what God is up to and get involved.

Ultimately, the Church is called is to be obedient to God's mission revealed in Jesus Christ. John's Gospel reminds us that Jesus came that people may have life and have it abundantly (John 10.10). In committing ourselves to growing our churches in depth and number, to nurturing disciples, and to service, we commit ourselves to serving God.

'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'

God's mission extends beyond the Church to all Creation. Christ's Kingdom is a servant Kingdom in which the Church is formed as an offering of grace and love. The Church is called to growth in number and depth for the sake of the Kingdom; the Church nurtures disciples, new and old, for the sake of loving service; the Church is called to serve because God in Christ is the ultimate Servant of All.

'Lord, teach us to pray ...'

Jesus's first disciples understood that without prayer we are lost and asked him to teach them to pray. Our calling to be part of the Body of Christ in Manchester is grounded in and animated by prayer. In prayer the Spirit calls the Body into the fullness of life. As we seek to be Church for a Different World, prayer illuminates Christ's Way. In prayer we are assured of God's promises in Jesus Christ and we unite our life together with the One who says in Matthew's Gospel, 'Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

OUR VISION

Manchester is a vibrant diocese of opportunity and creativity. Its rich mixture of church traditions makes it a wonderful place to engage in Gospel ministry.

We want to be a church for a different world.

All our energy, effort and prayer is focused on transforming into the sort of church we believe God is calling us to be by 2030:



We are growing - a church for everyone

- We appeal to all sorts of people – we are vibrant, living, God-centred communities.
- People who weren't involved ten years ago, feel comfortable here now.
- There is a wide range of different traditions of prayer, praise and thanksgiving.
- People of all ages can be together – everyone can belong.
- We love inviting people along.
- People experience the joy – as well as a sense of awe and wonder.
- Our leaders and congregations reflect the diversity of our local communities.
- Children and families have lots of fun here, as well as being safe.
- We are good at reaching out to and inspiring young people.
- Children and young people are leading the way in changing the way we do things.





We are nurturing - a church where we are focused on discipleship and evangelism

- We are able to develop our spiritual lives, teaching the Gospel and the faith.
- We are imaginative with worship and liturgy – it's not just about the written word.
- We worship at different times during the week – not just on Sundays.
- We are able to tackle the deep, difficult questions.
- We are able to develop our faith in a variety of ways – from small groups to social media.
- We meet together in different local places – cafes, libraries, schools, home.
- What we experience helps us live and share our faith in the rest of our lives.
- There are opportunities for development and sharing expertise - for clergy and laity.
- We are generous – with our time and talents and our financial support.
- We have great leaders – clergy and laity - who get the best out of everyone.





We are serving - a church which leads the way in every local community

- We are good at working with other organisations and building local confidence.
- People come to find out what we are doing and learn from us.
- We are at the leading edge with our environmental projects.
- We support and promote the creative arts.
- We have a high profile – we are active and visible in our local communities.
- We bring different communities and people of different faiths together.
- We are a base for lots of different activities.
- We work closely with our schools and our chaplains working out in the community.
- We are open and welcoming and our buildings are sustainable and accessible.
- We support those who are deprived and excluded and speak out for justice and peace.

We want to reach out to individuals and communities across our diocese so that our message of God’s love is heard amidst the noise of the modern world.

This is where we believe God is calling us to be. Join us in the journey.



ABOUT MANCHESTER DIOCESE

Our diocese, which covers an area of 416 square miles, was created in 1847. The overall population is 2.2 million. 125 (48%) of the parishes in the diocese fall within the 10% most deprived areas nationally. The diocese is divided into four archdeaconries and seven deaneries. There are more than 300 places of worship and chaplaincies which are organised into 256 parishes and 175 benefices, including Manchester Cathedral. Geographically the diocese takes in the two cities of Salford and Manchester and the metropolitan boroughs of Oldham, Rochdale, Bury and Bolton. Parts of the metropolitan boroughs of Wigan, Trafford, Stockport, Tameside, Blackburn with Darwen and most of the borough of Rossendale in Lancashire, are also within the diocese. While predominantly urban, a significant part of the diocese is rural, although less than 3% of the population of the diocese lives in these areas.

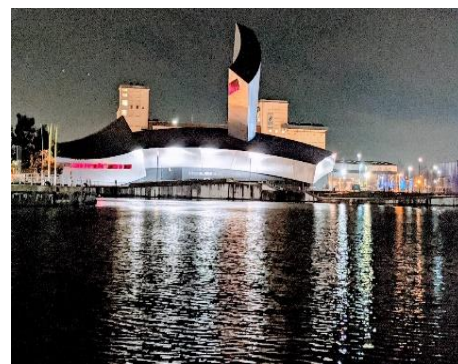
The diocese has over 300 churches, ranging from historic listed buildings to more modern places of worship. Over 300 licensed clergy serve in the diocese along with 140 licensed Readers who help with leading services and pastoral work. Our 300 Authorised Lay Ministers also play a hugely important role in the life of our parishes. In 2019 the diocese had total weekly attendance for all ages of 24,400. After significant reductions during the pandemic, in 2022 attendance increased back up to 22,400.

Across the diocese there are nearly 200 Church of England primary and secondary schools, educating 57,000 pupils every day. These schools are mostly funded by local authorities, with the diocese providing support with religious education and Christian ethos, as well as governance, the recruitment of head-teachers, admissions and building projects.

Parishes, chaplaincies and schools across the diocese are supported by a dedicated team, based at St John's House in Bury. This team supports churches and congregations across the diocese with our three mission goals of Growing, Nurturing and Serving. It also provides support with clergy housing and stipends, finance, safeguarding and governance.

Much of what we are doing in the diocese is already contributing to a culture of hope and an expectation of growth. This includes many forms of inherited and fresh expressions of church. However, we face significant challenges. The number of people attending our churches continues to fall, from 32,200 in 2012. Less than 1% of the population attends church in Manchester Diocese, which is in the lowest 25% of dioceses nationally. In 2022, 128 (50%) of our parishes had average weekly in-person attendance of fewer than 35 people. We have a large number of church buildings in poor condition. We also face significant financial challenges as a diocese.

We are completely focused on reversing this decline. We want to be a church that is open to all and for everyone, which reflects our diverse diocese and inspires new generations of Christians to become spiritually active and engaged, as well as being involved in their church.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS 2020 - 2022

Growing

- The Children Changing Places project in Bolton
- St Werburgh's Resource Church, Chorlton
- Nelson Street Resource Church, Rochdale
- The Antioch Network - Small to Small Community Church Plants project
- Funding secured for a new resource church for Manchester City Centre
- 61 candidates supported for ordination training with good representation from our diverse communities
- Stepping Stones for Growth training resources

Nurturing

- 140 Authorised Lay Ministers commissioned
- 19 Readers licensed
- #MoreThanSunday course piloted in ten places
- New pathway from Authorised Lay Ministry to Reader Ministry
- Foundations for Ministry courses delivered locally
- Agreement to the shape of focal ministry, ready for roll-out from 2023

Serving

- Involvement by our churches in 670 projects designed to combat the persistent challenges of isolation, homelessness, food poverty and debt.
- Fifty churches signed up as Places of Welcome.
- 142 churches registered for Eco Church accreditation with 38 bronze awards and 19 silver awards
- Energy Footprint Tool completed by 50% of churches

Our Transformation Programme

- Additional funding of over £5m secured from the Church Commissioners
- Deanery changes – reduced from twenty to seven
- Full-time Area Deans appointed along with deanery support officers
- Mission community boundaries agreed
- 25 out of 33 mission community leaders appointed
- Active approach to clergy deployment
- New pastoral supervision programme for clergy
- Two conferences on Generosity and Thankfulness
- Parish Share Review completed
- Support being provided to fragile churches
- Move to new offices in Bury – sale of Church House
- Investment programme in parsonages underway – surplus parsonages being sold

MISSION GOAL - GROWING

We want to be a growing Church, spiritually and numerically. We believe that loving God and loving our neighbour, The Great Commandment, and making disciples, The Great Commission, are the basis of a healthy Church and that a healthy Church is a growing Church.

We want to be a diocese that encourages creativity and risk-taking. We will pioneer new faith communities and reinvigorate existing ones.

To achieve this, over the next seven years we will:

- Set up new and release existing or potential **resource churches** across the diocese to attract new members, particularly young adults, as well as help grow and revitalise churches. These initiatives will be enriched by partnerships with wider groups and networks.
- **Plant new congregations** and fresh expressions of church, so that churches carrying a DNA of mission are established in communities where attendance is currently low. This includes church plants, revitalisations, church partnerships and developing good missional leaders.
- Support and encourage **chaplains** across the diocese into new ways of being church within their context.
- Support all parishes and mission communities in **maintaining a consistent outward focus**, helping them create pathways for newcomers and fringe members, enabling every parish across the diocese to run an **enquirers course** and create a culture of invitation as part of our liturgical rhythm.
- Equip our clergy, lay leaders and chaplains with relevant **development and training** opportunities so they have the skills to grow healthy and vibrant faith communities. We will also develop confidence in personal faith-sharing among leaders and church members, so they are able to talk engagingly and honestly about their own faith journey.
- Reach out to **children, young people and their families**, in order to ensure a vibrant future for our faith communities. This will include building on our network of church schools and the work of #ManDio Growing Faith to enable the growth of youth scared spaces.
- Develop plans for **town centres and estates** in the diocese, as well as the city centre, to ensure the diverse needs of each community are met and there is a thriving Christian presence in each place.
- Work with our **international congregations** enabling those who wish to give Anglican expression to their worship and mission to worship in the style and culture of their mother tongue and ethnic group. and be incorporated into our parish structures.
- Focus on **vocations** – both clergy and lay - so we nurture a new, diverse generation of leaders with the instincts and skills to grow new faith communities.

MISSION GOAL - NURTURING

We want to see all God's people, both lay and ordained, deepening their personal faith, becoming confident in their calling as disciples of Jesus Christ and actively living out faith in church and the world.

To achieve this, over the next seven years we will:

- Establish a **Diocesan Prayer Community**, encouraging all lay and ordained people in the diocese to say the Lord's Prayer and Diocesan prayer each day as a minimum expectation of community participation leading to an increase in both personal and collective spiritual growth.
- Recruit, train and commission **focal leaders**, to support local mission, ministry and growth across our parishes.
- Encourage and resource all church members to regularly participate in **discipleship development**, including participating in courses and using other resources provided through parishes and mission communities.
- Ensure the **#MoreThanSunday** programme is accessible and available for delivery in every mission community, to inspire everyday faith in everyone seven days a week.
- Ensure the **#ManDio Growing Faith** programme is able to support children and young people in confidently exploring and growing their faith in Jesus - in their homes, their churches and their schools.
- Continue to develop and grow the Foundations for Ministry, Authorised Lay Ministry and General Lay Pathway courses to ensure that all **lay training** is supporting our mission aims of Growing, Nurturing and Serving.
- Promote the vocation and ministry of **lay church officers** in our parishes and our other lay governance leaders, including Church Wardens, PCC Secretaries and Treasurers, and provide programmes of support and development for everyone in these roles.
- Establish **leadership pathways for lay leaders**, including PCC members and those supporting local and diocesan governance at all levels, to ensure that our leaders are appropriately equipped for their roles and leading with confidence and faith.

MISSION GOAL - SERVING

Serving is about transformation, changing lives and creating a different future together. This means being present for all, and providing pastoral support, especially to the vulnerable, deprived and excluded. It means speaking and acting prophetically for climate, trade and other forms of justice. It means sharing the good news of Christ through word and action within our most vulnerable communities, and deepening our faith and commitment through loving service.

We are called to serve the places in which we live, work and worship. As members of the worldwide Christian community, we are called to act globally as well as locally. We therefore seek to respond to the current climate crisis and to promote sustainable futures for our own communities and for all God's people.

Given the scale of the challenges, we recognise the need to work in partnership to achieve our goals. We will continue to work with our key partners, Greater Together Manchester, the Mothers' Union and the Council for Social Aid. We will also seek to work ecumenically, with other faith communities, and with relevant voluntary and public sector organisations.

To achieve this, over the next seven years we will:

- Grow our network of **Places of Welcome** by encouraging parishes offering warm spaces to sign up and expand their offer to ensure that our church buildings are available and fit resources for local communities.
- Continue to support our parishes in developing their work to combat **isolation, homelessness, food poverty and debt** and develop pioneering new initiatives to respond to the new pressures emerging in our local communities.
- Expand and deepen local engagement with **the Eco Church programme** run by A Rocha UK, by developing resources and networks for parishes, mission communities and deaneries as they engage across the five strands of the programme.
- Work towards net zero carbon by supporting parishes and schools to **measure their energy use** through the Energy Footprint Tool, and to take simple, practical steps to reduce their carbon footprint. We will promote access to information, advice and resources as they become available.
- Develop a comprehensive **decarbonisation plan** for our diocese and secure implementation funding to achieve net zero carbon.



OUR TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Our diocese is on a journey of major transition and transformation. The core aim of our transformation programme is to reshape the diocese to support our ministry at the most local level, to enable us to achieve mission and growth at scale and pace. This means actively reviewing all our existing resources and putting in place sustainable models of ministry to lead and manage the changes that need to be made to achieve our vision.

To achieve this, over the next seven years we will:

- Release missional energy and build capacity for growth at local level by bringing together the skills and talents of ordained and lay leaders in **mission communities** across our diocese.
- Put in place measures to ensure **clergy and laity wellbeing**, focusing on peer support, mutuality and building strong local relationships.
- Ensure that **clergy deployment** aligns with the priorities of parishes and mission communities and supports key missional opportunities at the local level, as well as aligning with our overall target for the diocese.
- Actively promote **racial justice and diversity and inclusion** to ensure the full participation of GMH/UKME people in the life of our diocese.
- Support our parishes with **generosity and thankfulness** to ensure our future missional and financial sustainability.
- Work with parishes to restore the payment of **Parish Share** to pre-pandemic levels and beyond, focusing on their plans for mission and growth alongside their financial sustainability.
- Support our most **fragile churches** in planning for the future, exploring options for revitalisation or closure and ensuring these are followed through.
- Ensure the effective stewardship of the diocese's resources, through the active management of our **investment and property assets** to secure income and capital growth.
- Inspire and encourage people across our diocese with achieving our vision, with a particular emphasis on promoting **digital communications** and building social media skills.
- Embrace, as a fundamental aspect of living out our Christian vocation, our responsibility to do all that is in our power to provide **a safe church environment for all** by promoting effective safeguarding.



WHERE WE WANT TO BE BY 2030

Growing

- The total number people attending church (Average Weekly Attendance) to grow to 31,500 – 1.5% of the population
- The number of people in the 10% most deprived areas attending church to increase from 0.8% to 1.2% of the population
- The number of children and young people under the age of 18 to increase to from 26% to 32% of our congregations – to 10,500 children and young people

Nurturing

- The number of people attending discipleship courses each year to increase from 25% to 90% of our congregations
- The number of children and adults baptised increasing from around 2,800 to 4,000 each year and the number of confirmations increasing from 650 to 1,000 each year
- Our church leadership as well as our new ordinands to reflect the diversity of our congregations

Serving

- 30% of our parishes to be offering targeted support to counter loneliness and isolation
- Net zero carbon for our diocese





Our Diocesan Prayer of Thanksgiving and Hope

Living and Loving God,
as your pilgrim people in Manchester Diocese
we thank you for the great commission
with which you have entrusted us:
to love and serve, and to bring
our parishes, schools, chaplaincies,
and all our communities
into new life in Jesus Christ.

Through your abundant love
lead us into your Kingdom
and grant us the trust to follow you;
meet our weariness, our griefs and fears
with your tender and comforting Spirit
that we may greet the promise
of each new day with joy and trust.

Teach us to pray in faith, hope and love,
that we may go out into your world
confident in your wondrous mission
and full of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Amen.