

## About Us

**Welcome to the Diocese of Rochester. A diverse and vibrant community of faith, we share the vision that we are called together by God to change, serve and grow the Church across the areas of Medway, north and west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.**

We serve a population of some 1.4 million people which is likely to increase by another 200,000 over the next 15 years or so, having increased by 100,000 in recent years.

Urban, suburban and rural, the wealth of cultures across the Diocese is huge. From this rich mix, we represent some of the most prosperous and poorest areas of the country.

Because of this, we both have some of the biggest challenges and, as we see it, some of the best opportunities for growing God's Kingdom.

We seek to be a Church that reflects the diversity of our communities both in our membership and in our leaders, and one that is a safe and welcoming space where all can flourish and be valued.

Serving this community we currently have:

- 231 beneficed and licensed clergy
- 440 people in a lay ministry role
- 215 parishes
- 90 church schools

We believe that all Christian people have a calling from God to know and love him more, and to serve others in his name.

Indeed, we are recognised nationally as a leader in lay vocation, particularly for our creative approach to the variety, scope and training of Licensed Lay Ministers, which is unique to our Diocese.

As well as a range of discipleship and prayer courses and materials, our Diocese has pioneered opportunities in Anna Chaplaincy, which has a special focus on those who have dementia and other end of life issues.

Numerous licensed clergy and lay ministers serve as chaplains, and in diocesan and cathedral roles.

Alongside this, we enjoy flourishing relationships with the Anglican Dioceses of Harare in Zimbabwe, and Kondoia and Mpwapwa in Tanzania, as well as an ecumenical link with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Estonia.

## Our vision – seeking first the kingdom of God

When Bishop Jonathan came to the Diocese in 2022, he arrived with the words change, serve, grow – three words he felt had been placed on his heart as Diocesan Bishop.

Much work has taken place since then to understand what these three themes mean for the life of the Diocese and our priorities, and to define what and where resources will need to be allocated to deliver them.

Through prayerful engagement and discernment, what has emerged is an understanding that as a family of faith our vision is that:

*Seeking first the Kingdom of God, we are called together by God to change, serve and grow with compassion, courage, and creativity.*

- Change is about the need for us to adapt in a changing world, so that our churches can play their full part in serving God and drawing people once more to faith in Jesus Christ.
- Serve is about the attitude we need to adopt if we are to earn and gain that cherished place in people's hearts and at the heart of our communities.
- Grow is about what God wants to bring about in us and through us, as people growing into the likeness of Christ, and as churches where people are being drawn to follow Jesus through our words and through our deeds.

## Our objectives

Within this overall vision, our key objectives are to grow *missional churches*, with *missional leaders* and *missional disciples*, that are:

- Growing a safe and healthy culture for all
- Growing younger and more diverse
- Growing spiritually and numerically
- Impacting their communities
- Releasing financial resources for mission
- Planting and growing new missional churches



We understand this to be a 'virtuous circle' in which missional churches encourage and develop missional leaders and disciples, missional leaders.

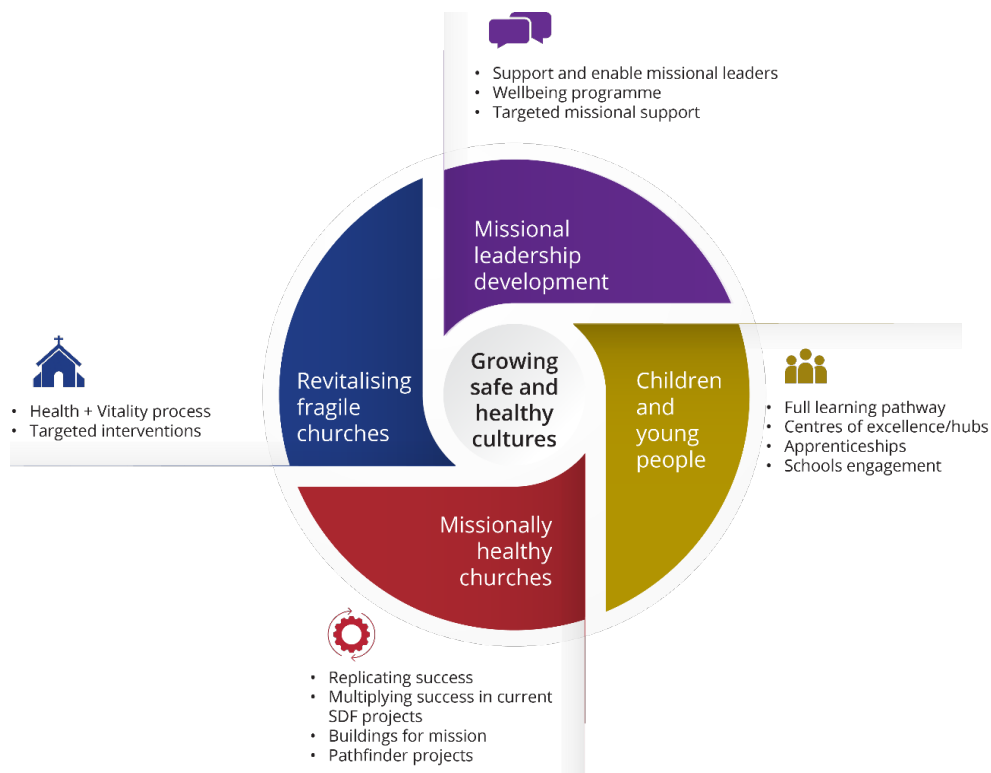
## Making it happen

In order to grow **missional churches**, with **missional leaders** and **missional disciples**, four workstreams will focus our endeavours and directly address our identified challenges and opportunities.

All are seen through the lens of growing safe and healthy cultures. This is because, if we are truly seeking God's Kingdom, then we must reflect its values of righteousness, peace, wholeness, and fullness of life for all.

The workstreams will focus on:

- Missional Leadership Development
- Children and Young people
- Missionally Healthy Churches
- Revitalising Fragile Churches



## A counter cultural plan

This is an ambitious, hope-filled, and refreshed Called Together vision, which seeks to support what is happening at the grassroots in parishes.

It's not a 'points of light' plan where only a few benefit, rather, it is an integrated vision for operational and cultural change across a broad range of areas and work to respond to the Spirit's call for our diocese.

Counter cultural to the general Church of England narrative of 'how much do we have, so what can we do?' our plan says, **'What are we being called to? Let's make it happen!'**

Every person has a part to play in this vision to bring about God's kingdom - lay or ordained.

Like those pilgrims of the Diocese of Rochester who have gone before us, and can be seen in the post war plans, we believe this is our generational opportunity to work together to respond to the Holy Spirit's call for this diocese.

As they were pilgrims on a journey building the Kingdom, and so are we.

Will you join us?

## Our Staff Values

**Compassion** - We recognise our people as individuals and we seek to offer understanding and compassion to each other, creating a safe and healthy culture for all.

**Courage** - We strive to do what is right, making ethical, clear and well-informed decisions. We encourage open communication and embrace obstacles as opportunities for growth. We take accountability, and when we make mistakes, we apologise and try to make things better.

**Creativity** – We understand the importance of thinking creatively about the way we work. Recognising the value in our diversity, seeking new perspectives and fostering a collaborative culture.