

A Strategy for Ministry in Cumbria

Background

1. This document presents a strategy for ministry across the county of Cumbria to be presented to the Diocesan Synod for the Diocese of Carlisle when it meets in October 2014 with a view to its provisions being formally adopted by the Diocese and enacted thereafter.
2. The strategy is a key strand in implementing the Diocesan **Growing Disciples** vision and strategy.
3. This strategy is shared with our ecumenical partners, the Cumbria Methodist District and the United Reformed Church in Cumbria, who will be presenting it to their respective synods.

Mission communities

4. This strategy calls for the establishing of **mission communities** across the Diocese of Carlisle, the Cumbria Methodist District and the United Reformed Church in Cumbria.
5. A mission community acts as an 'umbrella' for a number of Anglican parishes, their churches and, where appropriate, Methodist churches, United Reformed churches and other congregations within its geographic extent.
6. *Growing disciples* is at the heart of a mission community – it is both what the community is about and what will sustain it and allow it to grow and flourish.

Mission community leaders

7. Every mission community will be led by a **mission community leader**; this will normally be a full-time, stipendiary post for an ordained minister belonging to one of the partner denominations.
8. The mission community leader will:
 - a. build, lead, equip and train the team of local leaders (lay and ordained) in the mission community,
 - b. ensure a breadth of expression of worship, fellowship and outreach across the mission community,
 - c. play a key role in promoting mission and outreach,
 - d. teach and encourage disciples.

The form of a mission community

9. The strategy does not mandate a particular, centrally defined form of mission community to be applied in all cases, rather it is a flexible model to be interpreted according to the circumstances of the local context.
10. Within a mission community each church or congregation will be led by a designated, dedicated **church** or **congregation leader**; this will frequently be a lay person.

11. In addition to the mission community leader the mission community will also have a dedicated team of stipendiary and self-supporting ordained ministers and lay ministers; this resource will be utilised not only in helping support the existing churches and congregations but also in a substantially increased level of mission and outreach.

Forming a mission community

12. The decision to form a mission community will be taken at local level by the leaders and members of a group of churches/congregations in consultation with the local deanery / district / circuit / pastorate / archdeacon as appropriate.
13. A number of criteria¹ will need to be satisfied in order for an emerging mission community to become fully operational and recognized as such.
14. The formation of the mission community will require the approval of the Mission and Pastoral Committees, the Diocesan Bishop and, as appropriate, the URC Cumbria Area Pastoral Committee and the Methodist District Policy Group.

Pioneering ministry

15. Each mission community will be expected to engage in genuine pioneering ministry of one or more forms, targeting significant resource to that end, and to share in initiatives that span mission communities.

Ordained ministry

16. Although the number of stipendiary clergy is forecast to fall over the next few years the strategy calls for a significant increase in the number of self-supporting ministers being ordained and appointed.
17. Greater use of lay resources, for example in the leadership and administration of churches and congregations and in lay ministry, will enable ordained ministers to target more specialized ministries and to devote more time and energy to outreach and mission and to discerning and growing disciples.

Lay ministry and leadership

18. In addition to a significant increase in ordained ministry this strategy calls for a significant increase in the number of lay ministers, both to play a role in ministry at the congregational level and in mission and outreach.
19. This strategy also mandates a much greater level of lay leadership at all levels in the running of our church in order both to capitalize on the gifts and energy of the laity and to free up ordained ministry to exercise their particular gifts.

16 September 2014

¹ The criteria will be set out in a separate document, see the accompanying *explanatory memorandum* for an outline of what the criteria will be.