



A Time to Change Together

Resourcing Sustainable Church

The vision of the Diocese of Lincoln is to serve all God's people, sharing with them the transforming love of God. We've committed to become a diocese that is healthy, vibrant and sustainable. This means that we will be faithful in our worship, confident in our discipleship and joyful in our service. It also means that we will have the courage to change when we believe that God is calling us to do so.

In chapter 3 of Ecclesiastes, the writer tells us: 'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven... a time to tear and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.'

Together, we need to discern what God is calling us to, both now and in the future. We need to renew, refocus, and reimagine, as we seek God's purpose for His people and His creation. We need to join in with God's work, and the missionary activity of the Holy Spirit.

Together, through consultation and agreement, we have discerned that now is the time to act; now is the **Time to Change Together**.

Find out more: www.lincoln.anglican.org/ttct

Contact the team: ttct@lincoln.anglican.org

Phone the Diocesan Parish Support Office: 01522 50 40 50



Growth

Matthew 28:19
'Therefore go and make disciples...'



Partnership

1 Corinthians 10:17
'Though we are many we are one body, because we all share in one bread.'



Generosity

Proverbs 3:9
'Honour the Lord with your possessions and with the first produce of your entire harvest.'

1

CHURCH TYPE
SELF-REFLECTION



2

BUILDING
PARTNERSHIPS



3

COVENANT
CONVERSATIONS



4

VOCATIONAL
CONVERSATIONS





1

CHURCH TYPE SELF-REFLECTION

The local church and its growth, in all its different forms and varieties, must be at the heart of everything we are. Not all churches have to be the same or try to do the same things, but we need to work together to serve our communities. Conversations of discernment will be led by the incumbent or by delegated officers such as churchwardens to reflect upon the unique role of each church.

2

IDENTIFYING AND BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Churches, benefices, deaneries and groupings of deaneries will discuss how to build patterns of working together in Local Mission Partnerships. This process will be supported by bishops, archdeacons, rural deans, lay chairs and the Parish Support Offices in Lincoln.

'In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.'

Philippians 1:4-6

3

COVENANT CONVERSATIONS

Parishes and benefices will meet with the newly trained Covenant Pastors, who will assist each parish to agree a financial pledge to the diocese for the support of ministry. These covenant conversations about parish share will be phased meetings in order to ensure that the whole diocese is covered during the course of the year. These meetings are part of our generous giving response to God's generosity to us.

4

VOCATIONAL CONVERSATIONS WITH MINISTERS

Every ordained and lay minister who holds the bishop's licence will be invited to a vocational conversation, which will be an opportunity to reflect on her/his ministry, and will parallel the reflective conversations that will be going on in church congregations. The intention of these conversations is to listen, to support and to discern ways forward, for individuals and for the diocesan family of ministers as a whole.

WHY NOW?



AFFORDABILITY

For generations, we have been subsidising the cost of our paid clergy from our historic resources. As a diocese we have an unsustainable annual £3M operating deficit.

APPOINTABILITY

Despite best efforts, we have found it difficult to recruit paid clergy to some posts, leaving parts of the diocese under-resourced.

AVAILABILITY

Changing and rising expectations on clergy, lay ministers and officers such as church wardens and treasurers, mean that many people are exhausted and struggling to go on.



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CHURCH TYPES

Every one of the 622 churches of the Diocese of Lincoln, the buildings and the worshipping communities, is valuable, loved and a sign of the presence of God. Each has been nurtured and cared for, and can play a role in the Christian life of greater Lincolnshire in the future. Yet, importantly, each church is not the same. There's a rich diversity of tradition and worship, of reach and activity, of plans and people, of buildings and resources, and a balance of burden and blessing.

The first phase of A Time to Change Together invites every church prayerfully, realistically and with openness and energy, to identify its particular calling and what it sees itself offering in partnership with others to the growth of the Kingdom of God in greater Lincolnshire.



Using scripture to help inform your thinking about your church's vocation

Being a uniquely gifted part of the body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12.4-31: Imagine Paul's image as a body of churches. What are your gifts as a church and where do you look for the ones you don't have? What does a flourishing group of churches need?

Being the yeast that transforms the whole loaf

Luke 13.20-21: Yeast makes up just 2% of the loaf, about the same percentage as engage in our churches. But this ingredient transforms flour and water into delicious bread. Your church is one part of your community. How might your offering transform the whole into the world God wants it to be? What would your church's vocation be if it were yeast?

1

INITIAL RESPONSE

Each church's initial response to its future type and role.

By 30/09/21

2

CONSULTATIONS

How your type, role and full potential might be achieved.

01/10/21 - 31/03/22

3

AREA MAPPING

Determining mission partnership patterns of churches and ministry.

From 01/10/21

4

CELEBRATION

Dedication locally and in the diocese to celebrate each church's vocation.

Summer 2022

1**KEY MISSION
CHURCH - TYPE 1**

A large, flourishing, confident church, strategically located to serve a significant population and act as a resource/hub for a wider catchment area within the Local Mission Partnership (LMP). Capable of significant growth, multiple congregations, well resourced for worship, with high quality music, youth and family work, social action, area gatherings, teaching and mission. Able to cover its ministry costs and to contribute towards the cost of mission across the wider diocese. Good, accessible building and facilities. Spiritual reservoir for a large area, and an appetite to fulfil its role as a Key Mission Church for a wider area, working in partnership and collaboration with all other church types in its wider catchment area.

2**LOCAL MISSION
CHURCH - TYPE 2**

A flourishing, confident and well used church embedded in a specific village, town or area of a larger town, adequately resourced in skills and lay involvement. Everyone should have easy access to such a church. A clear sense of mission to a particular locality or a community, and a keen, prayerful and able active lay team with a commitment to growth and mission. Excellent and attractive welcome, regular worship and nurture, meeting diverse interests and stages of faith, social action and work with young people. Flexible and attractive buildings and resources. Commitment and ability to contribute financially to at least their share of the ministry they receive from the LMP collegial team, whose main focus such churches will be.

3**COMMUNITY
CHURCH - TYPE 3**

A church whose community or active worshippers cannot support the full parish church role of Types 1 and 2, but is keen to keep open with some regular prayer and worship, with a good lay team to help deliver this, and to serve as a focus for the community, and for baptisms, weddings and funerals, and celebrations at key points of the liturgical year where possible. Able to cover the cost of stipendiary ministry received from the LMP, with a team of lay people able to fulfil all that is needed to enable the life of the church. The immediate worshipping community will have as rich a spiritual life as they want, locally led, and gaining wider engagement and worship opportunity through links with nearby mission churches, and other community churches, maybe in a rich, collaborative network.

4**FESTIVAL
CHURCH - TYPE 4**

Churches that want to continue as places of worship, but don't have the personnel, resources or regular congregation to have the level of worship and prayer of a Community Church. They will still need enough budget to pay a share contribution to be part of the active church family of the diocese, and they will need lay officers of their own or shared with other churches. They may be open for private prayer, used for a variety of community purposes, offer baptisms, weddings and funerals as part of their LMP, and may be a location for special "festival" events - harvest, carols, songs of praise, mission activities. The status is not permanent - if resources and will and need increase they can return to a fuller life. Local people may seek worship and fellowship in other nearby churches.

5**CHURCHES
EXPLORING
CLOSURE - TYPE 5**

A few communities will decide they can no longer sustain the responsibility of caring for a church building. Though this is sad and painful, unsustainable churches cannot be artificially kept alive. Some of these churches have huge architectural, historic, landscape and spiritual significance. There is a process involving wide consultation, and a search for alternative uses. What happens to a church depends on its importance and condition, what provision can be made, with partners, to keep it for public enjoyment, and how well it is suited to new uses. Closure cannot be allowed to create a new burden on the diocese, but if you have no lay officers and no money to maintain and insure a church, closure may be inevitable.

By 30th September, every church community is invited to:

- Meet prayerfully to explore their vocation and Church Type
- Download and use the Church Types workbook and support materials: www.lincoln.anglican.org/ttct
- Ensure their church community is fully engaged and hold a PCC meeting to confirm
- Ask for support if required from the Time to Change Together team: ttct@lincoln.anglican.org
- Formally submit an initial response to inform the next stage: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/churchtypes