

Community of Evangelists

Our Role in Diocesan Strategy

Introduction

Our diocesan strategy document, 'Seeking the Kingdom' describes our vision of a diocese that is purposeful about evangelism, engaging creatively with local communities, becoming more diverse and growing younger. In Bishop Michael's introduction to Seeking the Kingdom he speaks clearly of the need for all of our efforts towards this vision to be underpinned by prayer. This vision documents sets out how the Community of Evangelists might support this work.

About the Community of Evangelists

The Lichfield Diocesan Community of Evangelists exists to recognise and affirm those with a ministry of evangelism (lay or ordained, part-time or full time, paid or voluntary). The community offers practical support for mission and evangelism in the diocese.

What the Community of Evangelists can do

There are many ways in which the Community of Evangelists can support our diocesan strategy. These include:

1. Pray: Saint Paul urges us to 'pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests' (Ephesians 6:18). All members of the community can commit to pray for our diocese and our journey towards our vision – perhaps by using the words of our Vision Prayer.

'As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find you, O God already at work in your world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as a people of hope.' (Seeking the Kingdom, page 4)

2. Learn: The Letter to the Colossians reminds us to 'let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts' (Colossians 3:16). The Community of Evangelists has an established pattern of meeting three times each year. These meetings can be used as opportunities to encourage one another – and new people – as we learn *'to speak more confidently about our faith, about scripture and about what Jesus Christ means to us and how he is shaping our lives'*. (Seeking the Kingdom, page 16). We want to be a part of the diocesan learning offer.
3. Grow: The author of 2 Peter exhorts us to 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3:18). We want to *'reimagine our approach to lay ministry'* (Seeking the Kingdom, page 20) and the Community of Evangelists has an important part to play in this. We are committed to growth and inclusivity and warmly welcome new members to our community. This will ensure a supportive network for all those in our

diocese who are called as evangelists. When we attend events such as Deanery Synods, we want to be clear about who we are, why we are there, what we are offering and how people can engage.

4. Go-out: Jesus tells us to 'go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation' (Mark 16:15). *'Building up our Parishes and Communities'* (*Seeking the Kingdom*, pages 21-23) is one of the three workstreams of our diocesan strategy. This is going to involve individual parishes trying new things and embarking on exciting projects. From time-to-time parishes may need additional practical support to launch something new – and the Community of Evangelists can offer to be a part of this, helping to 'equip the saints for the work of ministry' (Ephesians 4.12) – perhaps handing out publicity or leading prayer walks, or providing simple toolkits sharing best practice and ideas.

Next Steps

To be ready to support our diocesan strategy there are several things that the Community of Evangelists needs to do now.

1. Ensure that all safeguarding training and relevant checks are up to date and that we have a system for keeping everything up to date in the future.
2. Discuss this vision document and agree a final version.
3. Update information on the diocesan website and work with the Communications Team to share plans for the future.
4. Grow the Community by showing its value to the diocese and our diocesan strategy and intentionally seeking out and inviting new members.