

A silhouette of a person standing on a grassy hill with their arms raised in a gesture of triumph or prayer. The background is a bright, hazy sky.

transform ing
church

transforming
lives

our diocesan vision & 12 transformation goals

“ *Transforming Church, Transforming Lives* offers a vision of individuals and church communities responding to the transforming work of God’s Spirit, so becoming channels of God’s transformation in the world around them.

introducing

God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is in the business of transforming individuals and communities, and we have the joyful privilege of joining in.

The call to Christian mission begins, continues and ends with prayer – ‘unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain’ (Psalm 127:1). Prayer leads to godly action and growth in a humble confidence to share afresh the love and saving power of Jesus Christ, both *being* good news and *proclaiming* good news.

“Transform”

[verb: trans’fɔ:m] – to change in condition, nature, or character;

1. verb (used without an object): to become transformed.
2. verb (used with object): to effect transformation.

The fruit of prayer and godly action is a healthy, vibrant church in which lives are transformed and communities are enriched. This process, like our own growth as Christians, is often slow and gradual, but occasionally swift and dramatic.

The result of much prayer and discussion, our Diocesan Growth Strategy, *Transforming Church, Transforming Lives*, draws together all that we are seeking to do across the Diocese of Guildford, and brings a greater focus to areas of mission opportunity.

This strategy isn’t intended to add to the workload of hard-pressed clergy or church members, nor is it being advanced as a magic solution. However, *Transforming Church, Transforming Lives* does start with the conviction that God is still at work in the world He loves so much, and that it is entirely possible to reverse the narrative of a slowly declining and ageing church through prayer and godly action. Our vision is of growing churches, schools and chaplaincies making a growing impact, bringing fruitfulness, fulfilment and transformation in their wake.

listening

More than 1,500 people have helped to develop *Transforming Church, Transforming Lives*, through prayer, deanery meetings and a unique diocesan online survey. From this consultation, the following themes have emerged strongly from across our diocese and its wide range of contexts, cultures and churchmanships:



taking shape

Our survey findings...

- **Signs of growth** are associated with places which prioritise ministry among children and young families, and those which initiate new worship services and social action projects. Churches benefit from being responsive to social developments, most especially to the changing nature of Sunday.
- **Hindrances to growth** generally include a deficit of prayer and strategic thinking, a lack of youth and children's work provision, various financial, building and administrative difficulties and – most significantly – low levels of Christian discipleship and a lack of confidence in sharing the gospel.
- **Central resources** – according to the responses – should therefore prioritise church growth training, audit tools and consultancy, along with offering seed-corn funding to encourage new initiatives, especially among children and youth. Discipleship, evangelism and lay leadership training are also vital, as is the commitment to increase the number of ordained vocations by 50%. The establishment of congregations in new housing areas is a particular opportunity – and in all this there seems to be a growing commitment to learn from one another (between parishes and ecumenically) and to work together in prayer and mission.

**These are challenging times in the life
of our nation and the wider world:
there has never been a greater need
for a *Transforming Church,*
Transforming Lives ”**

Rt Revd Andrew Watson
Bishop of Guildford

founding

Five theological themes have emerged from listening to one another, and to God:

- **The Mission of God** – The Bible teaches that mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but rather lies at the very heart of God – hence the need to pray as much as to act.
- **Kingdom and Church** – Jesus came to bring the Kingdom of God to earth, and encouraged us to do the same: to pray ‘Your kingdom come’, then to work for that prayer to become a reality.
- **Transformation** – The New Testament uses the word ‘morph’ when it speaks of Christ being ‘formed’ in us (Galatians 4:19), and the word ‘metamorph’ when it speaks of us being ‘transformed by the renewing of your minds’ (Romans 12:2). Jesus pictures the transformative nature of the church in the images of salt, light and yeast.
- **Growth** – God’s creation call is to ‘go forth and multiply’. Jesus speaks of the Kingdom of God as like a mustard seed, and of the sower, who perseveres through disappointment and failure, and sees the ground yield mixed but, at times, startling results (Mark 4:1-20).
- **The people of God** – Both Old and New Testaments hold out a vision of a people who are filled with God’s Spirit and called into His service: what the reformers called ‘the priesthood of all believers’ (Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:9).

responding

Following the widespread listening exercise the strapline *Transforming Church, Transforming Lives* has emerged to encapsulate our mission as a diocese.

Transforming Church, Transforming Lives is a framework not a blueprint, encouraging a thousand local initiatives to work towards broader diocesan goals. It is primarily a strategy for the local church, though many of its principles can be extended to groups of churches, network congregations, chaplaincies and church schools. Its ethos is to create a culture of prayer, permission-giving, partnership, honesty and mutual accountability; and at its heart lie **three main commitments**:

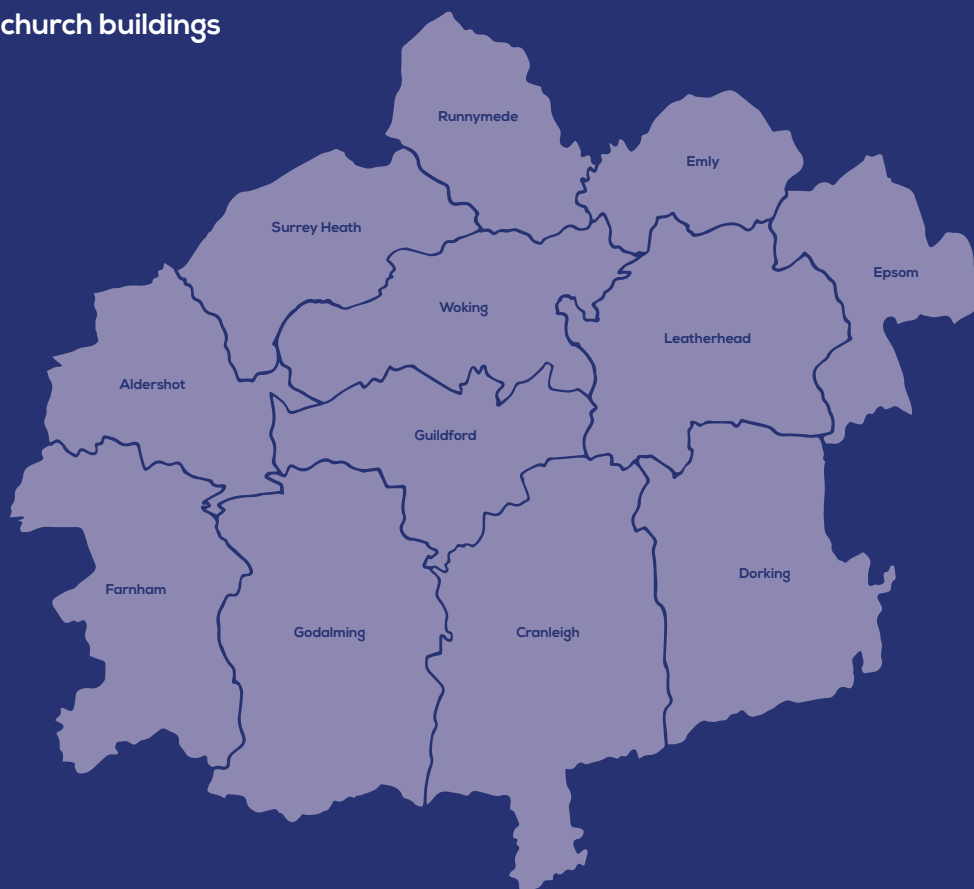
1. A set of **12 Transformation Goals**, which we all seek to fulfil together.
2. An expectation that every parish will pray over its mission priorities in the light of those goals, and produce a **Development Plan** which will be well-owned and regularly reviewed.
3. The provision of **Resources** from the centre, including support, training, mentoring, prayer resources and grant funding through a newly established Growth Fund.

envisioning

Our twelve **transformation goals**:

1. Making **disciples**
2. Increasing **believers**
3. Growing **youth and children's ministry**
4. Developing **lay leaders**
5. Recruiting **more clergy**
6. Cultivating **community partnerships**
7. Reaching **beyond borders**
8. Nurturing **education**
9. Encouraging **generous giving**
10. Sharing **expertise**
11. **Communicating** effectively
12. Improving **church buildings**

envision ing



goal one:

for every parish and chaplaincy to develop an appropriate plan for making prayerful, confident disciples in daily life

Discipleship and the creation of confident disciples in daily life covers everything we do. The vision here is of a community committed to lifelong learning, and to equipping its members to 'love and serve the Lord' in their neighbourhood, workplace, home, school and elsewhere. This goal places both prayer and confidence right at the heart of the strategy, and poses the question, 'How can we create a culture of spiritual growth?' Plans will be different in each context, but could include courses and small groups, as well as pilgrimages, mission trips, and a rediscovery of the spiritual disciplines.



goal two:

together to increase the number of new Christians of all ages through persistent prayer, confident faith-sharing, life-giving worship, and the development of a hundred new worshipping communities by 2027

2027 marks the Diocese of Guildford's hundredth birthday, and our target to grow the church and to found 100 new worshipping communities over the coming years signals a step change in the development of new congregations and so-called 'fresh expressions' across the diocese. This picks up on the survey theme of being responsive to the changes in our society. A new worshipping community can be of any shape or size. It can be clergy or lay led, and might consist of a new congregation in an existing building, a congregation on a new estate, or any opportunity to meet people where they are (from nursery schools to nursing homes). It might be a small missional community, a youth church or a completely new fellowship on a housing estate.



A photograph of two elderly women sitting and talking. The woman on the left is wearing a brown jacket and has short blonde hair. The woman on the right is wearing a patterned top and a pearl necklace, also with short blonde hair. They are both smiling. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a church interior.

making
disciples

increasing
believers

Diocese of
Guildford 

TRANSFORMING CHURCH
TRANSFORMING LIVES

goal three:

for every parish to develop a safe, attractive and spiritually-enriching children's and youth ministry, encouraging sharing of resources where appropriate

This marks a commitment to making all our churches friendly and accessible to children and young people, and to nurturing their growth in discipleship (rather than simply keeping them entertained for an hour on a Sunday morning). In meeting this challenge, churches might explore opportunities to work in clusters or partnerships, especially where one church is in a position to get something started in the church next door.





growing youth & children's ministry

goal four:

together to increase the number of leaders of all ages, who are called, trained and deployed in the church and wider community

This goal commits us to nurturing a culture of Christian vocation among all God's people. Churches which successfully connect with their communities are dependent on godly and able lay leadership. Christians also need to be encouraged to take up leadership roles in their secular workplace and the wider community.



goal five:

together to grow the number of clergy by 50% from 2020 and beyond

Our diocesan response to this national challenge includes an exciting commitment to provide an extra three curacies a year from 2020 onwards. Internships and a more proactive approach to discernment will be especially important in achieving this, as together we seek to grow a godly and gifted ordained workforce for the future.





developing
lay leaders

recruiting
more clergy

goal six:

together to increase the range, professionalism and spiritual fruitfulness of our partnerships with the local community, to help create a safer, stronger, fairer and more sustainable society

With a calling to be 'salt and light' in the communities we serve, this goal challenges us to be a force for good in our communities, with a particular commitment to the poor and disadvantaged. The words 'fairer and more sustainable' help to connect us with the whole Anglican Communion around the world, whose so-called 'five marks of mission' include responding to human need by loving service, transforming unjust structures of society and striving to safeguard the integrity of creation.



goal seven:

together to grow the number and depth of our partnerships with communities beyond our diocesan borders, in the holistic mission to which Jesus calls us

Recognising that Christians in our diocese have much to learn and much to offer, this goal commits us to forging connections within the UK and the wider world. Parish links are in view here, as are diocesan partnerships, mission trips and school links. This goal also commits us to continuing our financial contributions to the wider Church of England to support ministry in poorer parts of our nation.





cultivating
community
partnerships

reaching
beyond
borders

goal eight:

together to improve the standards and develop the Christian distinctiveness of our Church schools, wholeheartedly embracing our contribution to education across the diocese

Education lies at the heart of our mission as a diocese – our Church schools, of course, as well as our wider links within the education sector from nursery school to university and all points in between. This goal affirms a commitment to education and the opportunities it offers, which is shared between the parishes, our school, FE and university chaplains, the Diocesan Board of Education and the Good Shepherd Trust.




nurturing education

goal nine:

for every parish to encourage an increasing number of worshipping Christians to commit to regular, proportional and sacrificial giving

Recognising that Christian stewardship is one of the most basic expressions of the wider issue of Christian discipleship, this goal commits us to increasing the number of planned givers, and the level of their giving, so as to release considerably greater financial resources for God's mission locally and across the world.





encourag
generous
giving

goal ten:

together to streamline our processes and share expertise, so as to release fresh energy for mission

This goal encourages a missional approach to the administrative work of our diocesan centre, and encourages a greater sharing and partnering of resources between churches across the diocese. It includes a commitment to develop a bank of online resources, and to grow a volunteer consultancy service, helping to pool expertise across our parishes, in areas such as HR, finance, change and project management.



goal eleven:

for every parish and chaplaincy to develop effective communications, promoting a church that is visible, attractive and accessible

Recognising that communication is foundational to outreach and community, this goal will lead to the development of a central diocesan resource to help parishes improve local communications, and to share good practice across the board. The aim is to develop a more proactive approach to communicating good news so as to improve the local standing of our churches in good times and in bad.





sharing
expertise

communicating
effectively

goal twelve:

for every parish to work towards having church buildings that are fit for purpose in supporting today's ministry and mission

The aim of this goal is to develop facilities of a reasonable standard that enable worship, fellowship, outreach and community activities to be conducted effectively with proper regard for accessibility, safety and care for the environment. The diocesan centre will seek to support parishes in this regard through the provision of consultancy and links to funding opportunities.





improving church buildings

next steps for parishes

funding

Most of the funding for the local initiatives that develop in response to *Transforming Church, Transforming Lives* will continue to be generated from within the parishes themselves. For projects relating to goal six, the communities engagement team may well be able to point parishes to other sources of potential funding too.

In addition, plans are now under way to develop a substantial Growth Fund which will provide significant seed-corn funding for mission projects within *Transforming Church, Transforming Lives*. As part of this new initiative a significant bid to the Church Commissioners is being put together, with a special focus on enabling new growth opportunities to be grasped. The Fund will be administered by the parish development and evangelism team.

developing

1. Pray – Any fruitful mission begins with dependence upon God in prayer and so at the heart of our response to this growth strategy is a call to prayer for our neighbours, our communities and our churches. A variety of prayer resources relating to the 12 transformation goals are available at cofeguildford.org.uk/transforming/praying

2. Produce a plan – Each church, parish or chaplaincy is asked to respond to the transformation goals by producing a development plan. Planning resources are available online at: cofeguildford.org.uk/transforming/planning

For those already with a plan – No problem, please just transfer the key elements onto the response form. There is no need to reinvent it, but every parish is encouraged to follow the vision planning cycle of prayerfully reviewing, discerning, planning, acting and celebrating. For consistency we will talk about *Church Development Plans* (CDPs), but if you are already using a different name locally, i.e. Mission Action Plan (MAP), then it will be fine to keep using it.

3. Submit the plan – The first versions are to be returned by Easter 2017 and then updated at appropriate intervals (usually annually). Instructions for submitting plans can be found at: cofeguildford.org.uk/transforming/planning

equipping transformation



praying for transformation

God of our salvation,
you sent your Son to draw all people
into your abundant life:
grant that your Church,
empowered by your Spirit,
may be the instrument
of your transforming purposes in the world,
that all may know your power to heal and save.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.