

## Refreshing Renewing Hope Pray Serve Grow and Our 3 Priorities

### Introduction

The present crisis has seen the way we do Church change. Communication through social media has seen engagement rise, we are seeing new demographics join us, and for the first time in a long time we can talk about growth.

The other good news is that we have seen some real wins in the areas of our 3 priorities.

But the crisis has also highlighted the difficulties in reaching those off the social media grid and we face a legacy of financial uncertainty.

It is clear that as we move through the crisis and back towards whatever the 'new normal' will be, we will need time to reflect, regroup and REFRESH.

### **Renewing HOPE** Pray • Serve • Grow As we REFRESH our vision, we seek to...

**Deepen**  
our Discipleship and Evangelism

**Collaborate**  
in our Leadership

**Transform**  
our Lives and Communities

At our February Synod members adopted these priorities as part of our Refreshed vision for the Diocese, Renewing Hope: Pray Serve Grow ([details here](#)).

The decision of Synod was that this framework now needed to be turned into a range of communications products for different audiences; this process has been delayed by the coronavirus pandemic, but as we slowly move out of lockdown we feel the time is right to begin to do this.

### Purpose of Refreshing Our Vision

Hope is a defining characteristic of the Christian Church, founded upon the saving work of God in Christ. This hope, for the renewal of all things in the coming Kingdom of Heaven, gives meaning and purpose to the life of each Christian community.

To renew hope, then, is to refresh our Christian vision, so we may see the Kingdom come.

Since the introduction of the Diocesan Vision in 2014, Renewing Hope: Pray Serve Grow, there has been a strong commitment across our Diocese to these aspirations, not least because they are not top-down and directive but allow for interpretation and application in a variety of ways. Our shared vision provides direction and inspiration as we grow in faith, number and impact.

Now, after 5 years, the Bishop's Council believes it is time to refresh our Diocesan vision; while continuing to work with Renewing Hope: Pray Serve Grow, we are focussing in particular on the areas which will enable us to grow, allowing churches and schools to interpret and live out the shared vision in ways relevant to the local context.

We want to provide diocesan-wide support from the DBF and DBE, and reshape our work so that it serves the needs of churches and schools in a changing context.

We also want to answer a call for action on the climate crisis and, in everything we do, 'strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth'.

Through this, we will continue to build a flourishing Christian presence in every community.

## Our Priorities for Growth

Prayer, Service and Growth are knit together in Renewing Hope. We are all called to love and serve God and our neighbours. We have choices in how best to share our gifts and resources, and believe in creating space for innovation so that new signs of God's Kingdom can emerge.

As a Diocesan Support Team we aim to adapt our structures in order to encourage creativity and flexibility, both centrally and at the local level.

In listening to the needs of the Diocese over the last year, we want to work alongside our parishes so that our priorities for growth can be to:

- Develop discipleship and evangelism
- Encourage dynamic and collaborative leadership
- Transform lives and communities

While naming these priorities hopefully encourages focus and identification, much of the work that lies behind them is already taking place in churches, schools and communities across our Diocese. Details of each priority can be found [here](#). While this is a paper written for Synod, it does expand the vision behind these ideals.

In the 2020 February Synod, members celebrated the journey we have been on with Renewing Hope and affirm the next stage of our life together, as we continue to Pray, Serve and Grow for the glory of God.

Working together, the DBE and DBF will now be planning their work in response to these priorities. We also invite our churches, schools and communities to respond in ways relevant to their own context.

With your help we can communicate this refreshed vision in a variety of ways to different audiences.

God our Father, renew our hope.  
By the Holy Spirit's power,  
strengthen us to pray readily, serve joyfully  
and grow abundantly  
rejoicing in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen