



'A TOUCHSTONE TO REMIND US ALL OF THE VALUES WE TRY TO LIVE BY AND THE DIRECTIONS WE NEED TO TAKE IF WE ARE TO BE FAITHFUL TO JESUS CHRIST IN THE 21ST CENTURY'



SO NOW WHAT?

The future health of the Church lies in the vitality and imagination of the Christian community. And there's plenty of evidence in this diocese of prayerful planning for mission at parish, benefice and deanery level. The **Living Faith** vision is not intended to cut across local planning but rather act as a supportive framework for it.

What we have is in essence quite simple – and yet as difficult as bringing in the Kingdom! But it gets us on the front foot with the key priorities of holistic mission and sustaining spirituality. If we truly own the **Living Faith** vision, we can all paint something uniquely beautiful for God.

There are a number of publications – including a DVD and a Bible Study Guide – to help you explore the **Living Faith** vision further. The materials offer illustrations of how **Living Faith** might work in practice, to help stimulate your thinking. Over the coming months there will also be training workshops, events and other resources on offer.

To find out more about how you can be part of a bigger picture, see www.oxford.anglican.org.



BE PART OF A
be part of a bigger picture
BIGGER PICTURE



Diocesan Church House, North Hinksey Lane
Oxford OX2 0NB 01865 208200

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WHAT IS LIVING FAITH?

Living Faith for the Future is a vision for the Diocese of Oxford. It came out of a series of conversations all around the diocese in 2008 on a paper produced by the Bishop of Oxford in the light of his first impressions in office.

The **Living Faith** vision offers a strategic framework for the life and work of the Church of England in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire over the five years 2009/14. In essence, it's about sustaining spirituality and holistic mission.

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

It's not about rejecting the past and starting all over again. Nor is it a heavy handed 'strategy'. But it is about resetting the compass, and offering fresh direction. What **Living Faith** offers is a touchstone to remind us all of the values we try to live by and the directions we need to take if we are to be faithful to Jesus Christ in the 21st century.

It's rather like a palette of colours which each parish, deanery and board can use in their own way to create that work of distinctive beauty which is their particular response to God's mission. What we end up with then is a gallery full not of look-alike paintings, but of vibrant, colourful and unique works of art.

SO WHAT'S THE BIG PICTURE?

We've outlined the vision, values, purpose and priorities of **Living Faith** opposite.

VISION

The transformation of all human life under God.

VALUES

- **Contemplative:** attentive to God. 'Devote yourselves to prayer...' (Colossians 4.2)
- **Creative:** imaginatively releasing and harnessing all the gifts of all God's people. 'We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us...' (Romans 12.6)
- **Continuous:** rooted in scripture, faithful to the traditions we have received and seeking to give them fresh expression. 'For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you...' (1 Corinthians 11.23)
- **Accountable:** to God and to each other as we build for tomorrow as well as today. 'Give to God the things that are God's...' (Luke 20.25)

PURPOSE

To join with God in creating a caring, sustainable and growing Christian presence in every part of the Diocese of Oxford, enabling every Christian and every Christian community to live and share the love of God, seen in the life of Jesus Christ.



PRIORITIES

1. SUSTAINING THE SACRED CENTRE

This is about encouraging and enabling clergy and lay people to deepen their enjoyment of God, and to recognise God's presence in everyday life.

2. MAKING DISCIPLES

This is about the core task left to us by Jesus. It usually takes the form of accompanying people on a journey to faith by the intentional use of nurture courses, mentoring, or simple friendship, and then encouraging them to follow Christ in everyday life.

3. MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD

This is about recognising that in a holistic understanding of God's action in the world, social justice and prophetic witness cannot be put in a box as a specialism or an extra, but is at the heart of the calling of every Christian community in its own context.

4. CREATING VIBRANT CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

This is about shaping 'communities of grace' which exhibit the character of Jesus. Such attractive communities are genuinely hospitable, deeply engaged with their communities, and passionate about God.

5. SHAPING CONFIDENT, COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

This is about developing leadership using all the resources available to the local church. It will involve consolidation in some parishes and new work in others to build up shared ministry in teams, with appropriate training and support.