



Before the year draws to a close we wanted to thank you so much for participating in the **Lay Voices Conference** on 25th October. We very much appreciated the time and energy you invested and hope it was a good experience for you.

We had some brilliant feedback and what is evident is that there is an appetite for more information and a motivation to be involved. **Lay Voices** are indeed getting louder and will be significant in the mission of our future Church.

The Bishop's Council and the Diocesan Synod have received some enthusiastic reports and feedback following the Conference and, together with your encouragement, we have been given the support to run some follow up events in the new year.

We plan to send out invitations to the follow up events which will be held across several venues to help to make it as easy as possible for people to attend as well as also helping to encourage new faces.

Within this note there are some links to various resources from the Conference together with some snapshots and a Wordle created from your input and evaluations.

We also wanted to say a huge thanks for the responses to the questions about helping to find the twelfth Bishop of Newcastle. Your feedback helped to shape the survey that was circulated soon after as well as helping the Vacancy in See Committee with its ongoing work.

This comes with all good wishes for this Season of Advent and a joyful Christmas celebration. Many thanks for your support and contributions.

Carol

Canon Carol Wolstenholme
Chair of the House of Laity

Shane

Shane Waddle
Diocesan Secretary





The summary of the *table exercise* of **thinking** and **feeling** reactions is included on the next page.

A copy of all the PowerPoint slides from the Conference can be found at:

www.newcastle.anglican.org/synod

The actual PowerPoint file is available from Shane Waddle.

A collection of some of the significant bits of the Conference is on Twitter reference j.mp/layvoices

For those without Internet access please contact Shane Waddle for copies of the above.



Reactions from discussions

1. Feeling responses

Frustration at the fear for the future; We want the Church to stop **worrying** about the future and get on with it; To **renew** a sense of mission; **Despair**: A decade of no change? **Frustration**: so long to take decisions and act; **Passionate** about waiting to respond to despair; **Hopeful**: that the spirit will be with us; **Challenged**: for us to take our actions; **Optimism**; **Not complacent**; We feel **despondent** but not surprised about the numbers & how quickly they drop; **Depressed**; **Frustrated**; **Optimistic**; **Opportunity**; **Exciting**; **Overwhelmed**; **Depressed**; **Worried**; **De-energised**; **Tired**; **Unsurprised**; **Frustration**; **Uncertainty**; **Shocked** that lay readers are under used; **Splintered**; **Help!**; **Overwhelmed**; **Frustration**; **Time**; **Feeling valued**; **Frustration** at not knowing what is possible now; **Exciting**; **Hopeful**.

2. Thinking responses

Do not **nurture** our congregations enough, so **do more!** Use mission shaped ministry appropriate to each distinct congregation/parish; **Avoid** bureaucratic & procrastinatory responses, **be spiritual**; (Can you **really** have 6 priorities?); Don't **loose/dissipate** energy! **Increase budget** for training stipendiary clergy; **Re-assess use** of buildings and their viability; **Focus** on solutions; **Plan** for action now; **Listen, converse** and learn from others; Local Ministry development with **clear direction** from new Bishop; **Prayer**; Local response needed; **Every parish is different** and needs to respond differently to mission; **To be clear why** we want people to come to Church; **Money? Numbers? Introducing** people to the Kingdom? **Difference** between urban & rural; **Welcoming** new people carefully so they do not feel unwelcome; We need to **take responsibility** for leaving the 'doing' bit to other people; Maybe we are **all waiting** for someone else to 'start'; **Enthusiastic investment** in Local Ministry Development & Reader Ministry; **Empowering people**; "**Getting a grip**"; **Using the talents** of people in church; There is a need to have a wide debate about the **meaning of the word "Ministry"**; We have to **move forward** in hope and trust; We need to **develop a vision** of what the Church could be like in 10-20 years.

