

Mission and Ministry update to Newcastle Diocesan Synod - June 2025

1. Introduction

This update - in lieu of a verbal report - seeks to bring to Synod's attention current activities supporting the mission and ministry of parishes, chaplaincies and worshipping communities in the Diocese of Newcastle. The update framework is formed by the Synod's orientation around Seeking, Sharing, Sending. Please contact The Director of Mission and Ministry with any questions arising: r.whaite@newcastle.anglican.org

2. Triennium Orientation (2024-27): Seeking, Sharing, Sending

- A. In Year 1 of the Triennium (2024-25) "The Year of Seeking" our emphasis has been on discernment. On prayerfully attending to where we notice God with us and others in our lives, churches and communities. A discernment emphasis sought to orientate our diocese attending to the work of God, and our witness to that, rather than attending to various scarcities we encounter. The postcard initiative was intended to give people across the diocese opportunity to record and share their own attention to God's working with us.
- B. "The Year of Sharing" (Year 2, 2025-26) will develop some of the themes of the responses in the Year of Seeking. Particular attention will be paid to how we enable one another to faithfully discern God's work, and share it. These are formational questions that will develop the Bishop and the Synod's stated priority to develop discipleship that enables each to articulate their baptismal vocation as Christians. Where Seeking was concerned with discernment, Sharing is concerned with emphasising our Solidarity with one another. Witnessed to mutually enabling the gifts of many. The aim is a faithful articulation of what it means to be a diocese that shares gifts and responsibilities. Both the next stage of our Deanery Development work (begun in 2022) and the revised Authorised Lay Ministry formation scheme are key to this.
- C. The Triennium orientation helps our diocese reflect on how we might faithfully turn outward in mission particularly in respect of being a intergenerational and diverse witness to God's loving work. Thanks to the discernment work of parishes, deaneries, chaplaincies and our cathedral, we have identified three particularly strands of work to focus on during Year 2:
 - 1. New Worshipping Communities

- in which deaneries and parishes discern those initiatives that seek to engage with those not regularly part of churches in the last 2 years
 - To celebrate and be encouraged by the diversity of these communities already active across the diocese at the cathedral celebration on 5th July 2025
 - To offer from 2026 - in partnership with Cranmer Hall and Authorised Lay Ministry formation - contextually-shaped formational support for those discerning a call to enable these initiatives in the diocese
2. Supporting intergenerational work with children, young people and their families
- Participation for three Incumbent colleagues in a national pilot scheme to support further reflection on their work with Children and Young People (CYP)
 - The national “Catalyst” Scheme - led by Susan White - has just completed its first cohort. This scheme seeks to develop existing volunteers in their work with CYP.
 - Tara Russell and Susan White are looking to offer a hybrid (on-site and on-line) introduction “Children’s Ministry Essentials in late 2025. 25 participants receive funded places for this course.
 - In early 2026 the diocese expects to offer “Launchpad” a program intended to provide resources and support for churches doing all levels of CYP work and none.
3. Mutuality & Solidarity in the Year of Sharing
- To develop formation and discipleship support that enables a broad expression of vocations, in which our faith prompts us to notice the ways and places in which we stand with Jesus across our lives
 - To amplify and celebrate the variety of community-facing initiatives our diocese engages in as part of its witness
 - To support parishes and incumbents who wish to work with specific national initiatives (such as “Reconciling Mission” and “Organising for Growth”)
 - The roll-out of a Pastoral Supervision Scheme for Incumbents that complements existing provision via Ministerial Development Review, Sabbaticals, and Spiritual Direction that supports well-being