

# Fit for Mission: an introduction

The goal of Fit for Mission is to enable all parishes, church plants, fresh expressions, schools and chaplaincies to fulfil God's mission and to make new disciples where they are.

We are at the start of a six-year programme which will be led by your local leaders – lay and ordained. There will be continual communication and programme updates, through your church, as well as available on the Diocese of Liverpool website. For more information please contact your minister or area dean.

## Why do we need Fit for Mission?

**We are asking God for a bigger church to make a bigger difference, so more people know Jesus and there is more justice in the world.**

Fit for Mission focuses on 4 mission priorities which are foundational to this vision:

- i. Introducing people to Jesus
- ii. Deepening discipleship
- iii. Developing Christian leaders
- iv. Working for justice

The Fit for Mission programme will provide focus and support to work together to face the significant issues that hold back mission and growth. We aim to address:

### *Declining church attendance*

- The last 30 years have seen a 55% decline in attendance. We need to face that reality and act.

### *A lack of diversity*

- With few children and young people in our churches we struggle to be attractive to those who are the future.
- Our congregations are mostly worshippers of narrow ages, cultures, and colours.

### *An increasing admin burden*

- More and more is expected of fewer and fewer people.



- We can't ask everyone to work harder or better; our way forward has to be working together so more energy is available for mission.

### *Unsuitable and unsustainable buildings*

- Despite the decline in attendance the number of buildings has only declined by 6% in the last 30 years.
- Caring for buildings (that were built for another age) is a strain on finances and on time-poor volunteers, who don't have specialist building management skills.

**“Fit for Mission is about courageously addressing the issues that prevent us in mission, and truly releasing people to their God given calling for the sake of the gospel and of Christ's Church.”** Bishop Beverley

# What will Fit for Mission do?

## Create a growing and sustainable church

Fit for Mission will support each deanery in the Diocese of Liverpool to create their own future. There are six elements to this, and for each of them the programme will make available help and specialist resource.

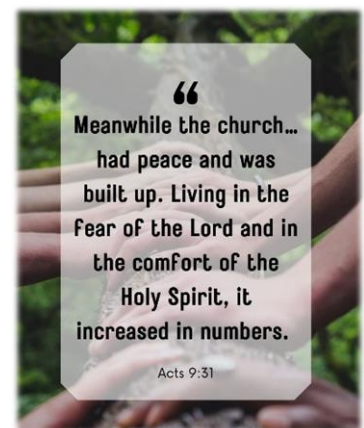
1. A focus on developing our **discipleship culture** through training and support, including delivering 'Cultivate', a successful Local Missional Leadership programme. Resulting in hundreds of newly planted worship communities and justice initiatives.
2. Creating **core support-services** in deaneries to support and resource your mission
3. Creating **missional leadership teams** of **lay and ordained** people over larger areas with responsibility for specific mission and worship communities.
4. Developing agreed mutual **support and accountability** structures for all leaders
5. Work towards each deanery having one or two **Larger Parishes**. Fewer parishes, but more worshipping communities and more justice initiatives. Less bureaucracy, more mission. With a local strategic approach, more diversity of worship will be possible.
6. Making sure **buildings are fit for purpose**, with buildings expertise available to assist in making good decisions on use, investment, or closure.

## How will we get there?

### Together

Fit for Mission is a programme of change from the inside out. **Decisions and actions will be led by existing lay and clergy leaders within each deanery.** Over a two-year period, each deanery will be able to draw on extra resources and skills to help create the specific growth culture and supporting structures the deanery needs. This is likely to include:

- A Change Facilitator to help the deanery plan and progress all the areas of change.
- A Team Coach to help the new teams develop their new ways of working.
- 'Cultivate'; a carefully constructed and tested step-change programme to envision lay leaders, helping them to uncover their call to mission. It goes on to support those called to plant and revitalise worshipping communities and justice initiatives.
- Help to set up core-services for the Larger Parish including finance, admin, safeguarding and HR.
- Buildings expertise to implement a buildings plan, as well as support to make funding applications for buildings investment.



Fit for Mission will engage the whole diocese between now and 2027, with a two-year intensive change period for each deanery.

**“By trusting in each other and walking together, I believe these changes will enable us to make an even bigger difference.”** Chris Daniel, Area Dean for St Helens