



A Decade of Transformation

A strategy built around
Three Bold Outcomes
for 2030



Diocese of Canterbury
CHANGED LIVES → CHANGING LIVES

‘God calls his Church to witness: to go, tell, and share what we have seen, heard, and experienced through the power of the Holy Spirit. As disciples of Christ, we are sent with confidence, prayer, generosity, and hope to proclaim God’s love and salvation for all.

Rooted in the gospel and shaped by deep listening, our strategic plan invites boldness, creativity, and faith, trusting God to transform lives and communities across our diocese.’

+ Rose

The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin
The Bishop of Dover

*Pupils from St Peter’s CE Primary School, Folkestone
interviewing Bishop Rose*

*Cover image: Archbishop of Canterbury’s Pilgrimage
Chartham, March 2026*



Strategy Revisited 2026

The Diocese

The Diocese of Canterbury committed to a decade of transformation rooted in the gospel, shaped by deep listening, and focused on sustainable growth. Our strategy ('**to enable the local church to share God's mission**') is built around Three Bold Outcomes for 2030.

The Diocese is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its ministry and mission, promoting a safer culture and the welfare of every child, young person and adult.

In 2020 a period of discernment began which is ongoing; listening to God and one another. This is how we identified our priorities:

- **Double the number of children and young disciples**
- **200 new Christian communities**
- **Every parish, benefice, and deanery showing signs of revitalisation**

These outcomes reflect our desire to see a flourishing, confident, outward-facing Church across our part of Kent. They arose from extensive diocesan consultation, parish-level discernment, and a clear theological vision:

Changed Lives → Changing Lives



*The Diocese of Canterbury's deaneries, archdeaconries and statistics, 2025.
There is a 13% increase in children and young people attending worship.*

Strategy Reset

This revisited strategic plan sets out how the Diocese of Canterbury will deliver these outcomes, combining missional ambition with financial sustainability and local empowerment.

We recognise that the continuing financial landscape provides ongoing pressures. We have many valuable and wonderful resources – primarily our people, but also in our buildings, and things made possible by the generosity of others.

It is incumbent upon us to steward what we have, and to seek support elsewhere when we recognise such additional resource will make our Bold Outcomes a reality.

The Diocese of Canterbury enters the period 2026–2030 at a moment of opportunity and responsibility. As the Church that traces its roots to the mission of St Augustine in 597, we are called once again to renew our witness—faithful to the gospel, attentive to context, and hopeful in the Spirit.

This strategy reset brings together:

- the long-established diocesan vision of **Changed Lives → Changing Lives**,
- the **Three Bold Outcomes** for 2030,
- the learning from **Three Things** (2025), parish **Health & Vitality reviews** (2025), and **Root Cause Analysis** (2025), and
- a renewed commitment to **local ownership, sustainable finance, and measurable growth**.

It sets direction for the next five years while establishing **2026 as a benchmark year** against which progress will be measured honestly and prayerfully.

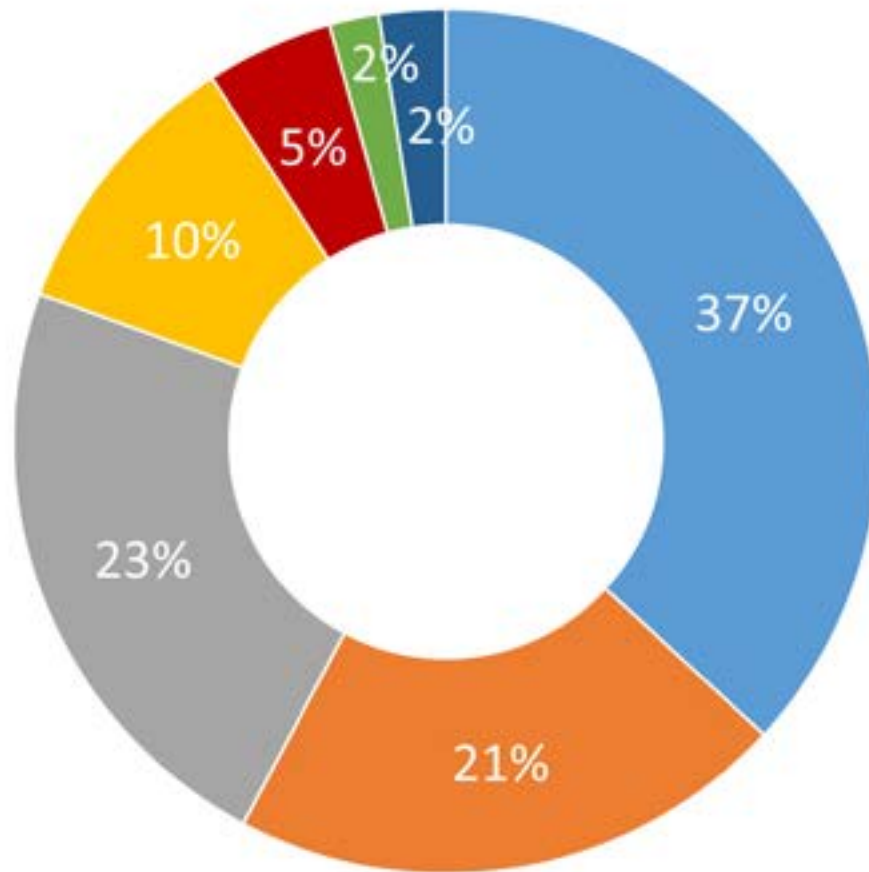
*“...we are called once again
to renew our witness—
faithful to the gospel,
attentive to context, and
hopeful in the Spirit”*

*Right: Youth-led worship at Growing Young Leaders,
hosted by St Luke’s Church, Maidstone*



Three Things

In 2025 parishes identified their missional priorities by sharing their 'Three Things'. This is what they said...



- Outreach & Community
- Prayer & Worship
- Children, Youth & Schools
- Buildings & Facilities
- Finance & Giving
- Environment & Sustainability
- Volunteers & Leadership

Vision: Changed Lives → Changing Lives

Rooted in Jesus' invitation to mission (to **make disciples, baptise, teach, and live in the assurance of Christ's presence – Matthew 28.19-20**), we seek to be, create and develop Christian communities transformed through encounter with Christ, growing and overflowing to bless the people and places we serve.

By God's grace, we aim to be a people who are:

- confident and creative disciples of Jesus Christ
- rooted in scripture and drenched in prayer
- living gratefully, giving generously, caring for creation, and sharing the gospel
- growing in number and in expectation of God
- motivated by justice and love
- open to the Spirit and ready for adventure

As we move into the second part of our ten-year commitment we make an intentional shift:

- from centralised programmes to **local discernment and ownership**
- from maintenance to **missional revitalisation**
- from uniformity to **contextual faithfulness**

The Three Bold Outcomes for 2023

These outcomes remain the non-negotiable missional goals of the decade:

1. **Double the number of children and young disciples**
2. **Establish 200 new Christian communities**
3. **See every parish, benefice, and deanery showing signs of revitalisation**

Together, they express our conviction that a flourishing Church is:

Younger

Outward facing

Spiritually deeper

Numerically healthier

Embedded in local communities

*Open door at
St Mary's Church, Kenardington*





Parishes as the Primary Missional Unit

Mission is discerned locally, coordinated at deanery level, and supported centrally. By 2030:

- Every parish and deanery will operate with a **clear, prioritised, and costed mission plan**
- Parish and benefice priorities (identified through the **Three Things** and other discussions) will shape investment
- Area Deans and Lay Chairs will be sustained through **Action Learning and peer support**

Our parishes across the Diocese of Canterbury are **especially diverse**:

- deprived and affluent communities
- rural parishes, coastal towns, estates, *and* major new developments
- the full breadth of church tradition

Our strategy therefore **does not impose a single model**, but must provide:

- adaptable frameworks
- shared theological grounding
- targeted support where need and opportunity coincide

We are data informed – both formal data and informal data. Using our various tools we can consider our various contexts (parishes and benefices) within groups that note the missional and financial strength. Each group can be supported by targeted support and resources.

*Diocesan Young Vocations Day 2026
St Paul's Church, Canterbury*

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28 : 19-20



*Crafts at 'All In'
Seasalter Christian Centre*

Existing Delivery Mechanisms

The strategy is already being delivered through proven models, including:

- **Resourcing Churches** (Margate; Maidstone)
- **Youth Ministers** (seven posts funded through SMMIB)
- **Ignite Communities** (contributing directly to 200 community target)
- **Focal Ministers** (supporting rural and multi parish life)
- **Church Schools** (105 schools as platforms for discipleship)
- **Social Justice Network** (embodying gospel credibility through action)

Partnerships

The Diocese has both new and established partnerships to scale what is already working and release further growth by:

- expanding youth ministry
- growing new worshipping communities
- developing revitalisation and resource churches
- strengthening leadership pipelines
- continuing to explore and develop models for focal ministry
- underpinning long-term financial sustainability

*Sea Baptism
Holy Trinity, Margate*



Four Strategic Aims going forward

Built upon our parishes' own missional action plans (**Three Things**), and taking what we have learned from our experience, our analysis of root causes, and the data we have for Health and Vitality, the Strategic Aims will identify clear funded interventions and projects, each with clear missional designs.

This will provide clarity for direction with clear links to how we will move towards the realisation of our **Three Bold Outcomes**.

*Community Larder,
All Saints Church Canterbury*



Strategic Aim 1: Children and Young People

(Serving Bold Outcome 1)

Children and young people are central, not peripheral, to diocesan life. The Children, Young People and Education Team, through the Diocesan Board of Education, already have a strong and coherent strategy.

We will:

- embed **Growing Faith** across parishes and church schools
- expand **youth ministry** through funded posts and local partnerships
- strengthen school–church–household **discipleship** pathways
- release children and young people into visible **leadership** and participation

Church schools, Flourish partnerships, youth ministers, and discipleship pathways form a **coherent ecosystem for growth**.

*Pupils from The Archbishop's School, Canterbury meeting the Most Reverend Sarah Mullally at her announcement as 106th Archbishop of Canterbury
Canterbury Cathedral, October 2025*





Easter Sunday 2025
St Luke's Church, Maidstone

Strategic Aim 2: Attendance Revitalisation

(Serving Bold Outcomes 2 & 3)

Alongside the interventions that are offered across the diocese into our various contexts, growth will come through **revitalisation, new worshipping communities, and developing a mixed ecology**, not replacement.

There are already several established pathways of support and intervention that many parishes can access. The first five years of this strategy has seen the development of several resourcing churches (two funded via the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board).

Key mechanisms will include:

- Strategic Mission Fund
- Missional partnerships
- Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCiG)
- Resourcing churches and focal ministry
- Ignite communities
- rural mission pilots

Church buildings will be used **prayerfully and imaginatively** to serve mission rather than constrain it.

Strategic Aim 3: Leadership (Lay and Ordained)

(Serving all Three Bold Outcomes)

Sustainable mission depends on sustainable leadership through both ordained and recognised lay ministry pathways. Informal leadership development will also be encouraged. We will:

- align curacy pathways with missional need
- expand leadership development for clergy and laity
- invest in youth, evangelism, and community engagement training
- support clergy wellbeing as essential to mission
- normalise collaborative lay/ordained ministry

*Ordination of Deacons,
Canterbury Cathedral*



Strategic Aim 4: Parish Support

(Enabling all three Bold outcomes)

We will build a culture of **mutuality rather than transaction** between our parishes, our deaneries and the Diocesan support team.

Key commitments:

- transparency in Parish Share
- investment in growth generating roles
- operational efficiencies
- stewardship and generosity initiatives
- external funding partnerships (including SMMIB)

Financial sustainability is understood as **missional faithfulness over time**, not mere survival.

*Left: Cornerstone workshop
Diocesan House*

*Lady Chapel Window
St Peter & St Paul's
Charlton Church, Dover*



What next?

A Call to Faithful Boldness

The Diocese of Canterbury stands ready to continue a decade of transformation with:

- a clear theological vision
- deep listening and shared ownership
- proven delivery models
- and a commitment to accountability

Changed Lives → Changing Lives will not simply be a vision statement, but a lived reality across our communities.

*Left: Pentecost Celebration 2025
Canterbury Cathedral*

*Images © Neil Turner for Lambeth Palace, Jim
Drew, Diocese of Canterbury, Holy Trinity Margate,
St Luke's Maidstone, Penny Lowe, Camilla Otaki*

July 2026, Diocese of Canterbury