

Ministerial Development Review

Reviewee Handbook

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1 Ministerial Development Review within the Diocese of Liverpool

1.1 Towards a theology of Ministerial Development Review (MDR)

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds. Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one look down on you." (Titus 2:11-15, NRSV)

The dawning of the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and the doctrine of unmerited salvation by that grace alone, is regularly linked in Scripture with exhortations to personal holiness and effective action. This juxtaposition, and its apparent paradox, is set out most starkly and most clearly in Philippians: *"...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure."* (Phil 2:12b,13)

In the wider context of the Church's mission in these days, we believe that the task for us is to embrace a confident urgency, built on trust in God and on a keen awareness of the tasks before us. To embrace this confident urgency is to resist two temptations: first, the temptation to ignore the sovereignty of God and to whip up a furious anxiety based on purely secular models of success; and second, the temptation to sink into a quietist complacency which absolves the Church's ministers of any share in the effective action of God in the world.

MDR takes its place within this theological context. By engaging in the Review we are not appraising one another's job as if we were agreeing a bonus, whether worldly or eternal. Nor are we focused simply on ministerial self-development, as though the role of the Church were no more onerous than to deliver well-rounded clergy into heaven.

No, we are aligning ourselves with the calling and sending God so that we may know the power of the resurrection and may co-operate with our Lord in recognising and welcoming the Kingdom.

When the national guidelines say that the MDR is to be "searching", therefore, the word is to be understood in the full context of that acceptance of grace, training in holiness and zeal for good deeds of which the author of Titus speaks.

We are most grateful to our colleagues who share with us the shaping and delivery of MDR in the Diocese for holding these tensions in their work. And we ask you, as you engage in the process, to hold these tensions too. Thank you for your willingness to do so.

This comes as always with every blessing and with our profound thanks to you for the ministry we share.



1.2 Principles and Overview of the MDR scheme

In May 2019 Bishop Paul set out several key principles which underpin the Ministerial Development Review (MDR) scheme within the diocese. These are:

- As the national guidelines make clear, an MDR is expected to be 'searching' and is 'founded on the assumption that all officeholders are responsible to God for the ministry entrusted to them and they are accountable to the Church and to one another for the way it is exercised'.
- As part of their personal discipleship within the Diocesan family, office holders will be expected to have committed themselves to the Rule of Life with its inner and outer journey, interpreted the Rule within their context and life and to encourage their congregations to embrace the Rule as an expression of personal and shared discipleship.
- Office holders are both encouraged and expected to be responsible for their spiritual and personal wellbeing, and for making those necessary demands and requests that will nurture this within the ministry they offer.
- Office holders should continue to reflect on the description of ministry in the Ordinal as well as on the specific hopes and plans of our Diocese, which are encapsulated in the "five numbers" (Appendix 4).
- The work of each of our office holders should be focused and guided by a role description that is realistic, challenging and held under regular review.

Ministerial Development Review in Liverpool, as in many dioceses, is an annual process for all licensed clergy. It is an aspect of the Episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Liverpool, and functions under his authority, and in keeping with the guidelines of the Church of England.

For all clergy under common tenure, except curates,¹ MDR is a requirement as set out in legislation.² Clergy who have retained their freehold are also strongly encouraged to undertake an annual MDR.

Clergy who have been recently appointed to a new post will be undertaking the Fresh Start³ programme, and it is recommended that they have their first MDR towards the end of their first year in a new post.

Clergy who are employed in Sector Ministry (Hospital, Prison, College Chaplain) or are in Self Supporting Ministry and hold the Bishop's Licence are encouraged to use the MDR

¹ Curates do not need to undertake MDR as the process for Assessment at the End of Curacy (AEC) meets all of the requirements for a developmental review.

² The Ecclesiastical Officers (Terms of Service) measure 2009.

³ A twelve-month programme for all clergy new to the diocese or that have moved parish from within the diocese. It is a transitions programme mandated by the Bishop.

process to help them reflect upon aspects of their ministry that might not be covered within their own organisation's appraisal/ performance review systems.⁴

MDR is a confidential process. The discussion is confidential between the Reviewee and Reviewer and the finished paperwork shared only with the Bishop, save one minor element, see para 2.4.

2 Preparation for your Review

2.1 The initial planning conversation with your Bishop's Reviewer

An email from Bishop's Lodge will inform you and your Bishop's Reviewer that your MDR is due. The email will let you know who your Bishop's Reviewer will be and how to contact them⁵ and will also include the paperwork for the Review. You should then have an initial discussion with your Bishop's Reviewer by phone or e-mail to:

- agree the date and time of your MDR Review discussion. The recommended time for the Review discussion is 1.5 to 2 hours.
- discuss the method that you will use to obtain feedback for the Listening Exercise and the selection of those who will be invited to participate (see Appendix 2).
- agree the date by which you will send the completed draft of the paperwork to your Reviewer before the MDR discussion, usually a week before the MDR discussion.

The paperwork you send to your Bishop's Reviewer is your Clergy Preparation and Summary document. Please note that you should also send your *objectives only from your last MDR – unless you have moved to a new post since your last MDR, on which see below and at Section 2.2*. Your Bishop's Reviewer will not retain last year's documentation so sending your objectives will serve to re-familiarise or to inform a new Reviewer.

Following this initial discussion, you should confirm the MDR date with Bishop's Lodge. **Please note that you have only four weeks to do this.** If the MDR date is not communicated within the four weeks, you will receive one reminder with a two-week deadline. If Bishop's Lodge have still not had a reply someone will be in contact with you to discuss the delay (please see section 3.4).

With an agreed MDR date and Bishop's Lodge notified you should do two things:

1. Begin the process of asking folks to contribute to the listening exercise (Appendix 2).
2. Set aside time to prepare your MDR paperwork.

If you are in the first year of a first incumbency or if you have moved to a new post of incumbent status in Liverpool you will most likely be on the diocesan Fresh Start programme. Normally your first MDR will be towards the end of your first year in post and usually the end of your time on Fresh Start.

⁴ MDR documentation appropriate for sector clergy and some SSMs is in preparation.

⁵ Bishop's Reviewers are allocated centrally; however, either the Reviewer or Reviewee may request a change of Reviewer by a discussion with Bishop's Lodge.

2.2 Reflection on your ministry

The purpose of MDR is to reflect upon the previous year and identify things to celebrate, lament and to learn from.⁶ This provides a basis from which to look forward to what God may be saying for the future, for your priestly ministry and your leadership of the congregations entrusted to you. In preparation for the Review discussion, you will need to make and take some time for serious and prayerful reflection upon your ministry.

If you are in a new post last year's objectives specifically around parish ministry will no longer be relevant. The Clergy Preparation and Summary Document invites your discernment in this first year of aspects of your ministry, emerging priorities and your engagement with Fresh Start which may shape and focus ministry objectives in the MDR.

To help you with this you should use the following important documents: the Ordinal, your objectives from last year's MDR or, in a new post, your reflections on your first year. Consider also your role description (including the diocesan vision statement ⁷) as well as the feedback from the listening exercise.

- When reflecting upon the Ordinal you might think specifically about the last 12 months, and identify two or three phrases that resonate with you and outline why they do.
- Review your objectives from last year's MDR: What is there to celebrate? What worked well? What has caused you to lament? What didn't work well or was frustrating? Have you seen growth? Did you achieve your objectives from last year? What remains left undone and why may things not have been achieved? If in a new post, what are you discerning, what is emerging as significant?
- Reflect upon how your ministry over the past year reflects our diocesan vision, the specific hopes and plans for the diocese as set out in the "five numbers" and the Bishop's Rule of life. (See Appendix 4 if this is not stated in your role description.)
- Reflect on the feedback from the Listening Exercise which will come to you directly if you are using Method One; for details on the options available, see Appendix 2. ⁸

Any Role Description should be reviewed annually and may be updated to reflect important changes in the ministry of the parish priest and the context of that ministry, including wider responsibilities in the diocese. Significant changes to the role description should be agreed with the church wardens in consultation with the PCC, in a team ministry with team clergy, with the area dean and signed off by the Archdeacon.

⁶ "In looking back there is an opportunity to acknowledge all there is to be thankful for and anything that is a matter for lament, and in looking forward to anticipate the changing demands of the role, identify future objectives and areas for potential development" (Ministerial Development Review Guidance Archbishop's Council 2010)

⁷ Older role descriptions may not include a vision statement; please see Appendix 4

⁸ If you are using Method Two your Listening Exercise contributors will send their reflections directly to your Reviewer

Where are you now?

This first question should summarise your reflections. Your summary will give you and your Reviewer a sense of this past year. One or two aspects may be touched upon or perhaps explored in more depth. You may want to note here:

- something that resonated afresh as you read the Ordinal
- things to celebrate, lament or consider as you revisit last year's objectives and reflect on the listening exercise
- how you are engaging with the Rule of Life and the "five numbers"
- your own spiritual and ministerial health
- where you are seeing God at work in the place you are called to serve.

Where do you hope to be?

From your reflection you should then identify the three or four key matters that you would like to focus upon in conversation with your Reviewer. These issues are entirely for you to determine. They may include specific concerns or celebrations in parish life and ministry; your sense of wellbeing and a sustainable rhythm in ministry, positive or negative; your ability to balance the demands on your time or perhaps areas of ministry that engage, exhaust or energise or those that invite exploration and engagement.

These three or four issues may begin to form into or inform your objectives for the coming year. But remember these objectives will be discussed, honed and agreed with your Reviewer during the discussion.

2.3 Looking forward

This section of your MDR paperwork will be substantially completed during the Review discussion and will firm up some key objectives for the year ahead under four headings which explore:

- staying healthy in ministry: your physical and mental self-care and wellbeing, sustaining the relationships that nurture you and managing the permeable boundaries of ministry
- how you are sustaining and developing your spiritual life and priestly ministry, incorporating the diocesan Rule of Life within this, summarised in Appendix 4
- objectives you discern for the breadth and depth of local church life and ministry, discerned in light of the hopes and plans of our diocese encapsulated in the "five numbers", including making and growing disciples, new leaders or new worshipping communities. If a recent Archdeacon's Parish Review (APR) has raised any specific issue for the church(es) to address it will be appropriate to capture that here
- consideration of wider aspects of your ministry not covered by the other objectives. For example, this may be perhaps gifts and skills you have to offer, particular areas of service within or outside the parish or things that will encourage and enhance your personal and professional development.

As you reflect and complete the initial *Reflection on your Ministry* section, some objectives may begin to crystallise for you. You might wish to jot down provisional, sketchy thoughts in the "a" sections of the four headings under *Looking Forward*, such as, "more time for reading" in 3a. You don't need to complete the "b" sections. They will be the focus of

discussions with your Reviewer who will encourage SMART objectives, as below and see Appendix 5. If you do write in the "b" sections please don't tie the details down.

2.4 Final reflections

This final section is for you to explore what support, encouragement and training will be valuable for you in the coming year. Complete the sections as follows:

1. Please summarise in advance of your MDR discussion any retreat, training or ministerial development opportunities you have taken this past year or so.
2. Please list any specific help, support or training that you would like to undertake to assist you in meeting your objectives. You may wish to flag up initial thoughts here and develop them during the Review. Any request for study leave, Bishop's Bursary application or Reading Week etc. should sit here. Please take the time to complete this carefully; only the information in this one question will be shared with Lifelong Learning to help plan clergy continuing development training.
3. Please complete this section only during or after the Review. You might note here:
 - any issues of significance arising from your MDR discussion
 - issues not raised at the Review but which you would like to talk about in confidence with the Bishop
 - a request for an early meeting with the Bishop should there be some urgency.

3 The Review discussion and follow up

3.1 During the Review Discussion

As the Bishops note in their theological statement, an MDR should be "searching". It should be an exploration of the ministry entrusted to us that is rich in "grace and truth" (John 1:14). Our Review discussion should be rooted confidently in the grace that calls us and give account for our ministry as faithful stewards of the mysteries of God (Luke 16:2; 1 Cor 4:1-2). The national MDR guidelines succinctly note that, "ministry is a gift and a trust" and that accountability "is about affirmation and encouragement as well as challenge".

Your discussion needs to be open and honest with appropriate space for both grace and truth, support and encouragement, honesty and challenge. Your Reviewer may use questions to probe more deeply into the issues you have raised and to encourage your deep reflection and learning, without the conversation becoming one of a counsellor or spiritual director.

Your Reviewer will use the MDR document to help structure your time together. The discussion will commence with your review of the past year and the results of your reflection. This part should not take up most of the discussion as the emphasis needs to be on looking forward to the next 12 months and the three or four key things that you would like to focus upon for the rest of the discussion.

During the discussion, you may find it helpful to make notes of the key points and possible future objectives. At the end of the Review discussion, you and your Reviewer will need to agree on your objectives for the coming year.

It is the task of your Reviewer to help you think through your specific objectives and to ensure that they are coherent with your reflections on ministry, your needs and the aspirations of our diocesan vision and strategy.

Crucially also, your Reviewer will help you identify SMART objectives (see appendix 5). Your objectives need to be realistic, measurable and doable. As your Review meeting progresses you can use the space in the "b" sections to make notes and after the Review discussion to firm up and finalise your objectives.

3.2 After the Review

Allow some time after the Review to tidy up and complete the paperwork. Then ensure that your MDR document is sent to and signed off by your Reviewer by the deadline date you have agreed together. It is important that the final Review document accurately reflects your discussion. Your Reviewer will sign and return the document, without keeping a copy.

You should keep a personal copy and send an electronic copy to Bishop's Lodge with MDR clearly noted in the subject field. Again, you have a deadline of 4 weeks to do this, so if you have not sent the document back you will receive an email asking for this within two weeks. If you do not respond the MDR Manager will be in touch.

As noted under Principles of MDR in section 1.2 MDR is a confidential process. Your MDR conversation is confidential. Unless you agree differently with your Reviewer, once signed off your MDR Reviewer will delete their copy of your MDR documentation. You retain your personal copy and at Bishop's Lodge your MDR document will be stored in your personal file. Your MDR will be sent to and read by the Bishop but the contents will NOT be shared with anyone else without your consent. The one minor exception, as noted above, is that training requests **only** as listed in Question 2 of *Final Reflections* will be shared with Lifelong Learning through the Bishop's Officer for MDR at St James' House (see 3.4 below).

You will be asked by Bishop's Lodge to provide some feedback on the MDR process via an electronic link to a brief online survey. Please do provide your feedback on your MDR and how useful you have found it. This feedback is looked at regularly and used to help improve the processes as well as train and prepare the Bishop's Reviewers for their role.

3.3 Meeting with one of the Bishops

Once the completed MDR document is received by Bishop's Lodge you will be contacted to make an appointment for you to meet with one of the Bishops of the Diocese approximately 6 months following the MDR. This is a confidential meeting (as understood in the context of section 12 of the "Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy") and the aim is to provide an opportunity for discussion of any issues that have arisen during your Review as well as to review the objectives that you set. It is also an opportunity for the Bishop to explore how you are flourishing as a human being, as a Christian disciple and as a minister of the Gospel and how your ministry is contributing to the hopes and plans of the Diocese and the wider church and community.

If you would like or need that meeting to be sooner than six months please make sure this is recorded in question 3 of Final Reflections and discuss this with Bishop's Lodge when arranging the appointment.

3.4 MDR oversight

Oversight of the Bishop of Liverpool's MDR scheme lies with a small implementation group chaired by Ven. Pete Spiers, Archdeacon of Knowsley and St Helens. The implementation group reviews the scheme regularly, monitoring the administration of the scheme, reviewing paperwork and process, identifying issues arising from clergy feedback and arranging for MDR training opportunities

Day to day management of the MDR Scheme is undertaken by the Office at Bishop's Lodge. Operational oversight lies with the Bishop's Officer for MDR within Lifelong Learning at St James' House. The MDR Officer is responsible for:

- overseeing the system for MDR in the diocese;
- advising on the appointment of Bishop's Reviewers;
- ensuring that appropriate training and information is provided for Bishop's Reviewers and those being reviewed;
- being available to discuss the scheme with clergy.

Contacts

- Ven Pete Spiers, Chair of the Implementation Group:
pete.spiers@liverpool.anglican.org
- Steve Pierce, Bishop's Officer for MDR at St James' House
steve.pierce@liverpool.anglican.org
- Nichola James, MDR manager at Bishop's Lodge
bishopslodge@liverpool.anglican.org

And finally

Many thanks for taking the time to review this guidance and to prepare both prayerfully and carefully for your MDR Review. MDR is a legal requirement for clergy under Common Tenure but it is much more than that. An aspect of episcopal oversight and support, the MDR process at heart seeks to help and enable clergy to flourish, as people and in our priestly ministry.

APPENDIX 1 An overview of the MDR Process

Step One: Bishop's Lodge will inform you and your Bishop's Reviewer that the MDR is due and send to you the Preparation and Summary Document and the Reviewee Handbook.

Step Two: You should make contact with your Bishop's Reviewer for a brief initial planning discussion: agree a date for the Review discussion, contributors and process for the listening exercise and the date that the preparation document and last year's objectives will be sent to your Bishop's Reviewer before the Review.

Step Three: You should inform Bishop's Lodge of the date of the MDR meeting within four weeks of the initial notification.

Step Four: Reflect, prepare your documentation and send to your Bishop's Reviewer along with the objectives only from last year's MDR.

Step Five: The Review discussion takes place.

Step six: Following the discussion, you should finalise and check the completed Preparation and Summary Document; send a copy to your Reviewer to check and sign; once agreed and signed by both parties you should keep a copy and forward a copy to Bishop's Lodge. Your Reviewer will not retain a copy of your MDR

Step Seven: Once your documents have been received by Bishop's Lodge they will be sent to the appropriate Bishop. You will be contacted to arrange an appointment approximately six months after your MDR. Any training requests (Final Reflections, section 2 only) will be extracted and separately sent to Lifelong Learning; your paperwork remains confidential to yourself, your Reviewer and your Bishops.

APPENDIX 2 Guidelines for the Listening Exercise

This listening exercise is a key part of the Ministerial Development Review process. The aim is to invite helpful feedback from those you are called to serve. For this to be helpful there should be a balance of positive feedback and constructive comments on areas of potential growth.

The initial email from Bishop's Lodge will include a Listening Exercise Feedback Form which you should pass to all those who agree to contribute to your MDR Review.

Please note that under Method One, below, you do not need to send the individual responses to the Listening Exercise to your Bishop's Reviewer. Nor do they need to be sent to Bishop's Lodge with the final paperwork after your Review.

The responses will inform your personal reflection and you may wish to note either the general tone or one or two specific observations in your paperwork. Your Bishop's Reviewer will invite your comments on and responses to the substance of the Listening Exercise.

Inviting contributors to the Listening Exercise:

Feedback works best when it is open, honest and timely. Therefore, for the listening exercise to be of maximum value, it is important that those individuals who contribute feel free to give honest feedback. Three models are offered which address confidentiality in different ways. Under Method One your chosen contributors to the listening exercise share their written feedback only with you; under methods Two and Three contributors share their observations with your Reviewer who will reflect back to you. The exact method for gaining feedback should be discussed during the initial conversation when setting up the MDR meeting.

In preparation for each Review, you should invite between 3 and 5 people to contribute to the Review process. Contributors are asked to comment from their own experience of the clergy person's ministry, in particular on the clergy person's specific gifts and contribution over the last year, and areas for potential development.

To encourage the most helpful feedback it is worthwhile inviting a selection of people whom you encounter across different parts of your ministry. Two or three people will be from within the church community; for example, a Churchwarden, the leader of the Sunday School, a Reader, a committed and involved member of the church, a person from the PCC. One or two should be people from outside the church community, for example staff from the local school or a local councillor.

Contributors will only be invited to comment on aspects of your ministry with which they are familiar, so it is not important that they have experience of all aspects of your ministry and context. Depending upon your role you should always ask the following to be a contributor:

- A training incumbent should include a curate;
- An incumbent should include one of any assistant clergy (e.g. self-supporting, retired and assistant ministers)
- A team vicar should include the team rector
- A team rector should include one team vicar.

The choice of whom to invite lies with you. However, you may discuss the selection with others, for example, with your Churchwardens. The Review itself may include a reflection on who it might be helpful to be invited to contribute the following year.

Method One:

Once possible contributors have been identified you should approach them to ask for their participation and tell them about the process and how their feedback will be used.

You should give each participant a copy of the feedback form along with a copy of your role description. Participants should be asked to read the role description and then reflect on the questions in the feedback form. They should complete the form and return it directly to you by the date given. This needs to be in time for you to read and reflect upon the feedback and incorporate it into the MDR discussion. You will know who has sent the feedback and the contributor will be aware of this. You do not need to send the contributor forms to your Reviewer but you are free to do so if you wish.

Method Two:

This is basically the same as method one, but that the feedback is sent directly to the Bishop's Reviewer who will collate it and then present it to you during the MDR discussion. Under this method you will know who is providing feedback but not who has fed back specific comments.

Method Three:

This method is more time consuming but can offer helpful insights. Using this round table method contributors to the Listening Exercise are invited to a meeting with your Reviewer who will lead a discussion based around the questions on the feedback form. Clergy are not present at this meeting and your Reviewer will offer you a summary of the points raised and these can then be used as part of your MDR reflection and discussion. You will know who is present at this meeting but not ownership of specific comments.

APPENDIX 3 The Ordinal

Priests are called to be servants and shepherds among the people to whom they are sent. With their Bishop and fellow ministers, they are to proclaim the word of the Lord and to watch for the signs of God's new creation. They are to be messengers, watchmen and stewards of the Lord; they are to teach and to admonish, to feed and provide for his family, to search for his children in the wilderness of this world's temptations, and to guide them through its confusions, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. Formed by the word, they are to call their hearers to repentance and to declare in Christ's name the absolution and forgiveness of their sins.

With all God's people, they are to tell the story of God's love. They are to baptize new disciples in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to walk with them in the way of Christ, nurturing them in the faith. They are to unfold the Scriptures, to preach the word in season and out of season, and to declare the mighty acts of God. They are to preside at the Lord's table and lead his people in worship, offering with them a spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. They are to bless the people in God's name. They are to resist evil, support the weak, defend the poor, and intercede for all in need. They are to minister to the sick and prepare the dying for their death. Guided by the Spirit, they are to discern and foster the gifts of all God's people that the whole Church may be built up in unity and faith.

- Do you accept the Holy Scriptures as revealing all things necessary for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?
- Will you be diligent in prayer, in reading Holy Scripture, and in all studies that will deepen your faith and fit you to bear witness to the truth of the gospel?
- Will you lead Christ's people in proclaiming his glorious gospel, so that the good news of salvation may be heard in every place?
- Will you faithfully minister the doctrine and sacraments of Christ as the Church of England has received them, so that the people committed to your charge may be defended against error and flourish in the faith?
- Will you, knowing yourself to be reconciled to God in Christ, strive to be an instrument of God's peace in the Church and in the world?
- Will you endeavor to fashion your own life and that of your household according to the way of Christ, that you may be a pattern and example to Christ's people?
- Will you work with your fellow servants in the gospel for the sake of the kingdom of God?
- Will you accept and minister the discipline of this Church, and respect authority duly exercised within it?
- Will you then, in the strength of the Holy Spirit, continually stir up the gift of God that is in you, to make Christ known among all whom you serve?

APPENDIX 4 Diocesan Vision and Rule of Life

Our *vision* is clear:

**We are asking God for a bigger church to make a bigger difference:
more people knowing Jesus, more justice in the world.**

Our *plans and prayers* to realise this vision centre on five numbers.

Two numbers apply to each one of us as disciples/followers of Jesus.

Three numbers apply to people in leadership roles in the Church, tasks we share together.

Disciples – all of us

1: Bring one friend

Bring one friend each year into the worshipping and serving life of the church.

10: Do ten things

Enact ten acts of service or points of connection each year that change the world for the better.

Leaders – some of us

100: Plant a hundred new congregations

Plant a hundred new congregations which draw new people into the worshipping and serving life of the church (over the next 10 years)

1,000: Grow a thousand new leaders

Identify and nurture a thousand new leaders in the worshipping and serving life of the church (over the next 5 years)

10,000: Build a body of ten thousand disciples

Encourage the first ten thousand people to commit themselves to the Rule of Life (over the next 3 years)



Rule of Life



As a leader in the Diocese of Liverpool you have agreed to live your life according to our rule of life. To live such a life is to be a disciple.

If we ask God for a bigger church to make a bigger difference, and want to see more people knowing Jesus and more justice in the world, then God will answer our prayer is by making more disciples – and including us in that number.

Being a disciple on the Rule of Life means being on an inner journey – to Pray, Read, Learn; and an outer journey – to Tell, Serve Give.

When we take the inner journey we respond to God's call, and we are not alone



In prayer, as Jesus tells us, we enter the secret place to meet the One he called Father, who draws us close, who sees what is done in secret, who fills us with life.



In reading the Bible we meet the inspired writers who point us to God, and we meet those who have interpreted their words over the centuries so that we can read with love and understanding.



In learning the faith we meet the people God has given us in the church, parish, school, fresh expression or chaplaincy; we meet them and learn from them how to live

When we take the outer journey we respond to God's sending love, and we are not alone



In telling of Jesus we meet our friends who do not know him, as one by one we bring them to meet him for themselves, to know his love for them, and to be led by Him to his Father, their Father.



In serving others we meet their needs as we meet the people themselves, connecting with them in the struggle for justice and dignity, doing the many things God gives us to do with and for them to help and love them more.



In giving our lives we take our place among the hundreds of millions of people who bear the name of Christ worldwide, and among the more than sixty thousand people who are actively connected to our diocese.

For more information and support to follow the Rule of Life sign up at www.ruleoflife.org.uk

APPENDIX 5 **Setting SMART Objectives**

The latter part of the discussion involves the setting of objectives for the coming year. This is not simply a business planning exercise, but an opportunity to listen to God and reflect upon what He may be saying about the development of ministry for the future.

Because everything we do is ultimately an expression of “the hope that is in us” (1 Peter 3.15) it is important to remember that planning and the setting of objectives leave room for God to change, challenge and surprise us. Intercessors are those who pray as well as plan the future into being and our strategic initiatives should always make space for the energies of God and the outpourings of the Spirit (Romans 12.4) that foster virtue, hope and justice.

During your conversation, you will need to ensure there is enough time for a full discussion about the objectives and be sure to consider what has emerged in the conversation. You might want to keep a running list during the discussion of possible objectives and this might act as a starting point once you are deciding on objectives, or which can be added to their list.

Remember to ensure that at least one objective is about your well-being. You should start by identifying this particular objective.

Good objectives are SMART. For the objectives to be of greatest use it is important that they are:

S pecific
M easurable
A chieveable
R ealistic
T ime set

Is the objective specific?

The objective “*Get the church to think about mission in the coming year*” is not specific and is really rather vague. It might be better to try to define what specifically about mission you want the church to think about. What would you like the Church to focus upon? Are you planning to talk about mission or engage in mission activity? It might be better to write such an objective as:

*“Preach two sermons in May about God’s Mission” or
“Talk with the PCC in June with a view to setting up a Mission Shaped Church course for next autumn”.*

Is the objective measurable?

The alternatives given above are measurable and it is easy to know if you have preached the sermons or spoken to the PCC and set up the course for the following autumn.

Is the objective achievable?

With the original objective it would be possible to do almost anything related to mission in the coming year and so achieve the objective. However, how will you know if you have achieved what you wanted to achieve when you first identified mission as an objective?

Is the objective realistic?

The objective needs to be realistic within the time and resources that are available. However, room must be made for the God of miracles to surprise us! Is God calling you to set an objective that stretches your faith and perhaps the faith of the church?

Does the objective have a time frame?

The objective should be time-specific as far as possible. A year is a long time, and if we allow a year to achieve something it is always easy to put it off. Also, some objectives may be so big that they would need to be broken down into a series of smaller steps, each with their own time frame. For example:

"Try to get more time for personal study and family life in the next year"

It might be better to try to identify a series of smaller steps such as;

- Within the next month: To set Friday as my day off and to let the PCC and congregation know.
- Contact Lifelong Learning and book onto the next available Time Wisdom for Ministry course.
- Within the next month contact Lifelong Learning to discuss the arrangements for study leave to be taken next year.
- Discuss with my family our next holiday and book it within the next two months.
- Select and purchase one new book dealing with developments in Old Testament theology within the next month.
- Identify and schedule 2 hours a week in my diary for the next 3 months to read and think about the contents of the book.
- Within the next month: Contact Lifelong Learning to ask about any study days that will help develop my knowledge of Theology of Mission.

Once you have agreed the objectives for the coming year, you need to write them into the final two pages of document.

Just as a long journey starts with a single step, it is worth identifying what step you will take first. This should be included on the form.

It is helpful to identify who, if anyone, you should talk to or seek advice from in helping you to achieve your objectives.