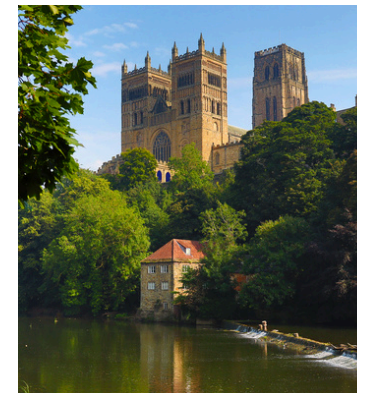
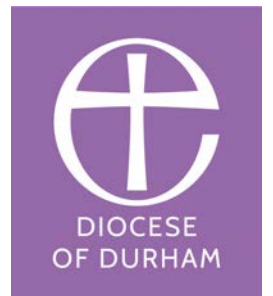


# Bishop of Durham

## Statement of Needs





*Petertide Deacon Ordinations, Durham Cathedral (2023)*

## CONTENTS

- 3 Welcome
- 4 Vacancy Prayer: Children's Council
- 5 The Region of Durham Diocese
- 10 Durham Diocese Today
- 19 Our Transformation Journey
- 35 Challenges & Foundations
- 41 Role Specification
- 42 Person Specification
- 43 Vacancy Prayer

# | WELCOME

We are praying for God to lead us all as we seek the next Bishop of Durham.

In this document, we want to share some key information about our Diocese, our mission and our ongoing transformation. We want to be transparent about the challenges we are seeking to address and the foundations on which we think we can build. All these flow into the final part of this document, which is our role and person specification for the next Bishop of Durham.

In preparing this document, the Vacancy in See Committee has reflected on the extensive breadth of responses that have been made during the diocesan- wide consultation process.

We pray that what we are sharing will fire the heart of the person God is calling to be the next Bishop of Durham.

As a Vacancy in See Committee, we will be praying for all who find themselves part of the discernment process.

April 2024



*Palm Sunday at St. Paul's Church, Spennymoor (2024)*



[Watch video](#)

The Church of England from the Tyne to  
the Tees and the Dales to the Sea, blessing  
our country in Jesus' name the  
of the Diocese of Durham



## VACANCY PRAYER: THE CHILDREN'S COUNCIL

Dear God,

As we look for a new Bishop of Durham, we pray that you would help us find someone who can lead our Diocese and help people get closer to God. We pray for a new Bishop who is caring, kind and a good listener. We give thanks for everyone in our Diocese of Durham and pray you will help us to trust in your plan for our future together.

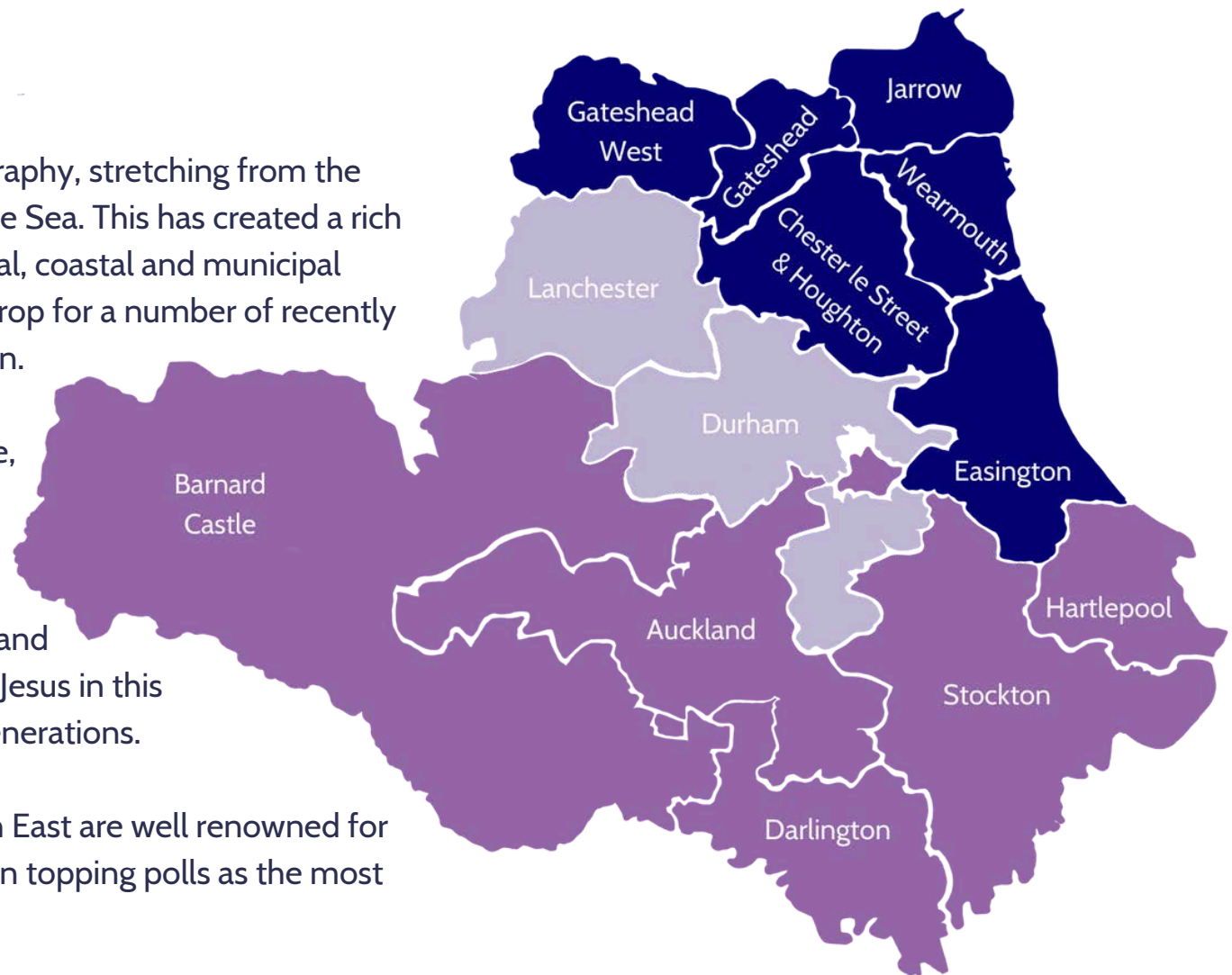
Amen

# OUR GEOGRAPHY & HERITAGE

Durham Diocese is an area of varied geography, stretching from the Tyne to the Tees and from the Dales to the Sea. This has created a rich variety of worshipping communities in rural, coastal and municipal settings. These settings provide the backdrop for a number of recently devised pilgrimage routes across the region.

The Diocese has a proud Christian heritage, with a history spanning more than a millennium, which is reflected in our traditions, the “seniority” of the Bishop of Durham within the Church of England, and our attitude: continuing to faithfully serve Jesus in this modern age as we have done for many generations.

The communities and people of the North East are well renowned for their friendliness, the familiar accents often topping polls as the most approachable in England.



Auckland Deaneries



Sunderland Deaneries



Durham Deaneries



Penshaw Monument, Northern Saints Trail



Beamish Open-Air Museum, Stanley



Weardale Valley, North Pennines



Angel of the North, Gateshead



The Herd Groyne Lighthouse,  
South Shields,



Infinity Bridge, Stockton on Tees



Northern Spire Bridge, Sunderland



Hartlepool Marina

From the Tyne to the Tees,  
the Dales to the Sea



## OUR COMMUNITIES

Durham Diocese has several significant population centres including Sunderland, Durham, Darlington, Stockton and Gateshead. There are many rural communities and many post-industrial communities, the majority of which are former mining towns. Many of our smaller post-industrial communities tend to be close-knit.

Many of our communities face real issues of deprivation – in all its guises. Over half of the parishes in the Diocese serve communities having the lowest 20% index of multiple deprivation (IMD) nationally, a third are in the lowest 10%. The impact of this is experienced across all facets of family and community life. Health inequalities, mortality rates, child poverty, unemployment and adequate housing are all very real and stark challenges for our communities. The [NE Child Poverty Commission's February 2024 report "No Time to Wait"](#) is a sombre account of the experiences facing our region's children.

In spite of these challenges, or perhaps because of them, we have incredibly strong communities in the Diocese, with people going above and beyond to serve their neighbours as they would wish to be served.

## OUR REGION

There are two universities wholly within Durham Diocese - Durham and Sunderland - as well as Teesside University having one campus in Darlington; each university has 22,000, 26,000 and 1,200 students respectively. Each institution has a distinct character. All present varied opportunities to help young people from across the country and wider world to grow in faith.

There are four prisons located within the Diocese (housing just under 3,000 men and over 300 women). There is a real opportunity to change prisoners' lives and facilitate the flourishing of their faith through the activities of the chaplaincy teams. The Diocese also has an immigration removal centre; during 2024, this will transition to holding 135 men from its current capacity of 85 women.



*University of Sunderland Friendship Group's Wellbeing Walk (2024)*



*Billingham's Remembrance Sunday Parade (2023)*



The region has a strong recreational and sport interest, which attracts people from out of the region and offers employment to those within.

There are many venues which offer cultural experiences to the residents of the Diocese and which attract people from further afield, such as the Bowes Museum, the Glasshouse (formerly the Sage), Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Beamish Museum and the museums, galleries and events managed by the Auckland Project. Several sites are tourist centres including Durham City.





## **DURHAM DIOCESE TODAY**

In this section, we aim to set out some of the data behind the realities of church life in Durham Diocese today. Whilst it is not always a comfortable read, and data is only one facet of our recent story, it does form part of the basis for our thinking about how we are being called to be God's people in the Diocese over the next few years. Our response to that calling, against the current backdrop, is explored further in the document.

## OUR WORSHIPPING COMMUNITIES

Durham Diocese is home to over 1,475,000 people, with 15,300 people being members of Church of England worshipping communities. The Diocese, like all dioceses, was affected by Covid-19; however, recent data suggests that our worshipping communities are not recovering at the same rate as others when compared with the national trends. This comes after many years of congregational decline prior to Covid-19.

The Diocese has 207 parishes (169 benefices) with 258 churches, of these a third have a usual Sunday attendance of fewer than 20. Modelling has suggested that at recent rates of congregation decline fewer than 100 churches are likely to have 20 or more gathering for Sunday worship by 2029.



1350th Venerable Bede anniversary, St. Paul's Jarrow (2023)



Good Friday Act of Witness, Churches Together in Darlington (2023)



*The Pulse termly youth event, Durham Cathedral (2022)*

Despite considerable focus on children and young people in recent years, a survey in 2022 of our parishes identified that:

- Only 5 churches have 5 or more teenagers regularly in Sunday worship
- Over 60 churches have no children of any age regularly in Sunday worship
- Over 40% of churches who responded did not provide any additional provision (weekly or monthly) for children and young people

Yet there are pockets of excellent children and young people's work and these are key to our future plans.

In many of the post-industrial communities occasional offices remain a notable component of parish ministry.

# OUR SCHOOLS

Durham Diocese has 57 Church of England Schools (50 primary, 2 junior and 5 secondary). A Joint Education Team (JET), with a reputation for excellence in the services and training it provides, supports both Durham and Newcastle Dioceses. The Durham Board of Education is unincorporated and operates as a statutory committee of the Diocesan Board of Finance (DDBF).

The landscape against which education is delivered continues to shift: approximately half of our schools are now within Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), including the Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust which has schools in both Durham and Newcastle Dioceses. Within the Diocese of Durham, there are four Church of England MATs, one of which is a Mixed MAT, as well as one empty MAT and two Single Academy Trusts (SATs). All of our trusts actively welcome non-Church of England Schools; the overarching governance structure is designed to protect the ethos of both Church and non-Church Schools. Our family of schools across the Diocese also contains eight voluntary aided schools and 15 voluntary controlled schools. Our schools vary, particularly in size, with immense pressures on our small schools who serve our most rural communities.



*St. Mary's CofE Primary School sing at Y6 Leavers' Service (2023)*



*Holy Trinity Academy - Christian Aid's Global Neighbours Scheme Bronze Award (2023)*



Inspection outcomes continue to be extremely strong across the Diocese for both Ofsted and SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspections. At the end of 2023, 98% of schools are outstanding or good (Ofsted) and 98% of church schools are excellent or good under the previous framework or “living up to their expectation as a church school” (SIAMS). Since September, all of our inspected Church Schools have been judged as “living up to their foundation as a church school”.

Many of our schools are experiencing challenges with attendance (particularly since Covid-19). There is a high focus on supporting those struggling to attend, particularly those struggling financially, the disadvantaged and vulnerable. The annual Year 6 Leavers’ Services held in the Cathedral each summer welcome over 2,000 children to celebrate the end of their primary school journey, with prayer spaces led by older pupils from our five secondary schools. In addition, we hold at least two annual education conferences, bringing together staff and governors.

*Y6 Leavers’ Service at Durham Cathedral (2023)*



## | SAFEGUARDING

For Durham Diocese, safeguarding is one of our highest priorities. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and we are committed to ensuring that our churches, buildings and activities are safe and welcoming places for all. The [PCR2 report \(October 2022\)](#) and [accompanying action plan](#) has been embraced and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP) have monitored the progress of the implementation of the recommendations.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Team (which comprises 3 professional staff in addition to administrative support) works with parishes to assess and manage risks, seeking to safely include rather than exclude. There are strong links and co-operation between the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and the Cathedral, which has its own Cathedral Safeguarding Officer. The Cathedral received a positive SCIE audit in 2022. The Diocese and Cathedral are working together to prepare for an INEQE safeguarding audit in May 2025.



*The LINK - Lesotho*



*Venerable Bede CE Academy visit Lesotho (2018)*

## OUR GLOBAL LINKS

Durham Lesotho Link: Since 1986, the Dioceses of Durham and Lesotho have enjoyed a thriving relationship which is continually evolving, pioneering new and innovative projects. Within this relationship the Durham-Lesotho Diocesan LINK is a partnership between two independent Christian charitable organisations with one based in each country. Our Basotho colleagues manage and develop the 'LINK' - a residential resource centre specialising in education, training and outdoor activities in Lesotho. The Durham Link primarily supports the Lesotho Link's work - spiritually, practically and financially. There are strong links with some of our secondary schools who, pre-pandemic, regularly visited the schools and supported the child-headed households. We hope to be able to visit again soon.

Partnerships on a less formal basis also exist with the German Lutheran Nordkirche Diocese (North East Germany) and the Romanian Orthodox Church in Alba Iulia (Western Romania).



# OUR RESOURCES – PEOPLE

Durham Diocese has a steady development of candidates in training for ordained ministry, with high national panel acceptance rates. In recent years, we have become an “exporting” diocese, though this trend may not be maintained over the next few years as candidate numbers decreased during the Covid-19 years.

In terms of becoming younger and more diverse, we have a consistent flow of young candidates, the majority of whom engage with and benefit from the Ministry Experience Volunteer (MEV) Scheme in the Diocese.

The Diocese also has a reliable flow of licensed lay vocations. We continue to look to broaden the offer by way of lay training opportunities. Interest in Licensed Lay Ministry (LLM) and Authorised Lay Ministry (ALM) has remained consistent through the pandemic. Our numbers of lay ministers have been sustained in the Diocese. We are hosting a BAME Vocations event in 2024, as well as participating in Step Forward (Young Vocations) event in early 2024.

We are proactively seeking to ensure learning on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is embraced across the life of the Diocese. The Diocese is no different to many others in having some parishes that struggle to fill key parochial office roles and this challenge is growing.



*Baptism at Vine Church Wynyard (2022)*

# OUR RESOURCES – FINANCES

Durham Diocese has a modest historic endowment, glebe and reserves and receives significant financial support from Lowest Income Communities Funding (LInC) to be able to sustain ministry in the most deprived areas. In 2023, £2.1million of LInC funding was received, which, supported by parish share receipts of £4.3million, made up the key components of recurrent diocesan income.

The Diocese adopted the accounting policy of Total Return in 2022 which resulted in £0.7million being drawn from endowment funds to support the delivery of mission and ministry in 2023. The Diocese receives grant funding from a number of charitable organisations for particular programmes and activities, most notably Lord Crewe's Charity, The Benefact Trust, The Mercers' Charitable Foundation and The Hild-Bede Trust.

Financial conditions remain challenging for many parishes and the DDBF, with no overall recovery in parish share observed since the pandemic.

In 2021 the Diocese moved to a guided pledge parish share scheme, an evolution from the free-pledge parish share scheme established in 2011. A review in 2023 of the guided pledge scheme resulted in minor changes but the main concepts were considered to be sound.

The cash value of the DDBF's parish share receipts has not kept pace with inflation in recent years, with share receipts remaining broadly constant over 2022 and 2023 at £4.3m. In 2023 this represented 96% of the amount originally pledged by parishes. This is significantly below the amount required to meet the cost of diocesan ministry including housing and pension costs.

In 2021 the average weekly gift of regular givers was £10.52 per person per week, which places Durham well into the bottom quartile of all dioceses. Whilst Durham would expect to be behind areas of far higher wealth nationally, on all recent metrics of congregational giving Durham is to be found well into the bottom quartile. Another striking statistic is that only 44% (~7,500) of our worshipping community give to their church on a regular basis.

There are currently 85 parishes using the Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) supporting 1,166 givers (15% of regular givers). While this is encouraging, the pace of engagement with PGS has slowed in the last few years. We remain deeply grateful and humbled by examples of sacrificial generosity in giving time, talents and money across the diocese, but there is still potential – and a real need – to go further.

# OUR TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY

Our mission is to *'Bless our communities in Jesus' name for the transformation of us all.'* We recognise that to fulfil this mission will involve significant change, and we are under no illusions about the challenges facing us. We see this clearly in the fact that a majority of our churches' regular congregations are in gradual decline, when they instead need to be flourishing and growing if we are to share God's blessing vibrantly in words and works of hope in our communities.



We have become clear over recent years that to focus our energy on mission and see the renewal of our churches – which is itself vital to enable them to serve and bless their communities – we need to prioritise. What those priorities need to be is something we have discerned together. In the “Waymark” process (2018-19) the whole diocese was engaged in prayerful consultation – culminating in a major diocesan conference in 2019 – about our mission. We became clear that we must focus on four priorities.

## Energising Growth

We have to **energise growth**. Growth is itself a vital part of our mission, in sharing the gospel and seeing people become disciples. But it is also essential as the basis for the rest of our mission: if there is to be a sustainable Christian church present in every community, able and equipped to serve and bless their locality, our churches need to grow. We are clear that growth relies on significant underlying culture change, rooted in our understanding of what it means to be a Christian disciple.

## Engaging with Children, Youth & 16-25s

We must engage in mission with **children and young people, and grow younger**.

## Challenging Poverty

We will see our sustainable, hopeful churches **challenging poverty** in all its guises.

## Caring for God's Creation

Church communities, as part of the holistic mission of God, will be fashioning **creation** in the context of our global environmental crisis.





We are convinced that these priorities give clarity and shape to what God is calling us to be and to do. However, we recognise that in many places our churches are not the sustainable, growing communities of missional disciples that the enactment of this vision requires. The gap between our clarity of vision and our current challenges has directly shaped our strategic transformation thinking. This has in turn informed successive and successful applications for significant grant funding including our recent [SMMIB application, Called to Fruitfulness, Phase 2](#). This application targets initiatives which we hope will enable the **transformation** of our Diocese, leading to new life and growth in many places. Our new bishop will need to embrace this transformation programme, continue to shape it and lead us well in the implementation of these plans.



## | GROWING THE CHURCH

We have six designated **Resourcing Churches** located in strategic areas, aspiring not only to grow themselves but to become engines of growth, and plant new worshipping communities. We have seen growth in these churches, and planting has begun. As their original grant-funding starts to taper off, we are working hard to ensure their growth continues sustainably and is shared.



We have developed “**Communities of Hope**”, a pilot initiative of churches based in smaller, economically deprived communities, seeking to establish new worshipping communities through relationships built out of service in their neighbourhoods. We see some real fruit here – and have also been learning fast through the challenges that have arisen in implementing this new model of mission.



GATHER Church, Teesdale (2023)

A vital support for our work of growing the church is our **“Cultivate”** programme, funded by the national church and the Benefact Trust. As well as supporting our Resourcing Churches and Communities of Hope, Cultivate runs the **“Health for Growth” learning community**, which helps churches develop principles of health and expand capacity through empowering leadership. This programme is now running its second cohort. The first cohort of five churches have all now planted or are in the process of planting new worshipping communities. Our aim is to **plant 20 new worshipping communities between 2024 and 2026** (and 100 overall between 2020 and 2030).

30 other churches have benefitted from the three-year **Partnership for Missional Church (PMC) process** over the last ten years, and we are now seeking to develop a one-year bespoke programme patterned on PMC to enable greater participation.



Cultivate Conference (2023)





A key new initiative for which we have received strategic funding in Called to Fruitfulness is **Church Revitalisations**: in places where there is a clear strategic need for a healthy church, but where mission needs revitalising, we now have resources to deploy. We hope to facilitate revitalisation in at least 20 parishes over 10 years, including Sunderland Minster, the civic church at the heart of the biggest conurbation in the Diocese.

Called to Fruitfulness also provides resources for the appointment of three **Interim Change Ministers (ICMs)** for seven years. ICMs will work in parishes where it has been discerned that a particular change needs to be embedded before a permanent minister's appointment would be fruitful. The first ICM has been recruited already and began work in April 2024.

Our **Vacancy Audit Process (VAP)** is a new practice, developed in our Diocese, to make wise choices about deployment and the use of the limited and precious resource of stipendiary clergy. A diocesan facilitator works with each parish in vacancy exploring their mission, finances, buildings, and leadership & governance. Even though the VAP often involves parishes being asked to face hard questions, we have had some exceptionally positive feedback, and the process has been ‘borrowed’ by several other dioceses. Through the VAP, we anticipate that our churches will become healthier, and that, when appointments are made, there is realism on the part of both the PCC and new minister about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges in the parish. The VAP is also the main mechanism for our informed discernment about the best contexts for using many of the initiatives described above such as revitalisations, planting and use of ICMs.





## | CULTURE CHANGE, DEVELOPING DISCIPLESHIP & GROWING LEADERS

We are clear that growth relies on significant underlying culture change, rooted in our understanding of what it means to be a Christian disciple. Missional churches come into being and flourish where there are missional disciples living and sharing the faith. One of the threads in *Called to Fruitfulness* is therefore **Missional Discipleship**. This links with the national strategy in this area and our diocesan priority of Energising Growth in number, depth and reach. The development of this work undergirds and is critical to the transformation of the diocese from declining congregations to thriving Christian communities, and our new bishop will need to own and champion the development of discipleship in all parishes as the key driver of transformation and growth.

Similarly, we recognise the huge need for the development of lay leaders. We have for the past two years been working on a **Lay Ministry Strategy**, seeking to build a pipeline of leadership training. This includes both formal, academic pathways leading to licensed and authorised ministries, and less formal routes to authorised or recognised ministries. If we are to achieve our Cultivate aim of planting 100 new worshipping communities in ten years and also enable the vocations of all God's people, a dramatic increase in lay leadership is required, so we are working to achieve that.





## | GROWING YOUNGER

We know that very few of our churches have significant numbers of children and young people regularly attending or pursuing a life of Christian discipleship. To help realise a step-change in our engagement with younger generations, we are undertaking the following:

**FE Missional Chaplaincy:** we have been awarded the resources in Called to Fruitfulness to develop pioneering Missional Chaplaincy to young people in the FE sector. Initially, we will seek to recruit three Missional Chaplain Enablers to develop local lay church-based chaplaincy teams associated with three FE colleges. We will develop models and lay leaders in this area. This will deliver our aspiration to ensure that every FE college in the Diocese has a church-based missional chaplaincy team to reach and serve its young people by 2032.

We plan to extend this work to secondary schools. **Secondary Missional Chaplaincy** is also part of Called to Fruitfulness (Phase 2) and we plan initially to establish missional chaplaincy in two secondary schools by 2026.

**Growing Faith:** excellent relationships have been built between the Joint Education Team, Diocesan staff, local churches and local schools. On this foundation, we are developing work locally within the national Growing Faith initiative, and working closely with Cranmer Hall, a Growing Faith Hub.

We plan to establish **20 Youth and Children's Hubs** with the hope that at least 15 of these will be reaching 25+ children and youth in active, weekly discipleship by 2027, with a third of hubs (5) engaging at least 40, totalling 450 children and young people.

We plan to pilot two **Flourish** church plant projects in our schools soon: one in a Church of England primary School; one in a local authority school.





*Venerable Bede CE Academy students lead worship at Synod (2023)*



*Air cadets explore moon rock samples, St Helen's Auckland (2023)*

We have plans to pilot three **16-25s engagement projects** in local churches, seeking to engage 90 young adults.

We recognise that there is a shortage of trained lay children's and youth leaders across the Diocese in this area and most parishes also lack resources to employ youth workers. Our Lay Ministry Strategy therefore includes a year-long course to enable those already working in some way with children and young people to become **Authorised Children's Leaders**. Once this pilot has been evaluated, we plan to launch an Authorised Youth Leaders' Course. We will also provide specialist training using **Youthscape Launchpad** to develop youth work in churches with no experience of youth engagement.



## | CARING FOR ALL OF GOD'S PEOPLE

We are clear that we are called to challenge poverty of every kind. Our parish churches, schools and our chaplains are deeply rooted in their communities, and are engaged in many projects aiming to meet the needs of people, and work for change in the structures that create or perpetuate deprivation. The people of God in different situations have felt called to create warm spaces, dementia cafes, after-school clubs, listening posts, community groceries, places of welcome and more.

We work in partnership with Communities Together Durham, whose focus is on building relationships between churches and their communities to enable them to flourish together and challenge social injustice. Many of our grant-funded interventions have been planned to create new projects in areas of significant deprivation, not least our Communities of Hope. We are clear that the church which wants to speak of good news must be good news.



# CARING FOR GOD'S CREATION

We are clear that mission is indivisible, and that the transformation God wills for us involves seeking justice and striving to safeguard the integrity of God's creation. This priority recognises that Christian mission in our generation must include active care for God's creation. With the support of national church funding, we have employed a Diocesan Environmental Officer (DEO) to lead on net zero work and support parishes in developing environmental engagement, and a newly appointed member of clergy has a 0.33 FTE role as Caring for God's Creation officer supporting the DEO. We have created a Routemap to Net Zero and, at Diocesan Synod in November 2023, committed to work towards becoming a net zero diocese by 2030.

Across the Diocese, we have 81 parishes registered with A Rocha as Eco Churches (currently 29 bronze, 6 silver and 1 gold), and the Diocese has recently been awarded bronze Eco-Diocese status.

We are actively investing in upgrading our parsonages as one of the initial steps on our Net Zero journey. We have set ourselves an interim target, supported by capital investment, that properties should be at least EPC "C" rating; currently less than half are.



*Litter-pickers, St. Mary & St. Cuthbert's, Chester-le-Street (2023)*



*St. Mary Magdalene, Hart - A Rocha Gold Eco Church Award (2022)*

# | DURHAM CATHEDRAL

Durham Cathedral has been a centre of worship, prayer and pilgrimage since 995; the present building, dating back to 1093, serves the Diocese and welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors and pilgrims from all over the world each year.

Under the leadership of a new Dean, and with the support of an expanded Chapter (in line with the Cathedral's Measure), the Cathedral has recently agreed an updated mission and purpose: *"Inspired by our saints, Cuthbert and Bede, the mission of Durham Cathedral is to offer everyone the opportunity to encounter God and know God's love in Jesus Christ."*

The Cathedral's priorities are pilgrimage, prayer and proclamation: these priorities are at the heart of consultation currently taking place that will result in a 9-year vision and strategy leading up to 2033 (the 900th anniversary of the completion of the present building). This vision and strategy will seek to complement and support the priorities of the Diocese.





## CHALLENGES & FOUNDATIONS

Durham Diocese faces a number of significant challenges. Many of these challenges are faced across the national church; however, their scale within our Diocese, against a backdrop of deprivation and recent trends, means that they need to be addressed with a real sense of urgency.

As we seek to address these issues, we recognise that the Diocese also has a range of good foundations on which we can build, many of which are specific to our context, such as the Transformation work.

We do not believe we are in denial about the scale of the task which we face, but we are also hopeful about the future, chiefly because we trust and hope in our living God. As we detail further in the role specification, the next Bishop of Durham will need to offer confident and visible spiritual leadership as, under God, we tackle the challenges, building on the foundations God has given us.

# | CHALLENGES



## Attendance & Active Church Membership

The numbers of those who regularly worship and serve in our parishes is an area of real concern, and there are naturally questions of whether current patterns are sustainable. This is not only a question of pastoral reorganisation; we have an urgent challenge to reach more people with the good news of Jesus Christ.



## Evangelism

While participation in the occasional offices is still strong in some parishes, there can often be an over-reliance on these as the main form for evangelism. We have a challenge in supporting churches to explore diverse ways of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in their local communities.

## Demographic



The data around children and young people (and indeed, generally people under the age of 60) in church is sobering. We face a challenge in helping our churches re-engage missionally with children, young people, younger adults and families.

## Lay Discipleship



Culturally, there are still high levels of clerical deference and a lack of confidence among many lay people in our churches. We have a challenge in fostering a culture of whole-life discipleship among those who are regular worshippers, so that God's gifts are nurtured across the whole church and lay leaders are released in their contexts.



## Clergy Workload & Wellbeing

We are aware that many clergy are struggling with the expectations placed upon them by their role, and the socio-economic challenges of many parishes. We have a challenge to ensure that clergy are resourced, both spiritually and pastorally, for the vital ministry and missional leadership they provide.



## Finance

More than half of our income comes from outside the Diocese, and Parish Share has not kept pace with inflation and started to decline in recent years. We recognise the financial hardship faced by many in our parishes, and are grateful for the historic endowment we can draw on. Nevertheless, we have a challenge to ensure that our finances are sustainable so that we can continue to resource local mission well.

## Prayer & Spirituality



If we are to see new growth, we believe this will be the fruit of spiritual renewal, reflected in lives of growing faith and nourishing prayer. We face a challenge in drawing on our rich spiritual heritage and inspiring, encouraging and resourcing lay people and clergy in their spiritual lives and discipleship.

## Buildings



The responsibility of caring for our church buildings is beyond many congregations, given the current worshipping patterns and numbers. We have a challenge to ensure that we have the appropriate number of church buildings to serve the mission of the Church, and that they are fit for that purpose.

# | FOUNDATIONS



## Unity & Diversity

The Diocese has the full range of ecclesial traditions represented in its parishes, and we rejoice in this. Likewise, leaders at diocesan, deanery and parish levels hold a range of convictions with integrity and grace. There is a sense of unity across the Diocese with respect for theological diversity. Our unity undergirds our ability to work together well in developing our shared mission.



## Missional Transformation

The Diocese is some way down the journey of strategic missional planning and has secured significant SMMIB transformation funds to see this work develop over the next five years and beyond. We have an opportunity to see this firmly embedded across the whole Diocese and contributing to a wider trajectory of renewal and growth.



## Decision-Making

The Diocese has shown itself able to take some tough decisions based on our priorities and a realistic assessment of our present situation. We have an opportunity to do this more and make decisions corporately that serve our shared priorities and mission.



## Vocations

Durham has been a place where lay and ordained vocations have historically flourished, and we are blessed with two excellent local theological training institutions and a world-class theology department at Durham University. We have an opportunity to see more women and men respond to God's call in a variety of way and be sent out to serve Christ locally and nationally.



## Schools

Our Diocesan Church Schools perform strongly and there are strong relationships between the JET and school leaders. Yet our children and young people are facing increasing challenges and adversity in an ever-changing world. We have an opportunity to further develop our partnerships in order to work together as school, home and parish in order to give our young people opportunities to explore their faith, have a conversation with Jesus and become agents of change.



## Our Cathedral

Durham Cathedral is a much-loved building and centre of pilgrimage, prayer and proclamation. Already seen by people beyond church congregations as 'their' cathedral, and with a new nine-year vision and strategy in production, we have an opportunity to develop the ways in which the Cathedral can resource local churches and bless clergy and lay people in their spiritual lives.



The Diocese has some of the highest national rates of child poverty. In many communities the local church and faith-based projects are responding to this need through loving service. We have an opportunity to build on this and encourage churches to respond to local need with the love of Jesus Christ.



The Diocese has stable senior leadership and there are many good relationships between parishes and the central teams.



Across much of our Diocese, the church is still respected in many places and clergy and lay leaders are invited into civic life and relationships, including with the universities in Durham and Sunderland. More generally, people are open to questions of faith and take pride in our Christian story and heritage across the North East. We have an opportunity to build on this goodwill and enable people to encounter the good news of Jesus afresh in this generation.



# ROLE SPECIFICATION

The role of the Bishop of Durham is to ...

- Be a missional leader so that seemingly intractable challenges are faced and local worshipping communities are resourced for renewal and growth
- Teach the faith and model a prayerful dependence on God, so that clergy and lay people are nurtured and encouraged in their faith
- Inspire clergy and laity in their own mission, evangelism and discipleship
- Focus on the urgent missional challenges in Durham Diocese while contributing to the Church's national ministry
- Oversee the implementation of the Transformation programme while keeping alert to new missional possibilities
- Recognise and cultivate missional potential in places and people where the impact of poverty is stark
- Build effective relationships with a wide range of people across the Diocese and use these connections for building the kingdom – both within and beyond the church
- Model a culture of care, approachability and accountability, so that teams are shaped where trust is built, difficult decisions can be taken and safeguarding is prioritised
- Harness the richness of different ecclesial traditions to build a strong sense of collaborative mission

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

The next Bishop of Durham will be someone who ...

- Will draw on their own experiences of energising growth in a local worshipping community, in order to lead local clergy and lay leaders in their own mission and evangelism to share the good news of Jesus Christ
- Demonstrates an ability to discern and communicate vision in a way that sees and releases potential in others
- Has a track-record of building and leading effective and accountable teams, where strategy can be implemented and difficult decisions can be taken
- Reflects critically on their own use of power and its impact on healthy culture, and uses this understanding to inform their leadership, building of culture and oversight of safeguarding
- Relates easily with a wide range of people, and is able to use these relationships for articulating faith and hope in Jesus
- Inspires others to pray and encounter God in word and sacrament, through their own palpable dependence on God
- Can listen to and amplify the voices of those living in poverty across our Diocese, so that God's kingdom of justice is built
- Exhibits resilience, wisdom and discernment in the face of competing priorities from the local and national context
- Is able to articulate their own theological convictions with confidence and respects the gifts, traditions and experiences of others

As a Diocese, we are committed to receiving the Bishop we discern God to be calling, whether that be a man or a woman. In addition to a Bishop committed to the Five Guiding Principles, we seek a Bishop who will ordain both women and men.

## **| VACANCY PRAYER**

**Almighty God,  
as we journey through this vacancy  
grant us joy in all that has been  
and hope for all that is to come.**

**Inspired by the deep faith of the northern saints,  
may we prepare the way well for a new Bishop of Durham,  
and delight in our call to bear your light  
from the Tyne to the Tees and from the Dales to the Sea,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

