



**DIOCESE OF TRURO**

DISCOVERING GOD'S KINGDOM  
GROWING THE CHURCH

## **To: Members of PCC's and Deanery Synod representatives in East Wivelshire Deanery**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ

Last year your Deanery set out 'On the Way' and now, 10 months later, the first stage of that journey is coming to an end. 'On the Way' invited you all to dream, pray and plan for a fruitful and sustainable future for your church communities in a world that was already changing rapidly before Covid arrived, and which is now changing even more quickly. 'On the Way' deliberately invites local churches, working together as a deanery, to shape this future, rather than someone else doing it for you.

Over the last months the team leading the work in the deanery, made up of lay and ordained people, have listened carefully to God, to the church communities and to the communities that we seek to serve in our towns and villages, most of whom are not part of the church. As that plan has developed, they have shared it with your Deanery Synod and with us, as your bishops. We know that the work has not always been easy, especially when the early versions of the plan were circulated. The challenges ahead of us all are complex and there are often different views on how best to face them. Everyone involved has had to work hard, to pray deeply and to be gracious with each other in getting to this point.

The deanery plan has now been presented to Episcopal College (the Senior Diocesan leadership team consisting the Bishops, Diocesan Secretary, Archdeacons and the Director of Education). We were pleased to see that further consultation had taken place since the first drafts. We looked at it carefully and considered how well it would enable the churches and people of the deanery to grow in those two key characteristics of fruitfulness and sustainability. We were impressed with the vision that it offers and the future that it outlines and are pleased to give it our blessing.

That said, we are very aware that it will require significant change in the life, practice and mission of the churches that you love and we do not underestimate what that means for you. In particular it calls everyone, lay and ordained, to begin working towards a different pattern of ministry, in which the stipendiary clergy are not responsible for the day to day life of each parish church, but work together across the new groupings to grow teams of people, lay and ordained who, in partnership, will lead your church communities in prayer, worship, mission and service. We are committed to supporting you all as you move into this future.

The plan now goes to PCCs for scrutiny and consideration before going to Deanery Synod in September, where it will be tabled for approval. The question each PCC is asked to

consider is 'Do you support your representative(s) in voting for this plan at Deanery Synod?'

As you consider this question, please bear three things in mind.

- First, staying the same is not an option. As Bishop Philip said when 'On the Way' began *'The choice is no longer whether we want to change. Change is going to happen; it's happening already. The choice we face now is whether you - we - want to be part of shaping the change or not.'* We therefore encourage your PCC and Synod to focus on the question 'Given the reality of the situation we are in, does this plan help us engage faithfully in God's call to the church in East Wivelshire?'
- Secondly, it is very unlikely that everyone will agree with everything in this plan, and there may well be elements that some disagree with, perhaps strongly. Please remember that this is the outcome of many conversations, discussions and prayers. It has been carefully and prayerfully worked on and represents the very best that the team asked to do this work can offer. We encourage you therefore to explore the question 'can you see this vision and plan as the way to a fruitful and sustainable future for the people of God in East Wivelshire?'
- Thirdly, the process so far has led to the vision and plan which you have in front of you. How that plan is implemented is the next stage. That work will happen, locally led and with support from the Diocese, but only after the Deanery Synod has made a decision about this plan. The question you are therefore asked to consider is focussed on the work that has been done up to now - not on how it will be implemented.

Our sincere hope, acknowledging the pain that this work has caused for many, noting the detailed listening, prayer and work that has gone into the plan, and welcoming the creative and missional future it offers, is that your Deanery Synod will approve it.

You are all very much in our prayers as you prayerfully and carefully discuss this plan and God's call to the church in East Wivelshire and we assure you of our commitment to you and to our shared future.

God bless you in all you do in the service of his Church and his Kingdom.

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