

# North Monmouthshire Ministry Area

## Ministry Framework



## Background

Our Ministry Area will be the final one in the Diocese to be commissioned at a special service led by Bishop Cherry on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January at St Teilo's Church, Llantilio Crossenny. The introduction of Ministry Areas has raised, understandably, many legitimate questions. The vast majority of concerns and queries have now been resolved and we are gaining greater clarity over how the new Ministry Area (MA) will operate as we make progress towards our "go live" date. Of course, one of the benefits of being the last MA to go live is that we can learn from those who have gone before us and we appreciate the support and advice that has been shared with us by other Ministry Areas.

The key expectation of introducing Ministry Areas is that the spiritual life of our 17 churches will be enhanced through the sharing of talents, experience and fellowship, thus making our churches more sustainable for current parishioners, more welcoming to new members and thereby more resilient for the future.

We are about MINISTRY; it is sometimes hard to remember this when we are caught up in the governance and financial aspects of setting up our Ministry Area. It is all too easy to focus our energies on these very important aspects of "getting it right", but that is not what we are primarily about. Our main drive and purpose is MINISTRY. By that we mean the sharing and supporting of what we do as Christians on a daily basis, nurturing our communities and each other and developing our worship in ways that enable us all to grow. To do this we need to ensure that our clergy are supported, that we have greater involvement of lay people and that we call on and share the talents we possess across all of the churches and communities in our Ministry Area.

## Diocesan Vision – Faith in our Future

The Diocese has recently launched its strategic document "*Faith in our Future*". The document has been drawn together following a series of meetings and discussions by over 50 people from across the Diocese. Quoting directly from the document, the purpose of the Vision is 3fold:

- Firstly, it is outward facing. Our Christian faith is not a private affair but one that should stir and motivate us to make a difference to the people we live alongside and to the various communities to which we belong. God loves and cares for us and all his creation and so, therefore, should we. The Vision helps us to focus on mission and growth; making the most of the opportunities God gives us to work with him in strengthening the church and building the kingdom.



- Secondly, it provides every congregation and every Ministry Area with 5 common overarching themes on which to focus our life and work. These themes are designed to inspire creative thinking in the very different contexts of our diocese so that they can be worked out locally and in ways that are relevant to each place. Working together, the church communities of each Ministry Area will be able to plan, support and encourage one another to engage with these themes in ways that are exciting, bold and imaginative; whether the activities are small and local or on a larger scale across a whole Ministry Area.
- Thirdly, it will enable us to exercise good stewardship – one of the 5 overarching themes. The Diocesan Vision will give us a framework within which the Bishop’s staff team, the church communities of our Ministry Area and the Diocesan office can focus and prioritise our resources and our energies and use them to best effect.

At the heart of the Diocesan Vision is the desire for God’s church to grow and the belief that it can grow. The Vision should help guide us in the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area over the next 10 years, so that we can move forward with confidence, knowing that we are focussing on what matters and what will help us grow our church communities and deliver what our local communities, both church and lay, expect and want of us.

The foundation of the Vision is the *Five Marks of Mission*, drawn up by the Anglican Communion. They are:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The Five Marks of Mission put into words themes that form branches through which we live out our Christian faith and they call us, as disciples, to help God’s church to grow. They form a foundation for our own Diocesan strategy, they focus our mission as a Ministry Area and call us to be proactive, in each of our unique contexts, to grow God’s Kingdom. The five key branches set out below actively embody the principles of the *Five Marks of Mission*.

### [The Five Branches of the Vision](#)

The five branches of the Vision are as follows:

- Discipleship: “Growing more like Jesus”
- Stewardship: “Living as thankful and generous people”
- Environment: “Caring for God’s creation”
- Social Justice: “Serving together to strengthen our communities”
- Equality and Diversity: “Welcoming all”

The 5 branches interweave with each other and uplift our own personal relationship with God as well as our relationships with others and the world around us. Our understanding of the Christian faith and what it means to be people who follow the way of Christ, will influence how we think and behave. As we engage with the issues of social justice, equality and diversity and the environment, our discipleship is enriched, deepening our understanding of God and his purposes for the world. This in turn will impact on the ways in which we “steward” all that God has given us.

The analogy of branches is no mistake; a branch grows and blooms, we are those branches and we can blossom and grow in faithfulness to God if we allow those 5 strands to be ever present in our hearts and minds. The five branches will help us to build confidence in our faith and enable us to share that faith with others, to draw the church communities of our Ministry Area together and enable us to build links with individuals, groups and communities currently outside of the church, to fulfil God’s call to love him with all that we have and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

We don’t engage with these branches with the expectation of any reward, but we do so with a real desire to love our neighbour and our environment as we have been called to do. As we live out the good news, we can be confident that people will respond and the church, far from facing inevitable decline, can begin to grow again. A desire to seek growth is essential in our churches and, whilst it is God who gives the growth, each of us has an important part to play.

If we work together across our Diocese and across our Ministry Areas, encouraging and supporting each other, and above all, trusting in God’s faithfulness, we believe that growth can and will happen.

We in the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area must be realistic in what we can achieve in relation to the *Faith in the Future* document. Everyone is busy, with numerous calls on our time and energy. If we spread ourselves too thinly, then we are likely to achieve less than if we focus on what we are good at, trying to be aware of and “live” the Vision, rather than seeing it as a checklist which we have to follow slavishly. Every church within each Ministry Area across the Diocese, will have different priorities, talents and offerings with which to tackle the Vision and move forward. As the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area, we will aim to identify how we think we might be able to do this, but we need everyone’s input and support. Read this document, read the Diocesan Vision document, and let us have your view

on what we have come up with. Do our suggestions satisfy what you feel you and your local church community needs? If not, please tell us, talk to your local priest and let us know how we can work together to get it right. This Ministry Area belongs to us all and we all have a responsibility to work together to find a way forward that enhances our spiritual lives and supports our local communities, both church goers and those who may seldom or even never set foot inside our doors.

### My Church or the Ministry Area?

Many people are understandably concerned that the introduction of Ministry Areas may lead to the downgrading and even closure of their own church, especially if that church is a small rural church with very few regular attenders. The truth is quite the opposite; Ministry Areas are designed to support ALL churches within their boundaries, ensuring as far as possible, that services continue and local communities can always call on spiritual support and guidance. In order to deliver on this expectation, we must be prepared to sometimes work a little differently. The North Monmouthshire Ministry Area has been devised in such a way as to build upon the already strong local connections between neighbouring churches. The entire area has been divided into 5 **Pastoral Districts**, each focussed on historical linkages between specific churches. The 5 Pastoral Districts together with the individual churches within each and the minister in charge are set out below:



❖ Crucorney Pastoral District. St. David Llanthony, St. Martin Cwmyoy, St. Michael Llanfihangel Crucorney. House for Duty Vicar with pastoral responsibility: The Revd. David Roberts.



❖ Grosmont Pastoral District. St. Nicholas Grosmont, St. Bridet's Skenfrith, St. Mary Llanfair Cilgoed, St. Cadoc Llangattock Lingoed. Stipendiary Vicar with pastoral responsibility: The Revd. Gaynor Burrett.



❖ Llantilio Crossenny Pastoral District. St. Teilo Llantilio Crossenny, St. Cadoc Penrhos, St. James Llanvetherine, St. Mabli Llanvapley. House for Duty Vicar with pastoral responsibility: The Revd. Heidi Prince.



❖ Llantilio Pertholey and Llandewi Skirrid Pastoral District. St Teilo Llantilio Pertholey, Bettws Chapel, St. David, Llandewi Skirrid. Stipendiary Rector with pastoral responsibility: The Revd. Julian Gray.

❖ Llandewi Rhydderch Pastoral District. St. David Llandewi Rhydderch, St. Bridget Llansantfraed and Llanarth, St. Cadoc Llangattock-juxta-Usk. House for Duty Vicar with pastoral responsibility: The Revd. John Humphries (position becoming vacant in January 2023 and will be replaced).

Each Pastoral District will have an experienced minister (either resident stipendiary or House for Duty) who will act as the focal point for ministry across their patch. S/he will lead a **Local Ministry Team** of both lay and ordained ministers and have considerable freedom and autonomy to lead their team and minister as they see fit.

There should not be a question of “My Church or the Ministry Area”, we are all here to support each other and the Ministry Area will provide the opportunity for some special services or ministries to be available to a wider audience than previously. So, for example, some churches may arrange a Taizé service occasionally, but other churches may not have the skills or experience to put on such a service. Similarly, some clergy are very confident at leading healing services, but again, most churches might be unable to access such services. Over time the clergy of the Ministry Area will offer a wider range of services of different

types, to all churches across the area. People will need to travel if they want to access these different services, but at least they will be accessible to everyone who wants to attend. The services will be published in advance, so that everyone knows what's happening across all of our 17 churches and everyone will be warmly welcomed to join in. Regular Sunday worship, and other mid-week services where they already exist, will continue to be provided (as long as the clergy continue to be available to lead them). The intention is that the Ministry Area will offer more and a greater variety of services and other social gatherings than is possible currently, thereby enhancing the spiritual offering and ensuring that clergy are supported in caring for and ministering to their respective Pastoral District.

### How will our clergy be supported?

The North Monmouthshire Ministry Area is extremely lucky to have five clergy, one for each of the five Pastoral Districts into which the MA has been split. Those clergy include two stipendiary priests, Father Julian Gray and Rev'd Gaynor Burrett and three House for Duty priests namely Rev'd Heidi Prince, Rev'd David Roberts and Rev'd John Humphries (soon to retire and who will be replaced). Father Julian will become the Ministry Area Leader or Rector and intends to ensure that the clergy team work in a supportive and inclusive way. Being a priest the rhythm of clerical life allows private time for prayer and study. Life as a priest however, can be lonely and somewhat isolating, especially in a rural area such as ours. Father Julian plans to have regular clergy team meetings, whereby the team can meet for prayer, discussion and to share ideas about services, liturgy and other aspects of ministry, particularly opportunities for uniting church congregations from across the Ministry Area. Quarterly chapter meetings will be arranged for the wider clergy group, including all licensed clergy as well as lay readers from across the Ministry Area. Another important activity for the clergy team will be discussing how we can achieve each of the 5 visions from the Diocesan Vision referred to earlier in this paper and what to do in order to continue to develop and engage with congregations. This means of support, along with any training that may be identified, can help nurture our clergy team, allowing them access to greater resources and strength to support their local church communities as well as carry out their Ministry Area-wide duties. Each lead minister will be free to meet with their own Local Ministry Team as they deem appropriate.

### **Our Vision for enhanced services across the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area**

The Ministry Sub-Committee has been set up to explore how Ministry can remain firmly at the heart of all we do in the Ministry Area. Some initial services and ways in which the benefits of working as a Ministry Area can be realised have already been identified. These ideas are based on activities and services that are already going on in one or two churches across the patch, but which might prove attractive to a wider audience. These activities all depend on the experience and enthusiasm of certain members of the clergy team and we

are grateful that they are prepared to work to open up prayerful opportunities for people outwith their usual church congregations. Some of these suggestions might attract people who currently are not regular worshippers at any of our churches and this is something to welcome and celebrate. Appendix 1 sets out the suggestions so far. This Ministry Framework is designed to be a living document which will grow and change over time. Consequently, the ideas and opportunities for joint services and other activities will change as we progress, develop and mature as a Ministry Area. We want to encourage more people to become involved in developing and leading such shared events, whether spiritual in nature or simply social.

### What Next?

We need to be realistic and to begin our Ministry Area journey together in ways that are sustainable and which can nurture our spiritual lives. We need to keep the five branches of *Faith in our Future* in our minds and ensure that whatever we develop in terms of services and activities, they are the living embodiment of those five branches.

### **Appendix 1**

### ***Suggested Ministry Area Initiatives and Services***

- Pop-Up Choir: this has already taken off in a small way thanks to the drive and generosity of Phillip Norman who has taken the initiative and arranged rehearsals and choral events across the Ministry Area. Singers have come from many of our churches and whilst not everyone in the new choir is a regular church attender, this has proved to be a great way to widen our circle of people who are happy to become involved in supporting church events across our 17 churches. The choir can be requested to sing at weddings, funerals and other events including special festivals in the church calendar. So far, the choir has performed at a wedding, a clergy licensing service and is soon to lead a Ministry Area Advent carol service on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November 3.00pm at St James the Elder Church, Llanvetherine. (Discipleship)
- A one-off Advent event is to be arranged with the Rt Rev'd Gregory Cameron invited to speak about his book "An Advent Book of Days". This has been supported by Bishop Cherry and will be available via Zoom for everyone in the MA who wants to sign up. The date proposed for this event is Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November starting at 7.00pm and lasting until 8.00pm. Further details will be circulated in good time. (Discipleship)
- A regular Healing Service is being developed between Rev'd Gaynor Burrett and Rev'd David Roberts, both of whom have extensive experience with healing ministry. Further details to follow. (Discipleship)



- Rev'd Heidi Prince is working with Rev'd David Roberts to formulate ideas for regular Taizé services across the MA. Again, both Heidi and David have experience of leading such services and having access for a wider audience would really enhance worship across the MA. Phillip Norman also has agreed to be involved with this initiative and we hope to have a service before Christmas. [\(Discipleship\)](#)
- Pilgrimage is a theme of great interest across the MA. The Llanthony Valley as well as many of our other churches offer numerous opportunities for pilgrimage. Father Julian is keen to establish a Pilgrimage Study Group and to lead pilgrimages to places across the UK as well as to the Holy Land. There are opportunities for devising walking or cycling trails linking our 17 churches. Leaflets could be developed with the support of interested individuals to include not only a map of the routes but interesting information on various churches and local communities along the way. These can be available not only for our church congregations but for the wider community and visitors to the area. [\(Discipleship\)](#)
- Quiet days and retreats are another way for us to deepen our spiritual lives and have time to reflect. We are planning to hold a quiet day at TyMawr Convent during Lent. The date is 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Further details will be circulated. [\(Discipleship\)](#)
- Training opportunities are something else that can be arranged across the Ministry Area. This will enable participants to access training and development more locally than might be the case otherwise. One such event which is open to everyone is Safeguarding Training which has been arranged for Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023, 2.00pm at St Michael's church, Llanvihangel Crucorney.
- Rev'd Gaynor has offered to provide spiritual direction and mentoring to anyone from across the MA who might wish to discuss and explore their calling, whether that be a lay calling or one that might lead to ordination. Such support is currently not available but with the right assistance, we may encourage more people to become involved in ministry. [\(Discipleship\)](#)
- Social activities are also part of our ministry. These can be opportunities for church congregations and non-church attenders to meet across the MA for social interaction and even some friendly competition! Ideas include the Fish & Chip supper and Quiz arranged by Rev'd David at Crucorney on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November at 5.30pm at St Michael's Church. Other ideas might include Ministry Area pub nights supporting different pubs in different parishes. Grosmont nave is a great venue for a candle lit supper, so maybe we could have future MA events there. [\(Stewardship\)](#)

This list is not exhaustive and will be added to on a rolling basis.