A Practical Theology of Oversight Ministry

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1. Introduction

In faithfulness to our calling to proclaim the gospel afresh to each generation, Church of England Birmingham is developing its ministry structures and organisation to support the mission priorities of our Transforming Church strategy through People and Places (P&P):

- Strengthening the ministry of the whole people of God through encouraging vocation, discerning call and equipping for leadership and ministry.
- Resourcing parishes and new Christian Communities in mission planning and making new disciples.
- Releasing Christian women, men and young people to witness and serve as disciples of Christ in their everyday lives and communities.
- Renewing patterns of ordained and lay ministry for leading, guiding and sustaining an inter-cultural missional church in diverse communities and neighbourhoods.

Sustaining and developing the ministry of oversight is a crucial part of this transformation.

1a The intention of this paper

This paper is intended as a theological reflection on oversight within the life of the Christian community, offering a resource to inform conversation and planning to take forward the P&P vision as part of Transforming Church. It is a work-in-progress which – like a stream flowing from a great lake - represents only a sample of the thinking and reflection which is gathering as a reservoir of practical theological wisdom for the missional transformation of Church of England Birmingham. The methodology is intentionally iterative, that is, the document will develop and change as theology and practice develop from the conversations and actions of partners in the adventure: the bishop-in-council, together with synods, chapters and context-specific groups, theologians, biblical scholars and working groups within the diocese and wider church, HR and other professional expertise, and particularly the oversight work of the People & Places Strategic Programme Board. I am particularly grateful for the comments of Canon Theologian Dr Paula Gooder. The paper is not intended to be the last word on any matter. The theology is pragmatic, focussed on mission, and does not pretend to represent a dogmatic or definitive ecclesiological position, which can be described as a characteristically modest Anglican approach to ecclesiology.1

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2. Oversight in the life of the church as Christian community

The ancient Greek term *episcopos* describes someone who *watches over* others – a person of authority and care. The diocesan bishop, as chief pastor, teacher and leader in mission, exercises a ministry of oversight across the diocese, shared with other ministers, both lay and ordained, who are selected, formed and licensed for this role. This is first and foremost a ministry of enabling the priestly people of God to live out their baptismal vocation, shared most immediately with deacons and presbyters:

God calls his people to follow Christ, and forms us into a royal priesthood, a holy nation, to declare the wonderful deeds of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light [1 Peter 2.9; Exodus 19.6; Revelation 1.6, 5.10].

The Church is the Body of Christ, the people of God and the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit [1 Corinthians 12.17; 1 Peter 2.10; 1 Corinthians 3.16]. In baptism the whole Church is summoned to witness to God’s love and to work for the coming of his kingdom. To serve this royal priesthood, God has given a variety of ministries. (CofE Common Worship Ordination Services).

Those who follow Christ, baptised into his death and resurrection, are given a share in God’s mission in and through Christ, inspired and sustained by the Holy Spirit. In a series of Scriptural metaphors and images The Ordinal describes how the particular and inter-related expressions of ministry offered by deacons, priests and bishops evoke, enable, order and lead this corporate missional participation.

Anglicans accept that appropriate forms of order, structure and process are gracious channels through which the baptised participate in God’s saving mission, both as individuals and as communities. Dan Hardy (who for many years developed his theology as a member of a worshipping community in a Birmingham parish) recognises how for Anglicans the Christian church is given meaningful structure – *sociality* – which expresses the theological realities of what it is to have encountered God’s saving love in Jesus Christ and to follow Him in the power of the Holy Spirit. The truth of the gospel is *enacted* by disciples in a myriad different ways and settings through the witness of their lives. It is also enacted in the Church, through its worship, giving shape to the missional identity of the Body of Christ carried in its social structures – a unity, holiness, universality (catholicity) and apostolicity - a shape that is *eucharistic*. Both the witness of individual disciples, and also the corporate, symbolic witness of the social structures of the Church, give expression to the truth of the Gospel which inspires it.

In this sense we see that the structural life of the church embodies and enacts the relationship of spiritual life in fellowship with God the Holy Trinity present and active among us as baptised Christians, individual disciples and ecclesial communities. This life is expressed in its most concentrated way through the communal celebration of baptism and eucharist. These sacraments enact the story of who we are in Christ.

This missional participation in God’s life and saving work is always fresh, and - under the guidance of God’s Spirit - takes new shape and forms of expression in response to human need and opportunity in differing times and contexts. Bishop David, exercising the ministry of oversight in his *Invitation to explore Being the Church of England Birmingham Here and Now* (2018), sets out a
vision of Church for the Birmingham city-region in which new Christian communities and new patterns of ministry will take their place alongside established communities and ministries in a vibrant, outward-facing Church rooted in a dynamic Anglican missional ecclesiology. This is the common ecclesiological ground in which Church Planting, Fresh Expressions and other mission initiatives generated in *Shaping the Future* will flourish alongside and in complementarity with established ministry and mission. The work of re-shaping, rooting and integrating established and innovative ministries is a ministry of oversight taking place in the diocesan, deanery and local expressions of Church.
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2a Oversight as structure

Oversight is built into our existing structures and processes as Church. The ministry of oversight – *episcope* – is exercised within the diocese by the bishop, extended through the ministries of archdeacons and area deans, and in terms of governance, through deanery Lay Chairs. At local level oversight is exercised by clergy and licensed lay ministers serving as Incumbents/Ministers-in-charge commissioned by the bishop to lead parish churches with responsibility for the pastoral, spiritual and missional life of Christian communities in parishes and chaplaincies, shared with Churchwardens, PCCs and Lay Ministers.

This extended oversight ministry takes a number of structural forms. In multi-parish benefices, multi-church parishes, and Team Ministry parishes, oversight is exercised within and across a number of distinct church communities (e.g. All Souls North Warwickshire; Kings Norton Team; The Whitacres; Oldbury Benefice; St Peter & St Michael Hall Green; Dorridge & Bentley Heath). A significant proportion of churches in Church of England Birmingham are led by clergy and associate ministers in this form of oversight ministry.

In larger churches oversight is exercised within a single church made up of several distinct congregations (e.g. St John Harborne; Knowle Parish Church). Some are a mixture of both these kinds of ecclesial economies – a large church of multiple congregations and also district churches (e.g. St Alphege Solihull & Solihull Team).

This structural variety of oversight ministry has changed and evolved as the church seeks to be faithful in using resources for mission in ways which are appropriate to time and place. In Scripture we see a variety of patterns which give others a distinctive share in ministry and leadership which coheres in and through the ministry of oversight:

*Exodus* 18.13-26 and *Deuteronomy* 1.9-18: Moses working with Aaron to establish an oversight system of dispersed and accountable leadership for the people of Israel;


*Acts* 6.1-7: The apostles appointing seven deacons to leadership roles focussed on the oversight of ministry caring for the needs of widows in a culturally diverse community, releasing the apostles to focus on teaching and prayer;

*Philippians* 1.1: Paul addresses the whole congregation of the church, including ministers described as *episcopoi* (often translated ‘bishops’) and *diakonoi* (often translated ‘deacons’).

In the historic churches, patterns of dispersed leadership and authority are held in a careful balance of complementary responsibilities supported by Canon Law. In the Church of England the *Ordination Services* and the * Declarations* made by all licensed ministers articulate the systems of authority and obedience which sustain the missional life of the church exercised through various different, complementary ministries and offices.
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2b Oversight as relationship

This ministry of oversight is more than a structural system stewarding people and resources for the mission of the church. Oversight ministry is also relational, an inter-personal and dynamic ministry which promotes the good order and wellbeing of the Christian community. Oversight ensures mutual accountability, vision and worshipping life – a ministry of prayerful guiding, encouraging, equipping and teaching which is summed up corporately in the celebration of baptism and eucharist, and in preaching God’s word, but not confined to those ministries.

Created in God’s image, human beings are essentially and dynamically relational (Genesis 1.27). God’s way of saving the human race is incarnational, personal and historical (John 1.1-14). Jesus calls disciples into personal relationship (John 15.15-17); baptism into Christ transforms our self-understanding and the conduct of our human relationships (John 13.34-35; Philippians 2; Galatians 3.28). Thus the church is a community of people, a fellowship who are in Christ as individuals-in-relationship, drawn together and sustained in community – koinonia – by the Holy Spirit, and through the Spirit participating in the life of the Holy Trinity who is Spirit, Son and Father (Zizoulas 1993, 209ff). Ministry flows from and simultaneously constitutes this Spirit-filled community. St Paul’s theological vision of Christian community in 1 Corinthians 12 describes church as a dynamic corporate life of mutual accountability energised by God’s generous grace which equips different people with a multitude of gifts for the good of the whole body.

The life of the church does not precede her actions: concrete ministries are constitutive of the Church’s being, not derivative from it (217). Ministry is therefore relational, rooted in and showing forth the mutually in-dwelling life of God as community of love: ‘…ministry… more than anything else renders the Church as a relational reality, i.e. a mystery of love, reflecting here and now the very life of the trinitarian God.’ (1993, 220) As in the persons of the Trinity we see the specificity of relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so in ministry we see particular callings and functions – ministerial order and purpose – born out of relationship rather than power, for the flourishing of love (223-4). As the Father watches over the Son, and as the Son is one with the Father through the Spirit, the ministry of oversight engenders the relational ethos for love and mission to flourish.

Scripture witnesses to the relational qualities of oversight as well as its function:

Luke 10.1-5: we see Jesus choosing, preparing and sending out seventy disciples in pairs to evangelise, teach and heal, and reflecting with them on their experience when they return;
Mark 6.31-34 and Matthew 11.28-30: examples of Jesus watching over his disciples, ensuring that their lives are undergirded by a sense of God’s generous love and care, including times of withdrawal and prayer;

Acts 20.28: the elders of the church at Ephesus are encouraged to keep watch over themselves as well as Christ’s flock entrusted to them by the Holy Spirit;

1 Peter 5.2: the elders are encouraged to tend the flock through the ministry of oversight;

Titus 1.7-9: the episkopos (bishop, overseer) is urged to behave as God’s steward – a person of particular character and spirituality - blameless, not arrogant or quick tempered or addictive or
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violent or greedy; but hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, self-controlled; possessing a firm grasp of truth and a capacity to preach and teach;

1 Timothy 3.1-5: those who aspire to the ‘noble task’ of overseer in the church must demonstrate character which is above reproach;
3. The missional imperative for more intentional oversight ministry

There is a missional imperative to foster ministry and leadership within the church which more closely matches the needs of the whole people of God in the present generation. This shift is both structural and relational.

...the missional context in which the church now finds itself is calling for a shift in balance between the different dimensions of ministry. Gifts which have not traditionally been part of the diaconal or priestly calling are increasingly demanded of the clergy: the gifts of intentionally enabling and building community; the gifts of discernment in identifying the charisms of others and enabling them in ministry; gifts of collaboration, of vision; and of guiding a Christian church through a period of change. (Croft 2008, 141)

This shift is not confined to the ministry of clergy, but a task and challenge for Church of England Birmingham as a whole as we seek to bring about culture change for every aspect of ministry and mission: oversight ministry being about the way people lead, not merely about a particular role called Oversight Minister.

In structural and relational terms, at the heart of the P&P transformation will be the development and strengthening of the ministry of oversight in a range of ways:

- ministerial roles and patterns of support and accountability;
- learning for discipleship, ministerial formation, and parish mission development;
- governance structures and processes.
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4. Transforming ministerial roles and patterns of support and accountability

Collaborative working will be an essential quality and practice for P&P exercised through re-imagined structures and patterns of ministry. A rich ecology of ministry will be committed to fostering outward-facing Christian communities enabling discipleship and mission, with appropriate structures of leadership, development, support and accountability, including:

- The re-configuration of existing deaneries into six new deaneries.
- The appointment of six Deanery Leadership Teams working with the archdeacons and oversight areas to enable transformational change, supporting clergy and lay leaders, comprising:
  - six full-time Area Deans
  - six full-time Operations Managers
  - six elected Lay Chairs
- A more equitable allocation of ministerial resources in relation to local populations.
- A revision of Common Fund to support mission through a collaborative spirit of generosity and shared commitment.
- Oversight Ministers leading local leaders in ministry and mission across a network of local churches, worshipping communities, schools, Church Plants and Fresh Expressions, enabling teams of Local Ministers.
- Local Ministers (both lay and ordained) leading mission and ministry teams in local churches, worshipping communities, Church Plants and Fresh Expressions.
- Context Ministers, leading and enabling mission focussed on specific areas/particular groups and communities;
- A range of new expressions of Ministry, including Ordained Local Ministers and Permanent Deacons.
- A range of authorised lay ministries commissioned locally under a framework of Bishop’s Guidelines for Authorised Ministry.
- The fostering of a culture of ministerial flourishing in which intentional patterns of pastoral supervision and reflective practice in ministry become accepted practice for licensed ministers, both lay and ordained (as commended in the draft CofE A Covenant for Clergy Care & Wellbeing 2018).

Some reflection has been done on the development of Local Ministers as a missional and pastoral resource – in Chelmsford Diocese, and in St David’s Diocese Church in Wales (where Heywood’s term ‘Focal Minister’ is used). These reflections suggest that Focal Ministers/Local Ministers can be effective leaders in mission for local church communities (Jackson), releasing missional energy in others. There are also indications that the formal designated Minister role can introduce a degree of gatekeeping which inhibits missional engagement – suggesting the important role which oversight can have in sustaining open and mission-enabling ministry culture and practice.
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5. The particular calling of Oversight Ministers

Whilst oversight is a dimension of all leadership within the Church, P&P introduces the particular role of Oversight Minister at local level, to lead a community of communities, overseeing a cluster of local churches, Fresh Expressions, schools-work and context mission initiatives. This *structural* shift requires a complementary renewal in *relational* ministry. The calling of Oversight Ministers is to promote the relational ministry in which all Baptised Christians may live out their vocation to follow Christ and make him known in the world.

Arising from the renewed missional imperative for the Church, the specific role of the Oversight Minister is to work collaboratively with others in three *inter-related responsibilities*:

- **To be a focus of unity for the people of God, helping Christian communities**
  - Moving forward and moving together
  - Discerning and articulating a vision for mission
  - Fostering collaboration and team-work in ministry and mission
  - Enabling and bringing about change
  - Identifying risks and resolving conflict
  - Linking with deanery, diocese and local partners – ecumenical, other faith groups, secular organisations

- **Enabling and sustaining the ministries of the whole People of God**
  - Discerning, developing and releasing the gifts of others
  - Clarifying tasks and opportunities
  - Supporting pathways into ministry, development and review

- **Keeping watch**
  - Ensuring the well-being of local churches, ministers and congregations
  - Taking care of self to ensure wellbeing
  - Holding the Oversight Area before God in a culture of prayer
  - Helping the ministers and communities to reflect theologically and to learn
  - Maintaining good stewardship of finance, resources and administration
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6. The particular character of Oversight Ministers

This ministry of fostering a mission-oriented relationality within the church, which engenders mutual care whilst also looking outwards in hospitality and service, requires particular gifts and skills.

A research community in Truro Diocese describes this aspect of oversight ministry in the following way (Truro 2018):

Skills and Character for Oversight Ministry: Enabling discipleship, travelling together.

Assumptions

- Oversight Ministers (OMs) are likely to be drawn, at least initially, from the church’s licensed ministers, hence the use below of the CofE generic selection criteria for ordained ministry, supplemented by ‘extra’ characteristics needed for OM.
- To enable suitably gifted lay people to serve as OMs, further consideration will be needed, regarding selection, training and deployment, but there is no theological or practical reason why this could not be so in due course.
- OMs will be working to build teams of clergy, Readers and other licensed, commissioned and authorised ministers, as well as lay leaders such as churchwardens, administrators and treasurers, across a network of local churches, church schools and mission initiatives, such as Fresh Expressions, church Community Centres or neighbourhood networks.
- Team sizes will vary as will team composition reflecting social geography and history
- Some OMs may be the sole full-time stipendiary person in their teams.
- Oversight ministers should not be solo-heroic leaders fixed in one church tradition.
- Oversight Ministers should be able to hold the big picture by being resilient, robust, emotionally mature, self-aware, comfortable with change, complexity and diversity, and confident in their vocation and calling.
- Oversight Minsters should hold the big picture by being able to ensure that discovering God’s kingdom and growing the church is at the heart of the vision of local churches.
- Oversight Ministers should be those who are able to draw together and enable a Team so that oversight is exercised through an oversight team rather than a single individual.
The following insights extend the current *Formation Criteria of the C of E* (currently under revision) in order to inform the discernment, formation and licensing of ordained ministers as Oversight Ministers:

- **Vocation**: Whilst valuing traditional ministries, OMs should be able to articulate a distinctive vocation to OM, seeing it as the opening and enabling of opportunities for all disciples rather than driven primarily by financial factors. They will be able to locate the distinctiveness of their ministry within the wider ecology of priestly ministry within the church.

- **Ministry within the Church of England**: OMs should be able to value, relate comfortably and work alongside to the diversity of traditions within the Church of England, ecumenically and in the wider community.

- **Spirituality**: OMs should be able to demonstrate how their personal pattern of spiritual practice supports and enables their ministry and extends into an oversight role. They should be able to articulate with confidence their identity in Christ across a range of church and community contexts.

- **Personality and Character**: OMs should have a proven track record of maturity and stability in the challenges posed by leadership roles. They should be able to articulate ways in which they approach the specific tensions encountered within OM.

- **Relationships**: OMs will have a passion for enabling the discipleship and ministry of others through the building and managing of teams and the intentional fostering of growth in discipleship in others. From an honest self-awareness of their own gifting they will be able to engage and resource the gifts of all God’s people in their corporate work and witness as the Body of Christ. They will be willing to engage courageously and appropriately with conflict.

- **Leadership and collaboration**: OMs should be able to discern and encourage collaboratively a vision for the kingdom of God in their contexts. They should be able to motivate and facilitate change whilst holding sensitively and creatively the tensions between past, present and future. They should be able to hold the bigger picture and plan strategically to inspire change. They should be prepared to take responsibility for making decisions appropriately, but also ready to allow decision-making by others, able to live, if necessary, with consequent disappointments.

- **Faith**: OMs should be able to articulate the gospel courageously within and outside the church. They should be able to lead the making of fruitful connections between gospel, church and wider community.

- **Mission and evangelism**: OMs should be able to motivate others’ involvement in mission, leading by example as appropriate. Their understanding of mission should be creative, inclusive and sympathetic to the spirituality of their churches.

- **Quality of Mind**: OMs should have an enthusiasm for life-long learning, engaging intelligently and creatively with both theological and wider cultural learning and being able to bring their reflections to bear on practice. They should be able to motivate and facilitate such learning in others.
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7. Shaping Oversight Ministers for particular contexts

The preceding reflections on oversight ministry are distilled into role descriptions (below) for the appointment of ministers who will share in the Bishop’s ministry of leading the Church in mission, generating and sustaining communities of love and service as a foretaste of God’s Kingdom. The roles of Area Dean, Oversight Minister, Local Minister and Context Minister are inter-related and complementary. Each role description describes generic responsibilities and associated gifts and skills. Specific appointments will of course take particular shape appropriate for context and culture.

The releasing of missional ministry through P&P requires a new structure for individual learning, ministerial formation, and the equipping of churches and other Christian communities for mission.
7a Oversight Minister

**Background to the role**

In faithfulness to our calling to *proclaim the gospel afresh to each generation*, Church of England Birmingham is developing its ministry structures and organisation to support the mission priorities of our Transforming Church strategy:

- Developing patterns of Christian community suited for mission in the 21st Century Birmingham-city region
- Strengthening the ministry of the whole people of God through encouraging vocation, discerning call and equipping for ministry.
- Releasing Christian women, men and young people to witness and serve as disciples of Christ in their everyday lives and communities.
- Renewing patterns of ordained and lay ministry for leading, guiding and sustaining an inter-cultural missional church in diverse communities and neighbourhoods.

An integral part of this transformation will be the role of Oversight Ministers who will lead a community of communities, overseeing the life of a number of local churches and Christian communities clustered in an Oversight Area.

Oversight Ministers will work collaboratively within an ecology of mission comprising a number of inter-related ministries and mission communities:

- **Within the Diocese**
  - Diocesan Bishop and Suffragan Bishop
  - Ministries, Mission & Parish Support services
  - 2 Archdeaconry Areas
  - Archdeacon of Birmingham/Aston
  - 6 Deanery Areas
  - Area Dean
  - 72 Oversight Areas
  - Oversight Minister

- **Within each Oversight Area**
  - Up to 12 Local Churches
  - Local Minister (lay or ordained)
  - Ministry Team comprising ordained & authorised lay ministers licensed/locally commissioned.
  - Context Ministers
  - Church Schools
  - Mission Communities, Fresh Expressions, Church Plant
  - Community Centre

**Oversight Ministry: Three inter-related responsibilities**

**To be a focus of unity for the people of God, helping Christian communities**

- Moving forward and moving together
- Discerning and articulating a vision for mission
- Fostering collaboration and team-work in ministry and mission
- Enabling and bringing about change
- Identifying risks and resolving conflict
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• Linking with deanery, diocese and local partners – ecumenical, other faith groups, secular organisations

Enabling and sustaining the ministries of the whole People of God
• Discerning, developing and releasing the gifts of others
• Clarifying tasks and opportunities
• Supporting pathways into ministry, development and review

Keeping watch
• Ensuring the well-being of local churches, ministers and congregations
• Taking care of self to ensure wellbeing
• Holding the Oversight Area before God in a culture of prayer
• Helping the ministers and communities to reflect theologically and to learn
• Maintaining good stewardship of finance, resources and administration

KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Generic responsibilities of Oversight Ministers
• To share with the Bishop both the cure of souls and in the responsibility, held under God, for the mission and ministry of the parishes and ecclesial communities in this Oversight Area/Mission Community/Cluster.
• Attending to and advancing the areas of transformation described in the Transforming Church initiative, collaborating with others to work towards fulfilling agreed goals of Transforming Church action plan(s) for the local churches in the Oversight Area.
• To be the Incumbent priest in the Benefice/Parishes, having regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy as described in the Canons, the Ordinal, the Guidelines for Professional Conduct of Clergy, and other relevant legislation and guidance.
• To work with the Archdeacon, Area Dean, Lay Chair and Operations Manager in developing the mission and ministry of the parishes.
• To work with the Local Ministers, local Ministry Teams, churchwardens, PCCs and other relevant bodies to develop the mission and ministry of the local church.
• To offer regular support, supervision and guidance for the Local Ministers, and to work with them in sustaining the ministry of lay and ordained licensed, commissioned and authorised ministers in the Ministry Teams of the local churches, including MDR and reflective practice.
• To participate in the diocesan programme of learning communities and to engage in support and supervision for Oversight Ministers with the Area Dean.
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Tasks specific to this particular appointment

An outline of the Oversight Area context for Oversight Ministry

- Up to 12 local churches, worshipping communities, schools, mission initiatives
  - church 1
  - church 2
  - church 3
  - church 4
  - Fresh Expression
  - church school/academy
  - Context-specific mission initiatives
- Ministry colleagues: Local Ministers, ministry teams and lay leaders
- Administrative support
- Buildings

PERSON SPECIFICATION

An Ordained Minister who is

- in Holy Orders for not less than three years
- recommended by their Bishop as suitable for Common Tenure Primary Responsibility leadership
- able to demonstrate the calling, character, gifts and skills to oversee a number of local churches and ecclesial communities in a range of parishes, institutions and networks
- shows capacity to foster collaboration between lay and ordained ministers (licensed, commissioned and authorised) and lay leaders
- committed to mutual flourishing envisaged in the Five Guiding Principles.

Key qualities and experience

- Missional leadership: the capacity to enable others in forming vision for mission appropriate to context, plan strategically, maximising opportunities to engage where God is at work.
- Discernment: the capacity to notice, nurture and deploy the skills and gifts of others within a shared commitment to the kingdom of God.
- Entrepreneurialism: the capacity to encourage new ideas, inspire action and commit to change in service of the vision.
- Leading through change: the capacity to start from the current context and draw others to engage in a constructive process of transformation, including constructive engagement with conflict and resolving disputes.
- Collaborative leadership: the ability to work collaboratively with due accountability and delegation, build and oversee Teams, negotiate difference, and take-forward shared decision-making strategies.
- Inclusiveness: the capacity to work with those of different theological perspectives, church tradition, culture and life experience.
- Effective communication: the capacity to create corporate life in which there is a culture of trust, openness and honesty in communication, listening well and ensuring that the voices of those on the margins are heard with respect.
- Spirituality: a person of prayer, rooted and nourished by a well-established personal practice of worship, reflection and study.
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- Personal resilience: the capacity to engage constructively with complexity, relate in an emotionally intelligent way, set and maintain appropriate boundaries in public representative ministry, take responsibility for their own well-being and nurture.
- ICT literate and willing to embrace new technologies.
- Ability to handle complex workload and competing demands.
- Commitment to the personal and professional development of self and others, including the ability to give and receive effective feedback.
- Experience of engaging in pastoral supervision and reflective practice in ministry.

An outline of Deanery context

- Area Dean and Lay Chair
- Chapter
- Synod
- Ecumenical partners
- Other faith communities
- Community partner organisations

An outline of Diocesan context

- Learning Community of Oversight Ministers
- Parish Mission support
- Clergy well-being
- MDR
- CMD
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7b Local Minister

Background to the role

In faithfulness to our calling to proclaim the gospel afresh to each generation, Church of England Birmingham is developing its ministry structures and organisation to support the mission priorities of our Transforming Church strategy:

- Developing patterns of Christian community suited for mission in the 21st Century Birmingham-city region
- Strengthening the ministry of the whole people of God through encouraging vocation, discerning call and equipping for ministry.
- Releasing Christian women, men and young people to witness and serve as disciples of Christ in their everyday lives and communities.
- Renewing patterns of ordained and lay ministry for leading, guiding and sustaining an inter-cultural missional church in diverse communities and neighbourhoods.

An integral part of this transformation will be the role of Local Ministers who will lead a church or worshipping congregation within an Oversight Area/Mission Community/Cluster, supported and led by an Oversight Minister and Area Dean.

Local Ministers will work collaboratively within an ecology of mission comprising a number of inter-related ministries and mission communities:

**Within the Diocese:**
- Diocesan Bishop and Suffragan Bishop
- Ministries, Mission & Parish Support services
- 2 Archdeaconry Areas
  - Archdeacon of Birmingham/Aston
- 6 Deanery Areas
  - Area Dean
- 72 Oversight Areas
  - Oversight Minister

**Within each Oversight Area:**
- Up to 12 Local Churches
  - Local Minister
  - Ministry Team comprising ordained & authorised lay ministers licensed/locally commissioned.
  - n Context ministers
  - Church Schools
  - Mission Communities, Fresh Expressions, Church Plants
  - Community Centres.
Local Ministry: Three inter-related responsibilities

To be a focus of unity for the people of God in the local church
- Helping the local Christian community to discern and articulate a vision for mission
- Fostering collaboration and team-working in ministry and mission
- Enabling and bringing about change
- Identifying risks
- Resolving conflict
- Linking with other churches and ministers in the Oversight Area
- Linking with local partners – ecumenical, other faith groups, secular organisations

Enabling and sustaining the ministries of the whole People of God in the local church
- Discerning gifts
- Clarifying tasks and opportunities
- Supporting initial ministry, development and review
- Offering regular support and supervision to Oversight Ministers

Keeping watch
- Ensuring the well-being of the local church, including fellow ministers, congregation(s) and individuals
- Keeping watch over self to ensure wellbeing
- Holding the local church before God
- Fostering a culture of prayer
- Helping the ministry team and local church to reflect and to learn together
- Sharing with the Oversight Minister in stewardship of finance, resources and administration of the local church

KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Generic responsibilities of Local Ministers
- To share with the Bishop and Oversight Minister in both the cure of souls and responsibility, held under God, for the mission and ministry of the local church.
- To work collaboratively with the Oversight Minister in attending to and advancing the areas of transformation described in the Transforming Church initiative.
- To enable team-working and collaborative leadership in the Local Church, enabling the local community to work towards fulfilling agreed goals of its Transforming Church action plan.
- To be the focal minister in the Benefice/Parish/Worshipping Community, having regard to the calling and responsibilities of a Licensed Minister as described in the Canons, the Ordinal, the Guidelines for Professional Conduct of Clergy, Guidelines for Reader Ministry, and other relevant legislation and guidance.
- To work with the Oversight Minister and ministry colleagues in developing the mission and ministry of the Oversight Area.
- To work with the local Ministry Team, churchwardens, PCC and other relevant bodies to develop the mission and ministry of the local church.
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- To engage with regular support, supervision and guidance for the Local Ministers, and to work with the Oversight Minister in sustaining the ministry of lay and ordained licensed, commissioned and authorised ministers in the local church.
- To participate in the diocesan programme of learning communities, CMD and engage in supervision and support for Local Ministry with the Oversight Minister.

Tasks specific to this particular appointment

An outline of the Local Church

- Ministry colleagues: Ministry teams comprising lay and ordained leaders
  - Licensed Ministers (Reader, Deacon, Priest)
  - Authorised ministers commissioned locally
- Leaders for specific ministries/mission initiatives
- Administrative support
- Buildings

An outline of the Oversight Area in which the Local Church is clustered

- Oversight Minister
- Up to 12 local churches, worshipping communities, schools, mission initiatives
  - church 1
  - church 2
  - church 3
  - church 4
  - Fresh Expressions
  - church school/academy
  - Context-specific mission initiatives
- Ministry colleagues: other Local Ministers, ministry teams and lay leaders
- Oversight Area Administrative support
- Buildings of other churches

PERSON SPECIFICATION

A Lay or Ordained Minister who is

- Licensed by the Bishop for this purpose
- able to demonstrate the calling, character, gifts and skills to oversee a local church/ ecclesial community
- shows capacity to foster collaboration between lay and ordained ministers (licensed, commissioned and authorised) and lay leaders
- committed to mutual flourishing envisaged in the Five Guiding Principles

Essential qualities and experience

- Missional leadership: the capacity to enable others in forming vision for mission appropriate to context, plan strategically, maximising opportunities to engage where God is at work.
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- Discernment: the capacity to notice, nurture and deploy the skills and gifts of others within a shared commitment to the kingdom of God.
- Entrepreneurialism: the capacity to encourage new ideas, inspire action and commit to change in service of the vision.
- Leading through change: the capacity to work with the Oversight Minister and local ministry colleagues in taking forward a constructive process of transformation.
- Collaborative leadership: the ability to work collaboratively with due accountability and delegation, build and lead a local Ministry Team, negotiate difference, and take-forward shared decision-making strategies.
- Inclusiveness: the capacity to work with those of different theological perspectives, church tradition, culture and life experience.
- Effective communication: the capacity to sustain a culture of trust, openness and honesty, listening well and ensuring that the voices of those on the margins are heard with respect.
- Spirituality: a person of prayer, rooted and nourished by a well-established personal practice of worship, reflection and study.
- Personal resilience: the capacity to relate in an emotionally intelligent way, set and maintain appropriate boundaries in public representative ministry, take responsibility for their own well-being and nurture.
- Commitment to the personal and professional development of self and others, including the ability to give and receive effective feedback.

An outline of Deanery context

- Area Dean and Lay Chair
- Chapter
- Synod
- Ecumenical partners
- Other faith communities
- Community partner organisations

An outline of Diocesan context

- Learning Community of Local Ministers/Local Ministry Teams
- Parish Mission support
- Clergy well-being
- MDR
- CMD
7c **Context Ministers**

As part of P&P, parishes will be invited to draw on Common Fund resources from 2020 for context specific ministries to lead local disciples in engaging missionaly with particular communities, neighbourhoods and mission opportunities.

In the spirit of co-operation and shared participation envisaged in a missional economy of oversight ministry, local worshipping communities are encouraged to collaborate at inter-parish and deanery level to discern where and with whom God is calling them to work and, as part of their Transforming Church action planning, to invest in context-specific ministers. These ministers, who may be lay or ordained, will be specialists in particular areas of ministry and mission, with skills in developing others and building capacity.

Examples of Context Ministers who will lead and equip others in mission and service locally are:

- Children’s and Families’ Missioner
- Youth Minister
- Children’s Minister
- Minister for Older People/Dementia specialist
- Chaplain – schools, retail, health-care, etc
- Inter-faith specialist
- Community Regeneration Worker
- Funerals Minister/Celebrant
- Lay Adult Educator in Discipleship
- Local Evangelist
7d Authorised lay ministries commissioned for local service

Flowing from the missional commitment to make more confident Christians and develop discipleship as a 24/7 lived experience, P&P will bring greater energy and intentionality for developing lay people to share their faith in Jesus Christ and to discern their vocation as disciples.

This includes developing opportunities for, and supporting the practice of, lay ministries in addition to the well-established and important Licensed Lay Minister office of Reader and Commissioned Pastoral Care Teams.

Developing new opportunities flows out of a renewed commitment to the value and quality of lay ministry, and involves a shift of focus from Lay Ministry as a role and an identity (with its emphasis on licensing, admission and categorisation), towards lay ministry as ‘commissioned tasks in service of the church and the gospel’ (CofE: Serving Together - The Report of the Lay Ministry Working Group 2015-16, section 1.4).
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7e Area Dean

As part of P&P, we are creating 6 new full-time stipendiary posts of Area Dean. A primary focus of the role will be the transformational leadership needed to bring about culture change in fostering a collaborative and empowering approach to ministry inter-connected with new arrangements for parish resourcing and deployment which will shape our local mission and ministry for the future. Each Area Dean shares the Bishop's leadership in mission and pastoral care in their deanery.

KEY AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Vision & Leadership

• Develop and support the implementation of a vision for mission in the Deanery, including specific initiatives such as Church Planting, Fresh Expressions, Mission Apprentice, Growing Younger.
• Within the P&P framework, establish, equip and support Oversight Ministers, Local Ministers and Lay Leaders for the worshipping communities in the Deanery, promoting team working and collaboration at every level.
• Be willing to coach, support and develop the gifts of emerging leaders. All of this will involve significant collaboration with others throughout the Diocese.
• Encourage parishes to work towards financial stability and to meet the costs of ministry identified through P&P.
• Ensure Transforming Church is embedded across the Deanery, with each parish having clear and regularly reviewed Transforming Church goals.
• Support and encourage those undertaking training such as Curates, Readers, Lay Leaders and others.
• Ensure that good practices for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults are understood and embedded in every parish.
• Take the role of Chair of Chapter and Joint Chair of Deanery Synod.
• Promote and enable collaboration in ministry and mission, including the sharing of resources across the Deanery and wider.
• Encourage the study of doctrine and learning for pastoral ministry within the Deanery.
• Encourage Deanery-wide collaboration and communication around common interests (for example context specific ministry, administration, finance, buildings etc).

Pastoral Care and Ministerial Development

• Ensure that all those in ministry and leadership have appropriate pastoral support provided for themselves and their families.
• Raise matters of concern regarding wellbeing of leaders (clergy and lay) with the Bishops, Archdeacons or others as appropriate, especially in cases of significant illness.
• Support new clergy, Licensed ministers and other leaders taking up posts in the Deanery.
• Offering regular support and supervision for Oversight Ministers and for Context Ministers with deanery-wide remit, creating and sustaining a culture where pastoral supervision and reflective practice become the norm for Licensed Ministers.
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- Ensure the fostering of a culture in which all Licensed and Commissioned Ministers participate in appropriate ministerial development, including MDR, CMD and relevant learning programmes for their role(s).
- Promote and model good practice in ministry.
- Provide signposting to resources and facilities to help clergy and other leaders to develop resilience and self-care.

Collaboration

This role will only be possible with significant collaboration and sharing resources with many across the Deanery and wider Diocese including (this is not an exhaustive list):

- The Bishops
- Archdeacons
- Deanery Lay Chair
- Other Area Deans and Deanery Lay Chairs
- Clergy, Lay Leaders, Lay Ministers
- Directors of Parish Mission, Ministry, Discipleship
- Those leading the P&P Programme
- Schools and other community partnerships
- Ecumenical partners

In particular, Area Deans should:

- Be a channel of communication between those in their Deanery and the Bishops, Archdeacons and CoFE Birmingham staff resourcing parishes, chaplaincies and schools. This will include attending regular meetings with other Area Deans and the Bishops, Archdeacons and other senior staff.
- Liaise with the Archdeacons for advice and support on day to day matters concerning the running of a parish.
- Work collaboratively with the Deanery Lay Chair and members of the Deanery Synod Standing Committee.

Administration

- During a vacancy:
  - Act as a Sequestrator along with the Churchwardens and any other person the Bishop may appoint.
  - Assist and support the Churchwardens as they provide for public worship and pastoral cover.
  - Hold securely the parish’s Confidential Declarations and other sensitive Safeguarding documents, and handle DBS administration if there is no other person in the parish with the necessary authority (such as a Parish Identity Verifier or a Parish Safeguarding Co-Ordinator)
  - Support and encourage Curates, Readers and others undertaking training.
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- When an appointment is being considered, attend and contribute to the Archdeacon’s Preliminary Meeting with the PCC, and any meeting called under Section 12 of the Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986.
- Work with the Archdeacon and PCC in crafting a relevant Role Description for the appointment which connects with local Transforming Church action plan(s).
- Share in the recruitment process for new incumbents by agreement with the patron.
- Work with Wardens of Readers and Assistant Wardens in supporting Readers.

- Be responsible for co-ordinating arrangements for new stipendiary parish priests’ Collation, Institution, Induction or Licensing.
- Ensure that calendar of Confirmation services for the Deanery is co-ordinated.
- Act as Returning Officer for elections when required. (This could be delegated to the Chapter clerk.)
- If a parish fails to keep an electoral roll, maintain a parochial church council or hold an annual parochial church meeting, verify the facts and then report the cause to the Bishop.
- Ensure those officiating in the Deanery have the necessary licence or permission.
- Have an understanding of the Canons, especially those which refer to Area Deans.
- Make arrangements for a deanery service for the annual admission of Churchwardens when requested by the Archdeacons.
- Deal with any other tasks required by the relevant Canons.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Leadership

We are looking for someone who:

- Has a desire to promote and enable change in ways which motivate others;
- As well as excellent leadership, is also a demonstrable team player;
- Has a passion for living the mission of Jesus that excites others to follow;
- Excellent communication skills and an ability to relate across a wide range of church traditions and social and ethnic contexts;
- A strength of character and ability to make difficult decisions and implement them;
- Ability to work constructively with difference in theology and tradition and committed to mutual flourishing envisaged in the Five Guiding Principles.

Experience

Previous experience should include:

- Ministry as a priest in the Church of England with at least six years in holy orders;
- Proven ability to build good working relationships;
- Experience of supervising ministers and facilitating reflective practice in ministry;
- Experience of coaching and developing others;
- Experience of delivering projects and tasks through to completion;
- Strong knowledge and experience of safeguarding practices for children and vulnerable adults
- Good understanding of financial management;
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- A deep and practical understanding of parish life;

**Personal**

Personal qualities should include:

- A compelling, warm and open demeanour with a collaborative working style;
- The capacity to be flexible and to work under pressure, with good levels of personal organisation and an ability to work to deadlines;
- Confidence and ability in handling sensitive information;
- Confidence in using technology such as smart phones, tablets, laptops and social media;
- An ability to model a responsible and healthy life balance;
- Resilience and good humour

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

- This is a full-time office held under Common Tenure.
- The stipend is £25,620
- A house in the deanery will be provided.
- The office holder will be a member of the Church of England Funded Pensions Scheme.
- Annual leave is 6 weeks.
- The office is subject to three months’ notice from the office holder.
- Reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed in line with the Church of England Birmingham’s Expenses Policy. Business car mileage is reimbursed at the prevailing diocesan rate, currently 45p per mile within Birmingham diocese and 30p per mile outside the diocese.
- This office is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check and Barred List check and an unconditional commendation from the individual’s current diocesan bishop.
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**CANONS RELATING TO AREA DEANS**

The following are summaries – it is recommended that the full Canons should be consulted ([https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/canons-church-england](https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/canons-church-england))

The Area Dean ....

C23
- should report to the bishop any matter in any parish within the deanery which it may be necessary or useful for the bishop to know, particularly any serious clergy illness or distress;
- should report to the bishop any case of a minister from another diocese officiating in any place otherwise than as provided in Canon C8 (which requires the Bishop’s licence or authorisation);
- is to notify the Bishop of any failure to maintain and electoral roll or hold PCC meetings or Annual Parochial Church meeting;
- reports to the archdeacon any serious defect in the fabric, ornaments and furniture of any church

E5  may nominate a person to be a Reader in an area wider than a single parish

Where there is no minister of a parish, the Area Dean....

B2  acts with a PCC to request the Bishop’s permission to continue use of an order of service whose authorisation has expired;

B12 requests the Bishop, with the agreement of churchwardens, to authorise a baptised and confirmed person to distribute the Holy Sacrament (*Regulation November 1969*)

B42 acts with a PCC to request the Bishop’s permission to use a translation of an order of service;

B43 issues any invitation to a minister of another denomination to participate in worship;

B44 acts with a PCC regarding arrangements for a Local Ecumenical Partnership

D1 oversees the ministry of any deaconess

E4 invites a Reader to conduct a funeral, with the goodwill of the persons responsible;

E7 may invite the Bishop to authorize a lay worker;

When authorised or requested by the Archdeacon, the Area Dean....

C11 may induct a newly instituted incumbent;

F17 ensures that ministers and churchwardens have compiled and kept a full note and terrier of all lands, goods and other possessions of the parish churches and chapels;

F18 shall survey the churches, chancels and churchyards and report any defects in the fabric, ornaments and furniture
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8. New learning structures: Discipleship and mission; ministerial vocation and development; parish mission development

Fundamental to the mission emphasis of Transforming Church will be a renewed culture of learning for discipleship and ministry, offering an economy of flexible and modular pathways for both individuals and teams, enabling lay and ordained to discern and fulfil their Christian calling through growth in character, knowledge and skill.

This transformative learning will be focussed in three inter-related and complementary areas and it will be essential that there is strong collaboration between these areas, under the oversight of the Bishop of Aston:

- **Learning for Discipleship and Mission**
  *including the development of lay leadership and vocation to ministry*

- **Ministry**
  *including the development of licensed lay and ordained ministries*

- **Parish Mission Support**
  *including the development of lay and ordained leadership in mission and resourcing of Transforming Church action plans*

This work is detailed in Birmingham diocese’s associated Strategic Development Fund application (Stage One) entitled ‘People & Places: Leadership Pathway and Context Ministry’.

The philosophy of learning informing this approach is theologically grounded and inspired by the complementary life of the Holy Trinity in which mutual exchange and flourishing is a continual dynamic of the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A community of learning for discipleship and ministries, focussing on the development of knowledge, character and skill through a flexible, inclusive, portfolio approach to learning in which different individuals and ministry cohorts can learn together – often as ministry teams - in a complementary and mutually enriching way through a range of different pedagogical approaches and learning experiences which model collaboration.
9. Transforming Governance structures and processes

Supporting and extending the missional emphasis of Transforming Church will be a renewed governance framework to sustain and develop the ministry of oversight under the leadership of the diocesan bishop, ordering the way in which the strategy and operations of the diocese are formed, directed, managed and reviewed.

Set within the economy of attentiveness to Scripture, prayer and theological reflection which characterises all our mission as a community of disciples, the transforming governance framework will enable a collaborative ethos of mutual trust, particular leadership responsibility and focused accountability which mirrors the loving and creative authority, obedience and interdependence of God the Holy Trinity.

In terms of particular roles and responsibilities commissioned by the bishop, this framework ensures that:

- Those with leadership responsibility, including all Directors, are appropriately acknowledged, engaged, aligned, informed and accountable for an agreed set of collective priorities.
- The particular gifts of individuals can contribute appropriately without everyone having to attend every meeting.
- A cascade of consistent communication is integral to the way in which we work as church.
- A new collaborative culture with new behaviours fostering authentic team-working, open to challenge and receiving with grace, is fostered and sustained.

Under this proposal the current pattern of Bishop’s Staff Meeting, Area Deans’ meeting and the Transforming Church Committee would be dissolved, to be replaced by two new board structures: one for Transforming Church Oversight (Strategic) and the other for P&P Oversight (Delivery), alongside the existing line management (Functional) which sets individual responsibilities and targets.

Alongside these board structures, Reference Groups could be set up as appropriate to glean wisdom from a wider range of stakeholders or from people with a particularly relevant expertise. These groups would enable a more diverse mix of lay and ordained, paid and unpaid, and under-represented groups to have a say. These Reference Groups can be more informal and fluid than the board structure and could meet for a short-term reason and then disband (Meet/Complete/Delete). They would serve a useful purpose for generating creative ideas, working through knotty issues, as two-way communication channels, and for buy-in and reality checking.
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10. Conclusion

In his paper *An Invitation to Explore Being the Church of England Birmingham Here and Now* Bishop David says:

‘...the church is facing a time of change in its habits of worship and in its shaping of representative ministry; a time when the appreciation of the fruitfulness of lay discipleship, leadership and ministry is growing, and when there is both excitement and a lack of clarity about the emerging shape of representative lay ministry within the church. Alongside this there is the beginning of a recognition that some current models of ministry are unsustainable and, in places, unhealthy. Together we face, perhaps with apprehension or perhaps with excitement, both challenges and opportunities as we reflect together on our vocation for the next season of the church’s life.’ (2018, 9)

Rooting our corporate life in the theological vision of God as Trinity empowers us to evolve structures and practices for ministry and mission which are appropriate for compelling and prophetic witness in the contexts and cultures in which we live out our Christian calling across Birmingham diocese. Oversight ministry takes specific shape in the particular roles and responsibilities of offices outlined in the Appendices below. Yet collaboration, team-working, and the building-up of one another – enabling the God-given gifts of others to bear fruit for the sake of the Gospel and the growth of the Kingdom - are values that will shape all our practice as disciples, ministers and communities of Christ Jesus.

The shared love and co-operation of the Holy Trinity, whose divine image we bear as human beings created by God, is a profoundly missional disposition. In Rublev’s allusive icon of the Holy Trinity we see a mutuality and hospitality between the three figures which is not restricted to them. The image is of an open table to which others are welcome, not only as guests, but also as participants in the feast of divine life. Faithfully shaping the pattern of our structures, processes and practice around the trinitarian hospitality of this open table will be transformational for us as individuals and churches, and for the communities in which we serve and witness.

Mark Pryce, Director of Ministry 24. x. 2018.
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Supporting Documents

- CofE: Declarations of Assent. 
- https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship.../declaration-assent
- CofE: Common Worship Ordination Services
  - https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer.../common-worship-ordination-services
- Jackson, Bob. 2017. *Focal Ministers & Church Growth in St David’s presentation.*
- Leth-Nissen, Karen Marie *Churching Alone*
  - https://teol.ku.dk/ast/ansatte/?pure=da%2Fpublications%2Fchurching-alone(1b0199cb-cc6c-4c6d-ab06-5825e0019e8c).html
- Rublëv, Andrej *Icon of The Hospitality of Abraham* (The Most Holy and Undivided Trinity) – Wikimedia Commons.
Endnotes

i ‘...the quantum of official Anglican doctrine about the Church is limited...its character is to say what is necessary to keep the faithful on the road to salvation, and little more...it is concerned with what works in the Christian life and in the life of the community; it is focussed on doing the job...the doctrinal legacy is not systematized or codified, but allowed to be occasional, untidy and incomplete...eclectic and unlikely to deny it...provisional in the light of the one holy catholic and apostolic church that we confess in the Creed...’. (Avis 2010,155-157)

ii ‘...Deacons are ordained so that the people of God may be better equipped [Ephesians 4.12] to make Christ known. Theirs is a life of visible self-giving. Christ is the pattern of their calling and their commission; as he washed the feet of his disciples, so they must wash the feet of others [John 13.15].’

‘...Priests are ordained to lead God’s people in the offering of praise and the proclamation of the gospel. They share with the Bishop in the oversight of the Church, delighting in its beauty and rejoicing in its well-being. They are to set the example of the Good Shepherd [John 10.11; 1 Peter 5.1-4] always before them as the pattern of their calling. With the Bishop and their fellow presbyters, they are to sustain the community of the faithful by the ministry of word and sacrament, that we all may grow into the fullness of Christ [Ephesians 4.13] and be a living sacrifice acceptable to God [Romans 12.1].’

‘...Bishops are ordained to be shepherds of Christ’s flock [Ezekiel 34.1,2]and guardians of the faith of the apostles [1 Timothy 6.20], proclaiming the gospel of God’s kingdom and leading his people in mission. Obedient to the call of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, they are to gather God’s people and celebrate with them the sacraments of the new covenant. Thus formed into a single communion of faith and love, the Church in each place and time is united with the Church in every place and time.’

iii ‘...the Church is the God-involving embodiment of its primary characteristics: to be one, to be holy, to be universal (catholic) and to be apostolic. Whilst in a sense these characteristics are nascent in every Christian, the individual Christian – or local group – can exercise them only in a in a very limited sphere and does so only contingently. By general agreement therefore, a social meaning – a structure – is chosen by which these characteristics are ‘placed’ in a wider framework in such a way as to ensure that they are fulfilled. And – at least ideally – this structure ensures that these ‘primary characteristics’ are pursued everywhere, from each locality to the whole world.’ (Hardy 2001, 250).