

What is Mission?



The heart and purpose of the Church is Mission

The Lambeth Indaba Reflections from the 2008 Conference describe mission as ‘the total action of God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit - creating, redeeming, sanctifying - for the sake of the whole world’ and acknowledges ‘the important dimensions of mission as God’s reaching out to all of creation, challenging our structures as well as our souls, our communities as well as our Churches.’

We hear from the Bishops at Lambeth 2008 that -

In Christ Jesus, God has revealed himself as the self-giving Lord of Creation, full of compassion and mercy. That same Son who was sent by the Father into the world, in turn sent forth his disciples, instructing them to proclaim the good news, making disciples and baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. For God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. It is therefore God’s mission in which we share.

Mission belongs to God and we are called to engage in this mission so that God’s will of salvation for all may be fulfilled. In this sense, mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. The Church exists as an instrument for that mission. There is church because there is mission, and not vice versa. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people, since God is the fountain of sending love.

As Anglicans, we value the “five marks of mission”, which begin with the preaching of the Gospel and the call to personal conversion, but which embrace the whole of life: we would wish to see increased emphasis on ecumenism, peace-making and global mutuality as integral parts of God’s mission. Mission is a rich and diverse pattern faithful to the proclamation of the Reign of God in Christ Jesus; a proclamation which touches all areas of life.

Mission has been broadly understood in two ways in the Diocese.

- First, there has been the strong desire to respond to the good news of Jesus by engaging in mission which leads to community transformation where we campaign against inequality and unjust structures and seek to help the poor, the marginalized and those in need.
- Secondly, there has been a deep commitment to share the story of Jesus with those who live around us in such a way that personal transformation and conversion of life takes place.

We seek to seek to balance both of these important emphases which we find in scripture and the tradition of the Church. In seeking to be a missional church, the Diocese has embraced the

Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion

- 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 the unjust structures of society.
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth