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KNARESBOROUGH TEAM MINISTRY

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'VISION 2030' – Resourcing the Future

Dear Friends,

I am writing to you to highlight the above document that has been generated from our Diocese.

It is a document that encourages all our churches to be 'Confident in the Gospel', to find ways to 'Grow disciples of Jesus' and to 'Change and become relevant to our Communities'.

HOWEVER it also informs us of three important realities for the future:

1. Firstly, that as the Church of England our distinctive vocation is to be the church of the parish, concerned for everyone and everything. Unfortunately, we cannot do that any longer through a minister who operates or is forced to operate a traditional approach to the cure of souls in every one of the communities in a multi-church group. Nor can we persist in thinking that church is that which happens in a particular building on a Sunday morning. We need to recognize that, whilst the gathering of the Eucharistic community is vital, church is also manifested in the School, in the house group, in the fresh expression, and incorporate these other manifestations of church in our thinking and praying and planning.
2. The second reflection is realism. 40% of stipendiary clergy will retire in the next 10 years and there are simply not the vocations coming through to replace them. We need to be plan for this reality.
3. The third is that the whole people of God need to take responsibility for the ministry and mission of the church. We all give thanks for the service of all those who contribute to sustaining the welcome, worship and witness of the parish church: Churchwardens, Treasurers, Secretaries, Administrators, Servers, Musicians, Sunday School teachers, to name a few. This needs to grow so all take responsibility for being the church in that place.

This has major implications for the role of those who are ordained. Bishop James suggests that one of the key roles of the ordained is oversight: enabling the body to grow and to function in each place. That means discerning and releasing the gifts given in the body, giving authority according to gifting and encouraging collaboration and valuing all contributions to life and work of the church in those places. It's about shared values and relationships.

Justin Welby said recently: 'Any church that leaves things to the 'professionals' is committing missionary suicide... The responsibility of demonstrating in word and works the love of Jesus Christ, in a way that is deeply attractive is the responsibility of every single Christian. Always. Everywhere.'

This is not a letter to scaremonger, but to inform you that we as a Team are going to be considering the implications of this document very carefully over the coming years – we are conscious that from a clerical point of view, we will be down to TWO stipendiary clergy in the next couple of years... we simply cannot sustain our current levels of provision on that basis... hard decisions will have to be made so that we can continue to be Confident, Growing and Changing. I am excited to say that already we are putting some planning into a Pastoral Group that will support the visiting side of the Team, and more information about this initiative will be coming to you soon. Some other possible thoughts need to be around:

- What is our bigger vision?
- What would be most important for us should everything else be stripped away?
- How are we to be a flourishing Christian presence in every community?
- How are we to develop the role(s) of the laity? How will it look in 2030?
- How are we to understand the role of the ordained? How will it look in 2030?
- How are we to communicate our vision?
- How are we to work together to accomplish the vision?

We here in the Knaresborough Team Ministry are on with planning ahead... we certainly want to be in control of our own destiny rather than be rocked by the currents of the wider national church. At this juncture, I just wish to reiterate my thanks to you for your faithfulness and offer this prayer as we begin to engage with the process

God of time and seasons: Pour out your Holy Spirit upon our Diocese of Leeds, upon our Episcopal Area and upon our Team Ministry.

Give us faith to look through your lens, to catch your vision for 2030 and to trust in you.

Use me, Lord; use us, in active service for growing the Body of Christ and the coming of your Kingdom. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen

With my continued blessing,

Garry

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Leeds

God of Mission
Who alone brings growth to your
Church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning,
Wisdom to our actions,
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen