

Mission Action Planning in the Diocese of London

Seven Marks of a Healthy Church

1. **Energized by faith** rather than just keeping things going or trying to survive

- *worship and sacramental life*: moves people to experience God's love
- *motivation*: energy comes from a desire to serve God and one another
- *engaging with Scripture*: in creative ways connect with life
- *nurtures faith in Christ*: helping people to grow in, and share their faith.

2. **Outward-looking focus** with a 'whole life' rather than a 'church life' concern

- deeply rooted in the *local community*, working in partnership with other denominations, faiths, secular groups and networks
- passionate and prophetic about *justice and peace*, locally and globally
- makes connections between *faith and daily living*
- responds to human need by *loving service*

3. **Seeks to find out what God wants** discerning the Spirit's leaning rather than trying to please everyone

- *vocation*: seeks to explore what God wants it to be and do
- *vision*: develops and communicates a shared sense of where it is going
- *mission priorities*: consciously sets both immediate and long-term goals
- able to call for, and make, *sacrifices*, personal and corporate, in bringing about the above and living out the faith.

4. **Faces the cost of change and growth** rather than resisting change and avoiding failure

- while embracing the past, it dares to take on *new ways* of doing things
- *takes risks*: and admits when things are not working, and learns from experience
- *crises*: responds creatively to challenges that face the church and community
- *positive experiences of change*: however small, are affirmed and built on.

5. **Operates as a community** rather than functioning as a club or religious organisation

- *Relationships*: are nurtured, often in small groups, so people feel accepted and are helped to grow in faith and service
- *leadership*: lay and ordained work as a team to develop locally appropriate expressions of all seven marks of a healthy church
- *lay ministry*: the different gifts, experiences and faith journeys of all are valued and given expression in and beyond the life of the church.

6. Makes room for all being inclusive rather than exclusive.

- *welcome*: works to include newcomers into the life of the church
- *children and young people*: are helped to belong, contribute and be nurtured in their faith
- *enquirers* are encouraged to explore and experience faith in Christ
- *diversities*: different social and ethnic backgrounds, mental and physical abilities, and ages, are seen as a strength.

7. Does a few things and do them well focused rather than frenetic.

- *does the basics well*: especially public worship, pastoral care, stewardship and administration
- *occasional offices*: make sense of life and communicate faith
- *being good news* as a church in its attitudes and ways of working
- *enjoys what it does* and is relaxed about what is not being done