

The Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

(Anglican Church of Southern Africa in Limpopo)
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09 June 2016

To All: Clergy
 Churchwardens
 Leaders of Organisations
 Diocesan Youth Council

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. He promised to send the Holy Spirit after his ascension – and he did! Alleluia!

Goals, Priorities and Ways

Last weekend we had our annual Archdeacons' Lekgotla, followed by the Diocesan Lekgotla organised by Finance Board. Various Diocesan leaders met to seek God's direction for the next year or two. They were really encouraging, positive days. So I want to share with you what emerged.

We based the Diocesan Lekgotla on the priorities that emerged last year, were reflected in my opening Charge to Synod 2015, and were agreed to by Synod. What follows is the outline we used, plus the decisions and recommendations that were made under many of the headings.

We noted that Solomon Makololo has retired from the Diocesan Staff, and that there are likely to be other vacancies as well next year. So that gives us some space to think creatively about the way forward.

1.1 Six Goals for Each Parish

The six goals below are well established in our life. We are making good progress on some of them, but little has happened with others...

1.1.1 Stipendiary Rector

We have one student at COTT (Prince Mphoshi) and Vocations Conference has identified 3 more to send as soon as possible! This is very exciting, but ***how can we raise the funds for this to happen?*** We agreed on a number of steps to take:

- 1) Finance Working Committee will look into the financial implications over a 10 year period. What will it cost to train and place all the clergy we need for our growing number of parishes? We noted that three new Rectories have been built in the Western Archdeaconry – they will need priests to occupy them and serve those parishes.
- 2) We will approach the College of the Transfiguration (COTT) to see if they have bursaries available.
- 3) We will explore: to what extent can COTT draw on SETA and other Government Funding, since it is now registered as a Tertiary Educational Institution?
- 4) We need to continue to encourage our members to support the Ordination Candidates' Fund through Give for Growth and Confirmation collections.
- 5) I will approach overseas friends of the Diocese (I have "commissaries" or representatives in the UK, Germany, New Zealand and Australia who may be able to help).

- 6) We will encourage Investment by families and businesses into our Ordination Candidates at Theological College – the annual fees are about R56,000, plus books, allowances and travel costs. We will organise dinners with the Bishop for groups of professional people to share the vision and ask for support. We will investigate whether Section 18A tax certificates are available if people give directly to COTT as a bursary for candidates from the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist.
- 7) We also encourage parishes to invest in the training of candidates. One (Mashashane) has already offered to do this, and a few others are giving (or have given in the past) some support to ordinands.

We agreed to budget for two students at COTT next year, but to work hard at fundraising so that we can send four if at all possible (including Prince Mphoshi who is already there) next year.

Another interesting and potentially exciting development: three clergy from other churches want to join us and become Anglican Priests in the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist. So we asked ourselves, how do we help them to make the transition and train them to be **Anglican** clergy? What are the budget implications? We decided to ask Chapter to develop a way in which they can serve a “curacy” in different parishes, so that they can learn an Anglican way of doing things. Of course we will also need to do the necessary background checks: criminal record, debt, and the sexual offences register. They will also need training in the Pastoral Standards of ACSA.

1.1.2 Team of Self Supporting Clergy

We are doing quite well with this, and God is raising up many people to serve as Self-Supporting Clergy. We recognised that all our clergy need **support and training in Christian listening and counselling**. They often have to share heavy loads with their people (Galatians 6:2). We therefore agreed that next year’s Clergy School should focus on equipping the clergy with skills for counselling and pastoral care. We also need people to whom they can turn for guidance and debriefing. We decided to establish a database of people who can be available for clergy support: psychologists, social workers etc. Please remember that we already have three retired clergy who are available to counsel or listen to clergy who need support: Nehemiah Mothiba, Alfred Malete and Theo Schmidt.

1.1.3 Many Lay Leaders

Now that Solomon Makololo has retired, training of Churchwardens and Church Councils is the responsibility of the various archdeaconries – drawing on those who are part of the Diocesan Leadership Team. Training for Ministries continues to do great work with Lay Ministers. See also section 1.3.1 below.

1.1.4 Church Supported Youth Pastor

We recognised that most parishes are nowhere near achieving this goal – although it really is not that difficult or expensive. **Therefore we agreed that this must be a priority for the coming year.** The Volunteer and Interns Programme is developing really well, and could be a way of making this happen. Therefore we agreed on the following steps:

- 1) We will ask the Volunteer and Interns Programme (VIP) Committee to take this further. Parish Youth Pastors could be part of this programme.
- 2) In the Interns’ Mission to parishes, they will be asked to help parishes identify and prepare to have Interns who are Youth Pastors.
- 3) We (especially clergy) will all be on the lookout for people with the potential to be Interns, Youth Pastors and possible future Clergy. It will be particularly important to engage with students at universities and other tertiary institutions. Ansoz/ASF can play a valuable role here.
- 4) We will prepare a publicity leaflet & information for the parishes. Parish Councils will be asked to put it on their agenda and report back on their progress. The VIP Committee will give them some guidance on the concrete steps to make it happen.

One exciting development: We have identified and interviewed a high quality potential Intern or Member of Diocesan Staff who is a professional **“Child and Youth Development Practitioner”**, and agreed to include this in the Budget for 2016.

1.1.5 [Community Development Projects using Church Land and Facilities](#)

This is an important goal, and we are slowly starting to make progress.

- 1) With the help of Green Anglicans, we have an **Environmental Intern**, Robbie Stuart-Thompson of St Paul's Haenertsburg, for the rest of this year. He is available to address churches, young people and organisations to raise awareness.
- 2) **"Awaken"**, the Church & Community Mobilisation Project (CCMP) is preparing to work with three pilot parishes: Mashashane, Modimolle and St Luke.
- 3) We recognised that **this area can be combined with developing and discipling the youth**. The Child and Youth Development Practitioner could also play a part here.

1.1.6 [All Members Using Their Gifts](#)

Helping our members to discover and grow in their gifts is one of the most important ongoing tasks of the church, and a critical part of growing as disciples of Jesus.

1.2 ~~Three~~ Four Priorities!

Last year we identified three priorities for action. This year we affirmed them and added a fourth!

1.2.1 [Practical Discipleship](#)

- 1) We must continue to provide training and support for leaders of Rooted in Jesus (I am in the process of appointing a new Oversight team). We must also keep looking for new teaching materials and make them available, for example: ACSA Stewardship Programme, Nothing for Mahala, The God Who Is There...
- 2) We must continue to equip clergy/preachers to teach people about living as disciples of Jesus? Langham preaching is an important part of this.
- 3) We agreed to work on finding ways to do **research on the needs of our people**: in what ways do they feel they need help and guidance from the church?

1.2.2 [Multiplication with Transformation](#)

Although many people are in our churches, **many more are not** – nor are they in any other church! So we need to learn how to meet people where they are and according to their needs. And we may need to develop new kinds of churches for 21st century people, alongside our existing, more traditional ones.

MSM (Mission Shaped Ministry) Training continues, and more of our people (lay and clergy) are receiving training this year. It teaches us to reach out with God's love to people who are not part of the church. It can lead to planting new kinds of churches known as "Fresh Expressions of Church". Later this month our **Clergy School** will be the MSI (Mission Shaped Introduction) course. Please see the Ad Clerum Notices for more.

1.2.3 [Community Development Using Church Facilities](#)

See 1.1.5 above.

1.2.4 [Bringing the members of the Diocese on to MyAnglican](#)

This is the **new priority** that we added.

MyAnglican is the Church Management and Database system that is being developed by Michael Künz of Growing the Church. It has been endorsed by the Bishops of ACSA, and we want to help **every member of the church in the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist** to be registered on it. This will help us in countless ways with our mission and ministry: to communicate with our members, keep up to date with church statistics, keep financial records, register for conferences and events, and much more...

At present our Interns are helping us to capture information, but we are also hoping that MyAnglican will develop a mobile App so that everyone can keep their own details up to date, and access information about their church and Diocese.

1.3 Two Ways

1.3.1 Leadership Training

We have recognised that leadership training (both lay and clergy) will always be an important part of our work. At the Lekgotla we highlighted two things here:

- 1) The role of the Leadership Team has been transferred to Archdeaonries. We decided that we can help them to do this by designing a **short training sessions** for the start of each Parish Council and Archdeaconry Council Meeting.
- 2) In recent years we have had a focus on training Parish Councils to comply with the rules regarding elections, duties of the Council and financial management. We decided that this need to be expanded to take forward the process of **clergy appraisals**. This will help clergy to evaluate how they are doing, and get further training in areas where they are not strong.

1.3.2 Involve the Youth in Everything

See 1.1.4 above... But this also requires a change of thinking in all of us who are older. How can we **consciously and deliberately invite young people** to participate in everything we do? For example, how about letting the youth elect “Youth Churchwardens” to work alongside Churchwardens and learn from them?

Youth Camp – Follow Up

Last time I wrote quite strongly about my disappointment with the Youth Camp that took place at the end of last year. Since then I have met with the Diocesan Youth Council and interacted with the former Youth Consultant. He explained to me why he had felt it necessary to leave the camp and play no further part in it – and I accept his explanation. He also made plans to transfer the camp money to the DYC Leaders at the camp, and this did take place. Before the camp he did a lot to help with budgeting and some of the supplies needed. He has made some useful recommendations about how to guide our youth leaders in the future. It has also become clear to me that, while the DYC did their best to plan and arrange things, these plans and arrangements fell very far short of what was needed. That is partly why some of our young people misbehaved at the camp. In future the camp organisers will need a lot more help and direction.

In the meantime, and before I can agree to another Diocesan Youth Camp, the focus must be on **making young disciples of Jesus in our parishes**. What I have written above about young people will be an important strategy to do this. I have also asked each Archdeacon to appoint an Archdeaconry Youth Chaplain (who may be lay or ordained) to work with parish youth leaders. From among these Archdeaconry Chaplains I will select a new Diocesan Youth Chaplain.

I am looking forward to meeting with youth leaders from all the parishes at the **Bishop’s Youth Day**:

Thursday 16th June from 09:00 to 15:00

At Christ Church Cathedral.

We have invited six youth leaders from every parish to come.

God bless you as you live and serve in the love and power of the Holy Spirit.

Yours in Christ,



†Martin: St Mark the Evangelist