**HARTLAND DEANERY PLAN – FEEDBACK GIVEN AT DEANERY SYNOD 24.10.19**

The plan will eventually be developed from the common themes drawn from the ‘Answers on a Postcard’ exercise. The **‘Four Mirrors’** are themes drawn from responses across the diocese including Hartland Deanery, and are offered as tools to reflect back on the responses to stimulate conversation.

**MIRROR 1: MODE OF MISSION**

The predominate mode of mission in the responses is **Attraction**, ie a desire to see people join existing congregations and activities. But there was an understanding that what was currently offered was not attracting people.

To a slightly lesser extent is the **Engagement** mode of mission, ie where church encourages and supports members to play key roles in community activities, or to initiate activities that serve the community outside the church. This changes the way we think if we realise this is ministry.

To a small extent, the responses indicate **Vicarious Religion**, ie religion is ‘done’ by the few on behalf of the many. It is valuable to be a Christian presence, but not enough as a mode of mission.

***Challenge, and discussion question:***

**How might worship services need to change to be more attractive to those who do not currently come or who only come infrequently?**

**MIRROR 2: DIOCESAN VISION**

The overarching vision of Exeter Diocese is to:

1.  Grow in prayer 2. Make new disciples 3. Serve the people of Devon with joy;

further refined with emphasis on the following groups to make new disciples:

 Over 55s; children, young people and families; students and youth; those on the fringe.

Hartland Deanery showed a strong pull towards Making New Disciples, especially children, young people and families. But discipleship has 2 facets: making new disciples AND deepening the faith of those currently in church. Much of the serving in the deanery takes place outside the auspices of the church. Based on this, 3 questions can be helpful in developing a vision for the church:

1. How do our services and activities help those who are seeking faith to connect with God?
2. What are we consciously doing outside of Sunday services to deepen our faith and expand our understanding?
3. What are the specific needs of our communities and how might we work with others to help meet them?

***Discussion question:***

**What are we consciously doing outside of Sunday services to deepen our faith and expand our understanding?**

**MIRROR 3: SURVIVAL STRATEGY**

Hartland Deanery responses indicated the full range from ‘planting seeds’ to ‘amalgamations and even church closures’. There was a recognition that those currently serving the church are limited and often exhausted. But there was an appetite for change to allow growth. This prompts the **discussion questions**:

1. **What practical steps can we take to encourage growth?**
2. **Is there a sense of inevitability about decline which prevents us from taking risks in our faith and ministry?**

We need to see things through God’s eyes and take the risk. Does the fear of decline dampen our faith?

**MIRROR 4: FIVE MARKS OF MISSION**

These express the Anglican Communion’s common commitment to, and understanding of, God’s holistic and integral mission and are:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Hartland Deanery responses display the understanding of 1, 2 and 3 above. There were no significant references to justice and ecology, which raises the reminder not to be content to alleviate people’s needs without seeking to transform the underlying systems that keep them in need.

The challenges are:

1. How can we be more confident in our articulation and understanding of the Christian faith, which we seek to share with others?
2. How do we go beyond meeting needs and transform causes?
3. How do we, as a Mission Community, engage with issues of justice and ecology?

**Discussion question:**

**How can we be more confident in our articulation and understanding of the Christian faith, which we seek to share with others?**