Recognising the need for a clear sense of our identity and deep roots, but also the imperative to present the Gospel afresh in our generation in London in 2006, the Church in the Diocese of London made a series of commitments under the London Challenge.

More than five years later, London is a much changed city with many issues and the Church continues to play a pivotal role. We pray that this brief tour of how the Church empowered by the Spirit has played out its commitments will encourage and inspire our vision for what the future might look like as we seek to serve Jesus Christ in this great city.
It took me a long time to find a church that suited me, so when I came across St Michael’s, I knew it was going to be my spiritual home. The combination of the traditional order of the mass, the modern screen, relevant and accessible preaching, and the varied approach to music is a perfect balance for worship. It provides me, each week, with renewed inspiration, energy and enthusiasm.

St Michael’s worship is fresh and vibrant. It has a 21st-century feel and appeal, beautifully wrapped in the splendour of a well-loved 19th-century church.

The liturgy at St Michael’s is reverent, accessible and inclusive. Traditional in structure and modern in the way it’s celebrated, each celebration is designed to feed us with life, joy and light. It is a gathering to feed from Word and Sacrament – providing the sustenance we need to go out and serve the Lord during the week.

The mass is our celebration, so we invite everyone to use their gifts and talents as widely as possible within it. One of the great successes of this approach is our serving team, which has an average age of 10 and has nearly 50 members.

We moved away from traditional pipe organ accompaniment, with hymn book and mass sheet, and have grown to rejoice in modern technology. Our music accompaniment is now digital, and all sung parts of the parish mass are projected on to a large screen behind the Nave Altar. This has allowed us to explore a diversity of liturgical music that we simply couldn’t access before. It enriches our worship tremendously.

We can now find ourselves singing one hymn to the backing of a full brass band and then another to the accompaniment of piano, guitar, strings and flute.

“I’m so glad I found St Michael’s – what a tremendous atmosphere of welcome and love.”
Sharing the good news in Bow
Cris Rogers, Vicar of All Hallows Bow, writes

All Hallows Bow is on the Lincoln Estate, a community left out of development and facing many issues around poverty, young people and knife crime.

In September 2010 the church had a congregation of seven people. The only sign that All Hallows was alive during the week was Little Cherubs, a parent and toddler group funded by the Church Urban Fund and heroically led by a local mum. Over the last 10 years the group has supported many isolated single mothers and is a valuable witness in an area of high deprivation.

On 18 March 2012, just over 100 people came to two services. So what happened in the months in between?

Events such as the Spring Fair, Easter Egg Hunt, Summer BBQ and Christmas Fair have all brought us to the community’s attention. We have worked with John Lewis and the Linc Community Centre to build future events together. We have run Alpha twice this year, with a number of church members using it to get to grips with their faith and others to ask questions for the first time.

We have partnered with Eden Network to launch the Eden team at All Hallows. This team is now involved in running a Friday night dance group. It also supports the Linc Centre’s work with young people and spends many hours on the estate doing detached youth work.

Over the last year we have seen a good number of people come to faith. One is a student from Queen Mary, University of London who joined us on Alpha. We have seen people walk in from the street, others brought by neighbours and others through random connections. One person came to faith because God told them during a night of drink that they were wasting their life and that they had been called to a much bigger life. Since then they have given their life to Jesus and have started attending church.

Jess Laver who came to faith on our last Alpha course says:

“It was the loving community and real interest in me that made me start to question if there could be a God. They invited me to pray for a week to see what happened and I have been praying ever since.”

We move into the next year strong and passionate to see our home changed by the Gospel. The Lincoln Estate is loved by Jesus and is loved by us so we will be his hands and feet in this place. Our question will be: what does the good news look like here right now for this group of people? We will learn to be that, do that and love like that.
St Mellitus College offers something new and exciting in theological education. It is a place of learning, of spiritual growth, of discovery of the riches of Christian faith and its transforming power for the many people who live in this vital and strategic part of the world.

The Revd Dr Graham Tomlin, Dean, St Mellitus College

“St Mellitus College offers something new and exciting in theological education. It is a place of learning, of spiritual growth, of discovery of the riches of Christian faith and its transforming power for the many people who live in this vital and strategic part of the world.”

Tip Rose, Curate and St Mellitus graduate

St Mellitus College came into being in 2007. Named after the first Bishop of London, whose territory covered London and Essex, it was founded by the Bishops of London and Chelmsford to serve the Church’s mission in this region and beyond. The College brought together two institutions, the North Thames Ministerial Training Course, based in East London and Chelmsford, and St Paul’s Theological Centre, based in West London.

The College offers courses for many different kinds of students, including Anglican ordinands looking for full or part-time training, church lay workers, those in secular employment, and church leaders from other denominations wanting to further their studies of theology and ministry. It has around 470 people enrolled from introductory up to postgraduate levels and now offers its first Masters in Christian Leadership.

St Mellitus College is marked out by its focus on unity in diversity. It works with all kinds of Christians within a generous orthodoxy, drawing on the great traditions of theology through the centuries. It endeavours to be open to the Holy Spirit’s transforming power at work in the Church and the world.

The College has from the start been committed to developing new ways of theological training and innovates to make theology more available and accessible in the Church. It strives to ensure that high-quality theological teaching relates to the 21st-century realities of life, mission and ministry in London and beyond.

Students learn not just theology, but how to pray and worship in a variety of styles, held together by an expectation of encountering God. The College works to develop students in the mind and in every area of life.
Renewing Vision is a ground-breaking residential course that has been running for four years. It has the stated aim of working with clergy in their 50s, to assist them as they approach the next phase of their stipendiary ministry. The course helps them to assess their skills, experience and strengths, in order to set renewed vision for their ministry. This residential was the first of its kind in the Church of England and representatives from a number of other dioceses (Chelmsford, York, Coventry, Rochester and most recently Dublin, with places offered for 2013) have been accepted as participants to encourage the model to be adopted elsewhere.

Andy Rider, Rector of Christchurch Spitalfields, writes: “In 2009, I attended the diocesan Renewing Vision course for 50-year-old clergy, despite being in my mid forties. Did it change my life? As a direct result of that course I found myself often back in Cheltenham helping to lead the New Incumbents residential, a great innovation of the Diocese of London. I have seen time and again that our diocesan clergy are rich in talents, enthusiasm and diversity, new incumbents want to work together and encourage each other regardless of churchmanship. There is a real belief among them that ‘our history need not define our destiny’ for we are a people of hope.

Time and again on the course we reflect that Christian leaders are firstly Christian disciples, and disciples are followers and learners after Jesus. As we look towards 2020 many more disciples will join us and many more initiatives will express our faith in Jesus. I know this because I have seen it amongst those who will in the power of the Spirit lead our church through the next decade.”

Encouraging vocations to all kinds of ministry

The Revd Jennie Hogan, Chaplain to Goodenough College and Associate Priest at St Giles Cripplegate, writes:

“When I began my curacy it came as a welcome surprise to hear that I was going to be the chaplain to England’s trendiest art college, Chelsea College of Art & Design. A commitment of half a day a week was required and it came as part of my title parish at St Stephen’s Rochester Row. Whilst honing the art of funerals, marriage and school assemblies I attended private viewings with cutting edge conceptualists. Once I was mistaken for a performance artist: why else would anyone dressed like a vicar visit their studios?

When my curacy closed I became associate priest at All Hallows by the Tower and was invited by the University of the Arts to take up a half-time role as chaplain to Chelsea and Camberwell Colleges. I was able to penetrate more deeply into the world of art education. Tea and sympathy with a real-life vicar drew regular visitors.

Now I serve a community of international postgraduates and it brings new challenges. Goodenough College thrives on a dizzying mix of nationalities, cultures and academic disciplines; and so do I. Post-morning prayer breakfast conversations range from the evils of venture capitalists with an Australian economist, to the frustrations of herb sourcing with a Nigerian scientist. Living amongst 700 students I seek to be a challenging and compassionate witness to the Word made flesh. There is no doubt that university chaplaincy requires fearless verve and vision. It is a gift to dedicate my ministry to an environment where a desire for growth and knowledge is at its heart.”
The 2012 is an initiative of the Diocese to train and encourage the next generation as they seek to live and share the Gospel during this defining year in London’s history. It is a collective of dynamic individuals from every walk of life who are united by a call to love and serve those around them. They are ambassadors for Christ in London.

The 2012 were trained at seven free events across the Diocese including one completely organised by under-18s for the 13-17 age group.

At least one event happened in each of the five Areas of the Diocese. Speakers included bishops, academics, authors and practitioners. The training culminated in a commissioning at St Paul’s Cathedral, where 2,700 ambassadors for Christ from 300 churches across the Diocese were commissioned by the Bishop of London.

The service also saw the launch of the 2012 messaging. In Olympic year, social networks and SMS messages are being used to set a challenge for the volunteers each day to help them to be a force for good in every postcode in London.

**Jen Ma, St Martin-in-the-Fields**
“A great night last night at St Paul’s Cathedral for the 2012 event with those in their twenties and thirties from St Martin-in-the-Fields. It was so uplifting and encouraging. We are not alone!”

**Moya Ratnayake, Chaplain of Bishop Wand Church of England Secondary School**
“Everyone had such a great time last night – challenging, whole place was worshipping, confetti was AMAZING and we got 4 local youth groups to mingle together more. Can we do something like that every year?”

**Hannah Hobden, St George’s Holborn**
“It was so encouraging to be part of such a large group of young Christians worshipping God together in such a beautiful building. Such joy from a diverse group of Christians being united.”
It was so encouraging to be part of such a large group of young Christians worshipping God together in such a beautiful building.
Raymond Prentice is the Executive Headmaster of the new Christ the Saviour Church of England Primary School in the heart of Ealing. It has been created by combining St Saviour’s Church of England Infant School and Christ Church Church of England Junior School. There has been a long tradition of Church of England primary teaching in Ealing, with the two schools providing a Christian ethos and education in the borough for nearly 150 years. The decision to amalgamate was made in 2009 and quickly followed by a decision to expand from three to four form entry. With 960 pupils, the new school will become the largest Church of England primary in London.

Raymond comments:
“Christ the Saviour is a wonderful and newly invigorated Church primary where teachers, pupils and parents are experiencing renewed motivation and energy. We have a clear vision to be an excellent Christian school by being creative, inclusive and founded on the Christian ethos, daily worship and weekly Mass - preparing children for life. Our founding motto from 1864, Pro Deo et Ecclesia (for God and the Church) is still completely relevant and challenges us to live every moment of our lives to the very best of our ability, for our good, and the good of all God’s church.”

As an Anglican in the catholic tradition Raymond was attracted to his new role by the Anglo-Catholic spirituality of Christ the Saviour Parish Church. He also had the relevant experience. In a previous headship role Raymond oversaw the amalgamation of a four form entry junior school with a four form entry infant and nursery school.

Trained in the London Diocesan Board for Schools leadership programmes from 2004 onwards, Raymond is a dedicated educator. He is also an Ofsted inspector and now visits at least one school each half term.

Rob Wickham, Rector at St John’s Hackney, writes
In 2008 we decided to raise the profile of our children and youth work. With some initial help from Toyin, a paid youth worker employed with another local church, and ongoing support from Helen a teacher, we began to develop Sunday morning provision from one group to four age-differentiated groups. We now have about 20 helpers for this work.

In addition we believe that holiday provision is essential so now we offer up to three residencies for children each year. Paid for largely through City money, we take youngsters to Cambridgeshire, Somerset and Dorset at little or no cost to the families concerned. We have also developed our worship too. Every Sunday we have an informal Eucharist with structured children’s activities as well as the more traditional service. The effects of this work have been extraordinary. Since 2007, the regular attendance of St John’s has grown from approximately 60 on a Sunday to regularly in excess of 180.

In addition we work in partnership with Andrew Coombs, our Artist in Residence, who runs all sorts of children’s dance classes and coordinates the Hackney Children’s theatre (begun in 2011) which attracts over 400 people per performance.

Working with the Children’s Society we will be taking a snapshot of the well-being of 500 teenagers in Hackney in the early summer, getting their responses analysed by York University students and then asking more questions in depth in September. This will feed into planning for both church work and for our work with our secondary school and its chaplain.

Following the Hackney riots in August 2011, the benefits of this relational based work within the church came to fruition – our children led the literal reclaiming of the street which saw the most violence.
Situated just behind Harrods department store, St Saviour’s used to be a redundant church in disrepair. Rob Gillion, Rector of Holy Trinity Sloane Square and St Saviour’s, has overseen its transformation into a Theatre Church with its own professional Christian theatre company, Intermission. It is also now home to the West End Gospel Choir, which supports St Saviour’s continued mission of prayer and worship.

The ethos has always been to provide a safe haven which brings together actors in fellowship and gives them an opportunity to explore spirituality and to reflect on faith. Rob has a passion for involving young people and those on the margins. So, in partnership with Darren Raymond (the artistic director mentor) and Janine Gillion (manager of Intermission, mentor and missioner in the arts), they extended the provision to young people. The vision was to engage them in something positive to bring them closer to God.

Most of the young people come to Intermission via their involvement in the care system or youth offending teams. The theatre group currently works with youngsters from Hackney, Brixton, Croydon, Peckham, Kensington and Chelsea. They aren’t all local to Knightsbridge!

Integrating with the theatre work is Pause for thought which enables them to explore their relationship with God through Bible stories, prayer and worship.

Rob writes: “It’s about being the church for them – they feel safe and say ‘it’s family, no one judges us here.’”

Artistic director Darren Raymond says: “Jesus is at the centre of everything we do. It’s about relationships, and we’re trying to bring them closer to Christ. The way I see the young people change is amazing. People are blown away by the show, but I’m blown away by how much they change.”

They recently performed their version of Romeo and Juliet at the Royal Shakespeare Company theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon. One of the young people, now a professional actor, Tosin Cole says: “It’s like a second family for me. This church brings everyone together.”

Intermission is expanding to schools with their director of education, Paul Forster – expanding this model of youth work to enable more young people to be involved.
Robert Thompson, Lead Chaplain at the Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust, says: “It's all about building relationships. Often through the Chaplaincy people come into contact with a Christian presence and ministry on a daily basis. This would just not happen in ordinary community life.”

One example of a family served by Robert’s team involved a baby who was in hospital for 11 months. He arrived soon after birth with heart problems and needed a series of operations in the first year of his life. His parents were not from a religious background, but one of the Chaplaincy volunteer visitors got to know them on a general ward round and formed a friendship with them. By this route they were referred to the full-time hospital chaplains. The parents began to attend the Sunday services and the Eucharist with prayers for healing and anointing on Thursdays. Eventually they asked for their son to be baptised. On leaving the hospital, with the parents’ consent, Robert was able to link them with their local parish where they remain involved. Both parents have since been confirmed and are active in and feel supported by their church community.

Over 30 volunteers from a diversity of church backgrounds support this Christian ministry at the Royal Brompton. They visit patients, some every week, some monthly, and lead the Sunday services. Sue Lepp, a Royal Brompton Chaplaincy volunteer, and a parishioner at Holy Trinity Brompton says: “Being a chaplaincy volunteer is a beautiful way to minister to the sick and walk alongside those in times of uncertainty. An art that sometimes gets lost in today’s NHS. The chaplaincy work I do has made me bolder in addressing the spiritual needs of the people I meet in my nursing work. My nursing work has helped me to understand the unique needs of those in hospital. Being able to bring together these aspects of my life has been a gift to myself and I hope to others as well.”
Regeneration in Tottenham

A growing respect for the Church and its ability to provide for the community has led to a series of brilliant opportunities for the Diocese of London to bring regeneration and lasting change to Tottenham.

Holy Trinity Tottenham was able to participate in a wider bid with Haringey Council to receive £200,000 funding from the Mayor of London as part of Tottenham Green’s regeneration. The Diocese is on the Tottenham Taskforce, along with three other organisations. Under the leadership of Sir Stuart Lipton, the Tottenham Taskforce works to steer local decisions about the area’s regeneration. Sir Stuart says:

“Working with the Church of England on regeneration in Tottenham gave me a real perspective on how Church is a central part of the community of the future. Its focus on care, education and leadership is outstanding.”

The efforts being made in Tottenham, particularly around the Ferry Lane estate has led to a strong partnership with Lee Valley Estates on the new Hale village site. To ensure that we stay central to a new community of 8,000 people and build a lasting legacy for London, we are building a new community centre and planting a new church in it.

The benefits of our churches being present in every community became very apparent during the riots last summer. St Mary the Virgin helped with recharging phones, boiling kettles, providing food, and accommodating those who had lost their homes, as well as police on long shifts and others involved in the cleanup effort.

“The people in our local churches didn’t need to be told they got to work straight away.”

Fr Chris Trundle, Curate of St Paul’s Tottenham

“Working with the Church of England on regeneration in Tottenham gave me a real perspective on how Church is a central part of the community of the future. Its focus on care, education and leadership is outstanding.”
The Church has been working with homeless people for many years. The thousands of volunteers who have opened up the winter night shelters for their homeless neighbours are demonstrating once again the impact of Christian faith and love in contemporary London.
Churches working together to serve the poor and vulnerable. More than 50,000 hot meals are served across London’s church-led winter night shelters

Each winter, 13 church-led night shelters in London provide a range of services including food and accommodation. The services are provided by volunteers, largely drawn from London’s churches, with each night shelter being staffed by about 200 people over the winter period.

**Bishop of London, Dr Richard Chartres**

“The Church has been working with homeless people for many years. The thousands of volunteers who have opened up the winter night shelters for their homeless neighbours are demonstrating once again the impact of Christian faith and love in contemporary London.”

John (not his real name) was an entrepreneur with a bright future and big plans. After carrying out careful research he decided to set up a business based in Hong Kong. The business grew and for a while it seemed he had made the right choice. Then came the economic downturn. Like many businessmen, John thought he could weather the storm. Eventually he knew that it was over and he returned to the UK in the dead of a winter’s night.

John found himself homeless. One day while taking refuge in a library he read an article about a local housing charity. He went to see them and was referred to the borough’s winter night shelter project.

**Reflecting on his time staying with the shelter he says:**

“I really don’t think I’d have survived on the streets, that really wasn’t for me. I’m sure that I would have died out there. When I came to the shelter, I was scared, there were these guys who seemed to get on, and all these church folks wanting to help, being cheerful but not being let in. I’m sure now that we were all relieved and thankful that they were there. That winter was really bitter.”

John stayed at the shelter for around 10 weeks and was amazed by the fact that some churches allowed people to sleep in their worship and sacred areas and that Christians really just wanted to help and were not judgemental.

Today, John has rebuilt his business life. Still grateful for the love and care that he felt he was given, he has remained a key part of the life of the night shelter project.

More places in church schools

In September 2013 a new Church of England secondary school opens on the former Gliaxo fields site in Oldfield Lane North, Greenford. The proposal was put forward by Twyford CE High School and the London Diocesan Board for Schools.

Over 2,000 signatures were collected by parents in just three weeks in January 2011 supporting the Twyford/LDBS bid. In May more than 500 committed themselves to applying to the new school, which will have an open admissions policy.

The school will be an 11–18 academy. In 2013 it will admit 180 students into Year 7 only and then grow each year by a further intake, increasing to 240 per year from 2015. A Sixth Form of 200 is planned, starting in 2018.

**Alice Hudson, Headteacher of Twyford, says:**

“Our academy will be founded on Christian principles and be open to families of all faiths and those of no faith, an academy serving the whole community.

We are tremendously excited that our plans have met with such a vote of confidence from the government. There is much work to be done to turn the plans into reality in just two years, but we are looking forward to working with the local community to provide the school they need.”

“I really don’t think I’d have survived on the streets, that really wasn’t for me. I’m sure that I would have died out there.”
Becoming a Fairtrade Diocese

“It’s no good praying for change if we don’t do something about it. Having a Traidcraft stall in church and serving fairly traded tea and coffee not only brings benefits to producers, it says to local people, this church is doing something!”

A Fairtrader who runs a Traidcraft stall in her church.

In 2012 the Diocese of London achieved Fairtrade status and pledged to continue its commitment. A weekend of celebrations in March began with the Bishop of London riding an eco bike to make Fairtrade smoothies and culminated in a service at St Paul’s Cathedral. London’s Fairtrade churches were each presented with a certificate recognising their achievement in being part of the Fairtrade Diocese of London.

During Fairtrade Fortnight over the past five years churches have been involved in many ways. Staines Parish held a Big Brew and decorated Fairtrade cotton bunting during a long reading to mark the 400th Anniversary of the King James Bible. All Saints Ealing made a banner for its tower and a fabulous Fairtrade altar frontal designed and stitched with the help of children.

“The great thing about Fairtrade is that it enables cocoa farmers like me to have a say in shaping our future.”

Mariano Manzuela, Cocoa Farmer, Dominican Republic

Shrinking the Footprint

There are now at least 12 photovoltaic solar panel systems in church buildings across the Diocese. In the words of Chris Rogers, the Vicar of Ashford:

“No the Vicar has not gone mad and painted the building green! But we have become the latest generating plant in West London.

So now we are one of those churches who not only worship Almighty God but also endeavour to be a good caretaker of the world he gave us to care for. The Bishop of London’s Route 2050 project encouraged all parishes to go greener to not only save money in the long term, but more importantly give a safer place to bring up our children and our grandchildren.”

The Diocese has several churches dedicated to England’s patron saint. Several of them have just banded together into a group called St George to the rescue! to share ideas on how to make our churches greener and improve life for everyone. Mary Spain of St George’s, Campden Hill, says:

“As a recent volunteer for Environmental Champion, it struck me that enthusiasm wasn’t enough. I couldn’t recognise the problems, far less suggest solutions. Other than obvious ideas, such as recycling and saving energy, I had little idea how to get started. If then struck me I was not alone. There were all the other Environmental Champions, all the other St George’s, to pool our ignorance and help solve each other’s problems. A group is so much stronger than its parts!”

The initiative has already inspired churches to improve recycling facilities, decrease paper use, and order environmentally friendly cleaning products.
ALMA – Angola London Mozambique Association – is the Diocese’s partnership with the Anglican Church in Angola and Mozambique. Over the last five years diocesan churches have raised in excess of £1 million for Angola and Mozambique.

The 2011 Lent fundraising appeal, Training God’s People, raised money to help our partners build up the Church so that it can better love and serve her people.

Donations have helped to support trainees to reach regional hubs, and to find and resource trainers with the capacity, mobility and language skills to travel vast distances to deliver training. Donations also helped to provide for the subsistence of trainees during training. There was a particular focus on assisting those in rural regions where there is very little transport infrastructure, a background of poverty, very low formal education levels and difficulty surrounding the cost and availability of appropriate materials in local languages.

Money has also been used to provide additional lay and clerical training – to support the tremendous growth the Mozambican and Angolan churches are experiencing – and to fund the purchase of 180 Africa Bible Commentaries in Portuguese.

“Equipping God’s people through training and Christian formation means that these young people will be enabled to be ‘the salt of the earth and the light of the world.’ They are surrounded by noisy and apparently attractive invitations to engage in the world of crime, dishonesty and sin and our effort through ALMA’s effort can help them and the adults to be impenetrable to these ills with God’s help.”

Bishop Dinis Sengulane, Bishop of Lebombo, Mozambique

This relationship with ALMA has also provided huge opportunities for parishes and schools in the Diocese of London to learn from our partners through visits and links.

“On our first full day in Macienne we were woken up in time to attend the Sunday service. This was SUCH a different experience. The whole service was sung, everyone knew the words to everything without books, and all the songs were sung a cappella. During the service people were invited up to give thanks to God for things that had happened and which they wanted to share. So many people spoke, and were thankful for so many things that we take for granted, that it definitely changed my perception of what is important.”

Mariko Chadwick, Twyford CE High School
In a challenging economic environment we have been able to support our commitments through generous giving and wise stewardship of our property and financial resources. For more information on our financial status see www.london.anglican.org/finance.