However, it is important to note that as a church, we respect all ages; we are not going to dive into a world of face painting, tambourines and messy play, to lose sight of the fact that some congregations are more elderly than others. Yet if we do not encourage young families to enter church and feel welcomed and relaxed, then soon our congregations will be at crisis point. We are a friendly, inclusive church – let us all focus on that for the future.

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MINISTRY AND EDUCATION ACTION GROUP

The Ministry and Education Group is working on a palette of resources to support the Casting the Net Programme. These include:

- a course that will refresh and develop Christian faith, which can underpin the various forms of lay ministry that are offered in congregations
- training courses that relate directly to the Nine Marks of Mission – e.g. worship leadership skills, sharing faith, pastoral care (e.g. listening skills), church websites
- training for Vestries with regard to roles, relationships and effectiveness
- courses and events provided by other bodies that might be of interest and relevance to our congregations.

We are also liaising with other groups who resource the life and mission of our diocese, such as the Spirituality Group and the Clergy Meetings Group.

The Casting the Net Officer has offered some time to support the work of this group, as it was not possible to appoint a Training Officer. This should help us move more swiftly towards a programme of training events and courses to resource congregations as they begin the mission planning process. In the meantime, events coming up in the next few months include:

Listening for Life, Health & Community
Saturday 12 September, Alloa
10.30 am—4 pm at Alloa North Church, The Ludgate. FK10 2AD.
Free - bring packed lunch.
Organised by Acorn in Scotland - "Listening can be more than you imagine". Helpful for those engaged in any pastoral ministry.
www.acorninscotland.org.uk

Brechin Diocese Mission Conference
Saturday 3 October, Chalmers-Ardler Church, Dundee DD2 3TP
9.30 am - 4 pm, Cost £10.
'Growing towards a thriving church'
Keynote speaker—Bob Jackson

Workshop on the healing ministry
Saturday 17 October, Bridge of Allan
10 am – 4 pm at St Saviour's Church.
Addressing worship, sacraments and pastoral ministry. Cost £5.

Please let me know of any events or courses that are open to others that support the Casting the Net programme so that they can be publicised in this newsletter and on the Diocesan Website.

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Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld, Dunblane
Charity No. SC017654

Casting the Net Newsletter
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FROM BISHOP DAVID ..

It is a real pleasure to visit our churches and to see Casting the Net displays – nets, fish and prayers – on view. At a time when there are many visitors in our churches, it is important that we communicate a vision of our future in mission.

Our two Development Officers, James Petticrew and Veronica Kinahan, have been settling into their new roles. I am very impressed by how quickly they have moved around the diocese, meeting clergy and people, and getting in touch with our life. But now it's time to move. Expectations and enthusiasm are high.

With a pilot group of congregations we're going to test a number of approaches to doing the mission planning which underpins Casting the Net. We also need to develop a group of facilitators to work with us.

I'm delighted that a clear sense of direction is developing in our Children and Young People's work – leading towards a November event at the Cathedral. Our training programmes are taking shape and started with a pilot event for clergy and Vestry Secretaries in August.

During the last two months, we have been working on a complete relaunch of our Diocesan Website. Justin Reynolds, who was responsible for the new Provincial Website, is reshaping our website so that it will be of the same standard and will have the capacity to serve as a key communications resource for the diocese as we move forward.

I am grateful to all who have been working so hard on Casting the Net. Expectations will always run ahead of delivery. But to have no expectations would be much worse!

May God bless us in our planning and our doing.

In Christ
+David

Bishop David Chillingworth
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CASTING THE NET

Purpose

This is a terrible confession for a preacher but I don't remember that many sermons that I have preached, never mind what other people have said in theirs. However, there is a line from a friend's sermon which God has seared into my soul. Erwin McManus, from Los Angles said, with the passion that only a Latino can generate to his congregation, that *"the purpose of the church cannot be to survive or even thrive but must be to serve"*

As the old cliché goes "sometimes you can't see the wood for the trees." I have been thinking that could be true of Casting the Net. We could be so involved in the detail of the process that we forget its purpose. The purpose of Casting the Net is not to negatively enable our churches to survive the current move away from church involvement in our culture or even positively to help create thriving congregations.

The purpose of Casting the Net is to help us become more effective in our calling as the Body of Christ and that is to serve. Our calling is so much greater than just our own institutional survival or vitality, it is to serve humanity as we serve the Mission of God.

There is no doubt that Casting the Net might entail some challenging change for us as Diocese. But surely all the upheaval that change brings to our churches is worthwhile in the light of the calling we have as the Church?

The next steps

The formal launch of Casting the Net in the Diocese on Pentecost Sunday feels like it is rapidly disappearing into history. There is always the danger that after a high profile launch event, a Diocesan wide initiative can feel like it has dropped off the radar of the local congregation. So I wanted to take some time to keep you up to speed with what's happening with Casting the Net.

Pilot projects

We are on target to launch Casting the Net (CTN) pilot projects by September in four congregations. The object of these pilots is to "test drive" several different approaches to the mission planning process with congregations so that we can make it as effective as possible when we roll it out to the next group of churches across the Diocese in January 2010. St James the Great, Dollar; St John the Evangelist, Forfar and St Paul's, Kinross have volunteered to act as our "guinea pig" congregations for these pilot projects. Our hope is that one other congregation will join their number to ensure that there is one congregation from each Area Council.

Please pray for these congregations that the process will be an effective learning experiencing for the church and the Casting the Net Action Group.

Growing the team

Currently we are in the process of recruiting and training two groups of people who will have key roles in implementing Casting the Net. In order to keep local churches informed and inspired about what's happening with Casting the Net we are asking every congregation to appoint a CTN Liaison Officer to act as the link between the CTN Action Group and the church. Our other priority is to have a group of facilitators ready and able to help congregations navigate their way through the mission planning process from 2010 onwards. ***These two roles are pivotal in the successful implementation of the CTN vision so please pray that we get the right people for them.***

So what should we do now?

Although only four congregations are expected to take part in the pilot projects, every congregation can start to Cast the Net. This can be done by studying the Nine Marks of Mission, bible studies on the call of the disciples, etc.

Here in the Diocese, we are looking at a number of ways to equip everyone for the adventure in mission that we as a church are embarking on, which is, of course, what CTN is all about.

Eventually, the new diocesan website will hold resources on mission for people to read and listen to.

We hope to facilitate different types of interaction and discussion around what mission is all about, so watch this space! The CTN Liaison Officers will be key to sharing these ideas with congregations.

Of course the most fundamental and effective way that you can be involved in CTN is to pray. ***So pick up your Nine Marks Bookmark and pray!***

I have been in post for over 10 weeks and my desk in the diocesan office is covered by books and papers. Although it looks slightly untidy I love it. It's a tangible sign that Casting the Net is developing from a concept to a reality. I feel incredibly excited about the journey of discovery that I believe God is going to take our Diocese on through CTN. I also feel deeply privileged to be part of it all.

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

When I took up post as Children and Young People's Officer in mid May, my first priority was to undertake a diocesan survey – an audit to see what was going on for our young people in our congregations and to find out what Young Church leaders wanted in terms of help. I sent out 26 surveys (including joint congregations) and received 15 replies.

I found pockets of excellent practice across the diocese - summer activity clubs, ecumenical groups, Young Church on Sundays and also youth groups meeting at other times during the week. From bacon butties to sleepovers, there was a lot going on in some congregations.

Others were more limited, either in numbers of young people or in resources. One feature that occurred often in responses was the need for a bank of resources for helpers plus shared practice among the congregations.

To that end, a workshop was held in Kinross at the beginning of June, to which over twenty people from all over the diocese came and I was delighted that four teenagers from Dunfermline joined us. I brought along a display of child-friendly resources and after some general discussion, coffee and cake (most important!), we split into 3 groups to discuss 'teenagers in the church', 'child friendly criteria' and 'ways to encourage small congregations to encourage children into church'.

One aspect of this workshop which was immediately taken up was the notion of 'Child Friendly Church'. So I instigated a competition for children/young people -to design a Child Friendly logo which could be replicated as a stick-on 'splat' to be put on church notice boards. This would have two purposes – to inform newcomers that this church was child friendly and also to give well deserved publicity to the good practice going on in churches across the diocese.

Workshops will be held in the autumn: story telling, puppet making, messy church, to name but a few. ***A major diocesan youth event will take place in the Cathedral on Saturday 21 November, so put this date in your diary.*** Following this there will be area youth events in 2010, especially to help make children and young people from smaller congregations aware of being part of a larger group.