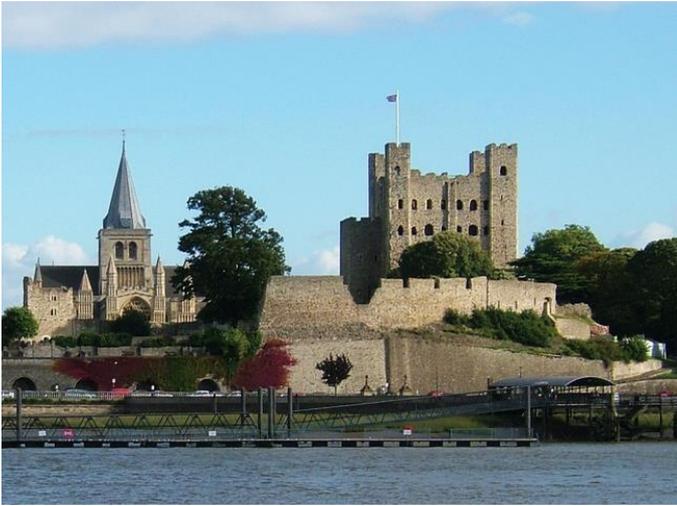




## The Diocese of Rochester: Overview



We are the Church of England in the areas of Medway, north west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley; a historic diocese in existence since 604AD

A diverse and vibrant community of faith, we share the vision that we are Called Together to Grow disciples, Enrich our communities and Resource each other in our mission and ministry.

Serving a population of over 1.3 million people, the Diocese includes 215 parishes, 89 schools, and two bishops: The Bishop of Rochester and the Bishop of Tonbridge.

We cover some of the most affluent areas in England, and some of the most deprived wards in the South-East. Our three archdeaconries of Bromley and Bexley, Rochester, and Tonbridge, characterise the increasing diversity found across our Diocese of varying kinds.

With the expansion of London and adjoining communities, we are increasingly urban and suburban, yet still retain places which see themselves as rural.

Ethnic and religious diversity is a growing feature of our communities, and this is reflected in many of our congregations. The borough of Gravesham has a historic Sikh community, now making up some 14% of the borough's population; in recent years the presence of people of East European and West African heritage has increased significantly.

And our population is set to grow by 300,000 over the next 30 years. The Ebbsfleet Garden City development will have a new population of some 40,000 people – it is the biggest single housing development in England.

Our parishes employ over 40 children and youth leaders who work with hundreds of volunteers in churches across the diocese who encourage children and young people to grow in their Christian faith.

We have 184 substantive stipendiary parochial posts, and 25 substantive self-supporting posts; at any time, we have 28 stipendiary and 12 self-supporting curates in training. Other licensed clergy and lay ministers serve as Chaplains and in diocesan and cathedral roles.



Through the Rochester Diocesan Family of Schools (RDFS) we offer a Christian education through the state sector to 22,110 children aged from 4 to 19. We have a growing number of community schools who have close links to the Diocese through our Affiliation Scheme.

All of our schools serve their local community as well as Christian families, and a number serve large numbers of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu children, as well as African and African Caribbean Christians.



We believe that all Christian people have a calling from God to know and love him more, and to serve others in his name. Through a range of learning opportunities, we seek to equip people in their faith and ministry development in order to fulfil their calling to Christian discipleship and mission.

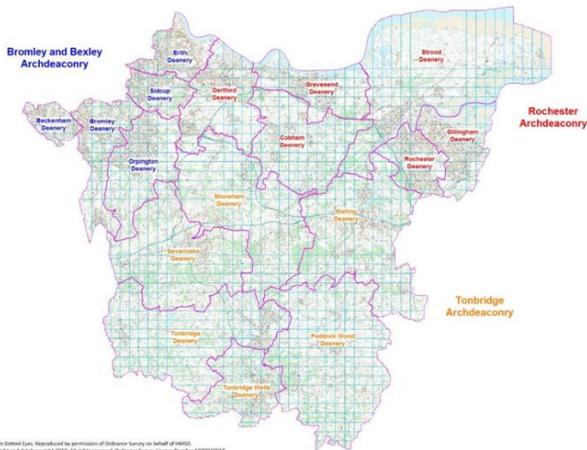
Indeed, we are recognised nationally as a leader in lay vocation, particularly for our creative approach to the scope and training of Licensed Lay Ministers, which is unique to our Diocese. As well as a range of discipleship and prayer courses and materials, our Diocese has pioneered opportunities in Anna Chaplaincy, which has a special focus on those who have dementia and other end of life issues.

The Bishop of Rochester is the diocesan or most senior bishop, responsible for oversight of the whole diocese. We are currently going through the Vacancy in See process to identify the new Bishop of Rochester following the retirement of Bishop James in summer 2021.

The Bishop of Tonbridge has a particular focus on evangelism and growth, rooted in *Called Together*, the Diocese of Rochester's vision. He also has oversight and leadership of the education, youth and children, and community engagement work of churches across the Diocese of Rochester and chairs the Diocesan Board of Education.



Each archdeaconry is led by an Archdeacon, who is supported by a personal assistant as well as other lay and ordained staff, including Area Deans and Lay Chairs.



The Bishop of Rochester is further supported by a leadership team (BLT) which includes the Bishop of Tonbridge and three Archdeacons, Diocesan Secretary, Director of Education and Director of Formation and Ministry who meet monthly to oversee the development of the overall mission strategy of the Diocese.

Our staff of just over 50 people, are jointly employed by the Diocesan Board of Finance and Diocesan Board of Education, and are based in the Diocesan office, St Nicholas Church. They support the clergy and the people in our parishes in a number of ways, resourcing them to carry out the mission of the Church.



## Called Together: Diocesan Vision and Strategic Framework



Launched in November 2017 in Rochester Cathedral, Called Together is the result of a year-long process of conversation, listening and prayer.

People from across each archdeaconry helped shape the vision, by responded to the call to discern what the Holy Spirit might be calling them to do and be in their local setting, as well as what needed to change.

The Called Together vision encompasses three overarching themes: 'Growing Disciples'; 'Enriching our Communities; and 'Resourcing Mission and Ministry'.

After two full years of activity, a review and 'direction sense check' of our Called Together framework was earmarked for 2020.

The Covid-19 pandemic provided additional reason to reflect on progress and consider carefully where our focus should be going forward.

In the light of all this, we have established five priorities, based on the five marks of mission, to guide our next steps.

These Called Together priorities are:

- Enabling each church to be mission minded
- Helping children, young people and adults live out everyday faith in Jesus
- Supporting loving service in local communities
- Speaking and responding to the prophetic voice of justice and peace
- Protecting creation's life for future generations

If you like, 5 Es: evangelism, everyday faith, engagement with communities, equity, environment.

To support local parishes we have launched the Children's & Young People's Fund and the Missional Property Fund; the majority of these funds are secured from external organisations to resource local churches.





Diocese of **Rochester**  
called together

We have enabled people to speak out about the injustices of modern-day slavery, homelessness, violence against women, and debt. We have encouraged people to pray in new ways, continued to support new churches in new communities and re-missioning in Kings Hill, Ebbsfleet and Chatham.

Our Called to Grow project unites different approaches to church growth and aims to encourage and equip the whole Diocese. Distinct roles in five priority parishes, funded by Strategic Development Funding, focus on working with specific groups, eg children and families, the socially isolated, or ex-offenders, to develop new worshipping communities. To complement these parishes and encourage innovation and learning across the spectrum, three Growth Enablers work with individual churches and benefices across the Diocese and help them consider how they might grow numerically and spiritually.