



MAP for Derby Diocese

MAP leader's guide

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introducing MAP in Derby Diocese

Mission Action Planning (known as MAP) is a process that was developed by Mark Ireland and Mike Chew and published in 2009, and then revised and updated in 2016¹. MAP is designed to help churches to become more missional, encouraging them to engage with their communities in relevant ways and to focus on the mission that God is calling them to.

MAP was originally rolled out across the diocese in 2011. Since then, we have been using it consistently to help parishes to engage with God's mission. We have regularly updated and revised the way we use MAP as we have gained experience and listened to the churches who use it, making it easier to use, more relevant and more valuable for every church each time we do.

MAP is not an initiative or an end in itself; its goal is not to 'produce a MAP'. MAP is instead a *process* to help you do what God is already calling you to do. You might think of MAP as a vehicle that you can use to help you travel more swiftly and easily to where God is calling you to be.

This latest version of MAP for Derby Diocese (referred to in this document as the MAP process) makes some significant changes that we hope will transform your experience of using it. If you have previously decided against using MAP, we hope that you will consider using this latest revision. If you have used MAP before, we hope this latest revision will be even more fruitful for your church.

As we have developed MAP, we have kept the following core values at its centre.

Christ-centred and theologically based

We've worked hard to ensure that every aspect of MAP, from the theology that underpins it to the language we use, is faithful to God's call to His Church, rather than being over-reliant on business models and language. At each stage, MAP brings us back to God and His call to His Church.

less about doing, more about being

This version of MAP focuses not on new things to *do*, but on becoming the flourishing church God is calling us to *be*. This comes from the dual conviction that the church is called to love, serve and share the Good News of Jesus Christ with *all* in its communities, and that if we are faithful in being the church He has called us to be, he will be faithful in fulfilling his purpose in and through us.

covering the whole common life of the church

The original MAP process focuses on the mission of the church. Whilst the mission of God encompasses His whole purpose for us, there is the danger that we see mission in a narrower sense and that other areas of the life of the church may be neglected. The mission of God depends on ensuring that every part of His Church is working according to His will and purpose. Consequently, this version of MAP encompasses the whole of the life of God's Church.

usable in any context

MAP has always had the challenge of needing to be suitable for a wide range of situations; different traditions, communities, sizes of church and many other factors can affect how it is used.

¹ *How to Do Mission Action Planning: Prayer Process and Practice* (2nd Edition), Mark Ireland & Mike Chew (SPCK, London, 2016)

As we move forward as a diocese, we also need to consider working more collaboratively and in different groupings; as a diocese, in deaneries, in benefices, and in other groups of churches and parishes as well as individual ones. We have deliberately developed this version of MAP to ensure that it can be used in any of these contexts. Within this MAP process, 'church' can mean any of these contexts (and more besides).

When referring to the church, this document will tend to use words like 'they', 'their' and 'them'. This is because we believe that the church, at whatever level, is at heart a worshipping community of Christians, and that everyone will be involved in the work of MAP (even if it is simply supporting the process in prayer).

flexible and based around core principles and elements

MAP for Derby Diocese has **three core principles** and **three core elements**. Ecclesiastes reminds us that, 'a threefold cord is not quickly broken' (Ecclesiastes 4:12b); adhering to these principles and elements should ensure that, in using the MAP process, the work God does in and through the church will be lasting and fruitful for Him.

Following the principles and elements faithfully also leaves the church free to adapt the process in any way they wish without constraint, changing the language and adapting the materials at need.

the MAP process in overview

The remainder of this document describes the core principles, core elements and stages of the MAP process in detail. However, over the page, you will find a single page summary diagram of the MAP process. This diagram contains all the essential parts of the MAP process. We hope it will also be helpful to refer to this document as you read the rest of this Leader's Guide.

the three core principles

principle one: leader commitment

Our experience with MAP in the diocese shows that the visible and ongoing commitment of the church leadership is crucial to the effectiveness of its use. In a recent survey among parishes in the diocese, of those who were not using MAP or had ceased using it, an absence of, or lack of commitment from, clergy and PCC was the reason most often given. Conversely, among those parishes that had decided to use MAP, the influence of the clergy or PCC was seen to be extremely important. We find this time and time again in churches; the visible commitment of the church leadership is vital for the success of their mission and ministry.

Therefore, we believe that it is equally vital that the leadership of any church shows a visible, consistent, real and ongoing commitment to the MAP process in the church, if they choose to use it. This applies to the priorities and resources they choose to invest in for the process, as well as to the words that they speak about it.

principle two: prayerfulness

MAP is concerned with God's Church and His call to it. We recognise that, without God's wisdom and resources, our response to that call will always fail.

the MAP process for Derby Diocese

three core principles

- 1. leader commitment**
Church leaders that show a real and ongoing commitment to the MAP process, encouraging and enabling everyone in the Church to show a similar commitment.
- 2. prayerfulness**
A deep commitment to prayer through the MAP process that seeks the wisdom and power of God's Holy Spirit above all.
- 3. integration**
The MAP process is at the centre of the Church's life and, as far as possible, everyone in the Church is involved in the MAP process at every stage.

This diagram summarises in one page the essential principles, elements and stages of the MAP process, and the questions the Church will address at each stage. Although many more resources are available, how the MAP process is used beyond these essentials is entirely up to the Church.

three core elements

- 1. the stages**
Five stages that fit together to form a coherent whole, each containing simple questions that every Church can use to help them address the important issues.
- 2. the characteristics**
A set of characteristics of the Church God calls us to be which the Church can explore and develop, based on Scripture and wide-ranging research work.
- 3. the church health check**
A simple to use and flexible tool to help the Church move through the MAP process in an engaging way, allowing everyone to have a voice.

1: EXPLORE
you to be
the purpose and character of the Church God is calling

this stage can be used in any cycle of the MAP process, but is always used where MAP is new or unfamiliar.

- what is the purpose of God's church?
- what is the character of God's church?

5: JOURNEY
with God, making the changes He requires of you

- are we staying close to God?
- are we aware of what God is doing in and through us?
- are we celebrating God's faithfulness?
- are we communicating with others well?

2: REFLECT
on your journey toward God's calling so far

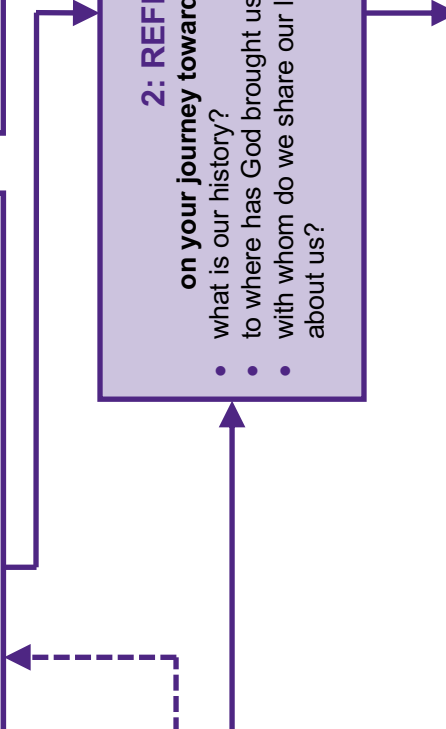
- what is our history?
- to where has God brought us?
- with whom do we share our life and what do they say about us?

4: PREPARE
how you will make the changes God requires of you

- what steps should we take?
- with whom will we share the journey?
- from whom will we need help?

3: DISCERN
the areas in which God is now calling you to grow and change to meet His call

- in what ways is God calling us to grow and change?



As Mary responded to God's call, she acknowledged the power of God to complete His work in her (Lk 1:35-38). Paul is confident that it was God who would complete His own work in His Church (Phil 1:3-6) and recognised his own need for God's resources for his own ministry (Col 1:28-29).

For MAP to bear fruit in any context, it must always be surrounded by prayer. The church must constantly seek the resources of God, recognise their need of His power in completing the work He has called them to and give thanks to God for all He does in and through them.

principle three: **integration**

Sometimes, MAP has been regarded as something to 'add on' to the normal work of the church. When this is the case, these things often follow:

- MAP is 'completed' as a plan, then put away and never looked at again
- MAP is one of the first things to be dropped when things get tough or busy
- MAP is viewed as something that only a few people need to be concerned with
- MAP becomes an added burden for the church, separate to their core life and calling

MAP works best when it is integral to every part of the church's life. That means that every aspect of the mission and ministry of the church is included in the MAP process, making it a high priority in leaders' meetings, committing time, energy and prayer to its use and communicating about it consistently and effectively across the church and beyond.

Integration also means that, as far as possible, everyone in the church needs to be involved at each stage. In this way, everyone will feel included. In turn, this makes it more likely that the church will be committed to the process and to the changes that may come as a result. Additionally, the voices of a wider range of people will be heard as the church reflects on where they are in the journey toward becoming the church God is calling them to be.

the three core elements

element one: **the stages**

Sometimes there is a temptation, when using a process like MAP for Derby Diocese, to skip over some of the parts of that process if the church believes they are too difficult, unnecessary or needlessly time consuming.

When a builder constructs a house, they wouldn't think of starting with the roof and then trying to complete the foundations; neither would they skip over the ground floor and go straight to the second. The builder knows that doing these things will result in a house that, at best, doesn't meet what is needed and, at worst, is likely to fall down!

In the same way, to get the best out of the MAP process, it is essential that the church completes each stage carefully and in the right order. Otherwise, the process is unlikely to reap the benefits that they might hope for, or fail altogether.

The stages of MAP for Derby Diocese are:

- 1) **Explore** *the purpose and character of the church God is calling you to be*
- 2) **Reflect** *on your journey toward God's calling so far*
- 3) **Discern** *the areas in which God is now calling you to grow and change to meet His call*

- 4) **Prepare** *how you will make the changes God requires of you*
- 5) **Journey** *toward making the changes God requires of you*

Each stage builds on the work of the previous one, just like constructing a building.

element two: the characteristics

The MAP process is designed to help the church become the healthy, flourishing church that God intends them to be. The process isn't focused on *doing* more things, but rather *being* God's church. To do that, we need to understand what that church looks like – in other words, we need to understand its **characteristics**.

The MAP for Derby Diocese process is therefore based around a set of eight MAP Characteristics of God's Church. Those characteristics are:

- Christ-centred in life and worship
- focused on God's mission and purpose
- loving, servant-hearted and generous
- welcoming, open and inclusive
- willing to adapt for God's purposes
- encouraging in Christian vocation and service
- Christ-like in leadership
- engaging with children, young people and families

The MAP Characteristics have been carefully developed, starting from the work of several different research projects. Each project has explored many different churches from a wide variety of traditions and contexts, to look for the common characteristics of churches that are healthy and flourishing. Specifically, we've examined the following research:

- The **Natural Church Development** programme, based on research led by Christian A. Schwartz across differing denominations and nationalities and published in the Natural Church Development Handbook (UK Edition, British Church Growth Association, Moggerhanger, 1996).
- The **Growing Healthy Churches** programme, led by Robert Warren and published in the Healthy Churches Handbook (CHP, London, 2004). This programme was based upon the research carried out by the Natural Church Development project, contextualised for the Church of England.
- The **Church Growth Research** programme, commissioned by the Church Commissioners and published in 2014 in the summary findings report, 'Anecdote to Evidence', following extensive research across the Church of England. You can find more information at <http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk>.

Next, we have brought these characteristics to Scripture to ensure that they represent a consistent and complete picture of the Church God calls us to be and to help you to reflect on what the Bible says concerning each characteristic.

Whilst they may not be perfect, we believe that these characteristics represent the church God is calling us to be, no matter what situation, tradition or context the church is in and no matter whether we're looking at a church, benefice, deanery or diocese.

Exploring these characteristics carefully and prayerfully, and then examining before God whether the church is exhibiting His desired character, is an essential element of MAP for Derby Diocese.

element three: the church health check

The MAP Church Health Check is the only essential tool in the MAP for Derby Diocese process. It works alongside the Characteristics and is threaded through the first four Stages of the process, as follows:

- 1) **explore** *the character of the church God is calling them to be* by explaining each of the MAP Characteristics through a theological reflection.
- 2) **reflect** *on the church's journey toward God's calling so far* by helping them to examine honestly the evidence we should expect to see in churches exhibiting His desired character.
- 3) **discern** *the areas in which God is now calling them to grow and change to meet His call* by helping the church to see in which characteristic(s) the church most needs to develop.
- 4) **prepare** *how they will make the changes God requires of them* by showing in which areas of each characteristic the church will specifically need to develop and grow.

The MAP Church Health Check comes as a separate resource, containing a leader's guide supported by easily accessible surveys for use in the church.

the MAP stages

The MAP process is designed to be used in a wide variety of contexts. For this reason, it is difficult and unhelpful to be prescriptive about how the MAP process should be carried out in a specific situation. However, this section outlines what needs to be done in each stage for the MAP process well. These stages are common to all contexts.

The MAP planning group (see below) will need to spend time before and during each stage deciding how best to complete that stage. If the church needs further help or support in planning the MAP process, the Parish Support Office is there to help and to walk alongside you.

preparation

Before starting on any new building, it is important to prepare the ground properly first, so that the building rests on firm foundations. In a similar way, there are some preparatory steps that need to be taken before a church starts to use the MAP process.

decide to use MAP as a church leadership

One of the core principles of the MAP for Derby Diocese process is leader commitment. For this reason, the leadership team should spend some time prayerfully considering the process, ensuring that they feel it is right to use it and that they are willing to commit their own time and energy, as well as those of the church, to it.

The people in the Parish Support Office are available to visit a meeting of your leadership (PCC, synod, leadership team etc.) to explain the process more fully and answer any questions. The leadership team should then decide, preferably by resolution, to commit themselves and the church to using the MAP for Derby Diocese process.

set up a planning group

The next step for the church leadership, once they have taken the decision to use the MAP process, will be to establish a planning team to oversee the work. The leadership team should be represented on that team, but it may involve others.

The planning team will then be responsible for ensuring that the work of using the MAP process is progressed and that the work is fully integrated into the life and ministry of the church. The planning team should make regular reports to the leadership team, so that the leadership team are able to maintain their support and responsibility for the process within the church, and offer appropriate decision-making, resources and support when required.

lay a foundation of prayer

Prayer and worship is at the heart of MAP, because it is God's Holy Spirit working in and through the church that will help them to flourish and grow. They will need God's constant discernment, wisdom and strength to discern and carry out the changes He is calling them to make. This begins with the leadership, both in being committed to prayer themselves and to modelling and encouraging prayer among the congregation. Committing to and encouraging prayer might include:

- Regular days of prayer (perhaps with fasting) or quiet days
- Including the MAP process in Sunday intercessions
- A prayer board
- Prayer bookmarks
- Creative prayer spaces for all ages
- Encouraging small groups to pray (either existing groups or starting a prayer group)

Derby Diocese has produced a MAP prayer that you might wish to use in any of these contexts:

*Eternal God of the moment:
 You sent your Son, Jesus Christ,
 to offer his body as a single, perfect sacrifice
 that the world might be reconciled to you.
 We thank you that, by your Holy Spirit,
 we grow in experience of your love and confidence in you.
 We pray that, as we engage with you and develop Mission Action Plans,
 we would offer ourselves to you in worship
 and you would transform us by the renewing of our minds,
 that discerning your will and working with you, we may
 serve our local communities,
 grow in discipleship of Jesus,
 draw others to saving faith
 and transform your world;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

communicate with the church

So that the MAP process is effective in the church, as many people as possible within the church should be involved in it. This means good communication in the church. It's very difficult to over-communicate – people are slow to be informed and quick to forget! Communication will mean:

- launching the MAP process effectively in the church
- helping the church to understand why they are using the MAP process
- updating the church regularly with how the MAP process is going
- offering opportunities for the church to support the MAP process in prayer and involvement

Communicating effectively with the church might include:

- a launch video with the church leader explaining their commitment to MAP
- a launch event and / or service (perhaps with a visiting speaker)

- a launch leaflet explaining MAP and including an article from the church leader
- a regular newsletter or email update (or regular updates in an existing newsletter)
- a MAP information board (perhaps combined with a prayer board)
- using social media and updates on the church web site

Communication will need to begin before, and continue throughout, the MAP process, and it will need to happen in lots of different ways. This will ensure that the process remains at the heart of the church and that as many people as possible can be informed and involved.

stage 1 – explore

This stage is designed to help the church to **explore** *the purpose and character of the church God is calling them to be*. This might also be called the **vocation** of the church.

This stage may be omitted from the lifecycle if the church is moving straight from a previous cycle of the MAP process into a new one *and* the church is still confident of the answers to the questions contained in it. However, it should *always* be included when MAP is new or unfamiliar, or where a church needs to re-address the questions contained in it.

The church will explore two key questions that will help them to understand and support the changes that the MAP process brings by showing why they are necessary. These questions are not concerned with the activities of the church. Consequently, they can lead to frustration because 'we're just talking and not doing'. However, a good understanding throughout the church of the answers to these questions is vital. It is central to deciding the priorities of the church's activities and in helping them to understand the reason for the changes that are to come. This exploration may require a significant change in hearts and minds, which always takes time.

Rushing beyond this stage before it is completed will often lead to failure and disillusionment, making the MAP process ineffective and any future work in this area much harder. It is important to allow plenty of time for this stage, enabling the church to reflect and to come to their own understanding, rather than just having the answers presented.

These questions can be explored through the creative use of Scripture in a combination of the following, or by other means appropriate to the church:

- times of prayer and reflection
- church away days, weekends or other events
- Sunday preaching
- small group work

what is the purpose of God's church?

This question is about *why* the Church of Jesus Christ exists. What are we here for? This could be described as the overall *vocation* or *call* of God's Church. For many churches, this exploration will involve moving from an inward-looking focus, where the church exists primarily to serve the needs and desires of those inside it, to an outward-looking focus, where the church exists primarily to worship God and to love and serve those around it, sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and seeing God's Kingdom grow.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in his Lambeth Lecture in March 2015, said this:

"I want to start by saying just two simple sentences about the church. First, the church exists to worship God in Jesus Christ. Second, the Church exists to make new disciples of Jesus

Christ. Everything else is decoration. Some of it may be very necessary, useful, or wonderful decoration – but it's decoration.”

Archbishop Justin Welby, Lambeth Palace, 5 March 2015

This may be a difficult statement for some churches – they may disagree with it. However, it illustrates the outward-looking focus that God intends for His Church.

*A good indication that the church have addressed this question is that there is a clear, succinct statement of God's purpose or vocation for the church that is well known and accepted. This might be called a **purpose statement** or **mission statement** (though not everyone likes these terms).*

what is the character of God's church?

This question is about *who* God is calling His Church to be. What attitudes and behaviours should we expect to see in God's Church? This could be described as a set of *values* for God's church. For many churches, this exploration will involve careful reflection over what is important to them and seeing whether this accords with God's calling for them.

One of the core elements of the MAP process is the MAP Characteristics, drawn from Scripture and illustrated through examining a wide range of churches. Exploring this question through the MAP Church Health Check materials will mean allowing time for the church to engage with these characteristics, to understand them and accept them. This may mean adapting the language and emphasis of the characteristics, or even making changes to them.

There is, though, a word of caution. It may be tempting to make substantive changes to, or even remove, the parts of these characteristics that the church finds difficult. However, these characteristics have been found to be common across a wide range of churches of every type, in every context, tradition and spirituality, and are based firmly in Scripture. There would therefore need to be extremely good reason to make such changes. It is more likely that doing so will prevent the church from tackling an area that, though challenging, is vital to their response to God's call.

A good indication that the church have addressed this question is that the church have understood and adopted the characteristics of a healthy church (perhaps adapting them to the language, tradition and culture appropriate to them).

stage 2 – reflect

This stage is designed to help the church to **reflect** on their journey toward God's calling so far.

There are three key questions for the church to engage with in this stage. As with any journey, we need to know from where we are starting before we can understand the journey. Honesty is essential in answering these questions. If people are unable to accurately assess where they are before God, it is likely to give a false view of reality, leading to poor discernment in the later stages. The church will need to reflect together and offer realistic opinions, backed up by good evidence, with everyone having an equal voice. It is especially important to avoid:

- destructive blame or judgement on the church or any specific ministry, group or individual
- the sense that some views may be ignored, or others treated with undue importance

what is our history?

In general, the MAP process looks at the current situation and future calling. This question allows the church to examine what *has happened* leading up to the current situation; in the church, in the wider community and in the relationship between the two.

Some churches may feel that they do not need to spend a great deal of time considering this question. For example, if a great deal of work has been done on it previously, the church may wish to just spend a little time updating their understanding from the last time they addressed the question. However, for most churches, the question is extremely helpful and is sometimes vital. There are three specific ways in which engaging with this question can bear fruit:

- 1) To celebrate the success of what God has done in and through the church in the past, helping to encourage the church and build faith for the challenges of the future.
- 2) To give space for the church to understand and deal with any past events, relationships or culture that may impact on its current mission and ministry, seeking repentance, restoration and reconciliation where appropriate.
- 3) To understand the culture of the wider community that may impact on how mission is engaged with in that community. History will often have a profound effect on the attitudes and behaviours of a local community toward the church or other groups.

London Diocese has pioneered the use of an History Audit as a part of the review stage of their MAP process, and there is a Grove booklet resource on the subject.²

A good indication that the church have addressed this question is that the church have understood and accepted (and if appropriate dealt with) its own history and the history of its communities, and how they might influence one another.

to where has God brought us?

This question helps the church to reflect upon where God has already worked in and through them to establish His call and character, and where that work is yet to be done.

This is primarily done through the MAP Church Health Check tool. This tool provides the materials to help the church engage with the MAP Characteristics, prayerfully reflecting on where the church is, and isn't, demonstrating those characteristics.

The tool uses surveys that can be used across the whole worshipping community of the church, asking people (using some specific areas of evidence) to what extent the church is already displaying each characteristic. For more information, see the MAP Church Health Check resource.

In addition to the Church Health Check, the church may wish to make use of existing information and data from other sources, such as financial information or statistics for mission returns. They may wish to carry out further research to build up a fuller picture.

A good indication that the church have addressed this question is that the church have fully engaged with the MAP Church Health Check with clarity, openness and honesty and have used all other reasonable means to obtain a full picture of their current character and situation.

with whom do we share our life and what do they say about us?

If the church listen only to those inside the worshipping community and structures of the church, they will only get half the story. Those outside the worshipping community may have a very different view of the church than those inside it and, although it can be painful, it is important to hear their views. God will often speak to His Church through those on the outside.

² *What Can Churches Learn from their Past? The Parish History Audit*, John Maiden & Neil Evans (Grove Booklet Pastoral Series P131)

What do others think of the church? What do they think are their characteristics, strengths and weaknesses? What do they already see the church doing to love and serve the wider community and world, and how does that differ from what they believe they should be doing?

The first part of answering this question is to discover with whom the church currently shares its life, and how. The church will need to explore the connections it already has with those outside – both intentional connections and connections that exist simply because the church is there. Such connections might include:

- Other churches, denominations and faiths
- Charities and NGOs
- Public sector organisations (health, police, social services, council and government bodies)
- Education (education authorities, schools and colleges)
- Commercial (shops, businesses, business leaders)

Engaging in conversation and building relationships is the best way to hear honest and balanced views. This might mean establishing relationships where there was previously little contact, and using imaginative ways to engage people. This information will also be used in stage 4.

A good indication that the church have addressed this question is that the church have confidence in their understanding of what a broad range of individuals and groups believe about the church and its activities.

stage 3 – discern

This stage is designed to help the church **discern the areas in which God is now calling them to grow and change to meet His call**. Some churches call this the **vision**.

There is only one question to answer in this stage as a part of this discernment process:

in what ways is God calling us to grow and change?

This question requires the church to discover the areas of its common life in which God is asking them to work and develop. Like other parts of the MAP process, this is not a question that can be answered quickly and simply. The process for doing so will vary with each church. However, the discernment will need to include:

1) Praying

It would be easy to listen to the strong voices in the church, or to simply come up with a strategy in a leadership meeting that reflects the views of that leadership. However, since the church are seeking God's way forward, prayer is central. The church may seek God's wisdom in different and creative ways that can engage people from right across its communities and groups.

2) Reflecting

The church will have gained a great deal of information from the previous stage about its history, its current place with God and about the views of those outside the church. There will need to be a great deal of reflection, considering carefully all that has been learned, without ignoring things that are difficult to hear.

3) Discussing

Listening to one another in the church is vital if there is to be accountability and opportunity to hear God in a range of voices.

There is always a temptation to try and do everything. There will inevitably be many good ways in which the church can continue to respond to God's call. The importance lies in discerning:

Of the many *good* things that God may be calling us to now, which are the few *God* things that He is calling us to now?

A good indication that the church have addressed this question is that the church are clear about 1 or 2 areas in which God is asking them to grow and develop in the next season, and about which aspects of these areas are the key ones. These are likely to be selected from the agreed characteristics of God's Church that form one of the core elements of the MAP process.

stage 4 – prepare

This stage is designed to help the church **prepare** how they will make the changes God requires of them.

This will mean creating a plan for these changes. There are three questions to answer in this stage, but the answers to each will develop together to form that detailed plan.

what steps should we take?

Answering this question will require the church to detail the actions that will be required to meet God's call for them (as discerned in the previous stage). What type of actions, and how many of them there are, will depend on the changes God is calling the church to make.

There is a temptation for the church to limit their thinking to *doing new things* – adding in new programmes or events, starting new initiatives. This often adds further burden and pressure on the church (and usually on those who are already overstretched, especially the church leader). Whilst this stage might mean starting something new, it might equally entail:

- **Stopping something**
It may be that an activity or programme that the church is currently involved in is hampering the church from responding to God's call.
- **Changing something**
Perhaps, in taking what is already happening and changing the way it is done to reflect the church's revealed character and purpose, the church can better respond to God's call.
- **Learning something**
Most often, the changes God calls His Church to make are heart changes (about who we are) rather than technical changes (what we do). This is harder, but nonetheless important. Such changes are not wrought through programmes, but through prayer, reflection, discussion, learning and repentance as God's church.

Whatever types of actions are included in the plan, it is helpful to make them SMART:

- **Specific**
The church is clear what needs to be done and what the aim of the action is.
- **Measurable**
The church knows what to look for to know that the action is complete.
- **Agreed, Achievable, Attractive**
The church agrees that this is the right action, that with God's help it can be done and that there is a will and desire to complete it.

- **Relevant, Resourced**

The church understands the need to complete the action and is therefore willing to bear the emotional, spiritual and material cost of completing it.

- **Timebound, Timely**

The church agrees that this is the right time to complete the action, and is committed to doing so in a reasonable timeframe.

A good indication that the church have addressed this question is that the church have a specific plan for change that will enable them to make the changes that God is calling them to, according to the previous stage.

with whom will we share the journey?

The MAP process will offer the church many opportunities to share the journey with others. To do so opens the possibility of building creative relationships in which the Good News of Jesus can be shared and the mission of God can be advanced. Such partnerships can enrich both the church and those with whom the church partners. This might mean establishing connections where there previously were none, or deepening existing connections. The answers to the question, 'with whom do we share our life and what do they say about us?' in stage 2 can form the base from which to begin answering this question.

Sharing the journey might mean different things, depending on the people with whom the church is seeking connection and why. It might be information sharing, or something much more substantial.

A good indication that the church have addressed this question is that the church are developing new and existing connections with others.

from whom will we need help?

Often, one of the hardest things for a person to do is to admit they need help. The same is true of churches. Although the church's source of help, wisdom and power will always be God, that may well come through others who can offer their support, help and advice. Sometimes churches will not embark on the work that God is calling them to because they are not sure they have the resources to complete it. Yet, the work may well be possible with the help and support of others. Commonly, churches will need help in the following areas:

- **Prayer, support and encouragement**

Partnering with those who will support and pray for the church.

- **The experience of others**

Partnering with those who have already completed the work the church is planning. It can be helpful to see what worked and what didn't, but care must be exercised in transferring models from another place without contextualisation.

- **Teaching, preaching, training and facilitation**

Seeking help for the church to learn something effectively, or having someone from outside to facilitate, which offers a 'critical friend' and free them to focus on content, rather than process.

- **Funding**

Seeking help with funding; this usually means making best uses of the assets and resources the church already has, or applying for grant funding from elsewhere.

- **People and resources**

Obtaining required skills or other resources to complete a piece of work.

The Parish Support Office will often be able to help the church to find any of these types of help, either directly or by pointing toward others who can provide it.

A good indication that the church have addressed this question is that the church are clear and confident that they have in place all the help they need to make the changes God is calling them to, with His help.

stage 5 – journey

This stage is designed to help the church ***journey*** toward making the changes God requires of them.

There are four questions to consider in this stage, but they are different to the questions in the other stages, in that the church needs to constantly ask them throughout the work. It may be helpful for the church's leadership team to frame their reflection on the MAP process around these four questions as they review each time they meet.

are we staying close to God?

The first core principle of the MAP process is prayerfulness. The MAP process is concerned with the church increasingly becoming the church God is calling them to be, so it is vital for them to be constantly seeking God's direction, wisdom, discernment and equipping.

The work of the MAP process should be regularly included in the prayers of the leadership team and during times of corporate worship, but the church will also wish to find other creative ways in which to seek God concerning the work. The paragraphs entitled *lay a foundation of prayer* in the **Preparation** section of this chapter (above) give further suggestions.

are we aware of what God is doing in and through us?

The second core principle of the MAP process is leader commitment. Although much of the detailed work of the MAP process may be done by other individuals or teams, it is important that the leadership team continue to oversee and be involved in it.

We recommend that the MAP process becomes a standard item on the agenda of the leadership team's normal meetings and that regular updates are sought by them from those involved in the work. If the work is progressing differently than expected, the leadership team will want to review why and to understand whether any changes might be needed to existing actions and plans.

are we celebrating God's faithfulness?

As God continues to work in and through the church, it will be important to celebrate the good things that are happening. This will remind the church of God's faithfulness and encourage them to continue in the changes He has called them to. There are different ways to celebrate:

- With those involved, thanking them and recognising God's work in and through them.
- As a leadership team, giving thanks to God.
- With the whole church, through regular updates and an annual celebration service.
- With the wider community, sharing all that God is doing through the MAP process.

are we communicating with others well?

The third core principle of the MAP process is integration – keeping MAP at the centre of the life of the church. People forget very easily, and will assume that if they don't hear anything then nothing is happening. Therefore, regular and constant communication is vital.

Communication will need to happen at all the same levels as for celebrating God's faithfulness (individuals, teams, leadership, church, wider community). The leadership will also need to communicate regularly and in different ways. The church may consider communicating via:

- personal contact (announcements, events, one to one, small groups)
- physical media (newspaper articles, newsletters, letters, information boards, posters)
- electronic media (email, website, blogs, videos)
- social media (Facebook, Twitter)

getting help

web pages

Our web pages on the Diocesan website have more information about the MAP process, including an overview of the process and a range of downloadable guides, tools and resources. These resources will grow over time.

Go to www.derby.anglican.org and select [Mission Action Planning](#) under the [Mission](#) section.

the parish support office

The Parish Support Office is always available help the church at every stage of the MAP process and as they carry out the work that results from it; from introducing it to the leadership and launching it in the church, right through to making the detailed plans. Typically, the Parish Support Office might get involved in one or more of the following ways (although support can easily be tailored to fit the context and needs of the church):

- Speaking to leadership teams
- Facilitating away days
- Providing training, preaching and teaching
- Offering advice on tools, techniques and approaches
- Walking alongside as a 'critical friend' during every stage of the MAP process

The officers in the Parish Support Office may be contacted at Church House, who can then put you in touch with the person most likely to be able to help.

Tel.: 01332 388650

Email: enquiries@derby.anglican.org

In person or
By post: Derby Church House
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