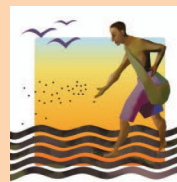




To find your parish's Steward of the Gospel:

- ⇒ Check your parish website
- ⇒ Check your parish newsletter
- ⇒ Ask your parish priest
- ⇒ If you cannot find out who the Steward of the Gospel is in your parish, please email adeleangel@dioceseofbrentwood.org

Where we are now?



Our **Stewards of the Gospel** have now completed their six training days. Around 100 people took part in each one. These lay people are being trained so that they can fulfil the role **Bishop Alan** has asked them to do for us all. The subjects that have been covered are:

- * The canonical role of the parish priest
- * Moving from the questionnaire to a parish plan for evangelisation
- * Practical evangelisation & how to become effective evangelisers
- * The parish & diocese in canon & civil law
- * Consultation, reactive and proactive decision making
- * The experience of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle - 'Forward together in Hope'
- * Who is my neighbour? Sharing resources & skill sets
- * Supporting volunteers

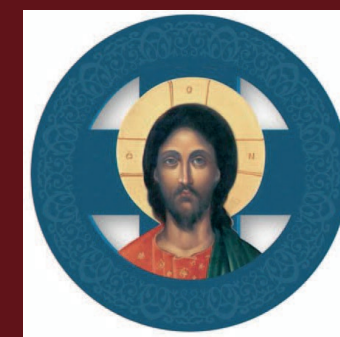
The Stewards, in the majority of our parishes, are completing their **questionnaires** in consultation with their **parish priest** and the parish community. Much good has come from the process already. Parishioners are taking a good look at what is happening in the parish, **celebrating** the good things and looking at how to **improve** others. Parishes are in different stages of the process, some are nearing completion and some are just beginning. This doesn't matter: what matters is the process and taking part in the development of the future of our diocese. A **deadline of Easter 2017** has been set to allow more time for those who need it.

There is a meeting in February for all the Stewards and clergy to come together to discuss the way forward. By going through this process, by working together and by the **Grace of God**, we can make the words of our Stewards of the Gospel prayer a reality across Essex and East London.

We are **very grateful** to our Stewards for putting so much effort into understanding their parish and collating all the information. To our clergy who are supporting them, and all **parishioners** who are participating in such a positive way. We thank you all most sincerely.

Stewards of the Gospel Prayer

Merciful Father,
 form us, we pray, as one community
 under the leadership of our Bishop Alan,
 to serve the people of our Diocese of Brentwood.
 Inspire us to discover new ways
 to spread the joy of the Gospel.
 Open our eyes to see Christ in others,
 especially the poor, the sick and the marginalised.
 Empower us to be the hands and feet of Christ
 in our parishes and communities.
 Help us to welcome all into His embrace.
 Guide us in our discernment.
 Give wisdom to our Stewards of the Gospel
 who will help us in each parish
 to see new paths of possibility:
 for a spirit of mission that invigorates our every effort;
 and for the strength to be unafraid of what is new.
 We ask this through Christ, our Lord.
 Amen.



Diocese of Brentwood



Shaping

our

future



Stewards of the Gospel

Some words from Bishop Alan



“It is ‘our diocese’ not ‘my diocese’.”

“We have to steer a course forward together for our common future and I would much rather do it in dialogue with people than present it as a fait accompli.”

Hence I want to invite people to discern, together and with me, a way of going forward as Catholic Christians.

That discernment involves respectful listening, sharing information, being in tune with the Issues and needs of our community and a willingness to be open to God’s will.”

Bishop Alan Williams has invited lay people within the Diocese of Brentwood to put themselves forward to play an important role in shaping its future. Called ‘**Stewards of the Gospel**’, these volunteers have been using their talents to work closely with clergy, parishes and schools as part of the diocesan planning process.



Appointed in each parish, the Stewards are, with local clergy and parishioners, assessing their parishes and collaborating with neighbouring parishes to determine opportunities for evangelisation and sacramental provision. They are encouraging discussion and being an advocate for their fellow parishioners, communicating their ideas, thoughts and concerns to the Diocesan Strategic Planning Group.

The key tasks for the Stewards of the Gospel are:

- ◆ To examine their own parish, to find out what is going on and to pave the way for a plan for better evangelisation in and by the parish.
- ◆ To begin to discern “which parish belongs to which” when it comes to working together in future.
- ◆ To be a source of creative inspiration, looking for new ways to evangelise.
- ◆ To be the voice of the laity when it comes to discerning the principles and priorities on which future plans will be based.
- ◆ To be the voice of the laity when it comes to implementing the agreed principles in the particular local situation of their own parishes.

Moving forward together

Imagine how your parish will look in **10 years’** time if we continue as we are. We will have fewer priests, the changing social situations and altered demographics will have an **impact**. With greater **lay involvement**, and a change in the way parishes operate we can paint a better picture. **Together**

we have to find a better way forward and we have to **evangelise** to ensure we have people in our parishes. We need more **joy** in our parishes to welcome those who are seeking Christ. We need to seek out the lost, the lonely and the lapsed. We can all pull our resources together and go from **maintenance to Mission**, with Christ at our side. We need your prayers, your wisdom and your help.

Imagine.....



What can we do now?

Pray, inspire....

- ⇒ **Pray** for our diocese throughout the process and for our future
- ⇒ **Complete**, after praying and thinking about it, the questionnaire insert (if your parish has chosen to insert one) with your suggestions and hand it to your parish priest or Steward of the Gospel
- ⇒ **Talk** to your Steward of the Gospel about your hopes and concerns
- ⇒ **Attend** meetings in your parish which your Steward is organising
- ⇒ **Discuss** partnerships with your neighbouring parishes and leadership within your parish

We believe that God’s desire for our diocese is that every Catholic will be part of a viable and flourishing community in order for their own faith to grow and so that they can share it with others. For that to happen each of us needs to look urgently at how we can move forward together with hope.

