**Seeking God Together:**
**A Rule of Life for the Amersham Deanery**

---

**Vision:**
Seeking God Together is a shared rule of life for the Amersham Deanery, expressing our conviction that the fruitfulness of our parishes flows from our shared life of prayer.

**What we have heard**
At Deanery Synod we asked one another to imagine Amersham Deanery five years from now. What would someone see if we were truly Seeking God Together? What would feel different? What stories would they hear?

We imagined a Deanery that is prayerful, outward-looking and centred upon Christ. Where parishes know one another and pray for one another. Where resources, encouragement and stories of God's work are freely shared; and where churches want to see one another flourish.

We also recognised some of the things which currently make that difficult. We do not always know one another well. Relationships between parishes can be limited. Our traditions and theological convictions are diverse and can sometimes divide us. There are pressures of finance, clergy capacity, ageing congregations and limited resources. And the purpose of the Deanery itself is not always clear.

Yet there was also a striking sense of hope. Again and again we heard a desire to become "bound together rather than divided"; to "help each other flourish"; to pray for other churches by name; to share what God is doing; and to learn to live with tensions where we do not agree and to ultimately respect one another.

One response perhaps captured the spirit of the whole discussion most simply:"People, not programme."

Seeking God Together therefore isn't principally a new Deanery programme. It is a shared commitment about the kind of Christian community we want to become.

Our conviction is that the fruitfulness of our individual parishes is strengthened when we seek God together.

**1. Prayer**

- Beginning Chapter and Synod with substantial, unhurried prayer
- Praying for named parishes, clergy, lay ministers, churchwardens, PCCs and schools
- Establishing a simple Deanery prayer cycle
- Sharing urgent prayer needs across the Deanery
- Holding an annual Deanery Quiet Morning or Quiet Day
- Exploring prayer partnerships between parishes.

**2. Relationship**

- Making space at Chapter and Synod for genuine conversation and fellowship
- Creating occasional social opportunities across the Deanery
- Encouraging clergy to take Chapter seriously as a place of fellowship and mutual support
- Ensuring PTO and SSM clergy are intentionally included in Deanery life
- Varying locations so that we become familiar with one another's churches
- Creating opportunities for parishes to encounter churches beyond their immediate neighbours

**3. Encouragement**

- Testimony at Synod: Where have we seen God at work?
- Sharing both encouragements and difficulties
- Creating opportunities for churches to ask one another for help
- Responding generously when parishes experience vacancy, illness or other pressures
- Sharing useful resources and good practice
- Exploring collaboration between parishes where this serves local mission
- Celebrating signs of Gospel growth throughout the Deanery

**4. Seeking God Together**

- Guided engagement with Scripture at Synod
- Occasional theological and spiritual formation
- Listening carefully before responding
- Ensuring different traditions are represented in our common life
- Using positive and gracious language about one another
- Creating spaces in which difficult conversations can happen without fear
- Continually asking not simply "What do I want?" but "What might God be calling us to together?"

As Jesus reminds us:
"The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve." **Mark 10.45**

We therefore seek a culture of servant leadership at every level of Deanery life.

**What might change first?**
A Rule of Life only becomes meaningful when it changes our habits.

**At every Deanery Synod we will:**

1. **Pray** intentionally for particular churches and people across the Deanery.
2. **Listen** to stories of where God is at work — including places where help is needed.
3. **Learn** together through Scripture, prayer or Christian formation.
4. **Connect** with people beyond our own parish and tradition.

Alongside this, Clergy Chapter will continue developing as a place of prayer, fellowship, mutual support and honest conversation, and we will establish a Deanery-wide prayer rhythm.

Other ideas raised through Synod: shared resources, vocations, social gatherings, collaborative ministry and practical partnerships. These can be grown naturally from the relationships which develop.

The vision which emerged from Synod was not ultimately for a busier Deanery. It was for a more prayerful, more relational, more generous and more hopeful one.