

## Summary of Diocesan Synod - March meeting

March 2023

**Opening Worship:** Synod began by sharing in the Eucharist together, with Bishop Andrew reflecting on the parable of the Lost Son, and the Father's desire to hold the family together in the midst of differing viewpoints and tensions.

**New Diocesan Secretary:** Geraldine Newbold was interviewed by Rosemary Donovan (Chair of House of Clergy) and spoke of her desire to be Approachable, Transparent & Accessible and for God to be central in all we are doing. Also to contribute to the smooth running of Church House.

Her chosen bible verses were Luke 6:31 'Do to others as you would have them do to you' & Psalm 127:1 'Unless the Lord builds the house, the labourers labour in vain.'

### **Reflections on General Synod from our Diocesan Representatives:**

6 members of GS spoke and one written contribution was read out, including the following comments

- *Positives:* Heartened by compassion and sincerity of members

Church has much to say about healthy human relationships and covenanted relationships

The Pastoral Principles retain widespread support in governing our discussions

- *Negatives:* Confusion and lack of clarity of what is truly being proposed.

Palpable tension and some discourteous behaviour

Have we counted the cost to the unity of our communion and consulted widely?

Perception of being inward looking; not sufficient regard for 21<sup>st</sup> century mission

- *Challenges:*

Will the impact on parish clergy be duly considered?

Has a clear direction of travel been articulated and, if so, with what support?

Whether GS as a legislative machine is most appropriate for essentially a discipleship/ theological discussion?

Can a middle way be found or does some form of differentiation seem likely/ inevitable?

Differentiation may seem daunting and clearer separation scary or scandalous

How the potential prayers may be used, given the amendment passed that the prayers must in no shape or form depart or challenge the received doctrine of marriage.

#### **Diocesan Board of Education:**

Helen Coulson spoke, Chair of Enlighten Learning Academy Trust, making the following pts:

- A family of schools collaborating together in a MAT can help them all to thrive.
- The distinctiveness of a Church MAT is that it plays an important part in our mission to young people.
- The Christian Distinctiveness of SLT's can be helpful in fostering a sense of growing and serving our communities.

Fr Damian Harrison-Miles spoke of his time at Thorpe, where they worked hard for the church to be a resource for the school. Importance of meeting with the Head Teacher and asking the question 'How can our church best serve your school and its priorities?' Partnership working could fruitfully include after school clubs, increased presence of clergy in school, drawing parents and church volunteers into worship, and parents rediscovering their faith through their children coming home singing Christian songs they are learning.

#### **Vision for Vocations:**

Rev'd Dr John Valentine, Dean of the LMP, addressed DS, making the following comments:

- 82% of Incumbents interviewed state that they have too much to do; that too often they are pulled into important work that nonetheless they were neither called to or trained for.
- The vision of the LMP & Foundations in Ministry (FiM) is to equip, empower and release significant numbers of lay vocations to serve in our parishes.
- Therefore, the creation of a new training pathway for a new category of LAM's (Lay Associate Ministers) is being created, who would complete one foundation year of training and then one year

of specialism. The specialisms are designed to be of most use in our parishes, including youth, children, church management, worship leading as some examples.

- The LAM training programme is intended to bridge the gap between gifted and high capacity lay leaders and the demands of the existing LMP. Thought has been given to a 'stepping stones' approach to training, with a journey from the diocesan Occasional Courses (e.g. occasional preachers), which are 3 Saturdays a year, to the LAMs course, which is 6 Saturdays a year plus 6 online tutorials, to LMP, which is weekly Monday evenings during term time.
- Assets based approach through Incumbents; LAM's would be locally recognised in distinction to LLM's who would continue with Durham certifications and Diocesan Licensing.
- CDP's would be used to identify existing or potential lay leaders who could carry responsibility for delivering CDP priorities.
- A pilot of 20-30 is to run from September 2023.

#### **Deepcut: Request for Deanery Synod representation.**

Synod rejoiced to learn of the growth in the church plant at Deepcut, and with +Andrew's support, unanimously agreed to Rev'd Daniels' request for Deanery Synod representation.

#### **Questions:**

Has the budget been stress-tested with possible LLF challenges?

A: Yes, contingency is always made with regard to parish share being paid with some fluctuation, but we foresee little budget implications for this year.

Q: Are there any blockages we have identified toward reaching our 2030 CNZ goal?

A: Sufficient personnel to support this could be a challenge, therefore it is planned a part-time Programme Manager be appointed to ensure allocated funds can be utilised to maximum effect.

Summary written by Revd Ben Beecroft (Area Dean Runnymede)