

Approved Minutes of Easington Deanery Synod Meeting held on the 3rd February 2020

Present:

Reverend Canon Jane Grieve Area Dean, Reverend Carol Harris, Reverend Paul Harrison, Father Paul Kennedy, Father Mark Mawhinney, Reverend Lucy Moss, Reverend Paul Paterson, Reverend Muriel Peters

Lay Chair Stephen Pickering

Speakers – Canon Dr Jamie Harrison General Synod-Member of House of Laity@ Durham (Diocese), Reverend Alastair Prince Vocations Strategy Development Adviser @Durham (Diocese) and Warden of Lay Ministries.

Ray & Alice Armbrister, Alan Askew, Neil Armstrong, Loraine Dodds, Matt Finkel, Ann-Marie Green, Carol Maddison, Liz Masshedar, Kathy McAvoy, Diane Metcalfe, Roger Muggleton, Jeannette Simpson, Anne Smith, Wendy Tempest, Alan Whitwell, Maureen Wilson, Jenny Winter.

1. Opening Worship

Reverend Jane thanked Dalton le Dale for their hospitality and joined with them in the celebration of all that had been achieved.

Carol Maddison shared how since the Church was built 865 years ago, there has been almost continual worship with evidence on the site going back to 1155. She then led the meeting in a time of worship.

2. Apologies for absence:

Reverend Elaine Jones, Father Kyle McNeil

Tracey Fox, Roger Key, Carol Lines, Alan Roxborough, Julie Smith, Susan Webster, Joanne Benson

3. Welcome

Reverend Jane welcomed Canon Dr Jamie Harrison and Reverend Alastair Prince to the meeting.

Reverend Jane paid tribute to the contribution of George Robinson, going back decades, and joined with Shotton St Saviour and his family in expressing our debt of gratitude and sadness at his passing.

Since the last Deanery meeting the Reverend Alan Stainsby has lost his battle with cancer. There was a wonderful funeral service that Alan himself had planned. Our thoughts and prayers are with Julie as she starts a new life in Ludworth.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on the 25th November 2019

The minutes were accepted by the meeting.

5. Matters Arising:

None

6. Feedback from the General Synod - Canon Dr Jamie Harrison

The General Synod has 470 members made up of Bishops, Clergy and Lay. Each Diocese elects 4 lay and 5 clergy members to the Synod. An election will take place later this year and the Deanery representatives were asked to consider volunteering to stand in that election.

From Monday (10th February) till Thursday there will be General Synod meetings in London. The meeting will be finalizing the Clergy Care and Wellbeing Covenant, which was agreed at the last Synod meeting, this is an Act of Synod; so not a law but an agreement. PCCs and Deaneries might want to adapt this covenant. The Synod will be discussing how to work out this agreement in practice, what would enable clergy to feel supported and to be able to flourish in their ministry.

The Church Representations Rules have been significantly updated for 2020. In the final stage of the approval process it was found that a regulation on the number of successive terms a representative could serve had inadvertently crept in, with a default of no more than two successive terms. This will be amended by separate legislation at the next Synod, returning to the default position of no limit.

Important things to be discussed at the next Synod include: a climate emergency debate, paupers' funerals, children and youth ministry, the Windrush scandal. Also there will be a discussion on how our cathedrals are run. At the moment cathedrals are not governed by the Charity Commission, it is thought that introducing this might be a means of giving a review process to cathedrals. There will also be debates on: Safeguarding, Living in Love, Developing a sense of belonging etc.

The meeting was asked to pray for the General Synod.

7. Feedback from the Diocesan Synod of November 2019 - Stephen Pickering

The meeting included: a discussion on Waymark, a report from the Children's Society, an address by Bishop Paul, a reflection by Bishop Sarah on her first 6 months in position.

The council had been asked by the Diocesan Champions and the Young People's Council to give Environmental issues a higher prominence in the Diocesan strategic goals.

The Diocesan Synod also discussed a financial report on the likely budget deficit of £540,000 that the Diocese may have at the end of 2020. It had been hoped that with the 5% increase in Parish Share we might have been closer to meeting the balanced budget. The Diocese can manage in the short term, but in the long term hard decisions will have to be made. One issue affecting the finance is the gradual reduction in the money that the Diocese receives from the Low Incomes Community Fund; and the way that this is disbursed. The Diocesan Finance Committee has also been looking at the reduction in fee income to the Diocese from funerals and weddings, which has affected the projected yearly income.

As a Diocese we have applied for income from the Strategic Development Fund to finance Resourcing Churches and Communities of Hope. In this Deanery this includes funding for three initial Communities of Hope which will be assisting the mission of our Deanery.

If you have particular questions that you would like to ask, or if you would like a visit by someone from the Diocesan financial office to the church PCC, please contact Stephen or Joanne Benson.

8. Vocations - Reverend Alastair Prince

There have been radical changes in the national process of applying for ordained ministry. The pastoral exercise will now include a video, and the group exercise now includes a scenario with a “curve ball” thrown in midway to mirror what the candidates might have to respond to in ministry. The registration form has been changed with less emphasis on academia and more emphasis on “where has learning happened”. The previous nine selection criteria have gone; there are now 6 qualities into which the previous criteria have been incorporated, and the emphasis is on how candidates work in a group, in line with the shape of future ministry of working in teams.

Alastair distributed two sheets with the criteria for “Priest” and “Distinctive Deacon” (see attachments). Also two books were distributed “The Great Vocations Conversations” to those clergy present who did not have a copy, and to the Readers present the book “Resourcing Sunday to Saturday Faith”, which includes guidance on a worker’s agreement with their clergy.

There are 35 people at present in the diocesan system exploring ministry, they all need a member of the clergy to guide them in their process of thinking through issues. They will all have a DBS check and complete the C0 and C1 training and also undergo a psychosomatic assessment. The youngest age of the 35 candidates is 21, the oldest 69, the two oldest will be ordained locally and will remain in their churches, the others are from very varied backgrounds. 80% are female.

Alastair is in the process of a review of Reader ministry, broadening the role out, following the themes of "Setting God's People Free" Every one of us has a calling from God and a duty, responsibility and the joy of discovering that calling. There are 68 Readers under 70, in 5 years this will mean only 30 under 70.

The APA course is now called the Pastoral Ministry course, with 18 on the course at the moment. The course runs over one academic year and the completion of the course is celebrated in the Cathedral at the annual Reader's service. Recruitment occurs during the summer. There is also a Lay Chaplaincy Pastoral Course to equip for ministry in schools, hospitals, in industry etc.

Next three Vocation Events:

7th March for 18 to 30 year olds wanting to explore ordained ministry

21st March and the 2nd May - same event to explore any of the authorised roles, Priest, Lay Chaplain, Reader, Church Army, Lay Pastoral ministry, Religious Life.

The 8th March is VOCATIONS Sunday Alastair asked churches if they had a student placement from Cranmer Hall or Lindisfarne to ask them to share their vocation experience or if not to ask Pamela Wilson to arrange a speaker.

Information from Pamela Wilson Email: pamela.wilson@durham.anglican.org or through Cuthbert House Tele: 01388 604515

Please pray for Alastair in his work.

9. Pilgrimage

New pilgrimage routes :

The Way of Life - Gainford to Durham - April 6th to the 9th

The Way of Love - Hartlepool to Durham - May 21st to the 23rd

The Way of Learning - Jarrow to Durham - May 24th to the 27th

The Way of Light - Heavenfield/Hexham to Durham - May 28th to the May 31st

Alongside the walking each day there will be evening events reflecting on the day and specific themes.

Saturday February 29th at St Giles Church 9am to 3.30pm

<https://durhamdiocese.org/events/pilgrimage/>

Passion Play - Good Friday, Bishop Auckland. There will be two performances, 12noon and 3.15pm

Thy Kingdom Come (May 21st - 31st) will have a strong Pilgrimage theme to it this year

10. World Day of Prayer

Reverend Muriel Peters distributed posters for the World Day of Prayer on 6th March at Wheatley Hill All Saints 1.30pm. There will also be a meeting in Seaham and other venues in the Deanery.

11. Feedback from Deanery Consultation Day 25th January

Reverend Jane led the meeting in a time of reflection, on the questions given by Matthew Frost in his second presentation at the Waymark conference (see sheets “Feedback from Waymark Deanery Consultation Day 25th January”)

The meeting was asked to prayerfully reflect on the questions, what they meant for us personally and our response to them.

We then looked at the “Wider Issues” and Reverend Jane asked that if any of those issues had a particular relevance to our own parishes, that we contact her, Stephen, Joanne Benson, Father Paul, Reverend Paul Paterson or Jeannette (all members of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee.. Also, if we are blessed by having young people in our churches, that we include them in our prayers and planning, so that their mission to the wider church may move forward.

The meeting closed with prayer

The date of the next meeting is the 18th May at Murton Holy Trinity 7 for 7.15pm

Reverend Jane Grieve thanked Dalton le Dale for their hospitality on behalf of the Synod.