

Hertford and Ware Deanery Synod

Our vision is

to see flourishing, Christ-centred communities inspiring people of all ages and backgrounds to discover God, grow in their relationship with Him and respond to His transforming love through serving others.

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

The Deanery Synod is the local link between the parishes and the Diocese of St Albans. It consists of the clergy and elected lay-people. The Synod provides opportunities for finding ways of supporting one another and of encouraging Christian witness and growth in our local area. It is also the first place of support for financial and staffing issues.

The Synod has organised large meetings during the year to provide information and opportunities to share concerns and interests over the central aspects of the Living God's Love project which is being promoted by the Bishops and the Diocese. The three meetings during the year consisted mainly of key speakers who encouraged discussion and information was sent to the parishes so that they can hopefully integrate the vision into parish life. The three areas examined were "Fresh Expressions of Church" – The Revd Alison Jackson, our Archdeaconry Fresh Expressions Advisor; "Children's Work today" – Margaret Pritchard Houston, Diocesan Children's Mission Enabler; and "Worship in Town and Country", led by Canon Andrew Holford.

1. **Fresh Expressions.** Alison invited the members of Synod to reflect together on "What is your prayer for your Deanery?" Making New Disciples is the current priority for the Diocese and the Deanery. We want to see spiritual and numerical growth: (1) Renewing existing modes of church and (2) reaching new people in new ways – "FX". Alison asked, "Where is your parish at present?" in terms of its journey, and, "What one thing will help you to move on from here?" She stated that the project is about our imagination – it could be anything.
2. **Children's Work Today.** Margaret said that these days "Children won't show up unless they are brought." What are some of the challenges – and the benefits? We have to approach the whole family. There can be an opportunity to minister to several generations at once. All Age Worship was also considered and discussed: What is/isn't it? All worship is all-age ... if it doesn't appeal to everyone, something is wrong? Yet different things appeal to different ages. Note that you can't define a person's needs by age. Why not call it Inclusive Worship?
3. **Worship in Town and Country.** Andrew asked whether we discuss the worship at our PCCs. He ventured that we are more likely to talk about the colour of the church gate! Yet we need a vision of the future. Priorities were felt to be *Ambience* (welcome, music, praise, inspiring reflection, quiet meditation), *Connection* (Accessibility, Communal Prayer, Inclusion), *Leadership of worship* (well-prepared, well managed), *Service Content* (variety, language we can understand, encourage a

desire to return), *Response* (hearing the Word of God, challenge and enthusiasm). Andrew challenged Synod members to promote discussion about worship in their parishes and to re-visit this issue in 2019.

Elections

Diocesan Synod representatives needed to be voted in for the next three years. In the House of Clergy, Canon Jo Loveridge, the Revd Mark Dunstan, and the Revd Ysmena Pentelow continued, later joined by the Revd David Sheppard. In the House of Laity, Mrs Diana Perkins, Mrs Janet Bird, Mr Colin Bird continued. Thanks were offered as they retired for Pat Parker and David Scott who had both served for many years. Concerns remain about our representation with one Clergy and two Lay seats unfilled.

Mr Colin Bird was elected as our representative on the Diocesan Board of Finance, and has now become its Chair.

Ms Dot Marlow (Head of Ponsbourne St Mary's School) was elected to the Diocesan Board of Education.

Finance

Budget information from the Diocese was given that total costs are £15 million, and stipends increase by 2% next year. Other costs remain at the same level, but it is very difficult to balance when inflation is at 4%. This is a very tough situation, which will lead to cutting two stipendiary posts per annum for the coming years. This is the first time that the Bishops and Archdeacons have needed to do this. The Parish Share increase for our Deanery 2.1% for 2019.

There are 23 parishes in the Deanery, and we pledge to pay our combined Parish Share on time. At the end of 2018 we owed £30,105 – shared almost equally between Stanstead Abbots, High Cross and Thundridge.

Clergy

Canon Pauline Higham retired from Hartford Hundred and The Revd Nick Sharp moved from Holy Trinity, Little Amwell. We welcomed the Revd Angela Lynas to join Watton at Stone and the team, the Revd David Sheppard as Curate of St Mary's, Ware, the Revd Wendy Sellers as Non-Stipendiary Curate at St Andrew's, Hertford and The Revd Amanda Duncan as House for Duty Minister for High Cross and Thundridge.

Communication

The Deanery website has continued in development by Mark Dunstan, with news and information available. It includes our Deanery Mission Action Plan which addresses agreed priorities for our parishes.