

Hertford and Ware Deanery Synod

Our vision: 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.

Thursday 12th November 2020

Zoom Meeting

7.45pm

Chair – Canon Jo Loveridge, Rural Dean. Diana Perkins, Sue Rogers, Beresford Thomson*, Dorothy Toyn, Julie Markey*, Shirley Taylor*, Jane Cohen, Sara McCrea, Amanda Rosier*, Catriona Baker, Helen Harris, The Revd Sarah Forrest*, Lyn Paddon, Tim Crowther, Katy Little, David Goodman, The Revd Mark Dunstan, Colin Bird, Janet Bird, Colin Taylor, Robin Bishop, Dorothy Abel-Smith, Ian Aitken, Marion Andrews, The Revd John Hookway, The Revd Ysmena Pentelow, The Revd Theresa Musiwacho, Ian Bailey, Mike West, The Revd Angela Lynas, The Revd Doug Loveridge, Marion Andrews, Tim Alexander

This was our first ever zoom meeting for the Deanery and we were grateful to the Revd Harry Steele for using his skills in facilitating it. Most things went well, but apologies to those who had difficulty joining in and sometimes sharing in the discussions. We would have liked to introduce everyone as we have a number of new members but in this situation, it could have taken at least half an hour.

1. Welcome and Introductions. New members: Jane Francis, Watton; David Briggs, Christ Church Ware; Tim Alexander, Aston; Beresford Thomson, Essendon.
New Priest Revd Dr Sarah Forrest from Stanstead Abbots/Great Amwell
2. Prayers were led by Diana Perkins, Lay Chair (including Pat Parker RIP)
3. Apologies for absence: Lynne Griffiths, The Revd Alan Stewart, Jillian Whitley
4. Minutes of the previous Synod Meeting 27 February 2020
5. Matters arising. Nil
6. Main Address: Revd Harry Steele, Church Growth Officer for Hertfordshire, Associate Director of Leading your Church into Growth and house for duty Rector of Therfield and Kelshall
“Enabling our churches to flourish in the ‘New Normal’- and beyond.” Please see the attached file of Harry’s slides and see my notes below.

7. Diocesan Synod report. A brief report was given by The Revd Mark Dunstan
 - a. Budget.
 - b. Clergy Well-being, a document is available (we will look at it in February)
 - c. Eco-Diocese, key issue that the Diocese wants to encourage that the whole Diocese/all parishes should be as environmentally friendly as possible: it was voted for very enthusiastically.
8. Parish Share and Diocesan Board of Finance – Colin Bird Many parishes are having varying issues re fundraising, e.g. letting halls, sales etc. Some have historic reserves, some have run out. Others have everyone on giving schemes which weather the storm. We are currently 10% behind across the Diocese (£1.5m). Parishes are making efforts to pay, which is excellent; but a lot of the money usually comes in in December, which may be below expectations. Next year, we know that all of us will be financially weaker, making it very difficult to budget.

The Parish Share should not rise significantly next year due to the challenges. It is a tough situation, although we are in a better position than many other Dioceses.

Jo suggested a Treasurers and Wardens meeting late next January to address issues – Colin agreed.
9. Events in the Deanery – currently not permitted! Hopefully soon....
10. Any Other Business (substantial issues must be notified for the Agenda)

Have all membership changes been notified? It appeared to be so
11. Closing Prayer
12. Forthcoming Meeting: Clergy Well-Being and election of the Deanery Standing and Pastoral Committee. Date agreed Monday 8th February 2021.

Representatives, please remember that communication in the Deanery depends on arranging and delivering a Deanery Report/update at your Parochial Church Council meeting.

Deanery website... www.hertfordandwaredeanery.org.uk

Flourishing Churches
A flourishing and Growing Church in Covid and beyond...

During the pandemic, has your congregation of 60 become 35? We should seek Hope and Growth not Fear of Decline. Do we panic? How can we evangelise????

7 steps to consider.... which steps might be most important in our own context?
How we do things has had to change, but what response can we make?

1. Create a prayerful culture of growth (Mt 13.31 Mustard Seed)

This also helps with our church's culture – congregation and PCC. Praying specifically for growth (not just general). This growing is a priority for us.

2. Implement an effective strategy (Mt 6.10 Kingdom Come.)

Are we just thinking about Christmas at the moment? – we need to look forward even to Easter. Pace yourself. But Christmas is a great opportunity, many people have found people coming online. It's not about just getting it done/out of the way, we need a brilliant service – and Alpha course follow-up?

3. Practice fruitful evangelism. (Mk 1.17 Catching fish)

You may feel anxious, but there's no other way than to have a go. There can be a special anointing, but we are all called. We need to be able to tell people our story. If people ask me, Harry said, about being a Christian/Vicar, he replies that Life with Jesus is better than life without. Who are you, where are you – and why don't you come to...course, prayer, worship etc?

Discussion

4. Develop engaging worship (Exodus 3.5 Holy Ground)

We can learn lots of lessons from online worship, and there are questions about Holy Communion, length of service, length of sermons, how to keep it moving online, children? Some people hated online worship, others loved it. Develop engaging worship. Harry has worked with evangelical and Anglo-catholic churches in Sheffield. What matters is doing the worship in a planned and

thoughtful way, not the churchmanship, etc. Do people see a Christian community at prayer, engaged in worship? It's what we invite people to. So it isn't about what we personally prefer but what will engage new people.

5. Becoming an inviting and Welcoming church. (Lk 14.21 Banquet)

Harry told one church they were not yet ready to invite/welcome. We should make sure all people are welcome. Make sure the service also gives a welcome. E.g High Chairs and snacks for young children. Young families began to attend when this was done.

6. Create a pathway for seekers to become disciples. (Mt 28.19 Make Disciples)

The journey of faith is like stepping-stones, not a big jump from one bank to another. Ask: How do you make disciples? Is it working? We could have people invited, seeking even - but they need to grow. In some churches you need to have been attending for 20 years before being asked to read a lesson etc. Concern – we are often good at caring for children, but lose them in teenage years. What is there for them?

7. Begin a planned journey of growth (Acts 5.14 Early Church)

Churches that plan to grow are much more likely to grow. A plan not mentioning growth will be more difficult. Collaboration is needed within the church, keep updating. The MAP can be a standing item on the PCC; what are our goals and how are they going?

Discussion