

RICKMANSWORTH DEANERY SYNOD: *'We are the body of Christ'*

SYNOD OFFICERS

Rural Dean:	The Revd Deborah Snowball, The Vicarage, Bury Lane, Rickmansworth WD3 1ED	01923 772627
Lay Chairman:	Duncan Kerr, Lavender Lodge, Nightingales Lane, Chalfont St Giles HP8 4SR	01494 763481
Treasurer:	Sally Morgan, Stockers House, Stockers Farm Rd, Rickmansworth WD3 1NZ	01923 773922
Secretary:	Alex Twells, 12 Greenbury Close, Chorleywood, Rickmansworth WD3 5QT	01923 448167

Minutes of the Synod in Christ Church, Chorleywood at 8.00pm on Thursday 3rd November 2011

Members of the House of Clergy (15 current members)

Present (9): Deborah Snowball (Rural Dean), David White, Andy Reid, Jim Stevens, Charles Burch, Miriam Mugan, Robert Riley-Brale, Simon Cutmore, Charles Parry.

Apologies (2): Rachel Jenkinson, Jenny Sumpter.

Others absent: (4)

Members of the House of Laity (34 current members)

Present (23): Duncan Kerr (Lay Chairman), Allan Brown, Pauline Brown, Stephen Lawrence, Audrey Timberlake, John Galloway, Jo Squire, Rupert Barnes, Tony Barton, Janet Anders, Ruth Barr, Terence Russoff, Beryl Baker, Suzanne Powell, Jim Pummell, Ann Badhams, John Marsh, Julie Shepherd, Alan Wills, Bill Seddon, John Parsons, Sally Morgan (Treasurer), Alex Twells (Secretary).

Apologies (9): Caroline Wainman, David Nobbs, Phil Waine, Linda Clough, John Guy, David Cansdale, Brian Smith, Gilda Conrich, John Rhodes.

Others absent: (2)

Observers

Present: The Rt Revd Paul Bayes (Bishop of Hertford)

Apologies: The Revd Scott Talbott (PtO)

2. Act of Worship

Item 2 (Prayers) was taken first, extended into an act of worship led by Deborah, which comprised the hymn *Immortal, Invisible*, a reading (Ephesians 4:11-13), a time of quiet reflection, prayers, and the hymn *In Christ Alone*.

1. Welcome

Deborah welcomed everyone, and thanked Christ Church for preparing the light refreshments.

3. Apologies

Deborah read out the names of those who had submitted apologies in advance.

4. Bible Study led by the Rt Revd Paul Bayes, Bishop of Hertford

Bishop Paul's text was Acts 15 – The Council at Jerusalem. Dissension had entered the early Church because factions had emerged with opposing views, like today. The joy that greeted the conversion of many uncircumcised Phoenician and Samaritan Gentiles, as reported by Peter and Paul, met fierce opposition in some quarters in Jerusalem, led by upholders of the law of Moses. Yet the two had witnessed what God was doing, and Peter firmly stated to his hearers that their report was nothing less than bringing a gospel of Grace, accompanied by signs and wonders: salvation was for all who believed. James, the leader of the Church in Jerusalem, decided that Gentiles who turned to God should not be troubled; being circumcised was not a prerequisite for being a Christian.

Bishop Paul then drew a parallel between the dissension at the Council and the current debate on the Anglican Communion Covenant. We are at the stage when action, such as that which James took, is required.

He summed up, saying that the Council of Jerusalem heard three approaches:

- These new believers should keep all the laws of Moses;
- We are under grace, not law, and so our new believers should not be bound by any of the old laws;
- We should be free of burdens under God, except for some essentials.

He then asked Synod members, in small groups, to consider the following questions:

- If you had been at the Council of Jerusalem what approach would you have taken?
- What would you have advised the Council to do if the new believers chose not to follow its advice?

5. Discussion of the Anglican Communion Covenant, led by Bill Seddon, of St Andrew's and the General Synod

Bill used notes prepared by Edmund Marshall for the St Albans Diocesan Synod. The bottom line is that if 23 of the 44 Dioceses in the Church of England voted against the draft Act of [the General] Synod, then it would go no further. Bill stressed that if rejection occurred, it would almost certainly be due to dissension on 'practical matters, relating to adoption of, and withdrawing from, the covenant', rather than on core values.

He said that provinces would not lose their autonomy, yet thought the provision of a Standing Committee with powers to declare a province as 'out of communion with the rest of the Anglican Communion' and to recommend its removal from the Communion, might be a serious point of contention.

For any one interested, the Anglican Communion Study Guide can be found at: www.anglicancommunion.org

Deborah then asked for any questions or other points from the floor. There were eight in all. The first sought clarification of the role of the Standing Committee, in particular how members were elected and to whom it was accountable (the Anglican Consultative Council). The second disputed that provinces were autonomous, arguing that we are one holy and apostolic Church, sharing the common ground of mutual forbearance. The third pointed out that in certain circumstances, the Archbishop of Canterbury could be placed in an impossible position, leading a Church holding a minority view in the Communion, which he also headed. A fourth point made was that having a Covenant would helpfully take the focus away from areas of disagreement.

Having considered the issue, the meeting was asked by Deborah for its view on the motion to be put to the Diocesan Synod on 10th March;

'That this Synod approve the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant'.

25 members were in favour, 3 were against, and 4 abstained.

Comments on the debate, together with voting figures, would be sent by, or on behalf of, Deborah and Duncan to the Diocesan Secretary for receipt by 5th December.

6. Minutes of the Deanery Synod on 13th June

After inserting 'as Rural Dean' after 'successor' in Item 14a, the Minutes were signed as a true record.

7. Matters arising

a. Licensing of the Revd Rachel Jenkinson as Associate Vicar of St Andrew's on 17th November at 7.30pm (Item 14b)

Anyone wishing to attend should notify St Andrew's in good time. Doors open 6.30pm, all seated by 7.20pm

b. Parish Share Factors for 2013 (Item 14c)

Alex had notified the Diocese that no change was sought by the Deanery.

8. Date of next Synod (23rd February)

This will be held in St Andrew's and will be in two parts;

- a. A speaker from Christians Against Poverty will address the gathering;
- b. A speaker from Farm Crisis Network will address the gathering.

9. Any other business

Deborah welcomed three new clergy members of Synod: Andy Reid (Assistant Curate of St Andrew's), Simon Cutmore (Priest in Charge of Mill End and Heronsgate with West Hyde), and Charles Burch (Vicar of Bovingdon); and one Lay member (John Marsh of Mill End), and followed this by thanking Bishop Paul and Bill Seddon for their contributions.

10. Closing prayer

Bishop Paul closed the Synod at 9.45pm with a prayer and a blessing.

Distribution: All Synod members, others present, The Ven Jonathan Smith, Jim May, Rev'd Chris Davey (Diocese link), Rev'd Gill Hulme (Methodist link), Churchwardens of parishes without clergy.

(sgd) Rural Dean