

Report on the Diocesan Synod meeting held via Zoom on 12th November 2022

This report aims to draw out those points which are most pertinent to feed back to the Deanery Synod who in turn can feed back to their respective PCC's.

Full minutes of the meeting will be made available in due course and will be posted on the Diocesan Website [here](#)

The Presidential Address consisted of a reflection on the next phase of the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) process, itself the third of three processes stretching back over a decade for the Church of England to discern how to respond on same-sex relationships and marriage. The national feedback from the process has been collated and over three meetings of the College of Bishops, one of which has already taken place, the bishops together will discern what proposals to bring to the General Synod in February 2023. He acknowledged that there will be profound disagreement and so we must learn to disagree well. The way we talk together and treat each other is very important and must be done in love. Love is a primary to discernment. Wisdom is also necessary but love is paramount. Bishop Steven recognised that it is unlikely that the whole church will change its mind at once and move together on this and so there must be freedom for individual churches to make up their own minds and operate accordingly. He called for James 3 17-18 to be the context of how the debate goes forward: *“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.”*

Note: Bishop Steven's address was made against the backdrop of the publication of his 52 page essay only nine days beforehand, in which he calls for local churches and clergy to be able to offer public services of blessing for same-sex relationships and to remove the legal barriers to the solemnisation of same-sex marriage in the Church of England and also that clergy should be given the freedom to order their own relationships according to their conscience and to marry a same-sex partner. He recognises that many Christians and clergy in the Church of England hold and will continue to hold a traditional view of marriage and that there must be room for them to continue to minister with integrity and conviction according to a conservative reading of scripture.

A Report on the Lambeth Conference that was held in Canterbury in July and August was given by Bishop Alan with contributions from Bishop Olivia and Bishop Brian (Bishop of our link diocese, Kimberley and Kuruman in South Africa). The conference, which is held once a decade, had not taken place since 2008. From across the 165 countries of the Anglican Communion, bishops gathered in Canterbury to pray, study scripture, discuss global challenges and seek God's direction for the decade ahead. The theme was “God's Church for God's World” and science and technology was a major theme. There had been speculation that tensions could run high with the risk even of division or the fracturing of the communion over the topic of homosexuality and same-sex marriage. However each of the Bishops emphasised the feeling of unity in experiencing the fact that the Anglican Communion is a worldwide communion with far more that unites than divides. They said it was fascinating to see how the gospel translates in different contexts around the world and humbling to hear how it does so in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. Bishop Brian emphasised the importance of gathering and interacting in person, saying this was not fellowship on a superficial level but on a very deep level, giving a real sense of wanting to seek what holds us together as people that are united in and through Christ.

Finance Sir Hector Sants (Chair of the Board of Finance) presented the 2023 budget and 2024/5 forecasts. He spoke of significant and long-term challenges to finances presented by these unprecedented economic times. 80p-90p of every pound in the Diocese goes on clergy-related provision. A quarter of adults in this country have less than £100 in savings.

Stephanie Summerell
November 2022

Members of the Oxford Diocesan Synod from the Amersham Deanery

Representing the House of Laity:
Andrew Bell (Gerrards Cross and Fulmer - Ex-Officio as a member of General Synod)

Julie Dziegiel (Great Chesham - Ex-Officio as a member of General Synod)
Lawrence Tebboth (Gerrards Cross and Fulmer and also Lay Chair of Amersham Deanery)
Edward Weiss (Beaconsfield)
Michael Hardman (Great Chesham)
Stephanie Summerell (Gerrards Cross and Fulmer)
Peter Flory (Chesham Bois)
There is one vacancy

Representing the House of Clergy:
Revd Peggy Ludlow (Chenies Benefice and also Co Area Dean)
Revd Canon Edward Bowes-Smith (Great Chesham)
There is one vacancy