

DEANERY SYNOD

REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2012-2013

Three Deanery Synod meetings have been held at various locations within the Hertford and Ware Deanery during the year. Deanery Synod Representatives come from each Parish. The Synod consists of a House of Clergy and House of Laity. The Deanery Synod is part of the governmental process of the Church of England.

At the meeting on **Wednesday 18th July 2012 at St Mary's Church Hall, Ware**, our speaker was Revd Jeanette Gosney, Parish Development Officer for St Albans Diocese. Jeanette outlined the newly launched course 'Equipping God's People' - explaining that the course had been designed around the 3 strands of 'Living God's Love' - Going Deeper into God, Transforming Communities and Making New Disciples and the training needs expressed by Parishes in their Mission Action Plans. Jeanette gave us an overview of how the new course is arranged to provide training in both our own Parishes and Diocesan centres so that we can join together to learn on our own journey of 'Living God's Love'.

In the remainder of the meeting, chaired by Janet Mayes, the Diocesan Synod representatives were elected. There were 5 nominations for each of the laity and clergy and as this was the number needed, they were elected en mass onto the Diocesan Synod as follows:

Laity – J Bird, C Bird, J Mayes, P Parker and D Scott

Clergy – Revd Canon Pauline Higham, Revd Nick Sharp, Revd Jo Loveridge, Revd Mark Dunstan and Revd Don Alcock.

The next meeting on **Wednesday 1st October 2012 at St Mary's Church, Hertingfordbury**, was chaired by Revd Canon Pauline Higham and our speaker for the evening was Revd Jo Loveridge, who gave a very interesting talk, with slides, on her recent trip to China, Tibet, Nepal and India and visited different churches and temples and families including a Hindu wedding. Jo gave us an overview of how people's faith is celebrated

in each country, from the lack of religion, but deep respect for people and the environment in China, to the somewhat chaotic ceremonies in India, where many faiths live side by side. The overriding understanding Jo had come home with was the differences in how people are drawn into their religion and the day to day living of their beliefs and how it seems people are moving beyond a mere tolerance of each other's beliefs to real appreciation of them. She had found it fascinating to find connections with people through their different practice of their religion and seeing God at work in people's lives.

During the rest of the meeting Revd Nick Sharp introduced us to the Deanery Blog he has created – all the different Parish Mission Action Plans are posted there for viewing, and comments can be left. Nick had done this to help with the Deanery Mission Action Plan which will be presented to the Diocese in July 2013. It is an opportunity to everyone to see the plans and wishes of other parishes in our Deanery.

At the meeting on **Wednesday 16th January 2013 at Christ Church, Ware**, our speaker was our Archdeacon, The Venerable Trevor Jones who spoke to us about the Diocesan Vision and the Living God's Love initiative and that in order to fulfil the priorities of Going Deeper into God, Transforming Communities and Making new disciples; it was important that all the parishes completed their Mission Action Plans so that we would think of ways of growing ourselves and our communities on our journey with God.

The Diocesan vision has 3 core values:

Sustaining the cure of souls – having a Christian presence in every community. We need to maintain the numbers of priests across our Diocese.

Opting to support the poor – the Diocese will not withdraw from the poorest communities. Wealthier parishes should support the poorer ones by ensuring that we contribute our whole parish share to the funds.

Blessing and cascading strength – sharing good ideas, practices etc and using them to bless others.

So the Ministry for the Future includes:

- Maintaining the numbers of our stipendiary clergy and focussing their deployment where they are needed, ie in new housing developments.
- Increasing the number of curates from 10 to 14 within the Diocese and increasing the self-supporting Ministers as the numbers are decreasing.
- Increasing the numbers of Readers across the Diocese.
- And finally developing the Ministry of all the members of the church. The Equipping God's People training courses will have a big role in helping us all to develop as Christian disciples.

During the remainder of the meeting, Chaired by Revd Nick Sharp, we heard reports from various meetings, including the General Synod. Among other items of business, Simon Baynes reported on the vote on the Ordination of Women Bishops and there was some discussion on this subject.