

# Minutes of Christianity Deanery Synod

held at

St Stephen's Church, Exeter on Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2016 at 7.30 p.m.

**Minutes** - The Lay Chair chaired the meeting

Attendance: At least 7 clergy (plus 11 apologies) and at least 26 laity (plus 14 apologies) and three lay observers

- 1. Opening prayer, welcome and short act of worship** by Rev Sheila Swarbrick (Central parishes)
- 2. Presentation by Rev Tom Carson** who is chaplain to Exeter School
  - Tom said that his vocation was to be a teacher and a priest, and he had taught in London before training for ordination, and had served his curacy in London. His presentation attempted to describe his work on a typical Thursday at the school.
  - He would begin shortly before 8am, when he checked e-mails and noted which pupils had birthdays, then moved to morning prayer in the chapel, sometimes with other staff or pupils. Then he would teach a Lower 6<sup>th</sup> *Philosophy of Religion* class as part of A-level R.E. before taking chapel for the Junior School (200 children, years 3-6). Later there would be chapel for half of the Senior School (years 7-11). The format would be: hymn, prayer, reading, talk (this term, *"Unlikely Heroes"*).
  - Mid-morning break would find him in the Sixth Form Centre, or the Staffroom, or dealing with pastoral issues, possibly out of doors. Pastoral issues cover many topics such as bereavement, family issues, exam stress, and he would be available to deal with these. He takes lunch with staff or Sixth Form, and then there is the Christian Union meeting for years 7 & 8 (with 10 or so children) [the years 9 to 13 have a separate CU, meeting on Wednesdays, with visiting speakers]
  - About 30% of his time is spent teaching; he attends after-school activities, to meet pupils informally, and summed up this part of his work as "wasting time with people – in the nicest possible way"
  - In the Q&A afterwards, he said that he hadn't met any pupils with vocations; there was an opportunity to think with pupils about big questions of life; there are two full-time and two part-time R.E. teachers in the school; he has some contact with parents, and attends parents' evenings and open days; there is a parents' group which prays for the school, and Heavitree parish prays for the school regularly.
- 3. Presentation by Jonny Baker**, who is chaplain to St Peter's Aided School
  - Jonny said that he combined his role with part-time maths teaching and assistant head of the school; in the latter role he was conscious of the big issues facing schools in the public sector, such as St Peter's. One tension of relevance to Christianity was the tension between striving for league table quality with maintaining concern for individuals.
  - The chaplaincy team works with Christian teachers with the motto "Life to the full" (John10:10), which means that the priority is to be a church school, rather than a "state school with chaplains". The curriculum combines academic rigour with fun, sensitivity

and prayerfulness. The school motto is: "We learn to serve" and this has been worked out through Toilet Twinning support for Tearfund and sponsoring children through Compassion.

- He spoke about the use of videos shown in tutor groups "QT= Quiet Time = Quality Thinking". He is talking to Care for the Family and Romance Academy to find ways to transform relationship education.
- Items for praise: increased engagement in assemblies; new CU for years 9,10,11
- For prayer: Search for a new head; the status of the school; to be more and more a place infused with the flavour of Jesus
- In the Q&A afterwards, he said that he gets alongside non-Christian teachers to help them deliver the school ethos, and to understand that it makes a difference; the school helps with outreach to the many primary schools that feed it, and Robin Eastoe helps with the year 7 tutor groups

#### **4. Presentation by Rev Chantal Mason, who is Lazenby chaplain to the University of Exeter**

- Chantal is full-time Anglican chaplain, with responsibility for the Anglican presence on the campus, and is part of the multifaith chaplaincy (10 Christian chaplains, some from local churches, plus representatives of Bahá'í, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim faiths)
- The university is a secular organisation, and one role for the chaplaincy is to cooperate with the support services for staff and students, in assorted areas including the Guild, Equality and Diversity Forum, Wellbeing, Faith and Belief Forum
- The Anglican Chaplaincy on the campus sites provides morning and evening prayer daily, choral evensong on Wednesdays, Sunday services at St Luke's and the Mary Harris chapel. Hospitality is important
- She is involved with the interfaith dialogue group, South West Ministry Training Course, theology studies.
- There is a duty chaplain on duty during the day, and Chantal has an open door policy, with a time-tabled slot for pastoral drop in each week. Issues that arise are typical of young people: bereavement, relationships, family, stress, loneliness, homesickness, cultural integration, financial hardship. Pastoral work means helping people with space to reflect on the journey
- In the Q&A afterwards, she said that there are students who "slip through the cracks", but the chaplaincy works to "narrow the cracks". She asked prayer that students may not become indifferent to anything beyond their work and campus life.

#### **5. Business items**

- Membership of Standing and Pastoral Committee;** Ash Leighton Plom and Philip Baker volunteered to fill the empty places for laity on the Standing and Pastoral Committee; there are still vacancies for a secretary and two clergy – one to be chapter clerk
- Bishops in Mission (2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> February 2017):** Robin Eastoe reported that a programme was being developed. He would meet Bishop Sarah, with David Smith and a representative from the Diocesan Communications Team on November 10th to finalise some details of the programme
- Secretary's Report:** As acting secretary, David Smith appealed for someone to fill the vacancy for this post
- Treasurer's Report:** Andrew Withers reported that common fund was being paid promptly across the deanery; there were still funds for parish projects this year.

- e. **Lay Chair's Report:** David Smith said that he had completed this year's prayer walk on September 10th, visiting: St Michael and all Angels (Mt Dinham), Exeter prison, St David's, St Andrew's (Exwick), St Thomas, St Mary Steps, St Olave's, St Petrock's, Exeter Cathedral, St Pancras, St Martin's, St Stephen's, St Sidwell's, St Matthew's, St Luke's campus chapel, St Leonard's, St Luke's Countess Wear, the site of St Paul's, the hospice, the hospital chapel, St Clare's chapel, St Michael and all Angels (Heavitree), St Lawrence, St Boniface, St Mark's, St James, with prayer for the congregations of these churches and for the ones that could not be included.

He showed two slides, which had been presented to the Archidiaconal Mission and Pastoral Committee; one showed the population pyramid for Devon compared with that for a large new development; the latter had a very high proportion of residents in the 25-40 age group with children under 4 years, and very few over 60s; the second showed the Travel to Work maps for east Devon in 2001 and 2011; the latter showed how Exeter was becoming the regional capital for employment.

- f. **Area Dean's Report and Report from Diocesan Synod:** Robin reported on the encouraging meeting on October 15th, with a video about Bishops in Mission, and reports about outreach in different parts of the diocese

## 6. Closing prayers were led by the Lay Chair

### Diary Dates 2017

Deanery Synod: starting at 7.30 pm with refreshments from 7pm

- **Holy Trinity Beacon Heath on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February**
- **(the standing committee note that this is Candlemas, but the date has been fixed as part of the visit by Bishop Sarah to the Deanery)**