

Welcome to the Deanery Synod of Christianity Deanery

What is a Deanery Synod”?

The Diocese of Exeter is divided into 21 Deaneries, or groups of parishes. We are the Christianity deanery – an odd name which is derived from old customs. Christianity Deanery includes all the city churches, and Topsham, Ide and Shillingford.

Every Deanery is required to have a Synod, and the word “synod” comes from a Greek word meaning “assembly” or “meeting. The synod is chaired jointly by the Area Dean (currently Robin Eastoe from Heavitree parish) and an elected Lay Chair, who work closely with the Bishop of Exeter (Bishop Robert) and the Suffragan Bishop (Bishop of Crediton, Bishop Sarah) and Archdeacon of Exeter (Archdeacon Christopher). The Deanery Synod consists of all clergy licensed to a benefice/parish within the Deanery, plus the cathedral clergy, and a representative of retired clergy. Each parish elects lay members and there are also nominees on Christianity Deanery Synod from the Cathedral and ENC.

What does a Deanery Synod do?

The Deanery Synod makes decisions at a deanery level. It acts as an intermediary between the parochial church councils of each parish and the leadership team of the diocese, which includes the synod of the diocese as a whole and the administrative staff of the diocese. Its priorities are to inform parishes about matters which affect the church in the city and to share information between the parishes. From time to time, Deanery Synods are asked to discuss and vote on matters of policy for the Church of England. Thus, the synod discussed and voted on the proposals for allowing women to become bishops.

Deaneries also have the power to bring proposals and motions to Diocesan Synod for debate. Deanery Synod lay members also elect the deanery’s lay representatives to the Diocesan Synod and the Diocese’s members of the House of Laity in the General Synod of the Church of England.

Deanery Synod members are invited to attend three Deanery Synod meetings per year. These are held at various locations in the Deanery, and are generally 7pm for 7:30pm until about 9:15pm. The agenda and papers about matters to be discussed are circulated to members in advance. Some decisions are put to the vote.

Deanery Synod members are also automatically members of their parish’s Parochial Church Council (PCC), and so attend those meetings as well. They are responsible for communicating the activities of the deanery to the parish, and encouraging the parish to be engaged and involved. This isn’t just about giving token feedback to the PCC as if the deanery is some remote body of little interest or significance - it is about ensuring that that the parish doesn’t operate as an island, and is actively involved.

Synod members are encouraged to take a prayerful interest (possibly using the rota overleaf) in the life of the church beyond their parish, both in the deanery and in the linked dioceses of Thika and Cyprus & the Gulf. Many lay members also try to attend at least one service outside their home parish during their membership of synod.

FOUR WEEKS OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIANITY DEANERY

1	Alphington, Ide & Shillingford
2	St. Thomas
3	St Mary Steps and Churches in Central Exeter
4	Unlimited Church
5	Ministries to the homeless in Exeter
6	City Centre Chaplaincy and Street Pastors
7	The Cathedral
8	Diocesan office and diocesan staff
9	St Sidwell's Centre, St Matthew's and Matts@5
10	The Mothers' Union in Exeter
11	The University chaplaincy
12	Exeter Network Church and Love the Streets
13	Chaplains to Police, Fire and Ambulance services
14	St Leonard's
15	Topsham and Countess Wear
16	The hospice and the hospital chaplaincies
17	Ministry in primary schools
18	St Michael's, Heavitree and St Lawrence
19	Trinity Clyst Heath
20	Ministry in secondary schools
21	St Boniface, Whipton and Holy Trinity, Beacon Heath
22	St Mark's
23	St James
24	Prison ministry
25	St David's and St Michael's, Mount Dinham
26	Exeter College
27	YMCA
28	St Andrew's, Exwick