

## Christianity Deanery Synod:

February Synod Focus: The role of Exeter Cathedral in Deanery and Diocese.

A summary of presentations made by Very Rev Jonathan Greener, Dean of Exeter Cathedral; Rev Canon Dr Chris Palmer, Canon Chancellor of Exeter Cathedral and Rev Canon Becky Totterdell, St Peter Canon, Exeter Cathedral.

### Very Rev Jonathan Greener:

The Dean began by asserting scripture that one should not be alone, hence the support of Cathedral Canons Chris and Becky this evening. He also offered synod two apologies for the Cathedral's fairly poor engagement with both Deanery and Diocese in recent years and also Dean and Chapter's non-attendance at Deanery synod over the last year or so which he intends to improve. He then asserted the Cathedral's core *raison d'être* in terms of its governance according to the Cathedral measure 1999 and as the seat of +Robert Atwell, the present Lord Bishop of the Diocese of Exeter; to be a centre for learning, to support +Robert and serve the whole Diocese. The Dean admitted how easy it is to forget both Deanery and Diocese amid the huge daily operation of the Cathedral to which its Residentiary Canons make a significant contribution and which during the recent vacancy caused by the departure of the previous Dean and Chapter, was held together by volunteers. Now there is a full clergy team as follows:

Rev Canon James Mustard:	Precentor (music and liturgy)
Rev Canon Chris Palmer:	Chancellor (mission and pastoral)
Rev Canon Dr Mike Williams	Treasurer (finance)
Rev Canon Becky Totterdell	St Peter Canon & former D.D.O. (parish engagement)
Rev Canon Dr Morwenna Ludlow	Canon Theologian (educational support)
Rev Canon Dr Sue Gillingham	Canon Theologian (educational support)
Ven David Gunn-Johnson	Priest-Vicar (pastoral and general support, NOT part of Chapter)
Rev Canon Ian Morter	Priest-Vicar (pastoral and general support, NOT part of Chapter)

From empty to full in 14 months so no excuses for not getting on with the job! The Dean then gave his overview of what that job involves which means "upping our game" and includes:

1. a) Sign off the Bishop's Charge by Easter.
- b) Complete the cathedral Worship Survey.  
    This has so far revealed a very high proportion of occasional visitor responses.
- c) Self Evaluation needs to be approved and signed off by Chapter a future meeting.
2. Christian nurture and discipleship (covered by Chris Palmer and Becky Totterdell below).
3. Building maintenance and improvement.

The Cathedral heating system is failing, as is the sound system and the lighting is inadequate and needs improving. The exterior toilets are "ghastly" and Cathedral surveyors have identified urgent work which needs to be done to damaged stone and metal surrounds of the Chapter House.

Church House which incorporates the Cathedral administration and finance offices is nearing the end of its life without substantial renovation work and most clergy houses require re-roofing. This is a huge challenge with initial estimates suggesting costs of approximately £13m to put right.

The Dean affirmed the blessing of goodwill among the Cathedral community but also the need to better care for its staff and volunteers, to make better use of its library and archives and to sort out charging people to come in and look around. The Dean hates charging people to look around the Cathedral but it raises £450k per annum and invited Synod members to forward suggestions as to how this money might otherwise be raised. The Dean ended by affirming the need for better Cathedral outreach with the Deanery and wider Diocese at which point he handed over to Chris Palmer to talk about how this is already being addressed.

### **Rev Canon Dr Chris Palmer:**

Chris began by thanking Synod for their invitation and warm welcome before outlining his role, which includes oversight of education, outreach, mission and pastoral care for a Cathedral roll of 450 which rises to about 800 when other regular visitors are included. Chris is chair of the education reference group which also includes Rev Canon Professor Morwenna Ludlow and education services coordinator, Lisa Gordon. Equipped by a Heritage Lottery Grant, it offers a wonderful resource for schools, organising activities for children and adults, such as the Icon, Heritage and Spiritual tours, offering lectures such as the Lent lectures at 5pm each Sunday which includes a focus on the ethics of giving attention to our world. Rev Canon Dr Sue Gillingham is based in Oxford so visits to Exeter are limited. She gave a Cathedral lecture in February and due to teach as part of Continuing Ministerial Development in the Diocese. Chris then outlined some of the initiatives already underway to improve Cathedral outreach within the Deanery and Diocese:

### **Holy Ground (Most 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays of each month through the year):**

A service offered to everyone within the Diocese to explore themes around the arts, justice and theology in a safe environment. Please look on the Cathedral website to learn more. In March, Rev Nick Bundock (St James and Emmanuel, Didsbury, Greater Manchester) will speak about the church that changed from one denounced as responsible for the death of gay teenager Lizzie Lowe, to becoming an all inclusive church. **There is no Holy Ground in April.** On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June The Cathedral will host the Thy Kingdom Come event and in July, John Bell of the Iona community will be the visiting speaker before Holy Ground takes a Summer break in August.

### **Growing the rural parishes project:**

Five long and one short pilgrimage routes are currently being developed in and around Exeter suitable for walking and cycling.

### **Spirituality Day:**

Unfortunately the 2019 event missed the Diocesan On-Line deadline and therefore wasn't advertised as well as it might have been but was a good day. Future spirituality and quiet days will be better advertised.

**Various Exhibitions:** To include Tapestry (Royal College of Needlework) in August.

**Pastoral Care Team:** Training might be offered to parishes in delivering better pastoral ministry.

**Homeless and Vulnerable:**

The Cathedral's Wednesday Kitchen is one of a number of facilities offered to homeless and vulnerable people across the city offering a hot meal, hospitality and interaction with people they wouldn't otherwise see. Conversations are ongoing with local partner organisations including Exeter City Council and St Petrocks to see how ministry among the homeless across the city may be improved.

**Cathedral Green:**

Management issues surrounding anti-social behaviour involving ball games, cycling, drug and alcohol use are currently under ongoing discussion by an Operations Group including local businesses, Exeter City Council, The Cathedral and Devon and Cornwall Police to see how this can be better managed.

**Engaging with people of other faiths:**

Chris spoke of his awareness that the Cathedral's engagement with people of other faiths has faltered during recent changes and hopes that efforts to encourage engagement with people of other faiths will improve understanding of prejudice.

**Mission:**

Finally, Chris spoke about mission as a response to the large number of visitors who come to the Cathedral in very large numbers, acknowledging the spiritual focus is not what it might be. The guided tours offer wonderful insights into the Cathedral's history without focusing on God and Jesus. The Spiritual Tours and Pilgrimage project currently being worked on and introduced should redress the balance. Chris emphasised that Exeter doesn't have one standout saint in its rich history, to whose shrine people make pilgrimage. Therefore we have to work harder to promote pilgrimage to this place.

**Rev Canon Becky Totterdell:**

Becky began by outlining what helping the Cathedral to connect better with Deanery and Diocese means in practise:

Building better links with parishes.

For Benefices with the Cathedral as Patron, assisting with the interview and selection process for appointment candidates.

Improve partnership working arrangements with Friends of Exeter Cathedral and Parishes.

Provide support for ordinands in training with SWMTC and St Melitus College as well as those around the UK and also support for curates in the Exeter Diocese.

Establish a remit, currently unspecified, for all Prebendaries of the Cathedral to make better use of this resource.

So how can the Cathedral be more of a resource and more accessible to parishes across Deanery and Diocese? Becky suggested the following five ways:

**1. Spiritual Resource:**

Including Holy Ground and the organisation of quiet days for all parishes, especially their lay and ordained leaders.

2. **Theological Resource:**  
By offering series of lectures and book clubs for everyone but especially church leaders via Skype for those in more rural locations such as North Devon.
3. **Building Community:**  
Make the Cathedral a place where people and parishes can come and be part of a fun experience to discover historical, archeological and carving oddities through a variety of tours and educational activities.
4. **Schools:**  
Not so well known is that clergy around the Diocese can offer Cathedral resources and activities to their parish schools, including seasonal workshops in Advent and Lent, art and literary sessions.
5. **Celebration of Parish special occasions:**  
The Cathedral choir can support and help your parish celebrate any special event.

There followed some questions and comments from Synod members addressed generally to The Dean, Chris and Becky, which raised the following:

- Lincoln Cathedral can boast loos which have been awarded 'Loo of the year'.
- Three excellent publicity networks for events across the Diocese are:
  1. Diocesan events page: <https://exeter.anglican.org/events/>  
To get events added to this page, just email [john.moxon@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:john.moxon@exeter.anglican.org)
  2. Churches Together Devon:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/137996716248958?tsid=0.32689780759233256>  
To get events added to this page, just email Paul Snell on [ceo@ctdevon.org.uk](mailto:ceo@ctdevon.org.uk)
  3. ONE for Exeter:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1990926824459201?tsid=0.40055486813656627>  
Email me or Hannah Richards on [ctaxexeter@gmail.com](mailto:ctaxexeter@gmail.com) to get events added to that.
  4. Cathedral News is now published as a PDF file on-line. The Dean informed Synod that he receives a lot of feedback each month which proves that people read it.
- A new Cathedral Marketing Manager is to be appointed shortly.
- The Dean outlined how the Cathedral balance its finances. Income comes primarily from the Church Commissioners, their congregations and commercial activity. For example the Christmas Market raises £125,000; The Friends of Exeter Cathedral, £230,000; Music Fund, £150,000 and the entry charge £450,000 all of which just about helps to balance the books. The Dean stressed that last year it was only possible to do so by cutting staff which means the Cathedral doesn't function effectively.

- To encourage people to get along together better, Synod members were informed of a 'Bridge Builders Course' organised by Philip Sourbut. See the Diocesan website for details.
- Concerning links with other churches, Synod was reminded that the Maundy Thursday service for example, used to be ecumenical commencing at 7pm. Southernhay URC and Mint Methodist churches among others have hosted this in the past as did The Cathedral in 2008. CTax have contributed to the Exeter Nativity and Good Friday Walk of Witness.
- The Dean asked members to let him know if someone needs prayer.
- The recent Cathedral Spirituality Day went well despite publicity issues beforehand. There was acknowledgement that Crediton parish struggles with contact and awareness of events because of the current vacancy and that there needs to be a radical rethink of how information is communicated (hopefully the links given above may help with this).
- Concerning Holy Ground, Synod was advised that some people don't go because the Cathedral sound system is so poor. In response, Chris Palmer affirmed their awareness of this and that whilst not easily fixed, it may be possible to use a system purchased specifically for Holy Ground in future.

In closing, The Dean left two questions for Synod members to consider moving forward:

1. How best can the Cathedral establish two-way communication with the Deanery's churches?
2. What would you like the Cathedral to be for you in the Deanery and Diocese?

The Lay Chair offered thanks to The Dean, Canon Chris and Canon Becky for all they had shared with us this evening.