

## DEANERY SYNOD REPORT 2021-2

14 June 2021 zoom

### Four presentations from churches in the deanery reviewing lockdown.

1. St. Paul's Woking shared the benefits of St. Paul's as a vaccination centre, working closely with the mosque. Many volunteers came from the church and found they were able to have discussions about faith. They saw that they were able to rise to the challenge of setting up the centre within two weeks and saw the value of providing a community service in a time of crisis. Saw online church increase. New degree of working together with the Muslim community.
2. St. Mary of Bethany reported starting new courses, "Talking Jesus", helping people share their testimonies. SHAPE course helping people discover and develop their gifts with the aim of becoming more intergenerational and cross-generational in worship.
3. St. Peter's Woking started two new services, 1) Forest Church, outdoors, reflective service, held monthly in the churchyard, hoping to continue in the future. No number restrictions. 2) Family focused service, simple liturgy, active songs with space to move around. Positive feedback from the congregation. Invitations to baptism families and others. Potential for growth.
4. St. Andrew's Goldsworth Park. Partnership with Foodwise during lockdown. Community café converted to covid secure Foodwise hub. Volunteers distributed 330 meals, one week, donated by "Bills", "The Ivy" and "Cooks" to 62 families maintaining community outreach. At Christmas and Easter, added a message in leaflet form with the meal. Seen as planting seeds. Hope to reopen the community café soon.

### ***Business meeting***

Welcome diversity in new reps.

Rev. Neil Hopkins now Assistant DDO.

Joanna Chamberlain now replaced Lucinda Tweed as Deanery Secretary.

Sarah Tapp from St. MoB now curate representative in place of Sam Waako.

### ***Diocesan Synod update***

Focus for next three years will be on children and youth, new models of church governance, post covid recovery, environmental issues, diversity and inclusion, LLF, support for clergy, finances.

18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 zoom

### **Presentation by Alison Moulden, Diocesan Environmental Officer, on "Net Zero and Eco Church"**

1. Read Romans 1:20-21. Simple verses draw us to the reality of the sensuality of creation, which makes known to us the character of God. Coupled to the revelation of God through Christ, we hold all the knowledge required to recognise God in the natural world. Call to love our neighbour includes a call to love those around the world in the choices that we make. Seek God's kingdom; then we can stop making excuses and simply ask what we can do to respect, protect and sustain creation.

2. We need to involve young people. They are often the most passionate.

Extreme weather events occur much more frequently with devastating impact.

A 1.5degree C rise in sea level will displace 46million people but the world is currently on track for a 4degree rise.

Christian imperative to act; Anglican communion 5 marks of mission. Central to all marks of mission.

- Transforming an unjust society; about 1000 children are dying daily from the climate emergency.
  - Teaching people about God and the world he created; creation is a gift to us.
  - Telling people about who Jesus was; e.g. John 1:1 and Romans 8:22.
  - Tending to others; to help refugees we need to address their future, not just their present.
- How's Woking doing on EcoChurch? 33% signed up, 13% achieved first award. Low compared to other deaneries.
- Several churches are working towards Eco-church awards and some have already achieved them. **General consensus that it would be good for each church to appoint a (passionate) Eco representative and for details to be shared at Deanery level for support and sharing of ideas.**
  - Eco-church has the potential to be very missional so we should bear this in mind.
  - In the short-term focus on what is achievable, e.g. reducing use of disposable items, encouraging liftsharing/walking/cycling. Clearly bigger things, e.g. replacing heating systems or improving insulation, come with high costs and need to be longer term plans.
  - Needs to be addressed both on a church level and as individual congregation members to maximise the overall environmental impact.
  - Reminder that some measures we could take as either congregation members or a whole church are beneficial financially and to our health as well!

### ***Business meeting***

General Synod elections update:

House of clergy; Paul Davies, Folli Olokose, Esther Prior, Jo Winn-Smith

House of laity; Ruth Allen, Peter Bruinvels, Carolyn Graham, Stephen Hofmeyr

General Synod may seem quite abstract from the parish but discusses very important issues.

Opportunity to send motions up and change church policy.

Diocesan Synod feedback. Highlighting of Transforming Church, Transforming Lives

Deanery course for 5 weeks in November at St. Mary of Bethany led by Rev. Gillaine Holland.

"Living in Love and Faith", a national course of videos and material to encourage all parishes to engage in the subject.

### **8 February 2022 zoom**

#### **Presentation by Jane Whittington, Diocesan Schools Officer for Christian Distinctiveness, on "Engaging with Schools as we Come Out of the Pandemic"**

Thought -provoking opening worship led by Rev. Jonathan Thomas from Deuteronomy 4:5-10: Moses reminds the Israelites of the laws that God has given them, laws that laid the foundation for a nation to live at peace with each other, worship God correctly, and witness to other nations. Moses was aware that these laws could fade and come to be taken for granted. Reminder so that the laws might be passed down through generations; praising God, declaring His goodness, and living His way. Many children in our schools know nothing of God. Our responsibility is to not let the word of God fade from the younger generation but to declare His character and how wonderful He is.

- Annual research; 1) Good childhood report; includes a millenium cohort study looking at 18,000 young people tracked from 2000-2022. 2) Girls attitude survey by Girl Guiding UK surveys approx. 2000 young women aged 9-21.
- Biggest concerns were around school and appearance. Not just school work but associated things, e.g. exams, poverty relative to others, peer-pressure, bullying-huge decrease in the number of children who feel happy most of the time, especially younger children.

- Children aged 10-17 asked how well they thought they had coped with covid changes. Friends, hobbies and family being restricted were hardest to cope with. Feelings of isolation are high.
- Longitudinal studies – having money and finding a job really worry children when they think about their future. More likely to be issues where these are issues within the family unit.
- Extent of worry about broader issues: concern about new illnesses and a new pandemic has overtaken even environmental concerns. How can we help them manage these anxieties?
- 65% have been inspired by teachers and key workers during the pandemic.
- Millenium cohort study: spoken to aged 11, 14 and 17. Giving children support at a young age can raise their mental health and well-being responses and avert crises later.
- We can't do much about the school based concerns, but we can help in other areas.
- CPAS; interviewed 5 head teachers about how they would like to work with their local church. More than just assemblies and RE teaching. Schools interested in working together to help with some of the wider issues.
- RE: Be an example; show that Christianity is a living, global faith. Helpful if school visits see evidence of a busy and active church life focussed on people. Want to show that Christians across the world worship the same Lord but in slightly different ways. Have we got people who can share experiences with local schools?
- Collective worship/assemblies: legally every school should have a daily act of worship for every pupil; should be broadly Christian. No schools in our Deanery have asked for a determination not to have these. Masses of material available on Guildford Diocese website.
- Spiritual Development: Prayer spaces in schools. Equal spread of primary and secondary, church and non-church schools. Every visit to the church should have an opportunity for spiritual experience.
- Pastoral support: Staff support – build links, prayer and reflection opportunities at inset days.
- School gate – pop-up coffee for parents and carers at the gate? Ideas for engagement.

### ***Followed by Q&A***

Steve Roberts: how many schools are in the Diocese? About 400 in Surrey, not including the independent sector and the special schools.

Gordon McFarland: Is there anything that we can do to explore careers, education/vocations? School is now very exam focused. Could run a CAP course for sixth form. RE units look at the impact of faith on life – could easily link these to work.

Chris Watts: shared experience of visiting Woking High twice, first to speak about engineering but invited back to speak about Christian life after mentioning it during the first talk.

Mentoring – TLG Transforming Lives for Good. National scheme set up locally.

### ***Group discussion***

Questions: Is there unlocked potential treasure or need in your local community which schools can engage with? How can the church best support all of this, not least by trying to act as a golden glue helping to link schools not only with the resources churches can offer, but also with the wider communities they support? (KP spoke of St. Mary's Coffee Club work with school ambassadors and community.)

### ***Business Meeting***

Minutes from previous meeting on 18 October 2021 approved as an accurate record.

Matters arising: eco-church and net-zero; Celia Young Deanery representative – would be really pleased to meet up with anybody who is an eco-church rep. Will be in touch with reps directly or church office; opportunity to share with one another and encourage people at different points in their journey.

### ***Deanery news***

Jonathan Thomas stepping down as Area Dean at the end of Feb, last synod as Chair. New Area Dean will be appointed within a few weeks. Vote of thanks to JT.

LLF Deanery course; Gillaine Holland. 20 or so candidates, positive responses. Encouraged others to run it if they haven't already done so.

Goldsworth Park vacancy – strong shortlist. Interviews 21/22 Feb.

***Finance update***

*Richard Collinson* Accounts prepared for 2021. Finances sound. Accounts will be audited later this month. Contributions this year will remain the same.

***Election of new members to Diocesan Synod***

As the number of candidates did not exceed the number of vacancies, all of the candidates were duly elected to Diocesan Synod:

Julie Levett (Clergy) Steven Morris (Laity) David Leach (Laity)

***Diocesan Synod brief update***

*Gordon McFarland*

Elections of chair of house of clergy and laity. Opening talk from Bishop Andrew addressing human relationships and rebuilding these. Recognised that a lot of parishes needed support with parish share, partly due to covid. Reaching net-zero is an ongoing issue for the diocese with significant investment required. Need for a longer term view financially – 10 plus years to build back better.

Update on the review of the Diocesan Board of Education structure. Important outreach. 22,000 pupils in church schools in the Diocese. Huge ripple-effect. More details to follow.

Kate Pearmain