

MINUTES OF RICHMOND AND BARNES DEANERY SYNOD

Wednesday 10th May 2017 – 7.30 pm

at ST. MATTHIAS, RICHMOND Church Road, Richmond TW10 6LS

- 1 Hymn, Alleluia sing to Jesus, and opening prayer
- 2 Introduction and welcome, Revd Anne Crawford
- 3 Minutes of the meeting of 12 January 2017 were agreed. Following the recent elections to the Deanery Synod the Dean welcomed new members. The Lay Chair, Marian Mollett, explained that the election for the Lay Chair of the new synod would take place at the next meeting on 16 October 2017.
- 4 The core of the meeting concerned reflections on the joys, challenges and opportunities of reaching young people in Richmond and Barnes, led by:

Adam Rylett	(Holy Trinity, Barnes)
Charlie Auton	(St. Mary's, Barnes)
Helen Williams	(Richmond Team Ministry)
Georges Kesrouani	(Holy Trinity, Richmond)

The presenters explained how and why they became engaged with youth ministry: Charlie – came to faith in his mid 20s and it was natural to live the faith in youth work; Helen had volunteered in a Baptist church and had been loved and nurtured in a tiny church where she had been allowed to make mistakes, had worked in rural parishes and a primary school; Georges went into youth work as a young person – on a PCC at 16, a youth worker at 18 – youth work is about the present not the future; and God's call to Adam led directly to youth work and ordination.

They led a reflection by Mark Yaconelli from "Contemplative Youth Ministry" –

Anxiety seeks control, love seeks contemplation
Anxiety seeks professional, love seeks processes
Anxiety wants products, love desires presence
Anxiety lifts up gurus, love relies on guides
Anxiety rests in results, love rests in relationships
Anxiety seeks conformity, love brings out creativity
Anxiety wants activity, love brings awareness
Anxiety seeks answers, love seeks questions

Charlie spoke about some of the challenges of his past 18 months as a

youth pastor. The availability of time to engage is a key issue: parents work long hours and young peoples' lives are filled with extracurricular activities. This means that regular contact with children is difficult. Meanwhile recruiting and managing volunteers is itself time consuming, so perhaps there is ½ hour per child per month in which to build a strong and stable faith with foundations in daily living – which endures into adulthood.

On the other hand there are many opportunities:

- Lots of families want baptisms and a parents and toddler group for the recently baptized is an easy point of contact
- The ad hoc use of space creates opportunities, for example a film project at different times in different spaces encouraged attendance
- Resources can be pooled across churches

Ultimately it is a privilege to have a job which encourages children into faith.

For Georges the opportunity is that the Christian religion has become irrelevant to young people. Though traditional things may be beautiful, they are not enough and they are not understood by the young as being in their particular paradigm. However beyond formal Christianity there is something which is highly accessible to youth: the Gospel with its good news of Jesus and vision of reconciliation, social justice and the end of poverty. Inviting the young to participate in that and understand that the Gospel is not a spectator sport works as a route to engagement. Go to the young and be the embodiment of love.

Helen encouraged the display of love: engaging with the young is not about coolness, anyone of any age can love and share with the young. The point is relationships, indeed for many young the favoured age of youth workers is grandparents.

Following a discussion in groups the following points emerged:

- We can start with what we have
- We live in an area where materially many children want for nothing, but they do want relationships.
- Older people may have time which parents don't and can provide an opportunity to develop relationships outside technology. A cross generational approach can be adopted in most church activities.
- Youth clubs and activities over a weekend (Walsingham, walk to Canterbury, Wychcroft, trips) help develop deeper relationships
- Oversubscription of Scouts and Guides is an opportunity
- Potential for organisation across the deanery
- Still spaces matter for youth activities
- Good support on safeguarding is available from the diocese
- Everything is underpinned by prayer and everyone can pray

Adam welcomed contact with him and his colleagues to share support

and experience.

- 5 Southwark Parish Support Fund. Marian Mollett reminded the meeting that pledges for 2018 are due shortly. £1.24m had been pledged for 2017, enough to support 5 priests outside the deanery in addition to those within the deanery. It was hoped that this level of outside commitment could be maintained or perhaps even increased.
- 6 Area Dean's Notices included welcoming Alex Barrow to All Saints, East Sheen and thanking Pip Bevan for his many years of ministry in the area.
- 7 Hymn, Oh praise ye the Lord, and Closing Prayer

The next meeting of the Deanery Synod will be at 7.30pm, Monday 16th October at St. Mary's, Barnes