

MINUTES OF RICHMOND AND BARNES DEANERY SYNOD

Wednesday 24th January 2018 – 7.30 pm

at ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, BARNES

- 1 Hymn (Guide me, oh thou Great Redeemer) and opening prayer
- 2 Introduction and welcome from Rev Stephen Stavrou to St Michael's which has had a presence in the community for 150 years, with the church built in 1893. The original mission approach remains as valid today as it was originally: a beautiful building, a lively choir, attention to children and pastoral visiting.
- 3 Archbishop Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Office, infused with hope, spoke about the nature of the Anglican Communion and answered questions.

The Archbishop brought greetings from South Sudan, he had just returned from a meeting to elect a new Primate - Bishop Justin Badi.

The Archbishop firstly placed the activities of the communion in the context of the relationship with the Church of England. Simply, without the C of E the communion would not exist. A mother cannot forget her children and the C of E must recognize that what it does affects other parts of the communion, who have an eye to the C of E for guidance.

The range of churchmanship within the communion is wide and the communion has mechanisms which enable it to remain together despite its diversity: these include conventions about the relationship between different Anglican provinces, for example a Primate may not send priests to another province without permission

There are also institutional instruments of Anglican unity:

1. the Archbishop of Canterbury
2. the Lambeth Conference, next due in summer 2020. The Archbishop asked us to pray that bishops will accept invitations to this. The conference holds debates and puts forward positions: it is then up to each province to take these forward.
3. the Anglican Commission
4. the Primates Meeting, where Primates are invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury to share issues

At a practical level the communion is a family and it is kept together by relationships encouraged by the Anglican Communion Office such as:

Companion dioceses (for example the Archbishop's former diocese of Kaduna, Nigeria has relationships with Coventry, Clogher and Toronto); companion cathedrals; scholarships and emergency funds; individual friendships; sharing materials on the web; the Anglican Alliance (concerning development and responses to natural disasters); networks on women, interfaith and environmental issues.

The Archbishop gave as examples of his personal role: in Ontario, following a contentious vote on same sex marriage - reaching an accommodation of views; in England, giving the Crown's nomination commission his experience of electoral processes for bishops elsewhere in the communion; in Kaduna, chairing a peace commission.

In response to questions:

Are children walking out of the church across the communion?

This is a global issue not confined to Anglicans or to the UK. The young are deterred by stodgy services and the failure of the church to speak in their language, meanwhile the "prosperity gospel" spreads.

But the communion is changing, with no watering down of the Gospel, and young people do respond, see for example in London the approach of St Mellitus College.

What is the role of the Church in reaching a solution in South Sudan?

Where there is God there is hope.

The Church brings the sustaining bonds of family in an environment of acute poverty and endemic corruption.

What is the use and value of the Lambeth Conference and what will be the focus of the 2020 meeting?

The conference gives a huge opportunity for the church to show unity, to demonstrate the variety within the communion and to wrestle with current issues. The next conference is being constructed around the theme "God's purpose for God's world".

Would it be more realistic to abandon the notion of an Anglican Communion and instead have a federation?

We don't value what we have.

Communion is a biblical term (not so, federation), the equivalent in Islam, Ummah (from the same root as "womb") conveys the same intent: what affects one within the communion affects another.

The communion simply is a given, not just an agreement, and we have to find ways to live together despite our differences. The need for the communion will only disappear when Christ's prayer in John 17 (21) is realized:

That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

How do we work with Islam?

The Archbishop emphasized his own lifelong experience of living with Moslems, as varied a group as Christians. Regarding religious violence (and scripture based religions will always contain a tendency to misinterpretation) he recommended the book "Not in God's Name" by the former Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks and he pointed out that the personal threats he had received had come from fellow Christians.

Christians need to seek out like-minded Moslems and work with them.

In final comments the Archbishop reiterated the importance of the Church of England to the Communion, particular the resonating impact of action by the C of E. The Communion rests on mutual respect and co-operation.

More information about the Anglican Communion is available at www.anglicancommunion.org

- 4 Minutes of meeting of 16th October 2017 were accepted.
- 5 Wandsworth Archdeaconry Mission and Pastoral Committee: Rev David Cooke was confirmed as clergy representative and the Lay Chair as lay representative for Richmond & Barnes.
- 6 Diocesan Synod Election July 2018: 4 lay representatives (anyone on an electoral roll in the deanery) will be elected by the lay members of the deanery, and 3 clergy representatives will be elected by clergy, to act for 3 years from 1/8/18. Timing of nominations, and elections if necessary, has yet to be received from diocese.
- 7 Acting Area Dean's Notices

Recent appointments:

Andrew Williams, Assistant priest, Richmond Team Ministry

Tom Rutter, Chaplain Christ's School

At present there are vacancies at St Richard's, Ham and Holy Trinity, Richmond.

A process is underway for discerning the new Area Dean following the death of Trevor Patterson.

There is a new procedure for annual inspections of parishes: these will now be carried out on-line.

- 8 AOB
David Guest gave an update on Glass Door: a night shelter for up to 20 people each night had opened the previous week, rotating between 7 churches. It provides a hearty meal, a warm sleep and a good breakfast. As well as the value for the individuals it also provides a fine experience of the churches working together. A consequence may be that attendance at Vineyard lunches increases.

Deanery confirmations will take place on June 10th at St Michael's and September 30th at St Matthias.

Closing Prayer

The next meetings of the Deanery Synod will be at 7.30pm at: Wednesday 9th May 2018, Holy Trinity Barnes and Monday 8th October, St Anne's, Kew Green