

SYNOD NEWS, 24 MARCH 2012

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An email for churchwardens, PCC secretaries & treasurers, planned giving officers, parish safeguarding officers, clergy & licensed lay ministers in the Diocese of Peterborough.

Bishop defends institutions

Bishop Donald in his Presidential Address stressed the importance of maintaining institutions to support relationships. "Society needs its institutions for stability: take them away suddenly or change them too quickly and life rapidly becomes unsafe," he said.

"When governments change the education system or the health service too rapidly, or restrict religious freedoms or redefine marriage we most certainly need to be on our guard," he added. His full address is here: www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/downloads/synod1.pdf



Synod supports the Covenant



The Synod voted to "approve the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant." This vote could be crucial in deciding whether or not General Synod proceeds with the Act because before this vote, 20 dioceses had voted against it and 12 for it.

Introducing the debate, Canon Bill Croft explained that because of the serious divisions that have emerged in the world-wide Anglican Communion (which consists of autonomous churches), a means of dealing with disagreements within the "family" of the Communion was being suggested to find a way of maintaining unity

"as the gospel is proclaimed effectively in different contexts".

Bishop Donald supported the Covenant and suggested that some rules and regulations were needed to regulate relationships within the Communion without over-riding the proper autonomy of each province. He denied that it would lead to an increase in bureaucracy.

Opposing the Covenant, Archdeacon Christine expressed concern about the apparent lack of objectivity in the process it envisaged.

Bill Croft's introductory speech is here:

www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/downloads/synod2.pdf

An audio file of Bishop Donald's remarks is here: www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/downloads/synod2_audio.MP3

A summary of the points made by various speakers in the debate, and the voting figures, is here: www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/downloads/synod3.pdf.

Academies and Church schools

Archdeacon Christine, as Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education, introduced a briefing paper on Academies. She outlined the Diocesan Board of Education's approach to the current and frequently-changing developments in school structures nationally. The Board has agreed to support schools moving to Academy status as and when the schools themselves feel this is appropriate.

The situation has been complicated by the fact that many village primary schools are too small for Academy status and need to join with others in "Multi-academy trusts" but that government will not allow Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools to be in the same MAT, necessitating a further structure to enable MATs to join in "Local Collaborative Trusts" to achieve the necessary support on the ground.

Her paper is here: www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/downloads/synod4.pdf.

This was the last Synod meeting attended by Dr Stephen Partridge, Director Education, who retires on 30 April 2012. He was warmly thanked for his work.

Legacies are worth having

Paul Adams (Stewardship and Funding Officer) gave a presentation on legacies. He said that some £566,000 was received from legacies by parishes in the diocese in 2009, amounting to almost £6,000 per beneficiary parish. "What couldn't you do with £6,000 in your parish?" he asked, before encouraging parishes to make the legacy process known to their congregations. His presentation, and papers available for parishes, are here: www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/downloads/downloads.htm#legacies.

Other matters

Members of the Kettering Deanery led the Synod in prayer, focusing on the world-wide Anglican Communion. The annual reports from Boards and Committees were received and Dr Dennis Allsopp gave an overview of the February General Synod meeting. This was the last Synod meeting before fresh elections later this year. Members were thanked for their work.

The Diocesan Synod meeting was held at Bishop Stopford School, Kettering, on the morning of Saturday 24 March 2012.

The next meeting is on Saturday 6 October 2012.

