

Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery Synod Meeting  
Cullompton Community Centre  
Monday February 25<sup>th</sup> at 7.00pm for 7.30pm

Apologies: Clergy: 0 Laity 3, Present: Clergy 17 Laity 56 Total attending: 73

The meeting opened at 7.30pm with a prayer.

Keith Rushforth, Lay Chair of the Deanery Synod, welcomed the Right Reverend Jackie Searle, Bishop of Crediton, who had been invited to talk about "Serving The People of Devon with Joy"

Bishop Jackie considered the meaning behind the title of her talk and the importance of the Joy of Christ, of peace, and of hope. She acknowledged that passing on the Christian faith is currently challenging everywhere, and that much of the church may be weary. She suggested that we need to think about our communities and to find out who we are not engaging with.

A quote from Pope Francis formed a central theme of the talk when wishing to share one's joy:

*"Instead of imposing new obligations, Christians should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet."*

*(Evangelii Gaudium: the Joy of the Gospel)*

Bishop Jackie stressed the importance of deep faith and trust in the love of God, accepting, however, that although we may have difficulties, we do have hope within us. The Diocesan vision begins with prayer and the process of growing in prayer.

The importance of deepening prayer was discussed.

Bishop Jackie described the core relationship with God, as a cup or jug overflowing by receiving God's love. However, a jug or vessel will not overflow if there's nothing in it. She also described her overwhelming experience of overflowing with joy at the laying on of hands when she was installed at Exeter Cathedral.

Other quotes from Pope Francis's Evangelii Gaudium in the talk included:

*“The joy of the Gospel fills the heart and lives of all who encounter Jesus. With Jesus Christ, joy is constantly born anew.”*

*“Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor.”*

The Deanery Synod Members then divided into small groups to discuss three particular questions:

1. Anything that struck them or particularly resonated with them
2. Anything they would like to think about more
3. A question that they would like to explore further

Issues discussed as a group afterwards included:

- a) “The delicious banquet” (from Pope Francis’ quote) - where food can be an avenue for deeper thought and discussion
- b) Deepening prayer, and praying for our neighbours
- c) The need to look after ourselves – as tiredness and anxiety can diminish humour and joy
- d) Is the Church seen as people bringing joy and peace?
- e) Bishop Jackie’s personal experience of growing in faith

Bishop Jackie’s talk was most uplifting and strongly appreciated - this was reflected in the applause - by the Deanery Synod.

Following the talk, Keith Rushforth explained that a copy of the General Synod Report will be circulated to the Deanery Synod members.

And he also reminded everyone that the next Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery Synod Meeting will be held on **Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> June at St Paul’s Church, Tiverton, - the title being “Thy Kingdom Come”**. Simon Talbot, the Rural Dean, described the subject as appropriate, as a time of prayer where we can pray for the life of our community. “Thy Kingdom Come” is a global prayer movement, which invites Christians around the world to pray during the nine days between Ascension and Pentecost (30<sup>th</sup> May – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2019).

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm with a prayer.