

Notes from the Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery Synod
Thursday 1st February
at St Paul's Church at 7.30pm

Attendees: Laity 18, Clergy 6

Apologies: Laity 12, Clergy 2

Andy Humm, the Rural Dean, welcomed everyone to the Deanery Synod and opened the meeting with a prayer.

Christianity in the workplace:

Andy introduced Debbie Westlake, a member of the congregation at St Paul's who talked about living out faith as a Christian in the workplace. Debbie is a team manager at Devon County Council (DCC), who was aware that there may be people in the workplace who would like to be involved in monthly prayer sessions. She sent an email to 5,000 people. 2,000 people read the email, which stimulated a great deal of interest. Now they have developed a DCC Christian Union with about 60 people regularly praying with each other, and supporting each other. They have asked social workers to incorporate people's spiritual needs in terms of their hopes and dreams, which opens the conversation rather than just confirming their religion. Debbie gave many testimonies of the success of this venture and the way that it has turned some people's lives around. Everyone thanked Debbie for her stimulating talk on such an important issue.

Training for Lay Worship Leaders:

Revd Paul Kingdom talked about another important issue which is an online and free training course for Lay Worship Leaders. This is a clear, easy to follow, do-it-yourself, course for lay people who are planning and leading worship and want to do it well, especially for those working in small rural churches. The course is made up of three video PowerPoints along with handouts for each session, and put together by Rev Helen Brent. The website: <https://transformingworship.news> – then look under Resources. Or to find out more, go to training@transformingworship.news

Diocesan Synod Elections:

Andy mentioned that the 2024 Diocesan Synod Elections are due this year. Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery are allocated 4 clergy and 4 lay representatives. Nomination papers will be sent by the deanery officers to deanery synod members in the beginning of June. The closing date is Tuesday 25th June. Meanwhile, if anyone is interested in standing as a Diocesan Synod Representative, please contact Keith for laity (keith.rushforth@gmail.com) or Andy for clergy (vicar@tivertonchurch.org). Also, there is one remaining lay vacancy for the Deanery Standing Committee. Andy asked the deanery synod reps to approach anyone on the standing committee (Andy, Keith, Ed, Steph, Matt or Bindy) if they are willing to join the standing committee, which plans the ways that the deanery synod can develop and grow.

Revd. Nathan Kiyaga:

After the break, Andy welcomed Revd Nathan Kiyaga, the outgoing Torbay Area Dean, and Chaplain to St Cuthbert Mayne Church of England and Roman Catholic Secondary School, and Chair of the Devon and Cornwall Community Scrutiny Panel which works with Devon and Cornwall Police to build trust and confidence between the police and the community. He has been made a medallist of the Order of the British Empire in the 2023 New Year's Honours for services to the community in Devon and Cornwall.

Nathan described his background, originally from Uganda, and married to Brigit Kiyaga (who is mission resource projects officer for the Exeter Diocese and has previously presented at the Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery Synod). They have three young children. Nathan spent some time in Sydney, Australia, before returning to Devon. He described his work between church and schools, such as the worship experience - JUMP (Jesus Understands me Personally). His links with Devon County Council and other services in the community are shown on the group "Torbay United", which has successfully secured grants to support the community - joint efforts from churches, charities,

schools, local authority, voluntary sector, police, food banks, and local people. Together, they have had an impact across Torbay, providing help for foodbanks, schools support network, mental health packages, and more: <http://www.torbayunited.org.uk>.

Nathan outlined a history of deaneries. The first rural dean was Robert de Ecclesfield, appointed in 1148, a position started by Edward the Confessor. The rural dean acted as an officer of the diocesan bishop who arranged issues for the archdeacon. Then gradually, archdeacons took over most of the work of the rural dean. However, in 1740 the Bishop of Gloucester, Martin Benson, revived the institution of rural deaneries and in 1847, area deans were reinstated. In 1969 the Synod replaced the Church Assembly, the result of a process of self-government for the Church of England that had started in the 1850s.

Nathan described the deanery as the heartbeat of local mission. He discussed how deaneries can work together, flourish, cross-pollinate, demonstrate and grow. Few parishes can survive alone. He encouraged deaneries not to look in but to look out, to share decision-making, to come together, to plan projects that are reflective of local needs, to encourage food security, to take responsibility.

Finally, Nathan circulated a questionnaire to the deanery synod representatives to complete and return – asking about the purpose of our deanery, how well we fulfil that purpose, and our involvement in our churches.

Andy thanked Nathan for not only making the journey from Torbay that evening, but particularly for his inspiring and excellent talk which gave everyone food for thought and ideas to take away with them.

Lifepath Tiverton:

Andy described some of the exciting initiatives that are going on in Tiverton and Cullompton. He explained about a project during June 3rd to 7th June at St Paul's Church that Steph Packham was involved in, called Lifepath, aiming for all year 4 school children to engage in art, history, drama, music, and the Christian faith, through the "life path" of a well know historic figure linked to their location. In Tiverton this is the Wesley family. If you would consider volunteering at this event or want to know more, please contact lifepathtiverton@gmail.com

Roman Catholic Bishop of Plymouth:

Also, Revd. Christopher Rowley asked the Deanery Synod to pray for the newly elected Roman Catholic Bishop in Plymouth, Canon Christopher Whitehead, who will become the 10th Bishop of the Diocese of Plymouth, which also covers Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. He will be ordained on 22nd February.

Nathan gave a closing prayer.

Date of next two Deanery Synod meetings for our diaries:

Monday 3rd June 2024 at 7.30pm at Cullompton Community Centre, Pye Corner, Cullompton EX15 1JX. The speaker for June 3rd will be Andrea Corrie, BEM, Andrea Corrie BEM is a retired medical secretary, who, following the loss of her nineteen-year-old son James to a drowning accident, has written articles for bereavement websites, in particular The UK branch of The Compassionate Friends, and two books, "Into the Mourning Light" (2014) and "Living in the Mourning Light" (2020), which focus on the grieving process and the attributes of hope, light, love, faith, resilience and joy, with faith as a powerful tool for processing grief.

Monday 30th September at 7.30pm at Calverleigh Village Hall, Calverleigh, Tiverton, EX16 8BB. Colin Smallacombe from the farming community network (FCN - a charity that supports farmers and families through difficult times), has agreed to join the Deanery Synod and talk about the many difficult and issues facing farmers today and sharing information about the support available in their areas so that the deanery synod representatives can take something back to help support their rural communities.