

Notes from the Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery Synod

Monday June 3rd 2024

at Cullompton Community Centre at 7.30pm

Attendees: Laity 42, Clergy 9

Apologies: Laity 4, Clergy 3

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

Diocesan Synod Representatives Keith Rushforth, the Lay Chair, explained about the process for the Diocesan Synod Elections: Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery are allocated 3 clergy and 4 lay representatives. Nomination papers will soon be sent to all deanery synod members. Any lay person who is on the Electoral Roll of a Parish church can stand for election to the House of Laity of the Diocesan Synod. Any member of the House of Clergy of their Deanery Synod can stand for election to the House of Clergy of the Diocesan Synod. The closing date for nominations is Tuesday 25th June. If anyone is interested in getting more information please contact Andy for Laity (keith.rushforth@gmail.com) or Keith for Clergy (vicar@tivertonchurch.org).

Good News! Andy then asked the Deanery Synod for any news of what has been happening in their parishes and what can we celebrate? Steph celebrated the work of the churchwardens and PCCs which made up to 70 people in the Exe Valley Mission Community who supported the parishes and she thanked them all. Hazel described the success of the Art School Club; Kev mentioned that there were swifts nesting in the belfry; Richard said that they've managed to get the flagstaff up; also celebrated the initiative LifePath currently running in Tiverton and Cullompton, with ten churches and seven schools involved.

Glyn Lewry : Andy also asked the deanery synod to pray for Glyn and Amanda Lewry. After many years in Sampford Peverell, they are now moving to North Devon to the parishes of North Tawton, Croyde and Georgeham.

Mid Devon Show Andy reported that there will be a Churches' Tent at the Mid-Devon Show on Saturday 27th July. There will be a call for volunteers to support the tent as it will be important for there to be a presence.

Bishop of Exeter: At the time, Andy was unable to provide any details about the newly appointed Bishop of Exeter. The King has since approved the nomination of The Right Reverend Mike Harrison on June 4th, for election as Bishop of Exeter, in succession to The Right Reverend Robert Atwell.

Andy also reminded the parishes to submit their participation figures to him as soon as possible.

After the coffee break, Andy introduced Andrea Corrie, 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. She has also written 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. Andrea described the events leading up to and following the death of her son, James, and the importance of friends, family and pastoral support in helping her cope with the grief. She discovered the catharsis of writing, and the power of being able to tell a story as part of her son's legacy.

After James' accident Andrea visited the spot near Kingston Bridge where her son's body was found and she could see how easily the tragedy could have happened, with no barrier and a large drop from the waterside into the river. She has since campaigned successfully to make riversides safer, with more safety barriers, better lighting, and water safety training for local businesses. Andrea's faith has been a vital tool in processing her grief. She feels that there is a need for more training in churches about the grieving process.

She quoted from Psalm 118, verses 13 and 14 which have both moved and supported her:

*I was pushed back and about to fall,
but the Lord helped me.*

*The Lord is my strength and my defence;
he has become my salvation.*

Andy thanked Andrea for her excellent and moving presentation which stimulated much thought and several questions on how best to support someone who is grieving, - and also what not to say. Andrea provided a handout for everyone which is attached.

Andy closed the meeting with a prayer.

The next Deanery Synod meets on 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.