

APCM Deanery Synod Report 2017/2018

The final meeting of the 2014-2017 Triennium was held on 10th May 2017 at St Michaels, Bishop's Stortford. The main focus of the meeting was on Gravetalk cards given by The Revd Simon Mansfield (All Saints). "Gravetalk café space" is an initiative backed by the Church of England to enable discussion on the difficult issues of death, bereavement, funerals etc. The Gravetalk cards contain 52 questions that can aid small group discussions.

The first meeting of the 2017-2020 Triennium was held on 13th September 2017 at St Mary the Virgin, Ferneux Pelham. This was the first Synod presided over by The Revd Mandy Brown as our new Area Dean. Bill Seddon, Diocesan Lay Representative to General Synod, reported on the July meeting, which was dominated again by the topic of "Human Sexuality" and the way the Church should respond. A Pastoral Advisory Group exists to support and advise Parishes with their approach to this issue. It is hoped that a teaching document on marriage and sexuality will be available by 2020.

General Synod voted to support a proposal for a covenant to be drawn up between Parish and clergy; an advisory document is due to be published by a clergy Wellbeing Working Group.

Two amendments to Canon law had their final approval:

- 1] The wearing of vestments are no longer mandatory
- 2] The burial of suicides can be dealt with as for other burials.

The Deanery Synod communion service was held at Great St Mary, Sawbridgeworth on 1st November 2017.

The third meeting of the 2017-2020 Triennium was held on 21st February 2018 at St Mary, Standon. Two audio-visual presentations were shown in the absence of a speaker for the meeting. First shown was a podcast from the Diocese about "Reaching New People in New Ways". This is part of Fresh Expressions but hopefully a less daunting approach. There are many ways to achieve the aims of this initiative, but all require an initial process of listening to discern peoples' needs and the best way to engage with them. An advisor for mission for the Hertford Archdeaconry, Alison Jackson, is available to give guidance to Parishes.

Second presentation was a short video about Sanctus at St Mark's, Hanley in the Lichfield Diocese. This is an active response to the refugee crisis in the Stoke-on-Trent area which faces many problems due to it being a major dispersal area for refugees. Sanctus at St Mark's involves the use of church facilities for holding various services and activities for the refugees, who have various faith backgrounds and often very poor English.

Our current representatives are Margaret Fox, Vivienne Emmett, Peter Rixson and Graham Savage

Peter Rixson