

Notes of the Tower Hamlets Deanery Synod – 1 October 2018

7.30pm at the Royal Foundation of St Katharine

Attended by 18 clergy and 20 laity

1. Welcome

The service was led by Ben Bell, with a reading by Linda Barrett.

Andy welcomed Synod members, in particular Father Beswick, the new Rector at St Peter's London Docks.

There was a reminder about the farewell party for Bishop Adrian and the collection for a leaving gift.

The following school governor re-appointments were ratified:

Governor	School	Proposed by
Robin Precey	St Paul & St John Primary School	Alan Green
John Thurley	Sir John Cass & Redcoat	Angela Hancock

Election of LDBS Representative

Two nominations had been received, one of which had, on the day, been withdrawn. Trevor Critchlow, nominated by Alan Green, stood for election. Trevor spoke briefly about his work as a trustee of the Borad thus far and the importance he places on these roles. Trevor also spoke about bringing the focus of the LDBS back to parishes and schools. They recently appointed a new Chair and CEO and work moves forward to build capacity and develop more advisors. Trevor Critchlow was duly elected unanimously to LDBS Representative. His term of office begins on 1 January 2019. **ACTION:** Synod were keen to invite Trevor in at a later date to talk more about the role.

Election of Lay Representative to the Diocesan Synod

No nominations had been received prior to the meeting. Andy asked for nominations at the meeting and provided nomination forms for completion. The item was re-visited at the end of the meeting.

Setting God's people free

Hayley reported that she had attended the Lay Chairs' meeting at St Paul's Cathedral, which had focussed on a Diocesan initiative, 'Setting God's People Free'. Hayley had found it of great interest and pointed to more information on the Church of England website - <https://www.churchofengland.org/SGPF>. **ACTION:** to be added to a future agenda for further discussion.

2. Making Disciples – Cris Rogers

Andy read the following text:

Matthew 28:19-20 - Now wherever you go, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And teach them to faithfully follow all that I have commanded you. And never forget that I am with you every day, even to the completion of this age.

In 1990 1.3m people attended Sunday service. In 2016 this had dropped to 740,000 (60%). This is against a population growth from 57.25m to 66.57m, so of great concern. The idea of setting God's people free means helping them grow in faith and confidence and providing the conditions for them to lead.

Cris spoke about his experience at All Hallow's where, after initial enthusiasm, many people were dropping out of church. Why was this happening? Why weren't they connecting to the breadth and width of being formed in the likeness of Christ? They started to look at this and worked with a consultant. Cris took a Sabbatical to explore further and ultimately liaised with the National Church to formulate the 'Making Disciples' initiative.

How do we help people flourish?

It was clear from the congregation that the term discipleship was not understood. Luke 10.27 tells us to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind', which means surrendering to Jesus our hearts, heads and hands. Most churches tend to focus on one of these aspects. Some dedicate themselves to prayer and worship (huge hearts), but no action. Some run foodbanks or give to the poor (busy hands) but fail to gain a deeper understanding of Christ. For some others the emphasis is on Bible studies (focussed minds) but fail to live out the teachings. Discipleship brings all three areas under the will of God - loving God with our heads, hearts, and hands.

Discipleship Formation

Within the church there are different approaches to spiritual formation and discipleship. Discipleship formation is the coming together of these two areas, ie the external activity of the life of Jesus at work in a person and the disciplines of the internal life.

Apprenticeship

This is a term normally accredited to younger people but may provide a better understanding of what is meant by discipleship. Rabbi Akiva, born 30 years after Jesus, was a touring rabbi who continued to teach and learn throughout his life. Cris spoke about the importance of the of the three areas mentioned above (head, heart and hands) being developed equally, ie prayer, work in the community and bible study. This will allow confidence to grow both inside and outside the church.

Resources

Making Disciples has been designed as a diagnostic tool to help us explore the whole of life through these three areas. Cris circulated one of the assessment tools which allows individuals to explore their discipleship 'shape' and see where strengths and weaknesses lie. The assessment can be carried out by individuals, small groups or the church as a whole. It could be useful to repeat every six months as part of spiritual reflection and see how congregations are growing. It can also provide useful insights for church leaders as to which areas are growing or need more work.

Cris has published a workbook and materials to help run Making Disciples in church. More information can be found at www.wearemakingdisciples.com.

3. Conclusion

Andy thanked Cris for the presentation and reported that the resource is being successfully taken up at Christ Church.

Election of Lay Representative to the Diocesan Synod

Only one nomination was received, namely that of Jane Preston who was put forward by Bill Chesshyre and Stephen Beer. No objections were received and Jane was duly elected unanimously as Lay Representative to the Diocesan Synod.

Andy thanked Mark Aitken for hosting the evening and led prayer.

Next Meeting: Monday 4 February

'Three Way Synod' with the new Bishop of London