

# Notes of the Three Way Deanery Synod – 4 February 2019

7.30pm at St David's Hope Church, London N7 8BZ

Attended by 32 clergy and 49 laity

## 1. Welcome

Revd Jessica Swift, Area Dean of Islington, opened the evening with Evening Prayer and welcomed those attending.

The Revd Preb Rosemia Brown, Area Dean of Hackney, introduced Bishop Sarah.

## 2. Bishop Sarah

### Reflections on Arrival in London

Bishop Sarah spoke briefly about her journey so far. She qualified as a nurse, served as a civil servant in the Department of Health before being ordained. She served primarily in Devon and, after her appointment as Bishop of London, has now been in post for some eight months. There is much to celebrate in the ministry of the Diocese and also many challenges. She spoke about the cultural and socio-economic diversity in the city and the evidence of inequality, for example the homeless and foodbanks. She also spoke about the diversity in the various traditions of church. She felt there is much to celebrate in that anyone can find a spiritual home here.

### Capital Vision 2020

With only two years left, how do we focus resources? Senior staff recently met in Canterbury to consider this question and chose five of the ten targets to focus on:

- Young People
- Ambassadors Programme
- Vocations
- Social Justice
- Church Planting

### What is Beyond CV2020?

Thought is already being given to what happens after 2020. There needs to be a continuation of conversations with people, communities, local government, etc. And there is a sense that the following areas are important:

- Young people need to feature
- Compassion – remembering that the poor are our teachers.
- Involvement of the laity
- The wellbeing of clergy, which is the responsibility of Bishop Sarah and the parish.

We are encouraged to continue talking and sharing ideas!

### Q&A

Bishop Sarah invited questions and comments floor.

- *Could we have more curates in London?*

It is important to remember that London resources the rest of the Church of England as many Diocese do not have as many in training as London, we already have more curates here than in other parts of the country. There is often a long lead in as housing for curates needs to be available. It is also agreed that curates should serve for three years before moving on to an incumbent post. The College of Bishops is beginning to examine this area, including the increase of other vocations, not just curacy, for example non-stipendiary vicars.

- *As there is often a lack of clergy to preside over events, particularly communion, would the church consider allowing others to do it?*  
Bishop Sarah noted that London is blessed with many clergy compared to other parts of the country. In Exeter, the clergy work together to cover the large number of churches. Perhaps other forms of liturgical worship could be considered, not just the Eucharist which requires a priest.
- *How can parishes support the ministry of healthcare?*  
We tend to only think of the parish model but there is a lot to commend chaplaincies, whether in the NHS, prisons, universities, etc. These institutions tend to be multi-faith and so training specific to chaplaincy, rather than curacy, is needed. We also need to encourage communication between parishes and chaplaincies. Angus Stephenson, Director of Capital Vision, is putting together a conference on this subject in the near future.
- *How can we avoid losing talented people involved in church schools?*  
There is tremendous work done in our schools but perhaps we need to believe more in the LDBS brand. Like Headteachers, it would be good for Chairs of Governors to meet regularly amongst themselves but also to be invited to the twice yearly meetings at the LDBS. London is quite distinctive in its diversity and other faiths are always present. There needs to be more conversation around this and how to develop a nurturing and contemplative environment. We also need to be more pro-active given that the number of primary children in the area continues to decrease. Given the high numbers of elderly people living alone perhaps there is reason to build a ministry for the elderly.
- *What do you think of church planting?*  
There is great potential here but we have to think more strategically. There needs to be more communication before.
- *Many children are not familiar with stories from the Bible. How do we get to kids more?*  
Most schools are not faith-based and so it is difficult for priests to have much interaction. Bishop Sarah has visited many church schools and is encouraged by just how good the teaching of the Christian faith is. SIAMS assessment are a way of ensuring this quality it maintained. Perhaps more opportunities to bring together children in the Deanery together would be useful. Rev Graham Hunter is a Stepney Youth Advocate and he spoke about the Encounter initiative at Hoxton, whereby young people come together every four months to share their encounters with Jesus. It is hoped to bring these events to all churches at some point in the future.
- *Resource churches – how will we know if they are successful?*  
Measuring the impacts of resource churches is a piece of work soon to be undertaken by Angus Ritchie with input from St Martin's in the Field. However, housing costs across the capital often force committed church members to move out, and this complex issue remains a big challenge going forward.
- *Can we engage better with the arts and creative industries?*  
Churches need to look at their contacts and resourcing and consider the context in which this type of engagement might be promoted, as not everyone will be keen to engage.
- *How does the Diocese support Ambassadors?*  
37,000 people signed up to become Ambassadors. The steer from the Diocese is not directional, rather it is supporting these people in their journey to discover what they have been called to do and to help them deepen their understanding. Vocational training is available.
- *What are the thoughts on the recruitment of SSMS (Self Supporting Ministers)?*  
SSMs can help in many ways and, of course, require no funding from the church. There is a risk that we can be too rigid in the way view their input and so better communication is required going forward.

### **3. Conclusion**

Andy Rider, Area Dean of Tower Hamlets, thanked Bishop Sarah and those present for an interesting discussion.

Andy Burns, Executive Director, of [Capital Mass](#) and Heather Ramsey, from the Churches Team at the [Church Mission Society](#) took the floor to speak briefly about their organisations.

Again, Andy thanked Bishop Sarah and presented her with a small gift (a voucher to spend at Porterford Butchers!) by way of thanks.