

Church Pensions

The Synod received a presentation on the Church's pension fund which, like 87% of defined benefit schemes, is in deficit. To remedy the deficit of £350 million contributions may have to rise to between 45% and 55%, the period of service for a full pension increase to 43 years, and the age for retirement go up to 68.

Do you have a question you are burning to ask?

Contact your synod reps. who can table it for you.

It must be a question of fact, not a hypothetical question, on the subject of the Church of England nationally.

Liturgical Business

There was discussion of the new 'Pillar' Lectionary (for use in cathedrals and churches where there are lots of visitors) which will now be revised by the Liturgical Commission. Some new commemorations were added to the calendar: the martyrs of the Melanesian brotherhood, Paul Couturier, Gregory Dix, George Bell and Amy Carmichael. In addition Thomas Clarkson (from Wisbech and St John's College, Cambridge and Olaudo Equiano were added to the names remembered on the commemoration day previously allotted to William Wilberforce alone, in recognition of the key parts they played in the movement for the abolition of slavery.



How does this session of Synod Business impact on the Diocese of Ely?

- We are being encouraged to find a Disability Adviser for the Diocese.
- Amending Canon 28 (which came from Ely Diocese and is good news for LEPs) finally became law- Hooray! (See the photo [left] of the impressive seal.)
- Wisbech and area will be pleased to know that their local hero, Thomas Clarkson, will now be nationally recognised.
- The 'Being Adult about childhood' report is recommended for all PCCs to discuss.

The Archbishops' Council and its spending priorities and budget

Much of the discussion featured a balloon debate with various constituencies (understandably) working to save posts at Church House. There was some discussion of a radical reappraisal re training for ministry funding but the greater priority recognised was to ensure that more coherence is sought in future planning for training institutions. The detail of the cuts hasn't been sorted out but broad areas of reduced expenditure were agreed.

General Synod
next meets from
the 8-12th February
2010 in London.



Opening the Doors- Ministry among people with learning disabilities and people on the Autistic spectrum



The presentation began with a DVD which will soon be available to PCCs. It gave some inspiring stories and encouragement to Dioceses to find a disability adviser. The report offers very practical clear guidelines for parishes, e.g. welcoming people on the autistic spectrum into our worshipping communities and support with & around the occasional offices (eg couples wishing to get married). The evening worship was led by people with learning disabilities. It was an incredibly moving and uplifting experience, with Arthur, a man with Down's syndrome. leading us in dance.

Please pray:

- For the Armed Forces in Iraq & Afghanistan
- That action flows from the Good Childhood Report
- For the implementation of the Disability Report
- For those who have lost jobs in recent cuts
- For the Bishops of Ely and Huntingdon



How to contact us

Mrs Gill Ambrose
Gill.ambrose@happyserver.co.uk
01223 858994
Ven. John Beer
Archdeacon.cambridge@ely.anglican.org 01223 350424
Revd Duncan Dormor
Djd28@cam.ac.uk 01223 338633
Canon Alan Hargrave
alan.hargrave@cathedral.ely.anglican.org 01353 660304
Dr Peter Harland 01223 243525
Revd. Rhiannon Jones
rhiannon.jones@ely.anglican.org
01223 880337
Dr Elaine Storkey
Elaine@storkey.com

Being Adult about Childhood

One of the highlights of Synod this year was a report by the Mission and Public Affairs department and the Children's Society entitled 'Being Adult about Childhood'. From the start of the debate there were numerous commendations from many Synod members including the Archbishop of Canterbury. The report is widely available for anyone to read and the point was made that we need to do something in response and not just take note. (NB This is something we discussed recently at Diocesan Synod)



If you want to know more about anything you've read here: check out the General Synod Website at www.cofe.anglican.org/news, beg, borrow or steal a copy of the church press or give one of us a ring. See above



Welcome to this July 09 edition of the General Synod Digest.

Faithful Cities- Urban Life and Faith

The retiring Bishop of Hulme (below) gave a passionate presentation on the three years which have passed since the publication of 'Faithful Cities'. It was thought to be an exciting report and some felt the discussion following it was disappointing. The report did not have the impact of 'Faith in the City' in the 1980s but it has proved especially relevant since the credit crunch.



Clergy Discipline Measure

A lively debate was had and it was agreed to ask the Clergy Discipline Commission to look again at the Measure in light of a number of criticisms as to how it works. Some personal cases were given and several Bishops, including our own, spoke on the difficulties of clergy discipline for all concerned. Hopefully, we will see some improvements in the next few years

Life in Christ- ARCIC report (Anglican/Roman Catholic)

On Saturday morning every Synod member was assigned to a group to discuss an ARCIC report on Christian ethics which is now several years old but still seen to be crucial. Though there were clear concerns about aspects of the report (as highlighted by the Archbishop's briefing paper) the report was found helpful in the way it encouraged us to view ethics and doctrine together.

Anglican Communion Update



We were shown a 5 minute DVD of the Anglican Consultative Council meeting (ACC) in Jamaica earlier this year. Archbishop Rowan told us there was a good mood at the two week meeting and it was well attended by provinces, including those who didn't come to Lambeth.

The key points were:

1. The development of an Anglican healthcare network
2. The development of some sort of Anglican Relief and Development Co-ordination across the Communion
3. The need to increase biblical literacy
4. The Continuation of the work of the group which is creating a Covenant for Anglican churches worldwide
5. The ongoing concerns over gay partnerships & Bishops.

The Covenant will finally come back to Synod for a final decision to be taken. However, no amendment will be possible at that stage.

The Church Commissioners

Synod received the annual report of the Church Commissioners and heard a presentation by the First Church Estates Commissioner. Not surprisingly, given the economic climate, the value of their assets has fallen but the Commissioners hope to maintain their financial distribution over the next three years. The economic climate remains uncertain as to whether there will be inflation or deflation. Members asked questions.

Goodbyes

A number of goodbyes were said to the many Bishops retiring, but most notably a very warm goodbye was given to Bishop Anthony, the longest serving Bishop currently in the Church of England.

Giving for Life- A Report from the National Stewardship Committee

Synod was almost unanimous in supporting a motion on giving, which encouraged Anglicans to consider their giving as part of our response to the lavish generosity of God, in times of plenty and stringency. We also added a clause to stress that this habit of giving needs to be encouraged early in life, for children and young people. Overall this was a very positive debate and a helpful booklet is now available for PCC discussions. Look at the Stewardship website. As a rule of thumb, Anglicans will be encouraged to give 5 % of their income to the church and a similar amount to other work which helps to build God's kingdom



Episcopal and Senior Church Appointments

A Diocesan motion from Bradford (and correspondence in the Church Times) has recently questioned whether we have too many people in senior posts in the Church, especially in the light of the cost of these positions and cuts in other stipendiary clergy posts. The Archimandrite (our Orthodox Church representative), however, suggested that we needed, rather, to increase numbers of bishops, as in the early church where each town had its own bishop. This drew a hearty round of applause. It was clear that what synod wanted was more bishops but without the expensive trappings. The main motion was amended by Christina Baxter (Chair of the laity) so that the Archbishop's Council and Faith and Order Advisory Group will be asked to look into the matter further and review the theological, ecumenical and biblical aspects of senior posts in the church.