

**Report to Broughton St. John Baptist Annual Parochial Church Meeting
On Preston Deanery Synod 2019
Canon Andrea Titterington**

The Preston Deanery Synod met three times during 2019. Between Synods the Deanery Synod Standing Committee meets to plan an Agenda that is relevant to all parishes. Fr. Shaun, stepped down as Area Dean and Chairman of the Synod and Bishop Julian licensed Revd Canon Alistair McHaffie (Preston St. Matthew's) on 7th October 2019 at Preston Minster. I am a member of the Standing Committee.

Deanery Synod Meeting at St Stephen's, Broadgate on Monday 28th Jan 2019

Bishop Jill gave the address calling on Preston Deanery to **STAND UP**:

Stand up in calling - What has God really called us to do? It's such a privilege being Bishop of Lancaster, finding buried treasure everywhere, as see the work of the parishes! Drawn to prayer, why? **Matthew 9:36** - "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them". People are desperately hungry for the Gospel; they are increasingly looking for guidance; they are praying for miracles, particularly younger people. The Gospel – 'Disney' is selling it, shows the hunger. **Luke 15:20** - "... his father saw him and had compassion". God hasn't lost us, God's heart is filled with compassion. God is longing for his people to come home. Misses you!! Also see **Matthew 12:10**
Stand up together – when a church stands up in Mission, one side effect is that fortunate things are likely to happen. There will be many opportunities through the planned Preston Resource Church, note **Mark 3:24** "If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand". Let's stand up together. Two key aspects of Congregation Planting and Church Planting – pray a lot and have massive courage! If Jesus saw a crowd his heart was filled with compassion but in the West, we're a bit insular. Church of England is a "A Christian Presence in Every Community" – where you are - who/where are the people of peace? What's happening on the ground in your parish? [Bishop Jill would love to see attendance at church becoming the 'normal' again.] With deep Roots there is hope for a tree. Even if it's cut down it may grow again. (**Job 14:7**) Deep roots are not touched by the frost. See "All that is Gold does Not Glitter" - a poem written by J. R. R. Tolkien. Seek out what words were spoken over your church in its early days; to grow - go back to your church's roots.
Stand up on the shoulders of giants – People must hear the Gospel in 'their own language.' On the day of Pentecost the Spirit came and people heard in their own language. Who are missing from your congregation? Pray, find people of peace in their own language. [Bishop Jill has been praying a lot for our country recently.]

"You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains

You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas

I am strong, when I am on your shoulders

You raise me up, to more than I can be"

God will raise us up to stand on the shoulders of giants, call to prayer. **The battle is now: Preston to Stand Up Preston to be a Power House.** It's a lie to say that this is how it is - we can see change, through prayer and action. Jesus taught his disciples to pray. **If prayer is not your thing – pray!** When we pray for a long time our prayers become more ambitious!! (NOTE: Preston City Ecumenical prayer meeting now each Tuesday, 7.30am to 8.30am at Crossgate Church).

Bishop Jill's address was followed by contributions from parishes on how they are reaching out to their communities: food banks, work clubs, cross-cultural activities, as well as the challenges.

Notice was given of the Deanery's Primary Visitation at St. Cuthbert's, Lytham on 21st May; the 2019 Ecumenical Lent Series at Central Methodist Church; and the closure of the Minster for refurbishment.

Deanery Synod Meeting at St. Matthew's on 19th June 2019

David Barlow, Chair, Diocesan Board of Finance, was the speaker. He had been in post for a year, is also Treasurer at St John's Whittle-le-Woods; a Reader there since 1992. David's wife is Treasurer of the Diocesan Mother's Union and he often attends events with her around the diocese. He said that as he never really understood the Diocese, he was finding it fascinating as he became more involved. He answered questions from parish representatives:

Q. Giving – it takes time for new people coming to church to come on board in terms of giving – the Parish Share should recognise a ceiling, not expect parishes to continue to give more.

David: the bulk of the Parish Share goes to pay clergy but it's a real challenge. Unless a diocese has great hidden assets, each financial year has to balance. There's great disparity in giving across the Diocese, some parishes average £16-£20 per regular giver per week; others in similar socio-economic area only average £5. The solution isn't people like me going round to parishes; it's each person accepting their responsibility. At present the Diocese is working through the 2020, budget but also looking at 2021 & 2022. The main challenge is maintaining clergy numbers at that of 5 or 6yrs ago. They could possibly dip into Diocesan reserves, but that would only last 2 or 3 yrs, then what? David is from a parish that just about pays its parish share, but giving is not an issue which can be solved from the centre.

Q. It is interesting that the Diocese doesn't want to use up all its reserves, but expects each church to do so!

Stephanie Rankin, Lay Chair: most of the diocesan reserves are in the vicarages, can't just sell them off!

David: a large amount is in property, but there is some flexibility. The Diocese is acutely conscious of challenges facing parishes. One issue is that people seem to think that the Church of England is rich, it doesn't need the money. Vicars face the challenge of balancing preaching about giving without the perception that that's all we're interested in! What is needed is balanced discipleship.

Q. One person's £1-£2 is equivalent to another giving £20, so need those who can, to over-give to balance.

David: I entirely agree. The diocese sees it as "we're in this together." However, in some relatively rich parishes the giving only averages £5/week. [Personally he gave £5, 35 years ago!] Parish Share does try to balance it out.

Q. There's been many new houses built in Grimsargh parish recently. People come to church for many reasons, including parents who come to get children into Archbishop Temple School.

David: It seems that there's not enough capacity at ATS, will chat with Stephen (Education) about it.

Q. Thinking beyond next year, it takes time to turn things round and most generous givers are dying off or moving to be nearer family. We have increased the number of givers, but new ones enter at a lower level and often such families have restricted disposable income. It is coming down to our church wondering if we can pay all our bills.

David: Clearly there's a "lag in giving" when new families come into church. In a financial sense it's in the right direction, but ultimately their giving will take time. In the wider sense the growth of churches is a matter of faith. At every opportunity Bishop Philip reminds the Diocesan Committees of their opportunities. There is a lower income Diocesan Fund which comes from central CofE, based on levels of deprivation, this year it was £1.3M.

Comment: Level of giving in Lincoln Diocese is the lowest in the country, it should be about the middle. People there assume that it has enough historical funds, so why should they give! The result is that the Diocese is in a seriously negative position financially, having to always use reserves.

Q. The Diocesan policy of buying houses for clergy needs to be reviewed. Locally the diocese paid top price for a house recently which had been on the market for 2 yrs.

David: The Diocese takes professional advice. David is looking at this as part of the budget process. The cost of running the Blackburn Diocese is well within the range for a charity of its size.

Q. Broughton has a parish share of £106,818 this year. It a big ask and it's difficult to communicate to the parish why it's so large. On the matter of asset management, the Diocese should have a serious look at its policies, including maintenance and energy efficiency of its stock. Nothing has changed, although there was a review in the 1990s of clergy housing. The Diocese continues to buy/sell houses for curates, paying unrealistic prices. More thought should be given to renting.

David: I will look into this, 2nd highest capital cost is our assets, will take this back and look at renting.

Following up on another issue the **Preston Resource Church** funding (£1.5m) is underwritten by the Diocese. It's good to see the new Vicar here tonight and we look forward to meeting him and seeing the project develop.

Q. The church of the Lord will grow in Preston, money invested is to bring people into the kingdom, we should not look in a narrow way.

David: I'm not paid for this job. One of my aims is to make Diocesan financial information clearer; to find ways that it can be understood so that when a group reads a financial statement it is understandable. The message is that finance is a means to an end. We should be good stewards but it may come to a point where you've a gap – it's called faith. From David's work with charities they improve giving by seeking:

1. One off donations, 2. Encouraging regular support that can lead to 3. 'Heros' – to feel part of it. Why give? – people see something that they feel their giving will help. In churches we want to give something back to God for what he has given to us.

Q. The Diocese has advice on credit card readers, is there anything on on-line giving, etc.?

Stephanie: Refer to the Diocesan web-site – in the "About us" section, find "Donate" on the RHS and read through.

David: Young people now do everything through their phones, for one-off appeals this is very good. The challenge is (as above) to move this to giving regularly. David has been in the job 12 months, he's taking the time to understand it and to feel the history of the church. He'd like to come back to talk to Synod in about 18 months' time and see how the conversation has moved on.

David invited feedback or follow up queries, please email him on: davidleesbarlow@outlook.com.

Notice was given of the Blackburn Cathedral Service in Thanksgiving for Archdeacon Michael Everitt's ministry in the Diocese on 13th July 2019.

Deanery Synod Meeting at Preston Minster on 7th October 2019.

Synod was preceded by Bishop Julian licensing Revd Canon Alistair McHaffie as Area Dean of Preston. Bishop Julian announced that The Venerable David Picken, currently Archdeacon of Newark in the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham, has had been appointed the new Archdeacon of Lancaster. Canon Alistair welcomed all to Synod and spoke about his aim to make Synod and Chapter meetings worthwhile for all. He is one of the least longest serving clergy of the Deanery! He gave thanks to Fr. Shaun Baldwin as Area Dean and asked all to continue to pray for Shaun as he eases back into Ministry. He is looking for the Deanery to continue to be supportive of each other and faithful in sharing the Gospel; and for Synod to feed things of concern to the Diocese and perhaps eventually to the national church.

Revd Sam Haigh, the main speaker, stated that he had been Vicar of Preston since April, the Minster and St George's, in short the City Centre. Initially met with Ron (Crossgate), Nathan (All Saints) and Alistair, have since met with many other clergy too. What is a Resourcing Parish? The Vision, Aims and Goals come from the heart of the early church where Paul went round strategic cities planting churches. Sam sees it as God's idea before anyone else!

Sam has come from HTB (Holy Trinity, Brompton), which since the 80s has sought outreach, to plant churches in areas where churches have often dwindled and closed. After doing so in parts of London, Brighton was next and has given a very successful lead. Resource Churches in other cities have

followed e.g. Bournemouth, Gateshead & Lincoln. In Blackburn Diocese there are 2 churches with over 200 in the congregation each week: St Andrew's, Leyland and St Thomas', Lancaster. The Minster and St George's had reached 46 per week average. Fr Timothy's ministry had been fantastic; especially with links to civic life in Preston, building key relationships with City and County Hall. Sam's initial visits to Preston were 2 yrs ago. He was impressed with regeneration taking place and optimism of the people. It was different to what he'd expected and what he'd experienced elsewhere. The regeneration comes alongside vast social need/deprivation in the city. He's encouraged to find that one of the early vicars at the Minster was here for 20+ years and planted 5 churches, of which St Andrew's continues.

The re-launch of the Minster on 29th September saw 300 people here for the Sunday Service and 8 confetti cannons used! (Many came to support the initial service). Yesterday at 11am, 100 people came here, great! He emphasized that the Minster is NOT here to steal Christians from other Churches. Transfers are a waste of time. The Minster is targeting those who don't presently go to Church. Their first challenge is the Alpha Course 9th October. A bunch of Christians (about 20 in total) have come with Sam, with the blessing of their churches, to be the core - themselves to reach out to plant other churches in Preston. Already strong links with UCLan, there for fresher's week and have linked with the UCLan Christian Union.

What is a Resourcing Church? A growing, thriving ministry. Teaching the Bible and rhythms of prayer. If we are to help you, we first need to grow. Looking to plant into urban estates, but such a church couldn't initially support itself financially. The Minster will be the hub, a place of expertise: Youth Ministry training? Worship? Children's work? See how it develops over the years.

The bid from the Diocese: stated that there should be a congregation of 400 by 2023.

The parish model of Evangelical and Anglo/Catholic tradition churches is unique. The CofE is looking for church plants to be in both traditions. The budget includes a pipeline of curates who will come here to move on to plant churches, constantly giving away people/resources. God's teaching in 2 Cor. 8, as we give away we also receive. Church planting will be where no church at present and with strong links with student population. HTB aims: 1. Iconic Building, 2. In city centre, 3. Near university – the Minster ticks all three. Most people come to faith when younger than 25 yrs old. There's a key window of time when people are seeking to understand God/life/universe. Sam introduced other members of the team: Tim, Jason [David couldn't be here this eve] and Neville, the operations manager. Sam asked for prayers for the Resource Church and its aims and for their parish relationship between the Minster and St. George's to be an example to the wider church of how vastly different traditions can flourish together.

Preston Deanery Synod meets three times in 2020 and each parish will be electing new representatives for the next three years at the APCM.