

Report on Salisbury Diocesan Synod – Saturday 7 November 2009

There was a pioneering agenda at the first Synod of the new Triennium, held at Amesbury Baptist Centre, Saturday November 7th 2009 at 10.00am.

The Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt Revd Dr David Stancliffe, introduced the session by welcoming Bishop Anthony Poggo of Kajo Keji in Sudan, and Bishop Graham Cray, Archbishop's Missioner and Team Leader of 'Fresh Expressions'.

In his Presidential Address, the Bishop urged Members of Synod to carry the "dangerous memory" of Jesus with them as they lived for others rather than themselves. He criticised the 'Risk-Averse' culture saying "Learning about our faith and living with risk means we need to move from belonging and believing to action and to ask ourselves the questions: What sort of society do we wish to be? Is there an alternative to a life predicated on getting what we can for ourselves – a shared concern to be givers, not getters?"

Delegates were inspired by tales of three pioneering community projects in the Diocese. The Revd Chris Tebbutt spoke on behalf of Becky Sedgwick, speaking of her newly-established links with schools, churches and community in Devizes. The Revd Paul Bradbury spoke of the newly-established Mission Community and Mission Initiatives in Poole, and the Revd Tony Stephens spoke of his work with Street Pastors, making Weymouth town centre a safer place on Friday and Saturday nights.

Bishop Graham Cray, Archbishop's Missioner and Team Leader of 'Fresh Expressions', praised the three initiatives, saying that they had made "significant progress in only a year," and spoke of the Church's need to adapt, using these and other models in order to reach today's society. He also spoke of the need to retain a clear Christian identity in the process.

The Dean of Salisbury, the Very Revd June Osborne, gave the Cathedral's second annual report to Synod. The presentation included development of Education and Arts ministry, plans for completing the refurbishment by 2015 and looked positively at the issue of fundraising in the current climate.

The Bishop introduced a debate and motion to reform the way in which Episcopal ministry is shared within the Diocese. The Bishops of Salisbury, Ramsbury and Sherborne would be free to exercise more flexible pastoral care and work across the Diocese rather than only in their own areas.

When debate was opened, Robert Key, MP for Salisbury and member of General Synod, welcomed the measure as "eminently sensible", saying "I wholeheartedly support this." Canon Richard Franklin and Mr Philip Sankey agreed and the vote was carried with no objections.

The next meeting of Synod will be an all day session from 10am on Saturday 6 February 2010 at Corfe Mullen.