

THE DEANERY OF HEYWOOD and MIDDLETON

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Minutes of the Heywood and Middleton Deanery Synod

4th March 2009 at St Mary, Birch in Hopwood, Heywood

1. Opening Prayers

Following a service of Holy Communion, Rev'd Ian Butterworth (IB), opened the meeting with prayers for the hopes and fears of the parishes in the Deanery.

2. Welcome

Thanks were expressed for the warm welcome at St Mary's and to Rev'd Alan Broxton for all his work at St Mary's.

3. Main Item: The Changing Face of Reader Ministry.

Beryl Procter, whose full title is the 'Honorary Assistant Warden of Readers', gave a presentation explaining how the Reader Ministry has changed over the years and how that ministry is now developing.

Beryl's role is to promote Reader Ministry and she is willing to speak on Reader and Lay Ministry to any church that would like her to do so.

She opened by saying that Readers came from a range of backgrounds and their roles had changed in recent times for a variety of reasons. Sadly however some Readers were experiencing a lowering of morale and some had given up the ministry. There was a general feeling that God needed the roles of a Reader to change. New opportunities for Reader Ministry were now opening up and selection and training were now much more in line with the selection and training of clergy. Through SNOWTOP – the Southern North-West Training Partnership headed up by John Applegate, formerly Archdeacon of Bolton all Reader candidates now do the same modular course as those preparing for ordination, though at a slower pace. The course leads to a Foundation Degree – a new type of degree based on work experience rather than on classroom teaching – and Readers are licensed after doing half of the modules, completing the course as In Service Training while ministering in parishes.

Roles of Readers

She commented that there are 'blurred edges' between the ministries of Readers and OLMs. In the past, Readers were the only non-stipendiary ministers in a parish but now many churches have people from within the congregation ordained and working as part of the ministerial team. This can feel like a threat to an established Reader and some Readers resist change. She noted that people often asked what the point was of there being such a post as a Reader and why wasn't everyone appointed as an OLM. Her answer was that both were wonderful callings. For her, being a Reader meant she could lead worship in a variety of types of churches and her roles were far wider than that normally experienced by an OLM.

The meeting split into groups to discuss the topic and generate questions.

Reader Ministry was a calling and should not be seen simply as just a n. other resource within the church. A Reader's job is to encourage the gifts people have. Fears that Reader Ministry was an academic calling and that training would therefore be of an academic nature were unfounded. Readers were deployed in many different ways and not necessarily 'up front' taking service. Leading groups was a role often taken on by Reader. Adding a theological perspective to many activities, not only on a Sunday, but in all walks of life, was where Readers made a significant contribution to God's work.

Issues being faced

1. Readers feeling isolated in parish ministry
2. Low profile previously given to laity development towards becoming Readers
3. Reader conferences were no longer taking place
4. General lack of awareness of Reader Ministry
5. Introduction of OLMs has tended to sideline Readers

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Actions in place

Chris Bracegirdle, Area Dean of Bolton and Vicar of Christ Church Heaton in Bolton, has now been appointed Warden of Readers, and is an inspired leader and is leading the initiative for a Ministerial Review of Readers.

4. Apologies

There were 21 members present with 6 apologies for absence

5. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true and correct record, having been proposed by Frank Platt and seconded by Mrs Karen Towriss.

6. Matters arising

The Dave Godfrey event **is** now going ahead. It will be held on Saturday, Sept 19th at St Leonard's.

7. Area Dean's Announcements

- Rev'd Andrew Starkey's induction at St Gabriel, Middleton Junction will be on 27th March at 7:30pm
- Rev'd Maureen Reed has taken up an appointment at Christ The King in Meltham in the Wakefield Diocese.
- The Archdeacon's Visitation is on May 18th at St Leonard, Middleton
- A churchwardens' workshop with the Archdeacon – on June 29th at St Martin's
- An evening with the Bishop for Eucharistic Ministers and Readers – provisionally September 1st – venue yet to be arranged.
- There is to be a Catholic Vision day conference in the Cathedral on May 16th – to explore Mission and Evangelism from a Catholic perspective.

8. Correspondence

None

9. Report from General Synod – Canon Nick Feist

Postponed until the next meeting

10. Notices from parishes

▪ All Saints & Martyrs

A Silent Retreat is being organised on 1st weekend in May at the Briery Retreat Centre in Ilkley, West Yorkshire. Cost is around £85/person. It is being led by Rev'd Felicity Shaw. Canon Philip Miller may be contacted for more details.

11. Financial Report

George Etugo reported that the current funds were as follow:

£123.06 Halifax

£219.70 Yorkshire Bank

George reported that he had only received £30 from St Gabriel's for the Deanery funds. Nothing had been forthcoming with regard to the £60 donation to support the clergy at a future event at Whalley Abbey.

12. Future of the Deanery

▪ Heywood Feedback

- St John's
Concerns expressed about possible problems if only 2 stipendiary clergy were allocated to Heywood. Suggestions from the Archdeacon that there could be just 1 were not welcomed.
- St Luke's

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Possibility of boundary changes would be involved for St Luke's.

General feeling was that they were 'fed up of waiting'. They would like to know: what is going to happen and when it will happen, so they can prepare for what's going to happen in the given timescales.

- All Souls
Same sentiments were expressed as for St Luke's
- St Margaret's
The joining with St George's was seen to be a very positive move. There had been no dissent

IB feedback that no formal plan had yet been documented by the Diocese due to legal freehold issues

▪ Middleton Feedback

- All Saints, Rhodes and Holy Trinity, Parkfield
It was thought sensible and helpful to formalise this new relationship. There was significant goodwill to move forward.
- St John, Thornham
There would be not be a replacement for Chris Fallone. A fifth priest for Middleton would probably be appointed to a new combined parish of All Saints, Rhodes (minus Birch and Bowlee) and Holy Trinity, Parkfield.
- St Gabriel's
In response to a question concerning the impact on Parish Share where a church was served by team of vicars rather than having one solely dedicated to a church, the reply was that the formula to calculate the Share was independent of such arrangements and therefore there would be no impact either way.

13.AOB

▪ Roger Jones: **ROCK Musical: The story of Simon Peter. "The Rock"**

Following a brief introduction to the musical by John Pye, it was agreed to hold this event as a joint deanery event on 7th June at 6:00pm at All Saints & Martyrs. It was mooted that each church should consider this as their event, albeit being held in a different church. All profits, after donations and expenses, would be shared in proportion to the tickets sold by each church.

Representatives from all the churches present, volunteered to be the 'champion' for their church and to promote the musical within their church and local community.

14..Date of forthcoming meetings/events summary

2009			
June			
Sunday 7 th	6:00pm	Rock Musical by Roger Jones and United Christian Singers	All Saints & Martyrs, Middleton
Thursday 11 th	7:00pm	Deanery Synod	The Old Grammar School, Middleton
Monday 29 th	Not given	Churchwardens' workshop with the Archdeacon	St Martin, Castleton
September			
Tuesday 1 st	TBA	An evening with the Bishop for Eucharistic Ministers and Readers	TBA
Saturday 19 th	Not given	Dave Godfrey Event	St Leonard, Middleton

15.Close

The meeting closed with the grace and finished at 9:30pm.