

Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane

Diocesan Synod 2022

Report for Inspires

Another year and another Synod. But nothing is quite the same as it. Two years ago we had a Synod in person with never a glance at how we might do this differently and to even guess at what was to come.

Last year's Synod, like others, was our first online. What a challenge that was but thanks to our newly recruited Diocesan Digital Missioner we were able to have a very productive and enjoyable meeting.

This year we debated whether it would be appropriate to meet face to face, but everything seemed to say that we were still shielding some of our more vulnerable members and we did not want to exclude them from the meeting. We also wanted to be mindful of our carbon footprint and asking seventy or eighty people to travel would not be the best advertisement for our banner of being carbon neutral by 2030. We have to start somewhere!

So once again Diocesan Synod was online. The day began with Bishop Ian leading the Eucharist from his very sunny window space and Dean Graham giving his homily and Mrs Elizabeth Roads and Revd John Connell from St Mary's, Aberfoyle did the readings. It was a wonderful way to begin the day and set the tone for the day to come.

It was then down to business. The Dean welcomed new clergy Revd Jon Connell from St Mary's, Aberfoyle and St Andrew's Callander and Revd Kim Lafferty from the ABBC group of Churches in Alyth, Blairgowrie, Ballintuim and Cupar Angus. There were several new members of laity to Diocesan Synod this year and it was good to have them with us for the first time. It was a delight to welcome our visitors to Synod. They were Revd Canon Ian Barcroft, Provincial Director of Ordinands for the SEC and some of our friends from the Church of Scotland – Revd John Murdoch Minister of St John's Perth and Revd Jane Barron, Minister of Ceres, Kemback and Springfield Church. With the business processed the Dean finished by giving his report to Synod followed by the Bishop's Charge. This was brief but inspiring and very moving. A copy can be found on the Diocesan Website at:

After a break for coffee the first of two sessions began. There were three items in this session. After COVID – What concerns and what excites. These things were considered in breakout groups and then shared with the bigger meeting. Interestingly enough some of the words that came out of the "what concerns" and "what excites" questions were the same. Many were concerned that numbers were dropping in church attendance but there were others that were excited about the new people beginning to attend church. IT and AV equipment has made us more connected to wider communities, but some have difficulties with making the connections with the communities on the doorstep. It was a fascinating discussion.

The second part to this session was on Climate Change and Revd Canon Elaine Garman gave a brief report and invited us to watch some videos of what is going on in other parts of the diocese. There was a sense of people being inspired and encouraged by other people's stories.

The final part of this session was on Ecumenical projects. Mr Nick Cooke our Lay Rep from St Moddoc's, Doune and Secretary of the Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum (SPRF) led a presentation on the Fife Pilgrim Way and asked Revd Jane Barron to speak regarding the new Pilgrim Pastor. This is a new (possibly the first) joint initiative with SEC, Church of Scotland and SPRF in the ethos of the St Andrews

Declaration. We look forward to seeing the progress this initiative makes in the coming months. Finally, there was a video from the Stirling Presbytery with Revd Dan Harper, Minister at Bridge of Allan and various people from the SEC and Church of Scotland. Their enthusiasm for working together going forward was uplifting and very encouraging.

The session after lunch was led by Revd Canon Christoph Wutscher and Revd Nerys Brown who led us through the consideration of the new liturgy from General Synod. The final part of the day was to consider the proposal “that Lilius Graham be included in the Scottish Episcopal Church Calendar on account of her faith-filled life and example”. Both the new liturgies and the inclusion of Lilius Graham to the SEC calendar were approved to be taken to General Synod for consideration.

Before we knew it the day was over. It had been an interesting and inspiring day with excellent speakers and topics to consider. My sense of the day was one of inspiration in these dark days and the essence of hope in our daily lives. That what we do in this small corner of the world has some impact and outcome.

All thanks to those who took part and those behind the scenes who made the day go so well.

Carol Aitchison

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