



Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

scene@synod

3-6 February 2025

A hope and a future



The annual in-person meeting of Diocesan Synod was held at the Lordos Hotel in Larnaca on 3-6 February, bringing together almost 100 participants—Synod members from across the Diocese and guests from around the world—to join in worship, reflection and discussion.

Synod opened with a Chrism Eucharist led by Bishop Sean. During the service, which included a clergy Renewal of Vows, the Reverend Dr David Jarratt was licensed as priest for the parish of Abu Dhabi (see next page).

The Synod theme was A hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11)—‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.’

“We begin this Synod trusting in God’s good plans for our diocese,” said Bishop Sean—“our parishes, and our very lives.”

Delivering his **Presidential Address**, Bishop Sean referred to Synod as “an important instrument of our unity”, expressing his hope that it would be “a celebration of our common calling and friendship in Christ

at this crossroads of the world.”

“Together as laity and clergy,” he said, “we must do the challenging but necessary work of discerning God’s vision together, and then, by God’s grace, aligning ourselves with this vision.

“In the longer term, my hopes are that Cyprus and the Gulf will be able to celebrate its unique identity within the Anglican Communion as a Middle Eastern and international diocese, and will come to be seen as a resource to the wider Church in interfaith, ecumenical, multiracial and multicultural practice and witness.”

As well as daily Eucharists, Synod participants shared in the joy of worship each evening with prayer before dinner, followed by compline. Music, as ever, was central to Synod worship. This year, participants were invited to suggest hymns and songs to be incorporated in services—overseen by the Reverend Drew Schmotzer who, along with the Very Reverend Jeremy Crocker and the Reverend Peter Day, also served as piano accompanist. Jacquie Hammond served as Synod Sacristan.

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The first Synod session opened with greetings from Archbishop Hosam Naoum, Primate of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

Synod also heard from the Venerable Paul Feheley, Middle East Partnership Officer of the Episcopal Church of the US, who brought greetings from TEC Presiding Bishop the Most Reverend Sean Rowe. And he shared news of the Good Friday Offering, through which TEC offers generous support to the Diocese and wider Province.

In the evening, hotel management gathered to celebrate with Synod participants the 40th anniversary of Diocesan Synods held at the Lordos Hotel in Larnaca. As Canon Georgia Katsantonis reminded the audience in her look back over the years, the Diocese itself celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2026. And though she refused to name names, she suggested the occasion might once again be the scene for a bishop to dance on a table...

Day two of Synod began with a service of Eucharist led by the Very Reverend Richard Fermer, Dean of St Christopher's Cathedral in Bahrain, with Bishop of Thika the Right Reverend Julius Wanyoike preaching.

Synod business opened with talks on two themes—Communion, Province and Diocese, by Canon John Holdsworth, and on Discerning God's Call, by Bishop Sean. These were followed by a workshop on Mission in the Diocese, drawing on Matthew 28:19-20 and led by the Reverend MD Johnson, the Reverend George Vidiakin and the Reverend Jim Young.

The day included the first of a series of workshops on Gulf enhanced episcopal leadership, which opened with a presentation by the Reverend Dr John Aitchison—and on the ongoing Constitutional review process. There was also discussion of Diocesan finances, and meetings of the Houses of Clergy and Laity.

Bishop Sean provided an update on the Ras Morbat Clinic in Aden, including a video of the compound and interior of Christ Church sent by clinic director Mansour Yousuf. The bishop also updated Synod on the Diocesan Mothers' Union, of which he is patron, proudly sporting an MU cap.

The Reverend John Attenborough reported on Mission to Seafarers operations in the Diocese and beyond, with the Reverend Franklin Isaac sharing news

of its work in Bahrain. The Reverend Canon Faiz Jerjes provided insight into life at St George Baghdad—ably translated by Sinan Kakarash.

The Reverend Ken Gabbadon reported on the St Mark Famagusta Student Chaplaincy, while Manisha Cornelius addressed Synod on behalf of the Contingency Fund sub-committee.

On day three—the final day of Synod business—morning Eucharist was led by the Reverend Prem Mitra, parish priest at Holy Trinity Dubai, with Bishop James Magness preaching.

Bishop James is chair of the recently established American Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, which works to support the presence and ministry of Anglican congregations in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, and to raise awareness in the US about the importance of that presence and ministry (<https://www.afdcg.org>).

Later in the day, Synod heard from the Primate of the Province,

the Most Reverend Hosam Naoum, who shared something of the experience of life in a time of war in his Diocese of Jerusalem—which, he said, would not have survived the past two years without the support of its friends around the world. Archbishop Hosam paid tribute to the work of the people of his Diocese, including the staff of Al Ahli hospital—frequently the only hospital serving northern Gaza.

He asked that Synod pray for the clergy of his Diocese—for their continued resilience and steadfastness; and, he said, "Please do hold me, my wife, Rafa, and our family in your prayers."

Bishop Julius presented news from Cyprus and the Gulf companion diocese of Thika in Kenya, with Bishop Sean outlining plans for a revitalised three-way link—Bishop Mike of the Diocese of Exeter completing the trio via a video greeting. Synod participants also heard from UK Friends of the Diocese chair the Reverend Chris Butt; Foundation chair Michael Cole; and JMECA—the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association, represented by Canon Dr John Holdsworth, who shared a message from JMECA Trustee Canon Dr Clare Amos.

Two workshop sessions—on Gulf enhanced episcopal

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Chrism Eucharist

Bishop Sean presided at the opening Synod Eucharist on 3 February, which included the licensing of the Reverend Dr David Jarratt as priest at St Andrew Abu Dhabi and clergy Renewal of Vows



(See page 22-23 for more images of Synod worship; page 39 for licensing of Revd David Jarratt)

Report

Diocese of Jerusalem



**THE MOST REVEREND HOSAM NAOUM
ARCHBISHOP IN JERUSALEM
PRIMATE OF THE PROVINCE OF
JERUSALEM AND THE MIDDLE EAST**

Archbishop Hosam shared reflections on life in a time of war in the Diocese of Jerusalem, giving thanks for the resilience and steadfastness of its clergy and for its supporters around the world

Archbishop Hosam described the Diocese of Jerusalem as the glue between Cyprus and the Gulf—"in the middle geographically but also spiritually, there to support you and to be together on this journey".

Inviting Bishop Sean and Jenny to attend the annual Synod of the Diocese of Jerusalem, he encouraged other Synod members from Cyprus and the Gulf to join. "We would like to have more representation coming to visit, to be with us, to have more partnership. That," he said, "would be lovely."

The Diocese of Jerusalem covers five countries, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, with 28 congregations and more than 30 institutions, engaged in social outreach, medical services and education.

Although Christians comprise just 2% of the population in most of the countries of the Diocese (somewhat more in Lebanon), their deep engagement with the wider community ensures that Christian presence, ministry and reputation exceed mere numbers.

"How we engage, not only within our parishes but also through our institutions, reflects the mission of Christ as the teacher and the healer," said Archbishop Hosam—"two important aspects of Jesus's ministry that are deeply embodied by the ministry of the Diocese of Jerusalem—the land where everything started for us as Christians."

Indeed, every event in the gospel happened within the Diocese of Jerusalem, he noted—except one, the flight to Egypt. "That one slipped through our fingers!"

Reflecting on the current situation, Archbishop Hosam referred to the two ceasefires currently in

place, between Lebanon and Israel and Israel and Gaza; fears for their fragility; and prayers that they might hold and for the release of Palestinian prisoners and Israeli hostages.

"But," he said, "we are also looking for a political horizon. What happens the day after? What solutions do we have?" Referring to recent statements by the US and Israeli governments regarding the future of Gaza, he refrained from detailed comment—albeit

noting the novel possibility of territory occupied by not one but two countries.

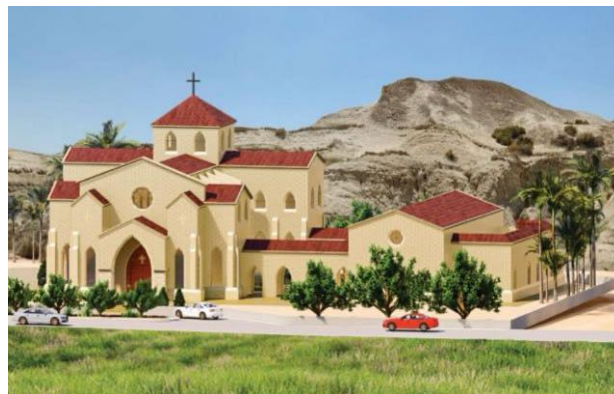
The Diocese of Jerusalem has an active youth ministry, which the archbishop described as a priority. "Our young people are the present and the future of the church, and there needs to be more intentional, spiritual investment and support for our young people."

A strategic plan for Diocesan central offices, congregations and institutions was in

the process of being implemented, incorporating goals and benchmarking for each—something that Archbishop Hosam said he would be keen to share with Synod, to further support partnerships with the institutions and 28 parishes of the Diocese of Jerusalem.

"We need to be present for our people," said Archbishop Hosam, noting that most of congregations and institutions of the Diocese are in the Holy Land—Israel, Palestine, and Jordan, with a further one in Lebanon and in Syria. A new congregation of more than 70 families was forming in a predominantly Christian area of the Diocese, reflecting growth as well as shifting demographics. And, in the coming days, the Diocese of Jerusalem would be celebrating the new parish hall and facilities at St Saviour's Church in Acre

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**CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST AT BETHANIA
ARTIST'S IMPRESSION**

What does it mean to be Anglican?

On Communion, Province and Diocese

*The Reverend Canon Dr John Holdsworth opened a Synod conversation on Anglicanism—a
conversation continued by Bishop Sean (see page 6)*

When I was in Hong Kong a few years ago, doing some teaching in the theological College there during a sabbatical, the Principal told me a funny story. It seems there was some discussion about how to translate 'The Anglican Church' into Cantonese. Since this title was not sufficiently descriptive for Chinese characters, they broke it down further into 'Reformed Episcopal Church.' This was fine but it seemed that their attempts to be so descriptive had backfired, because when they translated their efforts back into English from the Cantonese characters what they got was 'Society of Dissenting Overseers'.

The Anglican Communion: a collection, a family, a federation of some 42 autonomous churches, churches that control their own affairs according to their own rules, in 165 different countries of the world, comprising an ever-growing number of members, currently around 85 million—on some counts the world's third largest Church. Christianity has always been carried to the four corners of the earth by a combination of Empire, trade and migration. Anglicanism is no exception. It developed its particular societal response to the grace and call of God in a country called England, hence the name, but now as an Anglican Communion, it is not an English Church, or simply a Church for English speakers, or indeed a Church that is growing or thriving in England—in Hong Kong for example St John's Cathedral hosts hundreds of people every Sunday. Hardly any are English by birth, few have English as a first language, and although the main service is in English others are offered in a variety of languages, min-

istered by a variety of nationalities. Today's typical Anglican is someone under the age of thirty who lives in Central Africa. But the link with England is very important in one special and distinctive way that points to its particular character, and I'd like to spell that out a little.

Now of course there has been a Christian Church in Britain since the 4th Century, and Christians in Britain since the 2nd. For the first thousand years of its life, in fact, there was just one Church, initially coextensive with the Roman Empire. This is what we know as the undivided Church: the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of our creeds. During that thousand years there were heresies to be overcome and even some relatively short-lived schisms.

One notable schism lasted a couple of hundred years, in fact, in north Africa, and was occasioned when a bishop was appointed who the people thought was unworthy of the post because he was tainted as someone who had collaborated with a persecutor. They refused to take

communion from him, would not be baptised by him and rejected his authority. They set up a separate jurisdiction. The issue was resolved by the intervention of none other than St Augustine, who established a principle which still obtains in the Church (*ex opere operato*)—that the validity or efficacy of sacraments does not depend on any human agent. All humans are flawed in some respect. Absolute purity is unobtainable. With such bumps in the road—there were others associated with Councils in 431 and 451 concerned with a heresy called Nestorianism, which affected par-

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On discerning God's call

Bishop Sean continued the conversation, with an invitation to Synod members to reflect on ways to discern "the presence and guidance of Christ"

Three passages from Scriptures frame my hope for this Synod:

1. The Synod theme taken from Isaiah 29.11
"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
2. The Conciliar Principle, based on Acts 15:28
"For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us"
3. Jesus's self-revelation as the Messiah to the Samaritan Woman (John 4.26)
"I who speak to you am he."

But how might we have any sense of God's plans for our lives rather than our own plans; how might we know what seems good to the Holy Spirit rather than just to our own egos; and how might we recognise the presence and guidance of Christ amidst the wordiness and agendas of our religious debate?

I remember planning a parish vision day several years ago with a clergy team and the churchwardens.

We were very keen to hear from the youth, women in the parish, the retired, and the PCC; but I realised that we had not left any space in the programme to hear from God...! This fundamental omission might have occurred because

- it is easier to assume that we know what God wants or
- to assume that he wants what we want ... rather than try to do the more challenging work of trying to discern his voice.

John 10.1-5

10 "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit.² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them

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(contd from page 6)

out.⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.”

- I invite you to reflect on this passage
- Share with a person next to you how you recognise the voice of Christ in your life.

Scripture affirms the importance of discerning what is of God and what isn't.

1 Kings 3:9 - [Solomon's Prayer]
Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?”

Hebrews 5:14 - But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Philippians 1:9-10 - And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.

Romans 12:2 - Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

1 Corinthians 2:14 - The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

According to St Paul in 1 Corinthians 12. 4-11 the discernment of spirits can be a gift of the Holy Spirit:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;⁵ and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit

for the common good.⁸ To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, **to another the discernment of spirits**, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of

tongues.¹¹ All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

But what if one is not given this gift? How can we discern whether we are being led by our egos, a delusion, God or Satan? How can we make important decisions in life, confident that we are within God's will?

Many of us will immediately answer “scripture” and clearly Scripture must be the yardstick against which we measure any decision, or impulse, or motivation or thought. But it isn't always easy—Scripture needs to be well exegeted and interpreted, and we know that even Satan uses and abuses Scripture to his twisted ends.¹

There have been guidelines for “testing the spirits” for many centuries, and the classic work on discernment is by St Ignatius of Loyola in his 16C Spiritual Exercises.

For St Ignatius, the starting point in discernment is spiritual self-awareness and honesty. We need to ask ourselves the revealing question, “Right now, what is my spiritual direction of travel?” In my life am I currently moving towards God or away from him?

This is a difficult question for an individual to answer honestly.

The reason for this question is that if God is speaking to us, the experience of God will feel very different depending on our spiritual direction of travel:

- If we are travelling towards God, then we will experience God's Spirit moving in our lives as peaceful and consoling, increasing our faith, hope and love. If what we experience evokes sadness or anxiety and

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“How can we discern whether we are being led by our egos, a delusion, God or Satan? How can we make important decisions, confident we are within God's will?”

(contd from page 7)

attempts to lead us away from God, it is clearly not of God.

· If we have been travelling away from God, we will experience the movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives as challenging and uncomfortable, even painful. God will be encouraging us to repentance—to turn back to him—and this will seem like the harder path to follow. The easy path will be to continue to be comfortable and self-indulgent—and this is likely to be a temptation away from what God is saying to us.

Once we have considered the current spiritual direction of our lives, we need to assess what we think might be God's voice by analysing it through three lenses.

Assess the decision or thought rationally

· What emotions does this decision or thought evoke in me? Could these feelings come from something happening in my life right now?

· If you have mixed emotions—if something could equally be God or yourself—make a list of why it could be you and why it could be God and see which is longer and more rational.

· Ask for Godly counsel from someone whose spiritual wisdom we trust.

· Consider who will benefit most from a particular decision or thought? Will it be me or others, will it be the powerful or powerless?

Assess the decision or thought theologically

· Will it lead me closer to God or further away from him?

· Will it draw me closer to the poor of the world?

· Will it involve self-sacrifice?

· Is there any evidence from Scripture that Jesus would act in this way?

· Will it transform me into the likeness of Christ?

· What is the likely fruit of the decision?

In his Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught that a principle for discernment is seen in consequences, "You can tell a tree by its fruit."²

So, will the fruit of the Holy Spirit be evident in what is being considered: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control"³

If these virtues are likely to be produced then, it is probable that what is being prompted is from God. If not, then the origin of the impulse is likely to be the ego or even possibly an evil spirit.

Galatians 5.17 "For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want."

The spirit will not produce the works of the flesh; nor will the flesh yield the fruits of the spirit."

Assess the decision or thought prayerfully

· If it seems to pass all previous assessments pray that God would confirm his will by an experience of God's peace.⁴

· A deep feeling of joy and wholeness which leads me to God, increases my faith, hope and love. The direction of my heart is towards God and away from myself. I feel this deeply.

Individual reflection

· Where do I stand with God right now—drawing closer to him or away from him?

· What thoughts, ideas, plans have I brought to Synod?

· If these are assessed rationally, theologically, and prayerfully do I experience God's peace?

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[1] Matthew 4:1-11

[2] Matthew 7:15-20

[3] Galatians 5:22-23

[4] Philippians 4:7

Reports from Companion Dioceses



Bishop Sean introduced reports on the tripartite link—between the Dioceses of Cyprus and the Gulf, Thika (see page 9) and Exeter (see page 10)

“It is clear that there is renewed interest from all three bishops to retain and develop our three-way link,” said Bishop Sean—a link dating back to 1983 with Exeter, and 2005 with Thika.

Bishop Sean represented the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf at the enthronement of Bishop Mike Harrison, the 72nd Bishop of Exeter, at Exeter Cathedral on 2 November 2024.

“Bishop Julius Wanyoike and I were honoured to welcome Bishop Mike on behalf of our respective link dioceses,” said Bishop Sean, “and to pray a special blessing over him.”

The following day, Bishop Sean was invited to preach at the Cathedral morning Eucharist, where he shared news of the life and work of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf.

“Over the course of the weekend, there were opportunities to meet senior Diocesan staff and fellow bishops from the Solomon Islands, who are connected to Exeter Cathedral, and to spend time with Bishop Mike. Bishops Julius, Mike and I will be meeting online next month, to begin to see how we might support one another and build on the foundations of this relationship.”

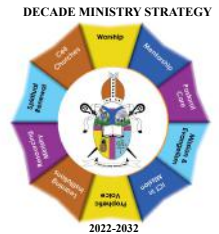


**THE ENTHRONEMENT OF BISHOP MIKE HARRISON, 72ND BISHOP OF EXETER
EXETER CATHEDRAL, 2 NOVEMBER 2024
WITH BISHOP JULIUS (LEFT) AND BISHOP SEAN (RIGHT)**

Thika



The Right Reverend Julius Wanyoike, Bishop of Thika, outlined progress in implementing the ongoing Decade Ministry Strategy in Companion Diocese of Thika, in Kenya



CLICK ON IMAGE (ABOVE) TO WATCH VIDEO

Thika's Decade Ministry Strategy initiatives include (clockwise from top left) accelerating congregation growth, spiritual development, church planting, the Mothers' Union, youth work—through the Boys' and Girls' Brigade and Sunday School—as well as and work in men's ministry (below), and episcopal visits—such as one in January to the Diocese of Soroti Convention, where Bishop Julius was greeted with music and dance (top right; [click to view](#)) and invited to preach not once but four times, to Cathedral congregations of 2,000.

Wazee (Men) Mashinani Initiative

- The men's ministry strategy demanded action on reaching out to men at their comfort areas. This was by holding public forums at shopping centers where men usually gather in the evening after a hard day's labor.
- The men leadership would prepare a cup of tea or soup and some bites to share with the men .
- Sharing on issues affecting men in the family, society and church were discussed openly .
- Men expressed their fears and challenged each other on issues of finances, parenting, economic growth, relationships and churchmanship.

- These gatherings proved very popular and were followed in one area with a medical camp where men turned up for check up on their health.
- They have resulted in men going back to church
- Reduction of stigma and bringing the age and status gaps amongst men



A Session of Men Mashinani Initiative.

Exeter



The Right Reverend Mike Harrison, Bishop of Exeter, sent Synod greetings via video, apologising for his absence and giving thanks for the longstanding link between the Dioceses of Cyprus and the Gulf, Thika and Exeter



(RIGHT) CLICK ON IMAGE TO WATCH BISHOP MIKE'S VIDEO; (LEFT) MEMBERS OF ST CHRISTOPHER'S CATHEDRAL IN BAHRAIN MET IN NOVEMBER TO BEGIN WORK ON PALM CROSSES FOR THE DIOCESE OF EXETER (AND FOR TEC—SEE PAGE 20)

Each year parishes across Cyprus and the Gulf generously give of their time to make thousands of palm crosses, collected at Synod to be sent to our link Diocese of Exeter in time for Holy Week.

In a special message of thanks (below), Bishop Mike described the deep significance of this gift from one Companion Diocese to another

“It’s a real blessing to have palm crosses from Cyprus & the Gulf with us for Palm Sunday – our family of Christian communities that make up our diocese of Exeter really appreciate this palpable and material way of being connected together in this season. Of course it is a sombre moment – as we recall the fickleness of a crowd welcoming Jesus with open arms and yet within a few days crying “crucify” in their disappointment that he did not match their hopes or expectations. Less often underlined is how later the Gospel accounts signal in various ways that at least some of them recognise their bad choices and that they’ve not been able to help themselves; the soldier acknowledging Jesus at his moment of death “truly this was the Son of God”; the crowds who had shouted “crucify him” going home “beating their breasts” and his followers, not least the women, who “watched these things” from afar, bewildered by Jesus’ death but conscious of something momentous and unprecedented here. And of course, eclipsing all this, the constancy of Jesus’ indestructible love for His people, and through passion, death and resurrection taking even the worst of humanity’s actions and bringing it to good issue and promise for us. So thank you for these palm crosses, signs of humanity’s brokenness and yet of God’s unbroken commitment to us in Jesus.”

Paying tribute to Canon John

SFC member David Axtell led Synod in offering heartfelt thanks to Canon John Banfield, who has retired from his role as Honorary Director of Finance after years of dedicated service to the Diocese



What makes a good church?

Some of you may know the popular Christian author, Scot McKnight and his daughter, Laura Barringer—in their recent book *A Church Called Tov: Forming a Goodness Culture that Resists Abuses of Power and Promotes Healing*.

“A church is not a business.... A church is a local community of believers who are striving to be like Christ, both as a congregation and as individuals”

Churches should be marked by interdependence, not hierarchy, as people work together.

They also list seven elements that make a good church member:

1. empathy and compassion
2. grace and graciousness
3. putting people first
4. truth telling
5. justice
6. service
7. Christlikeness

Alternatively, William Still in his book *The Work of the Pastor* was referenced by Sinclair Ferguson:

*Good Christians are
compassionate, generous,
and resourceful...
relentless advocates who
work diligently, can
find themselves on
the wrong end of the score
and yet love
and defend the church*

“Good Christians are kind and decent people. Good Christians are compassionate, generous, and resourceful. Good Christians are relentless advocates who work diligently, can find themselves on the wrong end of the score and yet love and defend the church.

“Good Christians, in sum, believe and love and hope rightly and truly.”

Why am I referencing these traits at the start of chairing a session on Finance? Simply because I have been asked to pay tribute to the work of John Banfield.

I personally believe that financial integrity is the bedrock of any organisation. It’s imperative to have people responsible for financial planning and management that

are honourable and trustworthy.

John and his wife Mary served as active members of St Paul’s Nicosia in the 1980s and remained active. John has directly served the Diocese since 2005 under Bishop Clive, and wore many hats including serving on the Bishop’s Council.

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ABOVE: PAUL HAMILTON (WARDEN), REVD STEPHEN THANAPUAL (ASST PRIEST, ST CHRISTOPHER'S CATHEDRAL AND MISSION TO SEAFARERS CHAPLAIN), ARCHDEACON BILL SCHWARTZ, HON LAY CANON JOHN BANFIELD, BISHOP MICHAEL LEWIS, REVD CANON ANDY THOMPSON (CHAPLAIN, ST ANDREW ABU DHABI), PHILIP SHEPHERDSON (WARDEN), DEAN CHRIS BUTT FOLLOWING JOHN AND ANDY'S INSTALLATION AS HON CANONS OF ST CHRISTOPHER'S CATHEDRAL, 4 DECEMBER 2011

BELOW LEFT: REVD STEPHEN, SIMON PHILLIPS (READER), REVD CANON ANDY, PHILIP SHEPHERDSON, CANON JOHN, DEAN CHRIS AND ARCHDEACON BILL



ABOVE: MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS AND JMECA, JERUSALEM ROOM AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY, NOVEMBER 2024



LEFT: REVD JOHN (ROCKI) PROFFIT (CANTERBURY GROUP), BOO PROFFIT, CHARLES MILNER, SALLY MILNER AND CANON JOHN, ST CHRISTOPHER'S CATHEDRAL RECEPTION FOLLOWING JOHN'S INSTALLATION

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Financial report

2025 Diocesan budget

The 2025 Diocesan budget was presented to Synod members for discussion, with an appeal to parishes that had not yet submitted their annual contribution to support Diocesan programmes and the Office of the Bishop, including its central administrative functions and proposed new project funding for church planting, youth development and clergy wellbeing

TOTAL PROPOSED EXPENSES

	2025 Plan (£)	2024 Actuals (subject to final Audit)	% Change ('24-'25)
Central Administration	335	359	
Programmes	45	16	
Supported Parishes	195	194	
TOTAL	575	569	1.1% increase

ACCL EXPECTED INCOME

	2025 Plan (£)	2024 Actuals (subject to final Audit)	% Change ('24-'25)
JMECA	35	40	
Episcopal Church GFO	65	133	
Diocese of Cyprus & the Gulf Foundation	20	40	
Other Donations	15	34	
TOTAL	135	247	45% decrease

BISHOP & ADMINISTRATION

	2025 Budget (£)	2024 Actuals (subject to final Audit)	2024 Budget
Bishop	80	82	65
Archdeacons	8	68	106
Office	162	164	168
Meetings	20	20	22
Travel	30	25	18
Provincial Contribution	10	10	10
Loan Repayment	25	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	335	369	389
% Change ('24-'25)		9.2% decrease	

PROGRAMMES

	2025 Plan (£)	2024 Actuals (£) (subject to final Audit)	Change ('24-'25)
Ministry Programme	15	16	
New Project Funding	30	0	
TOTAL	45	16	Almost triple

SUPPORTED PARISHES INCOME

	2025 Plan (£)	2024 Actuals (subject to final Audit)
Aden	25	13
Baghdad	120	123
St Mark Famagusta	0	0
TOTAL	145	136

2025 REQUIRED SUPPORT

	Expenses	Donor Income	Requested Support
Bishop & Bishop's Office	335	135	200
Programmes	45	0	45
Supported Parishes	195	145	50
TOTAL	575	280	295

2024 Diocesan accounts

Diocesan Finance Officer Evangelia Georgakaki presented for Synod approval
 2024 Diocesan accounts — issued in the name of the Anglican Church Cyprus Ltd (ACCL)

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES 2024

'000	Actual 2024	Budget 2024	Actual 2023
> Parish Contributions	200	275	196
> Other Revenue	292	235	306+5
>>TOTAL	492	510	507
> Direct Expenses	(313)	(318)	(340)
> Admin Expenses	(182)	(179)	(188)
> Net Other Cash Items	11	0	(17)
> Net Finance income/(exp.), impairment, other	8	5	(1)
>>Surplus/(deficit)	16	18	(39)

ACCL - 2024

BREAKDOWN OF OTHER REVENUE

'000	Actual 2024	Budget 2024	Actual 2023
JMECA	40	40	87
ECUSA	133	75	75
For Aden	13	20	12
Foundation	40	40	51
JEMT Cyprus	15	15	30
St Helena's	17	20	20
Other	34	25	36
>>Total	292	235	311

ACCL - 2024

BREAKDOWN OF DIRECT EXPENSES (CONT.)

'000	Actual 2024	Budget 2024	Actual 2023
Programmes			
Ras Morbat Clinic Aden	65	60	72
Ministry Training	15	20	8
Famagusta Student Chaplaincy	7	10	9
Other	-	-	6
>>Total	87	90	95
Bishop & Administration	226	221	246
>TOTAL Dir. Exp	313	311	341

ACCL - 2024

2024 CASH POSITION

'000		Actual 2024
Cash		231
Receivables	Endowment, 2024 Contributions in transit	98
LESS		
Designated Funds	Reserve Fund, Contingency Fund, TEC Donation	(114)
Payables	Creditors, Priest in Aden, Oman, DOI, Accruals, Loan	(182)
Uncommitted Cash		33

ACCL - 2024

(contd from page 4)

(Akko/Akka)—which reopened in 2017 for the first time since 1948.

Archbishop Hosam also shared his great joy at progress towards the construction of the new Church of St John the Baptist at Bethania—Bethany beyond the Jordan—saying: “Sixteen years ago, we laid the foundation stone at the Baptism Site, and now, within a couple of months, hopefully, we will begin digging. And we really praise God for that.”

There was much to celebrate, too, in the ordination of Deacon Saleem Kasabreh, and in the expected arrival within the year of Joel Kelling, who was finishing his theological training at Oxford.

The many institutions run by the Diocese of Jerusalem—rehabilitation centres, hospitals, clinics, schools and guest houses—remained exceptionally dedicated to their work for the communities around them.

Archbishop Hosam referred in particular to the Anglican medical facility in Gaza, Ahli Arab Hospital. “Our medical and healing ministry in the name of Christ has shown—for the wrong reasons—but real presence, real resilience in time of war. We have

treated hundreds of thousands of people in the last 15 months and, for a long period, it has been the only hospital serving the whole of the northern part of the Gaza Strip, and with so many so few resources.

“But with our partners around the world, in the States, in the UK, in Africa, in the Gulf, and in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, we managed to raise really significant funds for the Ahli Arab Hospital, enabling us to continue the ministry of the hospital there.

“And now we are planning the kind of ministry that we would have for the future. We will continue to be there in whatever form, whatever shape. We will rebuild. We will enhance our ministry. Because we believe that our presence there as Christians in Gaza is something of great importance.”

Other good news included the forthcoming opening of a new building at the Bishop’s School in Amman, a \$5-million project providing labs and multi-purpose

halls; and Women’s Ministry, which hoped to resume meetings soon under the leadership of himself, his wife Rafa, and other dedicated women of the Diocese.

Reflecting on the recent week of prayer for Christian unity, Archbishop Hosam celebrated a new initiative—the exchange of pulpits between the different denominations, he himself exchanging with the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, and Bishop William Shomali from the Latin Church also preaching at St George’s Anglican Cathedral in the course of the week.

Noting the strong relationships the Diocese of Jerusalem

enjoys across Christian denominations, he added: “Our province would be one of very few places where people would understand the importance of relationships between the different religions—between Christians and Muslims, between Christians and Jewish communities.

“We are committed to these relationships, not only at the grassroots level but also with those in authority.

“We have regular meetings with King Abdullah of Jordan; with the President of Israel; with the President of Palestine; and soon we will meet with the new

president in Lebanon—and we praise God for this election after an absence of two years, in order to bring stability to Lebanon, prosperity for the people there, and hopefully find a good solution as well.”

Archbishop Hosam ended his report on the Diocese of Jerusalem by thanking the many people in the room who prayed for its bishop, its clergy and heads of institutions, and for as its people.

“This support through prayer, and at times financial aid, has been an absolutely wonderful thing to have, and I praise God for the relationship that we have as two dioceses, and as a province, that we will continue to thrive, to be strong and to support each other in whatever way possible, because we are the body of Christ.

“And we too pray for you: we pray for your shepherd, Father Sean and for Jenny, and for your clergy and your people. May God bless your ministry, as we continue to serve Christ together.”

*“I praise God for
the relationship we have
as two dioceses, and as
a province, that we
will continue
to thrive, to
be strong
and to support each other
in whatever way
possible,
because we
are the body of Christ”*

Reports

The Episcopal Church (USA)



TEC Middle East Partnership Officer the Venerable Paul Feheley brought greetings from a newly appointed bishop, and shared news of steadfast work to support the Diocese and wider Province

It is a great joy to join you again for your Synod. I consider it a privilege to be here and to have the opportunity to come, see, listen, and learn about the amazing ministry that happens in this wonderfully Christ-centred, complex and diverse diocese. In the past year I visited in Doha with Fr Mark and Debbie, and I attended the consecration of your new Bishop in Bahrain. I have had several opportunities to meet, talk, and share with Bishop Sean. This included three days in New York City at The Episcopal Church headquarters where there were a number of opportunities for meetings, planning and in-depth conversation. It has been a great honour to get to know him and to begin to appreciate the gifts that he brings to his ministry as your Bishop. He has warmly received me into the Diocese, and I consider him a good friend for which I am very thankful.

I bring you greetings from our new Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church who, in my department, we call "the other" Bishop Sean.

Bishop Sean Rowe was elected last June and installed as our new Presiding Bishop and Primate in November. I also bring you the prayers and best wishes from Fr David Copley, the director of Global Partnerships of which my ministry is one of the branches. We work under a vision statement that says we are partnering with God's world to share the love of Jesus.

As the Middle East Partnership Officer I work on building maintaining and developing relationships in the province of Jerusalem and the Middle East involving me in this diocese, the Diocese of Jerusalem and, whenever possible, the Diocese of Iran. This ministry is a two-way street, so that I'm able to come and, where applicable, share something of The Episcopal Church but, more especially, take back to The Episcopal Church the things that I have seen and learnt

from being with you. I will say a little more about my ministry in a moment.

I do want to say a word about the United States and to ask for your prayers as the American people come to terms with the election of the new President. Many people are thrilled with his actions to date; others are scared and not sure of their place in society. Let me reference some remarks that Bishop Marian Budde made at the National Cathedral the day after the inauguration. Many of you have heard or read some of

her closing comments that were directed to President Trump. Earlier in that address she made some important comments about Unity.

Her text spoke strongly to me not only about The United States but also about the state of the Church in many places around the world. I quote:

"As a country we have gathered this morning to pray for unity as a people and a nation. Not for agreement, political or

otherwise. But for the kind of unity that fosters community across diversity and division. A unity that serves the common good.

"Unity in this sense is a threshold requirement for people to live in freedom and together in a free society. It is the solid rock, as Jesus said in this case, upon which to build a nation. It is not conformity. It is not victory. It is not polite weariness or passivity born of exhaustion.

"Unity is not partisan. Rather, unity is a way of being with one another that encompasses and respects our differences; that teaches us to hold multiple perspectives and life experiences as valid and worthy of respect; that enables us in our communities and in the halls of power to genuinely care for one another. Even when we disagree."

(contd on page 24)

*Unity is a way of
being with one another
that encompasses
and respects our differences; that
teaches us to hold
multiple perspectives
and life experiences
as valid and
worthy of respect*

Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association



The Reverend Canon Dr John Holdsworth reported to Synod on behalf of JMECA, delivering a report from JMECA Trustee Canon Dr Clare Amos

I am sorry that I myself cannot be with you at your Diocesan Synod of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf in my capacity as the Director of the Jerusalem and Middle East Church Association who has a special responsibility of relating to your Diocese. But it is very good that John Holdsworth is able to represent us on this occasion.

John has been working for JMECA as a consultant for the last 15 months or so, doing an excellent job in developing our communications, and especially the material on our website, ultimately, we believe, to the benefit of the Anglican Provinces and Dioceses in the region that we serve. I am grateful for this opportunity to be able to send you greetings.

During the last year I have enjoyed getting to know your Diocese a little better. It was a privilege to be invited to be part of the staff team on the ministry summer school that took place in June in the Angel's Hills. I came away from that week admiring the commitment and creativity of those within your Diocese who were offering themselves for a variety of ministries both lay and ordained. My involvement with the summer school gave me the opportunity to be present at Bishop Sean's installation in Nicosia, which was a joyous occasion to which I was glad to be able to bring JMECA's greetings and good wishes for his ministry. We had previously been represented by our Chair Bishop Anthony Ball at Bishop Sean's consecration the previous month in Bahrain.

One of my own roles in the life of the wider church is to act as Director of the Ministry Experience for the Diocese in Europe, responsible for a group of young people who are exploring a possible vocation to ordained ministry. As part of their internship year we take the group on a week's pilgrimage visit together. Often we visit the Holy Land. This year that is not possible, so in a couple of weeks' time I will be bringing the group to Cyprus, and I have been reflecting on what we can learn from the stories of Barnabas and Saul, two of the island's special saints, about the mission of the early church and its implications for us today.

I think there are learnings from their stories for the contemporary life and ministry of the whole Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf. The biblical accounts of Barnabas and Saul, not least on their visit to Cyprus, reflect

the way that the early church found itself breaking out of the boundaries of geography, race, nationality, culture and religion in which it had been initially confined, and engaging generously with the differences it encountered in its mission. These shifts were not painless or problem-free, but, as the Book of Acts makes clear, they were also the work of the Holy Spirit. This, it seems to me, is not a bad paradigm for the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf 20 centuries later.

I don't know whether it is by accident or design but I think there is a serendipity to the fact that your Synod begins on the day immediately after the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple.

As some of you will know better than me, in the Orthodox Church and in the Greek language this Feast is actually known as 'The Feast of Meeting'—for it is the moment when the Old Testament meets the New, the aged Simeon and Anna greet the young baby, joy meets with sorrow and the Lord God meets with his people. Of course what is a Synod itself, but a time for meeting across several boundaries, not least that of geography?

I do very much hope and pray that your days together will indeed feel like 'a Feast of Meeting'.

Canon John noted that JMECA was to change the way in which it provided funds, by linking them to particular priorities. In the case of Cyprus and the Gulf this was likely to entail, he hoped, funds being directed towards theological education. He also noted two changes in personnel, with JMECA chair the Right Reverend Anthony Ball, former Bishop of North Africa, having been appointed director of the Anglican Centre in Rome as well as the Archbishop of Canterbury's representative to the Holy See; and JMECA secretary Shirley Eason also stepping down. Their successors were to be announced shortly.

*SFC Member the Reverend Kent Middleton
reported to Synod on Standing and Finance Committee*



Standing and Finance Committee

*The Standing and Finance Committee is the
Executive Committee of the Diocesan Synod when that is not in session.*

As such and in accordance with the Diocesan Constitution (article 7e):

- (i) It shall consider matters arising when the Diocesan Synod is not in session and, if necessary, take executive action, and report to the next session of the Synod;*
- (ii) It shall be consulted by the Bishop on all matters he considers to be of importance;*
- (iii) It shall have the right to raise with the Bishop matters of concern to the Church in the Diocese;*
- (iv) It shall prepare the agenda for sessions of the Diocesan Synod*

Since Synod 2024, SFC met in Cyprus in June—welcoming Bishop Sean, and via Zoom in October, December and January.

Meetings began and ended in prayer, and included reports relating to finance, ministry, communications, safeguarding, and other administrative aspects of the life of the Diocese. The Archdeacons reported on activities in their respective archdeaconries, individual parishes were discussed and much positive work celebrated. The Bishop also gave an update on provincial matters.

Correspondence received by SFC secretary Canon Georgia Katsantonis was discussed, at the discretion of the Chair (Bishop Sean), and responses considered.

There was a review of Synod 2024, taking note of feedback forms received, and planning of Synod 2025.

Key points from SFC meeting of 24 June 2024 in Nicosia

1. Correspondence from the Revd Drew Schmotzer discussed.
2. Criteria for annual UTO grant noted, 2025 theme being “Addressing water issues and increasing water awareness”
3. ACCL AGM held in course of meeting, with following outcomes:
 - i. Minutes of meeting held on 24 May 2023 approved.
 - ii. Audited 2023 accounts received and approved
 - iii. Appointment of the Right Reverend Sean Alexander John Semple as Director approved
 - iv. Next ACCL AGM to be held during second meeting of SFC in 2025.
4. Canon Angela Murray to be consulting widely in compiling celebratory publication commemorating 50 years of the Diocese.
5. Agreement to hold mid-year Zoom Synod on 17 September 2024.

Key points from SFC Zoom meeting of 1 October 2024

1. Correspondence from the Very Revd Richard Fermer discussed and a response agreed, to be sent by SFC secretary. SFC agreed on importance of Synod members of such a dispersed diocese meeting in person once a year.
2. Hope expressed that Synod 2026, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Diocese, could be hosted in the Gulf. Options to be explored immediately after Synod 2025.
3. Correspondence from the Revd Deborah Moorgas regarding possibility of setting up a care facility for the aged in Limassol, Cyprus was discussed: SFC requested a formal proposal to be presented.
4. Draft Synod 2025 programme discussed with overarching theme taken from Jeremiah 29:11, “A hope and a future”. It was agreed to keep Synod registration fee the same as previous year.

Key points from SFC Zoom meeting of 5 December 2024

1. 2025 budget to be presented in new format at Synod, providing opportunity for further discussion before final budget presented.
2. Further planning for Synod considered, including need to reduce expenses, and make more use of talent already in and around the Diocese.

Key points from SFC Zoom meeting of 28 January 2025

1. Suggested that in 2025, periodic meetings be held between central finance office and parish treasurers, and between Bishop and church wardens.
2. Extensive work undertaken to finalise Synod planning, programme, presentations and reports.
3. Independent, needs-based assessment of the Office of the Bishop in providing services for the Diocese in terms of administrative and finance-related tasks to be undertaken in 2025.

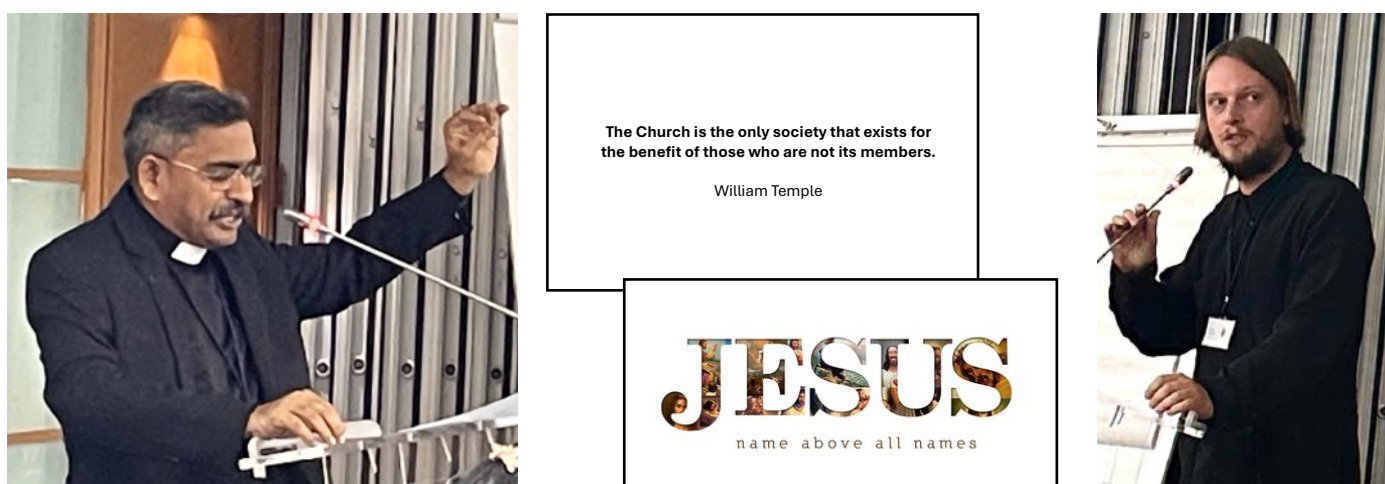
Workshop

Mission in the Diocese: reaching out, drawing in

The workshop session on Mission drew on Matthew 28:19-20:

‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’



(LEFT TO RIGHT) REVD MD JOHNSON; SLIDES FROM REVD JIM YOUNG’S PRESENTATION; REVD GEORGE VIDIAKIN

The Synod workshop session on Mission was led by the Reverend MD Johnson, associate priest at Church of the Epiphany in Doha; the Reverend George Vidiakin, parish priest at Christ Church Ayia Napa; and the Reverend Jim Young, parish priest at Christ Church Jebel Ali, who each shared something of discipleship in their own contexts before joining Synod participants in break-out groups to reflect on and share their experiences as outward-looking, engaged and transformative disciples.

(contd from page 2)

leadership and on the Constitutional review process—ended with a plenary session to share highlights of group discussions, joined via Zoom from Canada by Constitutional Review Committee adviser on canon law, Dr Harry Huskins. The results of House elections were also shared.

After morning prayer on the final day of Synod, participants made their way to Nicosia for a closing Eucharist at St Paul’s Cathedral led by Bishop Sean, with the Venerable Paul Feheley of TEC (The Episcopal Church of the US) preaching. TEC organises the Good Friday Offering, through which it generously provides financial support to the Diocese and wider Province. A retiring collection was for St Mark Famagusta.

Following a sandwich lunch in the Cathedral grounds, participants travelled around the Venetian

walls of the Old City to the Orthodox Archbishopric and the Cathedral of St John.

The group then gathered at the Home for Cooperation in the buffer zone of the divided city. Here, participants learned something of the bitter history of the island—and of the space offered for the different communities of Cyprus to come together in conversation and friendship.

The experience provided an opportunity to reflect further on Archdeacon Paul’s sermon that morning, in which he referred to the Synod theme—A hope and a future.

“Those two words—hope and future—are indelibly written in my heart and soul and mind,” he said.

“May they be central to your way of thinking, to your prayer life, and to our understanding of what God has called us to do and to be. Amen.”

Constitutional Review Committee (CRC)

Synod members met in closed session for workshop and plenary discussions on the ongoing Constitutional review process, overseen by the CRC—and on Gulf episcopal leadership (below), overseen by the GEEL working group. The two bodies were set up following motions passed at the February 2024 meeting of Synod



CRC CHAIR THE VERY REVD RICHARD FERMER (SECOND LEFT) INTRODUCED CRC ADVISER ON CANON LAW DR HARRY HUSKINS, WHO JOINED THE CLOSED SYNOD SESSION BY VIDEO LINK

Gulf Enhanced Episcopal Leadership (GEEL)

THE REVEREND DR JOHN AITCHISON, AN ACADEMIC RESEARCHER, PROVIDED AN OVERVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE AND FINDINGS OF A SURVEY UNDERTAKEN ON BEHALF OF THE GEEL WORKING GROUP, CHAIRED BY BISHOP SEAN



Worship





Reports



JEMT (Cyprus) chair Deb Graham reported to Synod

With the formation of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf in 1976, the Jerusalem and East Mission Trust (Cyprus) was established to manage church property in Cyprus on behalf of the UK Trustees, the Jerusalem and East Mission Trust Ltd.

These properties include:

Nicosia	St Paul's Cathedral, Deanery, and Commercial assets
Limassol	St Barnabas Church and Vicarage
Larnaca	St Helena's Church, Flat 201, Shops 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14
Kyrenia	St Andrew's Church, Hermitage, Houston Cemetery
Famagusta	Plot – "Mrs Gilles Land"
Troodos	St George-in-the Forest Church

Parishes are responsible for the care and upkeep of the properties they use and, where possible, the Trustees assist financially by means of a property grant request.

During 2024 the Trustees made grants to St Paul's Cathedral Parish Council towards the cost of removing trees in the grounds, and all JEMT properties on the island underwent valuation surveys. Renovations to St George-in-the-Forest had not yet been completed; quotations for work on St Helena Larnaca had been received.

A new lawyer had been appointed to represent JEMT.

In terms of income, JEMT (Cyprus) continued to receive rental income from commercial sites—shops in Larnaca and a petrol station in Nicosia.

Current members of JEMT (Cyprus) are Deb Graham (chair), John Cater, Chris Clapham and Kevin Townsend, and Observer the Very Reverend Jeremy Crocker. Their work is supported by Secretary Anetta Stylianou—whom Deb Graham thanked for compiling this and other reports, as well as JEMT minutes, and treasurer Evangelia Georgakaki.

(contd from page 17)

To me and hopefully to you, powerful words.

Another aspect of my ministry is the responsibility for the Good Friday Offering. On my visits to the Diocese I have learned a great deal which especially helps me when speaking about the Good Friday Offering and the richness of the work that you do.

Now in its 103rd year, every parish in The Episcopal Church is invited to make financial contributions that go to support the work and mission of the Province and the Dioceses. The total from 2024 will be half a million US dollars.

The decision on how that is shared is decided by your Provincial Synod. In the past few years that has worked out to the first \$30,000 to the Province with the balance divided 2/3 to the Diocese of Jerusalem and 1/3 to your Diocese. The Provincial Synod may choose to change those ratios, and an important aspect is that the decisions on how you spend the money are made here in the Diocese and are not directed from The Episcopal Church.

I also want to thank the Diocese and the parish of Jebel Ali for welcoming Mr Bruce Reed from The Episcopal Church. Bruce is part of the Young Adult Service Corp which invites young Episcopalians to

service in a variety of places around the Anglican Communion. I am thrilled that he is here among you and learning from Fr Jim and the people of the parish.

Some of you also know that I am the incumbent of the parish of Saint Michael and All Angels in Toronto.

My people are delighted on Palm Sunday when we bless and then share the palm crosses that you have made in the Diocese. It has become a rather unique tradition for me to bring the palm crosses home with me—a tradition that I hope continues (*see photo, page 9*).

I continue to grow in my appreciation of the extraordinary ministry that happens here. I have felt very gracious hospitality as I have traveled in this diocese and seen the faith that is lived out in so many places.

I thank you for all of that, for the joy of being with you again, for the friendships and relationships that enable me to speak with a deeper authenticity after visiting and witnessing the different issues and the various blessings that each place holds. I look forward to continuing opportunities to be with you and learn even more to share with The Episcopal Church.

May God's peace be with you all.

Mission to Seafarers



The Reverend John Attenborough, Regional Director for the Mission to Seafarers (MtS—Middle East and South Asia) and Chaplain to Cyprus ports, shared news about the Mission and its work



[CLICK TO WATCH VIDEO](#)

The Reverend John Attenborough opened his presentation with a video on the 160-year history of the Mission to Seafarers (MtS) and its work around the world today.

MtS operates in 53 countries, including the Middle East and South Asia (MESA) region stretching from Cyprus to Sri Lanka.

“Partnership through the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, and the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, is really important to us,” said Fr John.

The Mission is now, once again operating in Yemen, and efforts to begin work in Saudi Arabia continue.

The Reverend Franklin Isaac, Mission to Seafarers chaplain in Bahrain and assistant priest to the Tamil congregation of St Christopher’s Cathedral, gave thanks for the work MtS is able to do in the kingdom.

“Bahrain is a particularly interesting place to serve seafarers,” he said. “We have a lot of freedom to do that, including through the holy mosque in the port. The Port Authority itself is very helpful to us in our ministry, including supporting seafarers to get shore passes to visit the city.”

At a personal level, Fr Franklin expressed his deep gratitude to St Christopher’s Cathedral and School, and the well-wishers who raised funds for Christmas gifts and essential supplies.

“Their help means that MtS can really serve seafarers arriving in the port of Bahrain—and that seafarers can really enjoy that service,” he said. “Thank you.”

Completing the MtS Diocesan team, the Reverend Deborah Moorgas, who has a background in marine insurance and is parish priest at St Barnabas Limassol, works with MtS visiting ships in the ports of Limassol and Larnaca.

Mission to Seafarers is concerned for the welfare of all seafarers, irrespective of religion, and its teams include longstanding staff of different faiths. Raied Tashoush, a Muslim MtS welfare worker based in Aqaba, Yemen, has been with the Mission for 28 years; in Colombo, the MtS team includes a Buddhist member of staff. At the same time, MtS remains alert to local sensitivities. In India, where a partnership to operate in Kolkata is due to be renewed in March, there are very strict laws against proselytising; and indeed the word ‘mission’ is, in that context, sometimes a source of concern to authorities.

John is clear: MtS is not seeking to convert anyone. “We are purely about welfare—the humanitarian, social and spiritual welfare of seafarers.”

In India, that message has been clearly received and well understood—the result of advocacy, clear communication and hard work, not least by MtS man on the ground, Fr Nitin, who helped build a partnership with the Mumbai port union.

MtS work can often be about helping individual seafarers. In the United Arab Emirates, MtS is supporting a seafarer abandoned by his company and now living

(contd on page 26)



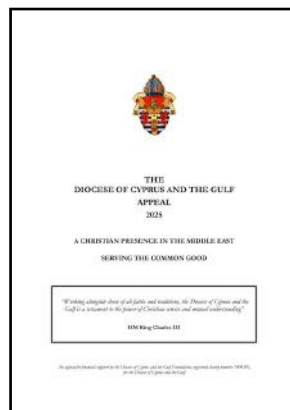
REVD FRANKLIN ISAAC, REVD JOHN ATTENBOROUGH AND REVD DEBORAH MOORGAS



Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf Foundation

Foundation chair Michael Cole updated Synod on its work to support the Diocese

The Foundation is a UK-registered charity, established as a trust in 1990 with the objective of the advancement of the Christian religion in accordance with the doctrines and principles of the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, by the extension of the work, ministry and public worship throughout the Diocese. Chair Michael Cole was joined at Synod by a further three trustees—Susan Cooper, Sibella Laing, Angela Murray and Helen Perry.



The charity’s main activities are to generate an income stream from a portfolio of investments and donations from private individuals and charitable bodies, with moneys disbursed to cover small administrative costs and to provide financial support to the Diocese and to individual parishes within the Diocese when required and as approved by the trustees.

The charitable status of the Foundation enables it to provide a facility for parishes within the Diocese to recover UK income tax on donations to parishes by UK taxpayers—a process overseen by Foundation treasurer Michael Ross-McCall, a former parishioner of St Christopher’s Cathedral in Bahrain. The Foundation also makes payments to the Church of England pensions board on behalf of the Diocese, to fund pensions for some members of Diocesan clergy.

A key point made to Synod members was that the size of the Foundation’s annual grant to the Diocese was steadily falling. During 2024, the Foundation provided the Diocese with a grant of GBP34.5k—compared to GBP45k in 2023 and GBP50k in 2022. (As had been previously discussed at Synod, trustees last year approved a loan of GBP85k, the first element of which was released to the Diocese in November 2024, with the balance available as required.)

The grant for 2025 was GBP20k—reflecting the fact that the Foundation had limited funds—sufficient only to provide “a lifeline, not life support”.

In 2020 the trustees launched an appeal for the Diocese—raising GBP105k by end-2024, including a grant of GBP83k invested in a separate endowment fund, generating (limited) interest payments.

There was therefore an ongoing need for fresh income. “The appeal is still very much alive, and everyone in this room can do their bit to help us,” said Michael. “If you think you know somebody who might be interested in supporting the Foundation and, ultimately, the Diocese, please do share the appeal document with them.”

CONTACT HELEN.PERRY@CYPGULF.ORG FOR A COPY OF THE APPEAL DOCUMENT

(contd from page 25)

alone on board his ship, providing food, water and money—and working with the International Transport Federation and the federal maritime authority “to get this poor Seafarer his due wages and a plane ticket home”.

A very different case is that of the Galaxy Leader, hijacked by the Houthis on 16 November 2023, with 27 crew members held at gunpoint—and only released just a few weeks ago.

“There was not much we could do for the crew,” said John. But MtS did provide invaluable support to their families. Raied managed to contact a few family members, who in turn contacted others. “The ball started rolling from there, with regular Zoom meet-

ings with family members from the Philippines, Mexico, Romania and Ukraine.”

Working with seafarers’ families is an important part of MtS’s work, especially in a crisis. “The thing that we identified very quickly was that the families felt voiceless. It took a little bit of doing, but we bullied and badgered and stuck our heads above the parapet, until we actually secured them an in-person meeting with the Secretary General of the International Maritime Organisation in London. “From there they said, ‘Now we are being heard. Now we are being listened to.’

“Families needed to know that—to have the IMO telling family members, ‘We do hear you; diplomatic efforts are being made.’”



UK Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf



The Reverend Canon Chris Butt, chair of the Association of the UK Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, updated Synod on its activities

The 2024 AGM of the Friends was my first as Chair and it was a privilege to welcome our new President, Bishop Sean and Jenny, to that meeting.

In my report I concluded with a reflection on what it means to be *Friends*. What a special title that is! Not an organisation, or a committee or a club, but *Friends*: friends of one another, who have shared similar experiences by living in the Diocese and sharing in the life of its chaplaincies; and some who will have enjoyed the experience of being part of this Synod, as we did over ten years.

Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, whose unity is expressed in the Bishop of the Diocese and therefore a particular friendship with him.

To be Friends, we must keep in touch and be informed. May I express our thanks to Helen Perry for her work on the Diocesan website, and encourage all of the Chaplaincies to feed good news of significant events at the local level to Helen for publication on the website. It does get read, helps feed our prayers for you, and it highlights what an extraordinary Diocese this is.

Recognising that our own publication, *The Olive Branch*, was increasingly becoming a duplicate of much that could be found on the Diocesan website, we have changed its format considerably, reducing its size to two pages of A4, and sending it out digitally three times a year. I am grateful to Ron Maitland, who has edited the Olive Branch for many years.

This year we have found new ways to pray as Friends of the Diocese. Launched in March 2024, three times a year we have an hour's gathering on Zoom to intercede for the Diocese, the individual chaplaincies, the ministry of Mission to Seafarers, our link Dioceses (Exeter and Thika), and any particular needs that we have been made aware of. Bishop Sean has been especially encouraging and supportive of this initiative

and it is a way of fulfilling one of our key objectives as Friends: *to pray for the work of God and ministry throughout the Diocese.*

We have had our regular regional gatherings in Gloucester in the Spring in the South West, arranged by Ian Calder, and in York in the North in the Autumn, opportunities for the Friends to come together

for a Eucharist, plenty of time to chat and catch up with one another over coffee and lunch and a cultural activity. Bishop-elect Sean and Jenny attended the Gloucester gathering in mid-March, which encouraged a larger than normal turn-out. Representing the Friends, I was honoured to attend the Consecration and Enthronement of Bishop Sean in Bahrain, and Ian Calder formally represented

the Friends at the Enthronement service in Nicosia. At both occasions other Friends were present.

The AGM of the Friends took place on 15 July at All Hallows-by-the-Tower, London. It was an opportunity to formally welcome Bishop Sean as our new President, and he presided and preached at the Eucharist.

As a community, All Hallows prays daily for the ministry and mission of the Diocese and we are grateful for their hospitality each year.

At the meeting Anne Lloyd stood down as Secretary of the Friends after several years of service; Linda Smith has taken over the reins as Secretary.

The Friends were also represented at a significant meeting on 27 November in Westminster Abbey arranged by JMECA at which Archbishops and Bishops from the Provinces of Jerusalem and the Middle East were present and gave an update of all that was happening in the region.

I conclude with words of Jesus in John's Gospel: *I do not call you servants any longer... but I have called you friends.*

Above all, we want to be good friends of the Diocese.

Three times a year we gather on Zoom to intercede for the Diocese, the individual chaplaincies, the ministry of Mission to Seafarers, our link Dioceses—a way of fulfilling one of our key objectives: to pray for the work of God and ministry throughout the Diocese

American Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf



Bishop James (Jay) Magness, chair of the American Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, described the background and purpose of the newly established organisation—almost a decade in the making

Thanking Synod on behalf of Canon Bill and Edith Schwartz, himself and his wife Carolyn, Bishop Jay described Synod as an “impressive opportunity to connect with the people of the Diocese and those responsible for the future of mission here. Through your kindness and generosity, we have learned volumes about the missional environment where you do God’s work, bringing the light of Christ to the world in which you live.”

The process of establishing the American Friends of the Diocese began in 2016, when Canon Bob Edmunds, then Middle East Partnership Officer for the Episcopal Church in the United States, and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, asked Bishop Jay to help draw up a resolution in support of the Diocese to be presented to its three-yearly general convention.

The result was a general convention resolution entitled ‘Response to the Yemen humanitarian crisis’.

“At that time, we were more than slightly ignorant about Yemen. About the only thing most Americans knew about Yemen, me included, was that in October 2000 a US Navy ship, the USS Cole, refuelling in the port of Aden, had been struck by an explosive-laden boat killing 17 sailors.”

Bishop Jay was the person in the States charged with providing casualty assistance for those 17 families.

“The work of this resolution and our quest to understand the unique nature of the Diocese and the Christian missional challenges faced by the people who lead the Diocese was significant. Fortunately, and in great part because of this resolution, there were others also taking an interest in the crisis in Yemen.

“In 2018 I began meeting with several friends in what we call the Episcopal Peace Fellowship in the United States. It may sound a little bit out of kilter for

a military veteran and Bishop for the armed forces at that time to be working with an Episcopal Peace Fellowship, but I have always seen them as close colleagues in all the work that we do, because we need people to remind us of what we’re doing and what the needs are and what Christ’s People ought to be doing.

We were trying to figure out the way forward.

“Through the medium of Zoom, we brought into the conversation Archbishop Michael Lewis, your bishop at the time, and Archdeacon Bill Schwartz. And over time, we began asking the question: had we done enough for the Diocese with that initial resolution? In other words, have we just created a general convention resolution that makes us

feel good, that gives us some emotional satisfaction, to assuage, perhaps, a guilty conscience—or are we interested in having an impact as we delve deeply into the challenges faced by the Diocese?

“We began to struggle to attain a grasp of, first, the vast and varied geography of the region; second, how the ecclesiastical polity that you embrace had been adapted to the region; and third, the fluidity of Middle East political dynamics.

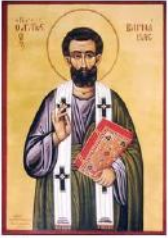
“In 2021, our small group took on the task to make an audacious ask of the next triennial general convention in 2022.

“One of the things we know about general conventions in our Episcopal Church in the United States is that it’s easy to pass a resolution that makes people feel good. That doesn’t cost any money. When you really want to get them involved, put a dollar sign on it.

“That’s what we did. The result was another resolution, entitled ‘Fund an ophthalmologist medical director

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Bishop Sean expressed his deep appreciation for the support of the American Friends—whose founding members have given so generously of their time—and personal financial resources—to strengthen links between the Diocese and the Anglican Communion of the United States



Barnabas Team

The Barnabas Team works to encourage spiritual development and enrich discipleship.

Its report to Synod was delivered by Bishop Sean

The Barnabas Team takes its name from the Cypriot-born apostle whose given name was Joseph, but whose nickname was "Barnabas" meaning "son of encouragement", because of his encouraging nature. Joseph Barnabas was a mentor and missionary companion to St Paul, and later to John Mark. It is these qualities of encouragement, mentoring, and journeying together that lie at the heart of the Barnabas Team.

Originally known as the Spirituality Development Team, set up by Bishop Clive Handford alongside the Retreats Ministry, early members included Maggie Le-Roy, John Banfield and Sarel du Plessis.

Bishop Sean paid particular tribute to Sarel, who stepped back from leadership of the group in October 2024, thanking Sarel "for his longstanding commitment to the Team, his untiring vision of promoting prayer and discipleship, and for providing spiritual resourcing to this Diocese".

Current Team members are Archdeacon Michael Mbona, Canon John Banfield and the Reverend Gill Nisbet, with Bishop Sean acting as interim chair.

"The Team has been responsible for promoting spiritual direction in the Diocese as well as regularly offering spirituality resources to clergy and parishes," said Bishop Sean. "There has also been interest in setting up a pilgrimage route in Cyprus following the Acts 13 journey of Paul and Barnabas."

Bishop Sean invited people from across the Diocese to join the Team, calling on those "from the Gulf and Cyprus who have a heart for spirituality, pilgrimage, discipleship, and simply encouraging and supporting other Christians in our parishes" to please be in contact with him to find out more.

"A particular hope I have is that in the spirit of encouragement, the Barnabas Team could specifically focus on clergy wellbeing," he said. "We do very little to mitigate the effects of culture shock for clergy and their families coming to posts in our Diocese. I would like to see newly arrived priests and families receiving spiritual and practical support to orientate them in their new environments. Through providing a caring landing for the clergy, I hope that they in turn would make a ministry of caring welcome central to the local church, which, in our Diocese, is so often a spiritual home from home."

Diocesan retreat: Katafiyio at Angel's Hills, Cyprus



**Contact Revd Deborah Moorgas
at retreats@cypgulf.org to**

- book a retreat or relaxing break at Katafiyio
- speak confidentially with a Spiritual Director
- discuss individual or group guided retreats

visit www.cypgulf.org/retreats

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at the Ras Morbat Clinic in Christ Church Yemen'. That resolution moved so fast through bodies of our general convention, and we got our \$90k grant. We were overjoyed. But when we drew up that resolution, we didn't account for the significant uptick in the civil crisis in Yemen.

"To date, we have literally and repeatedly searched the planet trying to find a physician who will take that job, and we have been faced with the reality that when even Doctors Without Borders remove themselves, you're not going to get anyone to come in.

A further issue was that under the terms of TEC grants, funds must be used within three years. The group therefore "began to ask some questions about how we could partner with the Diocese to fulfil your challenging Christian mission, and, with the help of many people, began to work in earnest to form an organisation of people within the Episcopal Church to support the Diocese.

"I liken our work to Isaiah's response to God's calling in the sixth chapter of that Old Testament book by his name. As Isaiah said in response to God, we said to one another and to the church, 'Here we are. Send us.'

The American Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf is similar to the American Friends of the Diocese of Jerusalem: registered in the US as a 501(c)(3)—a tax-exempt charitable institution that can raise financial support for the mission of the Diocese. Its seven-member board lives in the United States, with Bishop Sean in an ex officio position. The Friends can also help US citizens in the Diocese to make qualified tax-exempt charitable contributions to the Diocese or their parish.

"Our work has led us to ask a central question: why do we believe that a person would want to give financial support to the Diocese of Cyprus in the Gulf through our American Friends?" Said Bishop Jay. "I want to share with you a brief reflection from one of your parishioners, Mr Max Bobbit, currently serving a three-year assignment as a teacher in an English-speaking school in Kuwait. A US citizen married to a Polish national, and father of an eight-year-old daughter, I have known Max for many years, and I asked him to share with us why it's important for him to have an Anglican congregation in Kuwait.

'St Paul's Church in Kuwait serves as a spiritual home and community for the expatriates and residents of this area,' says Max, 'almost all of whom are

not from here. It's a place of worship, fellowship and support for people living far from home. While there are several Roman Catholic churches in Kuwait, it's the only representation of the Anglican Communion in the country. And because of the Anglican and Episcopal Church's unique place and position in the world, St Paul's fosters intercultural understanding, unity and shared values in a way that I think only an

Anglican church can, in a region that isn't known for its intercultural understanding. 'St Paul's provides continuity, comfort and a sense of belonging for a community in transit. It also exemplifies the Anglican Communion's commitment to serving global communities, demonstrating faith in action through outreach and engagement with society. In Kuwait, it is a physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit in Kuwait.'

"Friends, this is the challenge that is before the American Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf. How

can we support Max, his family and many others like them?"

Returning to the \$90k grant, Bishop Jay referred to a meeting organised by the Friends with Bishop Sean in New York, where TEC presiding bishop the Most Reverend Sean Rowe agreed to "repurpose" the \$90k grant to both support the Diocesan bishop and coordinate the work of the Ras Morbat Clinic. In future, said Bishop Jay, funds would be provided with no restrictions—unless a donor requested otherwise: they would be for the mission of the Diocese.

"What is future for the American Friends?" asked Bishop Jay. "For one thing, we're working hard to find donors, both individual and corporate. As a new startup charitable organisation, this is challenging work. But one of the things I've learned is that if you're going to ask for big amounts of money, you have got to find out exactly what their criteria are because you've got to get it right the first time you go in the door."

The Friends will also be working with the Foundation to identify mutually supportive endeavours with multiplier effects on their support for the missional work of the Diocese.

"Finally, we are actively looking for a diocese in the US Episcopal Church that would be interested in being an overseas partner with you. Wouldn't it be great if the Diocese could have a four-way partnership? We think that's possible.

"Being with you and learning from you has been a true joy," Bishop Jay concluded. "Thank you."

*Why do we
believe that
a person would
want to give financial
support to the
Diocese
through our
American Friends?*



Yemen



Bishop Sean shared a report sent by Mansour Yousuf—Director of the Ras Morbat Clinic, based in the grounds of Christ Church Aden, and expressed on behalf of the Diocese deep gratitude to the long-serving Mansour—known by his fellow Muslims as “Shahbib Kanesa”, the Church One

I am writing to share insights about our vital work at Ras Morbat Eye Clinic and the ongoing challenges faced by the people of Aden, Yemen. As the Public Relations Manager and Supervisor for both the Church and the clinic since September 1995, I have had the honour of coordinating between government facilities, the Church, and the clinic. The Ras Morbat Eye Clinic, established as a charitable initiative by the Church, is dedicated to providing essential healthcare services to the community. The church also serves as a place of worship for Christians.

Challenges facing Aden

The people of Aden face numerous difficulties that impact their daily lives, including:

Electricity: Power outages are severe, with a current cycle of 9 hours off and only 2 hours on, due to fuel shortages at the power station. These interruptions have persisted since the war in March 2015 and continue until today.

Fuel Availability: Diesel and petrol are available but prohibitively expensive. To run the clinic and operating room generator from 8 am to 2 pm, 200 litres of fuel are required per week. After work hours, we rely on solar energy and electric chargers to reduce fuel consumption and pressure on the generator.

Water Supply: Potable water is available for only 12 hours, after which it stops for 72 hours before resuming, making water storage essential for survival.

Food Essentials: Access to staple items such as rice, wheat, and oil remains difficult due to limited local production and high import costs, though agriculture and fish remain available.

Economic Stability: The prices of essential commodities remain highly volatile, creating immense hardship

for families.

Despite some improvements, thanks to support from alliances with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, sustaining essential resources and ensuring their accessibility remain critical challenges for the community.

Interfaith cooperation and support

Our clinic thrives through the unwavering support of Christians and Church officials from the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf. Their dedication has been pivotal to the clinic's success.

We are deeply grateful for the collaboration of renowned doctors, including Dr John Sandford Smith (UK), Dr Jan Tansefy (Czech), Dr Adel Gerges (Egypt), and Dr. Ji Ho (Korea). Since 2001, they have contributed immensely by training Yemeni doctors and nurses, conducting specialist surgeries, and offering invaluable expertise.

Our team of doctors and staff at Ras Marbat Eye Clinic serves between 10 to 45 patients daily, providing essential eye care and specialist treatments. The clinic stands as a beacon of interfaith cooperation, fostering respect and harmony among diverse religious communities.

“It is crucial for the world to understand that Yemen is not defined by terrorism. Yemenis are peace-loving, resilient people who seek stability, progress, and prosperity for their nation”

A message to the world

It is crucial for the world to understand that Yemen is not defined by terrorism. Yemenis are peace-loving, resilient people who seek stability, progress, and prosperity for their nation.

The Houthis militia's attack on Aden on March 25, 2015, caused widespread devastation, crippling both public and private sectors and inflicting immense suffering on innocent civilians. Critical infrastructure was destroyed, livelihoods were shattered, and the

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(ABOVE) CLICK TO VIEW VIDEO OF CHRIST CHURCH ADEN



(LEFT) CLICK TO VIEW IMAGES OF RAS MORBAT EYE CLINIC

socio-economic fabric of the city was severely damaged.

Furthermore, the ongoing crisis in the Red Sea poses a grave threat to regional stability and global trade. Strategic waterways have become battlegrounds, jeopardising maritime security and disrupting vital shipping routes that connect the world. The ripple effects of this instability extend far beyond Yemen's borders, threatening global commerce and energy supplies.

Thanks to God's blessings and the courageous efforts of the Arab coalition countries and the resilient people of Aden, the attack was repelled. Since July 18, 2015, the situation has gradually improved. However, security concerns and fluctuating prices of essential goods and fuel remain significant challenges.

The resilience and determination of Aden's people continue to serve as a beacon of hope for a brighter future. With ongoing cooperation and international support, we believe Aden will rise above these hardships and thrive once again.

Thank you for your attention, compassion, and concern for Aden and Yemen.

Sincerely,

*Mansour "Shahbib Kanesa" – the Church One
Ras Marbat Eye Clinic
Christ Church, Aden*

*To find out more about the Ras Morbat Eye Clinic
please visit rasmorbatclinic.org*



Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

Archbishop Hosam reported on the Province of which he is Primate, as well as sharing news from the Middle East Council of Churches (below) and answering questions from Synod members (page 30)

Archbishop Hosam began by offering his thanks for “the opportunity to walk together with the people of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf—as Primate, and as Bishop of the Diocese in the period between the retirement of Bishop Michael Lewis and the consecration and installation of Bishop Sean”, adding that he was grateful this year for “the wonderful gift to just be present” and sitting, as he was, “in the outer ring”.

“I hold you in my prayers,” he told Synod. “As I said to Bishop Sean, as a friend—forget about the purple—as Hosam, I am committed to your support, to walk with you anytime, especially my dear brother Sean, and all the people of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, in whatever way possible.”

Archbishop Hosam thanked the Very Reverend Richard Fermer, Dean of St Christopher's Cathedral in Manama, for organising, hosting and helping in the consecration of Bishop Sean in Bahrain, as well as David Axtell and the many others present.

“We witnessed a really wonderful celebration in Bahrain,” he said—“not only a wonderful Anglican

moment, but also the interfaith dimension.” And he thanked again Bishop Sean’s two principal co-consecrators (the Right Reverend Dr Robert Innes, Bishop in Europe; and the Right Reverend Richard Jackson, Bishop of Hereford) as well as the two other bishops

who attended—the Right Reverend Anthony Poggo, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion; and the Right Reverend Anthony Ball, Bishop of North Africa in the Province of Alexandria, Chairman of JMECA and Canon of Westminster Abbey.

Referring to the meeting of the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association in Westminster Abbey in November, Archbishop Hosam noted that JMECA “maintained the thread” between the two provinces that were once one—

the provinces of Jerusalem and the Middle East, and of Alexandria. “We thank JMECA for holding us together,” he said—“a constant reminder that we are one church in this region, and that we have a lot in common, including the Arabic language.”

The search for a new bishop for Iran had made steady progress with Archbishop Hosam continuing

(contd on page 34)

“As a friend—forget about the purple—as Hosam, I am committed to your support, to walk with you anytime, especially my dear brother Sean, and all the people of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf”



MECC

The Middle East Council of Churches marked its 50th anniversary in 2024—a chance to celebrate a unique organisation, which, said Archbishop Hosam, “importantly, and unlike the World Council of Churches, includes the Catholic family. This year, as you heard in Bishop Sean’s Presidential Address, is the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, and MECC is encouraging church congregations and dioceses to engage in joint celebrations of our unity, our ecumenical councils, and the identity of the Christian faith through conciliar and synodical life. I’m really encouraged to hear Bishop Sean’s idea of dedicating two weeks to sermons on the teachings of Nicaea in the life of the Diocese.”

The MECC Executive Committee last met in Lebanon—a hybrid Zoom and in-person meeting—where Dr Michel Abs was re-elected as secretary-general.

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discussions, hopeful that a way of having a bishop present there could be found by year-end.

“There have been a lot of difficulties, not only the diminishing numbers of Anglican Christians in Iran but also due to the lack of leadership there now, leading to challenges within our communities in Shiraz, Isfahan and Tehran.”

Referring to his work as vice-chair of the Anglican Consultative Council standing committee, Archbishop Hosam noted that its next in-person meeting would be at the ACC gathering in 2026, in Ireland.

A meeting of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission in Rome in January continued the tradition of pairing 60 bishops from regions around the world, Roman Catholic and Anglican, to “walk together”—this time, on a pilgrimage from Rome to Canterbury—“a wonderful celebration” commissioned in the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls on the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul, followed by a visit to the church of San Gregorio al Celio, where Gregory the Great in 595 commissioned Justin Augustine to go to Canterbury, so becoming the first Archbishop of Canterbury. And then the group made its way to Canterbury, “Catholics and Anglicans, to

walk in the footsteps of our ancestors”.

Referring to the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) responsible for selecting the next Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop Hosam noted that the Commission was to have 17 members (previously nine) including, for the first time, a member from each of the five regions of the Anglican Communion. Primates of the regions were to submit the names of five possible members—male and female; clergy and lay—for the ACC and ACO to choose from, with the final list of CNC members to be announced possibly around the end of March.

Meanwhile, provincial standing committee had met in September via Zoom, with another meeting scheduled for 2025 and a likely provincial Synod in 2026. While there were currently no plans for a provincial clergy and spouses conference—described by Archbishop Hosam as “one of the highlights of the life of the province”—he said Bishop Sean joined him in the hope that one could held soon. In the meantime, regular meetings continued online, “to keep in touch, hear each other’s news and pray for one another, working for the future of our province, together, united in mission and evangelism.”

(contd from page 12)

John has always had a passion for discipleship and pastoral Ministry across the Province, as well as the importance of lay leadership in support of the Bishop and his pastors.

Both in Cyprus and after returning to the UK, Mary and John graciously made their home available to clergy on the move and have been tremendous hosts to many.

John also served as a member of the Barnabas Team for over 10 years where he made solid contributions, always putting faith into action. John remains a Canon of St Christopher’s Cathedral in Bahrain.

However the role for which many here today will most remember him is for his faithful and unwavering commitment to serving as Director of Finance.

Let’s face it, there aren’t often many people that sit on a church council or even here at Synod who are truly comfortable in talking money or studying a table of figures. John made these more accessible to all.

Think of the time and effort he has put into communicating regularly with you individually. Now multiply that by nearly 20 parishes. Add a few extra for communications with Treasurers, donors, benefactors,

pension boards etc, each of whom he consulted with on a regular basis.

Balancing books in what is a self-funded organisation; introducing planning and financial prudence in a more structured manner; dealing with Covid, tighter financial restrictions as central banks clamp down on money laundering, and ever more challenging reporting requirements—checks (cheques) and balances.

Taking you back to my opening lines—isn’t that the type of person you would want to build your church around? Or Diocese?

Bishop Sean earlier made reference to sacrifice and celebration. This seems a wonderful opportunity to celebrate John’s many sacrifices.

John, thank you—we will be forever grateful for your loving service.

Bishop Sean also referenced Jeremiah. I have a reference from Ruth:

*May the Lord, the God of Israel,
under whose wings you have come to take refuge,
reward you fully for what you have done (Ruth 2:12)*

(Photo credit: Canon Angela Murray)

Q&A with Archbishop Hosam



After presenting reports on the Diocese of Jerusalem, the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, and the Middle East Council of Churches, Archbishop Hosam answered questions from Synod members

Life in Jerusalem

The Very Reverend Jeremy Crocker, Dean of St Paul's Cathedral Nicosia, asked Archbishop Hosam to share a little of what it has been like, living in Jerusalem.

It has been really difficult. Especially within Jerusalem, we have felt quite often overwhelmed. Every day we hear about death, not only in Gaza but also amongst Israeli soldiers as well. Death is everywhere, and people feel devastated. There is no kind of future for the region because of this war—in Gaza, around Gaza, in Jerusalem, South Lebanon, North Israel and the West Bank.

One big loss for us has been pilgrims—almost zero pilgrims, visitors, tourists. Restaurants, hotels, churches are all empty, and the place looks devastated. It reminded us automatically of the years of covid—isolation, everything shut down—but something much, much worse than covid.

I really don't know how we made it through the year. I would say that all the funds raised during the last 20 years, we raised in one year because of the great need that we have in the diocese and its institutions. I don't know how we would have survived if it wasn't for our friends and partners around the world; I don't want to think about what could have happened to our ministry if it wasn't for them.

Youth leaders

The Reverend Deborah Moorgas, parish priest at St Barnabas Limassol, referred to the USPG-sponsored provincial youth conference held in Famagusta, North Cyprus in August 2024, and to the suggestion of involving young people in the Diocese of Jerusalem Synod.

Thank you again to everyone who helped organise last summer's youth conference. We just signed an agreement with USPG to continue the project—supporting another highlight in the life of the province, youth work.

It will take time to change the constitution to make room for youth to be part of Synod as voting members. But in the meantime, we will have two non-voting youth members present at Synod—an invitation I can make to them as bishop. Last year we also invited 12 members of the youth committee, who took care of everything in terms of logistics—distributing papers, helping people to find their places—as well as being

responsible for a spiritual evening, a revival night, where they led worship, reflections, meditations and music. People absolutely loved it. That evening was one of the most joyful experiences of worship I've ever experienced, one of those evenings you do not want to end. Absolutely captivating.

For your prayers

The Reverend Drew Schmotzer, parish priest at St Martin Sharjah, asked Archbishop Hosam if there were one or two things Synod members could pray for, as he leads the Diocese of Jerusalem and the wider Province.

The big theme is the peace of Jerusalem: that is the only way for people to enjoy and celebrate relationships—whether they are Jews, Muslims or Christians.

But more specifically, for the diocese, I ask you kindly to pray for the resilience of our clergy and heads of institutions—those who are on the front line facing unimaginable challenges. Keeping the faith in these difficult circumstances is not something to be taken for granted. I really praise God for their strong faith, their dedication. I always fear that I will wake up in the morning and find in my inbox an email from one of the clergy telling me: 'I'm out of here.' That is my biggest nightmare. So, please, pray for their resilience and their steadfastness.

For me personally, I ask that God continues to give me the health and the strength just to carry on.

It's a huge burden, a load I feel on my shoulders. But, as I always share with my friends, the one thing I'm really kind of relaxed about—that I really trust in, through the prayers of people around me and those holding the diocese and myself in their prayers, even though it's a heavy responsibility—is: the Lord will provide; that God is there with me through all these difficulties.

At the end of the day, it's about God's mission, not mine. It's God's ministry, not mine. So who am I to worry about God's own mission? I have to do what I have to do. That's my calling and my responsibility, and I will continue to do that.

So, if you can, hold me, and Rafa, and the family in your prayers—to have health, to not get burnt out.

Somebody told me that I face a marathon not a sprint, so I need to take it easy. But I don't think I can take it easy. It's not on the menu, unfortunately.

St Mark Famagusta

The Reverend Ken Gabbadon shared views from the Student Chaplaincy of St Mark Famagusta—a Diocesan programme—on behalf of lay representative Lynette Oruc, who was unable to attend Synod

Arriving at St Mark's in 2017, the welcome I received was quite overwhelming and certainly faith affirming. At that time there was a curate attached to the church community on a part-time basis and there followed a series of residential curates, of mainly short-term duration, so there was a feeling of lack of continuity—but some wonderful spiritual times.

Attendance at that time was upwards of 40 communicants, with a wonderful choir led by Henry Ikidiego who, I was amazed to discover, had no formal music training. Henry's importance to the church community was evident right from the beginning.

A great team of workers kept things on track and there were times when a Sunday School was able to function. The very nature of a student chaplaincy is fluid but when one precious worker left another always seemed to pick up the reins.

Once curates were no longer appointed, St Mark's at that time being part of Ammochostos Parish, our priest in charge came from the Republic where he resided, and visits became increasingly spasmodic. Then the pandemic hit us all. There had always been a sense of isolation from the Diocese for Anglicans residing in the North and support and communication seemed to dwindle to nothing with no services until some online ones were introduced.

Our attendance numbers have not recovered since the pandemic, with possibly a number of reasons for this—initially, the fear of gathering in enclosed spaces after isolation; no ordained resident priest; discovering alternative worship groups; reduction in student numbers, especially from Nigeria; at times prioritising studies; and Sunday service times not being suitable for those fortunate enough to find work. Recently, some new students have joined us and will hopefully continue to commit to Christ and the fellowship; they are being given every encouragement.

Current average attendance is 15 faithful souls, nine of whom are workers (two of them schoolchildren). Throughout all this time Henry held everything together, maintaining communications through the WhatsApp group, ensuring food is delivered to those who had none, and supporting those who found the isolation and distance from families daunting. Henry's spiritual leadership is inspiring and sustaining.

We appear to be working at a financial deficit until our fellowship numbers increase. Monthly collection and donations average 3,500TL (around €95). Monthly outgoings are a contribution of USD75 to the joint churches committee for the church premises, and around €30 expenses per visit for a priest. (The fee has been graciously waived.)

We are blessed indeed that Henry is currently studying for ministry. I believe he has much to teach

jailed priests and those who have lost the way from their calling.

Apart from the Sunday service (11am-12.45pm), there is a weekly prayer meeting with six regular attendees, occasionally held online. There are eight regular attendees at the Bible Study Group; I believe it has helped several to deliver the sermon with increasing confidence and prayerful consideration of content.

The students have taught me much about prayer life and witnessing to faith. Some of the testimonies have been truly remarkable and very moving.

Some members participated in the summer 2024 Diocesan Youth Leadership Course, greeting attendees, making lasting friendships and providing refreshments. How wonderful that the selected location was Famagusta.

We are so grateful that God directed Fr Ken Gabbadon to Cyprus and, once here, prompted him to continue his ministry—here, once a month, with other

(contd on page 37)

*The very
nature of a
student chaplaincy
is fluid
but when one
precious worker left
another always
seemed to
pick up the reins*

Lordos Beach Hotel Larnaca: cheese and cheers for 40 years

Canon Georgia Katsantonis (*top left*), bishop's PA for over four decades, joined Nicolas Kirkillari (*middle, left*) and senior staff of the Lordos Beach to celebrate 40 years of Diocesan Synods at the Larnaca hotel. As Canon Georgia reminded the audience in her look back over the years, the Lordos had been the scene of many key moments in the history of the Diocese—itself celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2026. Might that be an occasion, once again, she mused, for a bishop to dance on a table? Georgia named no names, but the Lordos had seen it all.



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slots filled by priests mainly from Larnaca—and twice in December so we could have a Christmas service on the 22nd, which was joyous and followed by a bring-and-share and secret Santa gifts get-together at the chaplaincy apartment.

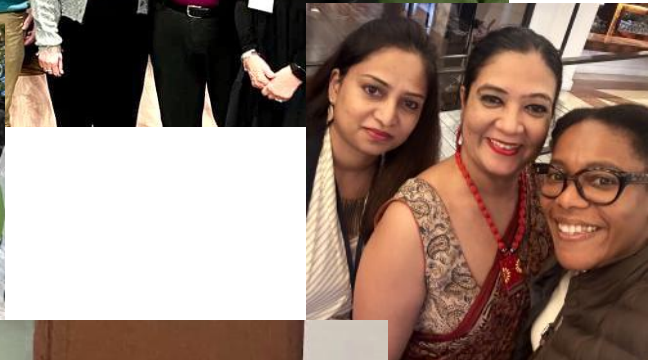
Fr Ken has been an inspiration and his visits are much appreciated, as is the contact he keeps between visits.

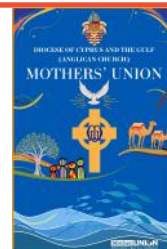
How thrilled our fellowship was to be able to participate in Bishop Sean's initial visit to North Cyprus at St Andrew Kyrenia, welcoming him in song in the IsiZulu of his own South Africa. Last Sunday Bishop Sean took the Eucharist Service at St Mark's, so we truly feel a new era in compassionate ministry and

communication has arrived, and pray that Synod produces ways forward that are much desired.

I shall miss being 'mommy' to the wonderful students but know we will remain in contact, as indeed past students have. All the students past and present state how important the chaplaincy is and was to their spiritual development and general confidence building which prepares them for moving on with their lives and professions. They are scattered far and wide but I am certain they bring Christ's light to their communities. I pray another 'mommy' will take my place to offer support and encouragement and share the experience of a full working life and may they in turn receive the same joy and blessings that I have.

seen@synod2025





Diocesan Mothers' Union

Since Synod last met, a Diocesan Mothers' Union has been established with Bishop Sean as its "proud patron".

The Diocesan MU is part of the worldwide Mothers' Union established in 1876—one of the largest and oldest women-led organisations in the world, with a deep commitment to making a difference in communities across the globe. The Mothers' Union welcomes all baptised Christians who share its dedication to living out the gospel through service to others.

Bishop Sean noted that priority areas of focus for the Diocesan Mothers' Union are tackling poverty and working for peace and justice.

The first parish-level Mothers' Union in the Diocese was established at St George Baghdad, followed by St Paul Ahmadi in Kuwait, in 2019. Several new branches have been set up under the new initiative, including at St Christopher's Cathedral in Bahrain, with executive committee member Giseli Severino.

Sporting an MU baseball cap—"I'm not just growing into my hat: I'm a man of many hats," he quipped—Bishop Sean encouraged anyone interested in setting up an MU branch in their parish to contact Diocesan MU president the Reverend Christine Mbona (mothers.union@cypgulf.org), who unfortunately had to leave Synod ahead of schedule to return to Kuwait.

Bishop Sean thanked Christine, MU co-president Pauline Mitra and all those working across parishes to grow and strengthen the work of the Diocesan Mothers' Union.



[CLICK TO VIEW DIOCESAN MOTHERS' UNION VIDEO](#)



**BISHOP SEAN LICENSED THE REVEREND DAVID JARRATT
AS PARISH PRIEST, ST ANDREW ABU DHABI
ON 3 FEBRUARY 2025,
IN THE COURSE OF THE OPENING SYNOD EUCHARIST**



(contd from page 5)

ticularly the church in the east—the Church maintained its fragile unity for around a thousand years (incredible, really).

Then there was a major split on cultural lines and with political overtones on an east-west basis, giving us the parents of the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches as we have them today. England maintained its continuity with the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church through the Roman Catholic Church. That lasted for a further five hundred years or so, and then, in the western Church, the Roman Catholic Church, there was a complete explosion, brought about by many factors: corruption in the RC Church, dissatisfaction with the authority of the RC Church and its dependence on tradition rather than scripture. There were societal issues such as the rise of education and learning, the development of printing making texts in the vernacular more widely available, to mention just a few.

On the continent of Europe this led to lots of new churches and religious groups. Though called a Reformation for some it was more like a reinvention – and here is the important thing about England. England broke with Rome for largely political reasons but continued church life as part of and in continuity with, and in the tradition of, what it understood as the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. On the Continent some of the main new churches were named after people – theologians and scholars who had doctrinal differences with the RC Church; people like Luther and Calvin giving us Lutheran and Calvinist Churches. These Churches moved eventually to producing new statements of faith – Confessions as they are called – such as the Westminster confession adopted by many Presbyterians, the Augsburg Confession for Lutherans or the Savoy Declaration for Congregationalists. These Churches had new creeds, new orders of ministry, new architecture and ordering of church buildings. A Calvinist Chapel looks nothing like a Catholic church. None of this is true in England. In England the Church maintained the historic orders of ministry. It had no creeds of its own. It continued to

use the creeds of the undivided Church; the Apostles, Nicæan and Athanasian creeds. It maintained the historic episcopate. It held to the eucharistic and monastic liturgies. It maintained the ordering of its buildings. Its spirituality tended to be conveyed by poetry rather than doctrinal statement.

Alongside that continuity it did incorporate some of the new continental ideas. It agreed that scripture should have the predominant place as a Christian authority and it encouraged the use of vernacular, but it had a different character from other Reformed Churches so called, because it was not confessional, based on doctrine. As a national church, it encompassed and fairly successfully for the most part held together, a very wide range of theological views from almost Puritan to almost Roman – it reflected the practice of a country, not the views of an individual. As a result, diversity and inclusivity were part of its DNA. It managed what others could not. It was both catholic and reformed.

But there was one other important ingredient that was stressed by early Anglican writers—the importance of reason—which resonated with society at that

time and indeed since. Anglicans believed that reason as a God given faculty, when used in a spirit filled and prayerful way should be used to interpret scripture. In other words, nothing was to be taken as authoritative simply because the Church said so.

Rather, increasing numbers of educated people, able to read scripture in their own language, were able to begin to form their own theologies, their own interpretations of scripture which represented a new freedom. Scripture was supreme as authority, and the action of reason on scripture created tradition. Hence Anglicans were able to talk about a three-legged stool: scripture reason and tradition, as the basis of its *raison d'être* and authority. This was distinctly Anglican.

Clearly, when people are allowed to think for themselves, that will lead to greater diversity. Then, in subsequent centuries the expansion of Empire and beyond

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(contd from page 40)

to post-colonial times, has added international diversity. The incredible thing is that one family of churches, one communion, could actually live with that amount of diversity. The Church has not generally been torn apart historically with doctrinal issues, though there have always been some who have wished it to make more definite statements and to move in a more confessional direction. The most recent example of that was the attempt to adopt a so-called Anglican Covenant. It was rejected precisely on the grounds that we are not a confessional church. And there have been some issues on which there has been a fundamental disagreement, such as the ordination of women, which have led to some people leaving the church, but in that instance special provision was made for those who were unable to accept the decision of the majority. Critics have said that the church's ability to see every side of an issue and often take a middle way, a *via media*, is wishy washy and vague (no-one is quite clear what it stands for) and shows lack of commitment and faith. On the other hand, as I heard the Archbishop of Alexandria say recently, the church is able to achieve a great deal in diplomatic and reconciling roles in an ecumenical setting. He said Anglicans have something in their DNA that oils the ecumenical wheels.

As an aside we might say that the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf is the very epitome of Anglicanism at its best. Inclusivity and diversity involve other attitudes such as generosity, welcome, mutual respect and those are surely characteristics of the church in this diocese that are difficult to find better examples of elsewhere. There is diversity of nationality and culture – the last time I attended a Confirmation in Jebel Ali there were eighteen candidates including representatives of every continent on earth except Antarctica. There is diversity of approach to the scriptures from conservative to radical and liberal. There is diversity in theological approach. On the one hand, people who are one step from Rome or Constantinople and on the other, people who are one step from being Plymouth Brethren. We continue to punch above our weight in ecumenical fora; we are encouragers of dialogue and are foremost in opening conversations with Islam. We are exiles, strangers and so-

*We are exiles,
strangers and sojourners,
able to
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for faith
that is a coat
of many colours;
a truly
Pentecostal church*

journalers in a very practical sense who have learned to live with the risks that involves and are able to generate a safe and respectful space for faith that is a coat of many colours; a truly Pentecostal church in the literal sense. That is no small achievement and is very much in keeping with our tradition, and in a sense our exemplary gift to the communion..

At the same time there are things about us as a communion which would have been familiar to a Christian over a thousand years ago. We recite the same creeds, we have the same order of ministry, the same basic structures of liturgy. And that is a very attractive combination. (I can speak personally) Recently I was in Chad. Anglicanism is relatively new in Chad and people are very excited by it. Churches are growing at a rate. There will be thirty plus new churches formed this year. Some of those who are new members were formerly part of other congregational churches, some with a prosperity gospel message, some little more than an opportunity for some self-styled prophet to promulgate his ideas, enjoy a con-

trolling authority and make quite a bit of money. I was interviewing some of these people who were exploring a vocation to Anglican ministry and it emerged that what appealed to them was being part of something bigger and reliable, having a definite structure but within which there was freedom of thought; and also perhaps surprisingly, our liturgy. So, Catholic and reformed: ancient and contemporary.

But amidst all this diversity and difference the question inevitably arises: how can we state what is truly common to all churches in the communion; where is the unity in all this diversity. Clearly Anglicanism cannot mean whatever we want it to mean (like Celtic religion). Remembering that some people have always seen diversity as a threat and a weakness as opposed to a gift and a strength, it is not surprising that that question has surfaced and persisted.

One early attempt at describing Anglican identity came from American bishops towards the end of the nineteenth century. Their statement of intent reflects what we have noted about the Anglican way. They said: That this Church does not seek to absorb other Communion, but rather, co-operating with them on

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(contd from page 41)

the basis of a common Faith and Order, to discountenance schism, to heal the wounds of the Body of Christ, and to promote the charity which is the chief of Christian graces and the visible manifestation of Christ to the world.

They came up with four marks of identity, later adopted by the newly formed Lambeth conference of Bishops in 1888. The first Lambeth conference had been held in 1867, a historical point at which, in effect the Anglican Communion came into being as a social entity. They were: the authority of scripture, the Nicene creed as a sufficient statement of faith, the sacraments of eucharist and baptism, and the historic episcopate; that is the idea that the bishops of the Church can trace their succession from the first apostles, or at least from the earliest church. (Those four marks are generally referred to as the Chicago-Lambeth quadrilateral).

The Lambeth Conference of 1930, associated particularly with Archbishop William Temple, focussed on Anglican identity and managed to articulate certain 'ideals,' which the Church had always exemplified. They included an open Bible, a pastoral priesthood, a common worship, a standard of conduct consistent with that worship and a fearless love of truth.

In more modern times the Communion has spoken of four instruments, that is instances which demonstrate the unity of the Church: places where its unity can be seen and experienced. They are the Lambeth Conference (every 10 years or so), The ACC (since 1968), the meeting of all the Archbishops of the different Provinces, and the Archbishop of Canterbury himself (ie his office). Even more recently, since the end of the last century, the ACC (8) decided to describe the church in terms of its task and devised the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Church. A 2007 consultation expressed the communalities thus: formed by scripture, shaped through worship, ordered for communion and directed by God's mission.

One definition of Anglicanism can be simply stated: an Anglican is anyone who is in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury (the office not the individual). This definition is appropriately relational and avoids questions about power. The archbishop of Canterbury is not the equivalent of a pope. The

Communion is held together not by institutionally endorsed power but by bonds of affection. The Anglican group that deals with questions of faith and order, the acronym for which is IASCUFO, is currently suggesting that this definition be altered to allow churches to have a connection with the Archbishop that falls short of full communion, but the point is that the ABC is still the relational focus, and if in the future as seems possible the focus will not be the ABC, it will still be relational.

All this is interesting to students of Church history but what does it mean in Diocesan terms? What are the instruments of unity in our Diocese? Where are the guarantees of unity within our diversity? And where is that unity visible? Are there challenges for us?

The most obvious symbol of unity in a Diocese is its bishop. As the Lambeth quadrilateral attests, the historic episcopate is one of the marks of identity of the church. It provides both unity, communion and continuity. Priests or presbyters are equally with bishops, ministers of the word and sacraments.

All bishops were once priests, and they do not abandon any of the pastoral requisites of the one post when appointed to the other. (They are still in a sense priests, still deacons and indeed still lay people, in a sense). However, bishops have an authority that ultimately derives from their being ministers of ordination. They are responsible for deciding who shall and shall not be ordained, and what preparation and formation is necessary before ordination. That effectively gives them oversight of ministry and worship. Those so ordained swear an oath of canonical obedience to the bishop and his successors, which is reaffirmed whenever a new office is assumed or licence issued. Clearly there has to be a single arbiter of who can preach and administer sacraments, and what forms of service can be used, at least in the locality that the Diocese represents. If the bishop is to symbolise unity, he or she has a responsibility to maintain the unity so represented. The bishop is the face of the Diocese within the Province and to the wider communion. He will pray for its well being and work to achieve that for which he prays.

Throughout the ages, notable contributions to thinking about the role of bishops have come from

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that unity
visible?*

(contd from page 42)

many sources, including St Ignatius, St Irenaeus and St Cyprian.

The other symbol of unity in the Diocese is Synod, and in terms of governance, authority resides with the bishop in Synod. That is, the bishop governs with the advice and consent of Synod (or Convention in the USA).

It is Synod that is responsible for agreeing mission objectives and programmes, and their financing. It is Synod that agrees the Constitution of the Diocese and affirms the Diocesan strategy, and it is Synod that is responsible for what we might call Diocesan financial justice: making sure that resources are fairly gathered and apportioned and that each part of the Diocese is honoured.

It is this last which is often not well understood. Synod members return to their parishes only to find that their financial committees there disagree with what Synod has decided. At this stage parishes can forget they are Anglican and can become quite congregational. This is not a problem peculiar to this Diocese. I have served in five Dioceses in my time. Each of them had rich and poor churches and each struggled with the Christian let alone Anglican responsibilities of that.

In the Diocese of St Davids there is a very attractive sea-side resort called Tenby with a beautiful old church. Both the town and the church attract many visitors. The Rector of Tenby used to live in a huge house with vast grounds in a prominent position overlooking one of the beautiful beaches. Some years ago that house was sold and the rector rehoused but the local church retained the land and turned it into a car park. It is an absolute gold mine and consequently the parish of Tenby can afford lots of things other churches cannot.

Now, are the people of Tenby better Christians, more deserving of facilities, more responsible stewards because they are rich? Is their priest more assiduous than the Vicar of the old mining village of Brynaman where a few people still gather faithfully week by week in freezing cold with their leaking roof and their decaying organ whose organist only knows ten hymns. Of course not. Their riches are a simple consequence of luck beyond their control. It's all down to a car park. Does the PCC see it like that? No. The Dio-

cese has an overview of this justice issue. Synod members are responsible for actioning it.

A third place where we can see the Diocese as a unity is in the learning community – that community of people intentionally discerning God's vocation for them, and as a result in many cases training for some form of ministry. Obviously, if only from the point of view of fellowship and support within a cohort, this is best organised on a Diocesan basis. If we think of a church as a gathering of those who are attempting to respond to God's grace and God's call, then surely this is an example to treasure and help develop. It is currently starved of money and in danger of collapse.

In parts of Africa the Mothers Union would be a great example. Last Easter I was in Kenya leading an ordination retreat in a centre donated by the Mothers Union. Whilst we were there, there was a one-day Diocesan Rally of the MU. It attracted 4,400 members, and I can tell you that seeing that number of people in

their blue and white uniforms was a formidable and thought-provoking sight. It was an example of how Anglican churches in different parts of the Communion are responding to their own contexts. As I have said, in our Diocese we also do that in unique circumstances, and Synod is somewhere to celebrate and affirm that.

So: what does it mean to be an Anglican? At least the following:

- To be part of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and to value its traditions
- To be a member of a hugely diverse company of people trying in their own ways to be open to the grace of God and attentively responsive to the call of God.
- To have and enjoy a particular style of liturgy, a particular order of ministry, a particular structure to church life; and an openness to and tolerance of the spiritual preferences of others
- To recognise the church as existing outside our own parochial boundaries
- To accept the Bishop's oversight and the authority of the bishop in Synod
- To be allowed a reasoned faith

And to feel part of something that is difficult to describe in words—and not only into Chinese characters.

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House Elections

House of Laity



**CYPRUS CO-CHAIR
DEBORAH
GRAHAM**



**GULF CO-CHAIR
CHRISTIANA
NWANDU**

House of Clergy



**CHAIR
REVD GEORGE
VIDIAKIN**

STANDING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

HOUSE OF LAITY

Elected Members

Cyprus:	Mrs Deborah Graham	2023 – 2026	(re-elected)
Gulf:	Mrs Louise Bougourd	2025 – 2028	

Elected Alternates

Cyprus:	Mr Chris Clapham	2024 – 2027	
Gulf:	Mrs Christiana Nwandu	2025 – 2028	

HOUSE OF CLERGY

The Ven Dr Michael Mbona (*ex officio*)

Elected Members

Cyprus:	The Revd Deborah Moorgas	2025 – 2028	
Gulf:	The Revd Mark Derry	2025 – 2028	

Elected Alternates

Cyprus:	The Revd John Attenborough	2024 – 2027	
Gulf:	The Revd Prem Mitra	2025 – 2028	

CO-CHAIRS: HOUSE OF LAITY

Cyprus:	Mrs Deborah Graham	2025 – 2028	(re-elected)
Gulf:	Mrs Christiana Nwandu	2023 – 2026	

Elected Alternates

Cyprus:	Ms Maria Evangelou	2023 – 2026	
Gulf:	Mrs Beulah Miller	2024 – 2027	

CHAIR: HOUSE OF CLERGY

	The Revd George Vidiakin	2025 – 2028	
	The Revd Kent Middleton (<i>Alternate Chair</i>)	2025 – 2028	

PROVINCIAL SYNOD

HOUSE OF LAITY

Cyprus:	Mrs Deborah Graham	2021 – 2026	
Gulf:	Mr David Axtell	2021 – 2026	

Elected Alternates

Cyprus:	Mrs Sue Mantovani	2022 – 2027	
Gulf:	Mrs Louise Bougourd	2023 – 2028	

HOUSE OF CLERGY

	The Revd Faiz Jerjes	2024 – 2026	(completing Ven Christopher Fletcher term)
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Elected Alternate

	The Revd Drew Schmotzer	2025 – 2028	
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WORKING GROUP to review Diocesan Constitution and Standing Orders

HOUSE OF LAITY

Elected Members

Cyprus: Ms Linda Balfe
Mr Chris Clapham
Gulf: Brig (retd) Tim Allen
Mr Mathew Joseph

Elected Alternates

Cyprus: Mr Talal Kawar
Gulf: Mr Pushpak Gilbert

HOUSE OF CLERGY

Elected Members

Cyprus: The Very Revd Jeremy Crocker 2024 – 2027
The Revd Paul Carr 2024 – 2027
Gulf: The Very Revd Richard Fermer 2024 – 2027
The Revd Kent Middleton 2024 – 2027

Elected Alternates

Gulf: The Revd Prem Mitra 2024 – 2027

SUB-COMMITTEE to draw up terms for, and consider, applications to Contingency Fund

HOUSE OF LAITY

Elected Members

Ms Manisha Cornelius 2024 – 2027
Mr Arun Kanagaraj 2024 – 2027
Mrs Marina Peters 2024 – 2027
Mr Gabriel Simpri 2024 – 2027

Elected Alternates

Mrs Jessy George 2025 – 2028
Mrs Fozia Prince 2205 – 2028

HOUSE OF CLERGY

Elected Members

Cyprus: The Revd Alec Mitchell 2024 – 2027
Gulf: The Revd Franklin Isaac 2024 – 2027

Elected Alternates

Cyprus: The Revd Geoff Graham 2024 – 2027
Gulf: The Revd MD Johnson 2024 – 2027

Vacancy-in-See Committee Members (*one-year terms*)

HOUSE OF CLERGY

THE VEN MICHAEL MBONA
THE REVD JOHN ATTENBOROUGH
THE REVD GEORGE VIDIAKIN (CYPRUS ALTERNATE)
THE REVD FRANKLIN ISAAC (GULF ALTERNATE)

HOUSE OF LAITY

MS MARIA EVANGELOU
MRS OLGA KUZNETSOVA
MR CHRIS CLAPHAM
BRIG (RETD) TIM ALLEN
(CYPRUS ALTERNATE) MRS JACQUELINE MCINTYRE
(GULF ALTERNATE) MRS JESSY GEORGE

Synod Motions

Motion 1

Subject to final audit, Synod receives and approves the Diocesan (ACCL) financial statements for 2024

The motion was unanimously approved

Motion 2a

Synod receives and approves September 2024 Synod minutes

The motion was approved with 3 abstentions

Motion 2b

Synod receives and approves November 2024 Synod minutes

The motion was approved with 1 abstention

Motion 3

Synod receives and approves the proposed Diocesan budget for 2025

The motion was approved with 4 against and 3 abstentions

Motion 4 (President's Motion)

Recognising:

1. the increasingly pressing need to re-balance the Diocese in terms of representation, episcopal oversight and diocesan funding;
 2. the importance of establishing an organisational structure that can deliver the Diocese's mission now;
 3. the necessity of addressing these issues before constitutional change can be progressed;
- this Synod will establish a task force under the leadership of the Bishop to report and present new organisational models at an Extraordinary Meeting of Synod in September 2025

The motion was unanimously approved

Motion 5

Synod confirms the appointment of Christin Givhan as Trustee of the Jerusalem and the East Mission Trust (Cyprus)

The motion was unanimously approved



SYNOD 2025 MEMBERS, OBSERVERS AND STAFF
LORDOS BEACH HOTEL, LARNACA