



THE OLIVE Branch

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE DIOCESE OF CYPRUS
AND THE GULF - Harvest 2025

Special Guests at York Gathering



Fresh from several weeks looking after St Paul's Cathedral, Nicosia, which is currently in a period of interregnum, the Northern gathering of Friends look forward to welcoming the Rev'd Canon Dr Bill Schwartz, OBE and Edie. Bill has recently been actively

involved in launching the American branch of the Friends of the Diocese and with a lifetime of shared ministry (Edie as a Reader), both in Cyprus and in several countries in the Gulf, their contribution has been immense.

The Friends Gathering, which is open to all, takes place on Wednesday 15th October at Bar Convent in the historic city of York with its Minster, medieval centre and remarkably well-preserved city walls. The convent is in easy walking distance from York Railway Station. The day includes plenty



of time for informal catching up over coffee and lunch, a Eucharist and address, and in the afternoon

an opportunity to visit the National Railway Museum.

For those who arrive on the day before, there is an evening meal at an Indian Restaurant on Tuesday 14th October. For further information and to book please contact Ron Maitland at ron@thewadi.net

AGM of the FRIENDS

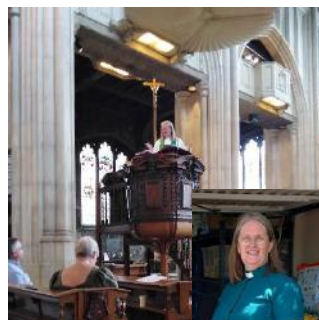
The Annual General Meeting of the Friends took place at All Hallows by the Tower on Monday 14th July. We were graciously welcomed by the Rev'd Nicol Kinrade, the Vicar of All Hallows. Nicol before coming to All Hallows was the Chaplain to the Bishop of Hereford, Bishop Sean's previous Diocese, as Rector of Ross-on-Wye, so she already has a personal link and interest in the Diocese.

The AGM included reports from our Chairman, Chris Butt, on the activities of the previous year and, in particular, he highlighted the opportunities to intercede for the Diocese together on Zoom, which has been one of the gifts of Covid.

The Rev'd Christopher Futch, recently retired Archdeacon of Cyprus, read Bishop Sean's wide-ranging report on the life of the Diocese: *"In each of the ten countries or territories in which we have a presence we provide a generous 'home from home' for Christians of many traditions. We live out the Great Commission in disciplining expatriates who are searching for God or who wish to grow in their Christian faith. Our presence should always bear conspicuous witness to a faith that provides peace that the world cannot give; to uncompromising integrity of life; to selfless neighbourliness; and to undiminished hope."*

It was a joy to welcome Christopher and Anne Futch, who are now back in the UK and who have joined the Friends.

Rachel Bainbridge, our Treasurer, reported a healthy situation in our finances due to a significant rise in subscription income and some generous donations. She brought to the meeting a proposal to donate £2,500 to the Bishop's Discretionary Fund, which was agreed unanimously.



Following the meeting there was a Eucharist, at which the Rev'd Nicol Kinrade presided, and the Rev'd Charlie Lloyd-Evans preached. Charlie trained through the Diocese of Cyprus

and the Gulf and now serves as Priest of St Peter and St Paul, Swanscombe, Kent and as Area Dean.



The AGM also offered opportunity for Friends to catch up with one another over a delicious lunch graciously provided by Di Robertshaw and the All Hallows team. It was lovely to see Anne Lloyd, our former Secretary, in her very smart new Chelsea Pensioners' uniform.

A big thank you to Sally Milner, who after several years' service on the Friends Committee, including as Secretary, felt it was time to step back.

Friends across Borders

It was a special joy for Chris Butt to attend the wedding of Tryphaena and Samuel in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu; Tryphaena is the daughter of the Rev'd Canon Stephen Thanapaul and Jasmine. Stephen is the Mission to Seafarers' Chaplain in Tuticorin, having served as MtS Chaplain in Bahrain and Assistant Priest in St Christopher's Cathedral for twelve years. He has also joined the UK Friends on Zoom to pray for the Diocese.



Several others, currently living in Bahrain, from the St Christopher's Cathedral community also came to the wedding.

Some of us will remember Tryphaena attending the Diocesan Synod in the Lordos Beach Hotel, Larnaca with her parents.

As well as the joy of the wedding, it enabled Chris to gain a new insight of the work of Mission to Seafarers in Tamil Nadu, especially the development of welfare work with families of seafarers in coastal villages. During the Covid lockdown, seafarers were unable to leave their ships or visit the Seafarers Centre outside the port in Tuticorin.

Cyprus Fires



High temperatures reaching 39 degrees Celsius, low humidity, and strong winds have caused conditions that have made wildfires a very real danger in Cyprus this summer. Two lives were lost, and several hundred homes and other buildings were destroyed in fires not far from Limassol in July. It has been heartening to see the compassionate response from congregations in Cyprus, among them the congregation at Ayia Napa, who responded with collection of food and water.



Diocesan Clergy Retreat/Pilgrimage

Although the number of clergy able to attend in person was small - others attended on Zoom - Bishop Sean is grateful to St George's College for their offer to host participants in early September for a time of pilgrimage and prayer and for the opportunity to convey the solidarity the people of Cyprus and the Gulf feel for our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Jerusalem.

The programme began with a visit to the Mount of Olives and the group visited Mt Sion and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Diocese's Golden Jubilee in 2026

The Golden Jubilee Year of the Diocese will be launched with two special services in January: a Eucharist at All Hallows by the Tower on Saturday 24th January at 12noon, followed by lunch, and a Choral Matins on Sunday 25th January, The Conversion of St Paul, at 11.00am at St Clement Danes Church, the Central Church of the Royal Air Force. The invitation to mark this special service at St Clement Danes Church comes from The Ven Giles Legood, the RAF Chaplain-in-Chief. The first Bishop of Cyprus and the Gulf (1976-83) was Leonard Ashton, who had served most of his ministry as an RAF Chaplain and as Chaplain-in-Chief. We will let you know as further details emerge, but keep this weekend free in your diary!