

Diocesan synod report May 2021 to April 2022

There have been two closed diocesan synods and 2 open synods. The topic at the open synod in June was “Living in Love and Faith” , a course put together by the National Church based on Christian teachings and learning about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. The aim of the short course is to create a space for learning together well, which the church has not been good at in the past. We discussed the importance of, and the roll-out of, the course material. Izzy MacDonald Booth is the LLF facilitator for the Diocese.

The finance synod on the 20th July discussed the financial struggles facing the diocese and the proposed budget for 2022.

At the September synod Bishop Christine had announced her retirement and her address was based on the future for the Diocese. Bishop Mark presented the Transformation programme: Growing Church; Bringing Hope: The Next steps, an application which was to be submitted to the National church for Strategic Transformation funding. This application was to be used to help us face the reduction in clergy numbers, a result of income shortfall. This new initiative was to encourage us as a Diocese to see this as an opportunity to work differently as churches, to relentlessly look outwards as God’s mission in the world, developing flourishing leaders, build new Christian communities and develop disciples to build up the church. This plan included ideas to work together more across deaneries and the diocese, sharing resources, developing the laity and missionaries.

We also had a presentation by Transforming communities together Tyne to Tweed, previously known as Together Newcastle. This charity work to develop and support communities.

The November Diocesan Synod was Bishop Christine’s final synod and began with us re-signing our Link Agreement with Botswana with the shared aims to walk together in Christian discipleship and further together the mission of the church.

The results of the general synod votes were announced and the Newcastle Diocese reps are:

Clergy representatives

Revd Robert Lawrance

Revd Canon Ian Flintoft

Revd Claire Robson

Lay representatives

Nicola Denyer

Izzy McDonald-Booth

Robin Brims

At this synod the focus again was on the future, given the Diocese had received the news from the National church that our bid for Strategic Transformation Funding had been unsuccessful. The plenary session considered what we should do as a result and what should be the focus for the Diocese moving forward.

The Vacancy in See group gave an update on the process of the appointment of the next Bishop of Newcastle.