

Minutes of the Deanery Synod held at St Mary's Ealing

on Wednesday 11 February 2015

Welcome & Prayer Revd Steve Paynter welcomed everyone to his parish and gave a short resume on the history of the church, which had been restored some 10 years ago. The churchyard has also been renovated for community use as well as ashes being interred as there is no room left for burials. The meeting then opened with prayer

What are the challenges for young people (18 -30) following Jesus?

Four interns were invited to speak.

- Although young people want to meet, socialise and belong to a church, few churches offered home groups for young people. (Some larger churches have a young adults pastor, like St Paul's Northfields where 10% of the congregation are age 18-30 and support dedicated life groups.)
- Young people all have their own individual styles of worship, so not necessarily lively worship as often supposed, but a good variety. They often felt awkward asking questions, maybe feeling intimidated and sometimes even that modern technology was even demonised.
- Young people like to contribute in church, to be doers, to be encouraged to be leaders.
- It was felt their generation likes to have opinions on national problems and are interested in social action, but only some converting this into action, some getting involved in community projects eg St Paul's Besom project.
- Today we live in multi-cultural, multi-faith communities and generally all young people are interested in one another's faith and quite accepting of one another's beliefs.
- Recently we have seen or heard about the Stephen Fry video as an atheist denouncing God; also Russell Brand's belief that all faiths lead to God and it was felt that probably most young people feel comfortable with Russell Brand's option rather than Stephen Fry's.
- They were interested by their contemporaries' views on Christianity, many not understanding who Jesus is and see Christianity as religious but not a spiritual faith. For Muslims and Hindus, they are not ready to leave their faith and follow Jesus, so we need to show Jesus in a whole different way – to be and walk like Jesus

Questions and discussion in groups

1. How would someone in their early 20s find coming to your church for the first time?
2. What could your church do to welcome the student living at home or coming home in the holidays?
3. What questions does what you have heard tonight raise for you?

Revd Sally Hitchiner, Chaplain at Brunel University.

A chaplain is from a religious background but called to work amongst the secular, creating space for the students to be who they are in a multi faith/cultural city and not to impose our views, not judged or measured.

The community room in Brunel on Fridays becomes a cafe with rabbits (people miss their pets!), where 200 meet each week; others at the pub.

This generation, born in the 1990s are more community minded, using facebook or twitter, wanting access to everything and immediately; want to do things together, some anti-authority, not getting around to hard work.

They will use their phone for various tasks eg using as a notebook so we should be accepting of this say during a sermon but at other times we would want to engage with everyone and see their faces! There are discussion groups to explore faith – stories, journeys, suffering, does God exist, what does it mean to live a good life.

Many non-Christians come to discussion groups, with good results – baptisms. Following a survey it was found many students continue in their faith after leaving university.

Each year churches asked to accommodate students – some are unable to return home in the holidays so Christmas dinner, carol services are all welcomed by the students and by non-residential students too.

Due to anxiety over Gideon Bibles being available, they are being removed from student accommodation but most students themselves stand up for religious freedom and do not find the presence of Gideon Bibles a problem

Business

1. The Area Dean highlighted that we still need a secretary; the Treasurer has been doubling up, taking the minutes, so help urgently required
2. The Electorate for General Synod – hot topics are human sexuality; more importantly archbishops strategies; and simplification of the Church of England
3. Mission Fund applications to be in by Easter – will be considered at June Synod
4. Look at our website www.ealingdeanery.org

Dates of Meetings

11 May 2015 - Archdeacon's Visitation Celebration Service: St Joseph the Worker in Northolt

9th June – St Mary's Hanwell (Mission Fund grants)

22nd October – St Nicholas Perivale (Market Place of ideas & resources) All PCC members invited

The evening ended with prayer