

Synod 2021

Dr Jane Williams

'Behold I stand at the door and knock' - Revelations 3:20

- In John 1, we are reminded that God calls for us, knocking to be allowed into our hearts and world.
- Jesus call us 'home' even though he himself is homeless.
 - Do we know where is our home?
 - Are we truly listening?
 - Are we allowing God into our world?
- How do we reach out to others?
- Do we know who is in need?

Bishop Robert – 'Looking back, looking forward'

Song: 'You'll never walk alone' and 'I'll survive'!!

- How have we survived?
 - Diocesan funds; External support; mutual care and fellowship; dedicated central staff; perseverance of our clergy and lay leaders
- Where are we at with Covid, globally?
 - Combating new variants; climate change and its impact; humanitarian challenges including starvation.
- What is the impact of Covid on our lives?
 - Vaccines and vaccinations give us hope but many people are suffering from loneliness, isolation, depression, grief, exhaustion and demotivation.
- What is the impact of Brexit?
 - Not clear at the moment but we must be prepared to meet the challenges.
- Medium term challenges for all chaplaincies!!
 - Stabilising budgets
 - Re-building confidence
 - Diversity and inclusion
 - The environmental crisis
 - Ensuring all churches are fully digital
- Lent, Holy Week and Easter 2021 – We each have to try and live our lives with:-
 - Compassion
 - Moderation
 - Endurance
 - Temperance?
 - Kindness to others and ourselves! (2 Peter 1 5-7)
 - Belief that 'God is always with us'!

Archbishop of York – Stephen Cottrell – God's vision that everyone counts 'He picked up the child and held him in his arms' ?

- How do we share the Gospel without being able to touch – eg: anyone who is ill or needs comforting?
- How do we share the message of the Gospel in our own lives?
- How do we allow the light of Christ to shine out of us to those around us – even with social distancing?

- How do we nurture our 'on-line' links after Covid and include those who can't or don't want to connect to zoom, now that we are all becoming hybrid churches?
- How can we improve the use of music in our services?
- What does a digital liturgy look like? – How can we adapt?
- We can't go back so how do we meet the challenges of:-
 - Funding concerns?
 - Negativity?
 - Growth in Bible Studies?
 - Limitations of music and singing in the services?
 - Ensuring that the services are meaningful not just a convenience?
 - The giving of communion?

What we are able to do!!

- Find God in all we do!
- Regularly check that our clergy are not under pressure (wellbeing)
- Give ourselves time to grieve if necessary; be kind to ourselves as well as to others!
- Keep In regular contact with each other.
- Find and use the talents of others, however small.

Rev'd Jeffrey John, Dean of St Albans - 'Behold I stand at the door and knock'!

- What are the churches problems now? Division on 'what to do' or 'facing the truth'?
- What does our Chaplaincy look like to outsiders?
- Do we know enough about each other to make changes?
- Do we need a reality check and how do we do that?

Andrew Caspari – Chief operator in the Chaplaincy with Ms Grace Fagan(Head of safeguarding) and Damian Thwaites (Communications Director)

- The team, work from home and communicate with a daily morning zoom meeting
 - Adjusting, updating and upgrading the website and more zoom training
 - New virtual leadership training for safeguarding
- What is our agenda?
 - Diversity
 - Care for creation
 - Well-being of Clergy
 - Young people
 - Digital Diocese
 - Financial planning that is realistic and ambitious!
- We will all recover and move forward by believing in:-
 - The art of the possible!
 - What we have learned.
 - Understanding what we need to do?
- AGM's must happen before end of May 2021. Can be on-line.

Bishop David – Clergy Covenant 'You will be my people and I will be your God' – Noah

The need to create greater awareness of issues of clergy care and wellbeing across the church because of a corrosive build-up of stress observed in an increasing number of clergy.

- What do we expect of Rachel and Sharon and are they realistic? Have our expectations been discussed?
- How do we encourage them to give the best of themselves in their care for others?
- How can we help them spot or avoid developing unhealthy patterns of work and ministry? (eg: overworking and not taking time off)
- How do we support them if any health or family issues arise?
- How do we ensure that clergy both have and take opportunities for rest, training, recreation, retreat and study?

Questions for the Chaplaincy?

- How do we grow and find God in all we do?
- How do we care for ourself as well as each other?
- How do we ensure the well-being of our clergy?
- How do we move forward within our Chaplaincy, our Diocese and our world?