

Ipswich Deanery Synod Report for 2023

Deanery Synod met 3 times in 2023.

February 28th: meeting at St Peter's Church Stoke Park. Rev Emily Swinerd, Priest-in-charge at St Peter's, led an act of worship. Lay Chair Gill Jackson was on holiday in New Zealand, but her report on the highlights so far of her time as Lay Chair was presented. Rev. Stuart Batten (Diocesan Director of Ordinands) and Rev. Rachel Revely led a session on Inspirational Vocations and the importance of encouragement in Christian life. Rachel spoke about the diocesan course 'Growing Leaders'. The discussion session focused on 'How can we all have/encourage inspirational vocations?' Area Dean Charlotte Cook gave an update on the recent meeting of General Synod. Rev. Alan Forsdike gave an update on Deanery Finance and appealed again for someone to take on the role of Deanery Organiser. The Pastoral Update reported on comings and goings within the Diocese. Archdeacon Rhiannon gave Deanery News, mentioning the many ways we can see God at work in our churches, and the wide range of activities going on - Top-up Shops, Warm Spaces, Messy Churches, fledgling new church communities, prayer groups, and support for refugees and asylum seekers.

June 13th: meeting at St Thomas' Church, Bramford Lane. Rev. Rachel Revely, Priest-in-charge at St Thomas' led an act of worship. There were 3 presentations on Stewardship: Bob Collett, the Ipswich Recycling and Parish Evangelist, reminded us that we are stewards of God's creation. Bob Hamilton, Inspiring Ipswich, promoted the 'Growing Leaders' course (in relation to talents). Rev Canon Alan, newly appointed Deanery Organiser, spoke on being a generous church. The Discussion session focused on 'How can we be good stewards?' and 'What might hold us back?' Ven. Mark Chamberlain – Archdeacon for Mission and Regeneration, New Zealand, spoke about his work in New Zealand. Two years ago, his diocese agreed to a mission action plan, and his role was to turn the diocese around by implementing the actions set out in that plan. Each parish has chosen 2 or 3 missional priorities, and these could include Children and Families, Digital Mission (e-mails websites, social media) and a disciple-making pathway of some sort. Mark had come to the UK to find out more of what's happening around church planting and mission in the UK, and Rhiannon had mapped out an itinerary for him, including opportunities to meet people and look at church plants in Ipswich. The meeting concluded with updates on the recent Diocesan Synod and Inspiring Ipswich, and comings and goings in the Deanery (including welcoming Rev. Alan).

September 27th: meeting at River Church, Ipswich. Helen Smith (Inspiring Ipswich Administrator and Prayer Facilitator) led the opening worship. AD Rhiannon shared ways we can encourage Growing in Faith: reminding us anyone can help others grow in faith, faith is grown through exercising it, telling our story may encourage others, it is a lifelong process, many resources are available, the importance of put 'stepping stones' in place to help people progress, and celebrating the milestones. Discussion groups followed on how we help people grow in faith, courses (Alpha, 'Being with') The Guild of Our Lady, Cursillo, and online presence The meeting concluded with updates on the Deanery Conference, Inspiring Angels, Deanery Finance, the support/advice available to parishes, Plans for Growth, St Mary le Tower Minister consultation, and Pastoral Updates.