

I am going to keep this report short about Synod which was held last weekend. This year it was proposed that Synod would be a bit different by having what is called Open Space from 9AM to 4PM on the Saturday. Basically, this is where Synod members present a topic of their choosing that is discussed in a room by members who are interested in the topic. This was seen as the church dealing with real issues in the world as well as within the church. The person who presented the topic would preside the discussion which would be summarised by another person. Synod accepted the proposal.

I attended sessions on Ministry Beyond The Parish, the Problems of Young Adults, and The Need for Acceptance of Others Regarding Relationships Including Same Sex Marriage. I cannot remember the discussions attended by the other members.

Father Steve also attended Ministry Beyond The Parish. Steve and I decided that our parish would investigate broadcasting prayer services as well as having something in the manner of Skype where verbal discussions could be held by whoever was accessing the service. Participants could be our parishioners who are confined to their homes etc. or younger people wanting to explore a topic.

The Problems of Young Adults mainly centred around attracting and keeping people from around 16 to 25 into the church family. It was felt that they need to be personally welcomed either in the flesh or through technology and that there is some meaningful project for them to be engaged with.

The Need for Acceptance of Others Regarding Relationships Including Same Sex Marriage was a combination of 2 discussion topics put forward by 2 priests with different opinions. While there were opposing views, participants were considerate of people who did not share their own view. At the 2018 Synod, there was passionate debate about same sex marriage. This year at the Open Space and in the Synod there was an understanding for other views. This has brought about a respect for others with different opinions which was the purpose of the discussion.

Following the discussions, members gathered together, and some members took ownership to progress particular discussions. In all there were 64 discussion groups. The discussion records are to be circulated to parishes.

There were debates on a number of motions and a number of motions were amended.

Motion 6 regarding Affirming Anglican Unity in Diversity was primarily about having respect for all dioceses so that they could exist with differences.

Motion 7 Affirming Anglican Schools Support of Gender Diverse Students was proposed by our theological student Gemma Dashwood.

Motion 10 regarding The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse had lengthy discussions and the final amendments to be put to the Synod were drafted by what the archbishop called a huddle. A similar motion was not put to Synod last year because it was felt that the time was not right. The motion which includes a commitment to continue to care for survivors and the prevention of crimes against children was passed.

Motion 13 related to Conversion Therapy for non-heterosexual people. The motion that every person is made in the image of God and acknowledged the pain and damage that this has caused in people's lives and that of their families was passed.

Motion 14 was a tribute to Jim Eyles who has been voluntarily serving as the auditor for 16 parishes over the past 18 years. Jim is in his nineties. If we have anyone who would like to assist parishes, I am sure that Bishop Cam would like you to speak with him.

The minutes of Synod will be posted on the diocesan website.
Des. Hunt. Synod Representative