



Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

scene@synod

5-9 February 2024

Synod confirms nomination of new Bishop of Cyprus and the Gulf



BISHOP-ELECT SEAN SEMPLE AND HIS WIFE, JENNY

On Tuesday 6 February 2024, the Synod of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf confirmed the Archbishop's nomination of the Reverend Sean Semple to be the sixth Bishop of the Diocese. The Electoral Synod was held in the course of the normal Synod gathering this year at the Golden Bay Hotel in Larnaca on 5-9 February.

Archbishop Hosam Naoum, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, warmly congratulated Sean and his wife, Jenny, offering his heartfelt prayers as they set forth on this new journey.

Revd Sean is currently Rector of the Benefice of Ross with Walford and Brampton Abbots in the Diocese of Hereford. His work there has included chairing the Council for World Partnership, as well as the role of Rural Dean of the Deanery of Ross and Archenfield.

Sean has served in three provinces of the Anglican Communion. Before moving to the Diocese of Hereford, Sean served as a priest in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, and in the Diocese of Natal, South Africa. He was ordained priest in the Diocese of Natal in 2011, following a decade of ordained ministry in the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. Sean's undergraduate studies in Psychology and Theology were undertaken at the University of Natal and the University of South Africa, followed by postgraduate studies in Spirituality and in Clinical Psychology, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of Nicosia, respectively. Sean is married to Jenny and they have five children and one grandchild.

The Consecration and Enthronement of Bishop-elect Sean Semple will take place at St Christopher's Cathedral, Bahrain on 24 May 2024 at 6pm. The Enthronement of the new Bishop in St Paul's Cathedral in Nicosia will take place on 22 June 2024 at 5pm.

Report

Diocese of Jerusalem

**SYNOD PRESIDENT THE MOST REVEREND HOSAM NAOUM
ACTING BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF CYPRUS AND THE GULF**

**ARCHBISHOP IN JERUSALEM
PRIMATE OF THE PROVINCE OF
JERUSALEM AND THE MIDDLE EAST**



Archbishop Hosam described the challenges and blessings of ministry at a time of war in the Diocese of Jerusalem, and the ongoing suffering of the communities it serves

From your sister Diocese of Jerusalem, I bring greetings from your siblings in Christ, who are holding you in their prayers.

We call the Diocese of Jerusalem the homeland of Jesus—the place where Jesus was born, where Jesus was raised, died and rose again.

The Gospel stories all took place within the Diocese of Jerusalem, from South Lebanon, Tyre and Sidon into Syria, Jordan, the Jordan River and the Holy Land. Just one event in the Gospels slipped through our fingers, and that is the flight to Egypt. And that is why we call it the flight to Egypt—something that was not wished for!

So while Jerusalem is not unique in the sense of being better than any other diocese, it has a particular significance when it comes to the story of Jesus, and so has a specific and very unique ministry to witness the Lord in two significant dimensions: the history of salvation and the geography of salvation, because Jesus's ministry happened at a specific time and specific place.

The Diocese of Jerusalem is engaged in four main areas of ministry.

The first is that of pastoral care. We have 28 congregations operating within the diocese, mainly in Jordan, and in Israel, Palestine. There are 12 ministries across “the road”—the Jordan River—and one in Damascus, one in Beirut. At least 90% of the congregations of the Diocese are Arabic-speaking—Christian Palestinians, Jordanian citizens, Lebanese, and so on, along with expat communities in the capitals and major cities.

Pastoral care is of course about caring for our congregations. But it is also about serving the whole community, which is unique where we and many of

you live, as Anglican clergy and Anglican communities who serve the community at large, open to other denominations and even other faiths, showing hospitality and engaging with everybody, regardless of their affiliation.

The second arm of ministry is our institutions. We have 35 institutions within the diocese: 18 schools and two major hospitals, as well as clinics, rehabilitation centres and guest houses, which together account for a huge amount of the work of the Diocese.

If our congregations reach perhaps one or 2% of the population, our institutions reach 50%—beneficiaries who are not necessarily Anglicans or even Christians. Every year we have, for example, something like 500 students graduating from our schools—people who come out with that kind of mission of Christian values, even in a

Muslim and Jewish context; with values of acceptance, values of appreciating the other. People who go out into the community to really spread the good news of how we can live together, even though we are different.

Institutions serve as faith-in-action in many places in the Diocese—places where evangelism is not welcomed, and where mission is not something that is appreciated. These institutions carry out the work of mission in a very respectful, very sensitive way, showing Christ in action through healing and education. That is the heart of mission in these spaces. And we are reminded that Jesus's own ministry focused on these two fields—that Jesus was primarily a healer and a teacher in his pastoral ministry, his earthly ministry in the Holy Land.

(contd on page 3)

*“We are reminded
that Jesus
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in the
Holy Land”*

(contd from page 2)

The third arm of ministry is that of peace and reconciliation. Peace-building is at the heart of the Diocese. At the ecumenical level, the Anglican church plays an important role in the life of the Heads of Churches and in ecumenical life in Jerusalem and beyond. Father Don and myself serve as the Secretaries for the Council of Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, a very important body bringing together all the historical traditional Churches. We also engage in reconciliation endeavours through interfaith dialogue. That is quite natural: we live in Israel, with the Jewish population, and in the Palestinian areas, Jordan and other places with a Muslim population. But the relationships that we maintain, over years, are really phenomenal. There is so much trust, with the Christian community at large, but specifically with the Anglican Church.

The fourth arm of ministry is that of hospitality and pilgrimage. Pilgrimage is central to the Diocese of Jerusalem. We welcome pilgrims from around the world, who come and visit with us and work with us. They witness with us, they share the life of the Diocese, visiting congregations and institutions, and they support us in our ministry, in the place where everything started.

When talking about the most ancient Christian communities in the world, people connect. They sense that this place needs to be sustained, because no one can imagine the Holy Land without its living stones, as opposed to the ancient or even, as some people call them, dead stones. And though we would call them sacred, the living stones are what really matter. Those living communities, those living witness.

We have approximately 8,000 Anglicans in the Diocese of Jerusalem. That is not a big number. But we have some of the best schools and hospitals in the area, and those, as we have seen, are very much appreciated by the wider community.

Since 7 October, things have been very difficult. As the Heads of Churches, all of us have condemned all acts of violence: no Christian would accept such violence as took place on the part of Hamas and on the part of Israeli forces, which we continue to condemn. And we continue to say that the only way for the future is a just and lasting peace through negotiations, sitting at the table and solving this issue in a way that will guarantee security for Israel and self-determination for the Palestinians and the right of a free State of

Palestine. That has been the position. But then 7 October happened, and with it the military operation in reaction, which has included South Lebanon and the north of Israel, and even interference from Yemen by Houthis followers, firing rockets into the south of Israel, so it has become a very complicated issue. We have also seen the US bombing places in Iraq, and in Syria, after the attack on forces in Jordan. Now, with

the coming of Ramadan, there is concern that this cycle of violence might widen even further.

Things have become extremely difficult for our people. The whole Diocese of Jerusalem has been affected, including Lebanon, to which many of our people fled from Christian villages. While not in the eye of the struggle, almost 60% of the population of Jordan is of Palestinian origin, and the streets are boiling at what is happening to their siblings in the West Bank and Gaza. The king is under huge pressure, as are all the leaders of the Arab world.

In Israel things are very bad: many people were evacuated from around Gaza and from the north of Israel, including Arab villages, and the economic situation is devastating. In the West Bank, things are harsh. Almost 400 people have been killed and while a small figure compared to the number in Gaza, to have so many casualties in the West Bank is beyond imagination. Checkpoints and closures mean that none of our institutions or congregations there are functioning properly.

In Gaza, the situation is even worse: 70% of buildings have been totally or partially demolished. There are now over a million and a half people who are homeless, and over 26,000 people have been killed since the beginning of the war. Of the many injured, most are women and children. One of the motivations behind South Africa submitting a case to International Court of Justice in The Hague is the indiscriminate killing of people in Gaza.

How are we, as the Church, to respond?

We have been able to work with our partners across the Anglican Communion and beyond to find support for our institutions and congregations to sustain ministry, including an appeal for Gaza issued jointly by myself and Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby. I would like to thank churches in the Emirates that contributed to that appeal during my recent visit.

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Those living
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witness”*

(contd on page 6)

Synod 2024

Our missionary calling



ARCHBISHOP HOSAM PRESIDED AT THE OPENING SYNOD EUCHARIST ON 5 FEBRUARY, WHICH INCLUDED THE LICENSING OF THE REVEREND GILL NISBET (BELOW, CENTRE LEFT) AS INTERIM PRIEST AND CHAPLAIN, ST ANDREW ABU DHABI, AND THE REVEREND PAUL CARR (BELOW, CENTRE RIGHT) AS PARISH PRIEST, PAPHOS



**(RIGHT L-R)
THE REVEREND CANON DR DON BINDER
THE VENERABLE MICHAEL MBONA,
THE REVEREND GILL NISBET,
THE MOST REVEREND HOSAM
NAOUM,
THE REVEREND PAUL CARR AND
THE VENERABLE CHRISTOPHER
FUTCHER**



Diocesan Synod had as its theme “*Our missionary calling*”. Held on 5-9 February 2024 in Larnaca, the event was in effect two Synods in one, with an Electoral Synod held on 6 February at which the nomination of the Reverend Sean Semple as Diocesan Bishop-elect was confirmed.

Both the Electoral and the main Synod were presided over by the Most Reverend Hosam Naoum, Archbishop in Jerusalem, Primate of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, and Acting Bishop of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf. It was a great privilege for the 90 or so members and observers in attendance to listen to Archbishop Hosam preach at the Opening Synod and Chrism Eucharists, as well as to hear his reflections on the desperate situation in Palestine/Israel. There was also profound gratitude expressed for his concerned leadership in the interregnum between Diocesan Bishops, at a time when his own Diocese of Jerusalem found itself in the midst of war.

Synod participants travelled from across the Diocese as well as from Canada, Kenya and the UK to gather at the Golden Bay Hotel, where Diocesan Synods have been held several times over the past 40 years.

The Synod Speaker was the Reverend Canon Dr Peniel Rajkumar, Director of Global Mission at USPG, who shared a series of three inspiring reflections on the themes of power, presence and partnership.

There were opportunities for worship throughout Synod days, including a Eucharist or Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Night Prayer, held in a chapel within the hotel. Although the Venerable Robert Jones was unable to attend, he generously provided the Synod liturgies, with the Reverend Peter Day providing accompaniment at the piano. Jacquie Hammond served as Synod Sacristan.



SYNOD CLERGY GATHERED AFTER THE CHRISM EUCHARIST

CHURCH OF AYIA MARINA ANALIONTAS, CYPRUS

WATERCOLOUR BY ANETTA STYLIANOOU

SYNOD 2024 PROGRAMME COVER



(contd from page 3)

The response we have had from churches and organisations around the world has been phenomenal. We feel the prayers, the support, the care, the love, as we walk through this horrendous conflict.

We have managed to keep our institutions running and all 2,500 of our employees fully paid and continuing their essential work. It is a blessing that we have been able to contribute in this small way.

Many of you will have heard about Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, which was hit on St Luke's Day, 18 October. Also known as the Baptist Hospital, the ministry carried out in that hospital is a blessing and a beacon of hope to so many people in Gaza, Palestine and the wider world—not closing for a day, despite everything, and now the only hospital still in operation in the north of Gaza. The church in the hospital compound, St Philip's, was transformed into a ward, pews facing each other to serve as patients' beds with the cross and the altar just there. It moved the hearts of people to see how the Anglican Church and Al Ahli Hospital continue in the most difficult situation imaginable, amidst bombs and tanks, bullets and fighting.

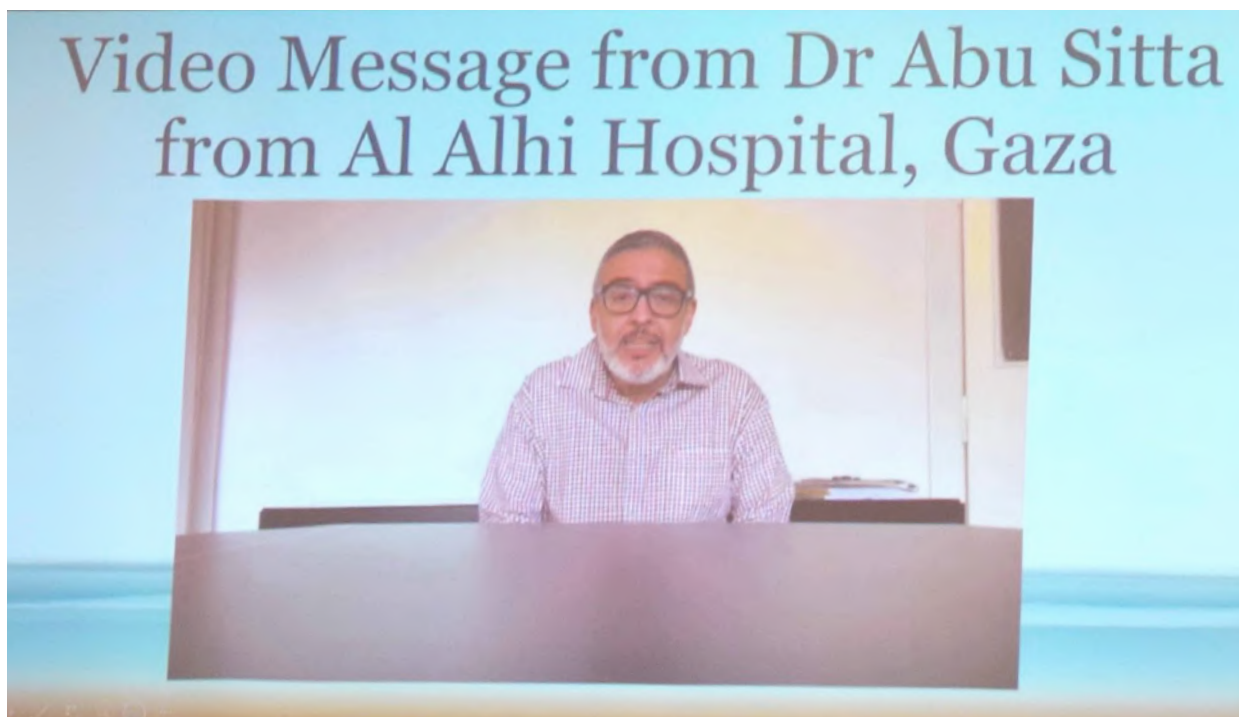
We continue to hope and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for peace in the Holy Land, where Palestinians

and Israelis, everyone, deserves to live in peace and in dignity. We hold the people of the Holy Land in our prayers, and thank you for your prayers and your support, for the notes and messages that we have received from the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, which continues to be a blessing to us and a blessing for the world.

GAZA APPEAL

To find out more about the joint appeal for Gaza issued by Archbishop Hosam and Archbishop Justin, please visit:

<https://j-diocese.org/wordpress/2023/10/24/joint-gaza-appeal-letter-from-the-most-revds-hosam-naoum-and-justin-welby-the-anglican-archbishop-in-jerusalem-and-the-archbishop-of-canterbury/>



A message from Dr Abu Sitta of Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza is available to view on the

Diocesan YouTube channel:

@cyprusandthegulf

Workshop morning

A morning of workshops opened with Archbishop Hosam sharing his reflections on leadership, inviting participants to note key ideas that could help frame subsequent discussion in break-out groups.

A second round focused on the theme of power and authority, ending with discussion groups returning to share their thoughts in plenary session.



On leadership

“Humans,” said Archbishop Hosam, “have a great desire for order—to be organised behind a leader, who can provide direction and focus”.

He referred to several types of leadership, beginning with the traditional type outlined in Machiavelli’s *The Prince*—“a leader who is powerful, who thinks he knows everything, whom people must follow and those opposed, be eliminated”.

“We still find these kinds of leaders,” he noted, “even in churches: the bishop who thinks he or she knows everything once people have laid their hands on them, consecrating them with a mitre on—ones who think they have a direct channel to God”.

Rather, he said, “leadership in the church has to do with much more than simply an internal exercise within oneself. That person needs to be connected with the rest of the church, with the rest of the body of Christ. As Anglicans specifically, we know that we are governed by our Synod, by our committees, by our councils. And that is why we have both lay and ordained within the church, we have people from across the divide within.”

A second type of leadership, he said, was that of a servant leader.

“If we go to the Hebrew Bible, the first text that comes to our mind with regard to the servant leader, a

Workshop groups discussed the following questions, before considering the key characteristics they looked for in a church leader:

- 1. What model of leadership speaks most to your own thinking/spirituality and context?*
- 2. To what extent does power and authority within the church influence your understanding and practice of leadership in ministry?*

(contd on page 9)

Reflections on

Witnessing through With-ness: exploring power



Synod Speaker the Reverend Canon Dr Peniel Rajkumar, USPAG Director of Global Mission, shared three reflections on the theme of witness through with-ness—the idea of mission carried out in the context of relationships—with God, with each other, and with God’s creation. The first address, below, explored this theme through the lens of power, while the second and third considered presence, and partnership

I was born feet first. My name, Peniel, was given to me by my mother, because she had a really long labour. And she interpreted that as being her struggle with God, in which she prevailed—an encounter face to face with God.

In some ways, my own theological journey has been one of struggling with God’s word, trying to make meaning out of it and, in the process, being blessed but also dislocated—bent out of shape, as Jacob was after his encounter with God.

But then the story of the feet is not just the story of my being in this world; it is also the way in which I see my own becoming, as a minister, and as a theologian. Because I have learned to do two things. One is to always keep my feet firmly planted on the ground: sometimes theologians have the temptation to live out of our heads and very often the heart, and the grounded reality of the context around us sometimes can be lost. I’ve also looked at the metaphor of the feet as something that connotes journeying with people; of walking alongside one another.

Before I joined USPAG I worked for the World Council of Churches on interreligious dialogue and cooperation, and this metaphor helped me a lot in speaking about discipleship and mission.

Some of you may be familiar with the saying that the path is made by walking. In the context of discipleship, what are the new paths that lie ahead of us?

What is the new ground we want to break, as we continue this journey as ministers in different ways, both laity and clergy? And in the context of mission, how are we involved in God’s mission?

There is a Kenyan proverb that says, “If you want to walk fast, walk alone; if you want to walk far, walk together.”

*“God is the author
of mission.
Our task is
to be swept away
by the blowing of the Spirit,
to be caught in
the moment of
God’s love in this world”*

Mission is in many ways today about doing both, because there is a sense of urgency towards formation but there is also the sense that we are in it for the long haul, and that this journey is best accomplished by walking hand in hand with each other.

Let us turn to mission and the theme of this Synod, *Our missionary calling*.

The theologian Emil Brunner said, “The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.”

What I find compelling about this quote is that it doesn’t speak of the church existing *for* mission, it speaks of the church existing *by* mission—almost as the lifeline of the church: the church cannot exist except for mission.

There is often an overwhelming temptation to think of mission as *something that I can do, that we can do*. This touches on the question of power—of how mission is something done by the power of God. God is the author of mission. Our task is to be swept away by the blowing of the Spirit, to be caught in the moment

(contd on page 28)

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suffering leader, is Isaiah 42, 52 and 53, and, in the New Testament, Philippians 2:5-11, about Jesus emptying himself, taking the form of a slave or a servant. Very important, as well, is John 13 and the foot-washing—the true reflection of Jesus himself, the leader, but the servant of all, turning the whole thing upside down, which was why Peter cannot understand what Jesus is doing.”

A third type of leader was that of the shepherd—“an image that is again very prominent, very rich in the biblical text. We begin with the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible, with Psalm 23, *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want*. God leads the people.

“But then we have two other texts, that seem to be challenging ones—Ezekiel 34:1-31 and Jeremiah 23:1-8.

“Ezekiel criticises the shepherds of Israel, saying that they no longer care for the sheep and for their people, but rather they care for themselves. The image Ezekiel brings forth is so powerful because it criticises the leaders who have shifted their direction from God to themselves.

“And then we have, of course, Luke 15, the lost sheep—a model of leadership in which leaders look to those in need. That’s very important because leaders, shepherds can often think that their followers are the ones who clap for them, rather than the others who need their attention and pastoral care. *I have come not for those who are well, but for those who are sick, or unwell*.

“And then we have the very important text of John 10, when Jesus said, *I am the good shepherd*.

“There is much to discuss and reflect on, between the Hebrew Bible—whether it is Psalm 23, or Ezekiel 34, or even Jeremiah—and the ultimate sacrifice of a good shepherd.

“Jesus’s example of leading and leadership becomes so important in the life of the church that Jesus becomes *the* example for us leaders, wherever we are, whether we are ordained or not ordained—the example that one is prepared to lay down their life for those whom they love, for their friends.

“Connect this, as well, with John 21 and the story of the primacy of Peter—the famous question, *Peter, do you love me more than these?* And then the word comes to Peter, that a shepherd’s leadership has to be through love. If there is no love, there is no way we can lead God’s people. *Yes, I love you*. And Jesus tells Peter, *Then my feed my sheep*—shepherd my flock.

“When we think about leadership, when we think about shepherding our people, love is very important; humility is essential.

“How can we lead God’s people, within our own brokenness, when we as individuals, as leaders, are ourselves broken and in need of care? How can we lead our broken community as broken leaders?

“We are all sinners. This, we have to admit. And we have to admit that we don’t know it all. We will always fall short. But what brings us strength, and perseverance is that we all depend on our good shepherd Jesus Christ. And we follow in his example, because he is the only true example of a good shepherd.

“Humility is really important, and when it comes to the shepherd, humility is quite often misunderstood.” Referring back to the words of his sermon in the previous day’s Eucharist, Archbishop Hosam reflected that “some people think of humility as an apparent powerlessness, a feeling that I am not worthy. But humility is nothing like that. Humility is about knowing your place in creation. Lent speaks to us a lot about that.

“Humility means forgiveness, repentance, knowing that you are a precious child of God, but also to know that you are no better than anybody else. That’s humility. We are all one. We are all sisters and brothers.

“I return to the idea of the servant leader, ready to sacrifice for the sake of the community. One of most difficult things about being a servant leader is that you put so much at risk, in terms of vulnerability, in terms of your time, in terms of your energy, everything, for the sake of the common good.

“How far are we prepared to go as leaders for our own people? Sometimes we want to think that we are heroes. We are not. We need to know our limitations, even as servant leaders.”

On power and authority

“The theme of power and authority is the most challenging when it comes to leadership. Human beings have the tendency to crave power, by nature. That’s how we are built. We all know the expression, Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.

“Going back to the servant leader, the question is how we, as leaders, try to limit these thirsty desires, aware that whether we are clergy, members of a PCC,

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(contd on page 10)

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or bishops, the people around us will feed our egos to walk that path.

“There are two kinds of authority in the Bible: formal authority and informal authority. I’d like to consider two texts, to reflect on what they mean for us as leaders in our ministry and in our church.

“The first is Mark 1:21-22. This is the beginning of Jesus healing a man with unclean spirit. The first two verses say, They went to Capernaum. And when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught, they were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

“What’s the difference between the teaching of the scribes and that of Jesus? The sole mission of the scribes is to copy the Torah—at least, that is the perception. And so Mark makes the comparison: Jesus teaches with authority when he speaks, whereas the scribes have knowledge, they know the law, they know the rules, but they don’t necessarily understand.

“The second text is Mark 11. Here, Jesus’s authority is being questioned by the chief priests and the elders, who came to him and said, *By what authority are you doing these things?*

“Now, formal authority means that an organisation has given somebody authority to exercise leadership—a formula based on formal recognition by the organisation, whereas informal leadership or authority comes from people’s followers. Jesus was an itinerant preacher going around, who has followers. His followers gave him that informal authority to speak, rather than the chief priests, assigning Jesus to be a rabbi, to teach and preach.

“This makes us think about leadership itself, about what would happen if we were leaders informally, rather than formally? What would that entail? We know that Jesus would control himself. Would we do the same if we had informal authority, rather than the formal authority of being appointed to work within the Diocese, where we have constitutions, we have order.

“But when it comes to informal authority, things can become more loose, and that makes us afraid, concerned about loose cannons.

“In the late 1950s, French and Raven published *Bases of Power*, outlining five forms of power—use of power, reward power, legitimate power, referent power and expert power.

“We could spend hours on each but I will give a short explanation for each, and perhaps in your groups you could discuss how we, as human beings and as leaders, use one form or another of these powers to influence people around us, and how they

might resonate with what we’ve been saying about servant leadership, shepherd leadership and dictatorial leadership.

“The first is use of power—using our influence to threaten or manipulate people to do things: *If you do not do this, you’re going home. It is my way, or the highway.*

“The second is reward power—offering incentives, a raise, a gift here and there, a promise to do something—to achieve influence. But the problem is that people get used to this, so you must always ‘tip up’ or they will no longer be motivated.

“Then there is legitimate power. We have spoken a bit about legitimate power, that is, formal authority.

“Next is referent power, in which the person with power or in a position of leadership uses words of encouragement, compliments, all the time, whether or not someone has done well.

“And then there is expert power—or, in a less secular sense, expert *spiritual* power. By that I mean somebody who is competent and knowledgeable, who understands the system, and understands the people: someone who can lead them in spiritual life, to engage in the mission of the church.

“When people are scattered and we think about the shepherd leader and about what we mean by ‘expert’, we can think of somebody who leads from the front, by example, and people will follow.

“But it is also someone who leads from the middle, who is among the people, who knows and listens to the voice of the sheep—one who recognises the openings to lead the sheep into the fold, into the flock. And it is someone who can lead from behind, so that no one is left out.

“Because that leader has to make sure that we are all in this together.”

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Reports

Archdeacon in Cyprus the Venerable Christopher Futchter reported to Synod on Standing and Finance Committee, and on Safeguarding (page 19)



Standing and Finance Committee

The Standing and Finance Committee is the Executive Committee of the Diocesan Synod when that is not in session.

As such and in accordance with the Diocesan Constitution (article 7e):

- (i) It shall consider matters arising when the Diocesan Synod is not in session and, if necessary, take executive action, and report to the next session of the Synod;*
- (ii) It shall be consulted by the Bishop on all matters he considers to be of importance;*
- (iii) It shall have the right to raise with the Bishop matters of concern to the Church in the Diocese;*
- (iv) It shall prepare the agenda for sessions of the Diocesan Synod*

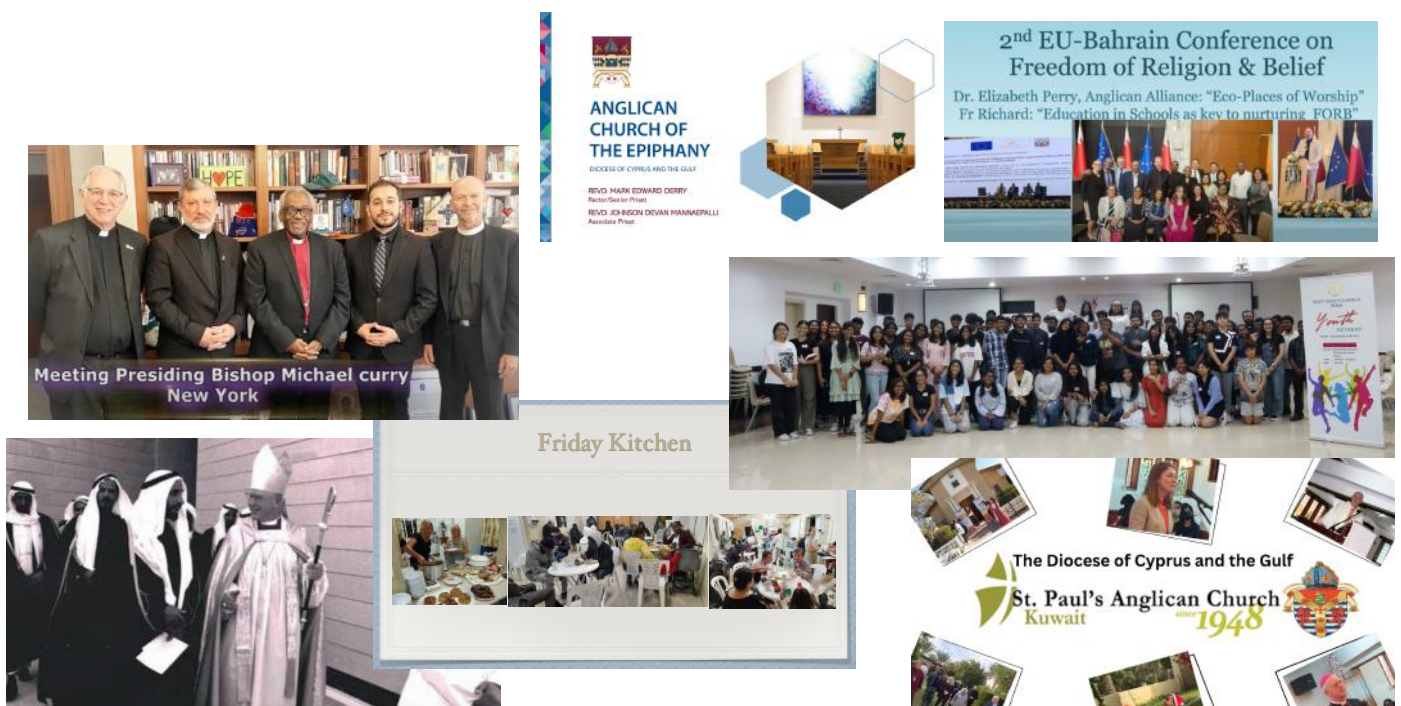
The Standing and Finance Committee met in May, August, October, November and January since Synod 2023. The meeting in May was chaired by Archbishop Michael Lewis and subsequent meetings were chaired by Archbishop Hosam Naoum, as acting Bishop of the Diocese.

There was a review of Synod 2023, taking note of the feedback forms received, and planning has been done for this 2024 Synod. There were also regular reports by the Director of Finance and the Director of Min-

istry, as well as reports relating to administrative aspects of the life of the Diocese, while the Archdeacons reported on activities in their respective archdeaconries. Individual parishes were discussed and much positive work celebrated.

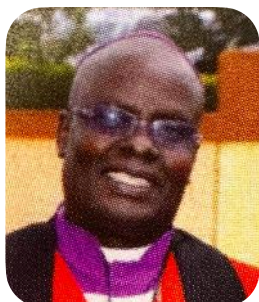
Correspondence received by the secretary, at the discretion of the Chair, was also discussed and responses considered. In fact, discussing and agreeing responses to correspondence has been the most time-consuming matter of business in the past year.

To see some of the parish presentations to Synod 2024, visit the Diocesan YouTube channel @cyprusandthegulf



Reports from Companion Dioceses

Thika



The Right Reverend James Kamura, Assistant Bishop of Thika, shared a report from its bishop, the Right Reverend Julius Wanyoike, including 25th anniversary celebrations

Established on 1 July 1998, the Anglican Diocese of Thika has been celebrating not just its past but also a commitment to our future.

The consecration of Assistant Bishop James Kamura at St Andrew's Cathedral in August 2023 reflects tremendous growth in the Diocese. The event included the induction of one lay and five clergy canons, with a celebratory 20km walk from one corner of the Diocese to the Cathedral that drew together more than 500 Christians.

Over the year more than 150 medals of honour have been awarded in recognition of individuals' role in the establishment and growth of the Diocese, and 5,500 trees planted in church compounds and homes—an exercise spearheaded by Diocesan Mothers' Union President Mrs Esther. The Diocese held a clergy and staff conference was held, while the department of music and liturgy organised music competitions that included a number of choirs—with the winners performing at the anniversary celebration day.

The Diocesan 10-year ministry strategy, *Inspiring Generations for Christ*, anchored in Psalm 78 verse four, focuses on the twin themes of spiritual renewal and worship.

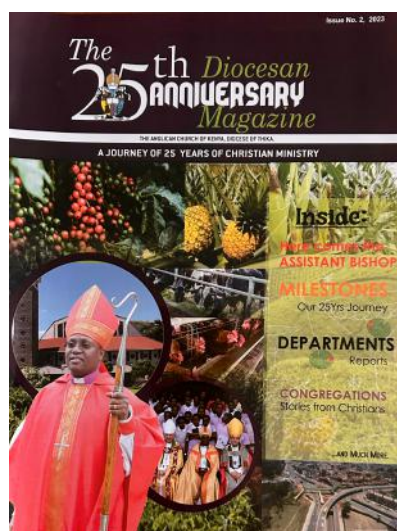
The Diocese has 88 parishes and 205 congregations, served by over 100 clergy. More than 2,300 candidates were confirmed in 2023, and eight priests admitted as deacons and 45 licensed as lay readers. As well as dedicating a number of halls and other facilities for ministry, foundation stones were laid for several new churches.

There is great appreciation for the work of clergy in sector ministries, in support of which empowerment forums were held, including for the Mothers' Union and KAYO—the Kenya Anglican Youth Organisation, which hold fellowships for men and youth across the diocese. The forums focused on the ministry strategy of spiritual renewal, worship, and ownership of the Church of God. We also visited schools, officiated at graduation ceremonies and prayed with candidates sitting their national examinations. Similar activities are held across the Mount Kenya region.

The Diocese continues to care for the most vulnerable children in Thika and its surroundings through the Murata CBO (community-based organisation). The mission is to provide orphaned children from deprived socio-economic backgrounds with the shelter, nurture and developmental support needed to realise their full potential. Many of the young people have finished secondary-school education and are now in vocational technical training or at university. Funding for food, school fees and the general upkeep of the children is raised locally and from our partners in the Diocese of Exeter.

We pray that God will continue to bless our tripartite link with the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf and the Diocese of Exeter. We also pray that as a church, we will continue offering the necessary support and guidance to our Christians and especially those in need.

(contd on page 20)



The Diocese continues to care for the most vulnerable children in Thika through Murata CBO

Exeter



The Venerable Jane Bakker, Archdeacon of Plymouth, shared uplifting stories from the year's events in Companion Diocese of Exeter



Every three years the Bishop of Exeter take curates-in-training to the Holy Land (*above right*). "It's a life-changing experience for everyone taking part," said Archdeacon Jane.

Back in Devon, the travelling roadshow *This Is My Story* shares individual faith journeys on banners that travel across the Diocese, to churches hosting outreach events (*below right*). Other activities support local families in difficulty, including sponsoring family camping for those unable to go on holiday.

This year also marked the start of Devon Pilgrim—"lovely walks across the county ending at a host church" (*below centre*). The Diocese of Exeter is predominantly rural, with a large farming community. The Devon County Show is an important diary date—as evidenced by Bishop Jackie, Bishop of Crediton and Acting Bishop of Exeter, appearing here with a llama (*below left*).

The Diocese celebrated a great number of ordinations in 2023, with 16 ordained as deacons and a similar number as priests in July (*above left*), and a further 15 licensed as lay ministers in August. "It's a bigger challenge to pay them all—but that's a nice problem to have."

In November Archbishop Justin took part in a come-and-see weekend, covering the whole Diocese in 48 hours ("Anybody who knows the geography of Devon and the quality of our roads knows that that's quite a feat," said Archdeacon Jane)—a visit that culminated in "an extremely wet and miserable Remembrance Service in Plymouth".

Another important event was the St Boniface Award, honouring lay people who have made a significant investment in the church.

"The award was established by our beloved Bishop Robert, who retired this last year," said Archdeacon Jane. The Crown Nominations Commission will conduct interviews for his replacement around Easter. "God willing, we hope for an announcement in the early summer. Your prayers would be very much appreciated."



Financial Report

2023 Diocesan Accounts



Presenting the 2023 Diocesan accounts, Honorary Director of Finance Canon John Banfield stressed that the office in Nicosia was not “the Diocese”, but simply the organisation responsible for overseeing and implementing programmes ratified by Synod. The Diocese was the sum of its parishes, clergy and laity, as well as its central office, all under the leadership of the Bishop

**Accounts 2023
Income**

Thousand Euros	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023
Parish Contributions	175	186	196
JMECA/JEMT	40	45	32
TEC Good Friday Offering	63	90	74
Christ Church Aden	20	40	12
Foundation	58	50	50
Other Contributions	13	17	7
	369	428	371
JEMT/Province/Paypal	81	55	55
	450	483	426

**Accounts 2023
Central Organisation**

Thousand Euros	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023
Bishop	96	60	75
Executive Archdeacon	63	65	59
Gulf Archdeacon	16	20	23
Office Staff	144	145	139
Office Expenses	32	25	21
Province	0	10	10
Standing Committee/Synod	11	20	23
Travel	22	20	17
	384	365	367

**Accounts 2023
Programmes**

Thousand Euros	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023
Christ Church Aden	63	65	72
Ministry Training	12	10	8
Student Chaplaincy	12	12	9
Barnabas Team	13	13	13
	100	100	102

**Accounts 2023
Summary**

Thousand Euros	Actual 2022	Budget 2023	Actual 2023
Income	450	483	426
Expense			
Central Organisation	384	365	367
Programmes	100	100	102
	484	465	469
Operating Balance	-34	18	-43


**Accounts 2023
Cash Balance**

Thousand Euros	Actual 2023
Cash/Receivables	161
Designated Funds	- 22
Payables	-124
Uncommitted Cash	15

Financial Report

2024 Diocesan Budget

Looking to 2024, Canon John described the focus of the budget as being to provide education, ministry training and discipleship resources; support mission in Aden and Famagusta; maintain high standards of governance; promote effective communications; and provide the administrative resources necessary to support the Diocese



Plan 2024 Income

Thousand Euros	Actual 2022	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Parish Contributions	175	196	275
JMECA/JEMT	40	32	40
TEC Good Friday Offering	63	74	75
Christ Church Aden	20	12	20
Foundation	58	50	40
Other Contributions	13	7	25
	369	371	475
JEMT/Province/Paypal	81	55	0
	450	426	475



Plan 2024 Central Organisation

Thousand Euros	Actual 2022	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Bishop	96	75	65
Executive Archdeacon	63	59	60
Gulf Archdeacon	16	23	22
Office Staff	144	139	138
Office Expenses	32	21	20
Province	0	10	10
Standing Committee/Synod	11	23	20
Travel	22	17	20
	384	367	355



Plan 2024 Programmes

Thousand Euros	Actual 2022	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Christ Church Aden	63	72	60
Ministry Training	12	8	20
Student Chaplaincy	12	9	10
Barnabas Team	13	13	5
	100	102	95



Plan 2024 Summary

Thousand Euros	Actual 2022	Actual 2023	Budget 2024
Income	450	426	475
Expense			
Central Organisation	384	367	355
Programmes	100	102	95
Operating Balance	-34	-43	25



Plan 2024 Cash Balance

Thousand Euros	Forecast 2024
Cash/Receivables End 2023	161
Designated Funds and Payables	-146
Uncommitted cash end 2023	15
Surplus 2024	25
Balance end 2024	40

Reports

Ministry Team

Diocesan Director of Ministry the

Venerable Christopher Futchter reported to Synod

on the Ministry programme



Exploring Faith (Queen's College, Newfoundland)

It was noted that new modules on the Psalms and on Pastoral Studies had been developed, and that a number of others need still to be refreshed. A student in UAE had finished the ordinary (non-honours) degree and was awaiting arrangements for its award and presentation of the certificate. Martyn Henry, the ordinand and churchwarden at St Paul's Nicosia who died in May, was awarded posthumously a diploma for the modules he completed.

An Exploring Faith session on Safeguarding was held.

Thanks were given to those who act as facilitators for each module, giving considerable time to working with students. It was noted that the Exploring Faith programme included several students who were not native English-speakers, each of whom was making excellent progress.

Summer School

There were Summer Schools held in 2019 and 2021 for students on the Exploring Faith programme, and those in the early years of ordained and lay ministry. The school for 2023 was delayed until 2024.

In the past, schools have been held at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut and a very good relationship has been built with staff there. A Summer School is being planned for June 2024, but regrettably a different venue is being explored due to the current regional circumstances and continuing uncertainties around the risk of escalation.

Ordinands, deacons and readers-in-training

Archdeacon Christopher, as Director of Ministry, continues to try to have at least an annual conversation with each ordinand, deacon and reader-in-training, along with their supervising priest, to make connections between theological learning, opportunities for practical experience and learning in the parish, and formational development.

Diocesan Readers and readers-in-training

There are regular zoom meetings for mutual support with the Warden of Readers.

Vocations – a discernment conference for two candidates was held in June in northern Cyprus. Both candidates were recommended for training for ordination and have begun their academic work. Each is already very active in ministry in Famagusta and Baghdad.

Thanks were extended to Dean Jeremy Crocker and Cheryl du Plessis, who took on their roles at short notice, when Christopher and Anne had to drop out due to the scheduling of Anne's surgery. Other explorations of vocation have begun in Cyprus with Archdeacon Christopher, and in the Gulf with the Revd Jim Young, the archdeaconry vocations advisers.

Accredited lay worship leaders - A second course in Cyprus was run July-August at St Barnabas Limassol and on Zoom.

There were four participants—three from Paphos and one from Limassol. The course was led by Archdeacon Christopher, Ian Nicholson and Ken Waters. Certificates signed by Archbishop Hosam were presented during a service in St Stephen Tala in November.

Canon Theologian

The Revd Canon Dr John Holdsworth continues to provide articles of theological interest for the diocesan website throughout the year.

Commission for Theological Education in the Anglican Communion (CTEAC)

CTEAC has a representative from each Province. Archdeacon Christopher attended a workshop of the Commission in October, which was held at the Virginia Theological Seminary in the US. He contributes particularly to a small group, with representatives from Australia, England, Tanzania and Wales, working on the theology of safeguarding.

Ministry Team

The Venerable Christopher Futchter
The Venerable Michael Mbona
The Revd Kent Middleton
Dr Helen Perry
The Revd Patrick Salvage
The Revd George Vidiakin
The Revd Jim Young

Archdeacon in Cyprus and Director of Ministry
Archdeacon in the Gulf
Warden of Readers
Administrator for Exploring Faith
Representative for SSMs
CMD Adviser (joined from Autumn 2023)
Vocations Adviser, Gulf Archdeaconry

JEMT (Cyprus)

*Archdeacon Christopher shared reports from JEMT (Cyprus)
and the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (below)*

With the formation of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf in 1976, the Jerusalem and East Mission Trust (Cyprus) was established to manage church property in Cyprus on behalf of the UK Trustees, the Jerusalem and East Mission Trust Ltd.

These properties include:

Nicosia	St Paul's Cathedral, Deanery, and Commercial assets
Limassol	St Barnabas Church and Vicarage
Larnaca	St Helena's Church, Flat 201, Shops 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14
Kyrenia	St Andrew's Church, Hermitage, Houston Cemetery
Famagusta	Plot – "Mrs Gilles Land"
Troodos	St George-in-the Forest Church

Parishes are responsible for the care and upkeep of the properties they use and, where possible, the Trustees assist financially by means of a property grant request.

During 2023 the Trustees made grants to St Paul's Cathedral Parish Council towards the cost of inspection of the play area on the grounds of the Cathedral; St Andrew's Church Parish Council towards renovations of the Hermitage; and to the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf towards repairs to Bishop's House.

Contributions were also made to parishes that do not own property—Christ Church (Ayia Napa) towards the rent of the priest's house, and the Diocese towards the rent of the Archdeacon's house.

It was also reported that St George-in-the-Forest was undergoing renovations, expected to be completed by the summer.

In terms of income, JEMT (Cyprus) receives rents from commercial sites—shops in Larnaca and a petrol station in Nicosia.

Current members of JEMT (Cyprus) are the Venerable Christopher Futchter (Chairman), John Cater, Chris Clapham (replacing Stuart Hillard, who resigned in September 2023), Deb Graham and Kevin Townsend, and Observer the Very Reverend Jeremy Crocker. Their work is supported by Secretary Anetta Stylianou—whom Archdeacon Christopher thanked for compiling JEMT minutes and reports, and treasurer Evangelia Georgakaki.

Safeguarding Advisory Panel

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser the Venerable Christopher Futchter reported on behalf of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel, which is composed chiefly of Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs).

Members met on zoom for a training session in October 2023, and two PowerPoint presentations are due to be distributed to Parish Safeguarding Officers to help support local training in parishes.

Training should include all those involved in ministry with children and young people, pastoral care among vulnerable adults, and in leadership roles should attend a training session.

A zoom session on safeguarding has also been run with the learning group of ordinands and readers-in-training. Two sessions to renew training in safeguarding for clergy and Readers in the Cyprus Archdeaconry (who attended a session in 2020 or who are new to the Diocese) were run in November. New material was incorporated to refresh the training offered.

Following Synod 2023 the parish safeguarding checklist was issued to help parishes to review their safeguarding provision.

Looking ahead, further work needs to be done in order to ensure every Gulf parish has an identified PSO.

During 2024 training will be extended to accredited lay worship leaders, and those clergy and Readers who attended safeguarding sessions in 2021 will be contacted to renew their training.

Archdeacon Christopher thanked Parish Safeguarding Officers for their work in ensuring that the Diocese observed high standards in safeguarding, and for addressing matters that arise.

Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association



JMECA Director and Trustee Canon Dr Clare Amos, newly appointed Lead for the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, made a video address to Synod introduced by JMECA communications consultant the Reverend Canon Dr John Holdsworth

The origins of the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association (JMECA) as going back nearly 150 years to the 1880s, when Bishop Blyth of Jerusalem founded the Jerusalem and East Mission to offer support, both financial and practical, to the Anglican churches of the Middle East region. And that, through various twists and turns and a Middle East whose shape and complexity would have been almost unthinkable to those who lived in the latter years of the 19th century, is broadly speaking what JMECA still seeks to do.

Within the limitations of our size—we are a small organisation with only a couple of part-time staff, and those of us who are Directors offer our services on an honorary basis—we continue to provide financial and other forms of support to the various Dioceses in the two Anglican Provinces, that of Jerusalem and the Middle East and that of Alexandria, which are the contemporary heirs of that Anglican work begun in the region in the 19th century.

We have especially close links with this Diocese, Cyprus and the Gulf, where in association with our local Cyprus partner organisation, we hold the title to a number of churches and other buildings on the island, a practical reality that has been important and beneficial at times of political crisis or uncertainty.

Our commitment to this Diocese was reflected in the way that, during the years of the COVID pandemic when many churches and church-related organisations struggled to cope with this unplanned-for crisis, at that key moment we were able to offer important and sustaining financial support to enable this Diocese to continue to thrive.

JMECA itself is going through a process of change and development, and encouragement to the Directors to take a more active role in its life and work. As part of that, each Director is now going to act as the Lead connection in relationships with one of the seven

Dioceses that we serve. I have been asked to be the lead Director for relationships with this Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf and I am very pleased to be able to take on this role.

My own—and my husband’s—association with both Cyprus and the Gulf goes back a long time—to the 1970s. This picture (*left*) is one that Alan, my husband, bought in 1974 from a British artist, John Corbidge, in Bellapais, a few weeks before the Turkish invasion. Alan was working in Lebanon at the time, and this picture has journeyed with us in the years since, initially in Lebanon, then in 1982 carried across the stones of Jounieh beach during the Israeli invasion of that year, as we left Lebanon by sea—initially of course landing at Larnaca where we will never forget the generous hospitality we received from the chaplain and congregation of St Helena’s Church. The picture has since been cherished in the various homes we have lived in in England. Incidentally, more recent examples of Corbidge’s work

can still be seen in Cyprus at an Orthodox chapel in Pissouri.

As regards the Gulf back in 1980, Alan and I spent an enjoyable month in Abu Dhabi, while Alan was acting as a locum there, and during the last 15 years I have travelled frequently to the Gulf region as part of my work in international interreligious relations.

One other current development in the life and work of JMECA: each Director is now asked to focus on particular areas of the work of the organisation—mine are Communications and theological education—which are both areas of work that I am deeply interested in, and I know are especially important to the life of this Diocese. JMECA has appointed a part-time Communications Consultant, John Holdsworth, whose good work during the last nine months is making a substantial difference to our—and by extension—your profile in this area.



AN OLD WOMAN
BY JOHN CORBIDGE
BELLAPAIS, 1974

The Episcopal Church (USA)



TEC Middle East Partnership Officer

*the Venerable Paul Feheley shared news of its work over the year,
supporting the Diocese and the wider Province*

It is a great privilege and honour to have the opportunity to see, listen and learn about the extraordinary ministry that happens in this wonderfully complex and diverse Diocese.

I bring you greetings from the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, Michael Curry, as well as from Father David Copley, director of Global Partnerships of which my ministry is a branch.

I work under a vision statement that says we are partnering with God's world to share the love of Jesus. As the Middle East Partnership Officer, I work on building, maintaining and developing relationships in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, involving me in this Diocese, the Diocese of Jerusalem and, whenever possible, the Diocese of Iran. This ministry is a two-way street, so that I'm able to come and, where applicable, share something of The Episcopal Church but more especially, take back to The Episcopal Church the things that I have seen and learnt from being with you.

Another aspect of this ministry is the responsibility for the Good Friday Offering. Now it is 102nd year, every parish in The Episcopal Church is invited to make financial contributions that go to support the work and mission of the Province and the Dioceses. The total from 2023 will be about \$245,000. The decision on how that is shared is decided by your Provincial Synod. In the past few years, it has worked out that the first \$30,000 went to the Province, with the balance divided 2/3 to the Diocese of Jerusalem and 1/3 to your Diocese. How you choose to spend that money is up to you.

Over the years there has also been other financial support, for St George's in Iraq and for the eye clinic in Yemen.

This is my fourth visit to the Diocese and I have learned a great deal, which especially helps me when speaking about the Good Friday Offering and the richness of the work that you do. On my first visit I learned about your love and care of the refugee, I worshipped at Saint Barnabas in Limassol and then joined all of the clergy of the Province for the clergy conference.

After attending one Synod meeting virtually, last year my wife Jenni and I attended the in-person Synod, spending the week before on holiday in a small community called Fyti, and worshipping at St Paul's Paphos. From that Synod meeting I took home palm crosses that were made by some of your parishes. I'm also the incumbent of the parish of Saint Michael and All Angels in Toronto, and I took 200 crosses—we normally just use 100—but the 200 were immediately taken by our parishioners and I'm now scrambling to try to find a few that I can burn for Ash Wednesday. I haven't asked but hope the tradition of bringing those crosses to Synod has continued!

Last April was my first visit to the Gulf Archdeaconry. I had learned about the Diocese from Angela Murray's book *The Unfolding Story* and from conversations with Archdeacon Bill Schwartz and David Axtell, but there is nothing quite like going to be with the people of a parish and learning and understanding something of their context: being in Iraq with Fr Faiz and Sinan to worship with that deeply devoted community; preaching opportunities in Kuwait as a guest of Archdeacon Michael and his wife the Reverend Christine; visiting in Abu Dhabi with the Reverend Gil Nesbit as a gracious host, and then with Fr Jim and Sheryl in Jebel Ali—not only to preach but to go to the labor camps and be with God's poor.

I continue to grow in my appreciation of the extraordinary ministry that happens here. I have never felt such gracious hospitality as I have in this Diocese and the remarkable theology of presence that you have taught me. When I preached in Kuwait and Jebel Ali I used the words of St Francis, which seem so real in those places—*Preach the Gospel; use words when necessary.*

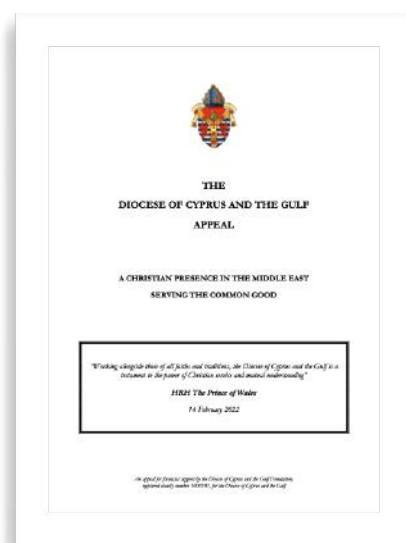
I thank you for all of that, for the joy of being with you again, for the friendships and relationships that enable me to speak with a deeper authenticity after visiting and witnessing the different issues and the various blessings that each place holds. I look forward to continuing opportunities to be with you and learn even more to share with The Episcopal Church. May God's peace be with you all.

Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf Foundation



Michael Cole, chairman of the Trustees of the Foundation of Cyprus and the Gulf greeted Synod, and shared his pleasure at being back at Synod after an absence of four years. He introduced his fellow Trustee Susan Cooper—a regular Synod attendee—as well as new Trustee Helen Perry.

The Foundation was set up in in 1990 to provide financial support to the Diocese. A Funding Appeal, set up in 2020, was making good progress: despite covid, a total of GBP122,000 had been raised. Those interested in finding out more were invited to contact Susan for a copy of the Appeal document.



**FOR A COPY OF THE FOUNDATION APPEAL DOCUMENT,
CONTACT SUSAN COOPER AT
SUSANCOOPER@HEDSTONE2537.PLUS.COM**

(contd from page 12)

The Reverend Drew Schmotzer asked Bishop James if the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf could offer financial and other, spiritual, prayerful support.

Bishop James responded, “When mention is made of the tripartite fellowship (between the companion dioceses) it touches the heart, because the reason why we came together was so that we could support one another on this journey of faith. And it is my prayer and wish that this fellowship continues, and that we find ways to visit each other—some of you come to Thika for pastoral experience, and some of our people come here. Because when I sit here I know I will not go back the way I came. I have a lot to take back. You can imagine that if many people came to Thika and many also visited you, we would be able to support one another

in a big way. That is my prayer, and that would be most welcome. Let’s be more active.”

Revd Drew asked if next year’s Synod could consider offering financial support to the Diocese of Thika.

Archdeacon Christopher responded by recalling the renewal of companion links signed in 2016 by the Bishops of Thika, Exeter, and Cyprus and the Gulf, noting that the arrangement had specifically not included financial exchanges between the dioceses, except in very small ways. “The relationship is rooted in spiritual fellowship for our mutual journeying and learning together in mission and discipleship,” he said. “It would have to go right down to the foundational document if that relationship were significantly to change.”



Mission to Seafarers

The Reverend John Attenborough, Regional Director for the Mission to Seafarers (MtS—Middle East and South Asia) and Chaplain to Cyprus ports, touched first on progress towards establishing an MtS presence in Saudi Arabia. Arab-world regional coordinator Raeid Tashtousch attended the 2023 Saudi Maritime Congress, touring the port facilities at Dammam and Jeddah and meeting officials.

At the same time, however, ongoing regional instability had put a stop to efforts to set up operations in Aden and Beirut. An important focus in the coming months was to work with DP World to reestablish access to terminals following covid. It was hoped that Princess Anne’s visit could help, as the historically the UAE had accounted for a significant share of welfare and justice issues.

Ninety percent of global trade is carried by ship, and the Red Sea route through the Suez Canal usually plays a critical part in moderating the cost of transporting goods. But with the safety of ships and their crew at risk in the Red Sea, the longer—more expensive route—around the Cape was increasingly the route of choice.

“You might think, well, everything’s fine, because all the ships are going around the Cape,” said Revd John. But the increase in cost, up from \$1,500 to \$10,000 per container, is passed on to consumers, including the poorest.

And the fate of the *Galaxy Leader*—a ship recently seized by Houthi rebels—spoke to the terrible dangers faced by crew. “The *Galaxy* is still in Yemen,” he said, “the crew held against their will, at gunpoint. Men and women going about their duties who, through no fault of their own, have been caught up in a political situation, their lives in danger for every one of us here. So please do remember seafarers in your thoughts and prayers, and the knock-on effect of the Red Sea crisis.”



(CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) ARCHBISHOP HOSAM VISITED MTS IN AQABA—PICTURED WITH MTS’S RAEID TASHTOUSH, WHOSE RESPONSIBILITIES COVER TRACKING SHIPS AT RISK OF ATTACK AS THEY PASS THROUGH THE RED SEA; MTS PERSONNEL INCLUDE REVD KENT MIDDLETON (RIGHT) IN THE UAE—WHERE MTS PRESIDENT HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS ANNE RECENTLY VISITED; MTS SECRETARY-GENERAL REVD CANON ANDREW WRIGHT; AND REVD FRANKLIN ISAAC (LEFT) IN BAHRAIN



Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf



*The Reverend Canon Chris Butt, Chair of the
Association of the Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf,
brought Synod up to date with its work*

Like the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, the leadership of the Friends is in transition. It was a privilege for me to be elected as Chair of the Committee of the Friends at our AGM in August last year. This was in succession to Ian Calder, who has served the Diocese in both Cyprus and the Gulf in a range of parishes through interregna and sabbaticals, bringing that experience to the leadership of the Friends over several years. In addition, Helen Smith stood down as Treasurer and Rachel Bainbridge was elected in her place. Helen kindly continued to design the Friends' 2023 Christmas card.

The objects of the Friends, briefly, is to provide a way of connecting those (at present, mostly in the UK) who have an interest in supporting the ongoing life of the Diocese; to promote communications with and across the Diocese; to pray for the ministry of the Bishop, Archdeacons and Chaplaincies of the Diocese; and to support the work of the Diocese through the Bishop's Discretionary Fund.

Some of this is done individually, especially prayer for the Diocese, through the invaluable resource of the Prayer Diary, but there are regular gatherings of the Friends and in the past year there have been four:

A Gathering in Gloucester in the South-west of England in March arranged by Ian Calder with a Eucharist and leisurely lunch in the St Mary de Crypt centre followed by an informative tour of Gloucester Cathedral; a Retreat at Launde Abbey in May, stimulatingly led by both Andy and Navina Thompson, now in the Diocese of London following lengthy service in the Gulf. This was also an opportunity for the Friends to say their farewell to Archbishop Michael and Julia, for him to give a thought-provoking Bible exposition and his final thumbnail sketch report of life in the Chaplaincies of the Diocese; a Eucharist and the AGM in All Hallows by the Tower in August, a Church in the shadow of the Tower of London, which was followed by an excellent lunch in the church, kindly arranged by the All Hallows team; and a Gath-

ering in York in the North of England, arranged by Ron Maitland, which included a Eucharist in Bar Convent Chapel, a leisurely lunch, and a visit to the historic Fairfax House.

Following the Friends AGM, a questionnaire was sent out to the membership to sound out opinion and ideas as to whether there was sufficient continuing support for the Retreat at Launde Abbey, which has become increasingly expensive.

On the whole, members looked to their local Church for provision of retreats, and for gatherings of Friends to be important opportunities for conversation.

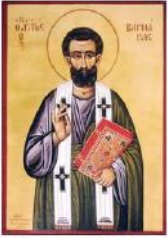
I had a particular concern that the Friends reach out and welcome those from the Diocese coming to the UK to study or to work in the National Health Service. In the last year, from Bahrain alone, I have been aware of two Indian families working in London and Worcester in the NHS, a Ugandan doing a Masters in International Hospitality in the University of Hertfordshire and an Indian doctor, doing a Masters in Public Health Management in Birmingham.

All have visited or stayed with us in our home, but we can only be effective as Friends in reaching out in welcome and support of them and to others returning to the UK from the Diocese, if Chaplains pass on contact details to us and encourage membership of the Friends. So, please have that conversation with me during Synod.

One positive suggestion to come from the questionnaire was to have a regular Zoom meeting, specifically to pray for the Diocese, and this will be launched in March, initially on a quarterly basis. This is an opportunity for the Friends to reach out beyond the UK, though we do recognise the challenges of different time zones.

As Friends we are hugely grateful for our time and experience of the Diocese and pray for its continuing flourishing in the future. May God bless you in your service.

*"The Friends
reach out and
welcome those from
the Diocese coming to
the UK to study
or to work"*



Barnabas Team



*The Barnabas Team works to encourage
spiritual development and enrich discipleship.*

Its report to Synod was delivered by Chairman Sarel du Plessis

Sarel referred to changing ministry dynamics in the Diocese, which the Barnabas Team was working to address through online initiatives aimed at ensuring the group continued to serve as a practical support to ministry. "Our prayerful ambition is to remain fresh, relevant and able to meet the discipleship, pastoral and spiritual needs of our Diocese," he said.

He described the Team as accountable through its Chairman to the Bishop, and to Synod through the Standing and Finance Committee.

Following the departure of longstanding Retreats Facilitator Maggie Le-Roy to take up a post in London and the retirement of the Reverend Ian Nicholson and his wife Carol to New Zealand, the Reverend Gill Nisbet had been responding to those across the Diocese seeking to explore spiritual direction, while Sarel would continue to act as interim Retreats Coordinator for Katafiyio until the appointment of a new Retreats Facilitator under the new Diocesan Bishop.

Two other Spiritual Directors were available to the Diocese: the Reverend Roy Shaw (a retired priest based in the Diocese of York) and Sue Riddell (a Spiritual Director based in the UK).

The Team produced a range of material to encourage prayer and the cultivation of new habits of faith, supporting individuals in their faith journeys.

The Retreats Newsletter, circulated monthly, and the quarterly Bread for the Journey are both posted on the Diocesan website (<https://www.cypgulf.org/retreats/>), while a regular spoken Meditation is available from the Diocesan YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsC9htuAdsnHDFvKlugo1tXCBkIyu7VJ5>).

The Diocesan Retreat Katafiyio at Angel's Hills had been much appreciated by groups and individuals from Cyprus and abroad, whether for quiet days or personal retreats. Recent visitors included groups from the Catholic, Maronite and Coptic churches, as well as a group of military staff under the guidance of the chaplain to UN forces. A number of agencies working in the region have also expressed interest in using Katafiyio as a safe haven amidst ongoing conflict in the region.

The Diocesan Retreats facility continued to be associated with the UK Retreats Association and the Anglican Association for Promoting Retreats (APR).

Sarel thanked on behalf of the Team all "who faithfully pray for the Barnabas Team Retreats Ministry". He also thanked fellow Team members Canon John Banfield, the Reverend Anne Fatcher, the Venerable Christopher Fatcher, the Venerable Dr Michael Mbona and the Reverend Gill Nisbet.



*If you would like to speak confidentially with a Spiritual Director
or would like to discuss individual or group guided retreats,
please contact Revd Gill Nisbet*

at gillnisbet@standrewauh.org

*If you would like to book a retreat or a relaxing break at Katafiyio
please contact:*

*Sarel du Plessis at retreatscypgulf@gmail.com
tel: +357 22671220 mobile: +357 9915 5092*

or visit www.cypgulf.org/retreats

Yemen

Archdeacon Christopher shared an overview of Diocesan presence in Yemen

After the creation of a single country under the name of the Republic of Yemen, the Anglican Church property known in colonial times as Christ Church, in Tawahi, Aden, was in 1993 handed over to the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf by the Yemeni government.

The property has been developed to extend Christian ministry, the large Victorian Church being redesigned to include space for a church hall and a hostel, while a primary medical care clinic was opened in 1996 to serve the poor in the Tawahi area, and accommodation for the parish priest, a clinic medical director and foreign staff was constructed in the mid-1990's.

The congregation, made up of commercial, NGO and diplomatic expatriate personnel, was always small but faithful and active. Since the outbreak of the civil war, there has not been an expatriate community (other than heavily guarded UN-sponsored compounds) in Aden. The Anglican Priest and his wife were evacuated in early 2015.

The partnership between the Diocese and the Ministry of Health in Aden has been a good example of compassion and care for people in need without regard to religious or tribal identities. The reputation of the Anglican Church is high: it is widely known and respected that we are there to help the poor in one of the least developed countries in the world.

In 2014 when the Yemeni Government opened a small hospital about half a kilometre from Christ Church, it was decided that the Ras Morbat Clinic should focus primarily on eye care that was not offered at the local government health clinic.

The Clinic is staffed entirely by Yemenis. They provide a large spectrum of care, from general vision tests and prescriptions for lenses, to surgery for cataracts and other corrective procedures. Patients come mostly from the Tawahi area.

In the past, the staff visited schools to offer sight tests and recommend prescriptions for spectacles if needed. For many years the staff have held outside 'clinics', offering treatment and surgery in areas quite remote from Aden, including Socotra, Mokha and the

UNHCR camp for Somali refugees 200 km west of Aden.

The Diocese is proud that the Ras Morbat Eye Clinic has continued to function normally in spite of all of the difficulties, but is anxious for the health services of Yemen to be restored to meet wider medical needs.

The staff are very dedicated and proud of their heritage of service to the people of Tawahi and the Aden area. The financial support from around the world that enables them to serve their fellow Muslims in Aden and the fact that the Clinic is located in the church compound gives them a sense of God's blessing on their work. Treatment costs at the Clinic are kept as low as possible, to cover the provision of consumables and intraocular lens implants. But not being able to pay does not prevent treatment. The Ministry of Health is also using rooms at the clinic to administer vaccinations to school children.

When Archdeacon Christopher and Anne visited in 2021, there was interest about when the Diocese might be able to appoint a priest to Christ Church again. Recent repairs to the outside of the church have also prompted local people to expect renewed activity.

Over the past few years, with two streams of funding support from TEC, the Diocese has been exploring the appointment of a parish priest and port chaplain (in partnership with the Mission to Seafarers).

A (so far unsuccessful) search for a new medical director was recently launched, and advertising for a priest was due to begin at the start of 2024. However, increased instability in the region following 7 October makes that impossible. The impact of Houthi attacks on shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, and the missile attacks on Houthi bases by the US and UK are unsettling the whole area, affecting the lives of all Yemenis and making foreigners more at risk. The effect on shipping is causing supply issues in an area which already has millions at risk of famine and disease. The country lacks fuel for power and suffers severe cuts.

The clinic is funded first by donations from many churches and individuals. The Diocese tops this up to around €60,000 pa for salaries *(contd on page 25)*

“Financial support enables staff to serve their fellow Muslims and the fact the Clinic is in the church compound gives them a sense of God’s blessing on their work”

*Joel Kelling, Anglican Alliance Facilitator for
the Middle East, briefed Synod on recent activities*



Anglican Alliance

The Anglican Alliance works in the fields of development, relief and advocacy, with a focus on the five thematic areas of Resilience and Disaster Response, Covid-19 and Beyond, People on the Move, Safeguarding Creation, and Tackling Inequalities—the last three being areas of Joel’s work.

Working alongside Kerk in Actie (the Protestant Church that is part of in the Netherland’s development and relief organisation), the Middle East Council of Churches and the Gulf Churches Fellowship, as well as Al Amana Centre in Oman and Sabeel in Jerusalem, the Anglican Alliance initiated *Church in Migration*—a project across the MENA region that included a workshop hosted by Christ Church Jebel Ali in January 2024. The event brought together representatives from the MECC, GCF and the World Council of Churches, and indigenous and migrant Christian leaders and church members, to assess responses to people in need across the region and identify priority areas in terms of both theological resourcing and practical action.

Joel extended particular thanks to the Reverend Jim Young and the team at Christ Church, and David Axtell for his help in assisting participation from Bahrain. Although difficulties acquiring visas restricted participation, it was hoped that national-level gatherings could be held in the near future.

In May, Companion Link Dioceses met on Safe Migration in Bahrain, (remotely) linking the IOM, CAPA and 50Eight—of the Just Good Work app—together with participants from Cyprus and the Gulf, Thika, and Exeter.

Efforts to revive the Anglican Working Group on Migration continued, to improve Communion-level discussion and response to mass migration, and a consultation on Mediterranean migration was also under

consideration, particularly given reports from the Province of Alexandria on the experiences of sub-Saharan Africans in Tunisia; ongoing challenges facing economic migrants and refugees and asylum-seekers in Cyprus; and the continued threat of mass displacement of Palestinians. There was also conversation with USPG about their planned summit on migration in 2025.

COP28 was the focus of work in the area of Creation Care over the past year, including webinars and high-level meetings of faith leaders in the course of the summit meeting.

With the Anglican Alliance full members of ACT (Action by Churches Together) as of December 2023, there were opportunities for Anglicans to engage in ACT structures at a local level, particularly in Iraq, which has a local ACT Forum, and Yemen, where there are ongoing ACT appeals.

The ACT/Anglican Alliance climate justice working group in the Middle East, of which Joel is co-leader, organised a symposium with the Association of Theological Institutions of the Middle East in Lebanon in October. It also launched a Regional Hub of actors working on climate justice. Open to any Christian organisation in the region, the Diocese was encouraged to consider participating.

Planning for the Season of Creation (1 September-4 October) had, for the first time, included voices from the Middle East, and a celebration guide was circulated to parishes. Meanwhile, the Anglican Communion’s ‘Communion Forest’ was working with communities around the world on verifiable carbon offsetting, helping to restore historic grasslands, plant mangroves, and cultivate micro-gardens, improving the lives of those at the frontline of safeguarding God’s creation.

(contd from page 24)

(doctors, nurses, technicians and the administrator) and maintenance. The Diocese receives a number of donations from parishes and individuals towards the Clinic, however donations have decreased in recent years.

Archdeacon Christopher speaks every fortnight to the administrator, Mansour Yousuf, who drives some distance outside Aden with a drum in the back of the minibus to buy diesel for the generator. This is vital to cover the electricity cuts, which are usually shorter at

this time of year than in high summer.

Mansour reports that the Clinic is busy with eye surgery, laser treatments and eye examinations. Refugees travel for hours each Tuesday to come to the Clinic—mainly locally displaced people and Somalians. Recent good news is that an Indian doctor working in another clinic is due to begin supervising Clinic doctors in using a piece of surgical equipment that enables less invasive surgery.

House Elections

House of Laity

House of Clergy



**CYPRUS CHAIR
DEBORAH
GRAHAM**



**GULF CHAIR
CHRISTIANA
NWANDU**



**CHAIR
REVD GILL
NISBET**



**DEPUTY CHAIR
REVD GEORGE
VIDIAKIN**

The House of Laity and House of Clergy held elections to a number of positions

STANDING AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

HOUSE OF LAITY

Elected Members

Cyprus: Mrs Deborah Graham	2023 – 2026	<i>(re-elected)</i>
Gulf: Mr David Axtell	2022 – 2025	<i>(re-elected)</i>

Elected Alternates

Cyprus: Mr Chris Clapham	2024 – 2027
Gulf: Ms Lucy Makina	2022 – 2025

HOUSE OF CLERGY

The Ven Christopher Futchter *(ex officio)*

The Ven Dr Michael Mbona *(ex officio)*

Elected Members

Cyprus: The Very Revd Jeremy Crocker	2022 – 2025	<i>(re-elected)</i>
Gulf: The Revd Kent Middleton	2022 – 2025	<i>(re-elected)</i>

Elected Alternates

Cyprus: The Revd John Attenborough	2024 – 2027
Gulf: The Revd Mark Derry	2024 – 2027

CO-CHAIRS: HOUSE OF LAITY

Cyprus: Mrs Deborah Graham	2022 – 2025
Gulf: Mrs Christiana Nwandu	2023 – 2026

Elected Alternates

Cyprus: Ms Maria Evangelou	2023 – 2026
Gulf: Mrs Beulah Miller	2024 – 2027

CHAIR and DEPUTY: HOUSE OF CLERGY

The Revd Gill Nisbet	2024 – 2025	<i>(completing Revd Ian Nicholson term)</i>
The Revd George Vidiakin <i>(Deputy Chair)</i>	2024 – 2026	<i>(completing Revd Gill Nisbet term)</i>

PROVINCIAL SYNOD

HOUSE OF LAITY

Cyprus: Mrs Deborah Graham	2021 – 2026
Gulf: Mr David Axtell	2021 – 2026

Elected Alternates

Cyprus: Mrs Sue Mantovani	2022 – 2027
Gulf: Mrs Louise Bougourd	2023 – 2028

HOUSE OF CLERGY

The Ven Christopher Futchter 2021 – 2026

Elected Alternate

The Revd Faiz Jerjes 2022 – 2027

(contd on page 29)

(contd from page 28)

WORKING GROUP to review Diocesan Constitution and Standing Orders

HOUSE OF LAITY

Elected Members

Cyprus: Ms Linda Balfe
Mr Chris Clapham
Gulf: Brig (retd) Tim Allen
Mr Mathew Joseph

Elected Alternates

Cyprus: Mr Talal Kwar
Gulf: Mr Pushpak Gilbert

HOUSE OF CLERGY

Elected Members

Cyprus: The Very Revd Jeremy Crocker 2024 - 2027
The Ven Christopher Fatcher 2024 - 2027
Gulf: The Very Revd Richard Fermer 2024 - 2027
The Revd Kent Middleton 2024 - 2027

Elected Alternates

Cyprus: The Revd Paul Carr 2024 - 2027
Gulf: The Revd Prem Mitra 2024 - 2027

SUB-COMMITTEE to draw up terms for, and consider, applications to Contingency Fund

HOUSE OF LAITY

Elected Members

Ms Manisha Cornelius 2024 - 2027
Mr Arun Kanagaraj 2024 - 2027
Mrs Marina Peters 2024 - 2027
Mr Gabriel Simpri 2024 - 2027

Elected Alternates

(tbc)
(tbc)

HOUSE OF CLERGY

Elected Members

Cyprus: The Revd Alec Mitchell 2024 - 2027
Gulf: The Revd Franklin Isaac 2024 - 2027

Elected Alternates

Cyprus: The Revd Geoff Graham 2024 - 2027
Gulf: The Revd MD Johnson 2024 - 2027

(contd from page 8)

of God's love in this world.

Mission is the heartbeat of the church. When she was Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, Katharine Jefferts Schori said, "The heart of this church will slowly turn to stone if we think our primary mission work is to those already in the pews, inside our beautiful churches. We are in cardiac crisis if we think we can close the doors, swing incense and sing our hymns, and all will be right with the world. The heart of this body is mission."

The question, as one of my mentors put it, is how do we allow the Spirit at every level of the church to offer the jolt of a pacemaker to tweak the rhythm of this heart? How do we respond to this pacemaker jolt of the Spirit so that our wills are in rhythm with God's own will for the world? How do we align our wills with the heartbeat of God, so that when God's heart beats, or when God's heart aches, we find that being reflected in our lives, and our mission.

The missionary calling is, in some ways, the calling to embrace cultures of discipleship.

And sometimes the way in which we often understand mission is slightly different from cultivating discipleship. Sometimes the language can be one where we want to be in control, where we have our own plans, strategies and agendas.

No doubt these are all important. But ultimately the question is, what is the priority for our mission today? Is it cultivating cultures of discipleship or something else? How do we deepen our thinking about Christian witness?

Cultivating cultures of discipleship is a hard one because, again, it is not about us: it is about God doing God's work in our lives, in our churches, among our people.

When we speak about mission through the lens of power and cultures of discipleship, we reflect on how sometimes it may be necessary for us to be out of God's way so that God's love can flow into people's lives; sometimes, it is necessary for us to be channels of God's grace, so that God's grace can work through us. Because the Spirit is something over which we can have no control.

The challenge is to move beyond functional understandings of mission, remembering that mission is not a function of the church but rather, the church is a function in the already up-and-running mission of God in this world.

How can we become part of this already up-and-running mission of God in this world?

One metaphor to consider is whether we set our sails to catch the winds of the Spirit or whether we seek to row on our own resources, our own strengths. Sometimes these gifts need to be aligned to where God is calling us, to where God's Spirit is calling us in the

context of our ministries, compelling us and calling us to new ways of being God's missionary people, embracing the missionary calling in our context.

In some ways, becoming disciples of Christ is to recognise that before we begin our work by witness and preaching the Holy Spirit, the giver of life is already active, and therefore the question is, how do we cooperate in the work of the Spirit?

There is often much talk about the church possessing the Holy Spirit. But I often wonder, how would our mission thinking be different if we think of the Spirit possessing the church, the Spirit calling us, the Spirit embracing us, the Spirit moving us, rather than thinking, I've got the Spirit to apply to something that I think is important.

That is part of being in with-ness with God, among God's people, among God's creation. This is what makes mission relational: the partnership with God, with God's people and God's creation.

I want us to reflect on what gifts we bring the church—a community of gift-giving, formed on the basis of the one who came as God's own gift to us, Jesus Christ, who came to us as one of his own but whose own unfortunately did not receive him.

One of the challenges of looking at witness through the lens of power is to think about how we can receive the gift that the other brings. How do we receive the gift that the other brings, so that my own ministry, my own life, can be enriched and emboldened to take a different step in the way in which I am involved in mission with God?

Anglicanism, as we all know, is a unique phenomenon, and we can see the diversity represented in this room. One of my colleagues at Ripon College Cuddesdon, Mark Chapman, has an interesting way of putting it, saying that while Anglicanism was once like a global brand with a quality control office based in Lambeth, like McDonald's or Coca-Cola, today Anglicanism, with its huge diversity of contemporary forms, is much more akin to locally produced and—more importantly—locally designed goods aimed primarily at a domestic market.

So there is an incarnational dimension to each of our contexts. And mission is about how we are involved in that incarnational dimension of this context.

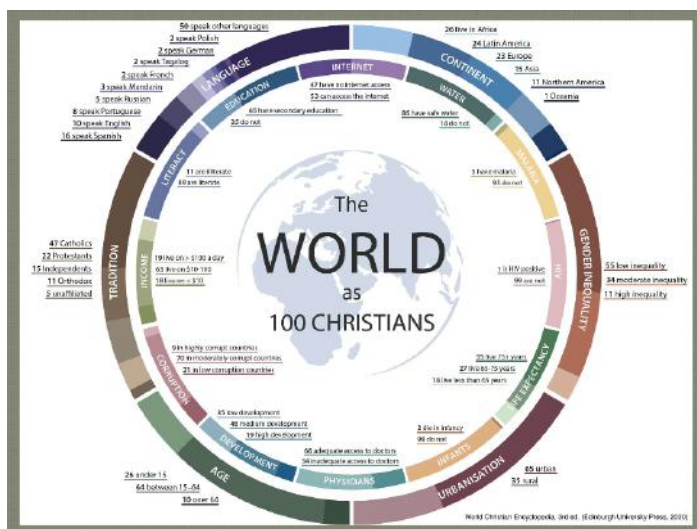
When we look at a global context, we see that we are called to be in God's mission in a changing context; we speak about the changing face of Christianity.

About 50 years ago John Mbiti, a Kenyan theologian, said, "The centres of the church universality are no longer in Geneva, Rome, Athens, Paris, London, New York, but Kinshasa, Buenos Aires, Addis Ababa, and Manila,"—and you here at Synod would add many other places, that you come from.

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The graphic below shows what the world looks like as 100 Christians—a picture that is very different to even 50 years ago. The demographic of Christianity is changing.



Our missionary call needs to respond to this change. How are we doing that? Some people have called it globalisation from below. But you also need to remember that what is called the phenomenon of world Christianity is not something out there; it is also in some of your parishes. How is our mission in this context something led by the Spirit, to minister in new ways, to become what can be called a church in the round, where there are no tables or corners? One where everybody has a place around God's own table, the table at which we are fed, by Jesus's own body and blood, but also freed—to live a new life, as disciples of Christ.

Another dimension of context is religious pluralism—the ways in which we can be religious, inter religiously, in the context of our own relationships. How can we be better Christians among people of other faiths? This, and the context of poverty, will be explored further in the next two addresses.

On the theme of witnessing through witness and the question of power, there are at least two ways in which people deal with power. One is the tendency to abuse power. As they say, power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.

In a sermon after his enthronement as Archbishop of Wales, Rowan Williams said, "Weak-spirited, we abuse power more by avoiding it than by seizing it."

Power, he said, is something humans both seek and fear. At its best, it can be a generous impulse: we are eager to share what we know is good, to make others see its goodness too. Yet the prospect of power also frightens us: to have power exposes us to criticism, to the difficulties of choice, to the expectations of others and the inescapable knowledge that we are not going

to be able to fulfil them. There is, said Archbishop Rowan, something bizarrely satisfying about the role of a bystander: they can challenge but not be challenged; be the prosecution, not the defendant.

Let us do a little bit of witnessing, alongside Jonah.

Jonah, as we all know, has a missionary calling. Jonah is a fascinating book, and I don't know whether I will be saying anything different. But then we have to realise that genre studies have almost become an industry and despite great waves of words tearing up storms on the sea of scholarship, Jonah refuses to be drowned.

The reason I'm choosing Jonah is to connect mission to the question of power. Jonah seems to be somebody who avoids power. God calls him to be a missionary, but he runs away.

Why? If you look at the first chapter of Jonah, we do not have any clear-cut answers. But there is an answer from silence. Sometimes there is this deep silence within us, where we struggle with why we're not able to make that one move, why we're not able to make that act of giving up something, why we are not able to move forward one step to extending a hand of reconciliation to somebody else.

Some of these contexts are complex, and some carry with them a deep silence that we struggle with—almost an abyss.

Jonah, in some way, speaks to that struggle. He doesn't have any straight answers for why he does not follow the path of God, or what he knows that God is calling him to, or the will of God. But there he is. In some ways, the story of Jonah speaks to the human tendency of refusing to name our silences.

There is a beautiful prayer by Dorothy McRae-McMahon:

Visit us deeply in the life-places we refuse to name. Speak to us in the silences, O God, where our words of guilt and regret lie unspoken and listen in the spaces where our souls whisper in longing for different ways of being.

Jonah is an ambiguous character. I always think that if Jonah had an email, it might be Jonah@Flight-from-God.com. He's not an either/or. He's not either good or bad. He is a little bit like most of us.

He is somebody who probably ran away from God for reasons he thought were good—not necessarily for the wrong reasons, not necessarily out of cowardice. If you look at the Bible verse, we see that he probably believed in his convictions, because the text says he paid *her* fare, which means, according to some scholars, that he paid the entire fare for the ship, to get away from God.

The story of Jonah is the story of the doubt, which in our story is the harbinger of hope, become a symbol of hopelessness.

(contd on page 30)

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So, we also have Jonah as somebody who abuses power as comes across in the prayer from the belly of the whale, which smacks of superiority—where he speaks of how his God is better than the other gods; how his God will judge everything, though he hasn't really obeyed his call.

Jonah also speaks to the tendency, in our acts of mission, to abuse the power that the scriptures give us in different parts of the world, to claim ourselves to be better than others. This is one way in which much of the abuse in the name of mission happens—where we claim to be better than others, in the name of the God who is on our side.

Jonah is not a neat story. It is what somebody calls a story of messy missiology—one that we sometimes try to straighten out.

Yvonne Sherwood says, “In the strange interpretive alchemy that converts the gospel of Jonah into a mini proto-gospel, what is lost is the sense of messiness.”

We often see the story of Jonah coming out of the whale as a symbol of the resurrection. But when we think about it, a fish vomiting is a sign of disgust—a sign of rejection. An interesting question, then, is when does the fish actually throw up Jonah? After his bad theology. He is praising God, but he is also making his theology an alibi for his moral superiority.

Chris Bowman offers a fascinating interpretation of this: “In his aquatic timeout, living on solitude and sushi, Jonah composes a prayer, as so many of us religious professionals do. Jonah cut and pasted a prayer from Psalms. Thus he is sure to include the requisite formula of praise and adoration, confession, assurance of pardon, and petition, all with correct and well-worn words composed in well-practised phrases. And after hearing these well-practised, liturgically correct professionalised prayers droning on and on inside her, that poor fish just couldn't take it anymore. And one last hurling commences.

So, there is this messy missiology that can be a part of our lives, and sometimes it can go hand in hand with our theologies.

When we speak about mission through the lens of power, we should look back at the theologies we have embodied, the theologies we have inherited, and see that much of it actually leads to wellness, not sickness.

So as Douglas John Hall says, “Mission does not busy itself so much with the verbal acknowledgement

of Christ's sovereignty, as with the concrete consequences of that for the here and now.”

Jonah's story is also the story of grace as we know it—a beautiful story of how God meets us in mission in the most unexpected places. God, and God's Spirit, can encounter us in the most unexpected spaces, even

in the belly of a whale. Jonah flees from God, only to encounter that in the belly of a fish. So the unexpected become points of God encounters, an opportunity.

As we think about mission and about the leading of the Spirit beyond our own comfort, I want us to reflect on where we are open to encounter God's unexpected grace.

According to some interpreters, Jonah is followed by a male fish but is portrayed as praying from the womb of a female fish. His God encounter becomes a place for new life and for a renewed understanding of God.

So how do these encounters that call us out of our comfort zones

also become moments, the wombs, from which new life is birthed? How can we become people who are in some ways filled with God's grace, so that we can bring something new to the world? How do we embrace the gifts that God has given us, so that we can be engaged in Christian witness with God, led by God's Spirit—but also with others, in a spirit of humility and expectation, waiting with anticipation, to encounter God in the one who is different from us, with the anticipation of encountering God in what can be unexpected?

In doing this, we may be surprised by the richness of God's redeeming grace, which was made manifest in the least likely of places, Jesus Christ on the cross, and made that cross the pathway to this understanding of witness as with-ness.

“Mission does not busy itself so much with the verbal acknowledgement of Christ's sovereignty, as with the concrete consequences of that for the here and now”



Reports

Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East



Archbishop Hosam provided an update on developments in the Province, including hopes for the Diocese of Iran, as well news from the Middle East Council of Churches (below)

Archbishop Hosam began by noting the role of Provincial Synod in approving the previous day's election of a new Bishop of Cyprus and the Gulf—a significant event not just for the Diocese but for the Province, too.

Referring to the Diocese of Iran and “a very strong candidate” for bishop of that diocese, he said, “I hope that in the near future we might hear good news about the appointment and consecration of a bishop in Iran, completing the leadership in all the dioceses so that we can now function properly as a province.”

He added that he was “not putting any hindrance, obstacles or conditions on the process of appointing a bishop there—we really want to see that happening”.

Joel Kelling was invited to touch on other events related to the wider activities of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, including the ACC18 meeting in Ghana where Archbishop Hosam was elected vice-chair of the Anglican Consultative Council standing committee, further bolstering the presence of the Province within the global communion.

The meeting in Ghana included extensive discussions about Anglicans and colonial legacy, “and how we continue to grapple with that”. Joel referred to “the missional history of the church that goes hand in hand, sometimes, with colonialism in West Africa, which was tied very clearly to the slave trade”.

“It was an opportunity for us as a communion globally to engage with who we are today, as the children of enslaved people and the children of people who enslaved, and to work together in reconciliation.”

The ACC also resolved to sign the fossil-fuel non-proliferation treaty—a decision that gave the Anglican Communion particular credibility at COP28 when speaking with some of the small island nations most affected by the impacts of man-made climate change.

The Anglican Church of Canada was noted for the support extended to the Province and to the Diocese of Jerusalem in the course of ACC18, with resolutions on the search for peace with justice in the Holy Land, and on the persecution of Christians in the Middle East.

In October, the Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue (chaired by Bishop Michael Lewis) met in Jerusalem, followed by a meeting of the Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Dialogue in Jordan.

Archbishop Hosam also referred to the recent Anglican-Roman Catholic summit—“A wonderful gathering of 27 pairs of Anglican and Catholic bishops, who met for three days in Rome, three days in Canterbury, meeting with the Pope and celebrating a wonderful ecumenical service on St Paul's Conversion Day, in which the Pope and Archbishop Justin both preached.”

Archbishop Hosam was due to attend a private meeting in Rome in April, on behalf of the Anglican Communion.

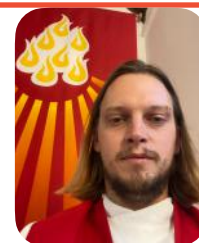
The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)

Established in 1974, the Middle East Council of Churches was marking its 50th year with a series of events that had begun with a week of prayer for Christian unity in Beirut and performances by more than 300 musicians and singers. The Anglican Church of All Saints hosted the closing service, at which the Maronite Patriarch preached.

“So Anglicans have been involved in a wonderful way over this week, in Rome and Canterbury, and in Beirut,” said Archbishop Hosam. “We thank God for this wonderful spirit among Christians and we continue to pray for unity and tranquility among churches.”

Looking ahead, Archbishop Hosam noted that 2025 would mark 1700 years since the Council of Nicaea met in 325—an anniversary for which the MECC (and Archbishop Hosam, as a member of its executive committee) was working on a programme of celebration.

Provincial Conference for young church leaders



The Reverend George Vidiakin provided a snapshot of a conference part-funded by USPG, on the theme Whom shall I send? The call to serve in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

Held in August 2023 in the Jordanian town of Rafah at the Theodor Schneller School—an institution run by the Diocesan of Jerusalem offering schooling from kindergarten through to vocational training—the Conference was attended by around 30 participants from the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf and the Diocese of Jerusalem, with young people from Nablus, Doha, Dubai, Sharjah and Manama, alongside clergy from Jerusalem, Nazareth, Nablus, Doha, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait and Larnaca, and was led by Dr Al Quran.

The gathering aimed to help young people aged 18-30 to discern God's call—in terms of theology, reflecting on stories from the Bible and listening to diverse personal stories, but also in terms of serving one's neighbours.

There was a rich programme of worship and talks—on God's call and its meaning, on ministering and on spiritual gifts—as well as visits to the Baptismal Site and Mount Nebo, and to educational institutions run by the Diocese of Jerusalem. “A visit to the Arab Episcopal School, a Diocesan institution for blind and visually impaired chil-

dren, offered a valuable opportunity to hear about its inspiring work on integration and inclusivity,” said the Reverend George Vidiakin.

There were hopes to hold a second conference, this time in the Gulf, and to include attendees from other parts of the province, such as Northern Cyprus and Iran. In the meantime, participants would meet via Zoom.

Joel Kelling, who co-organised the Conference, said participants were encouraged to invite a friend to join them to support them in their journey going forward. He also asked clergy to consider whether there were other individuals in their congregations who showed an interest in leadership—and not only those with a call to ordained ministry—who might want to participate. “We're all called to serve in some way, shape or form, in our lives and in the life of the church,” he said.



BELOW FAR LEFT: ARCHBISHOP HOSAM PREACHED AT A SERVICE IN THE SCHOOL CHURCH, LATER (CENTRE) SHARING INSIGHTS FROM HIS OWN SPIRITUAL JOURNEY AND CALL TO MINISTRY



THE REVEREND MARK DERRY (LEFT) AND THE REVEREND CHRISTINE TRAINOR SPOKE ABOUT THE TYPES OF GOD'S CALL, AND DISCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Synod Motions

Motion 1a

Synod receives and approves February 2023 Synod minutes

The motion was approved with 6 abstentions

Motion 1b

Synod receives and approves September 2023 Synod minutes

The motion was approved with 4 abstentions

Motion 2

This Synod will establish a working group to review the Diocesan Constitution and Standing Orders, consulting widely to present an interim report to Synod 2025, for approval at Synod 2026, consisting of:

*2 licensed clergy (Gulf) elected by House of Clergy
2 licensed clergy (Cyprus) elected by House of Clergy
2 (Gulf) members of House of Laity elected by HoL
2 (Cyprus) members of House of Laity elected by HoL
(Convenor and an adviser on Canon Law, to attend meetings and provide support, appointed by Standing and Finance Committee; election to include alternates (4)—one lay and one clergy for each archdeaconry)*

The motion was approved with 4 abstentions

Motion 3

Subject to final audit, Synod receives and approves the Diocesan (ACCL) financial statements for 2023

The motion was unanimously approved

Motion 4

Synod receives and approves reports on Diocesan programmes

The motion was unanimously approved

Motion 5

Synod receives and approves the proposed Diocesan budget for 2024

The motion was approved with 4 against

Motion 6

Synod authorises Standing Committee to sign loan agreements up to €100,000 during 2024, if required

The motion was approved with 14 against and 10 abstentions

Motion 7

This Synod will establish a sub-committee to draw up for approval by Synod terms for an application for a grant from the Contingency Fund and consider all applications to that Fund, consisting of:

*2 licensed clergy elected by House of Clergy
4 members of House of Laity elected by HoL
(Convenor to be elected from amongst and by members; Honorary Director of Finance to attend meetings and provide support; elected members to serve three-year terms, with a maximum of two consecutive full terms; election to include alternates (4)—2 lay and 2 clergy)*

The motion was approved with 3 against

Motion 8 (proposed by Sharjah)

This Synod will find ways to actively encourage the Diocese of Iran and provide assistance in training and supporting the clergy, so that a new Diocesan Bishop can be in place as soon as possible. This Synod will write to the President Bishop of our Province and the Archbishop of Canterbury to request them to intervene in appointing a bishop and re-opening churches in Iran.

The motion was approved

Motion 9 (proposed by Sharjah)

This Synod calls upon the Provincial Synod to encourage opportunities within the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East for cross-cultural training and ministry opportunity across dioceses, especially encouraging the building up of Arabic-speaking priests in the Gulf, and providing for expatriate congregations throughout the Province where needed

The motion was approved with 1 abstention

Motion 10 (proposed by Sharjah)

This Synod, valuing the links with the Diocese of Exeter and the Diocese of Thika, will find ways of furthering communication, prayer, and visitations among our companion dioceses in practical and tangible ways

The motion was unanimously approved

Motion 11 (proposed by Sharjah)

This Synod will rotate the meeting of Synod through all the countries of the Diocese, where it is allowed, so that the location of Synod is more equitable

The motion was approved

Motion 12 (proposed by Sharjah)

This Synod approves a tithe of 10% of its annual Diocesan budget to go directly to the “Contingency Fund”, established at Synod in February 2023, to help churches that are struggling beyond their normal financial means

The motion was not approved

(contd on page 36)

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(contd from page 33)

Motion 13 (proposed by Nicosia)

This Synod requests that, in view of the difficult situation the Diocesan finances are faced with, the Bishop, Archdeacons, Diocesan office staff and any other Diocesan-paid personnel consider accepting a 15% salary reduction for the year 2024

The motion was not approved

Motion 14

This Synod welcomes efforts to establish a charity in the USA known as American Friends of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf which would provide tax incentives for Americans wishing to donate funding for the Diocese, and actively seek ways to raise funds, advocate for the work of the diocese, and those whom it serves

The motion was approved with 1 abstention

Motion 15

This Synod confirms the appointment of Mr Chris Clapham as Trustee of the Jerusalem and the East Mission Trust (Cyprus)

The motion was approved

Motion 16

This Synod affirms the establishing of a working group to examine options to enhance episcopal leadership within the Gulf archdeaconry. The working group, co-opted by and operating under the direction of the Diocesan Bishop, will provide a report of its findings and recommendations to Synod, with interim reporting to the Standing and Finance Committee.

The motion was approved

Motion 17

This Synod affirms the holding of an interim, online (Zoom) Synod before that scheduled for February 2025

The motion was approved



**SYNOD 2024 MEMBERS, OBSERVERS AND STAFF
GOLDEN BAY HOTEL, LARNACA**

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