



**The Scottish Episcopal Church
The Parish Magazine of
St John the Evangelist Forres**

Charity Number SC010346



Summer

The Eagle

2015

RECTORS RAMBLINGS—

Its Summer! Or at least it is supposed to be, although at the time of writing there is no sign of a heat wave and as we are past the Summer Solstice the nights will begin to draw in!

Feelings about the rather gloomy weather have not been lightened of late by demanding debates regards same gender marriage at our General Synod and a proposed revision of ministry and mission within our diocese at local level.

Speaking personally I welcome the outcome of our General Synod regards beginning to address, at last, the issue of same gender marriage. I know that not all of you will agree with me.

I am not nearly so welcoming of the proposals for changing our approach to mission and ministry in our diocese. I know that not all of you will agree with me.

The Diocesan Proposals for change are given in full beginning on page 5 please read them and pray about them, I will welcome your views and be happy to discuss them with you.

I hope you have a sunny and blessed summer.

Fr Cliff

Vestry Seconds

Like buses, you wait for months (for something to write about) then lots (of issues) arrive at the same time. Six months have passed since I last wrote – but to be fair there have only been 3 Vestry meetings plus one extraordinary meeting in that time and, as usual, the bulk of the meetings have been taken up by mundane day to day business. There has also been a Diocesan Synod (which I missed), a Lay Representatives meeting (which Derek could not go to so I went in his stead) and a General Synod that Cliff and I both attended. Fortunately (or not, depending upon your point of view) just two matters dominated all of these meetings. The first is the publication of a series of proposals for a re-organisation of the administration of the Diocese and the second is the issue of same gender marriage within the Scottish Episcopal Church.

At the outset, I need to remind you that these scribblings of mine are just that – mine. As ever, I will try to report the topics in a balanced and unbiased way but what I write must inevitably be affected by my own perception.

Same Gender Marriage.

“With changes in civil law legislating for same-sex marriage, and same-sex couples seeking God’s blessing upon their partnerships, the Church is reflecting on the theological, pastoral and liturgical implications of these developments.” So begins a 37 page document laying out the theology of marriage as currently articulated through the Canons and Liturgy of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and exploring whether there is a case for change based on scripture, tradition and reason.

There is absolutely no way I can even begin to summarise this carefully constructed and comprehensive discussion of all the issues involved. It is undeniably informative, thought provoking and the result of considerable prayer and effort on behalf of the Doctrine Committee who produced it. For those that are able to access the Internet, the paper is available on the SEC Website. Type www.scotland.anglican.org into the search box on your web browser to go to the SEC home page. Click on “Who we are” then under Organisation click on “The General Synod”. In the purple box that opens, click on “Doctrine Committee – Theology of Marriage”. If you do not have Internet access, then I can always lend you my copy of the document from the Synod Papers.

Knowing that this subject was to be discussed, I went to General Synod expecting entrenched views, bitter argument and a divisive outcome.

In the event, although there were clearly strong opinions on both sides, many people were as undecided as I was and were open to persuasion. Those who spoke did so with sensitivity to those holding the opposite view – and the outcome, whilst not to the liking of some, was vague enough not to cause a major rift but courageous enough to open the door to further discussion. The crux of the matter was not actually the issue of same-sex marriage – the Church still has to decide on this over the next few years – but on the inclusion of the doctrinal statement at the beginning of Canon 31 :-

“The Doctrine of the Church is that Marriage is a physical, spiritual and mystical union of one man and one woman created by their mutual consent of heart mind and will thereto, and is a holy and lifelong estate instituted of God.”

With perhaps one other exception, Canon 31 is unique in containing a doctrinal statement. The doctrine of the Scottish Episcopal Church is enshrined in its Liturgies, not in its Laws and there is strong argument for the statement to be removed, regardless of other issues. Its existence prevents the Church from even considering same-sex marriage whilst its removal allows the conversation to proceed. After a long and complex series of motions over two days, Synod decided that the Canons Committee, under the Faith and Order Board, should prepare a revised form of Canon 31, omitting the doctrinal statement, for consideration at Synod 2016. I must stress that this is not a *fait accompli* adoption of same-sex marriage within the Scottish Episcopal Church – but it is clearly a significant step in that direction.

Diocesan Reorganisation.

Many believe that the Scottish Episcopal Church – and our Diocese in particular – needs to change in order to facilitate Mission and Ministry in the future. To this end, our Bishop asked our Diocesan Mission and Ministry Board to produce somewhat radical proposals for what they have called “A New Partnership in Mission”. These were presented to Diocesan Synod in March this year and have been discussed there, at the recent Lay Representatives meeting, at Vestry meetings throughout the Diocese and by your Vestry at two ordinary Vestry meetings and one extraordinary meeting called specifically for that purpose. As I understand it, this is a consultative process, which will lead to a revised set of proposals being presented to Diocesan Synod next year. At the moment the proposals lack detail and clarity and have led to heated debate both here and elsewhere. As I write, our Vestry has not yet decided on a response but is in the process of formulating one. Some other Vestries have already responded, primarily with lists of questions that need to be answered before informed decisions can be taken. As this is all very fluid

at the moment, I have deliberately chosen not to try and summarise the proposals and arguments in these Vestry Seconds. Rest assured that once your Vestry is satisfied that all the implications of the proposed changes have been adequately defined then they will be put to the wider congregation for consideration.

Funding.

One of the sticking points in the new proposals has been the suggestion that the Diocese increase the number of stipendiary posts from 7.75 to 10. Given that the Diocese can barely afford what we have, the £80,000 per annum additional cost has seemed impossible to meet. In the past, grants for Ministry from the Province have been restricted to 50% of stipend, with the Diocese having to find the other 50% (match-funding). A Diocese such as ours, without significant endowment income, has not been able to find the 50% needed to match-fund grants and so has not been able to benefit from Provincial funds. However, Synod 2015 agreed to change the block grant system to remove the percentage factor. Moray, Ross and Caithness will benefit considerably from this change and may well find that increasing stipendiary posts is financially feasible after all.

And These Are Just Beginnings.

In different ways, I think the next few years are going to be quite significant for St John's, for the Diocese and for the Scottish Episcopal Church. For St John's, costs are rising faster than income and there is much to be done. For the Diocese, regardless of the outcome of the (still-to-be-settled) proposals, change must come about in order to meet the challenges of the future. For the Province, the Scottish Episcopal Church must decide how to respond to the issue of same/trans-gender marriage. Thank God we have God to help us see our way through.



St JOHNS
NOTICES

WHIST DRIVE – Saturday 5th September at 7.00 pm in the Church Hall.

COFFEE MORNING – Forres Town Hall Saturday 14th November.

PARISH LIST – an updated Parish List is now available from Tina Coffey, please advise Tina or

Canon Cliff of any corrections.

A New Partnership in Mission (2)

Introduction

Matthew 28:19-20 establishes our mission :-

- Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

How we achieve this is up to us, but as Episcopalians we have chosen to act as congregations within

- a branch of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ (which) retains inviolate in the sacred ministry the three orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, as of Divine Institution. (*Canon 1 of the Scottish Episcopal Church*).

Therefore, we have a Bishop who is responsible for ensuring the adequate provision of Priests and Deacons to serve both existing and potential charges within the Diocese. Unfortunately, the traditional way of doing this whereby each congregation pays for their own stipendary priest is no longer sustainable.

Over the past few years, matters have reached crisis point in the north and west of the Diocese forcing an alternative pattern of ministry. This need for change, imposed not from within but in response to external pressures, is not unique to that region. Recognising this, the Bishop tasked the Diocesan Mission and Ministry Board with developing a Diocesan-wide long-term plan. This work resulted in the publication of a paper entitled “A New Partnership In Mission” which was presented to the Diocesan Synod earlier this year. Page 1 of this document, reproduced below, outlines the challenge with which we are faced.

The Challenge

- The United Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness has the largest area of land of any diocese in the United Kingdom. It is also, in financial terms, one of the poorest. Nevertheless, in the last 50 years it has proved possible to sustain - and in many places to grow - the mission and the membership of our Diocese. The statistical returns of 1962 show a total communicant figure of 2,131, while the returns for 2014 show that there are now 2,353 communicants.

- However, the geographical pattern of membership has changed radically over that period. In 1962 the majority of communicants would have been found in the towns and villages of the eastern side of the Diocese. The balance has now shifted significantly, as a result of changes in agriculture and industry, the steady growth of Inverness and the resurgence of population in the north and west Highlands, with new people moving into the region from other parts of Scotland and the rest of the UK.
- At the same time, the costs of maintaining a full-time ministry – stipend, pension, housing - have continued to rise, putting a particularly heavy burden on congregations whose membership has fallen, so that when a priest retires it may no longer be possible to find the funds for a replacement. As a result, whereas in 1962 the Diocese had 21 priests with stipend, serving 34 congregations from 19 rectories, at the end of 2014 there were 8 stipendiary priests and one part paid full time priest and an assistant Curate receiving half stipend gathered from a variety of charges across the diocese. Of these clergy, two were living in their own homes. The diocese has at present 43 congregations and 15 Church Houses. Of these houses, three are let to provide stipend, one is Bishop’s House and three are used as House for Duty accommodation.
- Although it has proved possible to offset the reduction in stipendiary posts through the very welcome growth of lay ministry and the use of non-stipendiary assistant priests and active retired clergy, it has become a continual struggle to sustain a pattern of clergy deployment that in some parts of the Diocese is no longer appropriate. **So we have clearly reached a point where it is essential to review how best to deploy for the future the resources of people, time and money available to the diocese, in order to provide effective mission where it is now needed.**

Underlying Principle

“A New Partnership In Mission” goes on to establish the principle that must underlie any response to the challenge – Partnership. Individual charges cannot meet the challenge alone, neither can the Diocese. The response must be a series of partnerships – partnerships between individual congregations, partnerships between congregations and the Diocese,

partnerships between the Diocese and the Province. That section of the paper is reproduced here, with some additional footnotes.

The Response Through Partnership

- The review and redeployment¹ of our resources will only succeed if it is an expression of willing partnership between the Diocese and the individual charges, reflected in thinking and action at both levels. In this partnership, the Diocese is responsible for taking a strategic view of where resources are best deployed¹ in order to meet the needs of mission, while the individual charges are responsible for the delivery of mission at the local level. However, these should never be seen as separate or self-contained activities.
- As part of a territorial Church, the Diocese has to find ways to cover its whole geographical area, as reflected in the pattern of the Bishop's appointments to charges. In the same way, individual charges must have a commitment to mission which goes well beyond the bounds of their own church building, in common cause with other charges. The financial dimension of this partnership already finds its expression in the Diocesan Quota, through which individual charges contribute, according to their means, towards the costs of maintaining the Diocese. For its part, the Diocese regularly bids for Provincial funds to take forward mission at the local level², while at the same time striving to keep within a lean budget for its own running costs.
- This sharing of responsibility for mission also implies a greater sharing of pastoral and financial resources between charges². This may not come easily to those congregations which have retained their ability to fund a priest and the associated costs themselves. Nevertheless, the formal position remains that "their priest" is in fact exercising the Bishop's ministry in that charge and that the Bishop must also ensure the availability of his ministry in places where a congregation cannot meet its costs.

Note 1 It is important to note that this does NOT mean that existing priests will be despatched at the will of the Bishop on a weekly basis to fill gaps in the ministry. Deployment and Redeployment refer to the strategic positioning of priests in the future.

Note 2 We are not averse to receiving grants from Provincial funds which are essentially the sharing of costs between our (relatively) poor Diocese and the (relatively) wealthier Dioceses in the south of the Province, so we should not be averse to the sharing of costs within the Diocese between the wealthier and less wealthy congregations.

The Proposals

The evolution of ministry in the north and west of the Diocese has involved a much closer relationship between the priests in the region – the creation of a North Chapter which formalises that approach is a logical consequence. (A chapter is an association of clerics forming a moral body and instituted by ecclesiastical authority – it is essentially an administrative structure).

1. The first DMMB proposal for the future ministry within the Diocese is that **the Chapter concept, as being pioneered by the Northern Chapter, should become the basis of our organisational structure for mission.**

In support of this, the “A New Partnership In Mission” paper defined two enabling objectives – the creation of Chapters and an increase in the number of stipendary priests in the Diocese.

2. The second DMMB proposal is that **we create two more Chapters, one covering the Central region, the other covering the East & South region.**

3. The third DMMB proposal is that **we work towards increasing the number of stipendary priests to 10 aiming for 4 in the North Chapter and 3 in each of the Central and East & South Chapter.**

4. The fourth DMMB proposal is that **we share the costs of ministry within a Chapter fairly and equitably between all the constituent charges.**

The thinking behind these proposals, and some of the implications of adopting them, were expanded upon at Diocesan Synod through a Power-Point Presentation and are further discussed below.

Chapters and Regional Synods

The North Chapter effectively exists already. As well as a geographical connection, the north and west charges share a commonality of the challenge facing them. There are two other regions which share a common challenge : Central, with it's focus on Inverness and the challenges of a growing diverse population and the social disease which urbanisation always seems to bring – and the East & South with an ageing population and dwindling resources. It is important to note that the establishment of the Northern Chapter is NOT a premature implementation of the proposals to create Chapters in the Central and the East & South regions, but rather a precursor to them.

Regional Synods, replacing the autumn Diocesan Synod, have in general been successful albeit difficult to resource. In the light of experience, the Diocesan Standing Committee has decided that a division into three Regional Synods is more appropriate and (hopefully) more efficient. This decision was taken independently of the proposals outlined in this document and should not be construed as presuming acceptance of those proposals. Nevertheless, within the proposal it is logical to associate each of the three Regional Synods with the proposed Chapters.

(Note that Regional Synods are a Diocesan construct and it is entirely within the remit of the Standing Committee to alter the arrangements under which they operate).

The suggested groupings (subject to agreement) are

North :- East Sutherland : North West charges : Ross-shire north of the Cromarty Firth (Tain, Invergordon, Dingwall and Strathpeffer) : South West charges : Wick and Thurso.

Central :- Black Isle : Glenurquhart : Inverness : Nairn : Strathnairn.

East & South :- Aberlour : Dufftown : Elgin : Lossimouth : Burghead : Fochabers : Forres : Grantown ; Keith : Huntly : Aberchirder : Rothiemurchus.

The Function of a Chapter

A Chapter is primarily a collection of priests offering each other mutual support and guidance in their aim of advancing Mission. It is NOT a Team Ministry.

However, in the context of these proposals, a Chapter is also an administrative grouping of charges which share a common challenge and a common Regional Synod.

The DMMB Powerpoint Presentation states :-

- Each Chapter should be given clear guidance on what is expected of it, in terms of mutual support for Mission. It will be up to individual chapters, with the Bishop and Dean, to determine how each is particularly structured. This will recognise the needs and situations of congregations and communities, which necessarily differ across the Diocese.

And goes on to specify a two-way accountability between Chapter and Diocese :-

- Each Chapter should be expected to report regularly to the Diocese on what has been achieved.
- Similarly, the Diocese should be ready to provide support for development, training etc to the Chapters. This may require additional finance, perhaps sourced at least in part from the Province.

There is a duty laid upon laity to provide support :-

- By continuing and intensifying the process of developing skills within congregations which will enable the clergy to concentrate more fully on issues of Mission and spiritual development.
- By using professionals from outside the clergy to perform professional tasks (eg in relation to buildings) which currently occupy clergy time.

Resources

At the outset, “A New Partnership In Mission” recognised that existing human resources were barely sufficient to meet current demands and insufficient to meet the demands of the proposed future pattern of ministry but that, assuming continued non-stipendary support, the Diocese could manage with just 10 fully-funded stipendary priests. This would be an increase of 2.25 stipendaries – costing perhaps a not insignificant additional £80,000 per annum. Some of this would come from Provincial mission-related grant aid. Following the principle of Partnership, these costs should be shared between all.

Funding

The fourth proposal is that we share ministry costs fairly and equitably within each Chapter. The essence of this proposal is that all the clergy costs (stipends, travel, pensions, accommodation etc) in a Chapter are apportioned between the charges using some agreed formula. This arises from “The Response Through Partnership” section of the DMMB paper :-

- This sharing of responsibility for mission also implies a greater sharing of (pastoral and) financial resources between charges.

There are two distinct phases to this proposal. The first is the general acceptance in principle of this new approach to funding (the easy bit). The second (and more difficult) is the development and implementation of a suitable mechanism. That some way could be found is not in doubt. For example, the ministry costs could be added to Quota, apportioned using the existing Quota formula, and stipend and other payments made direct by the Diocese. Alternatively, Quota for each charge could be rebated by the amount the charge is responsible for paying and payments made by charges as at present.

The ministry costs could be apportioned using a formula different from the one used to calculate Quota as decided by each Chapter and Regional Synod. For example, those charges currently paying full stipend (and which would probably see a reduction in costs under the new system) might elect to continue to do so, thus reducing the costs to other charges in the Chapter.

Clearly these issues will need to be investigated and discussed and considerable work will be required to be before instituting such a system. However, there is no point in expending the effort without an agreement in principle to the concept. To that end, the fourth proposal is only that we adopt the principle – it does not specify how it is to be done. Those discussions must follow later.

Future Implications

These proposals are significant and far reaching and it would be foolish to ignore the future implications. Areas in the Diocese have already been forced to adapt to external changes. These proposals both respond to those changes and provide a framework to allow us to adapt to future pressures.

Gradually, in time, we will see a movement away from isolated, perhaps inward looking, congregations to a wider - shared - responsibility for mission in partnership with other congregations, the Diocese and the Province.

- If the clergy in the new Chapters are to be able to put Mission at the head of their responsibilities, they will need greater freedom both to pursue priorities set for them by the Diocese and to develop opportunities they themselves have identified.
- That implies that the relationship between clergy and charges across the Diocese will have to undergo change, in order to create a greater degree of devolution for local action.
- Laity must play their part, by continuing and intensifying the process of developing skills within congregations which will enable the clergy to concentrate more fully on issues of Mission and spiritual development.

Conclusion

We have reached a point where it is essential to review how best to deploy for the future the resources of people, time and money available to the diocese, in order to provide effective mission where it is now needed.

Using the example of the North Chapter, the Diocesan Mission and Ministry Board have made four proposals which, if agreed, will form the foundation of an evolution of Mission and Ministry in the Diocese.

The establishment of Chapters is essentially an administrative function of the Diocese. It is a matter for the Bishop and the priesthood and is underway. But, this is just the beginning. Further steps will be needed to prevent the reorganisation into Chapters turning into a shuffling of administrative structures with no real impact on the ability of the Diocese to fulfil its commitment to Mission.

Next Steps

You are asked to discuss these issues in Vestries, Congregations and Regional Synods - feeding your views back to the DMMB by the end of November this year. The DMMB will continue to should work closely with the Diocese on how this more radical approach to organisation for mission might be implemented in practice, with the aim of presenting formal proposals to the 2016 Diocesan Synod.

In parallel, the Northern Chapter and Regional Synod will continue to develop their own operating practices and will be asked to present at the 2016 Diocesan Synod the mission-related lessons learnt from their first year.

Through this paper, the DMMB would also wish to issue a challenge to all charges – to review or draw up your own plans for mission over the coming year and be ready to present those plans in summary to the 2016 Diocesan Synod.

Robin Lingard
Chairman of DMMB

28 April 2015

DIOCESAN STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

To Vestry Secretaries, Lay Representatives and Treasurers
Diocese of Moray Ross and Caithness.

March 2015.

The Stewardship Campaign in 2012 was taken up by most Charges, and contributed to an increase in voluntary giving overall to participating Charges of around £20,000 a year, as well as other gifts. This coupled with savings in expenditure has placed the Diocese in a better financial situation, by reducing the accumulated deficits of earlier years; but we still need to budget carefully for the future.

Bishop Mark has plans to strengthen clergy cover in the Diocese and this will incur expense. The Stewardship Committee feel it would be too soon to introduce another Stewardship Campaign, except in the case of those Charges which did not participate last time. If any of those Vestries would like to do so, the Stewardship Toolkit is still available on the Diocesan Website, or as a hard copy from this Committee. Help and advice are available, if you care to contact us through the Diocesan Secretary.

One additional item to the toolkit and which was used by some Charges was a survey on Time and Talents, as part of the Stewardship concept. This proved effective in increasing volunteers to help with both Church Services and Activities where used, and a copy is enclosed.

We have now prepared a worksheet on Legacies, which are a very effective way of giving for members of congregations, who wish to contribute from their estate after their death. We would wish to encourage members to make provision for a Legacy in their Will, either for an individual Charge or the Diocese.

We would ask that this letter and toolkit be circulated to your congregation as soon as possible please, either by insertion as a letter in your Church Magazine, or placed on your website. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

+Mark

Derek Bedford
Chair- Stewardship Committee.

A TOOLKIT FOR LEGACIES.

TO GIVE TO THE CHURCH TOMORROW: A LEGACY?

Any of us may wish to help God's work by making provision in our Wills for supporting our Church, which is a registered charity, after we have died. Please therefore consider your Church when making or redrafting your Will. Including a specific Legacy in your Will can make a lasting difference and help those who will carry on the work of your Church. It is an excellent way to give something back to the Church that you have loved in your lifetime, and to ensure that its mission and ministry continue in the service of Christ.

HOW DO I GIVE IN WILLS OR LEGACIES?

This could be stated as a specific sum, or a share in the residue of your estate after all expenses and any other legacies or bequests have been met.

Wording for a pecuniary legacy.

I direct my executors to pay and make over to the Church of (name and address) (Registered Charity number if known) the sum of £ (cash figure), for its general charitable purposes, and I direct that the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being, or other duly authorised officer, shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors.

Wording for a residual legacy.

I direct my executors to pay and make over (the whole or a share as appropriate) the residue of my estate to the Church of (name and address) (Registered Charity number if known) for its general charitable purposes, and I declare the receipt of the Treasurer for the time being, or other duly authorised officer, shall be a sufficient discharge to my executors.

This form of giving will help your Church, and may reduce the amount of Inheritance Tax payable on your estate. Taxation can be a complex matter and you should seek proper professional advice before making a Will. This letter does not pretend to give such advice.

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READERS ROTA

DATE	READER	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT	GOSPEL
June 28 Trinity 4	Wiz Latham	Wisdom 1.13-15; 2.23-24	2 Corinthians 8.7-15	Mark 5.21-43
July 5 Trinity 5	Barbara Westie	Ezekiel 2.1-5	2 Corinthians 12.2-10	Mark 6.1-13
July 12 Trinity 6	George Latham	Amos 7.7-15	Ephesians 1.3-14	Mark 6.14-29
July 19 Trinity 7	Helen Barrett	Jeremiah 23.1-6	Ephesians 2.11-22	Mark 6.30-34,53-56
July 26 Trinity 8	June Airey	2 Kings 4.42-44	Ephesians 3.14-21	John 6.1-21
August 2 Trinity 9	Gisela Bettle	Exodus 16.2-4,9-15	Ephesians 4.1-16	John 6.24-35
August 9 Trinity 10	John Horrocks	1 Kings 19.4-8	Ephesians 4.25 – 5.2	John 6.35,41-51
August 16 Trinity 11	Jenny Swain	Proverbs 9.1-6	Ephesians 5.15-20	John 6.51-58
August 23 Trinity 12	Michael Thompson	Joshua 24.1-2a,14-18	Ephesians 6.10-20	John 6.56-69
August 30 Trinity 13	Ron Fleming	Deuteronomy 4.1-2,6-9	James 1.17-27	Mark 7.1-8, 14-15,21-23

This edition of the Eagle is available in full colour on St John's Website.

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