

**DS 2055**

**Minutes of a Meeting  
of  
Blackburn Diocesan Synod**

**held on Wednesday 22 March 2023 at Blackburn Cathedral**

**Present**

- 2 Members of the House of Bishops
- 43 Members of the House of Clergy
- 33 Members of the House of Laity
- 1 Visitors

**Apologies**

- 13 Members of the House of Clergy
- 15 Members of the House of Laity

**1. Welcome and Opening Worship**

The meeting commenced with worship led by **Dean Peter Howell-Jones**. The meeting was chaired by **Rev Peter Lillicrap (Chair of the House of Clergy)** who welcomed Synod members to the meeting.

**2. Address from Bishop Joseph Aba from Liwolo Diocese, South Sudan**

**Bishop Philip** welcomed **Bishop Joseph Aba from Liwolo Diocese, South Sudan** to the Synod.

Bishop Joseph gave an insight into his leadership of a Diocese in exile, including the extent of his work, the heavy responsibilities and challenges he has faced, and the extraordinary hope of his people. He asked for our prayers for infrastructure development in his country, for his people and for education for the future generation of his children.

The website for Christian Relief and Education in South Sudan (Cress) can be accessed via <https://cressuk.org/>.

**3. Vision 2026: Catalysing Healthy Churches that Transform Communities (DS 2049)**

**Bishop Jill** explained that a new funding stream, Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment (SMMI), is available from the Church Commissioners and work is underway within the Diocese towards making a significant application for SMMI in late 2023.

The ideas from the annual deanery MFF conversations and the Area Deans residential had been central to planning the application. The proposed Framework for the application focuses on 4 key aims: a parish system revitalised for mission, a younger church, a more diverse church and transformed leadership pipeline.

Synod were asked for their thoughts and feedback.

**Rev Rebecca Aechtner (Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery)** queried the use of the word 'Diverse' under the heading a 'More Diverse Church' and why this was limited to diverse types of worship rather than the diversity of those who worship in terms of races, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, genders, sexuality, etc.

**Bishop Jill** explained that diversity of those who worship could be dealt with in various other ways.

**Dr Peter Roberts (Kirkham Deanery)** felt that whilst encouraging youth and the connection with schools is important, it would be helpful to accommodate all ages.

**Bishop Jill** said there is an element of children and families work that reaches out to all ages (eg, older generations working with teenagers). New local congregations are also a way of reaching out to different age groups.

A more in-depth paper on the proposed application will be brought to Synod in July.

#### **4. Blackburn Approach to Giving and Stewardship**

**Archdeacon Mark Ireland, Mrs Stephanie Rankin and Mrs Christy Sawyer (Stewardship Resourcing Officers)** introduced the outline paper on the proposed diocesan stewardship and generosity strategy, 'Joyful, Generous Stewards'. Their presentation is attached.

Synod members split into groups and were asked to consider what training and resources would be helpful for clergy, PCCs and congregations.

The completed worksheets will be used to help shape the proposed strategy going forward, with a view to bringing this to the July meeting for approval.

#### **5. Lament to Action**

**Rev Sarah Gill (Bishop's Advisor on UKME/GMH Affairs)** presented the proposed Racial Justice Strategy for the Diocese of Blackburn. Her presentation is attached to the minutes.

Questions were invited.

**Rev Carol Backhouse (Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery)** asked why we are aiming for 8% representation on Bishop's Council, Finance Committee and DAC when the From Lament to Action report recommends at least 15% by 2030.

**Rev Gill** explained the intention is to start with small steps and aim for more in future years.

**Rev Dr Tom Wolford (Leyland Deanery)** asked why unconscious bias training is recommended when this has been shown to be less effective in other institutions.

**Rev Gill** clarified that this is the language used by the National Church but there is no intention to restrict ourselves in raising awareness.

**Rev Munawar Din (Burnley Deanery)** asked what the percentage of UKME/GMH on Bishop's Council is currently.

**David Picken** said this could be shared after the meeting.

**Dean Peter Howell-Jones (Blackburn with Darwen Deanery)** commended the paper and stressed the importance of acting on the strategy.

**Rev Mark Wolverson (Leyland Deanery)** asked if part of the strategy could be learning from other parishes.

**Rev Gill** stated that there are several churches across the Diocese that we can learn from.

**Mrs Natalie Cox (Preston Deanery)** pointed out that we should not assume to know a person's nationality as it is impossible to know without asking.

**Rev Gill** clarified that whilst there are other diversity issues, this particular strategy is focussed on racial diversity rather than nationalities.

**Rev Paul Benfield (General Synod and Burnley Deanery)** said that From Lament to Action had not been debated at General Synod, it had come from a private paper at the Archbishop's Council and many of the issues in the report are up for debate. He would have liked the strategy to have gone out for wider consultation.

**Mr Tim Cox (Leyland Deanery)** stated that it is not currently possible to include one member from the UKME/GMH on recruitment panels for all clergy posts.

**Bishop Philip** pointed out that this is a recommendation and it is very important to take a stand against racial inequality in the Diocese, there was a suggestion on how to support UKME/GMH representation for recruitment, and he hoped that Synod could vote in favour of the strategy.

**Rev Sarah Gill moved:**

"that the Racial Justice Strategy for the Diocese of Blackburn be approved".

In the vote:

Votes for - 50

Votes against - 2

Absentions – 23

The vote was **carried**.

## **6. DAC Constitution, Scheme for Quinquennials and Annual DAC Report (DS 2052)**

**Mrs Jen Read (Senior Church Buildings Officer)** explained that the Diocesan Advisory Committee operates under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018. Within this legislation are three statutory documents which must be taken to Diocesan Synod.

The first of these is the DAC Annual Report and Synod were asked to note the contents.

The remaining two documents, the DAC Constitution and the Diocesan Scheme for Quinquennials had been brought to Synod for approval as the previous versions were now out of date due to changes in legislation. The wording for the DAC Constitution had been taken from the Measure and the wording of the Diocesan Scheme had been taken from a template provided by the Church Buildings Council. Both documents had been checked by the Registrar.

Questions were invited.

**Rev Paul Benfield (General Synod and Burnley Deanery)** asked about the fund mentioned in the Scheme for Quinquennials.

**Mrs Read** explained that the Diocese must set aside a contingency fund so that quinquennials can be imposed on churches if necessary, although she had never known the fund to be used.

**Rev Canon Andrew Holliday (Chair of the Diocesan Advisory Committee)** moved: “that the DAC Constitution be approved and that the Scheme for Quinquennials be approved”.

In the vote that followed, the motion was **unanimously approved**..

## **7. Annual Diocesan Missional and Pastoral Committee Report**

**Archdeacon David Picken** introduced the annual report. During the last year, Mrs Faye Gunn had been recruited to the post of Mission and Pastoral Officer and there had been some boundary changes as a result of the MFF process.

The report was noted by Synod.

Questions were invited but none were received.

## **8. Living in Love and Faith**

Bishop Philip gave the following address:

“ It has been a joy so far in this Synod to keep our focus firmly on the mission of the church. We have been inspired by the testimony of Bishop Joseph and we have developed our plans for an application for major investment in the mission life of the Diocese. In a county in which 93% of the population do not know Jesus in the worship of his Church, that forensic focus on evangelism is critical.

But given its prominence in the life of the Church right now, it would be wrong to let this Synod pass by without some mention of the Living in Love and Faith process. To bring Synod up to speed, a motion was passed in General Synod to welcome the House of Bishop’s proposals to introduce a set of *Prayers of Love and Faith* that can be used with same sex couples and to write new pastoral guidance on marriage, sex and relationships which will replace *Issues in Human Sexuality*. There was an important amendment to the motion affirming the Bishops’ undertaking that what they decide or commend should not be ‘contrary to or indicative of a departure from the doctrine of the Church of England.’

Since that vote I have heard a huge range of reactions. Some of you are content with this way ahead and are pleased that the Church is seeking a way of affirming the goods that can come from faithful same sex relationships. Others are deeply distressed both by the process and by indications that the Church of England is in effect changing its teaching on sex and marriage and thereby crossing a red line. Some of you see new possibilities for mission opening up. Others of you are dismayed by this apparent departure from the authority of scripture or the sacramental integrity of the Church. For some on both sides of the debate who would identify under the LGBT umbrella this is especially personal and painful.

Whilst the Bishop's proposals were an attempt to find a common way ahead together, it is clear to me that they leave the Church of England dangerously divided. As Diocesan Synod it is only right for you to know that I too am troubled by the current direction of travel and abstained in the final vote, not least because of the impact that the proposals will have on the unity and so on the missional viability of the Church of England.

This means that Bishop Jill and I both find ourselves in one of those situations where the pastoral responsibilities that a Bishop has for every parish and person in a Diocese could be seen by some to clash with personal theological conviction. However – and this is a critical point - love is about more than mere agreement. The Bishop's role is to be pastor to all, and I believe that the wellbeing of the Diocese is best served when that heavy responsibility is lived out in the fullest possible sense.

Perhaps the biggest strength and certainly the greatest joy of this Diocese is our relationships, and in the months to come these will be more important than ever. We want to hear people's voices. We need honest conversations. The profound love that Bishop Jill and I have for every single one of you is not at stake here, and it is in the strength of that love that we must perceive together where God is in all this and what he is saying to us.

That love must also inform the tone and tenor of our conversation. We must ensure that our debates and conversations are framed by the pastoral principles agreed by Synod five years ago. We need to lament and repent of homophobia in all its forms. Even in a time of deep disagreement, it is important to bear with one another and see each other as Christ sees us.

However it would be naïve to understate the threats that this debate causes to our common life and so I have asked various bodies in the Diocese to look at mitigations we might put in place. This will include financial planning, the feasibility of clear guidance that will seek to protect the consciences of all clergy and an exploration of the impact of these developments on Vision 2026. It is not the way of the Diocese of Blackburn to sit back and then respond reactively to the decisions of others, and I am grateful for all who are leading on these strands of work.

At the same time the Church of God has never negotiated or compromised its way out of crises. As Bishop Joseph has shown us during his extraordinary visit this past week, the Church evangelises its way out of crises. At this moment more than ever we need to hear afresh the charge given us in the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. It would be a tragedy beyond imagining if our disputes meant that the Word of God went unproclaimed and souls went unsaved. There can be no pause button on salvation.

The Church of England is very good at arranging its disputes in such a way that everyone feels they have lost and everyone feels afraid. Whatever your theological convictions may be

in this area, I would urge you not to fall into fear and not to allow those fears to grow in the darkness. Instead, pray fervently for the gift of the Holy Spirit who burns out fear with his love and power. The Spirit has not abandoned his Church. Our unity is not of our own making. It is His gift. In His strength and through His visitation, the mystery of God's loving purposes will be revealed."

## 9. Proclamation of Canons

None.

## 10. Questions

A number of questions had been received. These questions and the answers provided are attached to the minutes.

The following supplementary questions and comments were received:

- **Question 7**  
**Rev Stephen Corbett (Blackburn with Darwen Deanery)** felt that Synod may like to take advantage of their ability to amend the Standing Orders. He will contact the Diocesan Secretary separately.
- **Question 8**  
**Mr David Wilkinson (Blackburn with Darwen Deanery)** said he did not think his question was metaphorical as this was the case in other dioceses.  
  
**Bishop Philip** clarified that his answer was given in the context of the Blackburn Diocese.

## 11. Motions

None.

The meeting closed with a prayer.

**Signed:** .....

**Dated:** .....






## JOYFUL GENEROUS STEWARDS – A BLACKBURN APPROACH TO GIVING AND STEWARDSHIP

Archdeacon Mark Ireland, Mrs Stephanie Rankin,  
Mrs Christy Sawyer



HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES



1

"Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little." 2 Corinthians 8:13-15"

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

2





### Living as Joyful Generous Stewards we:

- Are excited by God's vision of healthy churches transforming communities and allow generosity to infect every part of our lives.
- Will value the leadership of both stipendiary and non-stipendiary leaders in parishes and recognise that this has a cost.
- Teach everyone (existing members, new believers, children, young people) how to be joyful generous stewards and see this as a lifelong journey where we never arrive but constantly aim to grow.

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

3

### Living as Joyful Generous Stewards we:

- Challenge and encourage parishes to see that we are called to both sustain our churches in their present need and invest in their futures.
- Enable all communities to identify themselves in the stories we share and challenge people to put themselves into 'new shoes' or someone else's shoes.

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

4



HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE

**We want to hear your thoughts**

What training and resources would be helpful

- For clergy?
- For PCCs?
- For congregations?

Joyful Generous Stewards -  
Diocesan Synod 22 March 2023



HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

5



HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE

**RACIAL JUSTICE**

Rev Sarah Gill, Bishop's Advisor for United Kingdom  
Minority Ethnic/Global Majority Heritage Issues

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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE

**The acceptance of the strategy will enable us to remove the blinkers we may have which are hindering us to see God's image in other people.**




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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE

*Thank you!*

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...Diocesan intention to celebrate the diversity of cultures, languages and people from different ethnicities and racial background to experience hospitality, welcome and equal opportunities to grow and contribute in building a Just Church based on the Kingdom values...



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HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

10







...Racial injustice is sin, which damages the integrity of the Body of Christ and create the **culture of being biased against other races and consider them inferior.**




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11







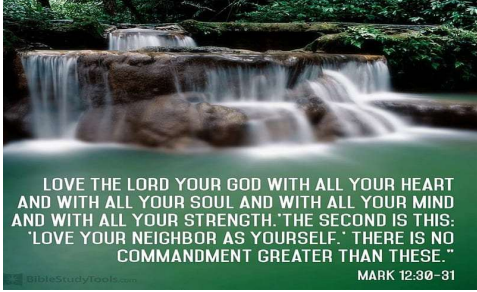


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LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART  
AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND  
AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH. THE SECOND IS THIS:  
‘LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ THERE IS NO  
COMMANDMENT GREATER THAN THESE.”  
MARK 12:30-31


HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

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We are called to live out our discipleship with deeper commitment to racial justice. This will enable the church to become a transformed and healthy community capable of transforming the world to become a just world where all races may grow in mutual respect and flourish together.



HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

14









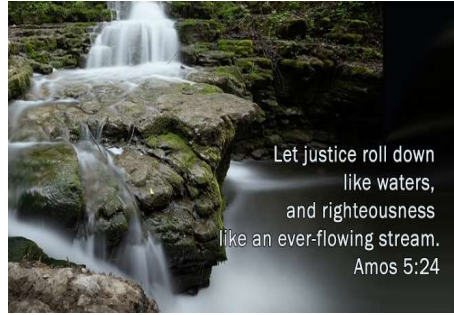
He has told you, O mortal, what is good:  
and what does the LORD require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?  
Micah 6:8

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

15









Let justice roll down  
like waters,  
and righteousness  
like an ever-flowing stream.  
Amos 5:24


HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

16





It is mandatory for us to embrace the diversity of God, realized in Christian believers from other cultures and racial backgrounds. The minority Christian community in the UK is not a threat but an opportunity. They are equal partners in God's mission. God longs for greater unity among His people.




HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

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RACIAL JUSTICE MATTERS AND IT IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS, BECAUSE IT IS GOD'S BUSINESS



HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

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**Racial Justice in our Church**  
**Lizzie Alton**

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

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1. On Ash Wednesday 1957, Archbishop Geoffrey Clayton wrote to the South African Government. In it, he refused to obey, and refused to counsel the people of the Anglican Church in South Africa, to obey the Act that would force apartheid in all Christian congregations. He gave permission to all priests to disobey the law, since it would be against the Law of God, who made all people in His image.

Archbishop Clayton was right. **Our identity is not in our race, our identity is in Jesus.**

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

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2. A young woman, blind since birth, was asked at an interview if she would mind that her managers were of Asian and African origin. She replied: *'this is a problem which you sighted people have, which I have never understood'*.

She was right. **We do not identify people by what they look like, but how they are seen by God. Our identity is in Jesus and how Jesus sees each person.**

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

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3. Jesus said: "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to His disciples, He said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of My Father in Heaven, is my brother and sister and mother."

Awesome! **Our identity is in nothing else, but Jesus and our membership of His family.** How can we see anyone as anything else, but a fellow member of our deeply loved family? Each with our own and different God-given talents. **We deprive ourselves if we cannot embrace and participate with a member of our family.**

These are three reasons why racial justice is a  
**Christian imperative.**

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**Ongoing developments across the diocese.**

Conversation about racial; justice and efforts

Bishop Joseph Aba and Bishop Saju's visit to the diocese and World Mission Service on 19<sup>th</sup> March  
Vision and Strategy outstanding agenda item and regular update  
DBE's strategy, school conferences and RE Syllabus update, training for staff  
Admin support for the UKME/GMH advisor (Sue started in this role just over a week ago)  
Unconscious bias training – online  
Canon for Justice – Blackburn Cathedral (ongoing conversation)  
Networking lunch on 21<sup>st</sup> March at Liverpool cathedral (SG attended)

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

23

Rev Sarah Gill, Bishop's Advisor for United Kingdom Minority Ethnic/Global Majority Heritage Issues, will move:

**"that the Racial Justice Strategy for the Diocese of Blackburn be approved."**

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## **DAC CONSTITUTION, SCHEME FOR QUINQUENNIALS AND ANNUAL DAC REPORT**

**Mrs Jen Read, Senior Church Buildings Officer**

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

25

Rev Canon Andrew Holliday, Chair of the Diocesan  
Advisory Committee, will move:

**“that the DAC Constitution be approved”**

and

**“that the Scheme for Quinquennials be approved”.**

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

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## Diocesan Synod on 22 March 2023

### Questions Received

| From          | To                                  | Question  | Response   |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| David O'Brien | Bishop Philip                       | How is our evangelism to the nation helped by the House of Bishops encouraging clergy to potentially adopt prayers of blessing which will compromise unity with the teaching of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, the revelation of Holy Scripture and the 39 articles, all of which we promised to uphold when we were ordained?   | <p>'Questions to Synod' is not the right place to give personal opinions which is what this question is asking me to do.</p> <p>There are a range of views in the Diocese with regard to the House of Bishops' Proposals and I have heard a wide variety of responses. Our hope and prayer is that we can find ways ahead which maintain the Diocese of Blackburn's strong commitment to evangelism and to growing healthy churches which transform their communities.</p> |
| Andrew Raynes | Bishop Philip and Stephen Whittaker | <p>What impact assessment does the Diocesan Board of Finance plan to make before July 2023 when General Synod might commend the revised Prayers of Love and Faith?</p> <p>Will the Board include in its deliberations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of clergy holding licences</li> <li>The number of people offering for ordained ministry</li> <li>Average Sunday attendance</li> <li>Electoral roll numbers</li> <li>Parish share contributions?</li> </ol> | <p>It is extremely difficult at the current time to assess the impact of the new prayers and guidance. This is because as yet it is unclear what will be agreed, what the content of new guidance will be and what pastoral arrangements might be put in place.</p> <p>However we have commenced a number of strands of work to identify risk and put in place mitigations and this work will continue.</p>  |

|              |                   |  |  |
|--------------|-------------------|--|--|
| Paul Bye     | Stephen Whittaker | <p>Has the diocese added to our risk register an assessment of the possible impact/fall out of the introduction of the revised Prayers of Love and Faith?</p> <p>If not, will it do so ahead of the July General Synod and report back its assessment to this Synod?</p> <p>And, if the answer has indicated such an assessment will be pursued, what process will it follow in order to do so?</p>  | <p>The Risk Register is a live document relating to the charitable company of the DBF and is reviewed through the Audit Risk and Governance Committee (ARG) on a quarterly basis, with headline risks shared with DBF Directors and Synod annually through the statutory accounts.</p> <p>LLF was already in the register prior to General Synod as a financial and strategic risk. The risk score was increased after General Synod. The next reporting time to Synod will be as part of the statutory accounts in the autumn Synod. It is currently ranked as the highest risk to the DBF</p> <p>All risks are considered by the ARG and possible mitigations are discussed along with supporting information.</p> |
| Laura Oliver | Bishop Philip     | <p>In the event of revised Prayers of Love and Faith being approved by General Synod in July and commended by the House of Bishops, what forms of support will be provided by this diocese to:</p> <p>a. Those who use the Prayers, but, not appreciating the fact that the House of Bishops commendation has no legal effect, subsequently find themselves facing complaints brought under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1963 alleging that their use of the Prayer is not permitted under Canon B5 and constitutes the commission of an offence?</p> | <p>This question raises a range of potential vulnerabilities that clergy face, whether or not they choose to use the Prayers of Love and Faith, if they are commended by the House of Bishops rather than approved by Synod. Legal and conscience matters such as these are being actively considered by the College of Bishops and will be taken into consideration as the next steps in the process are agreed.</p> <p>Within the Diocese of Blackburn we will be undertaking additional work to seek ways of protecting the consciences of our clergy as part of a risk mitigation process being undertaken by a number of officers.</p>  |



|                 |                                   |   |  |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
|                 |                                   | b. Those who choose not to use the Prayers who, as a consequence, find themselves exposed to actions for discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 or subject to vilification on Social Media?   |  |
| Philip Venables | Archdeacon David                  | In the event of the revised <i>Prayers of Love and Faith</i> being approved by the General Synod in July and commended by the House of Bishops, and given that all three houses of the General Synod voted 'to endorse the decision of the College and House of Bishops not to propose any change to the doctrine of marriage', what teaching materials will the Diocesan Board of Education commend to our Church of England schools to explain, commend and promote the Church of England's doctrine of marriage? | The Board of Education updated its guidance to schools on relationship and sex education in September 2019 in response to changes in government guidance on relationships education. This guidance advises church schools that they are required to teach the state definition of marriage in state funded schools but that church schools should also teach the Christian understanding of marriage as referenced in Canon B30.   |
| James Nash      | Bishop Philip or Nick McKee       | In the event of revised Prayers of Love and Faith being introduced after General Synod in July, will those being offered curacies in this diocese from 2024 onwards be guaranteed provision to be trained by an Incumbent whose convictions on the use of Prayers in Love and Faith coincide with their own?  | The process of determining Title posts for curates is one that is undertaken with a great deal of care. Once a possible appropriate Title has been suggested by the senior team, the training incumbent and future curate will then meet several times to ensure that the working relationships will be a fruitful one. The offer of the post is made by the training incumbent and not by the Bishop. Whilst a degree of flexibility on both sides is important, theological compatibility on major doctrinal matters is and always will be an important factor if the curate, the parish and the training incumbent are to flourish. |
| Stephen Corbett | Not specified - Stephen Whittaker | Given the late presentation of a substantial and important motion at the November 2022 Diocesan Synod, could the dates for submission of questions, motions be the same in future; thus enabling all business to be listed on the agenda paper?   | The dates and times are set by the Standing Orders of the Diocesan Synod and have been followed in the same way since 2018. This requires the agenda to be distributed at least 14 days in advance of the meeting and questions or motions arising from the agenda are submitted up to 7 days in advance of the meeting. Questions and motions can only come after the agenda has been distributed.  |



|                   |               |   |  |
|-------------------|---------------|---|--|
|                   |               |   | <p>Once received, the questions are answered and have in the past been presented to Synod on the evening and the motions are checked for legitimacy. We have attempted to circulate information prior to this Synod under the existing Standing Orders.</p> <p>To change to a practice to set dates for submissions and circulation of papers would require an amendment to the Standing Orders which is within the remit of Synod to request.</p>   |
| David Wilkinson   | Bishop Philip | Can the Bishop confirm that, if parishes cap or pause parish share payments in the light of the House of Bishops' revised Prayers of Love and Faith being commended, they will not be hindered from seeking a new incumbent following a future vacancy?   | The DBF holds minimal reserves and if the Diocese is to achieve its goal of maintaining clergy numbers it is critical that PCCs contribute Parish Share in a timely manner. Currently, if a parish that is not making its Parish Share contribution in full enters into vacancy, a great deal of work will be done by the Archdeacon and others to ensure that it is at least working towards financial viability, for otherwise it is other PCCs who will have to meet the ministry costs of that parish. We have not yet encountered a situation in which a parish deliberately holds back share for the reasons stated in this question and it is not possible in this context to answer a metaphorical question.   |
| Joseph Brookfield | Bishops       | <p>What factors are taken into account when deciding whether a person is suitable to be appointed a lay leader of a church/parish within the diocese and do they receive any specific training to take on this role?</p> <p>(Just for further clarification this question is specifically about those leading a church/parish in place of a vicar and not about general training for lay leaders)</p> | <p>We do not have a systematic programme to appoint lay leaders to lead "a church/parish in place of a vicar". All lay leaders minister under the oversight of a local parish priest and are trained as appropriate for the ministry they exercise. Within our 'Lay Majority Ministry' framework, training for local informal ministry is usually locally developed and delivered while Authorised Lay Ministers are locally discerned and authorised, but trained on diocesan programmes. Licensed Lay Ministers are discerned within the diocesan vocations processes and trained at Emmanuel Theological College before being licensed by the Bishop. Church Army Evangelists are discerned both within the diocese and by Church Army and are trained at the national Church Army college in Sheffield before being commissioned. More details are available here <a href="https://www.anglican.org/lay-majority-ministry-framework">Lay Majority Ministry Framework   The Diocese of Blackburn (anglican.org)</a></p> |

