

debate, the vote to accept the petition to ask the Theological Forum to review the status of the subordinate standards was passed. The petition called for a response by 2020, but the Convener suggested that this timescale may not be adequate.

doi:10.1017/S0956618X18000996

Governing Body of the Church in Wales

April and September 2018

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES: APRIL AND SEPTEMBER

The Archbishop of Wales, the Most Revd John Davies, reminded members that the Church was still addressing challenges and implementing radical changes following the Harries Review in 2012. He reflected that the Church in Wales is planning to celebrate its centenary in 2020 by ‘recognising concrete steps, solid progress and commitment to our core purpose in which everyone has a part to play’. The archbishop went on to remind members that a year ago the Governing Body committed itself to putting evangelism at the heart of the Church, stating that we had more than 1,200 local church buildings in regular use and that they must be places where newcomers and inquirers from communities feel welcome. He emphasised that the Church in Wales is not a private membership organisation existing to provide comfortably familiar services to its members. Nourishing and accessible worship and teaching in a variety of styles and forms must be offered to all who seek it.

Turning to the Evangelism Fund launched on Pentecost Sunday (which is a £10 million fund set aside by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales explicitly for evangelism project work), he reported that the Representative Body was clear that the fund was not to be used to ‘prop up’ existing structures but must be used to encourage significant new work and initiatives in communities and parishes across Wales. The archbishop reminded the members that, even though ‘The Bishops may articulate particular visions and seek others to develop policies and strategies, these will remain mere plans and heady aspirations unless individual contributions to the overall tasks at grass-roots level are encouraged, recognised, affirmed and supported.’

NEWPORT (ST WOOLOS) CATHEDRAL

Plans to introduce a new governance model for St Woolos Cathedral, Newport, in the Diocese of Monmouth – which would result in suspending the current Cathedral Scheme in Volume II of the Constitution of the Church in Wales – were unanimously backed by the Governing Body. The motion to introduce a new cathedral constitution and regulations was agreed to run as a pilot scheme for three years. The new model Newport Cathedral Constitution and Regulations will, among other things allow for appointment of lay canons and better facilitation of a more collaborative way of appointing people with special gifts or expertise in certain areas who will be able to work more closely with the cathedral chapter. The Governing Body looks forward to a report on its progress from the Dean of Monmouth in two years' time.

THE CHURCH IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

The question of how and why the Church should engage in public life was one of the key items on the April agenda. People in public life in Wales shared their stories of faith in a film which was commissioned by the Standing Committee and shown to members before they broke up into groups for discussions. Darren Millar, Welsh Assembly Member for Clwyd West and chair of the Assembly Cross-Party Group on Faith, was invited to the meeting to talk about his personal experience as a Christian in public life. Mr Millar said that debates and reforms at the National Assembly had been shaped by members who brought a Christian perspective: the issues included matters such as assisted suicide and organ donation. The role of the Cross-Party Group on Faith was particularly significant, securing spiritual care guidance for the NHS, a faith-tourism action plan and continued commitment to public funding for chaplaincy services. A chaplaincy service at the National Assembly was also being set up.

He urged church leaders not just to speak out in the political square but to encourage Christians to engage with the world of politics and in careers which would take them into having influence in government. He suggested that Church members could do three things to engage: pray for those in politics and for those in authority, including holding civic prayer events locally; encourage people to participate in politics – from school governing bodies to the UK Government; and offer practical support for those standing for election.

The archbishop commented that

It is not only our privilege to speak in the public square – it is also our duty and our responsibility. There are very few communities across Wales where Christians are not involved in community projects – that work sits comfortably alongside the Gospel.

EMERGENCY MOTION ON THE SITUATION IN SYRIA

During the Governing Body meeting in April, the escalating international tension in relation to Syria following a suspected chemical attack on the rebel-held town of Douma prompted the Bishop of St Asaph to table an emergency motion which was seconded by the Bishop of St Davids, as follows:

That the Governing Body:

- Notes with alarm the return to the international agenda of the possibility of heavy bombardment and violent intervention in the situation in Syria;
- While condemning the use of chemical weapons, is mindful of the complexities of the situation which rule out simplistic answers;
- Calls upon the UK Government to prioritise concerted diplomatic action to secure more peaceful and consensual international responses rather than an escalation of violence.

The motion was carried *nem con*.

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

A student from St Asaph was the youngest Anglican delegate to the recent UN Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW62). Laura Lloyd-Williams told the Governing Body how she represented the Church in Wales as part of a 16-strong delegation sent by the worldwide Anglican Communion to discuss issues of gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. She invited the members to ‘Take a look around the room’ (having asked all the female members to stand up) and added, ‘This is a great start to gender equality in the Church in Wales. Let’s see how we include women at all levels of ministry.’ Ms Lloyd-Williams was the only delegate to this Commission at the UN who was under 24 years’ old and she told the Governing Body that she felt that she was ‘so fortunate to be part of the Church in Wales which recognises and supports young people’. All the Anglican provinces were asked to send young people, but only Wales fulfilled that request.

SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS

The Bench of Bishops was keen to hear the views of the Governing Body in relation to same-sex relationships and what sort of pastoral provision the Church in Wales might wish to consider in the future. The Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, which voted last year to allow same-sex marriages in its churches, was invited to address members about the process developed and adopted in Scotland. His address was followed by a question and answer session, then a full debate. Finally, a private ballot took place in which

members were requested to indicate their preference regarding the following question posed by the Bench of Bishops:

Do you agree with the statement:

It is pastorally unsustainable for the Church to make no formal provision for those in same-gender relationships?

The result of the ballot was 76 in favour and 21 against, with one ballot paper being spoiled. The bishops did not vote. The Bench of Bishops will consider this matter further when it next meets.

TIME AND SEASONS NEW LITURGY

The Times and Seasons Liturgy has been six years in preparation. It is an online bilingual resource for those looking for more creative and evangelistic worship – from the blessing of Advent wreathes to hot cross buns – and is new liturgy to enhance worship throughout the year. It provides much new non-Eucharistic material as well as material that, though prepared for use during the Eucharist, would also be suitable for use in other services, including those led by lay people. The Governing Body was pleased to receive the new liturgy.

doi:10.1017/S0956618X1800100X

General Synod of the Church of Ireland

May 2018

KATE TURNER

Member of General Synod

INTRODUCTION

This year's General Synod, the first meeting of the triennium, was held in the now familiar venue of a hotel in Armagh City. The Synod considered Bills relating to the *Book of Common Prayer*, safeguarding trust issues, the governance of St Fin Barre's Cathedral, temporary suspension of episcopal electoral colleges and General Synod membership. During the meeting of Synod a commentary on the Constitution of the Church of Ireland was launched.