

Chairman's Report 2019-20

The four-fold purpose for the existence of the CDEF remains:

To promote evangelical ministry in the parishes of the diocese by:

- Representing the views of evangelicals to the bishop and the diocesan staff.
- Making sure that there are evangelicals proposed for elections to General Synod and to the committees of the Diocesan Synod.
- Clergy and laity meeting together to encourage one another and to consider issues of importance through local and central meetings,
- Providing a safe place for dialogue between evangelicals of different traditions, so that we may hold together on essentials.

These objectives continued to shape our activities over the last year.

Gavin Calver (CEO of the Evangelical Alliance) spoke at our Autumn Conference last year on 'Mission Unpacked'. He gave a Bible reading from Acts 5 and then in the second session looked at how we can equip Churches for evangelism. It was very well received and appreciated by those who came.

Our Spring Conference was held in March, a week or so before lockdown began. Dr Mary Northway was due to speak along with Greg & Ele Cushing on 'Messy Live – Healthy Church', looking at how we can support one another through mental health challenges. Unfortunately, Mary Northway developed Coronavirus symptoms the day before and had to withdraw. Greg stepped in to present Mary's material and did a wonderful job whilst Ele shared a very power testimony of her experience of postpartum psychosis.

Both General Synod elections and the Lambeth Conference were due to take place this year but have been postponed because of Coronavirus; General Synod elections to 2021 and the Lambeth Conference to 2022. Next year's General Synod elections will be key with *The Living in Love and Faith* project due to produce resources to help the Church look at issues around identity, relationships, marriage and sexuality.

It is important that we encourage people to stand for both Denary Synod, as this is the electorate for General Synod, and General Synod itself; in particular we need to discern lay people in our parishes (and ideally under 60!) who would be willing and able to make General Synod part of their ministry – not an easy ask for all sorts of reasons.

Much of the CDEF's work goes on behind the scenes. In November there was a meeting of DEF chairs and Secretaries in London looking towards the General Synod elections planned for this year. Due to Coronavirus the officers have not met with Bishop Martin this year to discuss issues of concern to evangelicals but hope to meet with him again in 2021. However, Jacob Vince and I will be meeting with our two new Suffragan Bishops in the coming weeks.

The work of the CDEF is led by a small committee and I am very grateful to them for all their work, in particular to the three officers Jacob Vince, Hugh Lowries and Linda Humble. I am particularly grateful to our secretary Hugh Lowries who is stepping down after six years in the role and ten on the committee.