

## Synod urges end to the wealth gap

The General Synod of the Church of England has urged all political parties to “adopt an explicit policy of reducing the wealth gap between the rich and the poor and the disadvantages that flow from it.” The new Synod also recommitted itself to the policy of previous synods, “working both nationally and locally to respond to human need by loving service, and to transform unjust structures of society which are creating the wealth gap.”

The motion was presented to the General Synod by the Leeds Diocesan Synod. During the debate, Synod members heard that the wealthiest 0.1 per cent of the country own as much wealth as the poorest 50 per cent.

During the debate, Synod members heard of work done by churches across the country to tackle poverty, need and inequality.

## Diocesan share of national church costs reduced

The Archbishops’ Council’s Chair of Finance, Canon John Spence, told Synod that the amount of money paid towards the costs of the national church by dioceses has been reduced following savings. For Southwell and Nottingham, this means a saving of £17,239, bringing down the amount requested for 2022 to £449,083.

## Contributions by Southwell and Nottingham reps

Two members from Southwell and Nottingham contributed from the floor in a shorter-than-usual Synod.

Dr Ian Paul asked about proposed cuts to clergy numbers across the dioceses. The Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich told him that dioceses were still making plans and that more detailed information on cuts would be available in a few weeks.

Ian Paul also asked about spending plans of the Church Commissioners following “an excellent return of 10.4 per cent on their assets” in 2020.

Alan Smith, the newly appointed First Church Estates Commissioner, said that the Commissioners aim to provide the maximum funding for mission and ministry; and that for 2020-2022 this would be £930 million.

Gavin Drake called for the national Past Cases Review report to reveal the number of instances where the Church of England had rejected complaints about the way safeguarding cases had been handled, but which the PCR reviewers concluded had been handled incorrectly.

He also asked whether the national safeguarding bodies had authority to intervene in dioceses. And, acknowledging a big rise in national safeguarding spending, asked for a review of the effectiveness of that work.

## The Gospel brought hope through Covid, Queen tells Synod

The Earl of Wessex stepped in to read the Queen’s speech at the inauguration of the new Synod. In her message, Queen Elizabeth spoke of past two years as being, for many, a “time of anxiety, of grief, and of weariness” because of Covid.

But she also said that “the Gospel has brought hope, as it has done throughout the ages; and the Church has adapted and continued its ministry, often in new ways - such as digital forms of worship.”

The Queen concluded her remarks by assuring the new Synod of her prayers: “At the beginning of this new Synod, my prayer is that the Lord’s blessing may be upon you as you embark on your deliberations,” she said, “and that you will find inspiration in the joyous words of the hymn you sang this morning: ‘O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear, and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.’”

The hymn was sung at an opening Eucharist service at Westminster Abbey. The preacher, Archbishop Angaelos, the Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London, said that the Church must be a catalyst for repentance and justice.

“Through actively reaching out, our Lord enabled repentance for Zacchaeus himself, and restoration of justice for those previously wronged by him”, he said.