

General Synod Report

November 2021 group of sessions

The newly elected General Synod gathered in London for its inauguration and first group of sessions. With 60% of Synod members being new members, the primary focus of the gathering was to induct new members and provide an overview of the ongoing work of the Synod. Unfortunately, Her Majesty the Queen was unable to attend the Inauguration of Synod as usual, but her youngest son, Prince Edward the Earl of Wessex deputised and shared her [message](#) of prayerful support.

After the induction day and inauguration service at Westminster Abbey, Synod met for a day and half to conduct business:

- The archbishops set the tone for the new Synod in their joint presidential address, with a focus on how Synod might journey together, listening to each other and the Holy Spirit and being mindful of the past whilst moving forward together.
- In the debate of the Report of the Business Committee the Archbishop of Canterbury clarified his recent [statement](#) following his meeting with Ghanaian church leaders regarding proposed legislation which would criminalise LGBT+ people. LGBT+ Synod members welcomed the clarification and staged a demonstration emphasising that 10% of the members of the new Synod could be imprisonable under the Ghanaian law.
- Synod backed a motion to begin the process of drawing up legislation which will allow for dioceses endowed with greater historical wealth to be generous and help less well-off dioceses.
- Synod supported a motion from the Diocese of Leeds which calls on the Government and political parties to take measures to reduce the wealth gap between the rich and poor in our society. There was acknowledgment of all that the local churches are doing and have been doing, particularly in the pandemic, to help the poorest in our communities and a call for reflection from dioceses to see where and how they can protect the most vulnerable including ways of addressing the housing crisis.
- Synod received a 2022 financial update with proposals for apportionment from the Archbishops' Council, which recognised the immense impact the Coronavirus pandemic has had on diocesan and church finances, despite the incredible efforts of parishes and dioceses during this challenging time. Recovery will be difficult and requires every single one of us to address the need for transforming the financial effectiveness as well as transforming the spiritual and missional effectiveness of the Church of England. Canon John Spence stated money is not the end it is merely the means. This is not a time to be frightened but a time to be determined. There may be some areas where there is a need for caution but there a greater need for creativity and courage. Above all a need for us to trust in Christ and trust in each other.
- Synod approved the re-appointment of Mark Sheard to the Archbishops' Council until 2027.
- Presentations were given on the Church of England's Vision and Strategy and the Governance Review, with an opportunity for questions. The Vision and Strategy talks about a 'mixed ecology' which simply means the church expressing itself in many different ways, including regular worship, online church, initiatives like messy church, cafes and clubs, and chaplaincies. The Archbishop of York emphasised that parishes are at the heart of this. The vision is that parishes will be revitalised for mission from which flows a flourishing of new Christian communities, where every person has the opportunity to encounter the transformation a life centred on Jesus Christ can bring. In this context part of Synod's work is to see what God is doing and align resources and training to this. The vision is to be simpler, humbler and bolder.

[Visit the CofE website to watch all the General Synod sessions back.](#)

To find out more about Diocese of Derby's newly elected General Synod representatives click [here](#).