

DEANERY SYNOD PICKERING 12th FEB 2026

PRESENT

Rev Paul Sunderland, Rev Rob Barker, Rev Mel Burneside, Robert Sword, Ali Holmes, John Castle, Helen Halkyard, Nicola Woosnam, Rev Joe Kinsella later, St John Harris, Sue & David Billett, Helen Taylor

APOLOGIES

Rev Gareth Atha, Rev Jackie Cray, Sue Mumford, Lucy Wilshire, Janet Richardson, James Ingham, Margot Cairncross

OPENING LITURGY

Paul

READING

John 20 v1-

PRAYERS

NEW DEANERY PLAN

Ali & Paul met with Archdeacons to revisit the original plan
Aim for a much simpler plan on a page
Meetings will start later in year after a September meeting with the Archdeacons
Up to us to make the plan what we want for a 3 year timescale
Nicola asked will there be time of prayer to hear God? Paul replied yes.
Process not yet known.
Andy Broom (Archdeacon of East Riding) plus team will provide support

LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH DISCUSSION

House of Bishops will not discuss this any more in General Synod.
A new working party will be setup with 2 years to make recommendations
Prayers of Love and Faith cannot be used in bespoke services, only in regular services
No real progress on same sex blessings and prayers.
Frustration on both sides.

ASSISTED DYING BILL

Deanery discussed this earlier
House of Lords is currently delaying progression of the bill
House of Commons may force action

People ask what the church position is on both issues.
Problem of an ill person enduring unmanageable pain now changes thinking.

HOW DO WE RESPOND TO CURRENT WORLD ISSUES?

E.g. a church warden active in Reform Party.
Issues not talked about in church – are we people pleasing?
How do we discuss such?
Division growing in society
Media exacerbate problems
Poor national leadership
Lack of safe spaces to discuss, argue, disagree
As church leaders do we give an opinion?
Christian nationalism - a perversion of faith
Lack of realism around Christian leaders because they feel they cannot speak freely

Difficulty of relating to someone with very different views to my Christian beliefs
How to stand by what you believe?
Acts 5 Gamaliel's approach - if someone's activity is from God, it will succeed, if from man it will not last?
Some shun those whose behaviour is unacceptable
Religion can make people feel guilty
People unwilling to disagree so they fester instead
Perception and fears versus realities?
No space in church to discuss e.g. a sermon
Different churches meet different needs e.g. Pickering compared with Middleton cafe church
One size cannot fit all believers
Be careful of thinking you are right and they are wrong?
Where and how do you draw the line? At what cost?
You cannot agree with everyone but that takes bravery to stand and lose friendships
USA becoming 1920s Germany?
Leader's lies to win support.
Can the church be hijacked? (e.g. Nazism in German churches).
Media sells coverage based on shock horror rather than much more complex realities
People like or dislike a leader rather than examine their policies
World events affect many people - worry, fear etc
We have been here before - 1930s Europe.
Is the chaos part of the end times?
Importance of small groups for discussion, learning the bible
Synod should be a place of discussion
Church should have a space for discussion
Importance of knowing the facts, a biblical judgement made in love

CLOSING PRAYER

For Mel becoming full time vicar for Helmsley from March.
The local Methodist church will need to find a new leader.
For this country, world.

John Castle
Secretary
February 2026