

Sunday 6 February 2012

### ***News from Canterbury Diocese***

For immediate use

#### **Canterbury Diocese votes in favour of the Anglican Communion Covenant**

On Saturday 5 February Canterbury Diocesan Synod voted in favour of the Anglican Communion Covenant in all three houses (bishops, clergy and laity).

The vote held at the John Wallis Church of England Academy in Ashford, was in response to the General Synod's decision in 2010 to refer the matter to the dioceses. All 44 dioceses in the Church of England are being asked to "approve the draft Act of Synod adopting the Anglican Communion Covenant."

Described as the closest thing to a constitution for the worldwide Anglican Communion, the Covenant was first proposed in the Windsor report of 2004, following tensions in relation to same-sex partnerships in North America. Around 85 million Christians across the globe worship at 'member' churches or provinces who are autonomous but share doctrine, ways of worshipping and mission and which form part of the Anglican Communion.

The Anglican Communion Covenant gives vision to a "communion with autonomy and accountability" and offers an agreed framework for shared processes of decision making, mutual accountability and responsibility for all churches in the Anglican Communion. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, has strongly commended the Covenant to the Church of England; in his 2011 Advent letter to the Primates of the Anglican Communion he said the Covenant: "Sets out our common life and common faith and in light of that proposes making a mutual promise to consult and attend to each other, freely undertaken. It recognises that not doing this, damages our relations profoundly."

The Bishop of Dover, the Right Reverend Trevor Willmott used part of his Presidential Address at Canterbury Diocesan Synod to explain his reasons for voting in favour of the motion to adopt the Covenant. He said: "The Covenant offers us ways of living faithfully and authentically, offering us processes of handling differences while at the same time allowing for the Spirit of God to breathe new life into our existing Communion framework."

The Covenant has been sent to all the Provinces worldwide of the Anglican Communion for their approval in 2009. Each Province has different governance structures but it is hoped that most will have completed the process for acceptance or rejection before the Anglican Consultative Council discusses progress at its meeting at the end of 2012.

In the Church of England, General Synod debated the proposal in November 2010 and decided to refer the matter to diocesan synods. At least 23 of the 44 Dioceses of the Church of England must support the motion in order for it to return to General Synod for final approval in November this year. Results from Dioceses who have voted so far have been mixed.

Canterbury Diocesan Vote:

House	For	Against	Abstentions
Bishops	1	0	0
Clergy	26	14	0

Laity	39	13	0
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Ends

Further information available from: Emily Shepherd, Director of Communications: 07876 210 446, [eshepherd@diocant.org](mailto:eshepherd@diocant.org)

More information on the Covenant:

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/final/text.cfm>