

Gulf DDO Report 2014

Last year we witnessed our two Gulf candidates being recommended for training at the selection conference held in Dubai. Since then they have both started ordination training at St Michael's Llandaff. Both candidates are enjoying their studies. Jon Lavelle completes his residential study later this year and Kent will be completed in 2015.

In the meantime other candidates continue to express interest in and explore their vocation for ordained ministry.

A definite highlight was the priesting of Rev Jo Henderson who is in her second year of a stipendary curacy at Abu Dhabi. Rev Jo is our first Ordinand to go through the full cycle of discernment, selection, training and ordination under Bishop Michael's tenancy.

Another encouragement in 2013 was the licensing of four readers who completed their training in Bahrain after two years training. That brings the tally to 15 Readers who were selected, trained and licenced within the Diocese in the last 6 years. This is in addition to other Readers who received a license from Bishop Michael through transferring to our Diocese.

Reader training has taken a bit of a back seat this year in the Gulf as we seek to identify an appropriate course. That said Kuwait is currently using the Exploring Faith course.

Our goals for 2014 is to identify a suitable course for Reader Training that will be easily implemented in our challenging contexts. I look forward to seeing the development of ministry training in the Gulf in the near future.

Rev Canon Andy Thompson

Cyprus DDO Report 2014

Two candidates were also recommended for ordination training from Cyprus last year. They are Christine Goldsmith, who is currently licensed as a Reader, and Geoff Graham. Both are offering Non-Stipendiary Ministry. It has been an interesting learning curve to devise an appropriate distance based ordination training programme for them. For different reasons, neither is able to leave the island for extended periods of study, and we have had to piece together a training programme that would include credible elements of theological learning, practical training and reflective formation, from limited resources.

In the event, in collaboration with St Michaels College, using Exploring Faith with an existing group, and calling on the experience and resources of three island clergy, we have arrived at an imaginative and effective scheme. It will be for the bishop to decide on ordination dates, based on the reports he receives.

The Ministry forum has been a major focus for all aspects of Ministry throughout the year and across the diocese, and we look forward to seeing Synod's response to the ideas the forum put forward. In the meantime, the success of the Exploring Faith course in Limassol and Polis has been a plus, and resulted in one new candidate for Reader training. The accreditation of the course through the Anglican foundation of Queens College Newfoundland will undoubtedly strengthen its international appeal.

The Cyprus Readers meet as a group four times each year for training and consultation – as well as fellowship. This has been a really worthwhile project and is greatly valued. 100% attendance is usually guaranteed. This year we have been joined by a Reader from the cathedral who has transferred from South Africa. Readers here are resourced with copies of The Reader magazine, produced by the Church of England, and that too is greatly appreciated. A number of Readers have now had permission, on completion of a course of training, to officiate at funerals, and some have made this a special and rewarding ministry during the past year. Also, we have had the first Reader to be appointed as Mission to Seafarers Chaplain to the Cyprus ports. Readers are valued members of worship teams in all the Chaplaincies where they are licensed.

We were greatly saddened to learn of the death, in a car accident in Larnaca district, of Graham Hodgson, who had been accepted for training as a Reader, from the parish of Famagusta. Graham had deferred starting his training for family reasons, but had attended some meetings of the Readers. He will be greatly missed in Famagusta.

Continuing Ministerial/Professional development for clergy has been on hold this year to an extent, because of the huge changeover of clergy and extended periods of interregnum. We hope to begin a new programme this coming year. Clergy also meet on a quarterly basis.

John Holdsworth