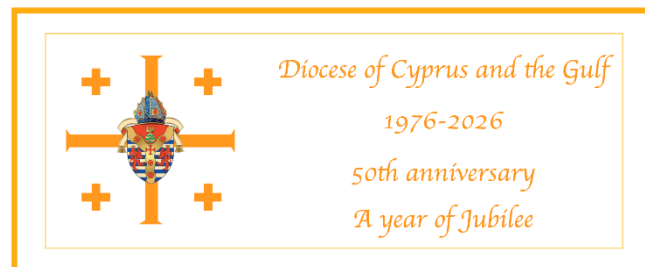


Synod 2026

► A special Synod

Synod 2026 was very special, as this year we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our Diocese - our Jubilee. Recent Synods have taken place in Larnaca, Cyprus. This was our first time in Bahrain and a lot of hard work had gone into making this Synod as interesting, useful and productive as possible - and to make the best use of our time together as a Diocese.



It was a joyous, uplifting occasion, with a palpable feeling of unity, fellowship and prayerful support for one another. The welcome and hospitality we received from the congregations and clergy of St Chrisopher's Cathedral and from Awali Church (the Tamil-speaking congregation further South on the island) was truly warm and generous.

► Our Diocese - who are we and where are we all from?

Synod comprises roughly 100 people (about 50 delegates and up to 50 visitors).

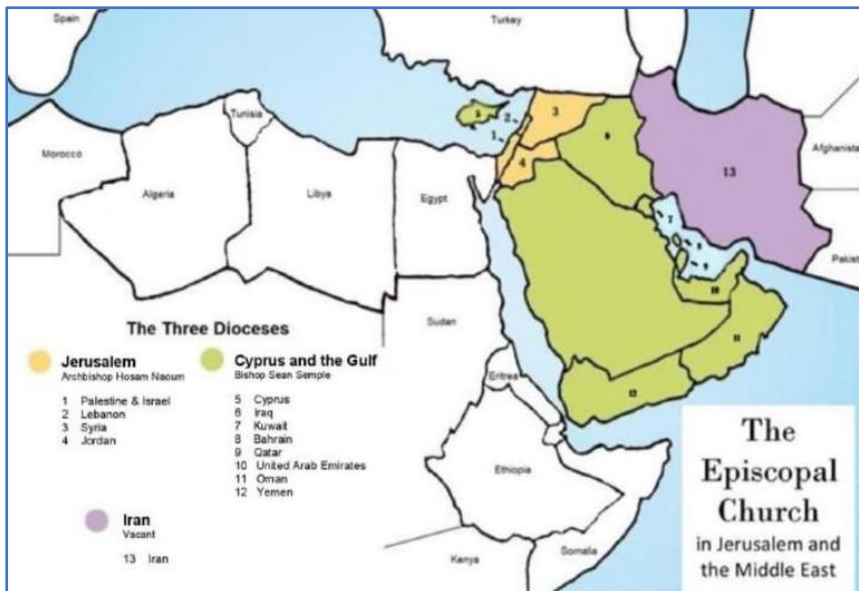
Our Diocese has

- 2 parishes in Northern Cyprus
- 6 parishes in the Republic of Cyprus
- A parish in Baghdad
- A parish in Kuwait
- A parish in Bahrain
- A parish in Qatar
- 5 parishes in the UAE
- A parish in Oman
- A parish in Yemen (Christ Church, Aden - not currently operating as a church, but running a hospital, run by local medical staff)



Almost all parishes in the Diocese send clergy and up to two lay delegates.

We are the second largest (by geographical area) and probably the most diverse diocese in the Anglican Communion. Over 60% of the people in our diocese speak Tamil as their first language, but scores of other languages are also spoken. Some Gulf churches are growing rapidly, as increasing numbers of people go there to work.



The Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf is in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

► What happened at Synod ?

Synod took place 2nd - 6th February over 3 full days and parts of 2 days. Every day was different, but there was also something of a pattern.

- There was a Eucharist every day, together with other services. Each day ended with Compline (Night prayer).
- The Synod Speaker gave an address on the 3 full days, followed by workshops on 2 of them
- The House of Laity and House of Clergy held their own meetings at the start and end of Synod.
- Synod Sessions took place on each of the 3 full days. These were very busy sessions, where the 'business' part of Synod happened.

In addition, there were outside visits and optional activities.

Many guests brought greetings from their churches or organisations and some gave reports.

Guests to Synod included Bishop Julius Wanyoike from our sister Diocese of Thika (in Kenya) and Bishop Moira Astin (Bishop of Crediton) from our sister Diocese of Kent.

The Reverend Don Binder (Chaplain to Archbishop Hosam) and The Venerable Fuad Dagher, from Galilee, representing of the Diocese of Jerusalem & the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, were collated as Provincial Canons of St Christopher's Cathedral, Bahrain.

In the same service, Rev'd Canon Walter Brownridge was licensed as Dean of St Paul's, Nicosia and Rev'd Navina Thompson was licensed as parish priest of St Helena, Larnaca.

SYNOD 2026 – an outline

	Worship
	Speaker & Workshops
	Synod Sessions
	Meetings of House of Laity / House of Clergy
	Travel
	Meals & breaks
	Optional activities

MONDAY 2ND FEBRUARY

	ARRIVALS & Check-in	
1445	Buses leave from hotel	
1530	Opening Eucharist (buses leave for Hotel 1700)	St Christopher's Cathedral
1830	Meetings of House of Laity / House of Clergy	Hotel
2000	Jubilee Dinner	Hotel
2200	Compline (Night Prayer)	Hotel Chapel

TUESDAY 3RD FEBRUARY

	Breakfast	
0830	Eucharist	Hotel Chapel
0915	Synod Prayer (see P7 of Programme) Address I – Synod Speaker Martha Jarvis, Anglican Communion Permanent Representative to the UN	Main conference hall
1000	Workshops on Address I theme	
1045	Coffee	
1100	SYNOD SESSION - Main conference hall (Introduction of Synod participants) 1. Bishop's Report 2. Minutes of September 2025 Synod <u>Motion 1</u> <i>Synod receives and approves September 2025 Synod minutes</i> 3. Report from the Diocese of Jerusalem and Provincial Report 4. Report on Middle East Council of Churches 5. Report from Bishop's Task Force* <u>See Programme for Motions 2-9</u>	
1300	Lunch	
1345	SYNOD SESSION - Main conference hall 1. Report from Bishop's Task Force (contd)* 2. Report from Constitutional Review Committee	
1515	Buses leave from hotel	

1630	Interfaith Service at Sea		
1830	Buses leave for hotel		
2000	Dinner	Hotel	
2100	Compline (Night Prayer)	Hotel Chapel	

WEDNESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY

	Breakfast		
0830	Morning Prayer	Hotel Chapel	
0915	Synod Prayer (<i>see P7 of Programme</i>) Address II – Synod Speaker Martha Jarvis	Main conference hall	
1000	Workshops on Address II theme		
1120	Coffee		
1130	SYNOD SESSION - Main conference hall 1. Financial Report - 2025 Diocesan accounts <u>Motion 10</u> Subject to final audit, Synod receives and approves the Diocesan (ACCL) financial statements for 2025 2. Report from Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor 3. Diocesan programmes a. Report on Diocesan Ministry programme <u>Motion 11</u> <i>Synod receives and approves the report on the Diocesan Ministry programme</i> b. Update on St Mark Famagusta c. Update on Christ Church Aden		
1300	Lunch		
1400	SYNOD SESSION - Main conference hall 1. 2026 ACCL budget: presentation and discussion <u>Motion 12</u> <i>Synod receives and approves the proposed Diocesan budget for 2026</i> 2. Report from Standing and Finance Committee 3. Report from Mission to Seafarers 4. Reports from Companion Dioceses a. Diocese of Thika b. Diocese of Exeter		
1515	Buses leave from hotel		
1600	Retreat	Awali Gardens	
1800	CHRISM EUCHARIST	Awali Church	
1930	Dinner	BAPCO Club, Awali	
2100	Buses depart for hotel		
2200	Compline	Hotel Chapel	

THURSDAY 5TH FEBRUARY

	Breakfast		
0830	Eucharist	Hotel Chapel	
0915	Synod Prayer Address III - Synod Speaker Martha Jarvis	Main conference hall	
1000	Meetings of Houses of Clergy and Laity (including elections)		
1130	Coffee		
1145	SYNOD SESSION - Main conference hall 1. Report from Diocesan and Worldwide Mothers' Union 2. Report from UK Friends of the Diocese 3. Report from American Friends of the Diocese 4. Report from the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf Foundation 5. Results of House elections 6. Briefing: Survey on disability (The Reverend Andrew Warmback) 7. Briefing: Survey on Servant Leadership (Mr Jaywant Michael) 8. Any other business 9. Date and venue of Synod 2027 10. Concluding business and notices		
1300	Lunch		
1400	(CONTINUED FROM TUESDAY) 1. Report from Bishop's Task Force (contd)* 2. Report from Constitutional Review Committee		
1630	Coffee		
1645	Discussion: Safe migration—with UN IOM guest speaker - main conference hall		
1830	Evening Prayer	Hotel Chapel	
2000	Dinner	Old Town	
2100	Compline	Hotel Chapel	

FRIDAY 6TH FEBRUARY

	Breakfast		
0915	Buses leave hotel		
1000	Morning Service	St Christopher's Cathedral	
	OPTION -Tour of Bahrain/Museum		
	DEPARTURES		

Throughout the week, posts about Synod activities appeared on the Diocesan website [Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf – Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf](#)

And the Facebook page:



These posts give detailed information on each day's events and activities, along with lots of photos.

They are a really good way of keeping people in parishes - and beyond - informed and involved with Synod. **Please check them out!**

► House of Laity Meetings

The House of Laity (HoL) is an extremely important body in the Diocese and is made up of all of the **Lay Delegates** to Synod, who represent the people in the pews.

Diocesan committees and working groups include lay delegates, who are elected by the House of Laity. They often bring invaluable experience and expertise from areas outside of the Church, together with a fresh perspective. It is important for the Diocese to be able to draw on the skills of a wide variety of lay people and for individuals to be in a position to contribute to the life and work of the Diocese.

► Synod Sessions

All of the Synod Sessions - when reports are received, questions asked and motions passed - took place in the main conference hall.

Each delegation sits together in allocated seats, with their parish name card in front of them. Parishes are arranged alphabetically.

The main conference hall is arranged so that all delegates can see one another.

Members of the Standing and Finance Committee (SFC) sit at the 'top' table and, between them, they chair all of the sessions (SFC is the Bishop, Archdeacons, 2 clergy and 2 laity - *Further information on the SFC is included at the end of this guide*).

Parish delegations are arranged around the other 3 sides, so that everyone is looking inwards, at one another. Visitors (who do not have a vote) are all outside of this square.

► Key decisions made at Synod 2026

The Bishop's Task Force, set up by Synod 2025, had considered possible models of Diocesan organisational structure, better suited to the challenges and opportunities faced as it enters its second half-century.

The Task Force brought proposals to Synod, all of which were agreed.

Archdeaconries

Synod approved the creation of:

- an Archdeaconry of Northern Arabia consisting of the parishes in the countries of Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar, and the central territories of the Arabian Peninsula
- an Archdeaconry of Southern Arabia consisting of the parishes of the countries of the UAE, Oman and Yemen.

The Bishop's Office and Residence will remain in the Republic of Cyprus for the next five years but this matter will be re-examined in 2030.

The Archdeaconry of Cyprus will be retained, with an Archdeacon serving the (current) 8 parishes of the divided island.

The geographic extent, complexity and number of parishes (approximately 12) in the current Archdeaconry of the Gulf place unrealistic demands on the Archdeacon in the Gulf. The restructuring of the Archdeaconry of the Gulf will result in a more manageable and efficient archidiaconal ministry.

There is currently not the financial means to fund full-time Archdeacons (i.e. Archdeacons who have no parish responsibilities) - a role currently undertaken in addition to a full-time parish role, under the terms of a three-year agreement with the relevant parish.

Cathedrals & Deans

Synod agreed that:

A church may be designated a Cathedral by recommendation of the Bishop and with the support of the church in question and a majority of Synod.

A Cathedral can be returned to the status of Parish Church by writ of the Bishop with the majority support of Synod, and after consultation with the Dean and Cathedral Council.

A candidate for Dean will be required to have a minimum of 10 years in Holy Orders.

A Dean is, in the first instance, the parish priest of the Cathedral parish.

Deans will rank as the most senior priests of the Diocese.

Deans will alternate each Synodical year as the Vicar General of the Diocese, representing the Bishop in Administrative and Pastoral matters as directed or required through episcopal vacancy, sabbatical or incapacity.

Deans will be members of the Standing and Finance Committee.

Each Cathedral of the Diocese will have a College of Honorary Canons, selected for their modelling of exceptional ministry and service in or for the Diocese or for their potential to contribute to the ongoing mission of the Diocese and Cathedral.

The Chair of the College of Canons will be the Dean of the Cathedral, and the College will meet at least annually. The College of Canons will act in an advisory and supportive role to the Dean and Cathedral, with authority for decision-making reserved entirely for the Cathedral Council.

Archdeaconry Forums and Councils

Synod agreed the formation of **Archdeaconry Forums**, to which all Archdeaconry licensed and PtO clergy and members of parish electoral rolls are invited. Their role will be to offer input on Diocesan and parish issues between and in support of meetings of Synod.

The formation of **Archdeaconry Councils** was also agreed, consisting of two members of the House of Clergy and two members of the House of Laity from the relevant Archdeaconry, to assist in the governance of that Archdeaconry with particular regard to HR and legal issues.

A Prayer for the Diocese

***God of infinite compassion and gentleness,
you call us to be your people
in every place to which you lead us.
In this our earthly pilgrimage
walk alongside us as our guide,
sustain us by your Word and holy sacraments.
Raise our eyes to see your glory
in all you have made
and to be your new creation,
through Jesus Christ our ascended Lord.
Amen***

► Some titles and acronyms

- ACCL - The Anglican Church (Cyprus) Ltd (The Diocese operates in Cyprus as a limited Company)
 - Barnabas Team - A group focussing on clergy well-being
 - BTF - Bishop's Task Force
 - CoE - Church of England. The established Church in England
 - CRC - Constitutional Review Committee. Group reviewing the constitution of the diocese
 - DSO - Diocesan Safeguarding Officer
 - ECUSA - Episcopal Church of the United States of America
 - GEEL - Group working on Gulf Enhanced Episcopal Leadership
 - HoC - House of Clergy
 - HoL - House of Laity
 - JMECA - The Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association. A Limited Company Charity, supporting the work of our Province
 - JEMT - The Jerusalem and the East Mission Trust Ltd. A non-profit limited company that administers the assets of JMECA
 - Ras Morbat Hospital - Eye hospital in Yemen financed by the Diocese; run by local staff
 - SFC - Standing and Finance Committee. The 'Executive Committee' when Synod is not in session
-

► Constitution & Standing Orders

The Constitution is simply a document that explains the purpose of an organisation, how it is set up and how it goes about what it is set up to do.

A copy of the Diocesan Constitution can be found on the Diocesan website.

The Standing Orders for the Diocesan Synod outline how Synod should be run.

Key points regarding Synod

The **Constitution** is made up of:

- A preface, which explains what the Diocese is
- 4 chapters, divided into 18 articles (sections)

The **Standing Orders for the Diocesan Synod** comprise: 99 Standing Orders organised into 21 sections (*Standing orders are detailed rules for how meetings are organised and run*)

CHAPTER 2 of the Constitution. Governance of the Diocese includes sections on:

- The Diocesan Synod
- The Standing and Finance Committee (SFC)

FROM CHAPTER 2. The Diocesan Synod:

- ▶ Must meet at least once a year
- ▶ Is made up of:
 - The House of Bishops - Diocesan Bishop (and any Suffragan or Assistant Bishops)
 - The House of Clergy - All priests and Deacons licensed under Seal in the Diocese, plus some non-voting members
 - The House of Laity - Two representatives from each parish, plus the lay members of the Standing and Finance Committee

A Chair of the House of Clergy is elected by its members to serve a 3 year term

Two Chairs of the House of Laity (one each from the Gulf & from Cyprus) are elected by its members to serve a 3 year term.

Members of the HoL are elected annually by their parishes.

▶ **Synod has authority on all matters relating to the Diocese except**

- Matters relating to Faith and Order
- Matters under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Synod
- The appointment of Clergy

▶ **Synod has powers to:**

- Advise the Bishop
- Express opinion on matters referred to it by the Provincial Synod
- Open and administer institutions (schools, hospitals, etc)
- Set up boards and committees
- Receive, amend, approve or reject recommendations of the Standing and Finance Committee
- Appoint legal advisors
- Make, amend and revoke Standing Orders

▶ **The Standing and Finance Committee (SFC)**

- This is the Executive Committee of the Synod
- It reports to Synod
- The SFC considers matters arising and takes action where necessary when Synod is not on session
- The Bishop consults the SFC on all important matters
- It raises matters of concern with the Bishop
- The SFC prepares the agenda for Synod