

Theology House report to Synod 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to report on the activities of Theology House in 2025.

A major highlight of the year was the honour of hosting the Reverend Doctor Sam Wells for a seminar. The day was well attended from both the Diocese and the wider Church. Sam's carefully thought through theological vision for the Church in mission is built on his writing and his practice at St Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square, London. Sam inspired some very good conversation and a notable uptick in borrowing of his books from the Theology House library.

We published the first edition of a new lectionary-based Lenten study *In the Spirit of Lent*. This work is a collaboration with The Reverend Sarah West from Auckland Diocese and pairs her visual reflections with my written ones. I plan three editions in total to complete the three years of the Revised Common Lectionary. While producing these studies is an enormous undertaking, helping people around the country and even overseas engage with scripture is equally an enormous opportunity.

We piloted a new course format, Theology After 5 with courses on the doctrine of salvation and on Christology and the Trinity. This proved to be both popular and effective and we will offer further courses in 2026. The content for the course is a slimmed down version of what I used in the Theology House Certificate of Ministry and Leadership programme. The standout feature of this approach is that each course starts from a reflection on scripture and only afterwards moves to a discussion of doctrine. I see enormous value in keeping Biblical Studies and Theology together and avoiding treating scripture as merely proof texts for our pre-existing beliefs.

It was a great privilege to help the Reverend Stephanie Clay lead confirmation preparation for a group of St Margaret's College students. As I continue to develop and refine my approach to this important ministry, I

would welcome the chance to share my learnings to see if the approach might work in more contexts.

Library patronage continues to grow, and we continue to work hard to add useful, relevant, and important resources to our collection.

I have continued to support ministry education of the Diocese, particularly helping lead Post-Ordination Training and overseeing funding and scholarships. I'm delighted that Bishop Peter has appointed the Venerable Nick Mountfort as Archdeacon for Ministry. I look forward to working closely with him as he takes the lead in ministry education.

We are grateful to the St John's College Trust Board who provide funding for our ministry and the Church Property Trustees who manage the bulk of our small endowment to generate sustainable income. We are very well served by the Diocese's Parish Accounting Scheme and benefit from a great facility and central location in the Anglican Centre.

Huge thanks are due to Sarah Larritt, Administrator and Sarah Dunning, Librarian who work hard to keep Theology House operating smoothly and to Nando for his companionship. My thanks also to our board for their guidance and governance:

- Bishop Peter
- The Reverend Canon Cameron Pickering
- The Reverend Margaret Neate
- The Reverend Chris Orczy
- Mr Peter Hart
- Mr Tom Elliot

In Christ's service

Gareth Bezett, Director