



BISHOP'S CHARGE TO THE SECOND ORDINARY SESSION OF THE FIFTY SEVENTH SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

Tēnā koutou katoa.

It is good to be together and I greet you warmly and thank you sincerely for your commitment to our work these next two days.

In welcoming you I am aware that there is always a slight change of membership from one year to the next within the three-year Synod. Could those who are joining the Synod for the first time please stand so that we can welcome and acknowledge you.

We have had quite a few apologies this year due to sickness, which is a reminder that there is still quite a bit of that about. This year it has been much more about bad colds and flu rather than COVID-19, and I think people are more aware of staying home when they are sick, both for their own well-being and for the sake of others. Bishop Kito is one who has succumbed to a cold and so has sent his apology for tonight's opening.

PARTNERSHIP

We are so very grateful to have Archbishop Sione present with us, however. Archbishop, we rejoice with you in accepting God's call to episcopal ministry. Our prayers are with you in your care and leadership of the Diocese of Polynesia. We have shared a long common history in gospel work in Auckland in recognition of the significant Pasefika population in our city. We look forward to continuing that and finding even better mechanisms for fostering this aspect of partnership within our Three Tikanga Church.

Thank you for your presence tonight and for your sermon at our opening Eucharist. Please accept this small gift as a sign of our aroha and our welcome.

Partnership remains an important aspect of our diocesan life. We have a focus in three ways with Te Pihopatanga o Te Tai Tokerau, with Te Pihopatanga o Te Manawa o te Wheke, and with the Diocese of Polynesia.

Just this week we were able to celebrate the conclusion of a piece of partnership work with Te Manawa o te Wheke in the contribution our Diocese had made towards the purchasing of a block of land at Rangiaowhia in the Waikato which had been lost in 1864 during the Waikato wars. There were both Anglican and Catholic missions established there alongside an agricultural settlement. The attack on

Rangiaowhia, which included the burning of the Catholic chapel and other whare and the death of numerous non-combatants living there, has been the source of considerable mamae these past 160 years. The opportunity for the Church to be part of restoring some of that whenua to Ngāti Apakura is a wonderful sign of hope and reconciliation.

We will continue to develop our Tikanga partnerships both relationally and in these tangible ways.

IN MEMORIAM

As is our custom, we pause to give thanks for former members of the Synod who have died since we last gathered. I invite you to stand as you are able.

House of Clergy

The Reverend Dr Terry Creagh
The Reverend Ron Smith
The Reverend Canon Roy Everall
The Reverend Bob Riha-Scott
The Reverend Beatrice Foote
The Reverend Pat Bawden

House of Laity

John Blyth, Former Co-Archdeacon of Waimate
Jean Coomer, Parish of Torbay
Janet Foster, Former Diocesan Archivist
Murray Guy, Parish of Papakura
Roger Dewhirst, Mission District of Paparoa

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord,
And let light perpetual shine upon them.

THE WEATHER

Talking about the weather has almost overtaken our Auckland metropolitan obsession with talking about the traffic. Many parts of the Diocese have been greatly affected by the January storms and the February cyclone, which has been compounded by ongoing rain and the heightened water table. We are all conscious of the strain this has placed on already fragile roading networks and it has been most keenly felt on the Coromandel and in parts of Northland.

State Highway 25A across the Coromandel remains closed until early next year and the other access roads around the Coromandel are tenuous. Ministry Units and communities in Whitianga, Tairua and Coromandel Town have been regularly physically isolated. The Bryderwyns have been regularly closed or restricted, SH1 over the Mangamukas has been closed for a year with uncertainty about whether it can be rebuilt.

Quite a few of our churches, halls and vicarages have been affected by flooding to various extents, adding strain financially, emotionally and in terms of time as people attend to repairs. We continue to be aware of the long-term impacts of the weather on settlements in Tairawhiti and Hawkes Bay.

Across the Auckland Diocese, thousands of homes were affected by the floods, with many hundreds still unable to be occupied 7 months on. The biggest impact has been in communities in the west of Auckland.

I am thankful for the ways in which local people and church communities responded well to community needs as they were able during the worst of the weather earlier in the year. Churches provided shelter, food and clothing, compassion and care to others. Thank you for this witness to the love of God.

Auckland Emergency Management and the Religious Diversity Centre have done some work on building resilient religious communities and recently released a resource related to this. It assists people in planning for emergencies, ways in which people can lead locally in an emergency, and opportunities for religious places to be used in an emergency. I will include the link to the resource in the published version of the charge.

<https://www.aucklandemergencymanagement.org.nz/media/q4gchv1a/resilient-religious-communities-guide-aug23.pdf>

AN APPROACHING ELECTION

This week the official establishment of Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga Tāmaki Makaurau took place at an event in Mangere. The Diocese has been part of this alliance since its establishment in 2018. Te Ohu exists in order to bring organisation and substance to the experience of people living in situations of poverty and so to enable their stories to have a greater voice towards those who are policy and decision makers in our society.

The Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, Deputy Leader of the National Party Nicola Willis, and Co-Leader of the Green Party Marama Davidson were present at the event and spoke in response to the challenges laid before them, with each one making a positive response in particular to a wero related to social housing in Auckland.

I was humbled to be asked to speak on behalf of faith communities who are one of the four streams of membership of the alliance which now has 45 member organisations who have joined. In my kōrero I noted that election campaigns are times when people can over-ask and political parties can over-promise. Many people are asking in order to secure their ongoing economic place in society through the influence of their well-organised unions and professional associations. How do those living in poverty ask in a collective way?

We follow the Saviour whose love is poured out for all people and whose heart has a particular care for those who are on the margins and who are too often unnoticed. Te Ohu Tāmaki gives us a further opportunity to express our faith in advocating for the situation of people living in poverty. I wish to pay tribute to David Hall and Susan Adams who have kept the vision of Te Ohu before us these past 5 years as it has come to this point.

ADDRESSING ABUSE

Attending to abuse in the Church has been a large focus in recent years in terms of our response to the Royal Commission of Enquiry and the Dilworth Independent Inquiry, our engagement with survivors relating to redress, and the development of policies and practices within the Church to create a safer environment.

Much progress has been made and it is critical that we maintain an ongoing awareness and commitment to ensuring our worshipping communities and their related activities are welcoming and safe places for people. This year's Ministry Conference theme was on being a trauma informed Church and allowed people the chance to be updated on recent events, hear from a survivor, be reminded of policy changes, and also be equipped for recognising and responding to those who have suffered trauma.

This is not just something for Diocesan and national Church leadership, but is a corporate responsibility that we must work out in each place.

The Dilworth report is expected to be published soon and the final Royal Commission report will be published in March next year. We will be very attentive to the recommendations contained in these reports and respond appropriately.

NEWS FROM RELATED ORGANISATIONS

Two of our partner social service agencies have had changes of CEO in the past year. In October last year Denise Cosgrove began at The Selwyn Foundation, succeeding Garry Smith who had served for 10 years in that role. Denise brings considerable leadership experience in social services including from her past role for five years as CEO of Presbyterian Support Northern.

Andrea McLeod joined the ATWC in June succeeding Judy Matai'a who gave 10 years of service including 8 years as CEO. Andrea likewise brings great experience as a senior leader across the social, health, and disability sectors and was most recently General Manager of Social Services at Presbyterian Support Northern.

Please join me in acknowledging Denise and Andrea, and in expressing our thanks to Presbyterian Support for gifting us two great leaders.

The City Mission was celebrated in the wider community last week when it was announced that they had won the Supreme Award at the 2023 National Diversity Awards. This was granted for their work to improve Māori outcomes and intentionally privilege Māori development and is having a far-reaching positive impact on those working in the organisation and the people in need they support every day.

We are grateful for the work that each of these agencies undertakes and are proud to be stakeholders with them in it.

I also wish to acknowledge the appointment of Dr Emily Colgan as Manukura of St John's College. We are proud to have an Auckland Anglican take up this leadership role at the College. Emily has a strong academic track record and a commitment to enabling effective training and formation for those preparing for ordained ministry. The appointment of a lay woman to such an important role in our Church is a cause for much thanksgiving.

LIVING BEYOND OURSELVES

At the commissioning of a priest in a mission district recently, I said this:

“I name some issues that are not yours alone, but are ones that we face right around the Diocese: ageing congregations, decline in attendance, juggling finances to balance the budget, managing the multiplicity of compliance issues, a reluctance by people to commit, and more. You choose which of those fit your situation, but they are the kind of issues which present a growing crisis for the Church. When do we find time for mission and, even if we can, what are we meant to do?”

When I became Bishop, I brought a vision and commitment to building the Church in the Diocese through the support and development of the church locally. That remains my vision and commitment. It has been given more substance and definition through the Healthy Church model and its related consultation process. COVID-19 took its impact on that consultation process and plans are being put in place to re-initiate it in 2024. For those not familiar with it I will append the model to the published version of the Charge.

Beyond that though, the focus of the Episcopal and Diocesan teams as a whole is to offer support and resourcing to the people of the Diocese and especially to clergy and lay people in ministry leadership roles. No one will ever be totally satisfied with the amount of that which is provided. My experience is that the more we offer, the more that is expected. But we do our best and I think that if we look back over 10 years or so we might see how that has grown.

I continue to believe that the Church incarnated locally through ministry units, chaplaincies and other expressions is the primary place for our mission. It is where we interface with people in local communities and thus where we have the potential to develop relationships that allow us to share the love of God and be part of the work of God’s kingdom.

When we undertake Healthy Church Consultations, it is often the case that the quadrant named “Living Beyond Ourselves” is the hardest one to be able to articulate what we are doing or to think about what new ideas there could be for acting. This is the quadrant that speaks of outreach and proclamation, the sharing of our faith through word and action.

At that recent mission district commissioning, I also said this:

“I can’t stand here and give you the answer about what you should be doing. I am not here. You are here. Each of you is a strong part of the communities within which you live. You know those communities. You know their needs, the ways in which healing might come to people and places and thus the opportunities for the Word of truth to find a place. Those are the mission opportunities which God opens up before you.”

People sometimes wonder where the opportunities exist to talk about these issues. Well, for clergy they are often the subject of conversation in cluster meetings. Locally I hope they are frequently a point of discussion in governing bodies and among leadership groups, and are the focus of annual planning around goals for mission and ministry.

But as a diocese we do not easily address them, and Synod doesn't always easily provide the opportunity. However, we have a Standing Order number 14 about introducing new business, whose sub-clause (iii) provides for new business that arises out of business of which notice has been given. In other words, having listened to this Charge that is part of Synod business, it may be that someone might move a new motion that could be as simple as "THAT this Synod thanks the Bishop for his Charge." But such a motion would then open the opportunity for discussion together about any of the matters I have raised tonight, and the sharing of ideas and concerns with one another.

I have to say that I would caution against a corporate rush of blood to the head through the establishment of more groups, committees or commissions as a result of such discussion, as that would simply add yet more work to an already over-stretched diocesan team and the willing group of volunteers that work with them. But ultimately, we would be in the hands of the Synod. Let's see what happens when we get to that moment on the Order Paper tomorrow morning.

THANK YOU

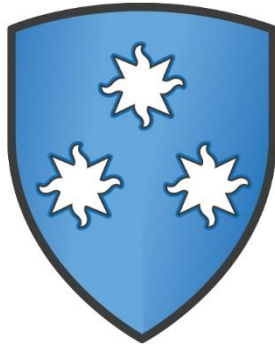
I continue to be very grateful for the hard work and collegiality of so many people. In particular I thank the team that works most closely with me in the exercise of episcopal ministry, and the wider team that works in and from Neligan House. But beyond them is an enormous number of people who give of their time and talents freely to allow some of our wider work to make progress. Members of the Diocesan Council are a great source of wisdom in their governance of our diocesan life. Likewise, the insights and wisdom of those who serve as Ministry Advisors and on Boards of Nomination. There are groups who support the work of Seasons and Space, who are part of AdJust and Ordinary Saints.

There are people working to help progress work related to a digital strategy, the review of Synod, the use of property, the assessing of faculty applications, the oversight of finances, health and safety, and on and on. Thank you to you all, as without you there would not be a Diocese, which is not a thing separate to us but is our collective life as we attend to all these things that help hold our life together and make our work more effective.

THE WORK OF THIS SESSION

And finally, thank you again to you all for being here. Some of you have travelled a good distance, many have taken time off work, all of you will give at least some of Saturday to this (hopefully not all of it if we work well!) In comparison with some Sessions of Synod this is a lighter load, but within it are some important things for us to consider and decide. Let us attend well to our work prayerfully, respectfully, and well.

Bishop Ross Bay
7TH September 2023



Anglican Diocese of Auckland

Healthy Church Model



Church Health Markers: What does a healthy church look like?

Inspiring Worship

Authentic, prayerful worship and joyous music that engages hearts and minds in glorifying God, which appeals to various generations and is relevant to the cultures/contexts in which we live. Well delivered, thoughtful and sound sermons, which apply God's word in practical ways, promoting growth in faith and inspiring people to Christian action.

Vibrant Faith and Prayerful Life

Actively seeking the Holy Spirit's direction and empowerment for daily life and ministry. Faith is lived out with commitment and answered prayer is celebrated. Enthusiasm about how God is working in the faith community. Active promotion and practice of prayer and bible study.

Authentic Loving Community

United and joyous relationships with members and non-members, showing genuine acts of kindness, caring, support and sharing. Intentional about relationship formation. Efforts to build loving, caring relationships between members, creating a strong sense of community within the Ministry Unit (MU). Invites, and displays hospitality toward the inclusion of newcomers, children and youth, as well as members into active participation in congregational life.

Stewardship & Governance

Teaches biblical stewardship and provides opportunities for generosity. Church operates the annual budget with financial integrity and accountability. Provides effective communication regarding decisions and activities.

Maturing Discipleship

Takes seriously the formation of disciples, nurturing spiritual maturity through relevant Christian education and encouraging all to grow in their walk with God and share their faith.

Gift Oriented Ministry

Challenges and equips members to discover, develop, and use their gifts for fruitful ministry. Identifies, trains, and empowers members for ministry.

Empowering Leadership

Led by leadership who demonstrates the calling, character, and competence to help the Ministry Unit achieve its God-given purpose and shared vision. Clergy are committed to developing and empowering lay leaders and identifying and training next generation leaders. Leadership builds optimism and hope even in challenging times and is open to innovative solutions.

Relevant Outreach

Engaged in the community, making positive changes. Focus on significant ministry reaching out to the community and beyond. Actively expresses the love of Christ through generosity and service to those in need. Outreach is culturally responsive and relevant to community needs and responds in tangible ways to global humanitarian needs.

Proclaiming the Gospel

Committed to proclaiming the Good News of Christ through word and action. Members bear witness to their faith.