

SUMMARY OF SYNOD 2017

The Second Session of the 55th Synod of the Diocese of Auckland was held at Auckland Cathedral of the Holy Trinity from Thursday 7th to Saturday 9th September 2017, commencing with the Synod Eucharist in St Mary's-in-Holy Trinity. The preacher was Bishop Jim. Following the service, Synod moved into the Cathedral to commence the business sessions.

Bishops' Charge

The Bishops' Charge was presented jointly by Bishop Ross and Bishop Jim. All present were welcomed, especially those new to Synod, while former members who had died in the past year were remembered.

The Bishops began by noting that a General Election would shortly take place and they made reference to a number of issues that had been discussed at recent Synods, some of which would be discussed again this year. Reference was also made to world issues, including the growing tensions between North Korea and the United States and other civil wars that were creating huge numbers of displaced people.

Following on from the discussions begun in 2016, the Bishops spoke on what it meant to be a Diocese and the responsibilities this involved. They noted many challenges faced the Church at both local and Diocesan levels and, while the mission of God was mostly worked out through local churches, it was important that local life was "strengthened and resourced to be able to fulfil its calling as a worshipping, mission-focussed people of God." Put another way, we were "not just an amalgamation of individuals" but we belonged to each other in a "deep, fundamental and holy way".

It was clear local ministry would need to adapt and change in different ways. We would need to find new resources and to have the courage to accept that some things may need to die in order for new things to come to life. The work of Archdeacon Sarah Moss in implementing the Ministry Unit Review played an important role in helping ministry units to identify what was working well, what changes were desirable and where new mission opportunities might lie. While the work of mission was a core purpose of the Church, assistance was often required to identify needs and resource them. The Diocese had an important role in harnessing collaboration and supporting such initiatives. "Local life must be strengthened and resourced to be able to fulfil its calling as a worshipping, mission-focussed people of God," they said.

As Bishops, they were called to serve alongside each community but also to serve the Diocese as a whole. Their vision was of a Diocese made up of flourishing ministry units, where "what it means to flourish is about knowing the gift of God in Christ and sharing that gift with the same graciousness by which it comes to us". This would direct their work and lead them to identify strategies that could make this happen.

Copies of both the Bishops' Charge and Bishop Jim's sermon can be found on the Diocesan website.

The Business of Synod

The order paper consisted of twelve motions and five bills, while a number of reports were also presented. A conference session was used to discuss the Interim Report of the Primate's Working Group on Motion 29 of General Synod 2016.

Motions

All twelve motions on the order paper were passed. They represented a wide range of issues as follows:

- *Title G Canon III of Marriage* – requested General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui to set up a working group to review the relevant legislation and bring recommendations back to it in 2020
- *Decade of Mission* – affirmed the goals announced in 2014, namely (1) to add 100,000 new believers (2) expand capacity (3) partner with other agencies (4) tell positive stories (5) examine how church structures promote or hinder further mission
- *Hagar NZ* – affirmed the work done by this organisation overseas in rescuing women from slavery
- *Equal Gender Representation* – attention was drawn to the report of the working group set up by Diocesan Council to consider this matter. It sought the appointment of a Diocesan Gender Diversity Advocate whose task would be to remind all of a commitment to gender diversity and encourage awareness in decision-making, representation, appointments and visibility of leaders. A Standing Resolution on this matter recommended by the Legal Business Committee was also adopted (based on a decision of Synod 2016)
- *Housing* – sought a commitment by the Government to build 34,000 social houses in the Auckland region in the next ten years. An amendment approved the formation of a working group led by the Diocesan Council to work on a practical response to the housing crisis within the Diocese
- *TPPA* – this called on all political parties involved in the General Election to hold a binding referendum before committing to ratify the Agreement
- *Inequality in NZ* – this called on the Government to introduce a more progressive income tax regime linked to the Living Wage
- *Shareable Resources* – this called on the Diocesan Office to create a centralised register of shareable resources that could be used throughout the Diocese
- *Climate change* – three motions were connected to this topic: (1) encouraged Ministry Units to include the care of creation material in liturgy and teaching; (2) asked the Diocese to commit to carbon neutrality in its business, including its travel; (3) requested the Diocesan Council to establish an annual budget to employ a Sustainability Field Worker
- *Overseas Missions* – a commitment to continued partnership with the Church overseas was affirmed, including a Diocesan target of \$300,000 towards the work of the Anglican Missions Board
- In addition, a Motion without Notice was presented and passed as follows:
THAT this Synod:
 1. Supports the Bishops' Charge, the appointment of an Archdeacon for Ministry Review and the goals of the Decade of Mission; and
 2. Encourages the continuing articulation of a missional vision for the Diocese that recognizes both where we are and where we plan to be.

Bills

To make any change to a statute, a bill must first be presented, considered in detail and passed. This year five bills were considered and all were passed, one with a small number of amendments.

Quota System – In 2016 the Diocesan Council advised Synod the amount being received through this system was significantly less than in 1983 when payment was first made voluntary, thus placing several ministries at risk. As a result, a working group was set up to consider funding options and to consult with ministry units. This bill was the result of its work. Quota payments will now become compulsory. Provision for a ministry unit to apply to the Diocesan Council for possible adjustment of its quota was included.

Clergy Housing – The purpose of this bill was to clarify requirements for the housing of clergy and to ensure that these were specified in a fair manner. The bill covered both fulltime and part-time stipended ministers.

Financial Returns – In 2016, Synod adopted Consolidated Accounting Procedures for ministry units across the Diocese. Under this system, the audit of accounts is undertaken centrally by the Diocese and ministry units are no longer responsible for organising their own audits. However, when the new procedures were adopted, some clauses were overlooked, thus leading to contradictions in the reporting measures required. The bill sought to correct these inconsistencies. A ministry unit will now be required at its annual general meeting to adopt financial accounts complying with the new procedures together with a budget for the coming year. The financial accounts will not require to be audited.

Nomination Procedures – This bill revised some of the procedures used when a vicar resigned, also taking the opportunity to update some terminology.

Synod Representation – The final bill provided representation for Mission Ventures at the Diocesan Synod.

Presentations

Diocesan Council – reported on its work over the past year with a special presentation on Health & Safety

Auckland City Mission – Chris Farrelly (City Missioner)

Christian World Service – David Lawson (Relations Manager)

Anglican Missions Board – Rev'd Steve Maina (Board Member)

Holy Trinity Cathedral – Very Rev'd Anne Mills (Dean of Auckland)

Anglican Youth Ministries – Karen Spoelstra (Diocesan Youth Facilitator)

Synod closed with a vote of thanks to all involved in the leadership and organisation of the Synod.