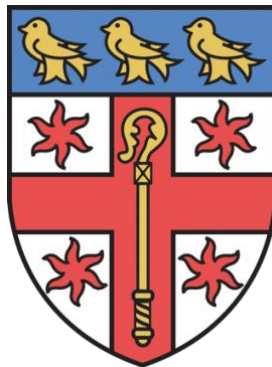


SECOND ANNUAL SESSION OF THE FORTY-FOURTH TRIENNIAL SYNOD



**THE PRESIDENT OF SYNOD
2020 PASTORAL ADDRESS**

I acknowledge that I am on the land of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains, and acknowledge and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and their relationship with the land. We acknowledge the impact European settlement had and continues to have on the first peoples of this land, and we continue to seek and pray for reconciliation.

At the start of this year I would not have guessed that 2020 would be the year it has been; that we wouldn't be meeting for Synod in the usual way, and that I would be recording this address rather than delivering it live in Memorial Hall at St Peter's College. But that's where we find ourselves.

Synod is important for the consideration of the various governance things we need to attend to, but it is even more important in that Synod is one place where the voice of the people can be heard in the decision making of the church. Sadly, this year only my voice is literally being heard, so I hope that in October 2021 we can gather as the Synod so all the voices of the Synod can have their say.

Since March, 2020 has been marked by COVID19. But of course before March Australia had experienced a particularly severe fire season which impacted among many areas, Kangaroo Island in our Diocese, and Cuddlee Creek in The Murray Diocese.

The people affected by those fires are continuing to deal with the process of recovery made more difficult by COVID19. We continue to pray for all who have been negatively impacted by bush fires this year especially our Kangaroo Island and Cudlee Creek brothers and sisters.

The fires highlighted the impact of climate change in our state and nation. It should not be a surprise to us that the climate is changing - it is never static. History demonstrates that reality clearly. The issue for us is the impact of human activity on the climate, and not only human activity that affects climate change, but which leads to pollution, environmental degradation, loss of species and the depletion of finite resources.

Way before climate change was an issue, Christians have seen their mission as including the stewardship of creation. That means more than solar panels, rainwater tanks and recycling though those are positive. What will be needed is a move to a much more sustainable and less damaging lifestyle by humans across the planet. As Bishop Tom Wright says: 'The present creation matters so it's worth putting it right'¹. While the focus on the environment has been pushed off the front page by COVID19, it must remain one of the important areas of focus for us as Christians, to both initiate and encourage action to care for the creation which is God's creation.

Since March when COVID19 turned up in a big way much has happened and of course you are aware of that. Many things that were planned have been cancelled or rescheduled. Jobkeeper has really helped our parishes. We showed we can change. Great efforts have been made to keep in touch and reach out.

¹ NT Wright, *History and Eschatology*, p.268.

I want to thank the clergy and lay leaders across the Diocese for your tremendous effort this year. Many people right across the community are feeling tired and a bit worn out so I hope some rest and refreshment will be possible - at least after Christmas. That will be important because while restrictions are certainly easing, it looks like we will be living with COVID19 for some time yet. I urge Synod members to keep praying for those developing a vaccine that will be globally available and accessible to all.

One of the good things that happened this year was that Joe Thorp was confirmed as the permanent, hopefully for a long time, Secretary of Synod. Joe has already made a significant contribution leading the Synod office team and we thank you for that Joe. (If we were live there would be applause!)

Among the events that were postponed this year was the meeting of General Synod which has been rescheduled to the end of May 2021. Whether General Synod goes ahead as planned of course is not yet certain, but preparations are underway. I am keen that General Synod does meet in 2021 as very important discussions concerning human sexuality and relationships still need to be had and further delay will not be helpful.

One of the events that wasn't rescheduled was the Primatial election. I accepted appointment to that role for a term of six years. Thank you to the many people who have been praying for me since my election. I am grateful that Archdeacon David Bassett has been able to assist with the role of the Primate and also more broadly in this diocese. It's worth the Synod being aware that David's costs are funded by the General Synod as part of its support of the Primate.

Bishop's Court

One of the significant things that did go ahead this year was the sale of Bishop's Court. The property went on to the market in February and the contract of sale was exchanged in September. The Synod has purchased a property in Prospect that has an old house on it which will be demolished, and a new bishop's house will be built. It is likely that the new residence won't be completed until September or October next year, so the search is on for interim accommodation for Lynn and myself.

Two 'last functions' are planned for Bishops Court. The first is the annual clergy and family BBQ which has been moved forward to November 7; and the second is a farewell to Bishop's Court which is planned for November 28. Both of those will go ahead COVID19 restrictions allowing.

The sale of Bishop's Court is a significant moment for us. It will be the first time the Bishop of Adelaide hasn't lived in that house for 164 years. The house of course will still be at 45 Palmer Place, and it seems that the intention of the purchaser is to keep the house as a family home and invest in the property in a way that the Synod has not been able to do. Even though the resolution to authorise the sale passed with a very large majority at the 2019 meeting of Synod I acknowledge the deep sadness that many in the Diocese feel at this part of the history of Anglican church in Adelaide changing hands.

The sale of the property means that, after the provision of the new house, a significant amount of funds will be available for investment, and the return from that will reduce the grant the Synod currently makes to the See. This year that grant is budgeted to be \$465,000. The See includes the Archbishop's stipend and costs, the running and maintenance of the house, the bishop's office, and the relevant costs of the assistant bishops. One of the tasks of the next few months will be a strategic conversation about how the Synod can use those released funds well for the mission of the church in the Diocese.

Bor Partnership

One of the Diocesan projects which has been supported over the past 5 years has been the clinic at Bor. This year with the assistance of Dr Owen Lewis we were able to transfer thirty-five thousand dollars for the completion of phase 1. This completes the Synod's part in the project. On behalf of us all I would like to thank Dr Lewis and the people who have supported the project by prayer, financial and in-kind contributions and actually going to Bor to build the clinic.

I look forward to an ongoing partner relationship between the Diocese of Adelaide and the Diocese of Bor based on relationship and prayer rather than on a project. Diocesan Council had encouraged me to invite Archbishop Reuben to visit Adelaide this year but that was postponed due to COVID19, so I invited Archbishop Reuben to visit in the first half of next year, but that visit is also on hold. Hopefully a visit may be possible in 2022 although that year looks like it will be very busy for us all.

Vision 2022

We are now around two and a half years into Vision 2022, and it is important to highlight some of what has been accomplished in that time bearing in mind we have had a change in Secretary of Synod along the way.

One of the strategic targets was to strengthen chaplaincy. Last year I welcomed Bishop Greg Thompson to Synod for the first time as Senior Chaplain. After a very good start Greg felt he was unable to continue in the role, and I asked Bishop Denise to take over as part of her role as Assistant Bishop. Prior to Greg beginning the role, a report on chaplaincy had been initiated, so what was necessary to strengthen chaplaincy was clear from the report. I am very pleased to say that Bishop Denise with the chaplains has achieved many of the recommendations of the report. We are now advertising for a permanent full-time senior chaplain. It is important to note that this position is fully funded by AnglicareSA as the senior chaplain has care of the chaplains working with AnglicareSA as well as chaplains working in healthcare and in the community, both paid and voluntary.

Another strategic goal is around the discernment, training, deployment and support of clergy and lay leaders. Bishop Denise has again been busy in this area working with The Reverend Dr Cathy Thomson, the Principal of St Barnabas College, to refine our discernment and formation processes. I hope we can soon announce the appointment of a Director of Discernment and Formation to work as part of the St Barnabas team.

Part of the effort to support our leaders is the introduction of pastoral supervision, initially for clergy. Pastoral Supervision aims to assist a person reflect on their work with the

expectation of helping them to be better at their work. One of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was that church leaders should participate in mandatory pastoral or professional supervision. Quite apart from the Royal Commission recommendation supervision is a very positive way to be strengthened in ministry and will be of great benefit to ministry right across the diocese.

This year St Barnabas College began teaching a program which will provide accredited training for pastoral supervisors. By the end of 2020 we estimate that we will have twenty-three trained supervisors available. The training process will need to continue until we have enough supervisors to enable me to make pastoral supervision mandatory for all stipendiary clergy.

In 2021 St Barnabas college will be running two pilot programs offering both group and individual supervision. Alongside these, clergy will be encouraged to start making arrangements for their supervision. I expect by 2022 or 2023 we will be in a position to launch mandatory supervision. A provincial policy covering pastoral supervision is being developed so the three dioceses of South Australia will be operating under the same arrangements. From my own personal experience of pastoral supervision, I am confident that clergy will find it a great assistance as they continue to minister.

One facet of Vision 2022 is that our Anglican communities will be united and connected. One project which is underway to strengthen our connections is a project to map networks that already exist either formally or informally. An example of these networks is the Opshop network. We hope we can assist to strengthen existing networks and develop others where there is value in doing that.

A further facet of Vision 2022 is 'flourishing Anglican Communities'. Last year at Synod I welcomed the appointment of the Reverend Dr Don Owers as the new Ministry Development Advisor (MDA). Don's ministry has been well received, and he is very busy assisting parishes with mission action planning and leadership. One of the things we will need to think through is how we can increase and develop the human resources we need to extend the MDA ministry.

Also to assist our communities to flourish was the National Church Life Survey which we were able to undertake just prior to the COVID19 shutdown. The survey aimed to provide parishes with tools to assist them to flourish in their life and ministry and provide some important base line data to help us when we are evaluating Vision 2022 in a few years' time.

The survey was provided at no cost to parishes and we had a fantastic participation rate. The plan is for us to join the national ecumenical NCLS survey in October 2021, then run our own survey two and a half years later, and then join the national survey again in 2026 and so on. The results of these surveys will, I hope, continue to give us good data and tools to assist flourishing. During this year's lay leaders' meetings, I was asked, 'what does it mean for a parish to be flourishing? That's a good question. As a result of their research NCLS have developed the following list of features which are important for a healthy church:

- Holistic small groups
- Loving relationships
- Empowering leadership
- Effective structures
- Gift based ministry
- Need-oriented evangelism
- Inspiring worship services
- Passionate spirituality

There were certainly some encouraging results in the survey. For instance 36% of people who completed the survey said they had grown in faith over the past year, and 77% of respondents said they would be open to supporting new mission initiatives in their parishes. There were however some results which certainly point to action that is needed. For instance only 13% of people said they were confident to share their faith and looked for opportunities to do so. This is one very important area for action in the coming years.

After our survey this year I asked NCLS what strategies they would recommend for us on the basis of our survey results. This is what they said:

1. Encourage ongoing relationships with non-attenders.
2. Train people in faith-sharing: to find words to express *why* they act the way they do.
3. Encourage hosting events with music and food and inviting others.
4. Help churches to be attentive to new people and offer ways for them to meet others.
5. Consider encouraging small groups to support discipleship.
6. Invest in worship services as a core mission activity.
7. Clarify vision and align all activities around it.
8. Embrace the openness to innovation and start new initiatives.

One of the books I read this year is *How Change Comes to Your Church* by Patrick Keiffert and Wesley Granberg-Michaelson. The Bishops and Secretary of Synod all read the book and thought it so significant that we asked Diocesan Council to read it, and we had a first discussion of the book at a special October DC just this week.

The theme of the book is significant because we do need to do things differently. We do need change. We didn't need the NCLS to tell us that our congregations generally are ageing and, in many cases, either shrinking numerically or just holding their own. If we are ageing and becoming smaller in numbers, we may not have the impact in sharing God's mission that we want to have. While flourishing doesn't necessarily mean growing numerically it does have the sense of vitality which includes fruitfulness and often does include growth.

The point of the existence of the church is to share in the mission of God which Jesus proclaimed as the coming of the kingdom of God (or kingdom of heaven). At the moment we are struggling to do this effectively with the model we have of mostly stand-alone, one priest parishes trying to do everything that needs to be done. I think we know we need to

change but are not sure what to do. The NCLS principles for vitality are important for us but the implementation of them is the key.

One of the words used in *How Change Comes to Your Church* is 'liminal'. The authors say we are in a liminal space at the moment. The model of the parish which worked in the 50's and 60's is working much less effectively now, but we are not sure what to do next.

I had always thought liminal meant uncertain or a bit fuzzy and unsure. But these authors say liminal means 'threshold', which I find much more exciting. If we take this meaning, they say we are on the threshold or at the doorway of something new. We are not quite sure what exactly comes next, but we are at the threshold. I think we have this sense across the Diocese, and it matches the NCLS result that 77% of survey respondents in the Diocese are prepared to support change and mission initiatives.

There is of course much that remains constant in our ministry. Our aim remains to share the mission of God which we see in the ministry of Jesus proclaiming the kingdom of God. We continue as disciples of Jesus Christ, proclaiming the kingdom of God in word and deed in the company of other disciples and making disciples of others.

The marks of mission are instructive as we think about what this means:

The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

As Vision 2022 clearly says we continue the mission of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are led and guided and empowered by God the Holy Spirit to continue to share in God's mission.

The question though is just how we do these things in our current era. Being in a liminal space means we need to be very prayerful and open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We need to be prepared to try new things, knowing that nine out of ten will probably not work as we hoped. We need to continue to develop an entrepreneurial culture where initiatives are encouraged, and risks are taken. There are already some very encouraging signs of green shoots where parishes, often after the completion of a mission action planning process, have stepped out and tried new things.

While I certainly don't have all the answers, I think there are some directions emerging, some of which have been emerging for a while.

A small parish community, which most of ours are, is not able to do all that needs to be done. We need to be providing outreach to those in need in the community, opportunity for

people to discover the Christian faith, discipleship opportunities for children, young people and adults of various ages and stages of life, as well as engaging, God-focussed worship. Most of our parishes as they currently operate are not able to do what needs to be done. So what needs to be done isn't being done.

Rather than maintaining the status quo one of the directions for the future is to find ways to work together - to put *united and connected* into action. I am not at all sure that amalgamations are a good idea, but networking might enable us to share resources and minister together in much more effective ways. I am encouraged at the development of the 'Northern Network', an informal collaboration of parishes in the Northern suburbs which was initially instigated by Bishop Tim as Bishop Missioner to Playford and is now receiving wide support and engagement by clergy and lay leaders alike. I think that the development of other networks across the Diocese involving stronger and weaker parishes will see the development of teams of people working together for more effective mission.

I said in my 2018 address to Synod that I thought we need to look at the physical assets of the Diocese with a view to releasing the value of some of those assets for ministry. Adelaide is known as the city of Churches and that's true, there are many churches. There are many Anglican church buildings most of which consume significant energy and resources in their maintenance. The proliferation of suburban churches was part of urban growth in an era where it was thought that part of being a 'real' community was to have a church, and where close proximity to that church was considered vital. Things have changed. We have significant numbers of church buildings which are not very suitable for contemporary ministry used by often small congregations which struggle to maintain them.

Two things occur to me in this regard. First, that where appropriate, we should consider re-purposing some of our churches so that while they can continue to offer space for worship, they are much more suitable for welcome and gathering and fellowship, and offering to the wider community for community connection. There are some really good examples, especially in the UK of large church buildings which have been remodelled with the pews removed and interiors renovated, and now include café spaces, space for art and community use as well as worship. These church buildings which were once mostly empty are now vibrant community hubs. I can think of quite a few of our churches which would be very suitable for this transformation.

Second, while church buildings offer some convenience and profile, they are not an absolute necessity for Christian mission. I think it is time we were more proactive in looking to close and sell some of our church buildings to provide resource for mission. If some parishes were prepared to give up their property or some of it, those resources could be used to transition other buildings as I've just described or fund the development of what might be called hubs or resource churches. These are multi-staffed, well-resourced churches which can operate a little like regional churches, reaching out into communities around them and resourcing clusters of local disciples.

We often have all sorts of hope and dreams to start new ministry or expand existing work but many times our response is, we don't have the resources. Well, actually across the Diocese we have a lot of resources. We have lots of committed and talented people, and we

have a Synod balance sheet which includes significant property assets. I am fully aware that some of those are tied up and restricted but actually we have a lot of resources if we choose to release them.

I am very aware that our history and in fact our organisation is all about stand-alone independent parishes which look after themselves. That is what has been encouraged and rewarded. But I don't think that works very well on the whole today. One of the key phrases in Vision 2022 is 'united and connected'. We need to be trying to work together, to broaden our focus beyond our own parish and start to think like a diocese with the ministry of the whole diocese as our framework. I know this is a very significant change and will take some time to work through but will be an important feature of our future if we are going to share God's mission effectively.

I am also aware that you can have all the restructures and redeployments and networks and everything else and not be at all effective in partnering with God in the mission God wants to do. That partnering with God requires heart. A heart that loves God and is committed to serving God no matter what it takes. A heart that is dependent on God. A heart that is open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. This is not our church, though we are members of it. This is God's church for God's world. We have been privileged to be part of the Church, but our heart always needs to acknowledge that this is God's church for God's mission.

Thank you to all the leaders across the Diocese who have contributed their time and skills to our work. Thank you to all the faithful people across the Diocese who have their heart in the right place. We are in a liminal space, at the threshold of something new. This year has been unexpected and, in some ways, unwelcome but it has been the year it has, and it has perhaps helped us to move into the space being prepared for us. May the Lord grant us peace and courage to step forward into what God is preparing for us in the next twelve months and beyond and let not our fear limit God's work in our part of God's world.