

## SUMMARY OF SYNOD 2018

The Third Session of the 55<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Diocese of Auckland was held at Auckland Cathedral of the Holy Trinity from Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> to Saturday to Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2018, commencing with the Synod Eucharist in St Mary's-in-Holy Trinity. The preacher was Chris Clarke (former CEO of World Vision) and a lay person from St George's, Epsom.

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. It was also noted that it was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of Local Shared Ministry Units.

The Bishops spoke of decisions made at General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui earlier in the year. In particular, the legislation enacted regarding the blessing of same-sex relationships, had come after careful and thorough consideration over a lengthy period and acknowledgement that further discussion was unlikely to result in a clear consensus or offer an acceptable compromise. The Bishops advised they would allow clergy to bless same-sex relationships but within clearly defined parameters. They remained committed to working through this carefully with people.

The Bishops spoke at length about the work they had done, together with the Episcopal Team and the Diocesan Council, in developing a vision for the life and the work of the Diocese going forward. In coming months they plan to share this presentation more widely and will begin to implement the plans. There are four main components to this plan:

- Knowing God
- Shaping community
- Growing in Christ
- Living beyond ourselves

*A copy of both the Sermon and the Bishops' Charge can be found on the Diocesan website.*

### **The Business of Synod**

The order paper consisted of seventeen motions and six bills, while several presentations were made and five lay representatives were elected to the Diocesan Council.

### **Motions**

All except two motions were passed. Those passed covered a wide range of issues as follows:

- *Sustainable Development Goals* – This motion called on the Synod to support the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are a global call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.
- *Suicide Prevention and Intervention* – Concern was expressed at the high rate of suicide in New Zealand and recommended suicide intervention training be taken by stipended clergy and youth ministers. The need to recognise when vulnerable people should be referred to others for appropriate support was also recognised.
- *Thanks to Archbishop Winston Halapua* – The leadership of Archbishop Winston was warmly recognised on his recent retirement after many years of dedicated and faithful service in both the Diocese of Auckland and the Diocese of Polynesia. Best wishes were extended to the Diocese of Polynesia as it prepared to elect a new leader.
- *Tenancy Laws* – This motion expressed concern regarding the poor quality, cost and insecurity of rental housing and its effect on people and called on the Government to enact changes that would see improvements made.

- *Church Army* – Support for the Church Army as a valuable evangelistic tool in spreading the Gospel in the Diocese was affirmed by this motion.
- *Rationalisation of Ministry Units* – The motion recognised that demographic and societal changes were affecting church attendances and, as a result, some ministry units could find themselves facing possible closure. In such cases, it was felt important that the ministry unit initiated discussions to facilitate the process. It also supported a portion of funds from any closures being directed to the Development Fund to assist new initiatives, as well as consideration being given to possible uses within the ministry unit itself.
- *Decade of Mission* – This motion affirmed the wide range of missional work being undertaken in the Diocese and urged continued support and prayers during the Decade of Mission.
- *Disability responsiveness* – Ministry units were challenged to review how accessible their worship, their programmes and their buildings were for people with disabilities. Ministry units were encouraged to undertake their own audits with the view to achieving a goal of full accessibility and inclusion.
- *Recommendations* – Seven motions from General Synod/Te Hinota Whanui were considered as part of the assent process required. Six of these were agreed.

A motion passed at the 2017 Synod was adopted as a Standing Resolution, as follows:

**‘On the roles of faith and action in tackling climate change:**

The Diocese of Auckland commits to carbon neutrality in its business, including its travel’

**Bills**

In order for a statute to be changed, a bill must first be presented, considered in detail and passed. This year six bills were considered. All were passed, with only minor amendments to two of these.

*Cathedral Chapter* – A revised and more clearly defined purpose will provide a better focus for the work of the Chapter, while a smaller Chapter (reduced from 17 to 11) will allow it to contribute more effectively to the life of the Diocese and the Cathedral. All Canons must now be members of the Diocese, while Te Pihopa o te Tai Tokerau be responsible for appointing a Tikanga Maori representative. The Greater Chapter has been disestablished, although the appointment of Canons of Honour will continue.

*Panel of Diocesan Nominators* – This change will allow the Diocesan Council to appoint up to four (4) additional persons to the Panel if and when needed (in addition to those elected at the start of each Session of Synod). This change would ensure there were sufficient nominators especially if several vacancies were being considered at the same time.

*Ministry Unit Roll* – Changes made will provide clear guidelines for the compilation of the Roll, as well as for its inspection. Most requirements for the Roll have remained unchanged, but the addition of baptism as a requirement caused considerable discussion. A vote during the Committee stage saw this carried 113-106. The Roll will be confirmed at a General Meeting.

*Schemes of Reconstruction* – This bill related to occasions when a commission is established to draw up a scheme of reconstruction for a ministry unit unable to fulfil its statutory requirements. It was agreed that ‘closure of the ministry unit’ should be stated specifically in the list of matters that might be addressed rather than implied by a general reference.

**Presentations**

*Diocesan Council* – a report was given on the wide variety of work done over the past year

*Anglican Trust for Women and Children* – Judy Matai’a (CEO)

*Anglican Youth Ministries & Grace Collective* – led by Karen Spoelstra (Diocesan Youth Facilitator)

*St John’s Theological College* – Rev’d Karen Kemp (Dean Tikanga Pakeha)

*Diocesan Climate Action Group* – Dr Richard Milne (co-convener)

*Christian World Service* – David Lawson (Relationships Coordinator)

*Volunteer Recognition Presentation* – an audio-visual presentation honouring many of our volunteers

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