



***BISHOPS' CHARGE TO THE THIRD SESSION  
OF THE FIFTY FIFTH SYNOD OF THE DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND***

**GREETINGS**

We welcome you to this Third Session of the 55<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Diocese of Auckland. We had hoped to be joined for the evening by our partner bishop from Tai Tokerau, Bishop Kito Pikaahu. Sadly Bishop Kito is ill and unable to be here, but sends us his warm greetings. We value our partnership in the gospel and in the life of our Three Tikanga Church.

Welcome to those who join us as visitors to the Synod, and to those who are members of the Synod for the first time. Please stand so that we might recognise you and welcome you.

We are excited tonight by what lies ahead of us as represented in the business before us in the order paper, and the opportunity to present to you our vision for future mission and ministry priorities for the Diocese about which we will speak shortly and which will form the bulk of our Charge tonight. We express our gratitude to Chris Clarke for his sermon this evening, and for the challenges and opportunities he set before us in the context of God's mission in our time and place.

**IN MEMORIAM**

We ask all present to stand as we hold in sacred memory the lives and ministries of former members of this Synod who have died since we last gathered.

**Clergy**

The Reverend Mark Anderson  
 The Reverend John Shallard  
 The Reverend Janet Fisher  
 The Reverend Valerie Hogan  
 The Reverend Canon Bob Newman  
 The Reverend Bill Heald  
 The Reverend Caleb Brake  
 The Reverend Canon David Dang  
 The Reverend Eddie Rogers  
 Archdeacon Frank Harrison

**Lay**

John McKay - Whangarei  
 Lay Canon John Wilson – Holy Trinity Cathedral  
 Mr Peter Jones – Northern Wairoa

## **THE GENERAL SYNOD / TE HINOTA WHANUI**

As most people will well know, at its meeting in May the General Synod of the Church passed various pieces of legislation that provided for the blessing of same sex relationships in our Church. This has been the subject of much debate in the Church over many decades. In the past 15 years the Church internationally has had a strong focus on this issue, especially in relation to the question of marriage and ordination.

Here in New Zealand our Church has received and considered a number of reports and convened several Commissions and working groups. We have held theological hui and debated various proposals at General Synod.

We reached a point where a number of things became clear. No end of talking was going to bring us to a clear consensus; it was hard to find a compromise that would satisfy the differing perspectives on same sex relationships; the underlying issue that separated us was that of the interpretation of Scripture.

The Primates' Working Group that was convened after the 2016 General Synod was given the task of finding a mechanism that could hold the Church together in the best possible way. Its recommendations were made available for wide consultation before coming in their final form to the General Synod. Those recommendations and the related legislation that was enacted as a result, have sought to provide a framework that safeguards the diverse understandings and biblical interpretation that hold the people of our Church in different places on this matter.

For our part, we will allow clergy to bless same-sex relationships within clearly defined parameters, and have been responding to requests to do so. The nature of such a blessing places a person in a rightly-ordered relationship in terms of the Canons, and thus makes it possible for us to ordain. You will be aware that one such ordination has now occurred in a Local Shared Ministry Unit.

We remain committed to working through this carefully with people, recognising that this places strain on some of our relationships. We continue to be available to speak with clergy and groups about this, and have had some fruitful conversations when we have done so. We pray for ongoing grace to be present in those conversations as we recognise our common belonging in Christ alongside this difference.

## **GOD'S WORLD**

As we gather Japan is coping with the aftermath of Cyclone Jebi. Thankfully, in this case, preparedness means loss of life and injury was minimised, but there have been so many extreme weather events around the globe that is hard not to hear a literalistic groaning of the earth in response to human-influenced climate change. This issue remains of concern to us all, and, in particular, of urgent concern to our Pacific brothers and sisters. We are grateful for the work of our own Climate Change Action Group and we need to encourage each other to respond further in a multitude of ways to this environmental crisis.

If natural disasters grab our attention and demand both our sympathy and our aid, the travesty of wars and violence around the globe demands even more from us. Archbishop Justin Welby has consistently called Christians to the way and witness of reconciliation, the work of peacemaking. We know that this work needs to begin with ourselves. One of the most disturbing features of our world at the moment is the degradation of civil discourse in the United States of America and the way it fragments the common good and threatens global security. We would urge our own government to set a higher standard for speaking across difference and cultures. Once again, however, in our communities and in our church we need to reflect on the way we communicate with those who differ from us or disagree with us. This is particularly true of communication in social media. We all have much to learn, and being followers of Jesus calls us to the way of love and respect for all.

### **AUCKLAND CITY MISSION**

As most of you are aware the Auckland City Mission has been readying itself for a massive \$90 million building redevelopment on its current site. The project, called Mission Homeground, is to be the home for all the Mission administration, the various social services such as the Homeless Outreach and Crisis Care Centre, the Calder Medical Centre, along with 30 Detox beds and 80 apartments for the homeless and needy in the city. Mission HomeGround is a New Zealand first; a catalyst to drive active collaboration to solve homelessness in our City in a new and innovative way. So, the new building is going to a base for us to grow and deliver our services in a whole new way while our focus is clearly to be around three "H's" - housing, hunger, and health.

Sadly, the need for Mission services and support is ever increasing; for instance, supplying over 15,000 food parcels in this current year. Necessarily partnerships exist with corporates and other agencies and organisations across the city so that the maximum number of people in need can be reached and assisted. The Mission absolutely treasures the relationships that it has with parishes and ministry units.

The Diocesan Council has pledged \$500,000 from the proceeds of the sale of the Church of the Ascension, Pt Chevalier to Mission Homeground. The campaign to raise funds has taken slightly longer than anticipated but some \$72 Million dollars of the \$90 million has been raised already. The focus has been on major single donors and this will continue for a little while longer. Significant six and seven figure gifts and pledges have already been received from individual Anglicans.

However, the Mission is well aware that large numbers of people in ministry units, parishes and schools will want to get in behind this project. There will be, then, an appeal in Lent of next year. Obviously, we hope that everyone who wants to be part of this exciting project and lasting legacy for the City will get that opportunity. So, watch out for news to come.

### **LOCAL SHARED MINISTRY**

We note with joy that this year is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the first Local Shared Ministry Units were inaugurated in the Diocese. We celebrate with the communities of Russell, Tairua and Tuakau as they each mark that anniversary this year. We give thanks for the innovative and courageous work of Barbara Wesseldine who coordinated that work from its inception and oversaw it for 13 years, and others who worked with her to bring it into being. It represented a new way of being and doing church, and we are in a place once again of seeking innovation and courage for our future.

### **COMING TO THE MEASURE OF THE FULL STATURE OF CHRIST**

We would like to share with you a presentation that has developed from work undertaken by the Bishops, the Episcopal Team and the Diocesan Council. It captures our vision for our life and work together in the years ahead.

The letter to the Ephesians is full of wonderful images of what it means to be the Body of Christ. We have lifted this verse and the vision of coming to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

“. . . until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.” *Ephesians 4:13*

### **What do we hope our Church will look like?**

We imagine a Diocese exhibiting all of the dimensions of what it means to be a healthy church, both in our life together as a diocese and in the local expressions of that life in the ministry units.

To know God is the foundation of all that we are and all that we do as the people of God. Faith is not a static thing, but a dynamic way of life. We hope for a deeper knowledge of God to grow in each person. We dream of a deepening biblical and theological knowledge among the people of the diocese, and especially those in leadership roles.

We exist not for ourselves, but to see God’s reign come on earth. We want to develop each person’s ability to bear witness and to serve. Because mission is part of the Church’s DNA, we long to see a church visibly serving its community and confident in inviting others to be part of its life. We know that the context within which we minister can be tough, and we want to build the resilience of leaders to meet the challenges that are presented.

To be Anglican is to be a diocesan church gathered around a bishop. There are things that we can only do and must do together. We wish to develop new initiatives in ministry that draw on the gifts and resources of the diocese as a whole and allow us to share the love of God with all.



As bishops we care deeply about the well-being and flourishing of the whole church and, in particular, in our Diocese and in every Ministry Unit within it.

Understanding exactly what makes for flourishing and well-being is complex. However, around the world a variety of methods and means have been devised to both plot the health of a church and then to identify actions to address areas of weakness. This enables churches to embark on a journey to greater wellness and to grow into the fullness of the stature of Christ.

Within the Episcopal Team, in workshops, and with some expert consultants we reviewed over ten methodologies from around the globe and worked on developing our own tool to help us understand overall wellness and to 'take the pulse' of a ministry unit. We are actually a little proud of what we have come up with and we have already had some interest from other Dioceses and overseas.

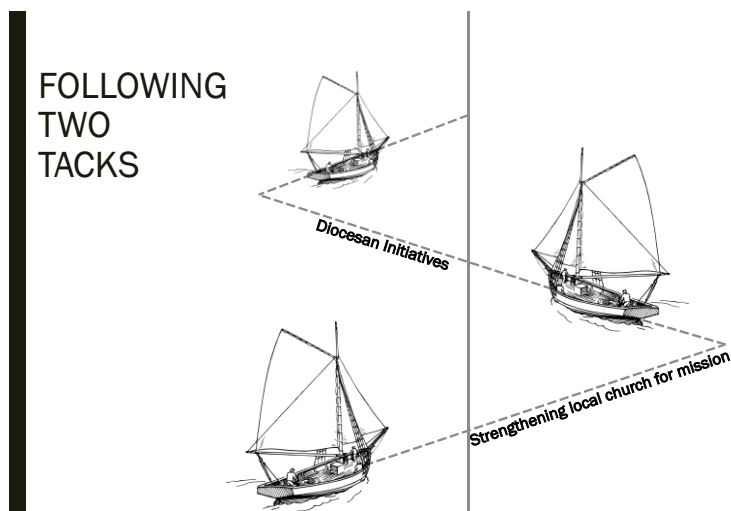
Some of you will have already encountered what we are calling 'The Healthy Church' model in the very good work that Archdeacon Sarah Moss is leading out. For those who have not, and to remind us all, we think a healthy church has four essential dimensions:

**Knowing God** – by which we mean a community where prayerful and often joyful worship helps people connect to God.

**Shaping Community** – creating a loving and authentic community where members engage in genuine and caring relationships with each other alongside being good stewards of their material resources.

**Growing in Christ** – a community where individuals are growing and deepening their faith and understanding. Such a community would value the gifts and talents of each member and the leadership would be encouraging, collaborative, and hopeful.

Living beyond ourselves – we do not live for ourselves but are communities called to serve. We know we are called to bear witness to our faith in word and action in generous and positive contributions in our wider communities and beyond.



With the America's Cup looming again, we will all be familiar with the idea of tacking towards the finish line. We think this is a good image for describing two aspects of our one life.

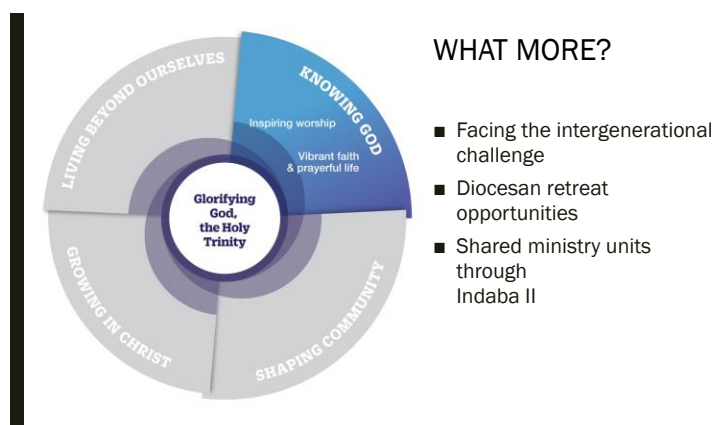
We will be following two tacks but they take us in the same direction, towards our goal of coming to the measure of the full stature of Christ. On one tack we will continue to strengthen the local church for the work of mission. On the other tack we will be developing new diocesan initiatives in mission, harnessing our life and resources as the diocese together for the gospel task. In this we will be guided by the aspirations of the healthy church model.



To know God is the foundation of all that we are and all that we do as the people of God. Throughout the Scriptures we see that the first human response to the revelation of God is that of reverence and awe, the offering of praise and thanksgiving for the grace that has been shown, and the marking out of sacred spaces that remind people of the grace of God's presence. This comes before any human action or work on behalf of God.

In the well-known Five Marks of Mission there is a lack of the explicit recognition of worship as being foundational to the Church's work of mission. Yet we would take it as a given and say that it is both the beginning of our relationship with God and part of the work of mission. We practice this mission strategy week by week in our churches with Sunday worship offering a shop window into our world for people, and thus an attractional element to people to become part of our life.

Our opportunities to worship together and so to express our knowledge of God as a diocese are inevitably few given the diverse nature of our styles of worship and the spread-out nature of our geography. But we do come together at diocesan events such as we have done tonight to convene the synod. Clergy and licensed ministers worship together in Holy Week as we recommit our promises in ministry, and at times like clergy conferences. Gatherings across ministry units in smaller groupings have happened through the original Indaba programme and at services which the Overseas Missions Committee have organised.



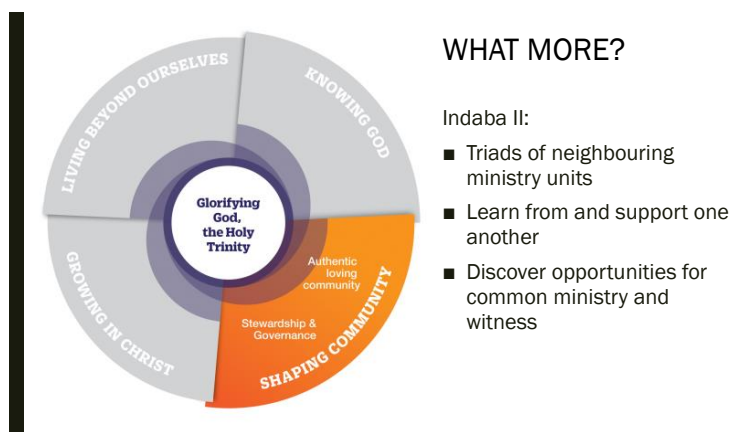
We would like to go deeper. We recognise the need to face the intergenerational challenge, and that this is primarily a piece of work in local worshipping communities. How are people of all ages able to participate in worship together, so that across the generations we grow to understand that being part of corporate worship is the first call God places on the life of a believer?

It is an expectation that licensed clergy will annually take time apart to be on retreat. We want to provide opportunities for that to happen within the diocese, both to make retreats more accessible for clergy and to allow clergy to build collegiality by being together in worship, prayer, silence, reading and reflection, as we respond to God and grow our relationship with God.

It is our intention to introduce a second phase of Indaba, about which we will say more in a moment, and ensuring that we worship together as we meet across our ministry unit boundaries.



Shaping community refers to being the household of God. Being a single household across the whole Diocese presents its own challenges. But we are an episcopal church – a diocese gathered around a bishop is the way that is symbolically described. We are not a loose federation of congregations. Rather we belong together and together we can do and be more than we can alone. We have been working on growing the sense of Diocese through the work we have done as an Episcopal Team, our willingness to be present and in conversation in times of joy and challenge, in settings such as the Synod, Cluster meetings, and Ministry Conference. We implore you to set aside the term “the Diocese” as if it is something separate from you. You are the Diocese. We are the Diocese together.



We know that the first experience of Indaba was a good one, particularly for those who really embraced the opportunity. We think that there is some real benefit to be gained from an Indaba 2. This time we will arrange triads of Ministry Units that are immediate neighbours. There is much to be learned from knowing who is over the back fence and what they are up to and, possibly, how we can share in ministry and mission together.





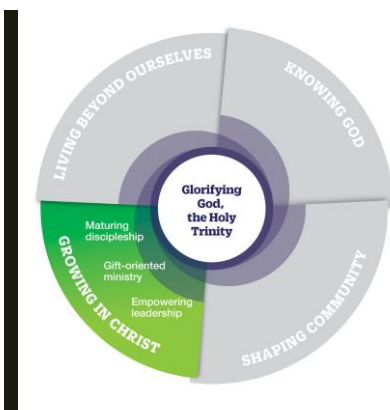
## WHAT MORE?

Best allocation of resources for mission and ministry:

- Managing the Diocese's property portfolio
- Facing closure as a viable option for struggling ministry units
- Completing church builds at Northwest, Flatbush and...
- Establish a residential young adults community

At Diocesan Council and in the Diocesan Office we have been working hard to improve our good stewardship of resources and facing into some recent challenging statutory compliance issues. As bishops we are committed to leading out improving management of the Diocese's property portfolio. We also have to face the fact that in the lifecycle of some ministry units closure is both a viable option and a faithful response. Where we end up with resources from closures, they will be placed in the Diocesan Development fund so that we can then prudently invest in ministry and mission, especially in new areas where demographic shifts and growth calls for something new.

We are committed to completing church builds at Northwest, Flat Bush and then moving to establishing other church plants, especially where demographic shifts call for an Anglican presence. These will not all necessarily involve new buildings. We are particularly keen to establish at least one residential young adults' community.



"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit . . . To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."  
1 Cor 12:4,7

Faith is not a static thing, but a dynamic way of life. We dream of a deepening biblical and theological knowledge among the people of the diocese, and especially those in leadership roles. We know that the context in which we minister can be tough, and we want to build the resilience of leaders to meet the challenges that are presented.

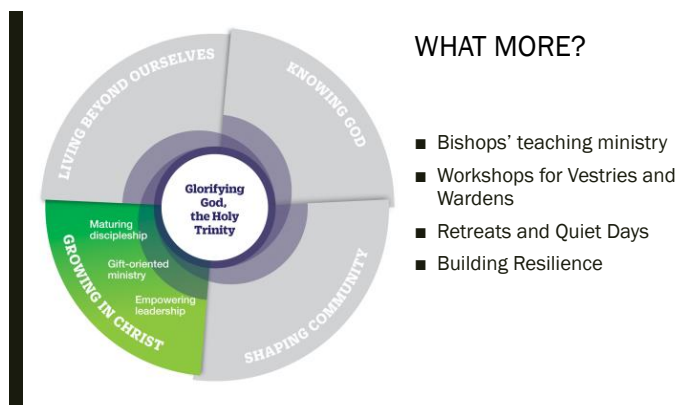
The Church has worked hard on its theology of baptism for decades. A significant piece of ecumenical work was the World Council of Churches 1982 publication of Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, which affirmed baptism as a sign and seal of our common discipleship, through which the

gift of the Spirit at work in believers is recognised. The implications of that for ministry as belonging to the whole people of God and not to the ordained or the licensed alone took on increasing importance.

We believe that this statement in the WCC paper remains true and important

*The Holy Spirit bestows on the community diverse and complementary gifts. These are for the common good of the whole people and are manifested in acts of service within the community and to the world. They may be gifts of communicating the Gospel in word and deed, gifts of healing, gifts of praying, gifts of teaching and learning, gifts of serving, gifts of guiding and following, gifts of inspiration and vision. All members are called to discover, with the help of the community, the gifts they have received and to use them for the building up of the Church and for the service of the world to which the Church is sent.*

The Diocesan Ministry Educator offers a good deal of professional development opportunities for clergy and licensed ministers. Significant among these is the annual ministry conference, but throughout the year there are other seminars and workshops which allow people to grow in knowledge and ministry skills.

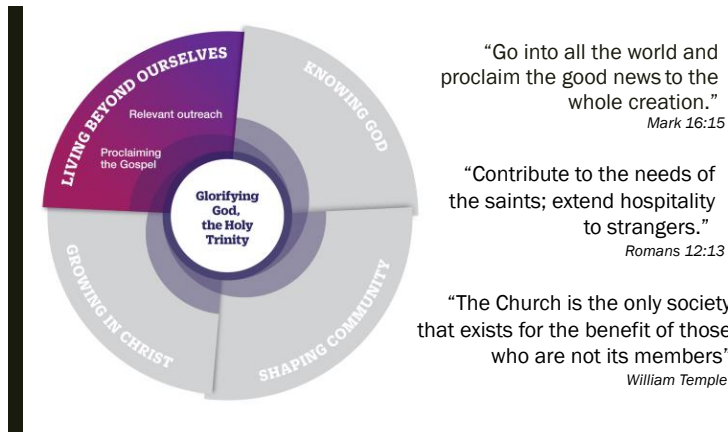


The Bishops recognise that an important part of our role is our teaching ministry. We exercise this in our Sunday engagement with ministry units, and in the times when we are with candidates in training for ordination and with clergy in the post-ordination programme. We want to extend that and have more public opportunities for people to come together in bible study and teaching led by the bishops.

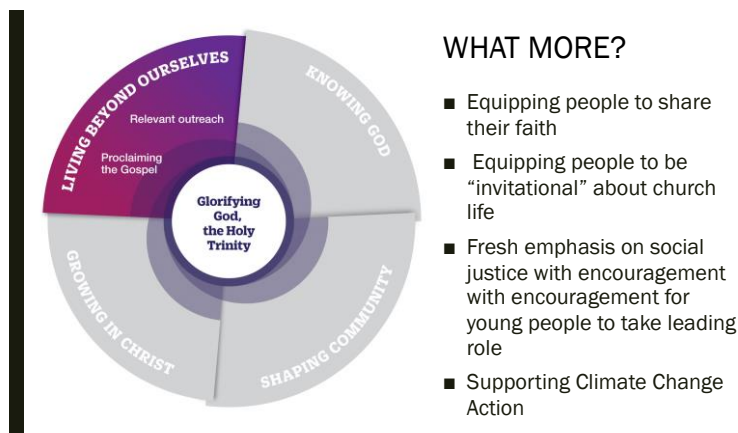
We have spoken of retreats and quiet days as part of our response to knowing God, and these opportunities also offer the chance for us to grow in that relationship and find a maturing discipleship and be open to new vocational directions.

We ask much of those who take on governance responsibilities in ministry units and there is an increasingly complex compliance environment which is set by State and Local Council authorities. We have seen how critical the exercise of good governance is in the church, and we want to resource people in those roles to be able to manage their responsibility well.

We have observed the toll that ministry can take on leaders in the church, and especially among the ordained. Through these and other mechanisms we want to help leaders to develop their resilience to be able to persevere when there is disappointment and push back as we go about our ministry tasks.



The Anglican way of following Jesus is precious but the love is always and fundamentally for Jesus. It is a tragedy and a betrayal when we keep that love to ourselves, or refuse to tell of our love or to share the gifts we have ourselves received from God. It was Archbishop William Temple who said “The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members.”



We know from the healthy church surveys already done that we are not so good at proclaiming our faith. Anglicans seem to excel at shyness. We are committed to finding ways to equip each other to authentically share their faith. We are exploring some promising programmes that we think will be a good fit and will equip us to be genuinely “invitational” so that people might share in what we have come to know and love. We think we need a fresh emphasis on our engagement in the social justice space. Indeed, we think it is time for a complete reboot and with encouragement and support we think this is an area that we should trust young people to take a leading role in our Diocese. Obviously, we are looking to further support and integrate the work of the Climate Change Action.



In the ensuing months we will be sharing aspects of this presentation more widely, and will begin to implement these plans.

We are blessed to serve alongside you in the Diocese of Auckland, and by the grace of God we look forward to seeing these things come to pass.

Now let us proceed to the further work of the Synod.

Bishop Ross Bay  
 Bishop Jim White  
 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018