

Bishop Peter Carrell's Presidential Address

Synod of the Diocese of Christchurch

08 September 2023

This is the full, official text of the Address.

Introduction

Greetings to you all. Thank you for coming and participating in this gathering of our Diocese. Some of our brothers and sisters are missing due to illness – we pray for you – and others are missing because of family events – we rejoice with you.

This Presidential Address is associated with presentation, discussion and resolution concerning the Diocesan Mission Action Plan (DMAP). I will say only a little about the DMAP. My whole address is intended to flow into our Synodical focus on the DMAP and its implementation. For the sake of time, some parts of the address will not be read aloud by me.

Thanksgiving

Our praise and thanks, always, is first to the God of Jesus Christ who has called us into being as a Diocese and who continues to work among us.

I see signs of God at work among us as we experience the provision of ministers, lay and ordained, for positions in leadership, development and enabling of ministry. God has been good to us. We still have some vacancies so please keep praying.

It is also appropriate for me to offer thanks on behalf of the Diocese to those people who have done so much for us.

I thank the many people, clerical and lay, paid and unpaid, elected or appointed, who have worked so hard through the past year to make the Diocese of Christchurch what it is, both within each of its ministry units, Anglican Care ministries, the City Mission, the Cathedral Reinstatement Project, our educational institutions and across the Diocese in ministries which incorporate children, youth, families, lay people, clergy, in a range of events, camps, retreats and conferences, as well as a variety of chaplaincies and ministries such as Cursillo.

It is my continuing privilege to work closely with a great team of people who make up the Diocesan Ministry Team, our Diocesan administrative team and our Senior Leadership Team, and with five major Boards/Committees (Standing Committee, ADMSC board, Church Property Trustees, Anglican Care, Cathedral Chapter): you all give above and beyond mere duty and obligation, your advice is appreciated, your challenges are always heard and your commitment to Christ's church and mission is much appreciated by me: thank you.

My special thanks to our licensed clergy and licensed lay ministers. All the baptized are ministers of the gospel but our licensed leaders take on responsibilities which often leave them vulnerable to

criticism from those they have been appointed to serve. Thank you for bearing the burdens of responsibility that often weigh heavy on your shoulders.

I warmly thank the following who are leaving major boards or committees in the Diocese:

- Lawrence Kimberley (Chapter, Standing Committee and ADMSC Board)
- Corin Murfitt and Sammy Mould (CPT Board)
- Patrick Murray (Anglican Care executive officer and secretary to the Anglican Care Trust Board).

I also warmly thank two clergy with whom I have worked closely since I became Bishop:

- Lawrence Kimberley served as our Dean from 2015 to 10 August 2023. I thank Lawrence for his diligence and faithfulness in service of our Cathedral and its ministry and mission.
- Stephanie Mander served as our Ministry Educator from early 2019 to the end of February this year. I thank Stephanie for her work in many areas of education and training, always calling and inviting us to go deeper towards being more perfectly formed in our ministries. It is good to see Stephanie back in our Synod as Chaplain of Craighead Diocesan School.

I thank Ms Lindy Graham for the leadership role that she has played for the past ten years as Principal of Craighead Diocesan School, not least in supporting the Anglican character of this school. Lindy leaves this role at the end of this year for a much deserved retirement.

Finally, in this part of my address, I want to say thank you to Teresa for her loving partnership in the gospel through this past year. It is a privilege to have your support and it is not taken for granted.

God's Mission Has a Church

There has been some criticism of the use of the phrase *missio dei* in the Diocesan Mission Action Plan (DMAP). It is a Latin phrase which signifies a certain amount of technical importance within the subject of missiology. But Latin is not much used these days and it is clearer if we speak about the mission of God – the work of God in the world.

This work both involves those whom God sends to work as his agents in the world and is a work which involves God doing things we know little about.

The church then is an agency within the great plan of God for the salvation of the world. People called by God to serve in the mission are also called to gather in prayer, praise, proclamation and participation in the eucharist – the act of giving thanks for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ while opening our mouths and our hearts to being fed by the bread and wine which become the body and blood of Christ.

We sometimes say, It is not the church which has a mission, but the mission of God has a church. Jesus, we heard in our gospel reading last night, is on a mission, and he invites others to become part of the mission force –gathering these missionaries together forms the church. The church is an outcome of mission.

What kind of church are we?

Are we aligned with God's mission?

Are we the Good News of God in action and in presence in the world because what we say with our lips about Jesus is matched by how we live our lives?

What resources – personnel, money, buildings, etc – do we need to be what God has called us to be, the church as an agency of God within the great missionary plan of God?

In the subject headings and comments which follow, my presupposition is that we want to be God's church within God's mission, and we have things we can be satisfied we are making progress on and things we should be restless about the progress we have yet to make.

There is no particular order of priority in what follows!

Recovery Programme (Post Quake Building Projects)

Last year I said to you, "by next Synod, the programme will be completed and something of a receding memory." Unfortunately, this has not proved accurate. One outstanding project, St. Mary's, Timaru was finished a few months ago. Another, St. Paul's, Glenmark, is close but not yet across the line in achieving compliance with the Hurunui District Council.

Cathedral

Good progress on the Reinstatement of Christ Church Cathedral has continued through this past year.

In March 2023 we were able to host several groups of people inside the building itself, beginning with representatives from the Cathedral congregation and the Diocese gathering to open the day's proceedings with prayer and thanksgiving.

More recently we have had the first Sung Evensong in the Cathedral since 2011.

Late yesterday afternoon, many members of Synod had the opportunity to be inside the Cathedral for a look around. The last time Synod members were gathered together in the Cathedral in the Square was the Synod service held on the evening of Friday 3 September 2010.

Raising funds to complete the work which remains is the greatest challenge we face in the next two to three years. We have more or less exhausted CPT's contribution of insurance funds. Considerable work continues as we seek support from the wider community of people keen to see the Cathedral reinstated.

Although it has taken longer than I thought, we are now very close to launching The Anglican Campaign – our appeal to Anglicans locally, nationally and internationally to contribute to this great project. The formal launch of this campaign will be in February 2024.

Our wider community in the city and regions of the Diocese are looking to us to see how generous and active the Anglican worshippers of our church will be. We are in difficult economic times, and every ministry unit in the Diocese has financial challenges, but can we go an extra mile in our

financial commitment to the Cathedral as our Cathedral – as our centre for public witness to Christ in the heart of Christchurch?

I need to be transparent and carefully say to you all as the representative body of our Diocese, that it is very likely in the next 12 to 24 months there will be expectations that we will yet find further ways to contribute as a Diocese to the completion of this Project.

Critical to all fundraising is vision. Our vision for the Cathedral is that the heart of our city is healed through the healing of this building, and that in the middle of our city and province is an enduring testimony to the love of God for all humanity. Bearing witness to Jesus Christ is the primary purpose of any church building and none more so when that building is a cathedral.

But not far behind that primary purpose is the role the Cathedral plays and will play in our life as a Diocesan family.

The Cathedral is our place where we gather as that family of God. I encourage each and every one of us as the Synod of this Diocese not only to respond to the appeal to Anglicans to give for the Reinstatement, but also to be a leader, encouraging all our worshippers and supporters to contribute – whether a biblical mite or a mighty amount, it all helps!

It is a delight, in closing this section, to congratulate Ben Truman on his appointment as our new Dean. I am looking forward to working with Ben on Cathedral matters, present and future.

Safe Church

Last year we passed the following resolution of Synod:

Motion 13: Diocesan Response to the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care

Moved: That the Synod of the Diocese of Christchurch:

- 1. acknowledges the work of the Royal Commission on Abuse in Care and the Report of a steering group commissioned by the Bishop in 2021 to develop a Diocesan response to the Commission's work.*
- 2. resolves to work together on a healing hikoi in the hope that through shared Lenten studies over two years and careful listening and discernment there will be a culture change in our Diocese.*
- 3. requests the Bishop and Standing Committee, in consultation with the steering group, to commission work on an initial Diocesan service of lament and apology to be held at the Cathedral at an appropriate date in the future.*
- 4. requests the Bishop and Standing Committee, in consultation with the steering group, to seek survivor engagement in the creation of a Diocesan perpetual memorial acknowledging the harm caused by abuse in our Diocese.*
- 5. requests each ministry unit to take steps to become a safer and more caring church, understanding that this is what it will look like as Diocese and ministry units work together:*

- 5.1 *the whole church is actively committed to safety;*
- 5.2 *there is a culture of transparency;*
- 5.3 *as part of our common life together, we will develop a culture that enables open and frank conversations about all aspects of abuse;*
- 5.4 *when we plan new initiatives we include safety as a core consideration;*
- 5.5 *we have clear processes for complaints;*
- 5.6 *we commit to safety training for everyone;*
- 5.7 *we keep our structures and processes simple and empower people to look after their safety procedures locally;*
- 5.8 *we commit to leadership accountability;*
- 5.9 *we commit to legal requirements around safety including police checks.*

- 6. *requests the Bishop and Standing Committee in consultation with the steering group to consult with health professionals who work within the Diocese of Christchurch with people who have experienced abuse in the church. This will include consultation on the preparation of safe written materials for Lenten studies and referral pathways.*

Moved: *Very Rev'd Lawrence Kimberley*

Seconded: *Rev'd Megan Herles-Moore*

In this section I speak about safe ministry, in the next section I speak about our progress towards formal lament and memorial.

We want to be a safe church. No one disagrees with that proposition. Everyone wants church to be a safe place for all.

If we ask the question, "Have we achieved the goal of being a safe church?" What answer would you give for your local church?

I have to say, as your bishop and arguably with more knowledge of all our churches across the Diocese than anyone else, "We have not achieved this goal yet."

What are we making progress on?

Through the leadership of Gareth Bezett and Stephanie Robson, Theology House produced the first of the two Lenten Studies books mentioned in the motion. Work is underway on the second book for 2024.

This year I have recognised the sheer scale of what needs to be put in place so we can be a safer church than we are. I thank Cherie Dirkze, our Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, and John de Senna, working contractually on Boundaries training, for their input into my thinking.

Specifically – to give a few examples and not a comprehensive list:

- We need more boundaries training, meaning greater depth of content, for example, getting ahead of temptations in inappropriate use of social media.
- We need more boundaries training, meaning greater breadth of participation: all licensed ministers, those who are not licensed but assist licensed ministers, and those who hold office in our ministry units and in our Diocese.

- We need training which enables each of us to identify grooming and other manipulative behaviour. This training has begun, I am glad to say.
- We need to more comprehensively police vet and reference check people in positions of ministry responsibility. This should be routinely expected of Vestry members, for instance, but we have not yet set out that expectation.
- We need to be able to systematically record all relevant data about police vetting, boundaries training and the like, in order to be sure that we know who is and who is not up to date at any given point in time.

These developments and others require resourcing or, more frankly, financing that is not currently budgeted for in our annual diocesan budget. For some ministry units – those with lots of activities and leaders and helpers to match – there will also be a need for enhanced local resourcing of local Safeguarding Officers.

From the perspective of the Diocese, we currently have funds for a 0.5 FTE Safeguarding Officer, and we have funds within the Ministry Education budget to support the current expectations around boundaries training.

My thinking, at this point in time, is that we need to develop what we are doing and what we are going to do into an Office for Safe Church (or Safe Ministry) – with this office having oversight of boundaries training, safeguarding of ministry, vetting processes, recording of data and so forth. At a minimum this office will need 1.0 FTE staffing, an increase on what we currently have.

Finally, I note that work at a national Anglican level on these matters continues and where we go as a Diocese will be in collaboration with developments in our whole church.

Lament

Last year's motion included a commitment to "commission work on an initial Diocesan service of lament and apology to be held at the Cathedral at an appropriate date in the future," and "the creation of a Diocesan perpetual memorial acknowledging the harm caused by abuse in our Diocese."

For various reasons these two pieces of work have made no further progress. My commitment is that through the next year we will make progress, with the provisional aim that by the time of our Synod in 2024, we will have made visible, measurable progress on these two important matters. Sharing in the lead on these matters will be Archdeacon Megan Herles-Moore.

At our Clergy Conference this year, one of our speakers, Chris Clarke, noted the need for a deep period of lament that church has not been a safe place of refuge, and that this period of lament is required before we claim "the promised land."

He also noted, memorably, and hopefully, that lament always precedes renewal.

Environment and Sustainable Development

We sure live in interesting times in the global quest for mitigating climate change, as we see our government and would be government do (or propose) one thing then another and perhaps change

the thing which was the plan a year ago. Overseas we have seen raging fires through the northern summer, and here we have experienced terrible flooding in several parts of our nation.

The use of electric cars is rising and proposals for public transport enhancement, including through rail travel, even for greater Christchurch, are being looked at seriously and carefully. The costs of doing something are huge but the cost of doing nothing is also huge.

Determining the right thing to do is one thing, and gaining popular, widespread support is another thing. Overall, more of us in NZ and around the world are on board with doing something rather than doing nothing.

In our Diocese and wider church, we continue to have regular Zoom meetings as part of our diet of meetings – cutting down our travel and the pollution associated with the use of cars and planes.

We use less paper than previously. We can do more. The best place to begin and to sustain this journey of change is local – in each of our ministry units.

Regeneration

The Regeneration of our Diocese in this decade is a theme which has caught the imagination of many Anglicans in our Diocesan regions.

It is important this morning, especially as we soon begin presentations and discussions about the DMAP, that I once again put before you our updated attendance statistics, albeit the figures for 2020 remain significantly incomplete:

	Total Attendance for worship in Dio Chch
2014	356,080
2015	351,448
2016	316,098 [a blip re counting?]
2017	336,155
2018	277,526
2019	258,623
2020	173,568 (from 41/58 ministry units, in the Year of Covid affecting 7 or more Sundays)
2021	236,414 (from 52/58 ministry units)
2022	205,084 (from 54/58 ministry units)

Note re the above table: the below par figures for 2018 and 2019 represent a number of ministry units not making the statistical returns required of them. The figures for 2018 and more so for 2019 also represent a Diocese which has suffered disaffiliation of several congregations in the second half of 2018. For recent years, I give the specific number of ministry units who have replied.

Statistics help us to understand who we are as a Diocese. Other work has been done through the past year on our age profile. It is sobering to know that statistics back up what we see with our eyes about our profile – strongly leaning towards senior generations. Regeneration of our Diocese remains as important and as urgent as ever.

Discipleship

As we reflect on the number of people who actively identify as Christians involved in our ministry units, our keenness to see regrowth of the Diocese must be a commitment to see every member of our churches understanding that we are disciples, and that Jesus calls us to grow daily in our commitment to him.

Later in this Synod we will discuss the Biblical Literacy project, catalysed by last year's synod. To read the Bible, to inwardly digest it, to apply its teaching to the attitudes of our hearts and to the actions of our bodies is a critical part of growth in discipleship.

Significantly in this Synod we also have a motion on Prayer in the life of the Diocese. Bible reading and prayer always go together when we consider daily and weekly disciplines which disciples undertake. I look forward to leading the Diocese in new ways of praying together as a result of this motion.

Family and Community

We are talking through this decade of Regeneration not only about an emphasis on discipleship but also on Family and on Community.

An emphasis on Family is both on church understood as family – people relating to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ – and on church as welcoming families (with no specific narrow definition of “family” implied).

Regenerating the Diocese means commitment to welcoming, including and supporting children, teenagers, young adults, single people, couples, families, old adults, grandparents. All are welcome but if all generations are not present in our congregations, have we – just possibly – created barriers to some generations not being part of us?

An emphasis on Community is both on church as community – together we enjoy a common life in Christ – and on church as a body understanding its responsibilities to the wider community around itself. Some brilliant things are happening as churches engage with wider community.

The Fragile Bloom of Democracy

We live in a global world and all is not well with that world. Thousands of words could be written about all the things which make the world unwell from faltering efforts to tackle climate change to wars and rumours of wars. This morning I want to make one observation which relates to the freedom we enjoy to live openly and freely as Christian people.

Russia, a totalitarian power is at war with Ukraine. Some in the West think we should yield to Russia by ceasing to arm Ukraine. That would be a mistake because it would not only embolden Russia and its territorial ambitions but also other totalitarian aggressors.

One of those aggressors is China. I accept that in the reality of a global economy, we cannot not trade with China and that that trade depends in large part on a very subtle and restrained

relationship with China. But China's ambitions include influencing the countries of the Pacific, including our own, and its ambitions are not the spread of democracy. Where China takes control – its own territories, Tibet, and Hong Kong, democracy is stifled if not killed, and the freedom of Christians and other people of faith to live out their faith is at best severely constrained and at worst results in imprisonment, if not death. We should not be naïve about the future of our faith in a Pacific in which China takes control.

I support recent subtle shifts in our foreign policy to support American counters to China, especially through greater American and New Zealand foreign policy and aid initiatives in the South Pacific.

Five Years On - 360 Degree Review

On 9 February 2024 I will have completed five years as your bishop. It has been an amazing five years, full of excitement and full of challenges. Some of the challenges have been immense – the role of bishop in today's church is no sinecure. My continuing excitement is excitement about what God is doing among us.

A few months back, as part of developing a new momentum in clergy professional development appraisals, I underwent a 360 Degree review. I have yet to find the day or two I need to fully reflect on the results of that review. But here in the Synod I want to acknowledge that many like what I do and some do not like what I do.

And that's okay!

Chancellor

We have been extraordinarily well served in our Diocese by a long chain of expert and always available Chancellors and Vice Chancellors. None more so than our current Chancellor, Maurice Walker and our current Vice Chancellor, Alex Summerlee. Thank you for what you do!

In the course of next year, Maurice will retire as a practicing lawyer and thus will step down from being our Chancellor. I will appoint Alex to be our Chancellor before the next Synod and we will work on securing a new Vice Chancellor.

DMAP

We said when we first proposed the DMAP that it would be revised in the course of this decade. I mentioned above language such as "mission dei" which has been critiqued. Other critical suggestions for improvement have been made. Four important suggestions were proposed to Clergy Conference in May by our speaker, Chris Clarke. These are that the DMAP lacks reference to or engagement with the following aspects of church as part of the mission of God in the world:

- Care of creation
- Advocacy for the poor (building on our mana and credibility)
- Te Ao Māori (noting that our Three Tikanga Church means we have kind of contracted out care for Māori). We could focus on: the role of Te Tiriti, including the evangelical, CMS background to the Treaty, appalling events in settle history such as Rangioawhia, and the role of covenant in the life of Israel and the church in the Bible.

- Salt and light beyond the church. Unleashing Christians into the wider canvas of life.

I intend to lead a process which will see a revised, updated, enhanced DMAP presented to Synod next year. Our discussions through the remainder of this morning will be contributions to that process.

Conclusion

Chris Clarke also said to us at that Conference:

The attempt to change faces many battles. We need to upskill ourselves to lead change. Joys do come from fighting the battles.

May this Synod embolden us to face change, help our upskilling in leadership in our ministry units and on our return to our ministry units, to fight the good fight of faith, may God bring us joy.

Thank you for listening, thank you for praying, thank you for being open to where the loving heart of God leads us. To God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations!

Bishop Peter
08 September 2023.