

Bishop Peter Carrell's Presidential Address

Synod of the Diocese of Christchurch

02 September 2021

This is the full, official text of the Address.

Within the constraints of a Zoom Synod session, with time at a premium, I will speak to the Address rather than deliver every word of the text.

Introduction

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3).

Every synod is a pause in the life of a diocese: to review, to take stock, to ask whether we are heading in the right direction. It is an opportunity to count our blessings in Christ, as well as to review the degree to which we have been a blessing to the local and global communities around us.

A year ago our synodical pause was planned for a physical Synod and became a virtual Synod, courtesy of technology and Zoom software joining us together under Level 2 restrictions.

I said at that Zoom Synod:

"We will do our business as a Synod assuming that sometime soon life will return to a new normal of meeting physically together, without Covid inspired limitations."

Well, we had a good run through the remainder of 2020 and a long way into 2021 but at midnight on Tuesday 17 August we all went into Lockdown Level 4 and planning for Synod 2021 became precarious. In fact, it turns out that this Synod week we are in Level 3 and we have split our Synod into two Zoom sessions, Thursday and Friday evenings and a face to face, physical Saturday session of Synod at a later date ... we hope!

The Year That Has Been: Diocese of Christchurch, 2020-2021

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers (Ephesians 1:15-16).

Gratitude

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.

Among matters for which we are thankful to God is the financial blessing we have received through the last half of 2020 and into the first part of 2021 as financial support from parishioners, from the government and from the St John's College Trust Board assisted through the challenges of a pandemic economy.

It is also appropriate to offer our thanks to those people who have done so much for us.

On behalf of the Diocese, I thank the many people, clerical and lay, paid and unpaid, elected or appointed, who have worked so hard through all the challenges and uncertainties of the past year and who make the Diocese of Christchurch what it is, both within each of its ministry units, Anglican Care divisions and 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.

The list of individuals is extensive, the names are readily found across the pages of our Diocesan prayer cycle, and the list is not limited to those whose names appear in the cycle. There are the many people involved in the Cathedral Project, for example, who deserve much thanks from the Diocese of Christchurch.

I work very closely inside and outside of the Anglican Centre, within the Diocesan Ministry Team, our Diocesan administrative team and our Senior Leadership Team, and with four major Boards/Committees (Standing Committee, Church Property Trustees, Anglican Care, Dean and 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, thank you, thank you.

I also warmly thank the following Trustee who is leaving one of our three major Boards in the Diocese (from the date of our Synod elections): the Reverend Doctor Carolyn Robertson who is concluding her service as a Church Property Trustee.

Speaking personally, I want to say thank you to Teresa for her loving support and travelling companionship through this past year. I could not do this job without you!

Recovery

Through 2020-21 great progress has been made on our Recovery Programme – our programme for repairing, restoring and re-strengthening buildings across the Diocese which were damaged in the earthquakes in 2010, 2011 and 2016.

At Synod last year I said that we determined that most of the Recovery Programme would be completed by 31 March 2021. That date has proved to be ambitious for various reasons, including the effect the pandemic has had on supply chains for building products. We now, at the time of writing, have 10 projects to complete, and our current date for completion of the projects is 31 December 2021 with completion of consequential accounting and filing by 31 January 2022. However these dates are understandably under pressure given the delays due to the recent Lockdown Levels 4 and Level 3.

I thank all staff involved in the Recovery Project and especially wish to acknowledge Suzanne Price who concludes her role in management of the Project in this week of the beginning of Synod.

Cathedral

This past year the **Reinstatement of the Cathedral in the Square** has included progress on site on the Stabilization of the Cathedral, the aim of which is to strengthen the building to 34% of building code and thus become safe for workers to enter.

I acknowledge with gratitude the hard work CPT, CCRL and CCRT trustees, directors, executives and staff have put into making things happen. We are on track – the Pandemic permitting - to re-open the reinstated Cathedral in late 2027.

Through the past year various developments have occurred with respect to fundraising for the Cathedral, mostly in response to feedback given to us by potentially significant donors.

That feedback has included the following: that our governance structure for the Project should be simpler; that we should reduce costs of governance; that donors wish to give to construction of the Cathedral buildings (and to the main building and tower in particular) and not to a fund to cover future costs of the Cathedral's insurance and maintenance; and that we have ample funds to expend for the present and should seek funds when we are closer to actually needing those funds.

In working through that feedback, the three governance boards involved in the Project, CCRT, CCRL and CPT, have determined that a review of governance is appropriate (and is underway at this time), that we should fund the Cathedral Maintenance and Insurance Fund from a mix of straight deposit into the fund from our insurance funds and accumulating returns over the next six to seven years, that a reshaped fundraising campaign will have a formal start in 2022, and that we need to revise one aspect of the 2017 resolution agreed by this Synod when we determined that that Cathedral would be reinstated.

That revision, proposed within Motion 13 of this Synod, is that we recognize the reality of fundraising for a very large construction project such as our Cathedral and make an adjustment to our requirement that all funds are in hand for the largest and most expensive stage of the Project, the building of the main Cathedral building itself.

Our 2017 motion we committed to not begin any stage of the Cathedral construction without funds in hand. The reality of this decision is that it presupposed funders for the Project would go along with our requirement for funding commitments to be made ahead of the need for funds. In the past four years since then we have been discovering that significant funders for a Project of this kind want to commit their funding when the funds are needed and not beforehand, especially not when they can see that we have significant funds in hand which covers the cost of stabilization and construction for the first few years of the Project's life.

The proposal in Motion 13 remains fiscally prudent like the 2017 Motion. It asks Synod to support proceeding through the main Cathedral construction stage one contract at a time – such contracts likely in the range of \$10-15m per contract. If Synod agrees, no contract for the next portion of construction will be signed without the funds to pay for that contract in hand.

Other Business

In other business before our Synod, the working on of which has been a feature of Diocesan life through the past year, I commend

- Church Property Trustees, Standing Committee, CPT staff and our legal team for their work on the distribution of the insurance surplus announced to Synod a few years ago. Our initial distribution will be a tranche of \$8m and we hope to have this distribution finalized and implemented by the end of the 2021 calendar year.

- the Parish of Christchurch St Luke's for their decision to dissolve the parish and to ask Synod to with their recommendation on the use of their assets for support and development of inner Christchurch city mission and ministry as well as the continuation of traditional charity support provided by the parish.

Remaining in central Christchurch, I am pleased to report the following to Synod:

- The Diocese and the Parish of St Michael's and All Angels have made excellent progress towards the Anglican Centre shifting from 10 Logistics Drive to Cardale House in Tuam Street. We were on track to be settled in by the end of September 2021 but then the Delta variant of Covid struck and we are now delayed. Hopefully we will be moved in by the end of October. Progress towards this goal has been a "joint venture" between the Diocese and the Parish of Christchurch St Michael's and we look forward to joining the prayer life of the parish when we are in their premises. I am personally looking forward to be physically closer to the Transitional Cathedral and to the Cathedral Project construction work in the Square.
- St Michael's Church School and St Michael's and All Angels Parish have been working very hard through the past year or so on the possibility of a new Diocesan statute underpinning the governance of the school and the structural relationship between the school and the parish. As I write these words we are confident we will have a bill to bring to our physical session of Synod 2021.

Royal Commission

A significant amount of work has occurred within our Diocese through the past year as the Royal Commission on Abuse of Vulnerable Persons has continued its work, often at some pace.

Research into files of past complaints has continued. There has been work for the Diocese, for Anglican Care and for each of our Anglican Schools. The Commission, through 2020-21, has made significant demands on us to supply information, often at short notice.

I thank all those involved in this work and acknowledge with gratitude the work of our national Anglican church legal team, including our former Chancellor, Jeremy Johnson, for its engagement with the Commission on behalf of a collective of episcopal units, social services boards and Anglican schools, of which the Diocese of Christchurch is a part. Especially helpful to me within that legal team has been Fiona Guy Kidd.

Within our Diocesan team I especially thank Veronica Cross, my Executive Assistant and Jane Teal, our Archivist for their work in securing the information required by the Commission.

The Diocese and entities within the Diocese have been engaging in formal, independently facilitated processes of redress with survivors of past abuse.

Nevertheless this is not the limit of our Diocesan response to the spotlight of the Royal Commission on our history and on our present as a church. It is a reasonable expectation that no one involved in our church's life and ministries would be subject to abuse by those who have committed to serving Christ in a Christ-like manner. Thus, we must ask and answer the question what we are learning from the Commission's work and what we are doing to implement those learnings as we address the past, act in the present and train and educate for the future.

Since I was present at the Commission in March, 2021, as one of four Anglican bishops cross-examined by the Commission's lawyers, I have been working on what we might do to address some aspects of our history which remain somewhat loose rather than tidied up.

By "we" I mean "the Diocese of Christchurch" and the question I am pursuing with a small steering group is whether we might be able to approach a future Synod with a proposal that we, the Diocese of Christchurch, acknowledge formally, liturgically and perhaps through a visible memorial, the fact that in the history of our Diocese we have failed those who have been abused. Failed that is, not only because they were abused when they should not have been, but also because when they sought both care and justice from the Diocese, it was not delivered as fulsomely and as decisively as it might have been.

Safeguarding

If the Commission has given us cause to look back and pause to review what we have done and what we have not done which we should have done re the past, it has also provoked considerable reflection on what we are doing in the present, what we could be doing but are not and what we must change in order to be better and more able as a Diocese which promises that people will be safe within it.

I am very pleased to report to Synod that this year we have been able to develop the role previously of Diocesan CYPPO (Children Young Person Safety Officer) so that we have a half-time appointee to the role, Cherie Dirkze, who has been in the position since early February 2021.

All too quickly, however, we are realizing that what we need Cherie to do in order that we become a safer Diocese is much more than a half-time role. We have asked Cherie, for instance, to incorporate some Health and Safety responsibilities. But Health and Safety compliance never diminishes as national and local authorities add more and more rules and regulations. (I say this not to complain, we must be safe, but to state a fact of time demands on officers in the church). So already we are beginning to get our heads around what it might mean to have a focused Diocesan Health and Safety Officer, setting Cherie free to focus on safety in ministry and mission.

One of the central, emerging concerns from the work of the Commission is the nature of ordained ministry, including how people become ordained (via discernment of vocation, education, training and formation) and what we do to maintain a highly skilled and continuously upskilled college of clergy, with special reference to ministering in life giving ways, without abuse of power or of office.

In no particular order of importance, this is raising questions of the place of:

- Psychological testing: currently this takes place after acceptance for training for ordination and before attending St John's College. Should such testing take place much earlier in the process, perhaps even before a person is formally accepted into the Diocesan Discernment Process?
- National discernment process: currently we discern people within our Diocese using people from within our Diocese in our process. Three other Pakeha dioceses do similarly. Three Pakeha dioceses in recent years have been working together in a combined process. The Commission has highlighted the variability in quality of clergy across our church. Should we

have one single discernment process for all episcopal units (or, at least, one for each Tikanga)?

- Training: should we have a single, coherent syllabus and approach to boundaries training in our church? (Indeed, should we have a coherent syllabus and approach to all training for each form of ministry (children, youth, family, elderly, for ordained ministry, etc)?)
- Database development and maintenance: typically and traditionally, we have had very full paper records for ordained clergy and very patchy or non-existent records for anyone else in ministry. A complaint against a Sunday School teaching assistant in the Parish of Somewhere in 1985 is unlikely to be able to be matched against a database of lay ministers involved with children in that (or any other parish) at that time. We are now working on developing a universal database for ministry across our Diocese which we will need to maintain through all of time ahead of us.
- Culture of discernment, testing, education, appraisal re all in ministry: perhaps the biggest challenge of all for our Diocese is to develop and keep invigorated a new culture of:
 - o discernment (for example, before anyone takes up any ministry in any ministry unit, how will we determine that this person is sound in character as well as in competency?),
 - o testing (are we open to scrutiny and review of what we do in education, pastoral care and activities with vulnerable persons?),
 - o education (every parishioner, not only our leaders and paid staff, need to understand what constitutes good ministry and what is unhealthy ministry, what is just and kind relational behaviour, and what is unacceptable bullying and abuse) and
 - o appraisal (if we do not check in on our ministers regularly, appraising how things are going, checking in on what new or renewed training and development is required, how will we keep improving?)

Finally, there is inevitably a financial question associated with these and related questions. What priority of our time and energy and funds will we give to safeguarding ministry and mission across our Diocese?

Good things in our Diocese

I am proud of the way our Diocese has ridden the waves of the past year. Whether negotiating Covid-19 level changes, featuring in the focus of the Royal Commission, patiently working through the final phases of our Recovery Project, living with the on again off again nature of youth events due to the pandemic's effects, or responding to manifest human need in various contexts, we have taken the past twelve months in our stride.

Our Schools

Our Anglican Schools – Christ's College, St Margaret's College, Craighead Diocesan School, St. Mark's, St. Michael's and The Cathedral Grammar – have continued to provide opportunities for Christian teaching and witness, through chapel and classroom. Our School Chaplains and Principals are vital leaders in this remarkable sphere for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

This year we especially acknowledge the faithful service of Peg Riley who concluded 22 and a half years as Chaplain of St Margaret's College in the middle of this year and the faithful service of Bosc Peters who early in 2022 will conclude 24 years as Chaplain of Christ's College.

I acknowledge all our Chaplains working in these and other spheres of life and work across Canterbury, Westland and the Chatham Islands and thank you for all your ministries.

Our life together

A huge number of people in our Diocese quietly get on with the tasks God has assigned to us, within our ministry units and within a variety of entities associated with or belonging to the Diocese. It is a privilege to meet so many of you, to talk about what God is doing among you, and then as bishop to leave your ministry unit, knowing that the work continues faithfully because of your responsibility and dedication to the work of Christ in the world.

I want to especially acknowledge our clergy, and within our clergy those who are in the hot seat role of Vicar or Priest in Charge. Everyone is a minister of Christ, a servant in the mission of God, but clergy take on responsibilities which often leave them vulnerable to criticism and even to opposition from those they have been appointed to serve. Thank you to you all as you have borne the heat of the day and the cold of the night in your leadership roles.

The Covid 19 Pandemic

Last year I wrote, "Permeating this Address and other presentations to Synod is the continuing Covid 19 Pandemic in our globe and in our nation and its effects on our mission and ministry operations." Unfortunately, a year later, the same words are pertinent to our Synodical deliberations. As I write this address (on the last day of 2021's Level 4, 31 August 2021) I am mindful that we are at a point of unknowingness. When will we return to Level 1? When we return to Level 1, what will life for the church be like?

Unfortunately, regular church going is a habit and one of the Pandemic's effects is breaking into that habit with consequences for attendance and participation in the gathered life of God's people. Nevertheless, Lockdown life is also an opportunity to re-examine what is core to the life of the church and what is peripheral and with the Holy Spirit's help to find new ways of being Christ's body on earth. We remain on an exciting if scary journey through these months and years in the time of Pandemic.

Te Waipounamu

It continues to be a pleasure to work with Pihopa Richard Wallace and Archdeacon Mere Wallace in various ways across our common territory and in our common interests in the work of God. I want to especially thank Pihopa Richard and Archdeacon Mere Wallace for their support and encouragement for various bicultural initiatives, especially among our youth and young adults.

We are slowly doing some work on the future of Tuahiwi as a ministry unit. I am delighted that Pihopa Richard is engaging our clergy on the West Coast in ministry.

The Diocese of Christchurch in its local and global social contexts

With all wisdom and insight, [Christ] has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and on earth (Ephesians 1:9-10).

We live in times which are arguably more than interesting and unfortunately all too often highlight divisions in the world when God's plan for the world is for unity.

As a nation, through our Parliament, we have agreed to or are being invited to agree to laws with implications for how many Christians conduct their lives and their ministries: the End of Life Choice Act which comes into effect in November this year; proposed legislation on "Hate speech" and on "Conversion Therapy". Much depends on the detail of such legislation. What rights of freedom of expression of our Christian faith are being curtailed? What protection against diminishment of humanity and enhancement of individual life choice is being granted by the legislation? Then, will we yet see legislation which will require (for instance) only people with vaccine passports able to enter our churches to worship?

Responses from members of this Diocese to such matters will vary, as they do across all the churches of Aotearoa New Zealand. In a world in which some seem concerned to be found on the "woke" side of history and others take pride in being "anti-woke", a Christian response to all social and moral issues is to seek the mind of Christ within the body of Christ as the Spirit of God binds us together and gives us gifts of knowledge and understanding. That mind of Christ, I venture to say, is always mindful of justice, mercy, and respect for each human being made in the image of God.

While debates about matters of personal choice and freedom of expression rumble on, we find that continuing to blight the social and economic landscape of Aotearoa New Zealand is a slow burning but detrimental crisis in respect of housing. Successive Governments, of the left and the right, have tried and largely failed to resolve this crisis which is a mixture of homelessness for those who would like a stable, weathertight roof over their heads, inability to afford to purchase a house for many, especially among the younger generations, and excessive rents for those destined to rent, perhaps for the whole of their adult lives. One question being raised with me, and which I am keen to take forward in 2022 (once our Recovery Project is concluded) is whether in our Diocese we have land or houses or both which could be repurposed in a manner which contributes to solving the housing crisis in our country. In the national scheme of things, we probably could not do a lot, but every house counts in this particular crisis.

The housing crisis is perhaps the most talked about and most visible aspect of the poverty which is experienced in these islands of plenty. I commend the work of Anglican Care as it faithfully engages in a variety of ways with the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized in our society.

I thank Moka Ritchie, Chair of the Anglican Care Board, the Board, executive leaders including Matthew Mark, Patrick Murray, and Jolyon White and all their staff for their many commitments to serve others in the spirit of Jesus in the task of improving the lives of fellow New Zealanders.

Finally, in this section, I note that we inhabit a world which continues to pose sharp challenges. Covid is both a local and a global challenge. To cite one aspect of the interplay between local and

global challenges, we have seen arguments for and against NZ being super fast in its vaccine rollout. Locally, the sooner we get to 100% of population vaccinated, the better. Globally, the more Western nations secure supplies of the vaccines, the slower the rollout in poorer nations. How self-centred should we be as a nation?

The recent capitulation of Afghanistan to the Taliban led consequentially to a rescue mission by our Defence Force, seeking to bring to New Zealand local Afghans who had served and supported our armed forces and other missions of good will through the past decades. In the medium and long term the debacle in Afghanistan poses the question, What increase in refugees settling in Aotearoa New Zealand will we commit to?

Last but not at all least, 2020-21 has seen significant and consequential increase in global warming, with natural disasters such as flooding being experienced here in New Zealand, including a recent massive flooding event in Mid and South Canterbury and another one soon after in Buller. A continuing challenge to us as a Diocese is what we can and should do towards becoming carbon lighter, if not carbon zero.

Omissions – What have we not done in the past year?

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:15-16)

I want to own up to areas in which we have not done what we said we would do, including areas in which I have not done what I said I would do. I mention two matters, though no doubt there are other sins of omission which could be named

1. **Vicarage Design Review:** the request for this work, which included a report back to Synod, has not proceeded as we hoped. Nevertheless we continue to move forward on vicarages, with occasional sale of, or purchases of vicarages. We have a standard and it is a good standard, if increasingly unaffordable. But we also have the capacity to vary from that standard, on application to Standing Committee, for reasons such as difficulty in securing a vicarage standard house in a specific housing market.
2. **A Survey of the Diocese:** I have talked for a couple of years now about surveying our Diocese in respect of our age profile. Last year was affected by Covid. This year, well, to be honest Covid has mostly affected it late in the year. But it has been an extraordinary year for busyness on many fronts. Hopefully, 2022 will be the year.

Regeneration: present and future of our Diocese (2020-2030)

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love (Ephesians 4:15-16).

One of the primary tasks of any Synod is to have regard for that which enables the church to grow and develop so that it is “working properly.” For Synod in 2021, a special focus on our growth is to engage with the Diocesan Mission Action Plan, commissioned at last year’s Synod. It will be presented to us by members of the working group, chaired by Dr Bruce Deam, which has worked on it through 2020 and 2021.

Thus, I do not want to say too much this year about regeneration of the Diocese through this decade. Our minds should be focused on the contribution a Diocesan Mission Action Plan can make to regeneration of the Diocese – a plan to guide us when we make decisions at a Diocesan level, for example, at Standing Committee, ADMSC and Church Property Trustee board meetings. But a Mission Action Plan which I hope will also inspire more local plans in each of our ministry units.

I want to take this opportunity to observe to Synod that a Diocesan Mission Action Plan is not Diocesan unless Synod agrees to it. The challenge for Synod will be to reflect prayerfully on the plan which is being presented. Every member of Synod will have a view on something which should be in the plan but which is not; or on something which is in the plan but which should have been said differently or not even be there at all.

The question I urge Synod members to ask of the plan is whether the plan looks like something which represents the mind of the Diocese as a whole, as a network of 58 different ministry units. It may not look like the plan which I would have written if I had the commission to write it; but does it look like a plan we can own across all the ministry units of our Diocese?

There is no question in my mind that we have eight years ahead of us in which significant decisions will be made in respect of ministry units, property, and other redeployment of resources. The Diocesan Mission Action Plan will guide us through these changes. As a result, we will be a lighter, nimbler and more flexible Diocese.

My vision is that we will also be a younger and a more ethnically and culturally diverse Diocese – a network of congregations of Anglicans who reflect the population make up of our regions and are spiritually alive and missionally engaged in the extension of God’s kingdom.

To underline the challenge we face, I once again put before you our updated attendance statistics, albeit the figures for 2020 are 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)

Note re the above table: the below par figures for 2018 and 2019 represent a number of parishes 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. For 2020 I give a specific number of ministry units who have replied.

A couple of years ago I introduced three new Strategic Themes for us as a Diocese: I want to remind you of them because moving into the future has no easy fixes, no quick repair jobs, and no snappy conversion methodologies to reverse our numerical decline. But there is a pathway forward which is faithful to the gospel mission of Jesus Christ because we will major on Disciples, Families and Communities.

By disciples we will mean growing in our faith, deepening our commitment to Christ, studying God's Word and living that Word out in our daily lives. You can help me to be a stronger disciple, I can encourage you to be faithful to Jesus, together we can draw others more deeply into fellowship with Christ.

By families we will mean valuing each member of each family, emphasizing ministry to children and to youth and to young adults and to the elderly. Youth ministry flows out of ministry to children. Grandparents bring children to church. Parents look for support and nurture in the challenging role of raising children. Our congregations are strengthened when we reach out to all generations.

By communities we will mean both the development of ministry units as communities of faith and the engagement of those communities of faith in the community around them. Through ministry among ourselves we grow bonds of love among God's people. In mission we face outwards to serve in Christ's name the community of our suburb, our small town, our rural district, our school.

Assuming we will adopt the Diocesan Mission Action Plan, I look forward to ways in which the outworking of the plan will assist us all to major on Disciples, Families and Communities.

Last year I made this announcement in respect of moving forward on regeneration of the Diocese: "I am working on a new position on the Diocesan Ministry Team which will focus on the cause of Regeneration of our Diocese: a "Consultant on Regeneration" though likely the position will have a different title to that phrase. I hope we can begin advertising for this position soon and make an appointment effective from early 2021."

For various reasons this specific plan did not work out, but I am happy to merge the thinking within that announcement into the part of the Diocesan Mission Action Plan which talks of appointing a Diocesan Missional Leader. In the outworking of my role as Bishop of Christchurch I am fairly desperate for the kind of assistance represented in this new role and, given the delay to when we

can actually consider the Diocesan Mission Action plan, I am considering moving forward with advertising for the role. Even if the Plan were delayed by Synod for some reason – I hope not! - we cannot delay on moving forward on this particular leadership role for the Diocese.

Conclusion

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21).

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
02 September 2021.*