

Bishop Peter Carrell's Presidential Address

Synod of the Diocese of Christchurch

02 September 2022

This is the full, official text of the Address.

Introduction

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!, By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3).

Every synod is a pause in the life of a diocese: 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.

This year, only a few weeks after the conclusion of the Lambeth Conference 2022, a periodic gathering of bishops of the Anglican Communion, held in Canterbury, Kent, the see of the Archbishop of Canterbury, I would like to shape my address to our Synod around the "Lambeth Calls".

The Lambeth Calls are a series of papers presented and discussed at the conference, each of which calls Anglican provinces and the dioceses within them to action, should we choose to hear and to respond to the call.

[For the full text of the Calls: <https://www.lambethconference.org/programme/lambeth-calls/>]

Each of the Calls are important but the order in which the sections of my address will unfold is designed to end with the Calls which are of greatest immediacy for our Diocese at this time in our commitment through this decade to Regeneration.

Our Bible study text at the conference was 1 Peter and it is from this epistle that I draw verses relevant to the structure of my address.

The theme of the conference was **God's church for God's world** and that is a good theme for this Synod: how can we be God's church for God's regions in which we serve. To focus on being God's church for God's world is to work on a kingdom theology. God reigns over the world; we live in the world; we the church are called to serve that world; what does this mean for what we speak into the world and for what we do in the world?

Nevertheless, there is one matter which is not easy to assign to any one of the Calls and so it is part of this Introduction. That is the pleasant matter of saying Thank you to people and groups in the Diocese.

Thanksgiving

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received (1 Peter 4:10).

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.

It is also appropriate for me on behalf of the Diocese to offer our thanks 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 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, 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.

A wonderfully large 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: thank you.

I want to especially acknowledge our licensed clergy and licensed lay ministers, among whose ranks are those who are in the hot seat role of Vicar or Priest in Charge or Minister in Charge or Chaplain. Everyone is a minister of Christ, a servant in the mission of God, but our licensed leaders take on responsibilities which often leave them vulnerable to criticism 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.

A particular joy in the last year has been moving the Anglican Centre into our new Tuam Street premises. I both thank God for this provision and thank the Parish of St Michael and All Angels for their co-operation and hospitality.

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

- Ms Moka Ritchie, Chair of Anglican Care Board
- The Reverend Peter Beck, Board member, Anglican Care
- Mr Byron Behm and the Reverend Tony Kippax, Standing Committee.

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!

Together we thank the Diocese for the privilege of being able to travel to the USA and UK in order to participate together in the Lambeth Conference – and to engage with and learn from expressions of the Episcopal and Anglican churches of each nation.

I am proud of the way our Diocese has ridden the waves of the past year. Living with Covid uncertainties we have continued our ministry and mission. Excellent progress has been made on the last stage of our Recovery Project. With many vacancies for vicars, nevertheless our ministry units have found ways to thrive and not just to survive. Steady progress in our response to the Royal Commission's spotlight on our Diocesan policies, practices and protocols has been made.

Now to the Lambeth Call papers and making connections to the life of our Diocese or province. Note that the Call papers are a work in progress: feedback from the conference itself is yet to be incorporated into final versions of each paper.

Thus: the first Lambeth Call to consider this morning:

Human Dignity

Honour everyone. Love the family of believers. ... Be hospitable to one another without complaining (1 Peter 2:17; 4:9)

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind (1 Peter 3:8)

This Call paper has significant things to say about the improvement of life for every human being on the planet with respect to engaging with issues of injustice, gender inequality, violence and domestic abuse and reparations for past injustices including those incurred by nations which engaged in the slave trade. This Call is a challenge to an Anglican Communion which inevitably includes churches in nations advantaged by British, other European and American imperialism and churches in nations disadvantaged by imperialism. Effectively it pushes our church to continue with urgency addressing inequality between Tikanga and critical reflection on the continuing effects of colonization of Aotearoa.

But, as you may have heard or read, this Call paper with its challenges on multiple fronts became overshadowed by controversy over, all too predictably, human sexuality. Some of that controversy focused on a series of changes in respect of voting and some on changes of wording over successive days. What is important is the actual outcome within the conference. After an intervention by Archbishop Welby (<https://www.lambethconference.org/bishops-at-lambeth-conference-discuss-the-lambeth-call-on-human-dignity/>) which included the observation that within the Anglican Communion are a plurality of views, held by Anglicans who have both studied Scripture, understood our tradition and reflected reasonably within each of our differing contexts.

“For the large majority of the Anglican Communion the traditional understanding of marriage is something that is understood, accepted and without question, not only by Bishops but their entire Church, and the societies in which they live. For them, to question this teaching is unthinkable, and in many countries would make the church a victim of

derision, contempt and even attack. For many churches to change traditional teaching challenges their very existence.

For a minority, we can say almost the same. They have not arrived lightly at their ideas that traditional teaching needs to change. They are not careless about scripture. They do not reject Christ. But they have come to a different view on sexuality after long prayer, deep study and reflection on understandings of human nature. For them, to question this different teaching is unthinkable, and in many countries is making the church a victim of derision, contempt and even attack. For these churches *not* to change traditional teaching challenges their very existence.

So let us not treat each other lightly or carelessly. We are deeply divided. That will not end soon. We are called by Christ himself both to truth and unity.”

In a related letter to all bishops of the Communion, Archbishop Welby simply said:

“We have a plurality of views.”

(From this Letter to the Bishops <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/news-and-statements/letter-archbishop-canterbury-bishops-anglican-communion>).

This is a fact of Anglican Communion life – uncomfortable and painful though this fact is for Anglicans who would much prefer we were committed to one and only one view and need not live with such striking difference as we do.

“We have a plurality of views”: this is also a fact of life in the Diocese of Christchurch. I am committed as your bishop to leading this Diocese, to the best of my ability, as a diocese in which, in the spirit of our 2018 General Synod decision, we live with difference of views and respect one another across those differences.

Anglican Identity

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God’s sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:4-5)

What does it mean to be Anglican? There are quite a few answers and the Lambeth Call on this topic includes a number of them as well as a potentially fruitful call for review of some of the notable aspects of Anglican Identity such as the Five Marks of Mission.

This morning I want to highlight one statement in the Call, 2.4:

“Our common baptism calls us to a life of service in the Lord Jesus Christ. We affirm a common ordained ministry according to the threefold order of deacons, priests (presbyters), and bishops. Fed by Word and sacrament, we turn outwards as witnesses to the Lordship of Christ in the world.”

Anglicans, in other words, are baptized Christians available to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, supported and nurtured by Word and sacrament through an ordered ministry of deacons, priests (presbyters) and bishops, understanding that our faces are turned away from ourselves so that we witness to Christ as Lord in the world that God has lovingly created and redeemed.

Although nothing in this Call references the importance of buildings, perhaps there should be such reference because, generally speaking, our ministry of Word and sacrament is situated in buildings which provide lectern and table, space protected from the elements so we can pray, praise and proclaim before sharing fellowship together. Anglican identity, historically and in the present, typically has specific connection to churches, halls and vicarage. Our critical question is always how such premises enable our witness in local and regional communities to Christ as Lord.

Thus, under the heading of “Anglican Identity” I want to consider some matters relating to buildings in our Diocese.

Recovery

Through 2021-22 further progress has been made on our Recovery Programme. Now, in early September 2022, we are so very near to this programme being completed (save for the Cathedral itself) and by next Synod, the programme will be completed and something of a receding memory.

Cathedral

After years in which we have been making excellent progress on the **Reinstatement of the Cathedral in the Square** but progress has been often invisible to the public, this year the visible progress has been phenomenal, resulting on Tuesday 16 August 2022 in two Project workers conducting the first in person engineering inspection inside the building since the early days after the 2011 earthquake.

Later in our Synod we will have an up to date report on how our new governance structure is working (for which last year’s Synod paved the way) and we will be briefed on fund-raising for our Anglican cathedral.

Having visited seven cathedrals in our recent travels, one of the many reinforcements of my visit to the States and to England when overseas for the Lambeth Conference was the significance of cathedrals as places of public witness in the mission of God. I am grateful for the role of the Transitional Cathedral through this season in the history of the Diocese and I really look forward to re-opening the Cathedral in the Square in late 2027 or early 2028.

But we are going to need to give an Anglican lead on fund-raising. 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?

Through the next five years we need to state and to communicate our vision for our Cathedral, for what it will mean to us to return to the Square.

Alongside our vision for the Cathedral at the centre of public witness to Christ is our vision for the Cathedral as central to our life together, to our life as a Diocesan family.

The Cathedral is our place where we gather, as we did last night, for Synod, for ordinations, for other special occasions. Within our vision for the Cathedral is an important sense that the Cathedral is a unifier in our life together: the sacred space where we bring ourselves in all our diversity to be God’s singular gospel people.

The challenge to reinstate our Cathedral is huge but it is important that we achieve the reinstatement – for the sake of our city and province, and for our own sake as the Diocese of Christchurch. Together, we can do this!

Also relevant under the heading of Anglican Identity is to talk about:

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 School – continue 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.

Something I am thinking about is how I might be able to delegate to another person or a small group tasks in relation to school chaplaincies such as finding new Diocesan-appointed board members for school boards and regular support for our chaplains in their roles in developing Anglican character in each of our schools.

The potential of our schools for the good news of Jesus Christ to be shared with students, parents and staff is immense. I am concerned that my inability to give proper attention to the schools diminishes our opportunity to reach our potential.

Three Tikanga

Anglican Identity in these islands is inextricably related to our life as a Three Tikanga church. I continue to appreciate opportunities 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.

The Tongan Congregation in our Diocese continues faithfully in its worship and witness under the leadership of the Reverend Leni Havea. Later this year the Diocese of Polynesia has an opportunity to elect a new Bishop of Polynesia who will also be one of our church’s three archbishops and primates.

Reconciliation

Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (1 Peter 2:10).

Under the heading of “Reconciliation”, perhaps the most interesting challenge in this Call paper is to moot the possibility of a “Congress” for Anglicans, focused on the theme of reconciliation, located somewhere in the Two-Thirds world, open to bishops, clergy and lay representatives from all Anglican provinces of the Communion.

The last such congress was held in 1963 in Toronto, Canada.

There is no doubting the desirability of such a congress, noting the lack of significant global Anglican gatherings to which bishops, clergy and lay representatives can gather in great numbers. What the conference doubted, via its feedback to this paper, is whether such a conference is practical and affordable.

Nevertheless, this Call is a helpful reminder, in the midst of Anglican differences and even divisions, that God calls his people to be reconciled to one another.

Science and Faith

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received (1 Peter 4:10).

At the heart of the relevance of this paper to our current life as a Diocese is the question of a relationship between science and faith which could have seen us avoid some of the disputes which have occurred in our ministry units over Covid vaccinations and related matters such as the science of control of contagions via masking.

Within the Call paper is this message:

“In the Call that follows the Bishops assembled at the Lambeth Conference invite every Church of the Anglican Communion to recognise within science God-given resources for the life of faith and to offer the wisdom of faith to the work of science. We call on our Churches to make this a priority and to support and equip church leaders and scientists in partnership for such courageous and confident leadership.”

Put in different words, the question here is whether the Anglican church values and supports scientists who are Anglicans. How can we honour their work in researching the intricacies of creation in order that there might be benefit to the creation and to the creatures within it, including ourselves.

Scientists are the unsung heroes of our society in an age of celebrities. Celebrities on, say, the sport fields or the video screen can make our lives more enjoyable through entertainment, but they haven't discovered the technologies which enable us to see celebrities in action via an app on our phone. Science is a gift from God which has inordinate capacity to bless human life (as well as awful capacity through, say, military weapons to curse human life).

As we are hopefully coming out of the age of Covid, it is important that we reflect on what benefits science has conferred on us and resolve to support the scientists among us.

Interfaith

Conduct yourselves honourably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honourable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge (1 Peter 2:12).

It was inspiring at the Conference to have the presentation on the Interfaith Call to include recognition that Christians are persecuted by some members of other faiths as well as recognition of the fact that developing good relations between members of each faith is vital if we are to be at peace with one another and to work co-operatively on issues facing our world, such as climate change. Such a presentation was made by an English bishop, Guli Dehqani-Francis who grew up in

Iran, lost a brother to Islamic assassins and who is now a leader in interfaith relationships in the United Kingdom.

Among challenges in this Call, and always aware of our own vulnerable interfaith context in Christchurch, I note the specificity of the following challenge:

“To Bishops across the Anglican Communion, where possible in your local context, to forge a new friendship with a leader of another religious tradition, modelling our commitment to peace-making and the common good.”

Safe Church

As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honour everyone. Love the family of believers (1 Peter 2:16-17a).

This Lambeth Call to be a Safe Church is pertinent to our current season as a church in the spotlight of our continuing Royal Commission on Abuse.

The Call paper says,

“We make this call fully aware of safeguarding/safe church issues in religious institutions including churches of the Anglican Communion, as highlighted by government inquiries and the media. Some religious workers have betrayed trust and abused children and adults for whom they had pastoral responsibility. Some religious leaders have denied or minimised this abuse and its consequences. Religious institutions have compounded the impact of the initial abuse by failing to effectively care for those who have been abused. The reputation of, and public trust in, many religious institutions has been damaged.”

To which, we can only say, and sadly, “Amen. This is true of our church and of our Diocese.”

The Call paper goes onto say:

“We affirm that:

- a key part of the mission of the Church is to create communities in which all people are safe and cared for. This conviction must be a core component of our theology and must therefore characterise our identity, thinking, words and actions in being God’s Church for God’s World;
- we will take action to make churches of the Anglican Communion places of enhanced safety for everyone, where church workers act with integrity; victims of abuse receive care and a just outcome; church workers who commit abuse are held accountable; and church leaders do not conceal abuse.”

The last phrase here, “church leaders do not conceal abuse” means “church leaders do not hide the fact that abuse has occurred in the history of the church.” It does not mean that identities of those who have been abused will be revealed.

The phrase “a just outcome” includes a commitment to offer redress, including financial redress in the process of responding to a complaint by a person who has been abused. A commitment to

include financial redress in response to a complaint is a sign of the seriousness the church is taking about the fact of abuse within our history.

To this affirmation, then, we can only say, and hopefully with resolve and determination in every part of our church and of our Diocese, "Amen. We will do this."

The whole Call paper on Safe Church is relevant to the work we have been doing through this past year and to the work which some motions at this Synod invite us to participate in.

We must not underestimate either the challenge of what we are doing or its importance.

The challenge is to do everything we can humanly do to be a church in which people feel safe and are safe and remain safe so that we all can flourish as disciples of Jesus Christ.

The importance of what we are doing is that when church is not safe, when people are harassed and abused, then not only has church been the opposite of what it should be, we are viewed as a place to which newcomers to Christ should steer clear of. In short, to be a safe church is to be a good news church; to be an unsafe church is to be a bad news church.

Since our last meeting of Synod we have made progress in a number of ways while always being conscious of how much more we have to do.

The motions before us are one outcome of a steering group I have formed in order to work on our response to the Royal Commission, including addressing improvement in our ministry protocols, policies and practices, as well as addressing where possible outstanding questions from the past.

Another outcome since last Synod is the continuing development of the national Anglican Ministry Standards Commission. Complaints are being made to the Commission, in accordance with our Title D legislation, and they are being responded to. From the Commission we now have a national poster re safe ministry in our church. We also have a complementary poster for our Diocese. Both posters should be displayed in our churches and halls. Both posters are available at this Synod to take back to our ministry units.

Within our Diocese the Reverend Stephanie Robson, our Diocesan Ministry Educator, and Ms Cherie Dirkse, our Diocesan Safeguarding Officer, continue to play key roles in the development of safe ministry practice.

One task which is underway is improving the quality of our database and the quantity of information carried on it, in respect of those who are licensed for ministry and those who hold office in our church.

The role of Diocesan Monitor continues and I am glad to report that we now have two Monitors, a male, the Reverend David Coster, and a female, Ms Clare Ayers. The role of Monitor in our Diocese has changed since the establishment of the Ministry Standards Commission. First, the Diocesan Monitors no longer work on complaints made under Title D, against licensed ministers or office-holders in our church. But, secondly, the Monitors work on other matters such as, but not limited to:

- Complaints against persons in our church who are neither licensed ministers nor office-holders (and thus are not complaints for which Title D is relevant);
- Concerns that have been raised but not made the subject of a formal complaint;
- Situations of a conflictual character in which some kind of mediation is required.

Christian Unity

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called – that you might inherit a blessing (1 Peter 3:9-10)

The Call to Christian Unity, made in a striking way in the Lambeth Conference in 1920, remains a great Call, to ourselves as Anglicans and to all churches.

But the reality of global Christianity is captured in this paragraph in the document:

“The disunity of the Church is a continuing and damaging wound in the body of Christ. We regret that divisions between the baptised lead to estrangement: to a lack of mutual recognition of our sacraments and ministries and the abiding sadness of our inability to share Holy Communion together. Such division weakens the Church’s witness to the Gospel of reconciliation at a time when, in many parts of the world, government regulation, persecution and even terrorism make Christians vulnerable in their life and witness.”

Speaking to the Lambeth Conference in 2022, Cardinal Koch described the lack of unity, indeed the slowing down in recent decades of moves towards greater unity as an “ecumenical emergency.”

There are other emergencies in the world today, including the climate emergency, and on a list of priorities, perhaps “ecumenical emergency” does not motivate us. But consider this: if we are to be God’s church for God’s world, and to make a difference to that world, we need to shift the dial on division between human beings and to model reconciliation for a world prone to transform emergencies into wars.

Turning to our local situation, in May it was a blessing to have Archbishop Paul Martin, former Catholic Bishop of Christchurch, address our annual Clergy Conference. We wish Archbishop Paul well as he settles full-time into his role as Co-adjutor Archbishop of Wellington. Then, more recently, Teresa and I were delighted to be able to attend the installation of Bishop Michael Gielen, the new Catholic Bishop of Christchurch, on Saturday 9 July 2022. We look forward to working with Bishop Michael.

Meetings of Heads of Churches/Denominations here in Christchurch continue to be a life-giving experience as we meet and share what the Lord is doing in our midst.

Finally, under the heading of Christian Unity, I observe that we continue to work closely with the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand in six co-operating parishes: Waimate, Pukaki, Mackenzie, Hinds, Akaroa and Amuri.

Environment and Sustainable Development (2 related Calls)

But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home (2 Peter 3:13).

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called – that you might inherit a blessing (1 Peter 3:9-10).

In the course of our Synod we have opportunity to consider motions which relate to two themes at the conference, Environment and Sustainable Development.

I do not want to pre-empt the debate we will have about those motions by my remarks here, but it is appropriate to say that on our planet today, the nations of the world face huge challenges, perhaps the greatest we have ever known as humankind, as the climate changes and with it changes to the dynamics of growing food, supplying water and sustaining economies.

As our world changes we are seeing major wars and significant conflicts breaking out. The significance of climate change was an everyday reality at the conference as we experienced a sustained period of hot, dry, unEnglish weather while following news reports from New Zealand which spoke of storms and floods.

The Calls on the Environment and on Sustainable Development are loud calls, shouts from a distressed world to God's church. Will we hear them?

Mission and Evangelism

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

... in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence (1 Peter 3:15-16a).

In the Call on Mission and Evangelism there is a long list of specific calls. Here I list just the first four of them:

"4 Specific requests (The Calls)

4.1 Each diocese and every church to seek fervently to be renewed by the wonder and power of the good news of Christ.

4.2 Each diocese and every church to commit to prayer, listening and discernment, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to discern how to bear faithful witness to Christ and authentically proclaim the gospel. This to include praying for the Holy Spirit to work in hearts and minds so that the message of the gospel would be received and bear fruit.

4.3 In obedience to Christ's own charge, every church to commit itself to actions which purposefully present the good news of Christ so that all might hear the call of Christ and follow Him.

4.4 Every Christian joyfully to understand that they are a witness to Jesus Christ praying that through this at least one other person each year might come to faith and grow as a disciple."

In the context of hearing such calls in our Diocese, let's recall that at our last Synod we received and adopted a Diocesan Mission Action Plan (DMAP). Since then, we have worked in various ways on the implementation of that Plan, led by Mark Chamberlain who began working in the Diocese as the Archdeacon for Regeneration and Mission in February this year, and by Edwin Boyce in relation to Standing Committee's responsibilities as laid out by the DMAP.

Shortly we will hear in detail, and through multiple voices what has been happening, what is happening and what is going to be happening. It is exciting to learn of new developments as ministry units engage with the DMAP and as new possibilities for training and formation as missional, evangelistic disciples of Christ are planned. What you will soon hear lines up very well with the calls within the Lambeth Mission and Evangelism Call paper.

I look forward towards the end of the session to the opportunity to commission the first two Missional Coaches which our DMAP envisaged: the Reverend Doctor Carolyn Robertson (Shirley) and the Reverend Chris Ponniah (Burnside-Harewood).

The Regeneration of our Diocese in this decade is a possibility that becomes a probability as we engage with the challenge of mission and evangelism (winning new people to the way of Christ) and as we implement the DMAP which mean we change and improve our ways of being Anglican in the Diocese of Christchurch.

A couple of local ministry unit decisions are going to be important.

First, that each ministry unit itself has a DMAP charting out its own mission action plan.

Secondly, that within that plan is a plan for making disciples: for ways and means by which every parishioner has opportunity to learn and to mature in the way of Christ.

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)
2021	236,414 (from 52/58 ministry units)

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 and 2021, I give a specific number of ministry units who have replied.

Statistics help us to understand who we are as a Diocese. I ask each ministry unit to distribute and follow through with the age and gender survey which Edwin Boyce has set in motion, with survey material ready to take back home from this Synod.

Speaking of our state of health as a Diocesan family, it should also be mentioned in a Presidential Address that in 2022 we are facing a significant challenge securing vicars for vacant parishes. I am thankful as we head to the end of this year that the situation is not as urgently challenging as it was at the beginning of the year. Nevertheless for several parishes in the Diocese it is a matter of prayer and faith that the Lord will supply workers for the harvest.

A significant aspect of forward momentum towards Regeneration is intentionality about Discipleship which is the last heading for my address (apart from the Conclusion) and also the last Lambeth Call paper to be considered this morning.

Discipleship

The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:7-8)

I want to confess that I was not aware of an important decision of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in 2016, which the Call paper on Discipleship reports as follows:

“a Season of Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making (Jesus shaped life) was launched at the Anglican Consultative Council in Lusaka in 2016:

In light of the Gospel and theological imperative to make disciples, [we] recognize the need for every province, diocese and parish in the Anglican Communion to adopt a clear focus on intentional discipleship and to produce resources to equip and enable the whole church to be effective in making new disciples of Jesus Christ. (ACC-16 Resolution16.01).”

Clearly, thankfully, whether or not any of us were aware of this decision, Intentional Discipleship has been pursued in the Anglican world, including in our Diocese, for instance, through the process known as “3DM”. At the Lambeth Conference, Bishop Eleanor Sanderson, as Assistant Bishop of Wellington, spoke powerfully on discipleship, with illustrations from the experience of discipleship and missional communities in her diocese.

The Call paper also says this:

“4.2 We call on all those who lead churches to enable our gatherings for worship, alongside small groups, to be the place where we intentionally learn these things – gatherings where we are formed and transformed in our hearts, minds and spirits for Christ’s liberating and whole-of-life discipleship;

4.3 We call on our churches to work intentionally and creatively with young people so that they can enable this learning and transformation to take place for themselves and for the whole church;

4.4 We call on our seminaries, theological colleges and training programmes to give this learning about discipleship a central place in their programmes, so that all ordained and lay ministers, female and male, young and old, may be equipped to enable those they serve to learn these things;”

Again, these calls within this Call for Discipleship are perfectly aligned with the emphasis on Discipleship which we have been making in recent years.

Regeneration in our Diocese, growth and development of each current Anglican in our Diocese, learning and formation of every new Christian because we have evangelised is all about taking seriously the call to be disciples – to learn the way of Christ in a whole-of-life discipleship in which daily life is a daily walk with Jesus Christ.

In the presentation which follows, note the ways in which we are encouraging discipleship in our Diocese as we work on the implantation of the DMAP.

Conclusion

[some extempore summary remarks after the DMAP presentations and small group discussions which follow]

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 2022.*