

Standing Committee Report

Through 2021 the Standing Committee has engaged with many issues, some of which have been issues all churches in Aotearoa New Zealand have faced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We give thanks to God for the faithfulness of God and for the faithfulness of the members of Standing Committee through these challenging and unprecedented circumstances.

I give thanks to the Rev'd Dr Meg Harvey, and the Rev'd Dr Thomas Brauer and Ms Moka Ritchie who completed their term on Standing Committee, and I welcome the Rev'd Kofe Havea and the Rev'd Michael Brantley, and Mrs Corinne Haines who were elected to Standing Committee at Synod.

The other members of Standing Committee are: the Very Rev'd Lawrence Kimberley, the Rev'd Tony Kippax, Mrs Kirsty May, Mr Byron Behm and Mr David Prosser. The Diocesan Manager Mr Edwin Boyce is an ex officio member and attends the monthly meetings of Standing Committee and Mrs Heather Fraser records the minutes.

COVID has taught us new terminology; Zoom, social distancing, MIQ, QR codes, self-isolation, quarantine, bubbles, and a team of five million. We do things differently, wear masks, wash hands more often, cough and sneeze into our arms. What hasn't changed is the love God has for us and for the world in which we live.

An outcome of the pandemic which is pleasing is that many meetings, including alternating meetings of our major Committees/Boards, are now held by Zoom, saving travelling time and reducing the carbon footprint of the Diocese.

We continue to be faced with applications from parishes to draw down on invested capital to meet increasing general operating costs and building maintenance costs. Over sixty percent of matters Standing Committee has had to deal with in 2021 related to property and funds. Such matters are being decided with the mission, ministry and regeneration of the Diocese in mind.

Increasingly Standing Committee, and our Diocesan staff, have to deal with more and more compliance issues such as healthy homes requirements, privacy regulations, tenancy laws, health and safety, accounting reporting standards and the safeguarding of ministry (noting outcomes of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into abuse in care). It is fair to say that through 2020-21 our staff have been stretched beyond capacity.

Our 2021 Synod approved the adoption of our Diocesan Ministry Action Plan (DMAP). This was the work of a small team that drafted a plan for how the missio Dei can underpin specific missional actions and new directions as the Diocese seeks to be regenerated through this decade. Faithful participation in God's mission allows missional churches to:

1. grow in strength, as they trust the God who calls them (Ephesians 1:13-23),
2. grow in depth, bearing fruit as part of the true vine (John 15:1-11), and
3. grow in breadth, to reflect the community they live within (Acts 10).

Work has already started on the implementation of the DMAP assisted by the recent appointment of the Reverend Mark Chamberlain as Archdeacon for Regeneration and Mission.

Across the Diocese there are good signs that we have a shared understanding of the importance and urgency of regeneration – of drawing new generations of Christians into our church families, of finding new generations of leaders, lay and clerical. From that shared understanding, we are seeing renewed enthusiasm for action, including change to the way we are doing things and change to the structure and infrastructure of our ministry units. We have a challenging decade before us as we make changes necessary for the health of the Body.

Work among children, youth and young adults is vigorous and skilled as Diocesan staff facilitate training, events and support networks for staff in our ministry units.

On a sobering note, as we move from 2021 into 2022, we have around a quarter of our parishes with present or imminent vacancies for the position of vicar. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for our regeneration.

Other Diocesan staff lead high quality training and education for lay and ordained ministers from across our Diocesan regions: Canterbury, Westland and the Chatham Islands.

In November 2021, after nearly 11 years away from the centre of Christchurch following the 22 February 2011 earthquake, we moved the Anglican Centre back into the CBD. Our new building, Cardale House, at 95 Tuam St, recently strengthened and refurbished, is owned by the central city parish of St Michael's and All Angels. It is a joy and a privilege to be at the heart again of the largest city in our Diocese, and important for the Bishop's office to be close to our Cathedral.

The work of the Royal Commission has entailed considerable work in our Diocese locating files relating to cases and situations the Commission has sought information about. Understanding through engagement with the Commission that we have matters in our Diocese which have been insufficiently addressed in respect of acknowledgement that abuse has occurred and redress for survivors has prompted an ongoing work involving a small group which is developing proposals for consideration. This particular body of work will be an important focus for the Diocese and its Synod through 2022-2024.

+Peter Carrell
Bishop of Christchurch