

Dean's AGM Report for 26 March 2023

Dear friends in Christ – te whanau a te Karaiti

Warm greetings to you for this, my first Waiapu Cathedral Annual General Meeting!

We often finish with thanks, so let me change things up, and begin with them.

I am deeply grateful to the Cathedral family for the warmth and sincerity of your welcome in May last year, and that I address you this year as your Dean.

I am grateful to the staff and leadership – to Sukh our cleaner (whose home at Awatoto was badly affected by Gabrielle); to those who clean silver and arrange flowers; to those who tend our community garden; those who prepare morning tea and other refreshments; those who wash and iron our purificators and altar linen; to Wendy who keeps our kitchens orderly and stocked; to Janine who shows love and care to our young people at Godly Play, in the choir and on a Sunday; to Charlene who brings not only her office skills, but her faith to the role of Parish Administrator; to Anthony and the ever growing choirs (adults and Young People's) who together maintain our reputation for excellent Cathedral music; to those who have volunteered to be in the Cathedral and hosts and welcomers of the many visitors who pass through our doors; to Jenny as our Precentor, with all the experience and knowledge that she contributes; to Sue our Deacon who in her limited time with us each week is always undyingly willing and available to tackle all manner of things; to Dorothy whose memory of what has gone before frequently saves the many newbies on the team – and whose pastoral care is unceasing; to the other retired clergy who can't keep up with Dorothy, but whose support is equally welcome; to the vestry and wardens for their encouragement and involvement; to sound desk operators, readers, intercessors, liturgists, livestream operators, website managers, Facebook administrators.... Where do I stop? I am grateful to you, and I gave thanks to God.

For the record I arrived in May and moved into the most recent of the Cathedral's Deaneries, on Corry Avenue. I've been pleased to invite some of you there and look forward to finding more excuses to let you all be familiar with your Deanery.

The seasons of this year

The winter months were spent reorienting myself to Waiapu as a Diocese, and learning something of the unique role the Cathedral has as both a parish and the heart of the Diocese, and also a home for civic events. The Queen's memorial and the Earthquake commemoration are examples of the services we offer in that space. We also thanked and farewelled our administrator, Amy, who had taken a significant leadership role during Covid and the former Dean's sick leave.

During Spring we put effort into supporting the Ormond Chapel monthly service, we called Kerryn back into the Chairing role for the Earthquake Committee (see her report for details

of what happened next!), and got a new Eftpos machine that would accept Paywave too. Steffi spent a short time in the office with us, with some superb graphic design skills that saw our Christmas season advertising reach a whole new standard.

By the time summer came, we had refamiliarized ourselves with being open 7 days a week, welcoming visitors from cruise ships as well as domestic travellers, and had a Sanctuary flag to fly outside (thanks for arranging the long-term loan, Jenny!). We didn't expect a cyclone, but that's ok – our calling as a sanctuary in the city centre caters for both the unexpected as well as the planned. Charlene kindly joined us for 2 weeks before Christmas, and then had a prearranged months' holiday – which meant she had only been back for 3 weeks before the cyclone. That has made the learning curve very unpredictable, and I'm deeply appreciative of her maturity in wading through what is normal, and what is not. We are delighted to have you on the team, Charlene!

I have enjoyed taking opportunities to engage in the Civic space on your behalf – for example, meetings with the Mayors, speaking to Rotary, and blessing the Rissington Anzac sculpture. I intend to keep engaging in that space this year. I also intend to see the momentum maintained with our seismic related issues – we need to double check that the decisions we have made demonstrate accurate assessment of risks, and then we need to begin the process of identifying the options open to us, and deciding on the best of them. We will keep you informed.

My observations after 10 months

Our key strengths – our location (central), our ability to offer a warm welcome, our music

Our weaknesses – having an EPB according to the DSA, and our people resource - insufficient people to offer a welcome 7 days a week...

Our opportunities – being a sanctuary for locals and visitors; having a large building with good acoustics; the scope for adding lighting that would enhance the building; the scope for some additional services that would offer greater breadth/diversity

Our threats – decreasing resources, both people and money... How can each of us help change that? (e.g. invite people to come, and welcome our new members!)

Conclusion

All of which means that I am excited about what the future holds for us. There are challenges, yes – but there are also numerous possibilities and a huge scope for people to contribute their ideas and giftings. If you believe you have something to offer, please don't wait for me to dust off my crystal ball – let's arrange a time to meet and talk, and see how God is preparing us for the future together.

Arohanui,

Di

Very Rev'd Di Woods

Dean of Waiapu Cathedral