

## **Dean's Report to the AGM on 10 March 2024 – by the Very Rev'd Di Woods**

The 5 marks of mission widely adopted by the Anglican Church are sometimes described as Tell Teach, Tend, Transform and Treasure. I will use them as a framework for half of this AGM report to ensure we are considering the breadth of our Mission as we look back on the last year.

TELL-ing, or proclaiming the gospel, can be done in so many ways. We aim to worship well in word and song – my thanks to Anthony & the choirs, but proclaiming the gospel is also about the way we each live out our lives in the community, and as a Cathedral, we have ample opportunity to engage with people who are not members of our congregation. I am grateful to those who volunteer to host visitors, and to those who show compassion towards Samuel, and Stephen and some of our other friends who live on the streets. Also the ushers / safety wardens who facilitate events that take place in our Cathedral and become the public face of the Cathedral. Thank you all.

TEACH-ing, or discipleship, is about growing in our faith. Some of that happens on a Sunday morning, but 10 minutes a week is a rather insufficient diet. Elisabeth's Bible Study Group must surely be one of the longest running ones in the Diocese (or indeed province?) – and during Lent, we are blessed by having the Diocesan Ministry Educator in our midst. Deborah leads the Lenten Study for us – assisted by Howard on the weeks she is away – offering top quality theological education right here. It has been good to open this opportunity to smaller Anglican churches in our region, as well as to the Napier Inner City churches. And Janene continues to share her passion for teaching and supporting our young people – as does Pip for key events. Thank you!

TEND-ing, or nurturing, encompasses our pastoral care and what it means to be a member of our faith community. Dorothy Brooker is tireless in her leadership of this vital area of mission – but various Ministry Leaders are also excellent at providing care for their teams, for which I am most grateful. This area can also encompass rites of passage, and I have been able to spend several hours with each of the wedding couples that have been married under the Cathedral's auspices in the last year, as well as the pastoral care that is offered at the end of life – to all concerned. The Wardens report acknowledges some of the significant people now enjoying resurrected life.

TRANSFORM-ing unjust structures is often the work of the people. It includes eliminating violence and promoting peace. It is the engagement that each of you have in your own right that makes a difference at a local, national and international level... Some of you are wonderful at lobbying and petitioning – keep it up. We must also ensure justice and safety amongst our faith community too, and to that end, the Diocesan Safeguarding Training has been offered twice as we seek to have as many parishioners as possible trained.

TREASURE-ing creation. Our care for the environment and our stewardship of the earth can be as basic as LED lightbulbs and recycling properly, through to championing awareness around climate change and reducing carbon emissions. For a Cathedral located so close to the coast on low lying land, we need little motivation to consider the impacts of global warming, and Cyclone Gabrielle left little to the imagination. We were relatively unscathed with only some leaks at the Cathedral, and no damage to Ormond Chapel – but of course some of our people were impacted. This is an area of mission that deserves more urgent attention. While accepting the challenge to investigate more fully the feasibility and cost of solar panels on our roof, the seismic issues before us have given us cause to pause. More on those issues soon.

*The second half of this report picks up four areas deserving of further comment – Ormond Chapel, the people, finance and seismic related issues.*

**Ormond Chapel** deserves specific mention. It is of course a part of our parish and helps us achieve many of the five aspects of mission described above. We continue to offer monthly services, and on alternate months, the Young People's Choir ensure a lower average age, and a higher head count. It is often the preference for both weddings and funerals, and your vestry have been actively considering the ways we can maximise our use of this building. They have also attended to some overdue concerns about care and maintenance issues. I am keen to experiment with the Sunday 8am congregation meeting there in the winter, since it is easier to heat, but we need to remember the difficulty of accessibility for worshippers with mobility challenges.

**The People.** You are amazing. The Church is people - and this Church has amazing people. Thank you for being you. Thank you for the amazing mission and ministry performed by so many of you. The new Saturday morning reflective walking group is just the latest example. To those who have joined us in the last year – welcome! It's great to have you on board – especially as we enter one of the most exciting phases of this Cathedral's history. I hope we will soon produce a Cathedral Parish Prayer Directory (no street addresses) for those who have given permission for their phone number and email to be shared – fill in a Privacy Act form today if you are worried about missing out! It will ordinarily only be available to those who are listed in it.

A particular shout out to the **staff, wardens and clergy**. Charlene brings so many gifts and skills to her role, and we love the complimentary nature of giftings that God arranges for this parish. Anthony continues to go 'above and beyond' time and again. Most of you know him as the Director of Music, but his skills and talents extend well beyond those of a musician – carpentry, furniture shifting, electronics expertise, administrative gifts, and above all his humour... Wendy is often found busying herself around the property, and plugging all sorts of gaps. Sue John had big shoes to fill as a new People's Warden, but has done a superb job and always has a list for me when we meet! Linda and Richard have been careful to divide their role appropriately, with only one attending vestry meetings for example – but have been able to offer between them a breadth of insight and expertise that has certainly served me well, and I trust has served the whole parish well as a result. I also want to acknowledge our cleaner, Sukh, whose home in Awatoto was badly damaged by the Cyclone, and yet he continued to serve us with his usual generosity, grace and flexibility. Revd's Sue Matthews and Jenny Chalmers both left during 2023 and I reiterate here the thanks that were expressed to each of them at their respective farewells. To Revd's Jenny Beale, Deborah Broome, Dr Howard Pilgrim, and more recently Dr Helen Jacobi: thank you each for your various contributions. And then there's Rev'd Dorothy Brooker. As I said to the Bishop recently, we go out of business without Dorothy. Kia kaha e hoa ma!

'People' for me also includes networking, which I engage in on your behalf beyond the Anglican church. That includes the ecumenical Napier Ministers' Association, the Inner City Churches group, a Rotary group, regular meetings and engagement with the Mayor, participation in the Napier Business group, the Art Deco Trust...and so the list goes on. I seek to put the Cathedral on the radar for all these people.

**Finance and Seismic Strengthening** each have committees of their own, and reports of their own. I don't want to double up, but I do want to add some comments 'from where I sit'. Remember all reports are available on our website if you've not read them on the noticeboard.

Our giving last year went up by 6.5%. Well done, and a huge thank you to those who increased their giving, and to those who have joined the parish and chosen to contribute financially too. The PayWave machine is also proving fruitful and has more than doubled the donations we receive from visitors. Despite such generosity, we are in **a precarious financial position**. Our treasurer will speak to her report shortly, but both she and I are concerned about working to a deficit budget. Our concerts generate some income, but our customers find the building cold, the pews somewhat uncomfortable, the catering facilities deficient – and the ablutions are hopelessly inadequate. This year the Napier Civic Choir have opted not to make any bookings here. During the last year we also hosted civic services, large worship gatherings (such as the Rununganui) and regular acts of worship. Some of those gatherings generate no income at all: that's the nature of being a Cathedral, and it's why the Diocese give us a grant towards repairs and maintenance (R&M) each year. We continue to offer ourselves as a concert venue, and seek donations from visitors, but the rest is up to you and I to give our tithes and offerings, and between us pay for the running of this parish – employing people, and maintaining a rather large complex. To put it in perspective, every one of us would need to double our giving to erase the deficit of our budget – or we need to double the number of people making regular offerings.

Can we cut costs further? We have farewelled our curate, Sue – as well as our Precentor, Jenny, who had been tasked with transitioning the Cathedral across to a new Dean. We will not be replacing either of them – the Diocesan grants that covered their costs have been rescinded and we cannot afford a second priest. The Diocesan R&M grant is already committed to repaying the cost of the roof protection barrier (completed in early 2022) – through until 2030. We have indicated to the Diocese that we will not renew our current insurance – that will reduce our \$70k premium, and get us closer to a zero budget – but we can only defer all non-critical R&M if this building's days are numbered. If the building is to be strengthened, we need to increase the budget to accommodate the R&M that it requires. The only remaining budget items large enough to cover such a deficit, are personnel.

And so to the future of this building. In the midst of the ordinary, there has always been one issue that can only be described as extraordinary, and that is the **seismic status of this building**. Increasingly that issue has been on my agenda most weeks, and we are fast approaching the time when decisions need to be made about our future – but I believe they need to be made with our current financial position clearly in mind. Today is not the day for those decisions, but we may well put out a survey soon, to gauge your views.

For our newer members, since a Detailed Seismic Assessment (DSA) was done in 2012, we have known that this building is 'Earthquake Prone'. I arrived in 2022 knowing that a second DSA had been done in 2018, but it was still subject to peer reviews (slowed by Covid lockdowns of course), and was not available to me at the time of my appointment as Dean. The vestry of 2022 spent some time dreaming about the possibilities for the future use of the Cathedral – how it could be developed to engage more successfully with our community. We cited the need for a commercial kitchen, a hall or lounge, modernised and expanded ablutions, accessibility (flat access) from more doors, the ability to heat it properly and so on. We quickly realised that the **current facilities are not fit for purpose** – partially due to the absence of the old hall. Knowing that strengthening would be needed, we began to envisage how that strengthening might be a huge blessing to us as we could make some wonderful modifications at the same time. The figure of \$10m had been optimistically touted, but never checked. The developments of 2023 include our listing as a Tier 1

Heritage Building on Napier's Long Term Plan, and the realisation that any hope of the necessary strengthening costing around \$10m were very ambitious. How do I see all of this? Only this year I heard that we sit right on top of the Awanui Fault line, as shown on the GNS website. At a personal level I question the moral and ethical wisdom in spending large amounts of money on a building that was not built with the latest EQ resistant foundations, when we now know we are right on a fault line. Additionally, when we consider our current financial position, I cannot see why we would be helped by strengthening the building "as is" when we can't afford to run it now.

Once the cost of strengthening becomes prohibitive, we turn to consider the other two options – to demolish and rebuild, or to leave and find a new site. There is no guarantee that the necessary consents will be granted for demolition, or (even if we had the money), for improvements and modifications to be made during strengthening. Lawrence refers to this in his report. Some decisions rest with the Council, some with the WBDT, some with the Bishop, and some with us. One possibility is to submit the request for demolition consents and see what the answer is. It will cost time and money to make those applications, but would give us certainty about that option.

Your new vestry will be tasked with helping lead us through some big decisions. Pray for them. Whichever option is selected, there will be the need for us to vacate the building – either for the strengthening work, or the demolition, or because we're "moving house"... Building costs escalate year after year, so once we have determined the way forward, there is nothing to be gained by delaying, in my view. I remain in conversation with those who oversee St Paul's Presbyterian Church, since that could be a useful place to worship temporarily at least. The Vicar of Taradale and I also brainstorm about the possibility of a "Greater Napier" parish one day – perhaps housed in a new Cathedral built on this site? These times are both daunting and exciting. I wish I could somehow read my 2025 AGM Report now, and see what some of the answers are going to be!

### **Other matters**

Donation towards Future Building Costs: I am delighted to announce a donation of \$100 000 from Bruce Carpenter in memory of Tom and Megan Carpenter – to be used for any future building costs, whether demolition, strengthening, or relocation. Whatever option we take, there will be huge costs involved, and to have such a significant unsolicited gift is really encouraging. All the fund-raising experts talk about the importance of a launch, but I have never followed those fund raising manuals, so if anyone else would like to make a contribution to the Future Building Fund, please go ahead. Any donation is of course eligible for a receipt, which in most instances can be used for a rebate from IRD. If you make the donation by 31 March, you won't have long to wait for your rebate... just saying.

### **Conclusion**

So my friends, there are many people and activities to celebrate in the life of this parish – but also some big challenges requiring big decisions that need to be determined. Thank you for your support in so many different ways. As you pray for me, know I also pray for you.

In Christ,

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