



ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

SUMMARY OF SYNOD 20-21 NOVEMBER 2020

Synod reassembled at Holy Trinity Cathedral on 20 and 21 November 2020 to resume the Second Session of the Fifty-Sixth Synod of the Diocese, adjourned after September's one-day Zoom meeting. It was clear that everyone enjoyed the opportunity to meet in person after a year which had featured mainly online interactions and Zoom meetings.

Friday morning began with a service in St Mary's with Bishop Ross presiding. The preacher was the Venerable Dr Lyndon Drake, Archdeacon of Tāmaki Makaurau, Te Pīhopatanga o Te Tai Tokerau, and his sermon proved to be a cornerstone of the conversation for the rest of the morning. His wero or challenge to our Pākehā diocese, laid down through stories of different kinds was that there is a need to talk more and to listen more to the Māori Church. The text of his sermon is available [here](#).

A key message was that our histories are intertwined. Although the creation of the three-tikanga structure had given autonomy and equal status to Pākehā, Pasifika and Māori communities within the Anglican Church, each remained deeply involved with the others. The waiata that followed reinforced that the strands of Māori and Pākehā history in the Church were interwoven. It also flowed through to the first major session of the Synod where three speakers from each of Te Tai Tokerau and the Diocese of Auckland offered their reflections on what tikanga partnership meant.

In the Bishop's Charge (presented in the September Zoom session), Bishop Ross had stressed the importance of good engagement with Tikanga partners and had outlined the important role of the Partnership Commission. He spoke further to this now and confirmed that a joint partnership group had been established between the Diocesan Council and Komiti Tumuaki of Te Tai Tokerau.

Bishop Kito spoke about how he belonged to the Diocese of Auckland where he was ordained and to Holy Trinity Cathedral where he had been installed as pīhopa. His Bishop's chair was there and it was a place where he was always welcome. The stained glass windows, especially those of Shane Cotton, placed Old Testament texts in a vividly Māori setting, while the gift of his crozier by the Diocese had been very significant. "We belong to all places," he said, "because we are Christian."

Other speakers also stressed the importance of working together – "We must do this more. We must learn from each other. Being together is important." In 1991 a new structure for the Church had been established that might have been seen as a repudiation of any past oppression. Now each of our churches needed to provide a safe place to connect and listen as we sought a new way forward in which any earlier confrontation had gone and there were encouraging pointers to the future. We are all te whānau o te Karaiti – like two hands with fingers interlaced (not held tightly in a fist). We are called to unite and to flourish – there should be no barriers to how we speak to each other as the partnership develops. Instead, we should together remember the command to "Tend my sheep, feed my sheep."

The Diocesan Council then spoke to its report on the past year, a year significantly affected by COVID-19. Tributes were paid to the way ministry units had presented online services and set up telephone trees and other ways of maintaining contact. The Diocese had also been able to reduce payments by ministry units during this period. Activities undertaken by the Diocesan Development Fund were outlined as well as the support for Habitat For Humanity. A climate crisis plan had been adopted, a workshop held to champion sustainability practices at parish level and upgrading of the Diocesan archives had been approved.

The formal business followed with the passing of three bills. One of these was a replacement for the Faculties Statute while the others amended current statutes.

While some of the earlier motions submitted were withdrawn as they were no longer relevant, eleven remained to be considered by the Synod, a number of these relating to social justice issues.

- Synod endorsed the work of PARS (People at Risk Solutions) which works with those released from prison, at-risk rangatahi, deportees from Australia, and their whānau to assist them to integrate into the community. PARS' request for funding was well supported and referred to the Diocesan Council for action.
- Housing became a significant topic for discussion. One motion encouraged ministry units to explore how they might work collaboratively to find solutions for those described as 'insecurely housed'. In particular, it asked the Diocesan Council to facilitate efforts for those units wishing to repurpose land and buildings for respite, transitional or long-term housing. Another motion acknowledged the significant contribution being made by community housing providers to address issues of emergency and transitional housing and called on the Government to take steps to implement the proposals of the Homelessness Action Plan (presented in February 2020) in order to address the issues outlined. Both were passed unanimously.
- There was also acknowledgement of the financial distress being suffered by many, especially children, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government was requested to give urgency to implementing the report of the Welfare Advisory Group 'Whakamana Tāngata – Restoring Dignity to Social Security in NZ' that had been presented to it in February 2019.
- Other motions addressed issues of the effects of climate change and built on the work being done by the group ADJust. The importance of establishing a procurement programme that would inform reports and proposals for building repairs and construction projects was highlighted – and supported. Similarly, the Synod supported Government initiatives to have mandatory, publicly-available climate change risks disclosed by companies, banks and other bodies.
- Following an earlier survey on how ministry units were meeting the needs of disabled people, the Diocesan Council was asked to develop a policy that would ensure disabled people could participate fully in church life.

Other motions acknowledged the contribution of Licensed Shared Ministry to the life and mission of the Diocese over a period of 20 years. Several speakers praised the ministry this had provided in many areas, particularly where it had been difficult to sustain ministry units. The establishment of the Anglican Community of St Mark as an expression of diversity within the Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia was also acknowledged.

Throughout all this business, there were other presentations. In particular, the work of the Selwyn Foundation was outlined. Board Chair David Cunliffe and CEO Garry Smith provided a vision of future planning to build further on what had been achieved to date.

During a period of general debate, several speakers drew attention to the statistics which showed a significant decline in church attendance and baptisms. Church populations were significantly slanted to over-65s and were predominantly Pākehā. The need for the Diocese to have a missional approach was brought to the fore.

The efforts of the Synod to include te reo were praised and The Rev'd Jacynthia Murphy provided everyone with a quick and enjoyable lesson in correct pronunciation of Māori vowels!

Throughout the Synod we were blessed to have Archdeacon Lyndon Drake as Chaplain. He was ably supported by Te Tai Tokerau evangelist, Keri-Ann Hokianga whose homily spoke of her own experience in moving from the corporate world to missional work in South Auckland. It was too easy, she said, to say we want to endorse change, but for nothing to happen! Taking small steps would help to begin the change process.

Synod closed just after lunch on Saturday with a motion of thanks.