

## Christchurch Diocesan Synod 2017 Report

Synod (a governance body, comprising elected lay members plus incumbent priests from all ministry units in the Diocese, plus youth representatives) began with Eucharist in the Transitional Cathedral on Thursday evening 7<sup>th</sup> September, and convened at St Christopher's, Avonhead, all day Friday and Saturday.

The fate of **Christ Church Cathedral** was the topic on everyone's radar, evidenced by the presence of a significant media contingent on-site. Also, unusual in the Cathedral discussions were brief addresses by Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel and Christchurch earthquake recovery minister Nicky Wagner.

Andrew, our vicar, introduced a late proposal to add Ivor McChesney's alternative design to the Cathedral options, but this was rejected in early discussions.

The original **three Cathedral options** remained:

- **"Reinstatement"** – Essentially what the Cathedral Working Group proposed, and what the Government, Council, and GCBT are willing to partially fund, fundraise, and legislate for; with the church's financial contribution limited to the insurance proceeds. This option retains as much of the old building as possible while adding base isolation, strengthening to 100% of the latest code, heating, and sympathetic functional improvements to the interior.
- **"New Build"** – Demolish/deconstruct the existing building and build something inspiring and new within the insurance proceeds available.
- **"Gifting to the people of New Zealand"** – Give the land and building to the crown along with some, if not all, of the insurance proceeds.

Following the opportunity to ask questions of a panel of subject matter experts, general discussions on this subject proceeded cordially and in a dignified atmosphere of prayer and respect. Many views were shared.

The question was ultimately decided in one (secret) ballot, with the "Reinstatement" option gaining a simple majority (55%) of votes.

Church Property Trustees' dedicated team managing the **Earthquake Recovery Program** reported considerable progress: many rebuild and restoration projects

have been completed, and that the full program should be finished by the end of 2019 (one year behind their original schedule). Our parish's hall is one of the last properties on the list due to our ambitious *Building Our Future* proposal.

The **Diocese-wide mission target** (contributed via the Anglican Mission Board) was confirmed unchanged at \$255,000. Our parish supports this with some of our mission projects. In 2016, however, only \$220,000 was achieved.

**Diocesan finances** have another break-even budget, however there is always less available than desired to fully fund ministry. The General Trust Estate, which supplements Parish contributions, is slowly being built back up.

The draft General Synod working group report outlining a possible "Way Forward" concerning the  **blessing of same-sex marriages**  was discussed briefly. Submissions on the draft close later this year, and a special one-day Synod on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018 will consider the final report in time for our Synod's views to be conveyed to General Synod, which meets in early May 2018. Anything resulting from this process will undergo a 3-year review/ratification/appeal cycle prior to implementation.

Revd Stephanie Robson presented an overview of her **research report** on the state of the Diocese: "Trends and Perspectives" in respect of **the Anglican Church's place in our community**. It paints a sobering picture. The "figures show significant decline and chart movement of the Anglican church from the centre of society to its margins." The report's general recommendation is to "take stock, to do things differently, to think about the legacy we are leaving, and for whom." It also presents a list of specific recommendations.

Other key motions and business items of note:

- Updates and clarifications to the rules for **Synod youth membership** and speaking rights.
- **Amalgamation** of Belfast-Redwood and Bishopdale parishes was approved.
- Phil Trotter encouraged parishes to be more serious about **discipleship**.

Hugh Mould / David Prosser  
(Parish Lay Synod representatives)