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BACKGROUND

The Synod passed the following resolution at the 2022 annual session:

- 32 THE PROVISION OF ORDAINED MINISTRY (Synod 2022)
Moved by The Rev'd Gwilym Henry-Edwards
Seconded by The Rev'd David Covington-Groth

Leave was granted to move the motion in amended form:

Synod acknowledges and supports the Diocesan Vision as presented to this Synod, and notes:

- a) the need to provide ordained ministry for Anglican faith communities;
 - b) the increasing cost of providing full-time stipendiary clergy;
 - c) the increasing number of parishes unable to pay full time stipends;
 - d) the number of vacancies for parish ministry;
 - e) the shortage of appropriately educated and trained clergy;
 - f) the shortage of clergy available for locum tenens ministry;
- and therefore, requests Diocesan Council to consult widely and to prepare a discussion paper that reviews and develops a variety of options for the provision of ordained ministry, with this paper being presented for discussion at the next session of Synod.

Following conversations with the proposer and seconder of this Motion to clarify their intent, and with clergy and bishop's within and beyond the Diocese of Adelaide I offer the following summary / general tenor of those conversation as a starting point for ongoing discussion in response to this Motion.

INTRODUCTION

The Motion above proposed that Synod 2023 requests Diocesan Council to explore '*a variety of options for the provision of ordained ministry*' in the Diocese of Adelaide. However, the provision of ordained ministry is only one facet of a broader, highly complex conversation regarding the ongoing provision of ministry in general across the Diocese of Adelaide.

When Bishop Short arrived in South Australia in 1847 he used the resources he had to establish parishes after the English model, with parish priests living in local communities which in turn provided them with a stipend. Essentially, 176 years later, this is the primary

model still embraced in the Diocese of Adelaide. However, society has changed, and where once Adelaide was known as the City of Churches for its religious tolerance and freedom, with prolific, active church communities, today the Christian church is a shadow of its former self, with little voice into wider society.

In his speech to Synod, the Rev'd Gwilym Henry-Edwards acknowledged that this Motion was one of support and encouragement. He also recognised and affirmed that fulfilling God's mission is the work of the whole people of God. Therefore, the whole people of God, clergy and laity share the responsibility to provide support and leadership to *Anglicans, individuals and communities, large gatherings and small, congregations and home groups.*

However, 'church' and 'change' are not necessarily comfortable partners. The Rev'd David Covington-Groth acknowledged this in his speech, seconding the Motion *It is time for synod to engage with the future of the diocese and start making some hard decisions, some of which people will not like. But if we are to be Adelaide Anglicans Flourishing and United in God's love we actually need to engage in the conversation that will enable this to occur and not fear the changes that may result.*

Endorsing this Motion, the Synod encouraged *Diocesan Council, and the wider diocese, to think outside the box, to explore the unexplored, to dream, to ponder and maybe try the untried. To be imaginative and innovative, pastoral, and sensitive, responsive to the Holy Spirit, who, if there is a willingness, will take us to where God wants us to be.*

In affirming the Diocesan Vision to *'Grow in Discipleship, Connect in and with communities, Advocate and work together for Social Justice and Care for creation and one another'* the Synod approved a framework that provides focus and direction as this next season of God's mission unfolds.

The Motion to explore the provision of Ordained Ministry may appear to be straightforward. However, this is only one facet of a highly complex issue – the faithful fulfilment of God's Mission in the Diocese of Adelaide at this point in God's time. A response requires a multi-faceted approach.

In 2022 the Archbishop Justin Welby said, "Do what you can with the resources you have." Essentially this lies at the heart of addressing the complexity.

THE DECLINE IN PARISH CAPACITY TO PROVIDE A FULL-TIME STIPEND:

The Diocese of Adelaide, and many of its parishes, is at a crossroads. The NCLS research indicates that where there was once flourishing multi-generational communities of faith, today Adelaide Anglicans comprises primarily aging, shrinking congregations which can no longer sustain a stipend, or even a % of a stipend without an additional source of income, such as Thrift Shops and building hire. As has been witnessed through the Covid-19 pandemic, these alternative sources of income cannot be relied upon.

Whilst people are deeply attached to church buildings, and a number have historic significance, many churches no longer meet the needs of today's communities of faith, are

costly to operate on a day-to-day basis, and require maintenance work beyond the capacity, or exercise of wise stewardship of most congregations.

Prior to advertising a vacancy for a clergy person, a parish must be able to prove it can sustain a stipend at the appointment level for three years. It is the practise of this diocese to request the Synod Office complete a Financial Health check. This gives an indication of previous financial performance, and an indication of future capacity. In addition, it has become critical to not only complete a Financial Health Check, but to also undertake a Property Health Check. Sadly, there have been some painful conversations with parishes as serious and expensive maintenance matters have been uncovered that are challenging ministry and future viability.

Whilst the Bishop's Office and the Synod Office can work with a parish to explore alternative approaches to sustain flourishing ministry, ultimately the Diocesan Ordinances require parishes to make final decisions. When congregations are in grief, shock, and denial at the severity of problems identified, they can choose not to change.

Grief is a process; it is very real in both the life of a parish and its people. Care and prayer are needed to support change.

However, despite the challenges faced by parishes, some have had the courage to step into a new future and Diocesan Council have had the courage to support these changes.

For example:

In May 2022 the Parish of Seacliff, after an extensive period of prayer and reflection made the decision to close.

In 2022 the Parish of the Holy Redeemer Ingle Farm was deemed unsafe. The congregation reluctantly relocated to St Augustine of Canterbury Church at Para Hills. Initially they continued to worship as separate congregations. They are now worshipping and working together for a flourishing future.

In June 2023, following considerable consultation, the Parishes of Gawler, and St Francis Gawler chose to merge. Despite differing worship styles and breadth of theological perspective across the three congregations, the parishes chose to work together.

The Parish of Modbury, and Golden Grove have merged. Modbury was a strong, well-resourced parish. Golden Grove knew that to continue to be a flourishing community of faith they needed to change. After significant consultation, and a time of intentional Sunday worship together the two independent vestries voted unanimously to merge.

Diocesan Council have supported and encouraged a potential new ministry model in the middle north involving the Parishes of Elizabeth, Elizabeth Downs, Salisbury, and Parafield Gardens. The heart of the proposal being the use of existing assets and resources in a new way. This process is ongoing, with two of the parishes eager to move forward and two still uncertain about stepping into something new. Prayer and discernment will continue.

Diocesan Council has also been engaged in some Blue Sky thinking as it considers possibilities in other areas of the diocese and has approved the appointment of a Flourishing Parishes Facilitator to enable some of this change.

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION OF ORDAINED CLERGY TO THE DIOCESE OF ADELAIDE

The pool of available clergy across the Anglican Church of Australia in general is diminishing. Vocations are reducing. Opportunities to serve are limited, often in direct response to reduced full time appointments. The ordained life is more complex than in previous generations with the primary call of the ‘cure of souls’ often in tension with the day-to-day functioning of parish life. *"Ministry is a demanding role requiring multiple skills and competencies. Maintaining balance and boundaries and developing supports are essential for effective ministry, particularly for ministers who are the sole stipendiary workers in their parish or chaplaincy"* (Ministry Wellbeing 2023) Most clergy will articulate that they are tired and stressed.

This environment is not conducive to recruitment.

A decline in income across parishes has created a situation where once a full-time stipend was assured this is no longer the case. Most clergy have families to support, all clergy have financial commitments, no matter what age or stage of life. Most clergy cannot afford to accept a less than full stipend.

The inability to provide a full-time stipend package impacts directly on the recruitment and retention of clergy from within and beyond the diocese.

Anecdotally there has been the idea that the cost of living in South Australia is lower than the rest of the country. The current cost of living and housing crisis have seen Adelaide benchmarked alongside Melbourne. This adage no longer stands.

When speaking with clergy beyond South Australia, they often comment that ‘it’s a long way away’, and they have never visited. This creates a sense of geographic isolation.

These factors pose significant challenge to recruiting clergy for vacancies.

For Information: Base Stipend Comparison from the metropolitan Dioceses in Australia.

Date	Diocese	Base Stipend
1/1/2023	Adelaide	\$60109
1/1/2022	Brisbane	\$69771
1/1/2023	Perth	\$65945
1/5/2023	Sydney	\$72980

Note: In addition, clergy also receive a range of allowances including provision of housing or an allowance commensurate with the area in which they are living, travel, costs for retreats, clergy conference, professional development, supervision etc. These additional allowances

are reviewed and approved annually by the appropriate Diocesan Council and are reasonably consistent across Dioceses.

SHORTAGE OF CLERGY FOR LOCUM MINISTRY

The effect of the inability to provide full time stipends for parish ministry directly impacts the need for Locum ministry. However, as the number of vacant parishes grow, the demand for locum, and long-term Locum ministry becomes more and more difficult to fulfil.

The majority of clergy providing Locum ministry have retired, however the demands are such that they are serving, usually part time, for very long periods. Many for over twelve months. Some retired clergy want to continue to serve beyond the retirement age of 70years, however others feel obliged because ministry is a calling and where there is a need they feel obliged to serve God and God's people.

Different models of ministry which effectively reduce the number of parishes but increase the availability of well equipped Lay and Clergy leadership, working in Teams will ease this burden.

FORMATION & TRAINING FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY

Having spoken to the proposer and seconder of this Motion they have clarified that while conversation from the floor of Synod also included Formation and Training for ordained ministry, this was not the intent of the Motion.

The Formation and training programmes for each diocese are determined by the Diocesan Bishop or Archbishop. The Formation programme and Theological Education requirements are reviewed regularly. St Barnabas College' membership of the University of Divinity has opened theological education opportunities not available to the diocese under the previous academic provider.

The Diocese of Adelaide uses the TEAC (Theological Education in the Anglican Communion) Grids for guidance to ensure a comprehensive programme and standard of Theological Education and Formation.

The Diocese of Adelaide is a part of an active Ministry Formation network across several Anglican Dioceses. This enables a level of benchmarking in respect to training and formation which in turn ensures when clergy want to move across diocesan boundaries their training and formation is acceptable in another diocese. This is important for recruitment and retention of clergy.

However, in what is often referred to as 'the good old days' clergy were trained residentially. Scholarships, or part scholarships were awarded. Trainee clergy lived and learned in community, in preparation to serve in community. Costs associated with academic study were minimal. On ordination, appointment to an assistant curacy was the norm. In some situations, a newly ordained clergyperson might be expected to serve two assistant curacies, or even three, before being appointed to a sole position.

Today, those who enter the Ministry Discernment process are faced with little or no financial support often accumulating debt to fund study; rising costs for academic study to complete a basic theological education, the need to earn an income, and a requirement to be active in a ministry formation programme that is both parish and diocesan based. These demands are significant, and for some they are insurmountable despite a strong sense of call.

Once ordained, finding and funding placements for assistant curacies that provide the appropriate opportunities for ministry praxis, putting into practise all that has been learned during formation, are severely limited.

This is an area where exploration of a different approach to using resources, for example scholarships, and paid internships may encourage further exploration of a vocation to ordained ministry.

However, despite these challenges, in June 2023 the Diocese of Adelaide has the following numbers of people in the various stages of the Ministry Discernment Process.

Enquiry:

Making initial enquires about process and undertaking some directed reading.

13 people

Exploration:

Intentionally learning more about ordained ministry prior to committing to a formal discernment process.

4 people

Formal Ministry Discernment:

Undertaking several interviews, psychological assessment, medical assessment and attending a Ministry Discernment Event

1 person

Formation:

Having been formally discerned as having a potential call to ordained ministry, or in their diaconal year participating in an intentional Ministry Formation programme. This programme has three areas of formation: individual, parish or ministry base & diocesan.

Year 1 Formation - 1 person withdrew earlier this year.

Clergy in their first year of ordination as Deacon.

2 people, one being from a South Sudanese congregation.

Ministry Praxis:

Clergy who are permanent deacons or newly ordained priests. Now serving in curacies and reflecting on the integration of their formation and training with day-to-day ministry experience

2 people. Both priests.

Ministry Support:

Clergy in first solo appointments being intentionally mentored and supported by senior clergy.

1 person

Further information regarding the Ministry Discernment process is available on request.

Recommended Reading: Truly Called? Vocation in the Anglican Church (of Australia)

By The Rt Rev'd Bradly Billings

Available from Broughton Publishing

THE OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND ADVANTAGES OF LAY LEADERSHIP OF CONGREGATIONS.

The church is the Whole People of God. Therefore, leadership of the church is the call and responsibility of Laity and Clergy. Serving together we become the Body of Christ.

The Diocese of Adelaide has had a default 'priest centric' perception in respect to parish leadership. The Anglican tradition requires priests for sacramental ministry, this has often created a silo effect where expectations are placed upon the clergy to undertake and/or lead all parish activity, creating a perceived two-tier leadership perspective. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the gap in well-equipped and trained Lay Leadership.

Well equipped Team ministry ensures laity can be full participants in the day-to-day life of the church. Laity are to be encouraged to use all the resources available, both within a parish and beyond to grow in their faith.

The Establishment of the Community of Learning provides opportunities for the development of discipleship and Lay Leadership.

A Licensed Lay Ministry training programme, reflecting the nature of lay licensing would provide opportunity for the development of those holding Bishop's licenses.

DIFFERENT MODELS OF MINISTRY

Each Diocese in the Anglican Church of Australia has its individual ministry dynamics, history, culture, demography, geography, approaches to theology and ecclesiology. These factors all influence the models of ministry that have developed in a specific area. While there is some benefit in exploring what is happening in other dioceses, it is important to recognise the unique needs of this Diocese.

For the past 3+ years the Archbishop has been encouraging parishes to find ways of working together. This has had varying levels of success. More radical change is essential for parishes to flourish into the future.

There is no one single answer to the crossroads we are experiencing. However, there are opportunities e.g., Team Ministry, with lay and clergy leadership, partnerships in ministry across parishes, and especially with AnglicareSA and schools, Pioneer Ministry, creative

connectivity to the community, developing ministry hubs and using assets and resources to sustain Teams of laity and clergy which also potentially, provide training opportunities and assistant curacies for vocations.

These suggestions are not new and will take courage to embrace. As the Rev'd Gwilym Henry-Edwards said in his speech to Synod *'Does the Diocese of Adelaide have the courage to think outside the box, to explore the unexplored, to dream, to ponder and maybe try the untried?'*

IN SUMMARY

- ✓ Leadership of the church is the call and responsibility of Laity and Clergy in partnership.
- ✓ It is time to courageously consider new ministry configurations, such as mergers and partnerships that enable the pooling of resources to enable stipends for multi-disciplinary ministry teams including, for example Priests, Deacons, Interns / trainees, Family ministry, Residential Aged Care ministry.
- ✓ Laity and Clergy are to be encouraged to use the valuable resources (formal and informal) that St Barnabas College can offer through the Community of Learning and the University of Divinity.
- ✓ A comprehensive programme of intentional ministry development for Laity who hold Bishop's licenses will enhance and support Lay leadership.
- ✓ It takes courage to dream, innovate, embrace change, and be willing to explore new and/or different models of ministry.

MOVING FORWARD:

This is God's church and God's mission.

As theologian Karl Barth is often quoted as saying 'the language of theology must change for each succeeding generation'. Maybe, the approach to ecclesiology is the same.

The Motion to explore the provision of Ordained Ministry may appear to be straightforward. However, this is only one facet of a highly complex issue – the faithful fulfilment of God's Mission in the Diocese of Adelaide at this point in God's time.

A response to this Motion requires a multi-faceted approach. In 2022 Archbishop Justin Welby said, "Do what you can with the resources you have." Essentially this lies at the heart of addressing the complexity.

POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONVERSATION:

1. Encourage parish mergers/collaborations/partnerships to create full time appointments.
2. Review the remuneration package to make it more competitive.
3. Provide scholarships which enable theological study to be undertaken.
4. Encourage the training of lay people to lead worship and preach.

5. Establish Missional Communities, particularly in areas of new growth e.g.; Northern corridor
6. Develop a '*ministry hub and spoke structure*' of existing parishes, supported a by Team comprising lay and ordained leadership.