

2024 President's Address to Synod

Welcome to the third session of the 45th synod of the Diocese of Adelaide.

We meet on the land of the Kurna people. This is God's creation that the Kurna people inhabited and cared for tens of thousands of years. When the European settlers came, the land wasn't given to them or sold to them. The settlers just occupied it. That's a fact. Acknowledging that fact is important. This is the land of the Kurna people, and I pay respect to their elders past and present, and their ongoing connection to the land.

Welcome to our meeting of the Synod here at the Starplex complex. I was here in May for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of Trinity college, and on that day, there were about 5000 people gathered. This school is an extraordinary success story and a gift to the communities of the North of the Diocese.

Synod

I have said in previous addresses to this gathering that the word *synod* is made up of two Greek words. They are *syn* meaning 'together', and *hodos* meaning 'road' or 'way'. Put together into the word *synod* the meaning is, 'on the way together' or 'together on the road'. That echoes what we read in the gospels where Jesus was with his disciples 'on the road' (e.g. Luke 24.32). It echoes the description of the Christians in the book of the Acts of the Apostles as people of 'the way' (e.g.9.2).

In our Diocese we tend to use the word *Synod* to describe our incorporated association. Our formal name is the Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide of the Anglican Church of Australia Incorporated. That's why the office at 18 King William Road North Adelaide is called the *Synod office*.

We also use the word *Synod* as a short-hand way of describing a meeting of the members of this incorporated association. So we might say, 'synod this year is at Gawler'.

Over the past twelve months or so it has become clear to me that actually the word *Synod* describes more than a gathering of the Diocese to consider reports, legislation and motions, and more than the name of our incorporated association.

The word *Synod* is a description of our life together as disciples of Jesus in the Diocese of Adelaide. We are *synod*. We are disciples together on the road or together on the way. We are disciples of Jesus together on the road with Jesus. The road of learning and serving the mission of God. The road of being and making disciples. We are people with a common purpose whose unity is in Christ and whose vocation is serving the mission of Christ.

Synod, together on the road, describes who we are and what our life together is. The Diocesan Vision statement reflects this: **Our vision is Adelaide Anglicans flourishing and united in God's love as we: grow in discipleship and share the Good News of Jesus Christ, connect and engage with communities, advocate and work together for social justice, and care for creation and each another.**

Being together on the road or way, doesn't mean we always agree with each other, but it means we stick together, and we go on together, we journey together, as we seek to learn of Jesus, be shaped by Jesus, and serve his mission.

As a community of disciples on the road of discipleship and service there will be times when we need to discern directions and make decisions about what we do or don't do; what our priorities will be; how we will use the resources God has given us to use and look after.

The way we have done that since the Synod of the Diocese of Adelaide was established in 1856 has been to use a parliamentary style of decision making, with three houses - laity, clergy and bishop, and Standing Orders which are very similar in shape to any parliament using the Westminster system.

This way of decision making was probably chosen because it was familiar to Bishop Short and the early members of the Diocese, because it was the way that decisions were made for the Church of England. In England those decisions were made in Parliament itself. The church in Australia was not established, so the parliament was not making decisions about the church here, but the parliamentary way of doing things was probably chosen because it was familiar.

Given that our task is to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit for the 'life and growth, and order and good government' of our Diocese (section 8 of the Constitution of the Diocese of Adelaide), the parliamentary system has some limitations. For instance, this way of decision-making favours those who know the system and are comfortable with it, including a good knowledge of the Standing Orders. This way of decision making which includes debate favours those who are confident public speakers, who think quickly, who can present compelling and sometimes dramatic arguments to support their views, and who are prepared to take the risk of expressing their views in front of more than 200 people. In other words, this environment unintentionally, but effectively, makes it hard for many to participate.

At times I suspect our annual meeting of the Synod doesn't feel much like a process of discerning the way forward led by the Holy Spirit. At times it feels like a combative process where decisions are made sometimes by 51% to 49%. Where there are winners and losers. Where a nuanced opinion is difficult to express because we have to choose to be for or against a proposition. If we have a view which is different to 'for' or 'against' we might have a go at amending the proposition but that can be a clumsy and unsatisfactory process.

Many people experienced last year's meeting of the Synod to be particularly like this. In truth these concerns had been around for some years but last years' meeting really crystallised them.

So what might be a better way?

As we think about that there are some important principles.

The first is that the people of the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide are together *Synod*. Synod is much more than the name of the incorporated association or the name for a meeting of the members of that association. We, members of the local churches of the Anglican Diocese of Adelaide are sisters and brothers together on the road, following Jesus and serving his mission. Our life together and our culture including our decision-making processes need to reflect the life that is *Synod*.

Second, we exist to serve the mission of God. That's our 'why'.

Third, God continues to lead the church through the Holy Spirit. In our decision making we seek to discern and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. That's our 'how'.

Fourth, we are all equal in that we have an equally valuable part to play in this process of discerning the will of God for the ministry of the Diocese.

We need a way which takes these principles into account and enables participation and discernment. That way might mean that decision making is not as fast as for instance using the parliamentary system, but it may well be better focussed on the kingdom, the rule of God and the dynamic leading of the Holy Spirit.

In order to begin to address this need, this year as we meet together for our annual discernment and decision-making opportunity, a different process will be tried. We still need to have what is effectively the Annual General Meeting of the incorporated association. That is required by state law. So we will consider reports. We still need to do things like set the assessment rate. We still need to consider some legislation. We will consider some motions. But the focus will be on discerning together how we go forward together.

The Standing Orders, the rules we have agreed on for these meetings, allow for us to spend time in conference together, so we will do that in small groups. This is to hopefully enable more people to express their views and maybe test their ideas in the safety of a small group.

As topics for those small group conversations, we will be using reports from working groups that this meeting last year asked to be set up, and also this address. In the course of those small group discussions motions may emerge which can be considered by the meeting tomorrow if the meeting wants to do that. Or maybe those discussions will be the start of a process of further discussion, prayer and discernment.

The whole idea is we have a **less combative, more participatory, open hearted, grace filled, Spirit led meeting which mirrors what we are-a community of disciples of Jesus together on the way, seeking to serve his mission, led and empowered by him through the Holy Spirit.**

The changes we are proposing for this weekend's gathering are within the existing Standing Orders. It may be that following this weekend feedback indicates that more significant change is desired, and if that's the case we can plan that for the future. I want to thank the Diocesan Council and the Secretary of Synod for the work that has gone into designing this years' meeting. I know many people are praying for us and I am looking forward to it.

Reconciliation

At the start of this address, I acknowledged that we meet on the land of the Kaurna people. I have done that in each of the addresses I have given as President of the Synod since my first in 2017. Basically, I have done a cut and paste from one year to the next. Each year my acknowledgement has included these words: 'we continue to seek and pray for reconciliation'. While that is true, in terms of action we seem to be a bit stuck at the moment.

The question is, what can we do that is meaningful?

It is important that we continue to acknowledge the historical fact that we meet and live on, use and profit from land that originally was appropriated by settlers. That's not to make anyone feel guilty. It's just reality, and should be remembered.

Over the past month or so I have been reading excerpts from a couple of very old books. The first is *47 Years of Clerical Life in South Australia* by the Reverend E.K. Miller published in 1895; and the second is *Augustus Short: First Bishop of Adelaide. A chapter of colonial church history*, edited by Fred T. Whittington and published in 1887.

Both of these histories speak of the engagement of the Anglican church with Aboriginal people; both books are 'of their time'; both are by 'church people'; both include information about the positive attempts of church people to care for Aboriginal people in South Australia; and both make it very clear that the Aboriginal people who had been here when the settlers arrived were quite quickly alienated from their former life as the newcomers settled and took over land for housing, industry, agriculture, and administration.

Land was appropriated without payment to those who originally had use and care of it. Our buildings across the Diocese are built on that land, so maybe land is a key to us moving forward in reconciliation.

A few weeks ago I, along with the Archbishops of Melbourne, Brisbane, and Perth and a representative of the Archbishop of Sydney met with NATSIAC, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council at the invitation of the chair of the Council, to hear from the members of NATSIAC about the priorities they have for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander ministry within the context of the Anglican church of Australia.

What was very clear is that their view is that funding for this ministry is lacking, and very important. They believe funding for a full-time aboriginal bishop, and funding for appropriate administrative support to enable NATSIAC to function properly is of prime importance.

The General Synod does have an endowment fund for Indigenous ministry, but it is not large enough to provide anything like what is needed. As an aside, Bishop Chris the current part-time national Aboriginal bishop has told me he does not want the role full time, so the full-time funding would be for his successor.

As we consider further steps in reconciliation, I do wonder whether the need for funding and land might go together.

I am aware that the Diocese of Melbourne as part of its *Sale of Property* policy includes a provision that 15% of the proceeds of property sales go to an indigenous fund, and I wonder whether we should consider something like that as a real acknowledgement in more than words, of the historical reality of our land. The money could be added to the General Synod endowment fund to build it up or be used for local indigenous ministry. Using a percentage of property sale proceeds in this way might be a tangible acknowledgement of history and contribute to a more positive future.

It is important that if we did something like this, we didn't see that as reconciliation 'done and dusted', but rather one step on a continuing journey.

Hope 25

One of the significant strategic opportunities we have over the next twelve months is to join in a wholehearted way with the Hope 25 project. The full name is *Hope25: Hope in an uncertain world*. This is a national evangelism project of the Anglican Church of Australia which came from a resolution of the last meeting of General Synod in 2022 focussing on the importance of evangelism for our church.

The Standing Committee of the General Synod has endorsed the project and has given it financial support, and that gives the project a genuinely national sense. In fact, this is the first national project of the Anglican Church of Australia since the national conference more than 25 years ago.

The idea is that resources will be collected and developed which will help people to share their faith and assist parishes to run outreach events so that the hope that we have in Jesus can be offered, especially to people who don't know that hope.

The project was launched officially on Pentecost this year, and from now until Ash Wednesday next year is the time for the development and collecting of resources and planning of events. Lent next year is the intensive preparation phase, and the Easter season next year is the intensive proclamation phase.

The hope is that every parish community runs at least one event during the Easter season next year at which people will hear the Christian message which is the source of and basis for hope in an uncertain world. Anglican schools and AnglicareSA may also be places where these events could occur.

We have set up a steering committee for the Diocese with Archdeacon Andrea McDougall as the convenor.

As a warmup for Hope25 St Barnabas College will be auspicing a *Festival of Hope in Theology and the Arts* from February 10-16 next year. This will be a week of Gospel Hope events and exhibitions.

As part of the festival parishes will be invited to host or organise events and/or exhibitions with a special focus such as:

- Gospel hope reflected in visual arts and poetry with perhaps an opportunity to have something like a children's colouring competition, or art and poetry competition with opportunity to connect with local schools.
- Gospel hope reflected in music: another opportunity to engage with the wider community and invite performance pieces related to hope.
- Gospel hope youth gathering.

On the Friday night (Feb 14) and Saturday (Feb 15) of that week St Barnabas will offer theological presentations including, what is a theology of hope in 2025? And, how do we share a theology of hope in an uncertain world?

There will also be practical workshops looking at:

- how to run Hope25 in your parish or other community
- how to create hope-filled worship
- reflections on seeking hope in movies/TV/music
- sharing of Hope25 resources

On Sunday afternoon February 16 there will be classic hymns of hope – a concert and community singing.

I think this is a wonderful initiative which will contribute to a season of hope in the good news that is Jesus which will be great. More information will be available in the coming weeks from St Barnabas College.

One of the consistent things I hear from people who have done the Mission Shaped Introduction course is that they want help to share their faith, and I hope the Hope 25 process will provide opportunities for that, with the main point being that more people will know the quality of life which comes from knowing God through Jesus Christ, and the hope that knowing brings-especially in an uncertain world.

I commend Hope 25 to the Diocese and encourage participation in it. I am greatly encouraged to hear that a number of parishes are already well on the way with their planning.

The Gospel

As we prepare to participate in Hope25 a couple of important questions are: what is the gospel? And, what is the hope we have?

The answer to the second question is a personal one. What is the reason for the hope we have? What is good news about Jesus from our experience? How have we encountered the reality and love of God in our life? It will be worthwhile helping the people of the church to think about and verbalise their answers to those questions.

In terms of the first question-what is the gospel, a survey of occurrences of the word *euangelion* usually translated 'gospel' or 'good news' in the New Testament reveals a variety of ways of expressing the understanding behind the term.

The term 'gospel' was well-known before it began to be used in the New Testament writings. It meant really good, or really good and welcome news.

In the Old Testament, the word is a message people bring, carry, run with and rush to tell, and that is always because something has happened that changes everything, and which is of such consequence that people need to know. Proverbs 25.25 puts it like this: 'Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country'. So, when we use the word *gospel*, we are talking about something that is so good and so important-like cold water to a thirsty soul.

The books of Matthew, Mark and Luke are very clear that the *gospel* is connected to the kingdom of God or Kingdom of heaven (same thing-different description). The *gospel* is that in Jesus the long awaited and hoped for kingdom or rule of God has come near (for instance Mark 1.15). The *gospel* is all about the kingdom of God.

In the epistles and especially the Pauline epistles the language is more around the death and resurrection of Jesus.

This year I have read a number of books which I have found helpful as I think about ways of describing what is the gospel so that I can share it effectively.

These books include one by Bishop Tom Wright, former bishop of Durham, which is entitled *Into the Heart of Romans* which looks at Romans chapter 8. Another is by Chris Russell and is called *Yearning for the Vast and Endless Sea-the good news about the good news*. A third is by Paul S Williams called *Exiles on Mission-How Christians can Thrive in a Post-Christian World*, and a fourth is by Scot McKnight and is called *Kingdom Conspiracy: Returning to the Radical Mission of the Local Church*.

All these books offer reflection on what the gospel is, and I want to share some of those reflections with you. Tom Wright for instance is critical of what is sometimes called *The Roman Road* which Wright says has four sections: 1. I am a sinner deserving Gods wrath; 2. Jesus died for my sins; 3. I believe in Jesus; 4. I will go to heaven.

Wright is critical of this portrayal of the gospel because he says this is too narrow an understanding of the gospel. It is a partial understanding of the gospel. The problem Paul is addressing says Wright is not just human sin and the danger of eternal punishment. The problem is the crisis of the whole cosmos, within which human beings were from the start designed to play a vital role. Salvation is not just God's gift to his people; it is God's gift *through* his people.

Wright says:

We have got our story of salvation upside down. Ever since the early middle-ages at least, most Christians have supposed that the point of the Christian gospel was to enable saved human souls to go up to heaven. But Paul never once mentions going to heaven. The eternal security of God's people in the New Testament has to do not with their supposed disembodied postmortem bliss, but with their resurrection from the dead into the rescued and renewed creation where they will have a truly human role to play (p.8-9).

I think there is a lot in Wright's book that people will find really good news. I especially appreciate his comment that the problem St Paul was addressing in Romans chapter 8 is not human sin and the danger of eternal punishment. The problem is the crisis of the whole cosmos, within which human beings were from the start designed to play a vital role.

This is important for at least two reasons. There is a danger that our understanding of the redemptive work of Jesus is influenced by our individualistic culture so that the gospel becomes all about an individual's relationship with God. The gospel is about an individual's relationship with God, but that is only half the story. As Wright says, Jesus' death and resurrection addresses a cosmic crisis, which Paul describes in Romans chapter 8 in this way:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit,

groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (vs 20-23).

The gospel is about the salvation of humanity but it's much more encompassing than that. It's about the salvation of the whole creation. In our current context there is an opportunity for this fulsome understanding of the gospel that talks about God's redemptive work as it connects with matters of common concern today - about climate change, sustainability, caring for the environment, and the future of the planet. These aspects of our daily living along with our relationships, can become more hope-filled when we can relate God's mission and purpose to what people, including young people, are anxious about or interested in discussing or acting on.

Paul in Acts gave us a wonderful model to build on. In Athens he saw the altars to gods the Greeks worshipped, and he used them as an entry point to speak the hope-filled good news of Jesus and his redeeming work. In the same way in our society our entry point can be these common concerns.

The second of Wright's reflections which deserve attention focusses on his comment: 'The problem is the crisis of the whole cosmos, within which human beings were from the start designed to play a vital role. Salvation is not just God's gift to his people; it is God's gift through his people'.

'Salvation is not just God's gift to his people; it is God's gift through his people'. Many people, and again especially young people, want to do something to make things better. An understanding that sees following Jesus as something mostly in the head misses the point. We have a role to play in the salvation of the creation. Ultimately of course this is God's work and God will bring salvation to the whole creation, but we humans have a part to play. We participate and share in the healing of the creation. We point to God's future by our actions. At least partly, we bring the future into the present by what we do. We are co-operators with God in bringing the new creation, the salvation of the cosmos to reality.

This is not just good and hopeful news, but also gives a purpose to life which itself brings hope. I strongly suspect that this broad concept of the gospel will be very engaging.

Reflecting on the gospel Chris Russell in his book says:

The gospel is not an object, a formula, a thing that we can learn by heart, so that in the right situation we can simply pull a cord on our backs and recite it to anyone. The gospel is not a commodity, or a brand, a cut and pasted block of statements, a moral code, a product to be dispensed in a sealed packet to which we just need to add water. The gospel is not a what, it's a who. The gospel is a person: Jesus Christ of Nazareth. (p2-3).

One of the reasons why so many people, especially the poor and marginalised, received Jesus so readily was that his words and actions pointed to a whole new world from the reality in which they lived. Jesus' message and Jesus himself resonated with the context of those people. He was and he brought news that was truly 'life changingly' good. Jesus truly was like cold water to a thirsty soul.

Christianity is a Jesus movement. This movement is focussed on Jesus Christ through whom we can come to know God and God's love (John 14.9); through whose death and resurrection we have peace with God (Romans 5:1); and in whom the rule of God and the new creation are inaugurated (Mark 1.15). This is the gospel. This is good news.

Knowing Jesus brings hope. Knowing Jesus brings purpose. One of our core commissions and a key plank in our diocesan Vision is discipleship. Being disciples of Jesus and making disciples of others. You can't do that without Jesus, so introducing people to Jesus is critical as we think about preparing for Hope 25.

The perspectives of Chris Russell and Tom Wright are different facets of the same gem which is the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel is about the kingdom or rule of God, incarnated and inaugurated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Human reconciliation with God through the death and resurrection of Jesus is a critically important part of the gospel, but only a part. The gospel is for the whole of creation and that gives us a wonderful opportunity to live it out and invite others to join in.

Hope 25 is an unapologetically evangelistic project and yet the word evangelism does not always sit comfortably even with Christians.

I suggest that instead of avoiding the word, we reclaim it. I suggest that we cleanse it from the negative baggage by our own use of it, and behaviour in relationship to it.

Colloquially evangelism could mean 'good newsing'. Chris Russell says that evangelism 'is the refusal to keep the good news that is Jesus Christ and all that he achieved to ourselves' (x). I like that definition. Refusing to keep the good news to ourselves. That's not shoving something offensive down someone's throat. It's not keeping something really good to ourselves. If others want to accept what we offer that's great-for them and the whole creation. If they don't. Then they don't. But we are not going to keep the good news to ourselves, and we are going to look for ways to share it because it is such good news.

Of course, all of this requires the work of the Holy Spirit. The spreading of the good news requires our involvement, but to change someone's heart is not ours to do.

That's why it's really important that we pray. As part of Hope25 a prayer has been written and I encourage us to use it. I will read it now:

God of Hope

*you call on us to be your witnesses in this uncertain world;
by your Spirit awaken in us
a true vision of your kingdom,
a greater certainty of our salvation, and
a deeper dedication to your service;
that through our words and actions the same Spirit may
bring many who are lost to be found,
and for them to celebrate the hope
that we can only have in Jesus Christ,
in whose name we pray. Amen*

I encourage you to start planning now for Hope25. Sign up to the Hope25 website. It is www.Hope25.com-very simple. There are loads and loads of great resources. Use the prayer and pray for Hope25.

St Barnabas Centre for Research and Missional Praxis

I mentioned a few minutes ago the planned Festival of Hope in Theology and the Arts to be held in February next year. I said that this festival is being auspiced by St Barnabas and it is. It is being auspiced by an activity of St Barnabas to be known as the St Barnabas Centre for Research and Missional Praxis. There is a motion on the business paper welcoming the establishment of the centre. I think this is a really great initiative that will assist our ministry and contribute to the life of the College and Diocese. The principal of the College the Reverend Canon Dr Joan Riley has appointed Bishop Tim Harris as the part time director of the centre and Tim's experience will certainly benefit the development of the centre's work.

Women's Ministry

In July this year we farewelled Bishop Denise and Mark Ferguson after five years of really positive ministry in the Diocese. Bishop Denise is a person of very great faith in God and is very gracious. As the first bishop who is a woman in the Diocese of Adelaide Denise was accepted well, and where her ministry was not welcomed because she is a woman Denise responded with grace and generosity.

We have now ordained Sophie Relf-Christopher to be a bishop in the church of God and to serve as an assistant bishop in this Diocese. I think Bishop Sophie will make a fantastic contribution as a bishop.

The Synod of this diocese clearly supports the ministry of ordained women and men as do I, and I seek to demonstrate that by trying to have a gender balance in the appointments I am able to make. For instance, archdeacons and assistant bishops.

Being in agreement with the ordination of women is not an article of faith to which someone has to subscribe in order to be part of this Diocese. Agreeing to the ordination of women is not a required part of any of our doctrinal formularies. But clearly, for more than 30 years the view of a large majority of the Diocese has been that the ordination of and ordained ministry of both women and men is right and appropriate, to be welcomed and encouraged.

A few weeks ago, a report was presented to the synod of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn which prompted me to reflect. This report is the work of a synod reference group in the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn set up to:

- look into the disparity in numbers between men and women clergy in full time stipendiary roles.
- investigate the causes of the disparity.
- consult with women concerning their experience concerning study, selection, student placement and competitiveness in current clergy appointment processes.
- develop appropriate strategies to ameliorate the disparity in numbers between men and women stipendiary clergy in full time roles in the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn.

This report finds, and I quote, ‘that the capacity of the Diocese to build partnerships with women for ministerial leadership appears to have regressed rather than advanced, despite the decision to ordain woman as priests more than 30 years ago’.

This report prompted me to have a look at our own Diocese.

The numbers move around as clergy move into different roles, but at the moment in Adelaide, of the registered parishes with a fully stipended parish priest or rector in office just 19% are led by women.

Of the registered parishes with part stipended priests in charge or long-term locums 56% are led by women. We have 170 active clergy in the Diocese and of that number 46 or 37% are women.

This indicates I think that we still have a lot of work to do. There is no reason why we should not be aiming at a gender balance across the board in terms of ordained leadership. I think we need to be looking for ways to encourage and facilitate the ministry of ordained women. I do believe we need to have a look at what we do, at our terms and conditions, our systems and processes because I believe we need to be careful to encourage women as well as men to consider a vocation to the ordained life, and be appointed equally across all areas of leadership in the Diocese.

I think this will take continued focus and effort but is very important to our life and witness. Achieving gender balance in our ordained leadership not just a justice issue, or as the Canberra and Goulburn report says, a gospel issue, but an issue which impacts the effectiveness of our outreach.

Reflection.

A couple of months ago I asked Joe Thorp whether he would put together a list of things that we as a Synod, as Diocesan Council, Synod Office, Anglican Funds Management, St Barnabas College and Bishops office have achieved in the past five years. The list runs to four single spaced pages. And that doesn't count all the achievements of the parishes and chaplaincies, Anglican schools and AnglicareSA. I think we have achieved a lot. When I asked Joe to put this list together, I thought I might read it to you as part of this address. I had no idea it would be so long and have decided to spare you from an even longer address. But the list of achievements is long which is great.

As we all know there is still a lot to do, but we are making good progress with our strategic objectives-our four areas of focus: grow in discipleship and share the Good News of Jesus Christ; connect and engage with communities; advocate and work together for social justice, and care for creation and each another.

I am not blind to the fact that many of our parishes are struggling, and over all our numbers continue to decline, but I am sensing a change in the mood of the Diocese towards a more hopeful, 'willing to have a go', 'focussed on the mission of God' kind of attitude which is wonderful.

We are part of God's church serving God's purpose. It's not our church in the sense that we own it, or that its future is entirely in our hands. We have a part to play, but this is God's church that we serve. I have said before that I don't know what the future for the church will be, but any kind of understanding of the history of the church shows that there have been all sorts of ups and downs over the past 2000 years. There are four things we must do in my view.

They are: first, hold on to the hope that is Jesus Christ. There is no reason for despair or depression about the future of the church if we are focussed on Jesus and his mission.

Second, we must be people of prayer and be open to God's leading, perhaps into different ways and expressions of church and serving God's mission. This is God's church, and we must be open to being led by God in God's purpose. God stirs people's hearts toward himself. He is rolling out his new creation and has done for millennia and continues this same work today. His grand redemptive plan for all people and his cosmos has not ended or finished and he invites us individually, as parishes, as Anglican schools and AnglicareSA to be open to his leading in the fulfilment of that plan. He invites each of us to seek out what he is doing and join in, in the contexts in which we find ourselves. The challenge is for us to be good listeners to God.

Third, we must be ready to, as Chris Russell says, refuse to keep the good news that is Jesus Christ and all that he achieved to ourselves.

And fourth, we must work to create Anglican communities which are welcoming and outward looking. Providing opportunities for growing disciples.

As I conclude, I want to thank Joe Thorp the Secretary of Synod and Registrar for his continuing fine contribution. It is now five years since Joe started as acting secretary of synod the day after the synod weekend in 2019, and those five years have been excellent for the Diocese. Thanks, Joe, for all you have done, are doing, and will do.

I also want to thank my episcopal colleagues Bishop Tim, Bishop Chris and Bishop Sophie, and also Archdeacons Andrew, Sam, Jo and Andrea. Thank you to the Synod office, Bishops' office, Anglican Funds Management and St Barnabas staff for your very dedicated work. We are blessed in the quality of people who serve the diocese. It is a real team effort. I want to thank the clergy and lay leaders of the Diocese for your dedication to our shared task. It's not an easy task. But it is a blessing to serve the mission of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for all that you do.

I also want to thank you for your support of Lynn and myself. I am very thankful for the constant prayer many offer for us. I find the clergy and people of the Diocese very supportive. I am all too aware of the distraction my role as Primate causes to my focus on the Diocese. My estimate is that the Primacy occupies somewhere between one third and a half of my time, and while the General Synod provides funding to allow for some back fill and support to acknowledge my time spent on General Synod and Primatial matters, I have only so much bandwidth. I appreciate your patience with my very full diary and frequent absences, and your sensitivity to my national responsibilities in a time of significant tension across the church. If you could keep praying for me that would be wonderful.

I thought I would finish with one of my favourite passages of scripture, from Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 2, verses 5 to 11.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
 who, though he was in the form of God,
 did not regard equality with God
 as something to be exploited,
 but emptied himself,
 taking the form of a slave,
 being born in human likeness.
 And being found in human form,
 he humbled himself
 and became obedient to the point of death—
 even death on a cross.
 Therefore God also highly exalted him
 and gave him the name
 that is above every name,
 so that at the name of Jesus
 every knee should bend,
 in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
 and every tongue should confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

May we by God's grace more and more have the mind, attitude and love of Christ Jesus.