



Diocese of the Northern Territory

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

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Report to Annual Vestry – Lent 3, 2010

The Very Revd Jeremy Greaves - Dean

“Lent is the time for trimming the soul and scraping the sludge off a life turned slipshod. Lent is about taking stock of time, even religious time. Lent is about exercising the control that enables us to say no to ourselves so that when life turns hard of its own accord we have the stamina to say yes to its twists and turns with faith and hope.... Lent is the time to make new efforts to be what we say we want to be.” - Sister Joan Chittister

It is perhaps appropriate, given Joan Chittister’s reflection on Lent (above), that we meet for our AGM at this time. An AGM gives us an opportunity to pause and reflect, to take stock, and perhaps to commit ourselves to “make new efforts to be what we say we want to be.”

For a number of years the Cathedral has used its pastoral statement as a guide and measure of how we should respond to the challenge of the gospel in this place. The pastoral statement sets a high standard for how we might engage with all those people we encounter in the life of the Cathedral: people of diverse situations, people of different genders and sexuality, age, ability and wealth. And while it sets a standard, it falls short in that it gives us no way of measuring how well we’re doing it. How well do we welcome all those people and share with them the Gospel that draws us to this place?

The Archbishop of Canterbury writes of the church as being a calling together. “When God acts, the event that follows is like the rush of iron filings towards a magnet. Things are disturbed and the pattern of relationships changes. *This* is the church.” The church is defined not by its walls or leaky roof, not by its liturgy or its music, not by the number of bible studies or home groups it has, but by the pattern of relationships lived by those who have been called together. Our pastoral statement has helped to shape this pattern of relationships at the Cathedral for a number of years. While parts of it have been challenging to some, particularly the explicit inclusion of those of diverse sexual orientation, others have found the statement to be a helpful guide to what they might hopefully expect from being part of this community.

The Archbishop of Canterbury goes on to say that “when things rush together, in the real world of human experience, they take time to settle into a pattern...”

As we begin a new year at the Cathedral, we need to look carefully at the pattern into which we’ve settled. The strategic planning document, worked on by parish council during last year and available for the last several weeks on our website, is one tool that might assist us in doing just that. It sets a raft of goals, in the context of the broad ministry areas identified as priorities by the Diocesan Synod, and gives us the beginnings of a framework within which we might work to see how well we are living out our pastoral statement and what more we might need to do to make it more real.

I sincerely hope that the Vestry will adopt the Strategic Plan at this AGM so that we can move forward together as we continue God’s work in this place.

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Like many Dean's before me, at this time of the year, I am somewhat preoccupied with the issues created by the amount of water that continues to find its way into the Cathedral and Cathedral offices. I wrote in my report last year about the challenge of raising the money to find a "once and for all" solution to this problem that has continued for the past 30 years.

Last year we were fortunate that the NT Government's department of heritage funded a comprehensive report on the Cathedral that seeks to find solutions to a number of problems: the leaks, the poor acoustics and the poor ventilation and air circulation within the Cathedral. The report (available for anyone to look at in the Cathedral office), identifies some clear problems and makes several recommendations about a way forward. The report included a cost estimate for all the work of \$800,000.00.

At the time of writing this report, I am waiting to hear the results of two major funding submissions (a total of \$400,000.00). Successful outcomes with these would put us in a good position to go ahead with some of the work as soon as possible and launch a public appeal to raise the balance of the funds needed. \$400,000.00 would enable us to do the work to fix the leaks and re-glaze the big window above the sanctuary as well as allowing us to add wide eaves along each side of the Cathedral. Any extra money would allow us to begin some acoustic 'treatments' to some of the Cathedral ceilings, and to improve the amenity of the worship space with proper fans etc.

Please think carefully about how you might assist with this significant project in the Cathedral's life.

All of this comes on the back of what has been another busy year in our life together.

2009 saw the installation and commissioning of the new Memorial Window, the culmination of a number of years work by many people. It was a particular joy to have George Chaloupka, who designed the original window, present for the commissioning of the new window. While Janusz and Magda were unable to be with us for that event, their skill, artistry and passion has left us with a beautiful piece of art that will remain to inspire people for many many years as it reminds us of those trawler men who lost their lives in Cyclone Tracy.

The Cathedral Seminar Series continued last year, with four events all supported by funding from the Society of the Sacred Mission Australia.

The Revd Dr Kevin Giles came to Darwin early in the year and along with Lindy Giles facilitated a day exploring healthy churches and relationships within them. Kevin contrasted the "church growth" movement with the "church health" movement and suggested the latter was a much more useful way of looking at what is happening in a church. He reminded us that cultural change is slow, and that it takes at least seven years to change the culture of a church community.

In July we were most fortunate to welcome Diana Butler Bass to Darwin as part of her Australian visit. Diana challenged us and encouraged us as she explored ideas around moving from a "congregation" to a "spirited community." Diana identified a number of practices that are common to progressive mainline churches that seem to be thriving in the United States. There are a number of those things that we have picked up in our strategic plan document.

As part of the celebrations to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his sometimes controversial book, we organised and hosted "Revolution in Evolution: God, science and religion" in September. Despite distressing quite a number of our more conservative brothers and sisters in churches around Darwin, the event provided a weekend of big ideas, engaging discussion and a message to all that the Cathedral is a place not afraid to engage with critical thinking.

The programme for the year ended with a return visit from the Revd Dr Alan Cadwallader who led us on a fascinating and often challenging journey through the Gospel according to Luke. Alan's skill as a teacher and passion for his material brought the gospel alive in new ways for all who attended. I hope that Alan will return this year to complete the lectionary cycle with a look at Matthew.

So far we have two seminars confirmed for the coming year. At the beginning of May (May 1), Fr Michael Trainor will join us from Adelaide for a day exploring new perspectives on the passion narratives – a brochure will soon be available with details of this visit. In August, Prof. Norm Habel will come to Darwin to lead us through the ideas in his latest book, *An Inconvenient Text*. Norm is a Hebrew Bible scholar whose passion for environmental justice informs his reading of the scriptures and prompted him to put together the liturgical and other resources used increasingly by churches around the world for the *Season of Creation* in September.

My hope is that we might confirm the visit of at least one more scholar in coming months. I will apply to SSM once again for funds to support this important area of the Cathedral's ministry to the churches in Darwin.

As we have worked hard to engage with the other churches in Darwin, we have also worked hard over the past 12 months to continue our engagement with the broader community.

The Darwin Festival presented us with a wonderful opportunity to share our facilities with the people of Darwin and we received a great deal of positive feedback from both the Festival Organisers and the wider community. Not only was the Cathedral,

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beautifully lit, a prominent feature of Festival Park but we hosted two significant Festival events, the *Legal Walls graffiti* exhibition and on the final night of the Festival, a performance by the African Gospel Choir. Both events received a great deal of coverage and raised our profile significantly. Our partnership with the Festival also included the use of the Harbour Room for rehearsals and the loan of various pieces of Cathedral equipment. While the programme for this year's Festival has not been finalised I am confident that we can build on last year's partnership to strengthen our role in this high profile event.

I have worked hard during the year to raise our profile within the wider community and strengthen our ties with Darwin City Council, the Diocese, NT Government and the various groups who use Civic Park and the surrounding facilities. We have a good relationship with the Darwin Theatre Company, the Darwin Chorale, the Darwin City Brass Band, the Palmerston Band, St John's Ambulance and the Darwin Comedy Club. I am working (in line with our strategic plan) to find ways of strengthening our ties with Kormilda College, AnglicareNT and Nungalinya College.

The Cathedral Website continues to be an important way of communicating with both Cathedral parishioners and those in the wider community, about who we are and what we are doing. Over the last 12 months there have been 7,794 visits to our website, predominantly from the Darwin area, but from 118 countries or territories in total. After Australia, the next biggest number of hits came from the USA. I am not sure if the hits from Iraq were from Australian soldiers (or chaplains) serving there. We even had one hit from Myanmar!! The website is increasingly used by people wanting to find out service times (especially in the lead up to Christmas and Easter) as well as those interested in the various events we have held here. I am continuing to work with the people at Captov8, who designed the site, to see how we can make the website more 'friendly' and more useful to locals and visitors alike. A recent addition to our online presence is a Facebook page, which is increasingly generating 'hits' on our main site. I encourage you to use the facilities on the website to make comments and leave feedback, or to speak to me in person, especially if you have ideas about how we can improve this part of our ministry.

Music is one area of focus for the coming year. Having hosted visits from Quintessential, the Darwin City Brass Band, Barrowque, the Darwin Chorale and the Palmerston Band over the past twelve months, I hope that we can work to include these groups and others, more intentionally in the life of the Cathedral. One strategy for this is to use "fifth Sundays", when they occur, as Sundays when we do something 'different' with music. This year there are three such Sundays remaining, along with a few other occasions when it would be good to have some extra or different music. Details of these Sundays will be available soon.

Children are an important part of our life together at the Cathedral and we have worked during the last year to find out better ways of accommodating both children and their parents so that the ministry to and with children is shared by a larger group than in the past. It is very pleasing to me that a number of parents have offered the share in this work and the younger children in the congregation seem well looked after.

A challenge for this year is to work to find ways of better engaging the older children in the congregation so that they can be both formed in their Christian journey and included in our life and worship. I have spent a great deal of time searching for an appropriate curriculum for this age-group and think I have found something right for us. My hope is that we might find someone with a passion for children's ministry who will take this on and fill this gap.

The other neglected group, although very small at the Cathedral, is the group of middle and secondary school aged young people associated with Christ Church. This is another area of concern for me and a focus for the coming year.

It is now nearly 18 months since Café Church came to an end and with it a significant ministry to the itinerant people who live in and around the CBD. Café Church was a safe place of welcome for many of those people, and while we continue to assist people through the week with food handouts, we struggle to find ways of really caring for these "little ones". It is interesting to see the increasing number of indigenous people joining us for worship and morning tea on Sunday mornings as they find a welcome here. One interesting proposal that I intend to pursue with the new parish council focuses on "breaking bread" with those who are marginalised, of providing a space and a place where we can sit down and eat together rather than just handing out food. It is a proposal that has great merit and significant implications for our life together. I hope you will continue to think and pray about how we can better minister with and to this group of people.

Every study of church health indicates that the health of a congregation should be measured by the activity that happens between Sundays. So while we continue to see new faces on Sunday mornings this is not a good measure of how we're doing. It has been encouraging to me over the last twelve months that there are increasing numbers of people prepared to roll up their sleeves and be part of the life of the Cathedral outside of, and in addition to, Sunday mornings. This has been the case with working bees, Lent Studies, rostered duties and other events where I have called for assistance.

During the dry season last year a small group assisted with morning tea under the trees. People provided cakes, helped with setting up and packing up and stayed around to chat with those who stopped for a tea or coffee. Not only did the morning teas raise a small amount of money (which funded the children's Christmas craft mornings in December), but it brought together a group of people in service and fellowship.

As I did in my last report, I share with you my hope that there might be someone in the congregation who is prepared to coordinate a Parish Life group, responsible for social activities throughout the year. The success of last year's Patronal Festival

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celebrations is testament to the fact that these events do not need to come at a great cost and can be organised with ease. With our beautiful grounds, there is no reason that we cannot enjoy brunch or lunch in the park during the dry season on a regular basis. Our Shrove Tuesday pancake nights are also examples of easily organised, fun opportunities for us to gather together outside of Sunday morning.

For a number of years I have been discussing with the Diocesan Ministry Development Officer, my wish to undertake some sort of Ministry Appraisal or Review and together we have searched for an appropriate model on which to base a process that might work in this Diocese. In consultation with a number of other Dioceses and with assistance from Vivienne Hayward, I think we have a process that might be useful and I will trial it later in the year. Bishop Clyde has agreed to facilitate the review process for us here at the Cathedral towards the middle of May. After two years here, I am keen to have a structured ways of reflecting on my ministry and receiving feedback from the Cathedral community. I hope there will be a good number of people keen to be involved in this process.

One of the great joys for me in coming to the Cathedral is to be part of a team. Over the past 12 months Pat Williams and Nicole Anderson have provided me with support and encouragement as well as providing the Cathedral with their gifts for ministry.

Pat has continued to offer much valued pastoral care to many within the cathedral congregation. Her gentle wisdom and knowledge of the 'cathedral past' is a wonderful gift as is her commitment to ministry at the hospital, the prison and Tracy Lodge Aged Care Facility. Pat continues to share in our funeral and wedding ministry as well as doing all sorts of other things around the place that we don't notice until she is on holiday and they don't get done.

Nicole has brought her gifts to bear on the life of the Cathedral more and more over the last 12 months. We have all travelled with Nicole along her journey the diaconate and joined with her to celebrate her ordination in November. Nicole's ministry of pastoral care has been a great blessing to many. But she has also gifted us with her enthusiasm and passion for children's ministry, the series of Quiet Mornings and Afternoons she has facilitated, morning teas in the gardens, her work as safe ministry officer as well as her work at the hospital and the prison.

When too much of my time is spent tied to my desk, it is a great relief for me to know that there are others who will pick up the loose ends I don't quite manage to get to.

In the Archbishop of Canterbury's "mixed economy church" there is room for many different expressions of the faith. Whilst others in the Diocese have made it clear that they disagree with me, I believe there is a place for a strongly articulated inclusive, progressive and thinking response to the Gospel. As we continue to develop our strategic plan and a vision for the Cathedral, I am committed to ensuring that we remain a place where people are able to ask difficult questions, challenge assumptions and dare to try new things.

Our worship is one place where we can reflect this inclusive, progressive faith. I work hard each week to create liturgy that is recognisably 'Anglican' in structure and feel, but includes prayers and hymn words that might challenge us to think more broadly or might reflect what we believe better than the traditional formulas we have inherited. While I still struggle with the place of the Nicene or Apostles Creed in our Sunday morning, I think that we usually manage a good balance in our Sunday liturgy: staying true to the tradition but equally true to our stated commitment to a more progressive expression of the faith.

There have been a number of liturgical highlights during the year. The celebration of Easter in 2009 was, for me, a particular highlight. With a full Cathedral, great music and lusty singing there was a wonderful sense of God's presence, of 'something happening' and of what things might be like. *Back to Church Sunday* and our Patronal Festival were both grand occasions, highlighting the difference music can make to worship. Nicole's ordination was a wonderful celebration as well, capturing the solemnity of the occasion but balanced with the joy and celebration of real community.

The Cathedral continues to play a significant role in the lives of many in Darwin through the pastoral services we offer. Last year the Cathedral staff conducted around 30 funerals, 12 weddings and a number of baptisms. At least two of the funerals had over 500 people attending.

Our monthly Taize service has continued over the past year, thanks to the commitment and talents of Br James Macdonald. A small but diverse group gathers on the evening of the first Sunday of the month for this quiet contemplative worship time.

It continues to be a joy to have Digby Barrow providing our music for three Sundays each month, his talent and his capacity to accommodate last minute changes and new tunes are a tremendous gift. A great gift also is the work of the small music group that plays on the second Sunday of each month. Ang, Ken, Anne and Mike allow us to try newer worship music in a style very different to that which most parishioners have grown up with – it adds a richness to our cycle of worship that is much appreciated by many.

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A key part of our year ahead is managing the Cathedral finances. The Cathedral Council is once again proposing that the Vestry adopts a deficit budget. It is a budget prepared on the basis of some small increases in expenditure that reflect the real costs of running the Cathedral Parish. While I acknowledge that many in our community are struggling, particularly those on fixed incomes or self-funded retirees, I encourage you to think about your giving to the work of the Cathedral and how long it is since you have adjusted that amount. I would like to thank Martin Mills for his work as Treasurer during the past year and for his courage and commitment in taking on the role once again in a much expanded form.

Amongst the busyness of these and other events, it is important not to lose sight of the importance of caring for the Cathedral community. We need to keep working on the way we welcome new comers and visitors and finding ways to invite them more fully into our worshipping life. It was good to see that there were a few Cathedral parishioners who attended a recent *Introduction to Pastoral Care* course at Royal Darwin Hospital and I hope that we might bring together a few people in the near future to form a Cathedral Pastoral Care Team to work more strategically at this area of Cathedral life.

This year we have maintained our strong connection with Royal Darwin Hospital. Keith Williams has continued his faithful ministry there on Sunday mornings and along with Morris Bastian, Nicole Anderson and Mike Nixon has ensured that there is a significant ministry presence amongst those who are in hospital. While Pat and Nicole have continued their visits to the prison, the arrival of Brian Worth in Darwin and his appointment as chaplain to Berrimah Gaol, has strengthened our links with that institution.

I must also thank those people who have helped keep the Cathedral Office and Shop open during the last 12 months. My thanks go to Vivienne, Caroline, John, Colin and Bob who have all helped answer phones, do paperwork, prepare pew sheets, assist those who come looking for food and generally ensure the (usually) smooth running of the Cathedral Office.

Thank you, to all those who participate in the life of the Cathedral by assisting on one or more of the various rosters that keep the place going.

Thanks, also goes to the Wardens, Caroline and Ken, for their encouragement and support and sage advice when required.

I am very aware of the challenges that lie ahead – no more so than when I am mopping the cathedral floor after the rain – but am still excited to be here and look forward to travelling the Way with you in 2010.

I thank the Cathedral council for its work over the last 12 months and look forward to working with the new council and wardens.

May God bless you with a happy and holy Easter season.

Go gently,



The Very Revd Jeremy Greaves
Dean of Darwin
March 2010

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