



Diocese of the Northern Territory

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

ABN 91 271 945 805

PO Box 181 Darwin NT 0801

Tel: (08) 8981 9099 Fax: (08) 8981 9039 email: enquiries@christchurchcathedral.org.au

Report to Annual Vestry – Sexagesima, 2011

The Very Revd Jeremy Greaves - Dean

“Jesus summarized the whole of the Jewish law with these twin commands to love God and love our neighbours as we love ourselves. He could have gone further and given the teacher [who asked him about the Law] just three words: love the other The opposite of this - self-love –is narcissism. It is easy to love the parts of ourselves that are popular, the parts of our bodies that are beautiful, the parts of our lives of which we are proud. It is easy to love the God who answers our prayers, easy to love the God who comforts us and saves us from distress. It is easy to love those neighbours we have who are generous, those neighbours who are polite and don’t disturb us.

It is easy to love what is lovely; but we are called to love what is other.” – Kester Brewin, Other

Who is this ‘other’?

“It is the other within myself, the parts of me that I hide in the dark, the half-fictional parts I parade and boast. What would it mean to truly love this self of mine? It is the other within God, the divinity I cannot fully understand, who does not answer my prayers and does not provide comfort; the incarnate yet ever-hidden who infects my dreams and won’t let me go. What would it mean to love this God with all of myself? And it is the other within the world I inhabit, the neighbours who are noisy, the street-people who are smelly, the immigrants who are strange.”

As the world increasingly allows us to filter out those who are not like ‘me’ and those who don’t think like ‘me’ through the settings on our Facebook page, or the newspaper we buy or the radio station we listen to, the Cathedral remains a place where we might be surprised by who we might find sitting in the pew next to us or who we stand next to during the Great Thanksgiving prayer or who we share morning tea with. As we work out what it means to love the other, we find ourselves constantly ‘bumping into’ people in this place who we would never encounter in the rest of our lives. In our wide welcome of people ‘regardless of

age, sex, marital or family status, sexual orientation, ability or wealth' the Cathedral becomes a parable for what Jesus meant when he commissioned us to love the other.

Of course we don't always get it right, and our discomfort sometimes means we are not as open as we might be to the 'other' in our midst but we keep on trying, we keep on with the conversation about how we can do it better, we keep on looking for ways of offering hospitality, we muddle along staying as true as we can to the hunch that in our encounters with the 'other' we may just see God.

Over the last twelve months we have been challenged to think about what hospitality we are able to offer those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other people who camp in and around the Cathedral precinct. These people sleep rough for many reasons: some for many years, others for just a short time, and we have offered a place to stay, access to showers and toilets, food and advocacy. We have also offered friendship, support, first aid, advice and a place to call home for however long it has been needed. In return we have had rubbish to tidy, faeces, blood and vomit to clean up, complaints from neighbours, late night calls to and from police and no end of frustration. We have also had glimpses of hope, and seen lives back on track, respect returned and powerful gestures of gratitude. We are respected by those agencies dedicated to working with 'long-grass people' and we have built good relationships with the police and the First Response team.

More recently we have been challenged by the presence of people in our congregation from one of Darwin's detention centres. As they have little English and have harrowing stories of their journey to this land and their detention, how do we offer hospitality to this group of people who are so keen to hear the gospel and learn more about the faith. Pat Williams has begun regular visits to the Detention Centre gathering, each time, a small group who want to talk about the Christian faith. We have bought some bibles in Farsi and are exploring how we might provide the Sunday readings in that language, but these people and their experiences are so different that it is hard to know where to begin in our care and welcome of them.

Last year the Cathedral congregation adopted a strategic plan to guide the Cathedral council and all of us as we think about how we live as church in this place. That document continues to shape us and be shaped by our experiences and conversations. The new council will begin the year by reviewing the plan and setting a course for the coming year that engages with the hopes that it expresses.

This time last year repairing the Cathedral seemed as far off as it ever has. As we begin 2011 we have over \$500,000.00 in the bank and an assurance from the builders that work will begin in March.

Following the successful applications for two major grants, we launched a public appeal in May 2010 to try and raise the other \$400,000.00 needed to do all the work recommended in the 2009 MKEA Cathedral Status Report. While we are still a long way short of the target, we have enough money to do the work that is most needed. Beginning in March, we will remove the large west-facing window and make alterations to the roof to allow a new window to be fitted in a way that won't allow water in. The new window will have a great capacity to reduce the amount of heat transmitted into the cathedral and will incorporate a section of "all weather" ventilation to allow hot air from the Cathedral to escape. We will also fully upgrade the Cathedral electrical system to bring it up to code and allow greater efficiency with energy saving lighting. Two large "high volume, low speed" fans will also be installed to move air quietly and efficiently through

the building improving comfort and reducing our reliance on air-conditioning. Finally the interior of the Cathedral will be repaired and repainted.

Unfortunately we do not currently have the funds for the addition of verandas along the Northern and Southern sides of the Cathedral. These verandas would not only improve the comfort of the Cathedral by giving extra shade to the windows, but would allow the doors to be left open when it rains and give extra space for seating for large events. I am still hopeful that we may receive further donations towards this work to allow us to complete the whole project in one go. Failing that, the verandas might form "Stage 2" of the Cathedral Project.

Of course the work on the Cathedral is only the beginning. The Cathedral Offices, toilets and kitchen all need a great deal of work and the grounds are an ongoing source of work and expense.

While clearly buildings are not what we are about, the way we care for the buildings and property we have speaks volumes to those who come. In the past 12 months the Cathedral grounds have continued to look better and better and we can take some pride in the fact that most people in Darwin are unaware of where the park stops and the Cathedral grounds begin – and we don't have the Darwin City Council's works budget!

There is always work to be done and I am always thrilled when people take the initiative and do some work around the place, whether it be in the grounds, the Memorial Garden or more mundane things like fixing shower rails or door handles. Please think about how you might assist from time to time in this ministry of care for the Cathedral and its surrounds.

Despite being somewhat pre-occupied with money and with buildings over the last 12 months, I am very aware that our business is people first and foremost and we have continued to work hard to find many different ways of engaging with many different people during the past year.

The Cathedral Seminar Series continued, a little more quietly in 2010. At the beginning of May, Fr Michael Trainor joined us from Adelaide for a day exploring new perspectives on the passion narratives and in August, Prof. Norm Habel led us through some ideas from his latest book, *An Inconvenient Text*, and some of the thinking behind the *Season of Creation* celebrated by many churches each September. We continue to attract between 30 and 40 people to these events and I know there are people who wait expectantly to hear who is coming as part of this series.

The Darwin Festival once again 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. In 2010 we hosted two significant Festival events, the *10 Swags* exhibition and a play reading focussing on the Katherine Flood Choir. *10 Swags* received a great deal of attention in the media and many positive comments from those who saw the exhibition. The *10 Swags* project strengthened our ties with the Larrakia Nation HEAL (Healthy Engagement and Assistance in the Long-grass) programme. Our partnership with the Festival also included the use of the Harbour Room for rehearsals and the loan of various pieces of Cathedral equipment. I am soon to meet with the organisers of the Festival and look forward to hearing the suggestions they have for how we might be involved in this year's event. While the programme for this year's Festival has not been finalised I am confident that we can continue to build on this partnership to strengthen our role in this high profile part of the Darwin

Calendar. I have also begun discussions with our organist Digby Barrow about the possibility of holding two afternoon recitals/concerts on the Sundays during the Festival. Perhaps we could have 'high tea' at the Cathedral to accompany a musical programme.

I have continued to work to build partnerships with other community groups and organisations and the success of this is partly seen in the number of groups that use the Cathedral facilities. There are a number of groups who regularly meet at the Cathedral: AA and Al-Anon as well as one other "twelve step" group, a prostate cancer support group and a drama group that works with long-grass people. As well, during 2010 we once again hosted the annual St John Ambulance Service, the St Vincent de Paul AGM and provided space for Anglicare meetings and the launch of a new AnglicareNT Financial Counselling and Interest-Free Loan Scheme. With the appointment of Mrs Barbara Vos as the General Manager of Brown's Mart, we have forged a strong relationship and good partnership with our neighbours across the park. We were recently successful in obtaining a grant for the purchase of 300 stackable plastic chairs to be available for groups using the Cathedral and Civic Park – this will further strengthen the relationships we have with a variety of groups around Darwin. (We are currently working to have a shipping container moved onto the Cathedral site at the rear of the offices in order that we might have somewhere to store the chairs!)

For a brief moment early in 2010 we were the focus of national attention when we hosted the military funeral for Corporal Scott Palmer. The funeral was attended by many hundreds of people and I was thrilled that a good number of Cathedral parishioners were able to be 'on deck' to assist in the smooth running of the occasion. The Military expressed their gratitude for the hospitality offered by Christ Church Cathedral in making sure everything went as planned.

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. As well as updates on what's on at the Cathedral, you can now find rosters on the website. A monthly email newsletter with smaller updates in between times also assist in keeping people informed about what we are doing. Over the last 12 months 3,712 people have visited the Cathedral website. While these people are predominantly from the Darwin area, visitors have come from 90 different countries. The top four things people look at when they come to our website are: who we are, our service times, our history and information about weddings. I am always open to suggestions about how we can make the website more 'friendly' and more useful to locals and visitors alike and what other things people would like to see on the website. 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.

We continue to be blessed with a vibrant group of children who come with joy Sunday by Sunday and whose enthusiasm is both an example and a challenge to us all. Last year The Centre for Progressive Christianity in the US published the first part of a Sunday curriculum for children, that fits well with the broad, inclusive faith we foster here at the Cathedral. It is my great hope that we will be able to begin using this curriculum this year so that our children will be further nurtured in an expression of the faith that is progressive, open and inclusive. This will also allow us to provide a more stimulating programme for the older children – while the younger ones can continue with their diversionary programme of cutting and pasting.

I was greatly encouraged last year by the number of people who participated in Lent groups and then by the diverse group of people who gathered weekly (for ten weeks) to work through Marcus Borg's book on Jesus. Borg's ideas were challenging to some and reassuring to others, but I was constantly encouraged by the respectful way that people in the group listened to each other regardless of difference. This coming year there will be further opportunities for adult Christian education, not just through our seminar series, but through smaller study groups. As previously flagged, this year we will use a study series called *Saving Jesus* as the basis for Lent discussions and then afterwards for those who wish to continue. Please let me know if there is a topic or area of discussion you would like to pursue.

Last year, I undertook to pilot a process of Ministry Review/Appraisal for the Diocese. For some years I have been concerned that there is no regular review process for clergy and church workers in this Diocese and have worked to find and, with assistance from Vivienne Hayward, further develop a suitable process. Based on a document from the Diocese of British Columbia, the process involved self-reflection, some work by parish council and then some work together with Bishop Clyde who acted as 'mentor'. While it was reasonably time-consuming, I found the process immensely valuable as it not only affirmed some positive things but gently pushed me to think about some areas where I need to do some work.

The Calendar of Events for 2011 is one direct result of the review process, giving everyone a quick overview of what is planned for the year ahead and giving me a sense of where we're going. Two key things came out of my review with the Parish Council and Bishop Clyde – firstly the difficulty I have in asking people to help and secondly the amount of time I spend being reactive rather than proactive. Last year in October, I set aside a day to sit down and plan things for 2011, the calendar came out of that planning day and will hopefully assist all of us through the year.

The review process also reminded me of the importance of making sure I set aside time during the year for a retreat. To that end I have booked to attend a retreat at Sevenhill, South Australia during the first week of August: a generous gift of frequent flier points from a friend in the U.S, means that the cost to the Cathedral is limited to the cost of the retreat itself. With a very busy year ahead, it is good for me to know that I have booked this 'time-out'.

One reason that this year will be busier for me is that Bishop Greg will be on leave for nearly four months (May - September). During that time I will assume the role of administrator of the Diocese which will involve many extra duties as I juggle the dual roles. To assist during some of this time, Neil Forgie has agreed to return to Darwin for around six weeks. Whilst I haven't yet finalised a 'job description' for Neil, I anticipate that he will assist with both Cathedral and Diocesan matters. Bishop Clyde has also offered to assist in any way that he is able and of course the indefatigable Pat Williams will be here continuing the pastoral work that is so important for our Cathedral community.

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.

Something I have been careful to include in the calendar of events for this year are a number of events that have no purpose other than bringing us together as a group for some fellowship and/or fun. These events are: the pancake tea on March 8, a BBQ in the Park on May 28, a dinner on September 2 and a lunch to celebrate our Patronal Festival in November. Amongst everything else that is happening, please make a point of supporting these things as we strengthen the sense of community here at the Cathedral.

This year we have welcomed a number of people into the Cathedral congregation and it has been a joy getting to know you little by little: each new person enriches our life together bringing new wisdom, new perspectives and new energy. It is also with sadness that we have farewelled a number of people. After being in Darwin for several years and serving as a Warden and Parish Council member, Caroline Sibson returned to Tasmania to be closer to family and old friends. Louise Maple-Brown with Simon and their boys Harry and Edward have moved to Canada for twelve months. Samantha and Duncan McLaren have also moved to Canada. 2010 also saw the death of two long-time Cathedral parishioners, Patricia Croft and Kevin Hodder. Both their funerals were wonderful expressions of the faith that was so important to them in life and were a wonderful mix of sadness and joyful hope.

The work of a priest can be lonely at times, so it is a great joy to work as part of a team at the Cathedral. Over the past 12 months Pat Williams has continued to provide me with support, wisdom and gentle encouragement as well as continuing the pastoral work that ensures people are visited at home or in hospital or receive a friendly phone call when they haven't been seen around the place for a few weeks. Pat also visits Tracy Lodge Aged Care, the prison, the hospital and more recently one of the detention centres for asylum seekers. She also works tirelessly behind the scenes at the Cathedral washing, cleaning and polishing things and taking care of many of the small details that are otherwise forgotten. Once again, I sincerely thank Pat for her greatly valued ministry in this place.

There are others, I also count as part of the 'team', who must be thanked (in no particular order). The Wardens and Parish Council have worked hard this last year as we have grappled with some difficult issues as well as the planning for the restoration and renovation work on the Cathedral. Vivienne Hayward has continued three mornings each week in the Cathedral office, making sure the phone gets answered, the pew sheet is compiled, things are filed, ordered and followed up, and other duties too numerous to mention. Bob Foster also assists in the office and keeps an eye on the grounds, Colin Clay makes sure cheques are written and bills are paid and John Whyte keeps track of the Bookshop money, what needs posting and making sure the weekly collection gets to the bank. Of course there are others – those who take their turn reading, cleaning, writing intercessions, arranging flowers, counting money, providing morning tea or assisting with children's ministry – and those who help unasked and unheralded with jobs small and large in the Cathedral or the grounds.

My thanks also go to Brother James Macdonald for his commitment to the monthly Taizé service held in the Cathedral. Through his quiet leadership, this service has become firmly established in the monthly worship cycle with up to 30 people gathering on the evening of the first Sunday of the month for this quiet contemplative worship time. This year, Br James will continue with the Taizé service while he also assists with ministry at St Luke's, Palmerston.

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. Also

wonderful last year was to have the Barrowque singers use the Cathedral for an afternoon with the music of Joseph Haydn. A great gift also is the work of the small music group that plays on the second Sunday of each month. Ang, Ken, Anne, Richard and Mike allow us to try newer worship music in a style very different from that which most parishioners have grown up with – it adds a richness to our cycle of worship that is much appreciated by many.

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, Pat Williams and Mike Nixon has ensured that there is a significant ministry presence amongst those who are in hospital or in the palliative care unit. While Pat has continued her visits to the prison, the presence of Brian Worth as chaplain to Berrimah Gaol, continues to strengthen our links with that institution.

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, 15 weddings and 19 baptisms. These pastoral services are one more opportunity for us to give Darwin community a glimpse of the welcoming and inclusive faith that underpins our life together at Christ Church Cathedral.

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, for his careful oversight of the Cathedral finances and for his courage and commitment in learning the inner workings of MYOB so that we can have clear reports and a good understanding of our financial position.

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 and community life. As I have spent much time during the past year raising funds for the Restoration Project, the bulk of the pastoral care work has been done by Pat Williams. I still 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.

I am very aware of the challenges that lie ahead – with fundraising, building work, juggling Diocesan and Cathedral roles (along with family responsibilities) – but as I begin my fourth year at the Cathedral I remain committed to being here and can think of nowhere else I'd rather be.

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

Go gently,



The Very Revd Jeremy Greaves, Dean of Darwin, March 2010