

Synod in 2018 was much less contentious than Synod 2017. In fact, for the first time EVER (well, the first time in a very long time) the business of Synod finished early on Sunday and we all got to go home at lunch. The clergy were very excited indeed. That said, many of the motions passed without much discussion, so I haven't included them in this report. If you want to know more, all of the business and minutes of Synod 2018 are on the Diocese website, so if you have further questions please don't hesitate to ask myself or Danny. I wrote this report, and as I have no real financial savvy I haven't included the financial parts. However, Danny took COMPREHENSIVE notes in this area so if finances are your interest area I'm sure he'd be happy to discuss this with you personally (possibly over a beer).

Now let's talk about the attendance numbers. Last Synod, there was much discussion and lamentation around falling attendance across the board. These trends are continuing. However, this year, before the official data was shown, The Right Rev'd J Roundhill spoke about the PMC's Parish Growth Framework. This is very accessible and easy to understand, and its on the diocese website. The framework gives recommendations for growth in different areas.

Most importantly:

4. Adopt a standard approach **to measuring health in combination with data** from the annual return - whilst also being active in sharing stories and case studies.

The important words here are "in combination" with data, as there is much going on in ministry that isn't reflected in the official numbers, which focus primarily on Average Sunday Attendance (ASA). As a Synod member, we felt that in this year's Synod there was a certain backlash towards the importance and relevance of church attendance data. The Right Rev'd J Roundhill and others asked Synod to view Parish support and growth in other ways, rather than just focussing on the negative points of straight data collection. In fact, there was lots of discussion about how we use and make sense of the data, and whether or not this data accurately describes the state of our church.

This was exemplified in motion 19, a motion that invited the PMC and the ASC to broaden their data collection and reporting to include **new ways of capturing and describing the work of faith communities** towards the five marks of mission, and to share this data at future Synods. It also asked parishes, schools and agencies to reflect on how they are participating in the mission of God outside formal worship services."

We were shown a video that should be available soon on the Diocese website about other forms of mission that are hugely successful. One parish works directly with refugees helping them to grow vegetables from their home countries. These are staple ingredients in their local foods, and being able to access these ingredients means that they can feel more comfortable and nourished in their new home environment. The refugees share meals together with parish members, creating friendship and fellowship through sharing meals and learning about different cultures. This kind of mission is difficult to "measure" in terms of reporting data. The

Mission to Seafarers was another example. Volunteers and clergy minister to a very large number of ships that come into port. We ourselves as a parish contribute to this ministry by making beanies for those men who may be away from family for months at a time. Again, this kind of mission is difficult to “measure” and report on.

Motion 19 asks parishes, schools and agencies to reflect on how they are participating in the mission of God outside formal worship services. In Grovely parish we do many things that are not captured in the data that we present to the diocese, such as Nursing home outreach, hospital chaplaincy, including after hours, spiritual direction, pastoral care, quiet mornings, being a tithing parish community (which means we give 10% of what we raise to church charities), visitations, home communion, our connection to breakfast in the park and just being available and present. This could include the work in our beautiful gardens at both churches.

Speaking of the gardens, the Angligreen motion passed at the end of Synod with a lot of support. It moved to acknowledge that that this Diocese has been slow in meeting the undertakings it made in adopting the Protection of the environment canon 2007, which is ‘to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth’. The motion explained that actual programs and targets have not been co-ordinated nor collated by the Diocese for reporting to General Synod. It also stated that the Diocesan Council, in consultation with the Social Responsibilities Committee and Angligreen, are to develop a process whereby we are able to examine our successes, our failures and ways in which we can respond to these, and that individual parishioners, every Diocesan organisation, and the Diocese as a whole commit to putting in the necessary time and energy to take seriously our care for the environment. Many speakers passionately supported this motion. I believe that Angligreen is very visible in our parish with fellow parishioner Ann Ellis encouraging us and the Sunday School, and with our important weekly messages in the pew sheet. It might be good for us as individuals to think of this extending into our homes and workplaces – how can we care for our environment further?

The Archbishop’s address spoke about The Royal Commission as it has released its final report and recommendations. He acknowledged that there were many failures throughout the Anglican Church, and that “the pain of facing those failures and that shame is great; so great that the temptation is great to regard them as a tragic chapter that’s now behind us and to move on to other important matters. We must resist that temptation. It would be a further betrayal of the survivors who, at great cost to themselves, courageously came forward and told their stories. On the basis of that courage and the comprehensive work of the Royal Commission Australia has crossed a threshold into a future in which our children will be much safer and institutions will be much more accountable for protecting them. But that future will eventuate only if we, now, have the courage to face squarely the truth the Royal Commission uncovered and implement its comprehensive recommendations.”

He gave an overview of the report from the commission, and what we’ve learned from it. He also focused on our shared government, community, institution and

individual responsibility in the future to focus on preventions, investigations, potential prosecution and sentencing, and justice and support for survivors. The commission's report gives clear details on how this can be achieved.

The report also gave specific recommendations for the Anglican Church. The Bishop's address to Synod goes into great detail about how we as a church are responding seriously to these. He mentioned particularly the start that was made last year when the General Synod passed the Safe Ministry with Children Canon as a national standard for this Church. The Synod adopted that Canon in 2017 just weeks after the General Synod and an implementation group has been working carefully since then to implement it. There are other direct recommendations for the Anglican Church and how they are being responded to. I urge you to read his address, and a copy can be found on the Anglican Diocese website.

I close with a quote from the Archbishop's address, which gives a picture of our work into the future: "Our task is to live in communion with God. When we do, God then brings together in the community of the church those who so live. People will come to faith in Christ 'when they discover inclusive churches committed to working for peace with justice; showing mercy, and engaging in the community with grace and integrity'.