

Notes from the office of the Bishop of Waikato



Welcome to this first issue of Bishop's notes for 2016!

Please feel free to print and display on your notice-board! Remember to check out the Diocesan website for news and events and resources www.waikatotaranakianglican.org.nz ; Bishop Helen-Ann is also on twitter @h_ahartley; the Diocesan Twitter feed may be found at @PeaksCurrents. Do also check out the Anglican Taonga website for other news and events www.anglicantaonga.org.nz .

If you have any items of news to bring to the Bishop's attention (significant birthdays or events in your parishes, ministry units and schools for example), please do get in touch with the Bishop's office.

By the time you receive these notes, I will have returned from my time of leave visiting family in the UK, and from preaching at the wedding of Archdeacon Sepi and Pate in Suva, Fiji. It is good to be back, and I look forward with anticipation and great hope to the year ahead. The Bishop's senior team in the north is now settled, and I am honoured to be working alongside such an experienced group of people. It is particularly good to have our new coordinators for both children and families, and youth in place: The Rev'd Ellen Bernstein, and Mr Darcy Perry. Our youth coordinator, Darcy, will have an office in Charlotte Brown House, and I am excited at the charisma, skills and experiences that he will bring to this role. In addition, our Waikato Ministry Educator, the Rev'd Stephen Black has an excellent programme of training and education for 2016 in place. I am especially delighted that the Rt Rev'd John Pritchard (the former Bishop of Oxford) will be in the Diocese immediately after GSTHW in May. Stay tuned for more about his visit.

Way Forward Report

Speaking of GSTHW, one of the key areas for discussion will be the report of the Way Forward working group. Archbishop Philip, Stephen Black and I will be working carefully to ensure that appropriate discussion and education about this important text is held throughout the Bishopric both in the run-up to GSTHW, and following it. It will be very important indeed that the *whole* document is read and understood. It is important to say also that the report needs to be set in the broader context of Communion-wide discussions, and the context of our own Province. Your prayers for all of this would be much appreciated.

Collaboration

Throughout the year, one of my foci will continue to be the encouragement of more collaborative models of sharing in mission and ministry at local and regional levels. We have a clear need to focus more resources at the local level, engaging in active community service and seeking ways of building on what God's mission is already doing. Some communities are more advanced than others in this area, and so parishes that are struggling to achieve their potential will be helped and resourced by better partnerships particularly at an archdeaconry level. Mindful of our diverse contexts, urban and rural, you may expect to see both myself and Stephen Black engaging with these in the time that I have set aside in my diary to focus on Bishopric archdeaconries for whole days at a time. These days will also give an opportunity for you to meet with me and share in reflective conversation.

Anglican schools

This year, our Anglican schools will remain a focus for my ministry, continuing to work with our chaplains and with the recently formed College of Chaplains and its Warden, the Rev'd Canon Neale Troon. During my time in the UK, I was delighted to visit an Anglican school in south London. You can read a reflection on my visit on the Diocesan website

(<http://www.waikatotaranakianglican.org.nz/latest-news/bishop-ha-goes-back-to-school>). One of

the key learning points for me from this visit, was a challenge to ensure that we all offer 'a place at the table' to those who need it. How can we find ways of doing that more intentionally?

Lent is almost upon us

Almost immediately after the feast of Candlemas (the presentation of Christ in the Temple), which was celebrated on February 2nd, we begin the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday on February 10th. The journey from birth leads quickly to our sojourn with Christ in the wilderness leading once more to the cross and resurrection. While the cross is a focal point for our devotion, the journey really begins in the realm of discipleship. 2016 is the year of focus on discipleship in our episcopal vision. Throughout Lent, I ask you to pray and to focus on your own personal journey as disciples. What does the journey feel like for you? How do you seek to disciple those around you? As an episcopal friend of mine said to me recently: Jesus brings *love* to the unlovely; *compassion* for the needy; *justice* for the victimised; *freedom* to the oppressed. That is our call of discipleship, and that is what we should be striving to do in every aspect of our lives, even in very small ways. Everything can make a difference. So, have a happy Lent! And to all of you following the Lent course from Theology House, I hope and pray that you learn and grow with it and with one another in your studies and reflections.

An additional excellent resource from the UK that I came across recently and which is designed for all-ages may be found here:

<http://www.40acts.org.uk/40acts-resources-for-groups>

And you can read a short piece on Lent that I contributed to the online youth 'Come Alive' magazine: <http://issuu.com/gretayeoman/docs/comalivfebmarch2016final>

End of Life Choice Bill submission

You may be interested to hear that both Archbishop Philip and I, along with several members of the House of Bishops signed a submission on the topic of assisted-suicide. The submission was made in response to the private member's End of Life Choice bill proposed by MP Maryan Street. The submission that I signed opposes the bill. The summary of the submission is as follows:

"While recognising the great distress of patients, families and friends with some intractable and prolonged terminal illness, it is our view that legalizing medically-assisted dying will open the gateway to many foreseen and unforeseen consequences which will be damaging to individuals and the social fabric. We recommend that provision, in terms of both palliative care and other forms of support, be provided as required."

Bishop's Diary (February 8th to 21st)

Monday 8 th	Return from Suva;
Tuesday 9 th	Various meetings throughout the day (in Hamilton); Standing Committee meeting (evening, by video-conference);
Wednesday 10 th	Ash Wednesday, beginning of Lent. Various meetings throughout the day; joint Anglican-Roman Catholic service in St Mary's Cathedral (7pm);
Thursday 11 th	Meeting of the Mission and Ministry Resourcing Sub-committee (MMRS, in Te Kuiti); evening, Board of Nominations for the vacancy in the parish of St Andrew's, Cambridge;
Friday 12 th	Planning day with Waikato Ministry Educator;
Saturday 13 th	Day off;
Sunday 14 th	Attend the induction of Andy Shudall as Head Pastor of Titirangi Baptist Church in Auckland; Parish visit to All Saints', Bryant Park;
Monday 15 th	Day off;
Tuesday 16 th	Various meetings throughout the day, including the Anglican Action Mission Trust Board;
Wednesday 17 th	Bishop of Waikato senior staff retreat, Tyburn Monastery;
Thursday 18 th	Bishop of Waikato senior staff retreat, Tyburn Monastery; evening Waikato Cathedral Board of Nominations;
Friday 19 th	Various meetings throughout the day (in Hamilton);
Saturday 20 th	Attend unveiling of the Tokanui Memorial Wall, Te Awamutu;
Sunday 21 st	Parish visit to St Andrew's, Cambridge;

Sunday Gospel thoughts

Lent 1, Sunday February 14th (Luke 4.1-13)

One of the immediately interesting features of this well-known episode is the close link that Luke places between Jesus' Baptism and his Temptation. So early on in his ministry, Jesus came under spiritual attack, and crucially, he overcame this. There is also a connection between Jesus' time in the wilderness, and that of the people of Israel who wandered in exile for 40 years. In fact this whole episode is rich with allusions to prior stories in the Old Testament. Once again, we need to read what is happening to Jesus within the context of the grand narrative of our faith. One commentator (John Nolland in the *Word Biblical Commentary*) reflects that the understanding of 'Sonship' here means that the Devil (*diabolos* in Luke's Greek) tempts Jesus to order his own affairs and tend to his own needs, rather than depend on God. In that sense, the understanding is that the Devil holds that Jesus' sonship (which is not disputed) is something to be exploited. We may want to call to mind Paul's famous Christological hymn in Philippians 2, that Jesus 'did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped' (vs. 6). Luke interestingly reverses the order of the 2nd and 3rd temptations from that of Matthew's order. There are numerous thoughts about this, with the possibility of Luke wanting to finish with a focus on Jerusalem, as the most plausible. Jesus rebuffs each attempt by the Devil to catch him out, and in each we learn something about Jesus' nature and his mission: his focus is on the Kingdom, not bread; Jesus seeks not his own glory, but that of God's alone; and Jesus seeks preservation through his death at the appointed time, not from it (as the Devil desires him to seek). The episode ends with the chilling reality that the Devil will return 'at an opportune time.'

Lent 2, Sunday February 21st (Luke 13.31-end)

Each book of the New Testament must be read within its context: historical and cultural. This is not to negate its contemporary interpretation, but rather that that interpretation must be undertaken with care. In this spirit, we gain considerably more understanding of this passage by a reminder that the first century was a time of great political unrest and uncertainty. Although the Roman Province of Judaea was considered something of a political back-water, increasing levels of unrest caused by an ever-growing divide between the rich ruling class, and the average citizen fuelled the urgent and prophetic message that Jesus announced. In this passage, it is fair to say that Herod offered no real threat to Jesus' ministry. He was, in many ways, a mere puppet of the Roman Imperial administration. So the focus here is the rejection of Jesus by the city of Jerusalem. Its leaders failed to realise that Jesus was the one to offer them protection and safety in their own precarious political relationship with Rome. This passage therefore offers us a summary of the whole of Jesus' ministry at this critical time. The very maternal image that is presented to us by Jesus of a hen gathering her brood under her wings is a helpful reminder that the power of the Gospel is as much about its capacity to nurture and protect as it is about brute force and loud words. As we journey through Lent we might reflect on how we seek to communicate the Gospel in the places where we live and work; what are the challenges we face? What are the opportunities that lie before us?

The office of the Bishop of Waikato contact details

The Right Reverend Dr Helen-Ann Hartley

bishopspa@waikatoanglican.org.nz

Bishop's PA

Jessica Perry

bishopspa@waikatoanglican.org.nz

Waikato Ministry Educator and Diocesan Director of Vocations

The Reverend Stephen Black

stephen@waikatoanglican.org.nz

Charlotte Brown House

104 Morrinsville Road

PO Box 21

Hamilton 3240

07 857 0020