

Summary of Synod 2022

THURSDAY 1 SEPTEMBER

The First Session of the Fifty-Seventh Diocesan Synod was held as an in-person event at the Cathedral, beginning on the evening of Thursday 1 September and the full day of Friday 2 September. This was a welcome return after two years of Zoom conferencing. With no bills and only eight motions, a decision had been made to reduce the Synod to one full day.



**Anglican Diocese
of Auckland**

A large group gathered in St Mary's for the opening Eucharist, at which the preacher was the City Missioner Manutaki, Helen Robinson. She spoke about the development of HomeGround, the new City Mission facilities opened recently in the CBD. She emphasised it was not only a building, but it also exemplified what the church should be – a place for all. She paid special tribute to the work of Bishop Jim White who had been involved for 17 years with the Mission's Board.

After the Eucharist, Synod adjourned to the Nave for the opening night's business, during which Bishop Ross delivered the [Bishop's Charge](#) (keynote address).

He spoke of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions and reported on the Lambeth Conference which he had just attended in the UK, including the deep divisions evident despite the call to truth and unity.

He also spoke of recent changes in the Diocese, including the appointment of The Rev'd Brenda Rockell as the Diocesan Vocational Chaplain as a move to encourage a renewed focus on ministry formation and growth in vocations.

Developments with the Selwyn Foundation and the City Mission were marked, as was the way in which the Royal Commission into Abuse in Care had interacted with the Anglican Church. Bishop Ross reported on how the tension between pastoral care and accountability was being managed and reiterated his apology to those who had been abused through the mechanisms of the Church and its people.

FRIDAY 2 SEPTEMBER

After morning prayers, the Synod heard from the Diocesan Council. Its full report is available on page 82 of the [Synod 2022 Yearbook](#).

Among a wide range of matters, health and safety including anti-bullying and harassment policies were noted, along with the associated Ripples Project.

Guidelines had been sent to the Diocese about Working Alone while a Digital Church Working Group had been established to share ideas and develop recommendations.

No audited accounts had been prepared in time for Synod. This was due to a sector-wide staffing shortage in the audit and financial sector which had affected Trust Management Ltd, who provided financial services to the Diocese.

Unusually, the agenda was set aside mid-morning to allow the House of Laity to meet separately. This meeting concerned the independent report by the Hon Rodney Hansen QC which had just been published, relating to abuse at Dilworth School and subsequent ministry appointments. (This report can be found on the diocesan website in a [news item about the deposition of Ross Browne](#).) Once the adjournment was over, a question put to the full Synod sought a process by which any clarifications could be requested, and it was advised these should be referred to the Bishop's Office.

Elections were held for vacancies on the Diocesan Council, Clergy Remuneration and Retirement Committee, and the pool of Diocesan Nominators. A trial of electronic voting using hand-held wireless devices proved sufficient for some appointments, but a decision was made to supplement this with a paper ballot in one case.

Motions covered a range of issues. Please see the first section of the [Synod 2022 Yearbook](#).

- One highlighted the maintenance challenge involved in looking after 400 buildings, including a number of heritage structures. Sites were becoming burdensome because of the increase in large-scale repairs and the impact of deferred maintenance. The Synod split into small groups to brainstorm solutions for a new funding process. As a result, a proposed property working group was expanded to include a strategic review.
- As a result of the difficulties experienced by Trust Management Ltd's accounting and financial services and the impact this had on ministry units, an independent review of TML's centralised accounting service to the Diocese was agreed upon.
- A motion seeking to review the structures of Synod to best serve the governance of the Diocese was agreed to. Group discussions on the structure of the Synod were held, and the feedback will be collated.
- Lengthy discussion followed the motion: Care of Creation – Urban Ngahere (Forests). This urged a proactive approach and encouraged ministry units to explore ways in which land under their stewardship could be used to enhance native biodiversity.
- The need for ministry units to provide intergenerational opportunities to encourage the involvement of children and young people was also agreed to.

- A motion suggesting a review of the three tikanga structure of the Anglican Church was carried, with the caveat from the Bishop that it needed to be a matter for discussion rather than one which could be decided by Tikanga Pākehā alone.

As time was running out, the final motion, expressing concern about poverty causing some children to leave school early, was forwarded to the Diocesan Council for consideration.

In the general debate (where any issue raised by any report in the Synod Yearbook can be discussed), a variety of speakers focused on issues of concern. The Assistant Chaplain of Diocesan School for Girls spoke of requests for baptism being declined at some ministry units, a concern of particular relevance at a time of falling church attendance. The work of the Te Ohu Whakawhanaunga Trust was championed, and Sarah Moss (Diocesan Ministry Educator) provided an update about Boundaries workshops.

After closing prayers and a blessing, Synod was adjourned to resume in September 2023.

Please refer to the diocesan website's [Synod page](#) for all Synod documents.

David Jamison & Julie Barnes
Synod Representatives