

Easter Vestry

Dean's Report

The Vision of an African Cathedral

Greetings and Appreciation

I greet you all in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour who calls us to worship him and to serve him.

This is my tenth month at Christ Church and the ninth month of our being a Cathedral. The time has literally flown by with the busyness of settling into a new church with its particular rhythms and routines.

I trust I am, albeit slowly, learning how you do things and following your patterns.

Both Jenny and I wish to thank you all from the very bottom of our hearts for the wonderful and warm welcome we received, and which welcome we continue to experience now. It is truly a wonderful thing to be a Christian solidly embedded within a worshipping family of fellow believers; and this has been our experience in this beautiful church filled with beautiful people.

Worship and Service

If we were to list the two most important aspects of our Christian life they would be that of worship of our Lord and Saviour, and service to his Kingdom.

God the Father created us to worship and live within his presence. This is why we boldly call ourselves sons, daughters and heirs of God, sisters and brothers to Jesus Christ. This is a high calling and is marked by our thankfulness and worship of God who so lovingly calls us to himself.

This is also why we serve him as we take both responsibility for our lives and witness to others of this loving God, calling them to commit with us to Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

This worship and service is our duty and joy (Hebrews 12:28). It is something we should do frequently and regularly. Our Sunday worship and the many duties and responsibilities in our service are a supreme example of our Cathedral worship and service in action.

A Challenge

I would like to appeal that we take our worship and our service very seriously and that we make our attendance at Cathedral services a high priority.

Attendance at church is our first duty on a Sunday. Missing a service should be the exception. Likewise, performing a duty in the service is not only a high calling but is done directly to God and for God. Missing your duty is again the exception.

An African Cathedral for an African City

I believe very strongly that Christ Church is not an ordinary Cathedral. I believe we are uniquely called by God to become a Cathedral at this particular time and for a particular purpose. I believe we are called to be an African Cathedral for an African City.

There is something unique about Polokwane and Limpopo Province. Maybe it is because we are so far north that many people do not know about us; for many South Africa ends at the Garsfontein Bridge outside Pretoria. When I tell people I live in Polokwane they look at me blankly. When I invited a youth worker to come to Tzaneen her friends asked if she would need her passport to get there.

For me Polokwane has a unique African Flair. As a city we are different to Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town – which are cities that could easily be located in any other developed country in the world. Polokwane is unique because it is the new democratic South Africa that is shaping its foundations and development. This is for me exciting and presents us with an opportunity to mould our Cathedral in a way that better represents our uniquely African city of Polokwane.

Our older Cathedrals in the Anglican Church resemble the European style with gothic architecture, narrow naves and high vaulted ceilings. We do not look like that at all. I am not against the European style, but neither am I locked into the belief that it is the only style.

So, when we desire to change our architecture let us look with fresh African eyes at what should be done. When we look to our style of service, our clerical dress and our pattern of liturgical colour in our altar linen; let us look with fresh African eyes at what should be done. When we look at how we use laity as sides-peoples, servers, readers, those who lead us in prayer, our Bible Studies and home groups, etc.; let us look with fresh African eyes at what should be done.

The vibrancy and the colour that is Africa would I believe be a start in making us unique and special should we be able to blend it into who and what we are.

Could we, should we change our style of clerical dress and altar linen? Could we, should we build a full immersion Baptismal Font in a uniquely African style? How could we identify our sides-people and other lay leaders in the service in a way that is modest and attractive and African? What ministry could we offer our city that best meets the needs of our modern and developing African Continent? Developing leaders and training our young people are two examples that sprint immediately to my mind.

These rhetorical questions are meant to get us thinking and excited at the potential that awaits us should we agree to move in this direction. They are not meant as concrete proposals, neither are they meant to terrify us at the prospect of rampant and unmerited change.

Nevertheless, there is something within me that believes God is calling us to explore what it means to be African. I believe this is an opportunity for our new Council to investigate further. I look forward to walking this explorative journey together.

Naturally, we will not rush headlong and without proper consultation. Change can be problematic and we need to seriously consider all concerns. Nor will we change purely for the sake of change; whatever we do will be because this is what God wishes us to do.

Let us begin and walk slowly and see where it is that God is leading us. This is not my Cathedral, it is our Cathedral. Whatever we do will honour all who call this church home.

In Conclusion

All that we have achieved thus far is as a result of the involvement of many, and I wish to thank you for your assistance and wisdom in this regard. From the Wardens and Council, to the pastoral and administrative staff, to the various groups who work tirelessly to make our services happen; a very big thanks to you all.

Finally to my wife a jolly big thank you for your support and encouragement, and for keeping me on the straight and narrow.

May God bless us all and may we follow him in all he does.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Pretorius". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Luke Pretorius

Dean, Christ Church Cathedral