

**Annual Vestry Report**  
**Dean of Christ Church Cathedral**  
**2014**

I stand before you once again to present my report to this meeting of the Christ Church Cathedral Annual Vestry Meeting. Together we all stand before our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who is not only here as lord of this church, but also as lord of our lives, and who is the light we follow as we move forward to the future God has prepared for us.

**By Faith**

Acknowledging the past and preparing for the future requires trust and faith. The writer to the Hebrews expresses it this way;

***11** Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.  
<sup>2</sup>This is what the ancients were commended for. <sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.  
<sup>39</sup> These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. <sup>40</sup> God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. (Hebrews 11:1–3, 39-40)*

This scripture, understood in our modern context, shows that the building of the church is a process begun by those who have gone before us and is to be continued by us today in order that we all may enjoy the benefits in the future. This moving forward following the lead of Christ is an expression of faith because often we are not sure of all the details and what the future will look like, but we nevertheless resolutely seek to obey Christ.

**Moving Forward but Not Rushing**

The forward movement and growth of any church is a God given imperative, but this does not imply an inordinate rush. It is my experience that we seek a balance; a moving and growing that is sustainable and gracious to all concerned.

For some any movement is threatening. For others change is something to be strived for. These two polar views create stress in the life of the church as one group slows us down while the other group pulls us forward. Effective leadership will listen to both views but ultimately listens to God and trusts their instincts and wisdom – this is after all why they were elected as leaders.

Our mandate from God is to grow this church in a way that is ordered and brave. Ordered in that we move with due diligence and caution; brave in that we will follow God as he leads.

I am very proud and grateful for our Cathedral Council. They epitomise, to the best of their abilities, this leadership in the life of our church.

### **Achievements in 2013**

Since my report on the 24<sup>th</sup> February last year I can report the following developments.

1. Sub-Dean and Mrs Mudzvovera retired fully from active service and returned to Zimbabwe. We will miss Philemon and I again thank him, and thank God for him, for his incredible ministry amongst us.
2. We also saw the departure of Revd Malin Mokou who has taken up the position of assistant Priest, self-supporting, in Lebowakgomo. Revd Shearsby and Beauty Mupfudzapake and their family accepted a call to be Rector of St. Luke's Parish in Namakgale/Phalaborwa. We wish them every success in their new ministry.
3. The Cathedral purchased its very first Deanery.
4. Our curate, soon to be priested, Revd Kwena Makgoka married the beautiful Sibongile Buthelezi and moved into the recently vacated Rectory. We congratulate them both and assure them of our prayers for their future ministry together.
5. Council and vestry debated the merits of converting the rectory into a Parish Centre and using it for office space. This was received with caution by some and we have accordingly placed further development of this idea on hold while we explore alternate arrangements.
6. We developed a website for the cathedral. The address is advertised on all our correspondence and on the pew bulletin. I encourage you to make use of it and to give suggestions.
7. We also subscribed to a professional, church-developed data base into which our parishioners have been loaded. This data base complies with pending government regulations on the safe-keeping of private information, and gives each member access to their personal record with an opportunity to update it. Those with an email address will by now have received notification of this with their personal login details. We wish to keep this record up to date and appeal that whenever you change any personal information you please alert us.
8. We ran ALPHA courses but unfortunately had limited attendance. We are planning to continue with courses this year and are exploring the viability of running a marriage course and resuming ALPHA again next year.
9. The youth group is an important and growing ministry and one which I wish to expand in the future.
10. We have expanded the Soup Kitchen by a further two days and now offer soup Monday to Thursday. Friday is excluded because many of those seeking employment return home over the weekend. We are struggling to keep this ministry regular and to offer proper commitment to those who come for feeding.
11. Sunday school is under new management. Revd Pat Lennox asked that he be permitted to relinquish control as his Diocesan work load grows, and Busi and Jenny have taken up this important ministry and are offering a class at each service and are following a prepared lesson plan. They require more helpers and would love to hear from you if you are willing to help or have questions to ask.
12. We have established a programme of Thursday Ministry Training. These training sessions are held once a month and seek to provide ongoing training to the various ministries and functions of the church.
13. Lay Minister Training now occurs every quarter for existing and new lay ministers. We are following the Diocesan training program which consists of three year-long modules. These modules are; worship leading, pastoral care and preaching.

I trust these thirteen examples afford an opportunity to see that we are busy.

## **Plans for 2014**

As we stand at the threshold of this New Year we will continue the ministries already established and look to focus on new areas. I accordingly share with you the current vision plan before council.

It is our conviction that there are six strategic areas before us in this New Year. Each can be broken into subsidiary ministries. It is impossible that we will complete all, but we believe they express God's vision for us for 2014 and beyond. The six areas are;

1. Young People
  - a. Youth Group → This is established and growing. More can be done.
  - b. Youth Pastor / Children's Worker → This is an urgent future need.
  - c. Sunday School → This is now established.
  - d. Servers' Guild → This is still to be achieved.
  - e. Young Adults → This is still to be achieved, although some work has begun.
  
2. Prophetic Witness and Involvement
  - a. Women → Our Preaching Theme will be focusing more on this. More can be done.
  - b. OVC → This ministry falls into the scope of another ministry.
  - c. Renewal (AA, New Wine, Iviyo, Soma) → The Diocese offers a mini AA Conference every year. The Cathedral will host the conference for this year, scheduled for 17-19 October. This is over and above of the large AA Conference scheduled for July in Johannesburg.
  - d. Men's Guild → Planning for this is now happening.
  - e. Providing Greater Assistance to CoGS (Ext 44)
  - f. Homework Club & Extra Lessons → There is a massive need to help our young people so that they are better prepared for Matric and tertiary education.
  
3. Preaching and Teaching
  - a. Sunday Sermon Series → We have begun.
  - b. Wednesday Evening Teaching Service → This is happening and should grow.
  - c. Thursday Ministry Training → This began last year, and will continue more formally this year. We seek to provide ongoing training for the various ministries and functions taking place in the church.
  
4. Missions and Church Planting

We are exploring taking our church on mission, and of having mission teams come to us. This is a wonderful way to grow our faith.

We are also looking to plant new churches and any opportunity before us will be explored.
  
5. Built Environment
  - a. Fence and Gates → There is a desire that we improve upon the existing shoddy fencing and gates around the car park. A recent attempted break-in at the church reinforces the urgency of this need.
  - b. Parish Centre → How best do we utilise our existing infrastructure on this property.

- c. General Maintenance → We must continually evaluate all current and future maintenance needs and seek to protect our infrastructure. Currently we have an annual roof inspection and cleaning of gutters and valleys. In this we are grateful for the assistance of Mr John Wright. Painting, security and lighting are other areas receiving constant attention.
  - d. Beautification of Church Interior → We meet every Sunday for worship and invite our friends into this same building; what impression do we give when light bulbs are blown, the carpet is tatty and crooked and painting requires attention. We have straightened the carpet and continue to examine other needs in the church.
6. Church Services and Administration
- a. Music and Musicians → There are many important components to a successful church service; Music is one of the more important. What more can be done to establish this ministry?
  - b. Worship → Are our services adequately meeting the diverse needs of our congregation? Could we develop more services to meet new needs?
  - c. Technology → Does our amplification and projection work and how can we record the sermons?
  - d. Choir → There is a desire for a choir by some; does this express the need by the majority? How can we build our choir?
  - e. Wards / Clusters → This is an effective manner in which to meet the needs of our people and to communicate more effectively with them. I would like to see such a development happen as soon as possible.

This list covers a wide and diverse field of opportunity. They are both exciting and challenging and will stretch our faith as we develop them. This cannot be achieved by the council alone and will require commitment and support from all who call the cathedral home.

In what area would you like to become more involved?

### **Important Long Term Plans for 2014 and Beyond**

The focus areas outlined above will inspire and lead us for many years to come. There are some that I expect will take more than this current year to bring to full fruition, and which I believe are necessary for the future ministry of the cathedral.

I see these as being;

1. Growing Our Clerical Complement  
Having lost Philemon we as a matter of urgency need to seek God's will for a suitable Sub-Dean replacement. This comes at a cost and requires a person of comparable skills and gifts. If not a sub-dean then we require a good assistant priest. This need is before council and the Bishop. Total annual cost-to-company for a priest is approximately a quarter of a million rand. This is money we do not have due to the current poor level of giving.
2. Accommodation and Transport  
As we grow our clerical complement so we will require accommodation and transport. Do we rent or do we buy?

We recently purchased the Deanery and have a bond with the Diocese for R900 000 over twenty years. We also borrowed from our own savings an amount of R200 000. There is no reason why we cannot pay all of this off in a much shorter period of time. In this way we do not cripple ourselves with debt and we release ourselves to purchase again when required.

3. Youth Pastor

If we are to take our young people seriously we need to invest in them. A good youth pastor is invaluable in growing our young people ministry. Growing this ministry is vital to the long term sustainability of this church. I would love to see us employ a youth pastor from January of next year. Again, this will require money; something we do not have much of.

4. Parish Centre

At present we have a trade-off by using living space for office space. As we grow our clerical complement and possibly engage the services of a youth pastor we will need to expand the office space and living space.

5. Wards / Clusters

The cathedral congregation is approximately 400 people spread over a wide geographic area. Polokwane is expanding and so too will our congregation. One of the best methods of reaching our people will be to group them into smaller units. I am planning that we begin implementation of this this year.

### **Of Critical Necessity**

None of our plans will come to fruition if we do not prayerfully seek the will of God. I ask that we all undertake to be prayerful and obedient to God not only in our personal lives but in our corporate life as Christ Church Cathedral.

Neither will our plans bear fruit if we do not commit of our time and our money to support the ministry of this cathedral. Our giving at present is dismal. Whilst some give generously and regularly others give nothing at all and yet others promise much but give less and sporadically.

Overall we are struggling to meet our normal monthly commitments and certainly cannot with any surety of long-term sustainability develop future ministry.

We will continue to work hard to increase the giving by our members. We send out four letters a year detailing what money we have received from each person and ask that people commit to give what they have promised, and that they promise to give generously to their God through their giving to their church. I appeal to you all again to seriously reconsider your giving to this church and to then prayerfully ask God if he approves of your decision.

### **Scary Big Future**

As I reflect on what I have written in this report I am struck by just how big the challenge is before us. It could all too easily appear too big and we give-up and do nothing.

But, from experience, I know that our God is bigger than any of our problems and challenges. God does not expect us to achieve this all by ourselves; he asks only that we begin and that

we do our best. God then comes alongside us and he does the hard work. This is a significant part of what the reading from Hebrews is teaching us.

### **Guarantee of Success**

Christ Church Cathedral will be guaranteed of success if we take seriously our membership of this cathedral and we give the proper tithes to God and commit to supporting the ministry endeavours before us.

Will you do that?

### **Diocesan Work**

My work with Bishop Martin continues to grow and this at times takes me out of our Sunday services. I believe this is an important aspect of what we as a cathedral offer to the Diocese.

### **In Conclusion**

It remains only for me to express my appreciation for the hard work done by so many in the running of this cathedral. Without your involvement and commitment we would not have achieved much at all. This note of appreciation includes all who perform a ministry, and to our former Sub-Dean, Curate, and church staff.

In particular, I express my gratitude to my wife and partner in ministry, Jenny. Without whose support and encouragement I would not achieve half of what I do. Thank you.

Lastly, I remain excited and committed to the ministry potential that lies before us. I believe we have an incredible opportunity for ministry to our community. This potential can only be fully realised if we all work together as a team, and if we hold ourselves and our elected leaders accountable, and support one another.

Thank you for allowing me to be your Dean and for your support.

May God bless and guide us all.

Luke Pretorius

Dean, Christ Church Cathedral