



Synod of Otago & Southland

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Evan Parry House, 43 Princes St, PO Box 1131, Dunedin 9015

26 March 2021

Dear All,

Six months have passed since I wrote to you and we have been through Covid-19 Alert Level 2 twice since then. Our world has become a different place in a very short time. This reminds us of our mortality and the need to be diligent in sharing the gospel with those around us as our world looks for answers. Many of you will have had to reassess how you do work and what you spend your free time on. You may also have had financial constraints and many of you will have had to do church differently. Can I encourage you through all of these things to keep your eyes on Jesus.

Synod Executive and Synod Committees have also had to adjust how they meet and some of the priorities both now and into the future.

In my last letter I mentioned some important issues for the Synod Executive going forward and I just want to update you so that you are kept informed. I also want to say that there are some things in the process of due diligence that cannot be shared until the appropriate time. For this I ask that you be patient and trust your Executive to bring all the relevant information to you at the right time. Please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Officer Fergus and/or one of the convenors – John Daniel, Peter Dunn, John Willis - if you have concerns.

UPDATES

Synod AGM - This is taking place in Invercargill on the 16 & 17th of April. If you want to come you need to register as soon as possible. Please contact Fergus Sime our Executive Officer at synod.otago.southland@xtra.co.nz for registration details.

At the meeting I will be handing over to Debra Clark who will be leading us as our Moderator for the next two years. Please pray that Covid-19 doesn't interrupt our gathering together.

Funding - All the committees have met and after prayer and deliberations have put forward their recommendations to be approved at the AGM. These will be in the 'White Book' and are confidential until approved.

Staff - Our staff are employed to serve you. Please contact them if you need their assistance. We have said goodbye to Cheryl Harray and Rachel Bates this year. Together with Presbytery we are in the process of finding a replacement for Cheryl.

Synod's Home Premises - The lease on the current premises we are working from runs out in February 2022. Along with the Trust Board and Presbytery we are looking for a new property to work from. Covid-19 has not made it easy for us to move this forward.

Bequest - We received a bequest and with legal advice have been formulating some guidelines to help us to know how best to deal with this and any future bequests.

Synod Regulations - For some years now we have been working on collating and updating them. Work continues on this and progress will be reported at the AGM.

Otago Foundation Trust Board - The relationship that we have with the Trust Board is I believe a very good one. I do want to say that the Trust Board do a wonderful job of administering the funds for us to distribute to our beneficiaries. They have done so again in a year with extreme volatility and uncertainty. My thanks for this go to the Trust Board.

Executive - As a Synod we have an extremely dedicated Executive Committee. They work tirelessly to serve the purposes of the Synod and all that it does to enable the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to be shared to those in the south and further afield. While some processes seem slow, be assured that we have a great team serving us. So please can I ask you again to trust the system and continue to trust your Executive. Do remember to uphold them in your prayers, as they hold you in theirs.

Finally - This will be my last letter as Moderator. I have written them to try and keep you informed of some of the topics that are being dealt with. It has truly been a privilege to serve you as Moderator for the past two years.

Yours in Christ

Mark Heslip
Moderator of Synod of Otago and Southland