

7 April 2020

Dear Cathedral people,

Our new reality is sinking in daily, and it's so strange to be walking the dog around nearly deserted streets and scrupulously skirting the few people we do see. On the other hand, I saw friends talking back and forth across the Marewa stream from the comfort of their portable chairs, and next-door neighbours having a chinwag across the distance of their two driveways. It's amazing how much has changed and how totally mundane things like a supermarket trip now have to be carefully managed without becoming overwhelming.

It's probably less than a month since I first heard the term "Zoom meeting" and shortly after, experienced it at the Diocesan Centre for the first time. Some of you will have had similar experiences in the workplace of late.

I didn't think I was going to embark on the very steep learning curve involved in setting up meetings and designing services for them, not to mention the people clamouring to resolve their issues with the new technology. I am maybe one step ahead and no more. As Bishop Andrew has recently observed, Zoom meetings can be very demanding (conducting the liturgy, enabling participation, doing the checks for readiness, policing the room for microphone violators and remembering to monitor one's own vocal participation). Our first live service for Palm Sunday went off quite well all things considered but we hit a snag about an hour before we were due to start. Although I'm sure I set the meeting up to not require a password, all of a sudden a password requirement appeared and we tried very hard to let people know this via email. We still had more than 40 participants though. It's my goal for the next service to be easy for everyone to access (i.e. no password). That service will be on Good Friday afternoon. The tradition is to conclude at 3.00pm. Zoom is free to use for up to 40 minutes at a time, so we will have 30 minutes of reflection and worship for Good Friday starting at **2.30pm**. Give yourself an extra 5 minutes to enter the meeting.

There will also be a Zoom service at 10.00am on Easter Day and once again you will be able to access the service material via email to use at a different time of the day if you wish.

The colours for Easter Day are white (and gold), so you might like to create an arrangement as a background to your camera. (But you don't need a cam to participate).

We normally would be hosting the Renewal of Ordination vows with Bishop Andrew at this time, and this too will be a Zoom meeting at 2.45pm today.

I know we are all learning how to stay in touch via the new technology but here are some guidelines for Zoom meeting etiquette:

The host will probably have muted your microphone automatically upon entering the meeting, or soon after. However, people who enter the meeting late may have their microphones on and may possibly be conversing with someone at home, which will

interfere with the host's audio. A note from the Diocese says:” With regards to meeting protocols, it is appreciated if everyone mutes themselves when they join the meeting. This means that any background noise in your home isn't shared with everyone (i.e. phones ringing, dogs barking, general family noises). If you wish to say something, if the host allows, please raise your hand clearly indicating you wish to speak.”

Unfortunately we can't all join in with responses and hymns with our mikes on because Zoom is designed for one speaker at a time only. This is particularly important for a large group: Zoom reacts to the person speaking by switching to their camera, which is clever, but chaotic as numbers increase.

I would greatly appreciate you continuing to reach out to those who do not have the internet, perhaps sharing with them something from one of the services you have been part of.

I am looking forward (not without trepidation!) to sharing our forthcoming worship opportunities with you.

And I'd also like to thank Michael Morgan for hosting a parish “Virtual Cuppa” via Zoom as a follow-on to our Palm Sunday service.

Kia manawanui (be steadfast),

May you know God's peace in the midst of lockdown!

Dean Ian