



Announcement made at the 10:00am Sunday Liturgy

I am standing before you today to announce I have advised Bishop Peter and Chapter that I have decided to lay down my calling to be the Dean of Christchurch and to resign from this ministry. Elizabeth and I have made this decision together after a great deal of prayer and discernment.

This is not a decision Elizabeth and I have taken lightly. The primary driver, to quote Jacinda Adern, is that I no longer have the gas in tank to do this job justice over the next five years until we return to the Cathedral in the Square. I need to be able to give more time to Elizabeth and Aidan and his wife Sarah, who deserve more of my attention. I also need to take care of my own well-being.

My time in this role is coming up to eight years. It has been a privilege to serve here. We have had lots of fun, but there have also been big challenges. The truth is that I have been running at more than full capacity since the 2010 earthquake, during which I have had various roles including as a Church Property Trustee where there was a heavy earthquake recovery workload. I have served on two school boards where the effects of earthquake trauma have created tough and challenging situations to work through. The mosque shooting was also a period of challenge and as Dean I was a key player in the ecumenical and interfaith relationships that helped co-ordinate a response from the Christian churches. The period post 2010 has been like running a long marathon, and it is time now for me and Elizabeth to stop and take stock. This includes ensuring Elizabeth and I can afford to retire when that time comes.

I want to honour Elizabeth who has worked tirelessly beside me and has been my biggest supporter. There is a great deal that needs to be said about her

contribution in the areas of children's ministry, discipleship development, pastoral care, community development with the Christchurch City Council, and project management of new cube offices, and more. There will be time for that later, but today I want to acknowledge that I could not have fulfilled my role without her support.

My priorities have been to make this Cathedral unashamedly a house of prayer, and place of hospitality, so that when people come here, they find only the love and hospitality of God. My prayer is that in this place, all who come here know God's love in a way that is so real it can be tasted, like honey from the rock.

I will remain Dean of Christchurch until 10 August 2023, but in the meantime I will be using up my study leave which will begin after Easter, during which I will be discerning where God wants me to go next. I will co-operate with Bishop Peter on ministry arrangements for the Cathedral going forward. I will remain fully involved and committed to the Cathedral Grammar School Board.

I commit myself to praying for this Cathedral community, in particular our beloved staff team I have had the privilege of working alongside. They are a committed group of talented people who work tirelessly and beyond the call of duty for this Cathedral. Naturally I will pray for all our volunteers, and above all, for the Holy People of God who worship here day by day and week by week.

I commit myself also to praying for Bishop Peter and Chapter as they discern the way ahead. And I ask for your prayers for Elizabeth and me as I seek secular employment opportunities and look for a new home.

I remain utterly supportive of this Cathedral and the faithful here, and will continue praying for God's blessing on the Cathedral Reinstatement Project.

Thank you.

Dean Lawrence

The Fifth Sunday in Lent, 2023.