

Adelaide Anglican Synod opens with a focus on unity and mission

The Diocese of Adelaideâ??s forty-sixth Synod opened on Friday evening, 17 October, 2025, with a Eucharist at St Peterâ??s Cathedral marking the start of a significant weekend for the Anglican Church in South Australia and the last synod for Archbishop Geoffrey Smith before his retirement.

In his Presidentâ??s Address, delivered Saturday morning, Archbishop Smith used his final opportunity on the synod floor to reinforce core principles of unity and mission, framing the churchâ??s work through the concept of â??synodalityâ?• â?? being â??together on the roadâ?•.

The Archbishop, who is set to lay up his pastoral staff on 1 November, acknowledged the challenges facing Christianity in contemporary Australia, noting a popular culture that often â??mocks and deridesâ?• the faith.

He countered this narrative by highlighting research that strongly connects active faith practice and church attendance to positive outcomes, citing the National Church Life Survey (NCLS) finding that Christianity is â??good for individuals and good for our societyâ?•.

â??Itâ??s easy to believe the popular message that derides Christianity and, in response, lose confidence and withdraw,â?• Archbishop Smith said, before offering five points on how the church must live in this context.

These included living the faith with integrity, vigour and commitment, and being outward-looking and welcoming.

He emphasised the necessity of Christian unity, urging members not to give people â??more reasons to discount our messageâ?• by publicly criticising one another.

He also highlighted key areas of diocesan growth and focus, including the positive results of the Hope25 national evangelism project and the surging popularity of lay ministry education offered through St Barnabas College.

Programs like the Archbishopâ??s Certificate units â?? covering topics from Handling the Bible to Understanding Pastoral Care â?? have seen high enrolment numbers, indicating a â??growing hunger for learning and enthusiasmâ?• among the laity.

At the Synod Eucharist on Friday evening, the Reverend David Covington-Groth was collated as Archdeacon of Torrens and four area deans were commissioned â?? the Reverend Stephen Bloor for Adelaide, the Reverend Michael Lane for Sturt, the Reverend Dr Jospeh Chung for the Para and the Reverend Dr Matthew Anstey for Torrens.

At the service four members of the Diocese received the Diocesan Extraordinary Service Award, sometimes known as the â??Archbishopâ??s Pinâ?•.

The 2025 recipients, honoured for their remarkable voluntary lay service, are:

Sandy Mitchell, a Synod member for 50 years, recognised for extensive service across committees and councils, including three trienniums on the Bishop Nomination Committee.

Grant Chapman, for his long-standing work as Chair of Committees, Anglicare Board member, and service as Peopleâ??s Warden and Treasurer at St Matthewâ??s, Kensington.

Catherine Feriks, a Synod member of 20 years, who serves as a licensed lay assistant and member of the Provincial Council.

Ian Gray, acknowledged for over 20 years on Synod, extensive involvement with St Barnabas College, and service on numerous diocesan boards and committees.



From left: Sandy Mitchell, Grant Chapman, Catherine Feriks, and Ian Gray receive their pin from the Archbishop

In his earlier Pastoral Letter to the Diocese, Archbishop Smith confirmed that this meeting of the Synod would be his last as President.

â??I expect that this will be my last pastoral letter as Archbishop of Adelaide,â?• he wrote, adding that it had been a great privilege to serve as the tenth Bishop of Adelaide. He concluded his final address to the Synod with a prayer from Ephesians, expressing his hope for the body to be â??rooted and grounded in loveâ?•.

The full text of Archbishop Smithâ??s Synod address can be downloaded here.

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