

2 December 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

First I want to thank you for the incredible privilege and honour you have bestowed on me by electing me as your next Bishop. My prayer has been that I would receive whatever outcome of the election as God's gift to me. I am humbled by His gift and pray that I might be faithful and honour God in the trust you have put in me for this role.

Helen and I are feeling excited and very blessed to be entering into this next phase of life and ministry. But I must say I am also feeling a little daunted; the ordinal is right in describing the role as "weighty". But we know that God has gone before us, and we can trust Him for our future together with you.

Back in 1990 we had our first holiday in Tasmania and I bought a limited edition hand coloured print of an 1851 map of Tasmania, which has hung in our lounge room ever since. I bought it because we loved Tasmania, I love maps, and it is really beautiful. But of course, now I see how God has kept this special part of Australia in our hearts all these years, and has now given us the precious gift of coming to join you in ministry there.

Helen and I both come from Brisbane where we grew up, and have slowly been working our way down the east coast of Australia. For me, university in Armidale NSW, study in Melbourne, early ministry in Murwillumbah in northern NSW, then working at Ridley College and St Jude's in Melbourne, and now Tasmania. A warning: we may be on the way to Antarctica!

Helen comes from a Christian family like me, and we have been married for 25 years this year. She trained as a Doctor in Brisbane (doing an elective in Hobart in 1986 for a few months!) and has worked as a GP for all of our married life. She is a wonderful Mum to our two kids, loves to read, play tennis, travel and experience the beauty of nature. She is incredibly hospitable, and is the loveliest person that I know.

We have two young adult children; Sarah, who will be 22 in a couple of weeks is studying International Studies at RMIT in Melbourne, and Matt who is 19 and after a gap year this year, will commence Industrial Design at RMIT next year. They are both looking for somewhere to live in Melbourne, and we will be very sad to leave them. They are delightful young people, and are both keen to come and do some bushwalking in Tasmania. (Matt and I walked the Overland Track in 2014).

My great passions in ministry are seeing local churches flourish, and church agencies reach their full potential in serving God in the world. We have such a great gospel to both proclaim and live out in our daily lives, and I long to see us all continuing to influence our communities with this gospel in a lively and engaging way. I am passionate about sharing the good news of God's love so that men and women, boys and girls, come to know Jesus as their saviour. And I am also passionate about the church standing for justice, for the oppressed and marginalised, and showing God's love through our deeds of compassion and mercy.

Over the last 13 years, I have had the privilege of leading St Jude's Church in Carlton. It is a large inner city church of 6 different congregations, and over 20 staff. God has been so kind in blessing our ministry to children and youth, families, students, singles, marrieds and workers, residents of the public housing estate, many migrants, refugees and international students. Under God we have sent men and women into ordained ministry, people to global mission field, and equipped many others to serve God in the everyday world of

their work and neighbourhoods. St Jude's has planted a number of congregations in Melbourne and has partnered with a couple of others for their revitalisation.

I have also worked as Archdeacon of Melbourne, looking after 17 parishes in the inner city. While the role is primarily around property and temporal matters, this is all done with a view to stimulate mission across a wide variety of churches of different sizes and styles.

I am now looking forward to coming among you to bring all these experiences, and to use the gifts and skills that God has given me, to encourage and help equip you in this great gospel task of winning Tasmania for Christ through our words and work, in the power of his Spirit.

In Philippians 1, Paul writes:

I thank my God every time I remember you, 4 constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, 5 because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. 7 It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. 9 And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight 10 to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, 11 having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

This text says a lot about how I am thinking about you and the ministry we will do together.

On my part:

- thanking God for you
- constantly praying with joy for all of you
- being in gospel partnership, where we strive together in this task
- confident that God will be faithful in bringing his work in Tasmania to completion
- longing for you with Christ's compassion
- and praying that your love may overflow, that you may know His will, and be found pure and blameless on the day of Christ, with a harvest of righteousness.

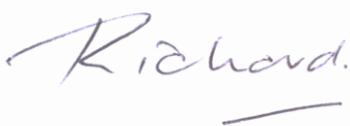
On your part, I ask that you will hold us in your hearts (and prayers) as we share God's grace, and as I defend and uphold the gospel among you. (We might leave the "imprisonment" for another day!)

Thank you once again for this privilege, and for the many warm wishes we have already received.

Between now and the end of January, I will be working hard at St Jude's to prepare for a transition for them. Please pray for them and for us (it is a very emotional time), that God will protect His church in Carlton. From February 1st to March 19th, we will take some holidays, move house and prepare for this new ministry. We look forward to meeting many of you at St David's on March 19, 2016 at 11am.

The Diocesan Office will handle all my communications over this time, so please don't hesitate to get in touch with them.

Warm wishes in Christ,



Richard Condie