

My thanks to those members of Parish Council and Churchwardens who were able to attend the joint planning session with the Wardens and Parish Council of Christ Church, South Yarra last Sunday afternoon. Under the guidance of Mr Jamie Miller, a review of the Covenant was undertaken, with some difficult truths being named, and affirming qualities of the Covenant celebrated. The group then identified a number of ways in which they saw the Covenant being further deepened, as new initiatives were proposed.

These initiatives will become the agenda items for the *Achieving More Together* committee to discuss in the coming months. For example, it became evident that those present wanted more done together in the area of pastoral care. Whilst acknowledging that there are significant differences between the two parishes, and far from wanting a “one size fits all” approach, training and equipping parishioners from both parishes to be more effective and pastoral in their care of one another is clearly an important aspect of our communal life, and it is this training and equipping that could probably be better done together. (please refer to the further summary of proceedings provided by Jamie, on page 15 of this pewsheet – this summary is also included in the notices at CCSY this morning).

It was also wonderful to see a good number of parishioners present at Choral Evensong on Sunday night. As well as being the first of the regular joint Evensong services for the year, it was also the launch of the ABM Lent Appeal. As such, the Chair of the ABM board, Bishop Garry Weatherill, preached at the service. In his sermon he reflected on two main aspects of Lent. Firstly, he highlighted the way in which our church year has a distinctive pattern, which repeats in a cyclical manner. However he implored us to think of the cycle as being more like a spiral than just a circle, reminding us that we never arrive at the same place (the beginning of Lent, for example) as exactly the same people. Rather we are called to go more deeply into the cycle of birth, death, and resurrection each time we experience it.

Then, in quoting the prophet Leunig, we were reminded of how Lent calls us to the “slow footpath” of life, rather than the bustling pace at which most of us live our lives. In Lent, especially, this is important, as it enables us to travel more slowly and experience things more deeply. The Bishop finally urged us to consider supporting the three ABM projects which are a focus this Lent – Indigenous ministry in the Northern Territory; Gender and governance in Zambia; and Church growth in the Philippines.

May George Herbert, Chad of Lichfield, and all the Saints walk with you this week...

*Sam*