



THANK YOU

In my first message as Vicar at the Cathedral Family Camp in 2015, I referenced to Hebrews 10:24,25. I shared on how we were looking forward to growing in our faith along with the Cathedral community. We will stir one other to "love and good works."

Indeed, this five-year journey has been an enriching experience. I have learned so much about my faith, pastoring, the church community and leadership. The friendships that we have forged are enriching. I have enjoyed immensely working with my fellow clergy, deaconesses, staff and lay leaders.

Truth be told, I thought that I would be staying longer and perhaps even retire here as my last station, given my age and season in life. As I shared at the start of this year, I felt I had finally settled down and could count SAC as my home church and family. That was of course before I knew of my posting and yes, none of us could predict that 2020 would be a pandemic year.

My view of ministry has always been longterm and it has been so in the way I pastored and led the work here. I was also taking my time to form friendships and build trust, person by person, in what is obviously a large parish with



dispersed communities. Added to that, in some significant ways, the Cathedral stood still this year. There are many members whom I have not met in person for many months now.

And so, if it is hard to say goodbye, indeed it is even harder in such a time. Like a song which is stopped halfway, truncation; ministry or friendship-wise; will undoubtedly accompany every change of parish leadership.

You have heard me say, "Love deeply, but hold lightly." I will certainly pass the latter with flying colours but I am less sure about the first part. And so, if in any way I have been less a pastor or brother to you, do accept my sincere apologies. I am quite sure that these misgivings do happen in the line of duty. Charles Mackay's quote comes to mind:

"He who has mingled in the fray of duty that the brave endure, must have made foes. If you have none, small is the work

that you have done ... You've never turned the wrong to right. You've been a coward in the fight."

In church work, the fight is never against one another, for we have a far sinister common enemy. Every ministry initiative and dream were attempts to help Cathedral find a cutting edge, to grow into her calling and be more luminous in a dark world.

This I can say from the depths of my heart. That I have dreamed of a warm, loving, welcoming community with an influence that reaches far and wide, whether politicians or blue-collar workers, whether cosmopolitan latte "city-zens" or "kopi kau" heartlanders. I have dreamed of an Anglican Church which plays no second fiddle to the attractive independent church upstarts which are gathering in conference halls around us. And a Cathedral which is flourishing in her church music, liturgy and arts which plays non second fiddle to more established churches like our Roman Catholic counterparts. The idea is not to compete with them but to discover our own confidence, calling, place and responsibility as an Anglican Church, rich in history but alive to a modern and fast-changing world. Situated right at the heart of the city, our bequeathed historical cross-shaped property can be just a monument to history. Or it can be a monument to a living God, with her bells fully ringing with gospel proclamation in this city. If statistic matters, the growth in our services in the last five years may well indicate that in some ways, some good seeds were growing and taking shape.

And so, we say goodbye. Saddened because of bonds of love but unshaken in faith. That He will continue to build His Church. That whether Paul or Apollos (1 Corinthians 3:5-9), we are merely co-labourers for God. We can have every confidence in the renewed team led by Revd Lewis Lew that He will fulfil His purpose. Like Prophet Moses who could not enter the Promise Land or King David who was not allowed to build the temple, we clergy will always know that the work is far larger than our gifts and far longer than our life-spans. Like a relay race, we are to be faithful in running each leg and to pass the baton well when it is time.

Meanwhile, there are lights that need to be lit in every corner of this city. Pray for me that I will remain faithful in shining a light in the east. And as for you, please be faithful in doing your part to build up this precious body of Christ that St Andrew's Cathedral is.

I will always thank God for every remembrance of each of you.

It has been a rich privilege to journey with you.

THANK YOU.

Love in Christ,

Terry and Jennifer Wong