

THE WITNESS

Te Kitenga - Te Amorangi O Whakatū



NEW REST HOME CHAPLAINS

8 new chaplains trained by the diocese have been sent out to serve in rest homes.

NEURODIVERGENCE AT CHURCH

Being in an Anglican church can have advantages for the neurodivergent person.

'GUD NIUS' IN THE AWATERE

Something remarkable has been happening among seasonal workers in the Awaterere.

RUNANGA HEALING ROOMS

As well as praying for those who come to the rooms, they intercede for the whole community.

AND MORE



**Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we
profess, for he who promised is faithful.**

Hebrews 10:23

Cover photo taken in Appleby by Petra Oomen.

Published by the Nelson Anglican Diocese, February 2026. Edited and designed by Petra Oomen.

Printed by Printhouse Nelson Ltd.

Contents

News from around the diocese	04
Fighting the good fight against sepsis Petra Oomen	06
Nelson Tasman Rest Home Chaplaincy's 8 new chaplains Liesel de Kriek	07
Learning the 'gud nius' in the Awatere Rev Spanky Moore	09
Neurodivergence at church Karen Elliott	10
3 things pigeons and pétanque taught me about church Rev Spanky Moore	14
Healing Rooms bring hope, comfort and love in Runanga Carolyn Killick	17
Ministry Encounter team crosses cultures in Fiji Rev Brad Wood	19
For the prosperity of the city: a social services reflection Jason Shaw	22

News from around the diocese

Liesel de Kriek is appointed as ministry coordinator for older persons



Liesel de Kriek started working for the diocese as ministry coordinator for older persons services in October 2025. Liesel was born in South Africa and has been a high school maths teacher for 35 years. She and her husband Peter have two adult children. She has a passion for intergenerational connection both within and beyond church walls, and making sure people are heard and valued, whatever stage of life they are in.

Liesel is continuing to grow the chaplaincy ministry with volunteer chaplains in rest homes, and meeting elder care workers across the diocese, finding out what support they need in each unique context.

Rev Paul Milson is appointed as ministry coordinator for social services

On 3 February Rev Paul Milson began his new role in the diocese as ministry coordinator for social services. Many will know Paul from his time as vicar in Waimea Parish, but prior to that he has worked in the social services sector with both Richmond Waimea Youth Trust and the Gateway Housing Trust. He and his wife Mel are based in Brightwater and have three children and a new grandson. Paul is passionate about mission and introducing people to the love of Jesus.

In his role, Paul will be at the interface of parish ministry and community need, supporting social services that reach the lost, last, and least in our mission field.



Revs Emily and Andrew Spence to be vicars at Motueka Parish

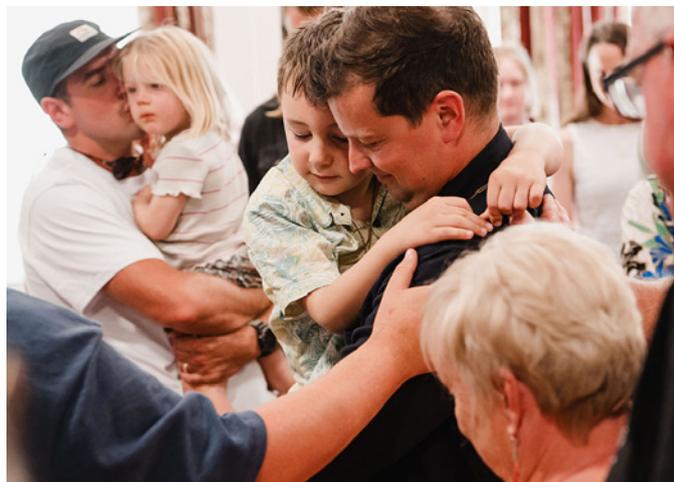
Andrew and Emily Spence will begin as new vicars of Motueka Parish in April 2026. The Spences are passionate about discipleship, hospitality, and helping the church flourish in its mission. They bring extensive experience from youth and children's ministry in the Christchurch and Wellington dioceses, as well as co-leadership across

several Anglican parishes. Andrew offers strengths in preaching, visioning, systems, and missional leadership, while Emily brings a pastoral heart, strategic insight, creativity in worship, and the ability to connect deeply with people of all ages. They have three young boys.

Rev Brad Wood is inducted as vicar at Waimea Parish

At the start of February 2026, Rev Brad Wood and his whānau were welcomed into the Brightwater Anglican Churches community (Waimea Parish) as he was installed as vicar.

Since being ordained as a priest in 2018, most of Brad's time has been spent focusing on the care of young people and the development of youth workers as the diocesan youth ministry enabler. He will continue in this role part time alongside his new position as vicar of Waimea Parish.



It was quite overwhelming to see who had gathered – people from all kinds of different seasons of my life. It was humbling to see those people gather to celebrate and support this new season for the parish.

I'm really excited for what God has planned for Waimea Parish. I come after a long line of vicars that have done faithful work here. I'm so thankful for the work they've done and that I get to participate in the continuing of that.

Rev Brad Wood

All Saints partner with Atawhai

In response to the bishop's call for parishes to work in partnership for revitalisation, we are excited to announce a new collaborative venture in the Nelson deanery.

All Saints have said "yes" to this call and will adapt a "resource church" model by which new mission in Atawhai at St Peter's will begin. Under the leadership of Rev Tim Bustin, the new expression of ministry and mission will carry the call and kaupapa of All Saints: to be a church "for the good of the city". At the heart of this initiative is their commitment to see Nelson flourish through encountering the good news of Jesus and the goodness of God.

The first steps in the initiative will be prayer, discernment and a community needs assessment. These will then inform the design of the first steps to the mission.

Amanda Poil has said yes to the bishop's invitation to take up a part-time community worker role for Atawhai and join the All Saints staff team. This is alongside her current role as coordinator for children and families ministry in the diocese.





BARNEY HOSSAIN, 10

Fighting the good fight against sepsis

Petra Oomen | Published 4 December 2025

“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young,” the apostle Paul told a young Timothy, “but set an example for the believers” (1 Tim 4:12).

10-year-old Barney Hossain is proof that you don’t have to be a grown up to make a difference, having raised thousands of dollars to go towards sepsis awareness.

Sepsis shook the Hossain whānau after Barney was hospitalised with it last year.

An uncontrolled immune response to infection, sepsis can occur in anyone – up to 50,000 New Zealanders contract it every year. It’s a life-threatening condition that needs quick treatment, but it can be hard to recognise.

Sepsis Trust NZ is a charity which works to raise awareness of the signs of sepsis in both the general public and amongst health professionals. When I spoke to Barney, he told me he raised money “so they could get more awareness and they could tell more people”.

He raised over \$6,000 for Sepsis Trust by brewing pink tea and baking pink cookies – “a lot of cookies,” his mother Ally adds.

Health advocacy runs in the family. Barney’s father, Mark, is a general practitioner, and after last year’s harrowing encounter with sepsis, Ally is now the newly appointed CEO for Sepsis Trust NZ, having previously been its communications and engagement director.

The Hossain whānau have also been connected to Nelson Cathedral for the past five years. Ally and Mark are choristers, and Barney is involved with the kids’ church.

Ally was eager to express her gratitude for the cathedral’s “love, support and encouragement”. The community prayed for Barney’s recovery while cathedral dean Graham O’Brien regularly checked in. “It was very uplifting,” Ally said. “It’s such a warm and welcoming community.”

On one of the main days of Barney’s fundraising this year, he was also able to run his stall at Nelson Cathedral at the end of both services.

When I asked Barney what he wanted to say to Kōrero readers, he replied, “Thank you to everyone who supported me, and thank you God for leading me in my path to getting here right now.”

So, keep an eye out for sepsis the next time you or a loved one suffer an infection – it is treatable! But it’s tricky to spot, and the quicker it’s treated, the better the outcome. If you’re ever concerned, you can just ring emergency services and ask: “Could it be sepsis?”

Visit the Sepsis Trust NZ website for a host of resources and information: www.sepsis.org.nz. ♥



PHOTOS BY PETRA OOMEN

Nelson Tasman Rest Home Chaplaincy celebrates 8 new chaplains

Liesel de Kriek | Published 6 November 2025

Eight new rest home chaplains – Bernie Leckie, Carol Barker, Caroline Gordon, Heidi Iseli-Strasser, Jane Jensen, Lenore Lawrence, Nadine Hinton, and Rachel Graham – graduated on Wednesday afternoon. These lovely people follow a training programme which includes aspects such as boundaries, death, grief and loss, listening, self-care and the process of change.

They are now attached to a rest home or care facility where they offer a few hours a week of engaging with people – residents, staff and families.

Nelson Tasman Rest Home Chaplaincy is an interdenominational group, trained by the Nelson Diocese to serve the entire rest home community. The focus is on connecting with, engaged listening to, and supporting each person on their life walk.

The speakers were Atje Faber and Jan Northfield, who explained how the ministry was born about four years ago and has grown to 17 active chaplains attached to 11 facilities. The concept of God creating us for connection was constantly repeated throughout the morning.

The following is what one of the graduates, Jane Jensen, shared to celebrate the day:

Over the past 18 months, I have learned, reflected, and grown – guided by our workshop training, our monthly peer support programme and thoughtful leaders. This combination taught me the value of true presence, compassionate listening, and delight in spending time with senior citizens.

As I look back on this journey, I'm reminded of the words in Philippians 1:6: "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

This verse reminds us that the work we begin as chaplains – in care facilities or churches – is not just ours. It is God's work through us. We are simply his vessels of comfort, love, and peace.

During my training, I was inspired by the seniors in my church community. I saw their quiet resilience, their deep faith, and sometimes, their loneliness. I realised that what I was learning could bless them too. And so, out of that inspiration, the



CHAPLAIN ROAD UKULELE PLAYERS



CHAPLAINS IN PRAYER

“Happily Ever After” programme was born – a year consisting of 45 meetings designed to walk with seniors through life’s later chapters with dignity, faith, and joy.

We’ve talked about moving, facing poor health, grief, and finding support. We’ve created together, through creative memories, advance care plans, and planning our own services. We’ve learned how to visit the ill effectively and how to offer pastoral care that truly supports loving fellowship.

It has been a privilege to walk beside them, to laugh, cry, and pray together. And through it all, I’ve learned that chaplaincy is not about having all the answers, it’s about showing up – with love.

In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Paul writes: “Praise be to the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”

That is the heart of chaplaincy – to pass on the comfort we have received.

May we go forth with open hearts and willing hands. May we continue to bring hope into care homes, hospitals, and communities. And may the Lord strengthen us to be his light wherever there is darkness, his peace wherever there is pain, and his love wherever there is need. ♥



SOCIAL SERVICES COORDINATOR JASON SHAW CONGRATULATES CHAPLAIN JANE JENSEN



Learning the ‘gud nius’ in the Awatere

Rev Spanky Moore | Published 9 October 2025

When you think of the Awatere Valley, most people picture vineyards and long rows of grapevines bending in the wind. But over the past few months, in the evenings at the workers’ accommodation quarters, something remarkable has been happening: groups of RSE (Recognised Seasonal Employer) workers gathering around the Bible – in two languages.

Rev John Phillips, the minister at Awatere Parish, didn’t set out to launch a ministry like this. “It takes a while to build trust,” he explained to me. “One group, from Papua New Guinea, were back for their second season, so I asked if they’d like to do some Bible studies. The other group, from Vanuatu, was led by a brother in Christ, Patrick, who has a long history with our church. He invited me to lead some studies with the RSE household he looks after.”

Rather than rolling out the standard videos and workbooks, John used studies adapted for people learning in their second language. “I started with an app called *Gud Nius Blong Jisas Kris* – a Bislama-language app – so the guys knew I wasn’t bringing a false gospel,” John said.

He also used the *Christianity Explored Universal Edition*, which removes the very British videos, rewriting the material in simple English for cross-cultural groups. Later, they moved on to *Discipleship Explored*, which connected well with the group.

Each group required a different approach.

The Papua New Guinea group often have teachers from Australia who don’t speak Tok Pijin, the common language there. When that happens, the teacher teaches in English and the group discusses in Tok Pijin, with the stronger English speakers helping the others learn. The Vanuatu group had a wide range of English ability and wanted to use their Bislama Bibles. They weren’t used to discussing the Bible, so we would read it in Bislama and English, then I’d ask questions. Patrick would explain in Bislama and often preached the message at the end. Over time the group began to discuss in Bislama and then check back with me in English.

Part of the unique dynamic of John’s experience has been that he’s had to be a student at the same time as being a leader. “It’s important for my brothers to see ‘the pastor’ struggling to learn some basics,” he laughed.

I love singing heartfelt praise and worship songs in Bislama with them. I’ve learned to say *gudnit* in the evenings and discovered little gems like *tok strong* – which means “rebuke”. We’ve even had to talk through key terms that don’t translate directly. In Bislama, for example, “heart” doesn’t carry the metaphorical sense it does in English, so to love God with all your heart becomes loving him with all your *tingting* (mind), *spirit* (soul), and *beli* (belly).

What’s stayed with him are the faces. “I’ve loved hearing Patrick explain the gospel in Bislama to his household and challenge them to share the ‘gud nius’ when they go home. I’ve rejoiced at the joy I’ve seen on their faces as they reflect on the good news. One of the Papua New Guinea lads is a youth leader back home. He took a study guide and some manuals with him, determined to lead a study when he returned. That’s really exciting.”

John’s encouragement is this: “If anyone out there feels a call to mission, come to the wild lands of the Awatere, learn Bislama, and share the *gud nius*.”

After all, as his brothers in Christ would say: *Hae God, i got pawa, i strong, yumi pikinini blong hem* (Our God is powerful and strong – we are his children). ♥



Different brains in the body of Christ: neurodivergence at church

Karen Elliott | Published 11 December 2025

Disclaimer: I'm writing this article based on information I have gathered from various neurodivergent people, from podcasts I've listened to, books and articles I've read. I am in no way a professional in the area of neurodivergence. I am also not neurodivergent myself - I'm what my family call "a normie!" (neurotypical).

For anyone under the age of 50, neurodivergence is probably a familiar term. For those under the age of 20, it's a term you've probably grown up with. But for those over the age of 50 it's likely unfamiliar unless you're in a medical profession or education.

So what is neurodivergence? First off, it is not a disability! It is a difference in the way the brain processes certain things.

Neurodivergence (ND) comes in many forms: autism (Autism Spectrum Disorder - ASD), attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia,

dysgraphia, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), to name a few.

People who are neurodivergent have their strengths and weaknesses, just as neurotypical people do, however we live in a society that is largely geared towards the neurotypical and so many neurodivergent people have learned to conform or "mask" in order to fit the expectations of our society. Have you ever had to pretend you're something you're not to try to fit in? It's exhausting!

In August 2025, the Centre for Christian Living in Sydney published an excellent three-part podcast called "Neurodivergence and the Christian Life". Over three episodes, they explore neurodivergence, consider what the Bible has to say about it, and what it means for our Christian life and experience.

Talking about models in which neurodivergence has been viewed historically, one of their guests notes that the model that is missing is the biblical and theological model. Kate Morris says, "What we actually need is a world that approaches everyone

in the 1 Corinthians 12 sense of us humans being created by God. Christians are one in the body of Christ with all of our differences, and we are called to love and serve each other in this interdependent relationship where, together, we're dependent on Christ for salvation, on God, for grace, on the Holy Spirit for renewal, maturity, and together working to glorify God."

For those of us who are neurotypical, going to church on a Sunday may present the usual challenges: getting there on time, the lack of desire to go, not liking the music or liturgy that week, having to sit somewhere different because someone is in our normal seat, etc. For the neurodivergent person who experiences those same challenges, they are navigating a mental jungle-gym as they attempt to respond in a "normal" manner to these kinds of variances, which non-ND people take in their stride. This is where a little understanding of what a person who has ADHD, ASD, or another neurodivergence will go a long way.

I asked four people I know who are neurodivergent some questions to help those of us who aren't ND to grasp a little bit of what it might be like for a ND person to be at church week after week. I also hope this helps ND people feel less alone in their church whānau.

David is 18 and has Autism Spectrum Disorder and Anxiety.

Oli is 31 and has ADHD.

William is 14 and has ADHD and Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD).

Faith is 23 and has ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder.

What's something you appreciate about going to your church?

D: For me it's the community at church, especially youth group.

O: I love gathering with God's people to hear his Word, sing his praises, and share his supper together!

W: The sermons.

F: It's a safe judgement-free environment where I don't have to mask or be anxious about how I am. It's not loud or over stimulating. I know what

is going to happen in a service and if there is anything that could potentially make church and that Sunday difficult my minister will let me know so I can mentally and emotionally prepare.

It's also very Bible-based, and the Scriptures directly relate to what we are talking about. When the preacher starts with an outline of what to expect with different bullet points clearly explained directly related to the text it means I know what's coming and I don't have to try and guess. Having so much based on the Bible means the message is clear cut and I can understand what's happening.

Neurodivergent people love going to church for the same reasons as the neurotypical! It's biblical that we meet to spur one another on in our faith (Heb 10:24-35), and hear the Word taught.

What do you think are your strengths?

D: I am loyal and intelligent. I am a sponge of information.

O: I'm not sure there are any strengths involved with an attention deficit, but it does keep me aware of my limits and makes it super clear when I'm not trying to listen.

W: Intelligence.

F: Despite being ND and struggling with social settings I find I can talk to almost anyone. And I am quite good at getting things done when they need to be done (e.g. producing written content for church). I'm quite creative so I find that I am able to channel that when needed. I also understand and recognise other ND individuals and when they are struggling or needing help. So we are able to support each other.

Neurodivergent people are often highly intelligent and have a wealth of knowledge on particular subjects. They often are aware of people "like" them and are able to engage with other ND people well.

What do you think are your weaknesses?

D: I get stressed and anxious around unknown things and situations, especially around social interactions with strangers. I struggle when I am given a lot of tasks to do all at once.

O: I have a real difficulty paying attention when people are talking, and threading together

complex ideas.

W: Listening.

F: I don't like busy settings, loud environments, or changes to routine. I get very very anxious which can make coming to church quite difficult. I often get up during the service as I can't sit still. So I need to move around, fidget etc.

We all have weaknesses, no matter our neurodiversity. It's interesting to see the common themes here of anxiety with unknown social situations, change, and difficulty in paying attention or listening.

Is there a way that your "weakness" makes Sundays at church difficult?

D: I struggle with social interactions with people I don't know well. I like going to services where I know people.

O: Absolutely, church is full of meaningful interactions which I find very easy to miss. But for me it's pretty clear when I'm being lazy and letting things go awry, and when I'm using my faculties as I should be.

W: It is difficult to actively listen to the sermon.

F: I have been to a few churches since becoming Christian at 17, and I find loud, bright, and other over stimulating things nervewracking. My

current church is the only church I've felt fully comfortable to be myself and embrace my quirks and weaknesses. I don't like overly "emotional" environments, e.g. changing to low lighting, the music team strumming on the guitar while praying.

Neurodivergent people are well aware of their weaknesses – perhaps more than the neurotypical person. They find church difficult for some of the same reasons they enjoy going in the first place: being with people and hearing the Word taught!

Is there a way that your "strength" makes Sunday's at church a joy?

D: I enjoy learning more about the Bible and discussing that knowledge with friends.

O: I don't think so, for me the joy is when I am actively engaged in church life. I think it is definitely true that ADHD shows me I am part of a fallen world, and that alone I have no way of having a relationship with God. In that sense, it does point me to Jesus, and he is the ultimate source of joy!

W: It is easy to understand what is being taught (mostly).

F: I can connect well with lots of different people, and enjoy seeing my work being used (the



written content), even though a lot of the time people don't know that I do that. With fidgeting and walking around a lot I get to sit with lots of different people.

Because neurodivergent people are often highly intelligent, hearing the word taught makes church a joy. Turning up and being engaged in church life is important.

What's one thing you would want a neurotypical person to know about church on Sunday for you?

D's Mum: As a mother of a neurodivergent child I think one of the things that is helpful for David is the predictability of how the service is set out. It is also helpful for David to be made aware if there are going to be any major changes to a service, like a fire drill during this service.

O: I would just want them to see me as their brother in Christ. We all – whether circumstantially, physically, or mentally – have tough things we bring to church with us. I wouldn't want them thinking that we were somehow totally different!

W: I listen while doing something else – it might look like I'm not paying attention but I am still taking in everything. This might be doodling in my journal or squeezing a squishy toy.

F: If I'm having a bad day, or I shut down, it's not because of them. It's simply that I am outside of my window of tolerance and can't take any more. And if you can see I have shut down or am struggling and I am doing that around you, it means I'm comfortable with you and don't need to "mask" my way through. This truly shows a church family.

Neurodivergent people might not look or behave in the way neurotypical people would expect in church, but they are still taking everything in.

Being in an Anglican church can have some real advantages for the neurodivergent person, who often likes predictability, set patterns of worship, responses held in common and more traditional song patterns. As a denomination that has historically valued preaching to heads and hearts, having a logical flow is also helpful to the neurodivergent person, whereas abstract ideas and informal worship can create anxiety.

Some simple things such as the service leader and preacher outlining where they are "going", having a sermon outline and/or notes, and creating a culture where there is less sensory stimulation could be greatly beneficial for the neurodivergent person in your church.

In terms of the social aspect of gathering on a Sunday, can we see someone who is on the edge? Why not approach them, or look for someone who knows that person to introduce you. If you sense they're up for it, invite them into a pre-existing conversation. Often Neurodivergent people have deep insights, but really struggle to initiate conversation.

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27

Whatever our neurodiversity, it is important for us to remember this foundational truth of all humanity: we are made in the image of God.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Psalms 139:14

It is no mistake that some of us are neurotypical and some are neurodivergent. God created us that way in our mother's womb, and we can praise him because of it.

I hope that as you read this article and reflect on the truth of the Scriptures, whether you are neurotypical or neurodivergent, you will be able to go to church this Sunday a little bit more aware of the people in the pews next to you, and how you can love and care for them as your brother or sister in Christ. ♥



3 things pigeons and pétanque taught me about church

Rev Spanky Moore | Published 20 November 2025

As a kid I was a serial hobby fanatic. Every week I had some new fad I'd become obsessed with. I was always on the hunt for that special activity, something I could dedicate my life and pocket money to.

Kite flying.

Parrot breeding.

Miniature model tank wargaming.

Cartooning.

Marching band drumming.

Archery.

Homemade fireworks.

I'd start them all, thinking I'd finally found "the thing". But after a few weeks of enthusiasm, my energy would fade. Nothing ever stuck.

Fast forward 35 years, and I'm now an adult who often struggles to rest, relax and recreate. And so this year I decided to once again go in search of a life giving hobby. One fateful night I prayed, *God,*

the next thing that piques my interest, I'm going to stop overthinking and I'll take it on as my hobby.

In hindsight that was a dangerous prayer to pray! To my shock – and to my friends' amusement – the two things that grabbed my attention that week were a) pigeon racing (via an interview on Radio New Zealand) and b) pétanque (via a Facebook group that popped up on my feed).

Okay God, I prayed that week, These aren't quite the kind of things I'd expected. But I've struggled looking for a way to Sabbath for long enough... Let's give them a go.

But the thing that surprised me the most about pursuing these two new hobbies – which I knew virtually nothing about – has been the experience of being the "newbie". I hadn't realised this until now, but in most areas of my life, I'm used to staying in my comfort zone and knowing how all the things work.

Especially when it comes to church stuff.

I'm someone who's pretty comfortable walking into any flavour of church. It could be a hanging from the chandeliers Pentecostal worship night, an Eastern Orthodox church in another language, an Anglo-Catholic liturgical service thick with incense, or a contemplative Celtic service with people sitting silently in a circle. I'm used to being an ecclesial expert! Or at least knowing the territory well enough to not feel intimidated.

Not so much when it came to these new worlds of pigeon racing and pétanque. Suddenly I was the person who knew nothing! I felt vulnerable, exposed, nervous... Even stupid.

I remember sitting in my car the first time I turned up to the pétanque court. I watched the people playing from a distance and almost chickened out altogether. It took much more courage than I had ever expected to walk up to 12 strangers, wearing various championship pins, to gingerly ask if I could join in.

It made me realise, this must be how it feels when someone decides to turn up to one of our services for the first time. It's a huge step of courage to walk into a church when you know little or nothing about faith, but for whatever reason, your interest in Jesus has been piqued.

So let me share three things I've learnt on how we can receive first-timers on a Sunday, from my

experience of being a newbie in the weird worlds of fast birds and flying boules.

A person of peace

In both clubs when I first turned up there has been a "person of peace" who has welcomed me, helped me navigate some of the interesting personalities in the club, and gone out of their way to explain the basics without making me feel like an idiot. They've shown an interest in me, being hugely encouraging from the moment I arrived, and taken me as I am. Being a newbie, I felt so appreciative of those people who looked after me till I found my feet.

It made me wonder...

Who are the people in our own churches who are gifted at welcoming people in this way?

Because these "people of peace" can be the difference between someone coming back again next Sunday or deciding to run for the hills.

Absorbing the awkward

I discovered in each club there was a whole new world of insider language, unspoken protocols, and a unique culture.

I remember trying to hold a pigeon for the first time as a chap handed me a bird. It wiggled around and



I almost let it go. The club members looked at each other with a smirk, and I felt quite embarrassed. But then an old chap reassured me “It’s okay mate. We’ve all had to hold a bird for the first time... Ya hold it like this.” I remember as they loaded the birds into the hampers for a race, they’d hold each bird and assess them, using lingo I had no clue what meant.

“That one’s a bit doughy... But this one’s way too corky! He’s like a flying meatloaf!”

But rather than leaving me feeling like I was a total idiot and an outsider, each person took turns explaining what things meant, how things worked, teaching me the basics, and sharing their passion in easy to understand ways. They absorbed the awkwardness for me – helping me catch their passion, rather than feel intimidated by the amount of stuff I didn’t know.

It made me wonder...

How can we do the same for new people when they arrive at our churches?

How can we help them navigate some of our insider language and the strange things we do, so they first and foremost catch our passion for Jesus, rather than feeling overwhelmed by our quirks?

Going the extra mile

Lastly, I discovered that in each club there was someone who was so passionate about seeing me “catch the bug” of the hobby that they were willing to go the extra mile to help me get involved.

Zay is a pigeon evangelist, and about the kindest man you’ve ever met. He’s given me pigeons to get me started, come to my house to help me set up my loft, given me nesting boxes, and even shared his top secret bird seed mix with me. Zay has been willing to do anything to help me have a positive experience as a newbie.

Without Zay I doubt I’d have stuck around. He’s the ultimate pigeon racing disciple maker. Not only that – Zay has taught me a lot about our club’s culture, and I’ve noticed that I’m now doing the same to help welcome new club members. I want to help them out like Zay helped me. It’s contagious.

It made me wonder...

When someone new visits on a Sunday, who do we have in our churches who are willing and able to go the extra mile to connect with our new visitors beyond Sunday?

To go the extra mile, and to show them what our faith is all about, so they feel supported and catch the Good News?

My prayer and hope is that our churches would become places where we have “people of peace” ready to welcome, congregations who are willing to “absorb the awkward”, and passionate Christians who are willing to “go the extra mile” for those who have taken the courageous move of stepping onto our turf.

After all, if people can get this passionate about introducing others to pigeons and pétanque... Surely we can do the same when introducing people to Jesus! 



Healing Rooms bring hope, comfort and love in Runanga

Carolyn Killick | Published 10 November 2025

The story began in Spokane in Washington, US, in 1915, when John G. Lake opened what he called “Healing Rooms” in downtown premises. 100,000 documented healings took place. His vision was to see healing rooms in every city of the world but he died before his dream could be realised.

In 1996, a bored church leader was impacted by the Holy Spirit to move to Spokane, and there he learned of the ministry of John G. Lake and Healing Rooms. Praying in the same places as Lake had, Cal Pierce was led by the Lord to recommence the ministry which had flourished there. They were able to open up in the very same location that John Lake had used and having trained some people, they began to minister, seeing many healed.

The ministry has since spread widely across the world, including to Australia and New Zealand. Our vision here is to see Healing Rooms in every town on the West Coast.

Runanga Healing Rooms opened for ministry in July 2025, but the story for the Runanga Rooms began in Dargaville, where I was, for a short time before moving to Greymouth, part of a Healing Rooms ministry there. I had not thought of having the ministry on the West Coast, being too involved in making a home here, until, at a prayer meeting at Holy Trinity Greymouth, during a time of silent waiting, one woman received a word from the Lord: “healing”. Immediately I knew. Healing Rooms! And the vision was born.

A couple of years of thinking, talking and praying about the possibility followed, but I had no idea of where, who or how until, over coffee, I mentioned the idea to a friend who lives in Runanga. She drew my attention to an article in the Greymouth Star from June 2024 about the old disused services building being made available to a Runanga group for community activities by the Greymouth Council. I knew that was the green light, and that was where our ministry would take shape.

I shared the vision with Sophia Newman, friend and peoples’ warden of the Cobden-Runanga Parish. Sophia and her husband Brian had recently moved to Cobden. They had joined OSL (Order of St Luke) in Westport and believed they would be involved in healing ministry in some way. Sophia and I presented our idea about Runanga Healing Rooms

to the Cobden-Runanga vicar, Ven Tim Mora. Tim was receptive and laid out the conditions and requirements for his support which we appreciated and were happy to agree to. I wrote out the vision with input from Sophia and Brian. It was presented to the parish vestry in August and their approval was given.

We were on our way!

Through the whole process, we were led step-by-step, and our next step was to locate and contact the current director of Healing Rooms NZ, Rhonda Puddle. Rhonda, who is in Hamilton, sent me the information I needed and promised to come to run a training day for us in Cobden. After consultation with Tim, this was set for November.

Runanga Healing Rooms would be the first on the West Coast!

About 20 people from across the denominations attended that training day run by Rhonda, supported by John Daysh from the Wellington Cathedral Healing Rooms, and hosted by the parish. From that, two groups were formed – one for Sunday afternoon sessions and the other for evenings. Both teams began to meet weekly for prayer and to learn the Healing Rooms way of ministry.

The ministry is based very much on Scripture, prayer and seeking the Holy Spirit's presence and leading. It's a team ministry, usually with someone leading prayer, another person supporting in prayer, and a scribe, with the rest of the team interceding in a separate space. Each person who wanted to be involved was required to do the Safe Here training, to have references and a police check plus having read the Healing Rooms manual.

Our two groups met weekly, transferring to the Community House at Runanga towards the end of February, as generous permission had been given by the committee there. We knew the Potter was moulding us for his purposes, so we were not in a rush, using the time to build the teams, to pray for one another and to grow.

Since opening in July, we have continued two sessions weekly, Sunday afternoon and Wednesday evening. As well as praying for those who come to the rooms, we intercede for each other and for the whole community. Presently, we are in the process of forming guidelines for home visits.

It is a joy and privilege to be an instrument of the Father's love to those who come. We have seen people leave after prayer, relieved and encouraged and blessed.

Sometimes they return for more because of the love of Jesus they have experienced.

It is such a blessing to see that God is moving in our healing rooms. Our hope is that this will continue to bless and encourage our communities, making the love of Jesus more tangible and available. ♥



LEVI, BRAD AND WILL SNORKELLING AT SOUTH SEA ISLAND

Ministry Encounter team crosses cultures in Fiji

Brad Wood | Published 18 December 2025

The Fiji Ministry Encounter Trip 2025 was, by all accounts, an incredible success. A group of nine rangatahi (youth), young adults, and leaders travelled to Fiji as part of the Nelson Anglican Diocese's ongoing partnership with Tikanga Pasifika. This was the second visit to Dreketi, and it was powerful to see how deeply the relationships and learning have grown since the first exchange.

The team was made up of Luke Watts, Levi Petterson, Ruby Hughes, Ethan Rutherford, Hana Wood, Will Poil, Renata van der Wal, Marzi van der Mark and myself.

Preparation played a key role in the experience. The team met monthly for six months before the trip, alongside a weekend training retreat, which helped form strong relationships and prepare everyone for the cultural, spiritual, and practical aspects of the journey. It felt like God had put the right people



BUILDING WITH MOBILE MISSION MAINTENANCE FIJI

together at the right time. It was awesome to see everyone engaging fully in everything we did.

One of the most significant outcomes of the trip was the strengthening of cross-cultural relationships between Anglicans in Aotearoa, particularly within the Nelson Diocese, and our Polynesian Anglican brothers and sisters in Fiji. There was a strong sense of mutual learning and shared faith. For many of the team, seeing God at work in both big and small moments was deeply formative. Hana Wood reflected, "I saw God at work through the little moments. It was such a testament to how personal God is and how well he knows each of us. Seeing the youth two years later, they are walking testimonies of God's provision and faithfulness."



RIVER DAY TRIP WITH DREKETI YOUTH

Time spent in Dreketi visiting elderly parishioners was especially moving. The team visited people in their homes, including one woman who had been living in a tent for five years after her house was damaged by flooding and cyclones. Sharing kōrero, prayer, and kai together was emotional for both the visitors and the hosts, highlighting the power of presence and relationship. Hospitality was a constant theme throughout the trip. Levi Petterson shared, “The Fijian people were incredibly welcoming and hospitable, especially in the Dreketi

parish. Some people even took time off work just to spend time with us. That generosity really stood out.” Luke Watts also noticed the strong sense of whānau. “Life felt so family-oriented. People did everything together, and even just walking through town, everyone would say ‘Bula’ and you’d say it back. It felt so warm and welcoming.”

Practical service was another key part of the encounter. The team spent a day helping NZCMS Mission Partners Rachael and Roy from Mobile Mission Maintenance build a house for an elderly woman connected to the ministry. Mixing and pouring concrete alongside local builders Frank and Atu was a powerful example of shared work and humility. Renata recalled, “They told us the work we did in a couple of hours would have taken them about a week on their own. They were so grateful we pitched in.”

Levi added, “It was incredible to see how something small for us made such a big difference for her. Her faith was amazing.”

Another highlight for many was a day spent at the river in Dreketi. Will Poil shared, “We spent the afternoon connecting with people, travelling by boat to different homes along the river, and hearing how people live off the land and water. Watching



RIVER SAFARI WITH DREKETI YOUTH



CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS IN DREKETI

the youth jump off the boat into the river felt like we were being welcomed into everyday life.”

A particularly significant moment of the trip was the visit to St Christopher’s Home in Suva. The team spent the day playing games, sharing Bible stories, singing, dancing, and simply being present with the children and young people who live there. It was a really special time together. Everyone got involved, whether that was sport, stories, or testimonies. Marzi van der Mark, who helped lead a testimony workshop alongside Hana, described a moment of unexpected grace. “We were talking about how testimonies are about both big and small moments, and then the police arrived with gifts. It felt like such a clear picture of God at work in simple, unexpected ways.”

At its heart, the Fiji Ministry Encounter was about discipleship and cross-cultural mission.

It gave young people space to grow in confidence, faith, and leadership, while strengthening long-standing Anglican relationships across cultures. It was also about going as Jesus’ hands and feet, seeing where God is already at work, and joining in with humility and joy.

The trip would not have been possible without generous support. Special thanks to the Henry and William Williams Trust for their funding, to Bishop Steve, Simon Martin and the diocese admin team for their support, to NZCMS, to Cassie and Takape Kamunaga for their guidance and cultural wisdom, and to Sai from the Parish of the Holy Cross in Dreketi for his incredible hospitality and leadership.

Most of all, I give thanks to Jesus, who continues to call, shape, and send his people, drawing whānau together across oceans, cultures, and communities. ♥



For the prosperity of the city: a social services reflection

Jason Shaw | Published 11 December 2025

I'm a staunch believer that wherever we go, whatever field we work in, we are all missionaries, carrying Christ's light.

Having handed in my resignation as the ministry coordinator of social services, to jet off to Tonga, I'm not handing in my resignation to Christ's mission of reconciliation and transformation. This continues wherever or whatever I find myself doing.

In the last two years, I've been encouraged and challenged in my role in this diocese – allow me to share my musings as I pass this baton on to the next coordinator.

When I was young, the *Left Behind* books were all the rage in Christian circles. I lived in fear of coming home to find my family's folded clothes around the house, after they had been raptured and left me behind.

Many people are excited about Jesus' second coming – and what a great and glorious day that will be, standing in his presence! But whatever

we believe about the end times, we currently find ourselves in this world of brokenness. We look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, but what do we do with the here and now? How do we live in the “now” and “not yet” of God's kingdom?

About 2,600 years ago, God's people of Judah were captive in Babylon, longing for deliverance. They could have shut out their present reality, clinging to the promises of deliverance from the Babylonians, whose way of life was so different from theirs. But the prophet Jeremiah spoke God's words to them: “Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper” (Jeremiah 29:7).

We, too, are “longing for a better country – a heavenly one” (Hebrews 11:16). We're looking forward to Jesus' return. We could just white-knuckle it and hold on until we find ourselves face-to-face with Christ. Or we can be his ambassadors and reconcile this

separated world to God (2 Corinthians 5:20). We can seek the peace and prosperity of our diocese – this region that we are placed in.

When we look at Jesus, it wasn't only his birth, death and resurrection that is good news to us today, but also his *life*.

He healed the sick, cared for the poor and freed the oppressed. Jesus' life was spent liberating people from sin, sickness, shame and the systems that burden so many people of his day.

And he is inviting us to be his ambassadors!

The living God wants us to represent him?! What a daunting honour!

When I first started my social services role for the diocese, I had just finished a three-year degree at Bishopdale College. It was time to step out from this safe Christian environment and live out what I had learnt.

I still remember the first time I cold-called a social service agency to ask them what the needs of the community were. I felt like Peter walking on water: I was pretty sure I was going to sink, as the church that I represented and social service organisations are often suspicious of one another.

Yet God reached out and helped me walk through this often-challenging role. Over the past two years, I have talked to many secular organisations and am always amazed at the care they show their clients who are sick, poor and oppressed. They were asking for youth groups, after-school programmes, places for connection. This, I realised, is our wheelhouse!

I was so encouraged by the vast amount of community-facing ministries that our Anglican parishes host every week, building connections between so many people. If we are to truly care for the hurting, we need to work collaboratively, using the gifts of people, spaces and resources that God has given us. The Church has a vital role to play in the wellbeing of members in our community.

During my time in this role, I've received over 500 hardship grant applications from many different

organisations and parishes, requesting slightly over \$200,000 in total.

I've heard many heartbreaking stories from whānau and individuals. Mums going hungry so their children can eat. Children who don't have car seats so their family can buy food. Families suffering the cold in their homes as the cost of electricity and firewood continues to rise.

Considering those words again, "seek the peace and prosperity of the city," I realise there's still a lot of work to be done. But as I have worked alongside both Christian and secular organisations, this is exactly where I've seen God at work.

God has been restoring relationships so we can work together for the peace and prosperity of all. For what is the "good news" if it only impacts me? Or if I only see it on my deathbed?

The good news is the good news for everybody.

We may not be able to lead everybody into a loving relationship with Jesus, as great as that will be, but we can care for the sick, poor and oppressed and point to Christ.

Pointing to Christ with both actions and words is why I have enjoyed my role as the ministry coordinator for social services. I am sadly leaving at the end of this year, although I am not sad about the reason why.

Early next year, I am marrying Esther Jens, from Wellington, and together we are relocating to the Kingdom of Tonga for three years. I'm looking forward to seeing God at work in a different culture and country, and how we may serve him in this kingdom for *his* kingdom.

Thank you to the many people I have been able to serve alongside. Thank you to the bishop, and to the diocese, for taking a chance with me.

I am very encouraged by the direction God is leading our diocese in, and I look forward to hearing of the great things he does. May we continue to experience Christ's love, grace and mercy, so we can love and serve those around us. ♥



The Anglican Centre

48 Halifax St

Nelson

www.nelsonanglican.nz