

Heart & Soul

Update for Churches



July 2025

HEART & SOUL

YOUR CHURCH'S IMPACT IN HOSPITALS

As followers of Christ, we are called to be present where people are hurting—and nowhere is that need more visible than in our hospitals. At Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa, we're privileged to provide spiritual and pastoral care in these places of crisis and healing, and we believe the Church has a vital role to play in making this possible.

While we receive support from Health NZ, the heart of our ministry relies on churches who stand with us—practically, prayerfully, and financially. That's why we've launched Heart & Soul Partners, a new initiative inviting churches to deepen their connection with hospital chaplaincy and help ensure chaplains are present when people need them most.

Every day, chaplains step into the sacred moments of hospital life—sitting quietly with a patient in pain, praying alongside families facing uncertainty, or simply listening to a weary staff member in need of encouragement. Through chapel services, communion, and one-on-one support, they carry the presence of Christ into places where comfort, faith, and human connection are needed most.

If your church is already a Heart & Soul Partner—thank you! Your support is life-changing. If not, we'd love to invite you to explore what it could look like to join this mission.

Visit www.hospitalchaplaincy.org.nz to find out more, or share this with your church leadership—we'd love to hear from you.

Barry Fisk

CEO, Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa

PATIENT FEEDBACK CORNER



At Hawke's Bay Hospital, there's a special prayer book where people can leave their thoughts and prayers. One anonymous note recently reminded us just how powerful gratitude can be:

"Thank you for our wonderful staff – the nurses, doctors, chaplains, radiologists, and everyone who makes up our hospital. Their care brings hope. I feel it—it's a warm feeling of faith, love and hope."

"I enormously appreciated the efforts by the chaplain and assistant chaplain to visit and witness a document before my dangerous operation which I survived. I'm not religiously inclined, but I'm grateful for the caring and empathy from the chaplains."

We all have our ways of trying to understand the universe and life, and any way that produces service to others has my respect."



Hospital Chaplaincy
AMOKAPUA HOHIPERA
AOTEAROA

HOW SPIRITUAL CARE HELPED VERA FIND PEACE AND CONNECTION

When 82-year-old Vera* was told her illness was no longer treatable, her world shifted. Independent and proud of managing on her own, she found it deeply unsettling when doctors recommended palliative care or a hospital bed at home.

Hurt by an unhappy marriage and estranged from some of her children, Vera was hesitant to accept help. Beneath her resistance was a quiet spiritual ache. "I keep calling out to God," she told the hospital chaplain, "but I don't get an answer."

Gentle visits from Chaplain Lizzie opened a new path. Through prayer, honest conversations, and simple spiritual practices, Vera began to reconnect with her faith. The Psalms brought comfort. Morning prayer became a steady routine. Slowly, she began to sense that God had not left her.

A turning point came when Vera agreed to create an Advanced Care Plan. For the first time, she could name her fears, express her wishes, and involve her daughter in decisions. She even accepted short-term respite care—a suggestion she had once firmly rejected.

Most meaningful of all was Vera's reconnection with her church. With gentle encouragement, she restored relationships she had let fade. Fellow parishioners offered prayer and presence, reminding her that she was not alone. It gave her renewed purpose—and peace.

"You didn't force me into anything, but helped me be brave enough to use my faith."
Vera

Vera's journey is one of many where spiritual care brings healing and hope. Thanks to the prayers and generosity of people like you, chaplains can walk beside others like Vera—helping them find courage, comfort, and connection, even in life's most difficult moments.

* Name changed to protect identity



SPIRITUAL SUPPORT FOR EVERY JOURNEY: MEET CHAPLAIN LIZZIE

With 13 years of experience as a chaplain, Lizzie serves at Wairarapa Hospital, offering compassionate spiritual care to patients, whānau, and staff. As an ordained Anglican minister, she finds deep fulfilment in helping people navigate life's big questions and moments of crisis.

Lizzie believes pastoral support is especially vital in hospital settings, where people often feel vulnerable and overwhelmed. She brings patience, openness, and a deep respect for all faiths, beliefs, and cultures—ensuring everyone feels heard and supported.

"We are more than body, brain and breath. My role is to help people regain a sense of holistic balance."

One of the many lives Lizzie has touched is that of Vera, an elderly woman facing terminal illness. Through gentle conversations, prayer, and encouragement, Lizzie helped Vera reconnect with her faith and her church community, finding strength in spiritual practices and renewed peace in her final chapter.

Lizzie hopes more people will understand the inclusive role of chaplaincy: "It's about walking alongside people—whatever their beliefs—and sharing in their journey."