

Heart & Soul

Update for Churches



Hospital Chaplaincy
AMOKAPUA HOHIPERA
AOTEAROA

HEART & SOUL

A Message from our CEO

As we reflect on the past year, I want to sincerely thank you—our supporting churches—for your faithful generosity, encouragement, and partnership. Your commitment continues to make a real difference in the lives of people at some of their most vulnerable moments.

We know these are challenging economic times, which makes your support even more meaningful. We do not take it for granted. Because of you, compassionate spiritual care remains available to those who might otherwise go without it.

This year, we have been especially struck by the growing number of people we encounter who do not identify with any faith, who follow other belief systems, or who would describe themselves as atheist. As you will read in this update, these are not barriers—they are opportunities.

This ministry is only possible because of your support. You are part of every bedside conversation, every quiet moment of prayer, and every thoughtful exchange about life, meaning, and hope. Together, we are reaching people who may never walk through the doors of a church, yet are open to encountering God in these unexpected places.

Looking ahead, the need continues to grow. One key priority is increasing the number of Volunteer Chaplaincy Assistants (VCAs), whose time and care help extend this vital work. We encourage you to consider who in your communities might feel called to serve in this way.

Thank you again for your ongoing partnership and for standing with us. Your support enables us to continue bringing hope, compassion, and care to all.

Barry Fisk

CEO, Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa



Volunteers needed

Our chaplains rely on the support of kind, compassionate people to continue the vital work they do each day.

Volunteer Chaplaincy Assistants (VCAs) play an important role by coming alongside chaplains to help provide pastoral care to patients, families, and healthcare staff.

This is a meaningful opportunity to make a real difference—offering presence, listening, and support to those going through challenging times.

Volunteers are not expected to have all the answers; a willingness to care and serve is what matters most. Extensive training and ongoing support are provided, equipping volunteers with the confidence and skills needed for this role.

We are often looking for more VCAs and would greatly appreciate churches helping to share this opportunity within their communities.

If you'd like to find out more, please email info@hospitalchaplaincy.org.nz.

Meeting People Where They're At

CREATING SPACE FOR HONEST CONVERSATIONS

Each day, our chaplains step into deeply personal moments in people's lives—often at times of vulnerability, uncertainty, and searching. What continues to stand out is just how many of these encounters are with people who would not describe themselves as Christian.

Many identify as having no faith, belonging to another faith, or as atheist. Yet, in these moments, something significant happens: space is created for honest conversation, reflection, and often, unexpected openness.

One chaplain was called to sit with a woman awaiting surgery. She described herself as having no faith, yet she was carrying a heavy burden—recent bereavement, relocation, and uncertainty about her future. **In the midst of her anxiety, she accepted the offer of prayer.** Afterwards, through tears, she shared that although she didn't believe in God, something in that moment stirred within her—a sense that perhaps she needed to reconsider and reconnect with the faith she once knew as a child.

Another patient, who had previously been unsure about God, reflected after a successful surgery on a deep sense of peace and calm they experienced—something they came to believe was God's presence. They spoke with gratitude for the consistent, non-judgmental presence of the chaplain over time. Simply being listened to, accepted, and not dismissed had opened a door. **For the first time, they shared deeply and asked for prayer, expressing a growing belief in a God who cares for them personally.**

In a different encounter, a chaplain spoke with a woman who identified as an atheist. Initially hesitant, she gradually engaged in a thoughtful and respectful conversation—raising questions about faith, morality, and life after death. It was not a moment of immediate change, but it was meaningful nonetheless: a genuine exchange where both could speak openly and listen carefully. **These conversations matter. They build trust, challenge assumptions, and create space for faith to be explored rather than imposed.**



Chaplain Bronwyn with a patient.

These stories reflect the heart of chaplaincy: not to persuade or pressure, but to accompany. To listen without judgment. To be present in ways that allow people—whatever their beliefs—to ask questions, express fears, and, at times, encounter something beyond themselves.

The ongoing support of your church makes this ministry possible. Because of you, chaplains are able to be there consistently—returning week after week, building trust, and offering care to those who may never otherwise step into a place of worship. **Increasingly, this is how many people first experience Christian compassion and presence.**

In a world where faith can feel distant or unfamiliar, these quiet, personal encounters are profoundly important. They remind us that God is at work in every conversation, every question, and every moment of openness.

Thank you for enabling us to continue reaching people—wherever they are on their journey.

"I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some."
1 Corinthians 9:22