



Heartfelt

SUPPORTER NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

COMPASSION HAPPENS BECAUSE OF YOU

At Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa, we witness every day the quiet but profound difference compassionate presence can make in people's lives. In this newsletter, you'll read Raewyn's story — how, facing an unexpected hospital admission and with no family nearby, she found comfort and reassurance through the support of our chaplain Matt. Stories like hers remind us why our work matters so deeply.

Providing this care consistently requires reliable support. That's why our regular giving programme, **Care Champions**, is so important. By committing to a monthly gift, you become part of a community that ensures chaplains can be there for patients at exactly the moments they need them most. Your ongoing generosity helps us plan ahead, reach more patients, and respond quickly in times of crisis.

We invite you to consider becoming a Care Champion – you can find out more about this here:

www.hospitalchaplaincy.org.nz/becomearegulargiver

Even a small, regular contribution provides steady, vital support that transforms moments of fear and uncertainty into moments of comfort and hope.

Together, with your generosity, we can continue walking alongside patients, families, and staff across New Zealand, offering presence, reassurance, and care when it matters most.

Thank you for standing with us.

Barry Fisk
CEO, Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa



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>Your Kindness Brings Comfort

A CHAPLAIN'S PRESENCE WHEN IT WAS NEEDED MOST

At the start of 2026, Raewyn faced an unexpected hospital admission at Wellington Hospital. With no family in the city at the time, she found herself navigating complex medical decisions and uncertain news on her own.

What was meant to be a routine appointment with her GP quickly became overwhelming. Raewyn felt anxious and alone as she tried to understand the situation, make decisions about her care, and face the uncertainty of what lay ahead. Without family nearby, the experience could have felt isolating and frightening.

Just when she needed support most, Matt, a chaplain from Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa, visited her. Thanks to your generosity, Matt's calm presence offered reassurance, spiritual guidance, and a listening ear.

"He was the perfect person for me to talk to, and his support was really significant for me. It made such a difference knowing someone was there to listen and care."

Matt sat with Raewyn, helping her process what was happening and reminding her she was not alone. His presence provided comfort during a time that could have been overwhelming.

FEEDBACK CORNER



I have been meaning to write for a long time about my experience in hospital several years ago now, after having a stroke.

Sure, the wonderful doctors and nurses fixed me up, but it was the Chaplain who gave me such hope with his kind words of Jesus' love. He restored my soul — that is what needed fixing most!

— Rob



Raewyn meets Matt to thank him for his support.

The connection between Raewyn and Matt extended beyond her hospital stay. On a follow-up appointment, she was able to see him again and personally express her gratitude for the support he had offered.

"I was so glad to be there for Raewyn when she needed it. Sometimes a patient is a delight to the chaplain as well. This was one of those times." — Matt

Stories like Raewyn's highlight the profound difference donors can make. Your support ensures that people facing sudden change or fear are never alone — that someone compassionate is there to walk alongside them, offering hope, reassurance, and care exactly when it is needed.

For Raewyn, the care of a chaplain made all the difference — a quiet, compassionate presence in a time of need that she will not forget.

A message to Taranaki Hospital Chaplaincy Team: On behalf of our ED whānau I want to express our deep aroha and gratitude for the mahi you do each and every day.

your presence in our hospital brings comfort, compassion, and hope to patients, whānau, and staff alike. Whether it's sitting quietly with someone in their time of need, or supporting our team through challenges, your service is an integral part of the manaakitanga we provide.

Please know that your contribution is deeply valued and greatly appreciated.

ED Nurse Manager

You helped spread Christmas cheer!

SPREADING JOY THROUGH CHRISTMAS CAROLING

In December, the spirit of Christmas filled the wards of hospitals across Aotearoa — and it was made possible through the generosity of supporters like you.

At Whangarei Hospital, your giving helped a wonderful team of volunteers bring carol singing to multiple wards, gathering Volunteer Chaplaincy Assistants, hospital staff, an ex-patient, and a special group from YWAM (Youth With A Mission).

During the first week, the group visited the four medical wards, followed by the four surgical wards the next. As word spread, requests soon came from other specialised areas, including cancer, mental health, maternity, and the renal unit. Everywhere they went, they were met with smiles, tears, and heartfelt appreciation as love, joy, and peace were shared through song.

Some moments were especially moving: Indian nurses recording the carols on their phones; mental health staff, patients, and chaplains standing together in a circle singing; a dementia patient rising to dance with his wife, tears in her eyes; and an out-of-tune piano transformed into something angelic in a patient lounge.



These simple but powerful acts of music and presence reflected the true spirit of Christmas — connection, compassion, and hope. Because of your ongoing support, moments like these can take place across Aotearoa, bringing light and joy into hospital spaces when they are needed most.

“Walking the wards singing Christmas carols shows how a simple act can connect with something deep within patients and staff — memories of Christmas past and hope for what is to come. Each time, we saw how the sacred can gently disrupt the ordinary rhythm of hospital life.” — Adrian, Chaplain, Whangarei Hospital

NEW VOLUNTEER CHAPLAINCY ASSISTANTS FOR TAURANGA



Interested in finding out more about volunteering with us?
Email us at info@hospitalchaplaincy.org.nz for more information.

Last September, we were delighted to welcome five new Volunteer Chaplaincy Assistants (VCAs) to the Tauranga Hospital Chaplaincy Team. Their journey officially began with a special commissioning service at Tauranga Hospital, which opened with a moving Karakia led by Te Pare ō Toi in celebration of Te Reo Māori Week. The service led by Rev'd Matiu Best, and Chaplain Andrew Rowe, was a wonderful way to formalise and commission the VCA's into their roles and ministry at the Hospital.

We also want to recognise Chaplains Graham Silkstone and Catholic Chaplain Leanne Brooks, for their dedication and commitment to training this cohort. We are incredibly grateful for these volunteers and for all our volunteers, as they provide an invaluable listening ear and a compassionate, supportive presence for our patients, whānau, and staff.

A MINISTRY OF PRESENCE

Meet Chaplain Matt Porter

Matt Porter emigrated from Texas to Wellington with his family around three years ago and has been serving as a chaplain at Wellington Hospital for the past 18 months. It is a role he speaks about with genuine passion.

Through connecting with people from all walks of life, Matt has found chaplaincy both deeply rewarding and a powerful way to better understand the people of Aotearoa New Zealand and the country he now calls home.

Matt believes chaplaincy plays a vital role in the hospital environment. While patients may encounter many different medical professionals during their stay, it is often the chaplain — even after a brief interaction — whom they remember. For Matt, this comes down to presence and continuity.

“Being truly present and listening deeply is vital. Only by slowing down and paying close attention can I discern what support a patient might need.”

In the fast-paced world of hospital care, Matt intentionally “moves a few steps slower,” signalling that his presence is different — unhurried, attentive, and focused on the person in front of him.

Matt values the variety of his chaplaincy role. On any given day he might sit with someone who is deeply spiritual, someone who is unsure what they believe, or someone who has never thought about faith at all. What matters most is meeting people where they are.

Over time, many moments have stayed with him. He recalls bearing witness to a wedding for a patient determined to live his final days well, supporting a young woman finding her way while struggling with an eating disorder, and sharing laughter with a gifted storyteller reflecting on his life as a boxer, immigrant, and chef.



One thing Matt wishes more people understood is how difficult it can be to reach the later stages of life alone — something he sees happening more often. He believes this awareness might change how we live our middle years.

Matt is passionate about encouraging younger people to consider pastoral care as a vocation, but he also believes this call to presence belongs to all of us.

“There are many ways to serve the body of Christ, and this is a deeply rewarding way to spend your time.”

Whether through formal ministry or everyday acts of listening and care, Matt hopes people will see the value of slowing down, noticing those who may be overlooked, and offering companionship to others in times of need. He believes that when we are willing to be present with one another, we reflect Christ’s love in powerful and practical ways.

Matt and his family are well settled in Wellington, where their home also serves as a retirement haven for Punch, a former racing greyhound.



Tax Receipts

A reminder that we send annual tax receipts after 31 March each year for all donations made in the tax year. If we have your email address on file these will be emailed to you.



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Heartfelt thanks

Your generous giving helps to ensure no person in Aotearoa has to face their toughest moments alone.

Thank you.



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