



Chaplain Matiu with Jennifer.

# Heartfelt

SUPPORTER NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2026

## YOU HELP SHINE A LIGHT ON CHAPLAINCY

September saw us celebrate Hospital Chaplaincy Awareness Week, a valuable opportunity to shine a light on the support hospital chaplains provide every day in hospitals across Aotearoa.

One of the things we hear most often is, "I didn't realise hospital chaplains did that." Many people still associate chaplaincy solely with end-of-life care or religious support. In reality, our chaplains walk alongside patients, whānau and healthcare staff through a wide range of challenges, offering a listening ear, emotional support, practical care and a compassionate presence during difficult times.

Raising awareness of chaplaincy matters because people cannot access support they do not know exists. Whether someone is facing a new diagnosis, supporting a loved one through treatment, adjusting to a life-changing event, or simply needing someone to talk to, chaplains are there to help.

Throughout this newsletter, you'll read about the profound difference chaplaincy can make. These moments of connection, comfort and hope are possible because of the generosity of supporters like you.

Thank you for helping us ensure more people know that they do not have to face their hospital journey alone.

**Barry Fisk**

CEO, Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa



**Hospital Chaplaincy**  
AMOKAPUA HOHIPERA  
AOTEAROA

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# ♡ You Help Bring Calm When Fear Takes Hold

## A FRIGHTENING HOSPITAL EXPERIENCE IS TRANSFORMED THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT

**When you support Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa, you're helping ensure that people facing illness, fear and uncertainty are met with compassion and care when they need it most.**

A recent email from a former patient we'll call Jan\* beautifully illustrates the difference your support makes. While recovering on the rehabilitation ward, Jan witnessed an extraordinary act of chaplaincy that transformed one woman's hospital experience.

An elderly woman had been admitted to the ward, frightened, confused and unable to trust the people trying to care for her. Despite the best efforts of doctors and nurses, she remained distressed and refused medication. Jan knew that Hospital Chaplain Reverend Emma Mead would be visiting that morning and suggested the woman speak with her. She agreed.

### **What followed was a remarkable example of pastoral care in action.**

Emma sat quietly beside the woman for more than 90 minutes. She listened without judgement, acknowledged her fears and gently built a relationship of trust. There was no rush, no agenda, just patient, compassionate presence.

Slowly, the woman's anxiety began to ease. With Emma by her side, she felt safe enough to accept her medication and speak with the healthcare team about her treatment. Emma even remained with her during those conversations, holding her hand and offering reassurance. When she promised to return later that day, she kept her word.



*Wairarapa Hospital Chaplains, Lizzie Snowsill and Emma Mead.*

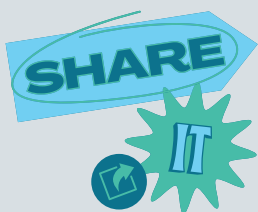
Jan later said that the transformation was extraordinary. The woman received the care she needed and was soon able to return to her "normal, lovely self".

**"The chaplaincy service brings time, humanity, trust and calm to people during some of the most frightening and vulnerable moments of their lives."**  
— Jan

Stories like this demonstrate the unique role chaplains play in our hospitals. They bring humanity, trust and calm into situations that can feel overwhelming, helping patients feel safe enough to receive the care they need while also supporting busy clinical teams.

**Because of supporters like you, chaplains such as Reverend Emma Mead can continue to be a reassuring presence for patients and whānau during some of life's most challenging moments. Thank you for helping make this vital ministry possible.**

\* Name changed to protect identity.



### **Has a hospital chaplain made a difference to you or someone you love?**

We would love to hear about your experience. Whether a chaplain provided comfort during a hospital stay, a listening ear in a time of uncertainty, or support for a loved one, your story can help raise awareness of this important ministry.

Email your story to [funding@hospitalchaplaincy.org.nz](mailto:funding@hospitalchaplaincy.org.nz) and help us celebrate the impact of hospital chaplaincy across Aotearoa.

# ♥ You helped bring comfort and joy to young patients

## A SIMPLE PROJECT BRINGS JOY AND SMILES

**Recently, one of our chaplains, Bronwyn Owens, got involved in the latest children's toy craze – Ooshies!**

Ooshies are small collectable toys based on popular cartoon characters like Hello Kitty or Yoda that people receive for free at supermarket checkouts or buy online.

Bronwyn's daughter, who works at a supermarket, began collecting Ooshies that customers didn't want to take home for her mum to share with the children at Starship Hospital.

Word quickly spread about the Ooshie collection, and people started posting their spare Ooshies from across the country. One young lad went all the way into Starship with a big box because he wanted to give his spare Ooshies "to the sick children in the hospital".



**But the power of the Ooshies didn't stop there.**

Bronwyn was able to use the small toys as a basis for connection with a mum and her young daughter going through an incredibly difficult time in hospital, away from their home and support system. The Ooshies helped break the ice between her and the family, allowing the mum to receive some much-needed support.

**Although simple in nature, this project has brought smiles to countless faces during a time of great difficulty, benefiting both patients and staff alike.**

The Ooshies are still arriving, and the play therapists are sharing them out between the wards at Starship Children's Hospital for the children to enjoy.

## CELEBRATING HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY AWARENESS WEEK

This September, hospitals around New Zealand marked Hospital Chaplaincy Awareness Week, a chance to celebrate the vital role chaplains play in supporting patients, whānau and healthcare staff. The week focused on making chaplaincy more visible and helping people understand that chaplains are there for everyone, regardless of faith background.



Across the country, chaplains connected with hospital communities through coffee and conversation drop-ins, bake sales, information displays, quizzes and other activities designed to raise awareness of the support available.

The Awareness Week was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate this ministry and remind people that hospital chaplains are here to walk alongside patients, whānau and staff throughout their hospital journey.

**Thank you for making this life-changing support possible.**

# A FULL CIRCLE JOURNEY

## Meet Chaplain Emma Mead

**Emma Mead is one of our newest hospital chaplains, having worked at Wairarapa Hospital in Masterton for just over a year alongside Lead Chaplain Lizzie Snowsill.**

Even in this short time she has had an amazing impact, meeting new people every day and offering them comfort and compassion during times of great vulnerability.

As well as being a hospital chaplain, Emma is also a deacon and a pastoral team leader in her wider church community.

And she has come full circle to get back to Wairarapa Hospital.

Emma spent her childhood growing up in the Wairarapa before leaving to go to university. Recently, she decided to return home to raise her daughter. The call of the beach and getting out into nature again brought her back, as well as the promise of many gatherings to come with friends and family.

As a hospital chaplain, journeying with individuals and families throughout their time in hospital is one of the most rewarding parts of Emma's work. She strives to be a compassionate presence towards which people of all faiths, and none, can turn.

**“Being able to be completely present for patients, whānau and staff in times of great vulnerability and uncertainty is such a privilege.”**

You've already read about the impact of Emma's chaplaincy in the hospital. Through her compassionate presence, she was able not only to bring calm to a patient in distress, but also to transform her entire hospital experience.

Emma spoke quietly with the patient for more than 90 minutes, helping to ease her anxieties, and stayed holding her hand while healthcare staff discussed her ongoing care.



She met this frightened patient exactly where she was, offering companionship and reassurance in an overwhelming and unfamiliar environment.

For Emma, hospital chaplaincy is all about presence without expectation. Each day, she aims to create an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they are feeling and where they are at in their health journey.

One of the things Emma works hard to do is to challenge people's perceptions of what hospital chaplains are for.

**“One of the most challenging parts of my role is changing people's views about chaplains. People often think we're only there to support the dying. In reality, we're here for anyone who needs support. No one needs to hold a particular faith or set of beliefs to benefit from a visit.”**

Having come full circle by returning to the Wairarapa, Emma is grateful for the opportunity to journey with people through some of life's most difficult and uncertain moments.

Thanks to supporters like you, she is able to provide compassionate care and a reassuring presence for patients, whānau and staff when they need it most.