

Special Events – a report to the March 2024 AGM of Waiapu Cathedral

Over the past year our special events have encouraged a wider community of people to come into the cathedral, including some who had not previously experienced the acoustics and ambience of our building, and the warm welcome of our people.

Community and civic events

- The cathedral again hosted an Iftar meal for the local Moslem community on 2 April 2023. This meal is becoming a tradition, with halal food prepared by cathedral parishioners and enjoyed by all present.
- Later in April the annual Sing-in directed by Anthony Tattersall and organist Michael Fletcher attracted a good crowd of local singers with the theme 'Music for Coronations'. This was a good lead-up to the special Evensong on 14 May, celebrating the coronation of King Charles III.
- For the second year, the cathedral bells rang out on 22 October to celebrate the return of the migratory Godwits to the waters around Napier airport.
- This year, on 3 February, the 91st Memorial of the 1931 earthquake was attended by a large crowd of people, including a few of the last survivors who would have been very young at the time but they enjoy the opportunity to get together.. We welcomed the Hawke's Bay Soul Choir into the cathedral for the first time to participate along with the Cathedral Choir in a service which was a moving tribute to the courage and resilience of the city and its' people.

Concerts

We have enjoyed a very busy year of beautiful musical performances in the cathedral.

- In July, Octavius presented 'Songs from the Shows' as part of the winter Art Deco weekend entertainment.
- The young Cathedral choristers chose their personal favourites for a 'Welcome to Spring' concert on 24 September, a programme very much enjoyed by the singers and the large audience.
- A highlight in the concert year was the stunning new work 'Re-imagining Mozart', a Hawke's Bay Arts Festival event presented in October by Voices New Zealand Chamber Choir to a full house.
- The Napier Civic Choir presented successful choral and orchestral concerts on two weekends in June and October.
- Our own Cathedral Strings played a selection of their best-loved music in November, followed at the end of that month by the first concert in the cathedral by the Bay Cities Symphonic Band.
- As part of this year's Art Deco festival in February 2024, some of the symphonic band members came back as the Hawke's Brass Quintet to perform with the Cathedral Choir in a joyous celebration of the success the festival which had returned after a covid and cyclone forced break. Again, the cathedral was full of people enjoying the music and the positive mood of the event.

- Cathedral choir members also participated in a street flash mob performance of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' on 18 February to celebrate the music support and contribution of Peter Williams.
- On 25 February this year the renowned German organist Hans Hielscher gave a superb recital on the magnificent cathedral organ as part of his farewell world tour.

Nine Lessons and Carols

Perhaps the most significant cathedral event in terms of community outreach was the traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols on 17 December 2023. This beautiful Advent service was very well-attended and has now been viewed on Facebook almost 1700 times.

Raewyn Towers & Susan Wylie, Vestry Communications team
28 February 2024