

Wardens Report for AGM 2024

The Wardens' team welcomed Sue John as People's Warden following Alison Thomson's retirement at the 2023 AGM. The wardens meet with Dean Di and each other regularly, along with being members of various committees.

The year has been marked by a number of significant events and changes, and we express thanks on behalf of the parish to everyone who continues in their roles, or who has taken on new tasks; temporarily or for the longer term.

The Rev'd Sue Matthews was ordained Priest and subsequently appointed to a role in St Luke's Havelock North parish; commencing in September. Our Canon Precentor, Rev'd Jenny Chalmers, concluded her term serving in the Cathedral parish in November. We farewelled them both with grateful thanks for all they have offered during their ministry with us; and look forward to seeing them in the future as clergy serving in the diocese. We are most fortunate to have willing retired clergy assist Dean Di as part of the clergy team, and especially acknowledge our licensed Priest Assistant, the Rev'd Dorothy Brooker in her unstinting dedication to pastoral ministry.

The people of the church have marked a number of life events this year. Megan Carpenter, Audrey Densham and Ian Hopson, parishioners of very long standing, and our much loved and dedicated priest Rev'd Jon Williams passed to new life. We received news that Rev'd Bill and Wendy Bennett are to retire to Palmerston North. Bill celebrated 60 years of ordained ministry in late 2023, and this was celebrated during an 8am service in the Cathedral, with Bill preaching.

New members of the congregation were welcomed and introduced themselves in a special post-service gathering. This was a valuable opportunity to learn some of their stories as they join us. The parish had the opportunity and joy to assist practically the Chinnasamy family as they settled in Napier, having arrived from South India, and have all taken active roles in parish life.

The return of cruise ships has provided an added incentive to keep the doors of the Cathedral open on as many days as possible. Dedicated welcomers and guides offer their time to make this possible, and it is much appreciated by visitors from all parts of the world. We also acknowledge the dedicated service of Wendy Probert in taking up a good part of a verger's role; important tasks that often go unseen.

The office and administration remain in the capable hands of Charlene, and visitors are assured of a warm and caring welcome. Some administrative procedures, expense claims for example, have been changed or formalised to conform to best practice as we look to ensure the orderly running of the parish.

The demands on Dean Di's time are very significant with reduced clergy resource. Her role in the wider church and community, along with the time-consuming issues associated with the building, changing practices and the like, require constant rebalancing of her workload. Dean Di manages this with a level of skill that means we may often not notice the extent and complexity of her work and ministry. We record our thankfulness for her energetic and inspiring presence among us.

The communications team have delivered an updated logo and image package. Signs are now looking very smart and should help people unfamiliar with the Cathedral to find information and the right door. Cathedral Lane and Browning Street changed to one-way roads at the end of the year. This should help with traffic flow and intersection safety, and an additional benefit is an increase in parking spots (all abilities).

The Cathedral building itself has been much in our minds, as decisions on its future will be required well before the mandatory window of time for strengthening closes. The Earthquake committee continue to keep the parish informed and engaged in decisions on the building's future. Following specialist engineering advice, and implementation of a safety management plan, the Waiapu Board of Diocesan Trustees (WBDT) decided that the belltower was able to be re-opened. We received positive feedback from the community as regular ringing resumed.

The issue of heritage status for the Cathedral building is ongoing and, if applied, will significantly limit what can be done with our building. It has become an integral part of discussions and future decisions that flow from this process. Vestry have made a submission to the Napier City Council in support of a submission from the Diocese in relation to heritage status.

We conclude by acknowledging the people of many groups that contribute so much to the life of the parish. Some roles are undertaken by one or two people and may be unseen; cleaning the silver and linen for instance, whereas the choir, readers and many others contribute in more obvious ways. All are valued and acknowledged for their role and service to God in this place. We look forward to a year of growth and being open to change and opportunity; challenging as it may be.

Sue John – People's Warden

Linda and Richard Harris – Dean's Wardens