

Children, Young People and Their Families

Te WāhiAtua Godspace

Our fifth year saw a great deal of change. Initially we continued to develop with our alternating provision of Wednesday and Thursday afternoons for separate groups of children and young people. Inevitably some people could not attend on various days for a host of reasons and this, together with potential interest from beyond the Cathedral led us to also try alternating days. In addition we worked to transition one of the young people to become a leader with the children. Across 2024 we engaged with seven children of whom five attended fairly regularly for a time, and eight young people, though sometimes only one or two actually came.

We continued to benefit from invaluable support from Sue John, Julie Burt Andrews, Wendy Probert, Adalgard Willemsma, Marie Davis and Mary Davies, with work in the background from Charlene, Susan and Rae which was also much appreciated, as was the support of Dean Di and Jan Martin. As the year unfolded we realised that we were to lose first Adalgard as a parent and then Wendy who had been a pillar of strength and practical support across a number of years. Thankfully we were fortunate to have good support from parents, Chrissy, Becci, Soné and Mike.

Given the very small groups of children and young people who were attending, the loss of two key team members who had completed the Safeguarding Training, the significant work each of us were contributing and the uncertainty over the future of the Cathedral building, Dean Di, Jan Martin and I met to consider the way forward. Together we agreed that it would be wise to take the final term of 2024 off, and prayerfully consider the next steps. While there has been some grief associated with this decision, we finished well with three children and three young people appreciating our closing sessions. There has not been a significant upwelling of desire for a new iteration of Te WāhiAtua Godspace, nor am I aware of an alternative that has such potential to lead children and young people into an appreciation of Anglican liturgy while affirming and developing their spirituality for ministry and mission.

Godly Play Hub

Activity has been limited to the lending of books. No further sessions have been needed with the closing of Messy Church at St Matthew's, Hastings. I remain open to engaging with any church in Waiapu who would like to explore working Godly Play.

Cathedral Kids

A small number of children are keen to gather most Sunday mornings to engage with Bible stories and one another. I am grateful to Marie Davis who responded my request at last year's AGM to be available when I am otherwise engaged. Jan Martin and I have met to consider provision for children and young people beyond Cathedral Kids and all that Anthony Tattersall and Pip Brooker provide for these important members of our community.

Janine Melville