

BISHOP'S CHAPLAIN FOR EASTLAND REGION – REPORT TO 2013 SYNOD

Ko tau rourou, ko taku rourou, ka makona matou – with your basket, and my basket, we will have enough.

This proverb, included in the Prayers after Communion (NZPB p.490) exemplifies how Eastland region works at its best, sharing resources and personnel across parish and tikanga boundaries. With a small population spread across a large geographical area, few stipendiary clergy, rapidly changing demographics and some of the most negative socio-economic and health statistics in the diocese, the challenges for the Anglican Church are enormous. However the region retains cohesiveness communities and a sense of identity often lacking in bigger places, which give entry points for mission and ministry in ways not possible in other parts of the diocese.

My predecessor, Rev'd Adrienne Bruce, worked hard with Wairoa and Waikohu, the two LSM parishes, on their particular needs, meaning that these areas running well under the circumstances. Since taking up the Bishop's Chaplain position in February 2013, I have worked predominantly with Gisborne-Te Hapara parish, which covers the city area and eastern coastal suburbs of Wainui and Makarori, providing support and advice for the new vicar, Rev'd Petra Barber, as she settles in to a new position and makes some important changes.

Guiding Eastland parishes through the recent review of diocesan social services has resulted in a greater awareness of church – community interface. The proposed appointment of a regional manager (0.5) under the new structure is positive for the region, and should further enhance the social service cluster at Te Hapara.

A key area of work in the Eastland region is liaison with tikanga Māori Anglicans, especially given that Archbishop Brown Turei is based at Te Rau Kahikatea in Gisborne, which is also headquarters for Te Hui Amorangi ki te Tairāwhiti. Local initiatives include joint congregational life within East Coast parish and co-operation and shared use of buildings in many other places, and wider diocesan and national ventures, including the upcoming Three Tikanga Youth Pilgrimage. These work best with face to face discussion and an understanding of the needs of each tikanga to effectively work together.

As a Church we live in exciting times, with changing mission and ministry expectations as the Spirit of God works in new and unexpected places. The move from nine years on the isolated East Coast with minimal regional, diocesan or national involvement, to working fulltime in the mainstream of church life has meant huge changes for me personally and professionally. Representing Bishop David Rice on the ground in Eastland on a day to day basis, providing oversight, support and advice for our parishes, and liaison with social services is a privilege and responsibility which I do not take lightly. I trust my contribution will be worthy of the vocation to which I am called. Kia ora tatou

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