

## Port of Tauranga Mission to Seafarers Chaplain Report

It is over 8 years since I was appointed voluntary Port Chaplain for MTS, and am part of a very busy, ecumenical and well run, United Seafarers Mission USM.

The Mission to Seafarers arm of the USM is in danger of folding, because of lack of people from the local parishes willing to be involved in the governance of MTS.

At this point, we have 3 members on the committee, which means we do not have a quorum. MTS has 13 volunteers out of a pool of 70, most of whom are nominally church members, or members of the community recruited by other volunteers. These people are involved in hospitality, governance, driving, and ship visiting.

Tauranga is the busiest Port in NZ. Last year we had 16,000+ seafarers (100 nationalities) through our Mission. Churches can support us financially, practically and prayerfully.

We visited 220 ships, covered 43,000 kms, taking 12,000 Seafarers, on a total of 4,300 trips. The work of the Seafarers affects the lives all of the people in the Diocese! Not just those close to our Port! It is the Seafarers Mission (representing the Church), who care for them pastorally, physically and spiritually.

It is of great concern that we only enjoy the support of 4 parishes in our BOP region, all of whom are aging communities, and who could contribute effectively to the governance of MTS, because of their life experience. Our committee meets 3 -4 times a year.

In recent months I retired from my position as Chaplain because of an eye problem. We found a replacement, who was soon snapped up for a stipended position, a reality which raises further issues. I have agreed to stay on as Chaplain, until we find a replacement. My role also includes promotion of the Mission, in our City.

Our Ecumenical Mission has recently been refurbished, and has again been "Shortlisted" in the ISWAN Awards. That puts us again in the top six (for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time.)

Wherever you are in the Diocese, please consider our request for support in this dynamic and important outreach to God's people on the Sea. Their work affects our entire nation, in the transporting of a variety of cargo around the world. It is crucial to our livelihood, as well as the Seafarers!

**Marie Gilpin**