

## Whakatāne Hospital Chaplaincy Report

This last year has been a year of many changes.

Because of health reasons, Rev Maureen Martin and I began to job share the Chaplaincy position. In June this year Maureen decided to retire. She has served as a Chaplain for 19 years, working in Dunedin, Gisborne and Whakatane. She was highly respected as a Chaplain with patients and staff. A photo of her farewell is attached

I was offered the full time position and began working as an Ecumenical Chaplain on 1 July 2019. I know I have big shoes to fill.

A couple of highlights and memorable moments in the last twelve months have been:

- The singing of Christmas Carols around the Wards, which was well attended by Hospital staff and members of local community groups. We began in courtyard where we were heralded by a young lad playing Amazing Grace on the Bag Pipes. The group went through the Wards singing Christmas carols and finished in the Chapel for prayer.
- One of the good things to come out of the Carol Service was that some of the Ukulele players formed a group which comes to the hospital each Monday to entertain and pray for patients and staff. Yesterday we were told by a family that their mother's favourite song was "There'll be blue birds over the white cliffs of Dover". She was asleep when we went into her room so we sang the song softly. Then this 97 year old lady woke up with a smile that none of us will forget.
- On 15 March 2019 along with all New Zealanders we received the news of the Mosque attacks in Christchurch in complete disbelief and horror. Our chapel was a place of peace and solace in the days and weeks that followed as the impact was felt by our health community and the community at large. A plaque was placed in our Chapel indicating the direction of Mecca and a large red candle was lit over those weeks next to an open book with the names of the 50 victims.

Now that I am working as the Whakatane Hospital Chaplain in a full time capacity I have sought the services of a number of people to join the weekend after hours roster for when rooms need to be blessed or support for patients and families is required. We now have eight volunteers willing to do this work which makes weekends more manageable when I am not available.

There are a lot of changes happening within our governing body, ICHC, which is a little unsettling, but we are lucky to have a very good 'Local Support Group' who give us a lot of encouragement and community support.

**Peter Lander (DASW)**

