

Woodford House Chaplaincy Report

Woodford House is a special character school with a particular relationship with the Diocese of Waiapu. It is a culturally diverse community and is home to about 330 girls. Approximately 180 girls are boarders, including around 15-20 international students. The students are from 12 to 18 years old, studying from Year 7 to Year 13. They come from many different countries, including Germany, Japan, China, Thailand, Futuna Island, Vietnam, and South Korea, with a range of interesting educational backgrounds. 2019 is a huge year in the life of Woodford House as we proudly celebrate 125 years of educating young women. To mark this significant milestone and to honour the vision of our Founders, Woodford House hosted a weekend of celebrations from Friday 22 February – Sunday 24 February, 2019. The celebrations included a service in the school chapel to mark the occasion which was attended by many old girls. One of which commented on the special place the Chapel holds in her heart.

In April this year, Woodford House bid goodbye to the chaplain of the past 2 years, Rev Dr Deborah Wilson, who has taken up her new post as chaplain at Queen Margaret College in Wellington. I took up my new position here at the start of term 2, as a lay Chaplain. The school is very grateful to the clergy have been supporting me in my new position by taking our Eucharist services and offering support and advice. I was welcomed at a beautiful commissioning service in our chapel of St Francis on Monday April 29 led by Bishop Andrew. Various symbols were presented on behalf of the staff, students, B.O.T and B.O.P, Old Girls association and the Parents' association.

On Sunday April 12, the whole school joined the choir and congregation of St John's Cathedral in Napier at their evensong service where our chapel choir contributed alongside the Cathedral's own choir. This was the first year that the school attended Evensong rather than a morning Eucharist service and it was very well received by our staff and students.

I was fortunate enough to attend the Anglican Schools' Conference in Timaru in May, along with our Principal, Mrs Julie Peterson, and 2 year 12 students. The conference attracted chaplains, teachers and principals from across the whole Province. The theme of the Conference was Singing our stories and it was fantastic to hear from the guest speakers, John Bell, The Most Reverend Don Tamihere and Gerald Morris along with others about the importance and value of sharing our stories. Our students particularly enjoyed their time with other young people from throughout the province and commented on feeling like they now feel a part of a bigger group of people who also attend Anglican schools. I am challenged to keep the momentum going for these two and others who are passionate about being more involved in our school and the wider Anglican community. They are keen to continue the reflections they started to make at the Conference, possibly in the form of a Peace Justice and Environment group. Deborah Broome is in the process of instigating a Special Character Committee in the school and I hope to include one of the students that attended the conference, along with our Chapel prefect.

As a school we are conscience of being intentional about building on our relationship with Te Aute and Hukarere schools and in term one a few of our students and Reverend Deborah Wilson went to Te Aute for a BBQ lunch. I look forward to being able to have more opportunities for this relationship to grow.

We hold two weekly chapels, two Sunday and a weekday morning and evening chapel for our students. At Friday chapel, each home room takes it in turn to prepare and lead the service. This term I have been using

lectionary readings and themes and I have been impressed by the creativity and effort that the classes have put into the liturgies and reflections. The Ministry Educator Rev Deborah Broome spoke at a staff meeting at the beginning of term 3 to help our staff understand more about the special character which will I am sure help with the preparation of these services. Chaplain Rev Deborah also spent time in the boarding house each week, and I look forward to carrying on this time of contemplation, reflection and quiet. I am preparing 3 students for Confirmation and we are looking forward to the service in August.

We continue to support the Hospital Chapel in Hastings a few times every term, in sending a small team of girls to assist with bringing patients to the Sunday chapel service there.

As part of our Religious Studies programme, our students participate in Middle School Theology units developed by the Anglican Schools' Office in partnership with the University of Otago. This aims to incorporate philosophical and critical thinking skills as we introduce students to the theology and spirituality of the Christian Faith. In addition to this, students also explore Jewish traditions and wider issues within society. 2019 is the first year where the year in recent times where 10s have a compulsory lesson of religious studies along with our year 9 students now having 2 lessons per week. The year 7 and 8 classes continue to have 2 lessons a week over a semester. I teach the majority of the religious studies classes and support 2 other teachers who take one class each.

At the time of writing I am looking forward to, attending the religious education teachers conference in Auckland later this term along with a visit to Auckland Diocesan School for girls to view their R.E programme; a trip to act as cook come chaplain for a group of our students and staff at a music festival in Whanganui and to Woodford House hosting synod at the end of the term. I am hugely encouraged by my first term here at Woodford House and look forward with great excitement to the future development of the chaplaincy here.

Raewyn Hedge

Chaplain Woodford House

The school attending evensong at the Cathedral.



The school Anzac service:



“It is important that we find ways of connecting to stories of the past. Not just to be nostalgic but more importantly because if we choose not to forget, to remember the injustices of the past, we can seek to strive for peace and justice in our time.” Heartfelt words spoken by our Chaplain Mrs Hedge during the school ANZAC service this morning. Our students wore their poppies with pride as they listened to Mrs Hedge, readings from students and our beautiful Chapel Choir. The service ended with The Last Post performed by Year 11 student, Rachel Hansen. [#LestWeForget](#)



Raewyn Hedge, Chaplain and Reverend Deborah Broome receive the elements of the Eucharist from the head girl during the instillation service.