

EASTLAND REGIONAL EXECUTIVE – CHAIRMAN’S REPORT to July 2014

Eastland continues to be a challenging region for Anglican mission and ministry; isolation, rapidly changing demographics, differing community expectations, major issues around poverty, deprivation, transport infrastructure, environmental degradation, and of increasing interest to oil and mineral exploration companies, all this combined with a church and parish structure which does not allow us easily and quickly to adapt to this dynamic situation. With only three stipendiary diocesan clergy in the region (two vicars and a regional dean), much of the ministry of Eastland is reliant upon non-stipendiary, local shared or retired clergy, and, notably in East Coast and Wairoa parishes, close co-operation with Tikanga Māori, to enable regular Sunday services and pastoral ministry to be carried out.

Regional executive have met most months, co-ordinating a range of mission and ministry activities across the region. At the end of January 2014 a planning day was held to map out the year ahead, which also included a session on the use of Social Media as a means of communication. This has resulted in Gisborne and Waipaoa parishes joining Waikohu and East Coast parishes in using Facebook as one of the ways of reaching wider than their own congregation with upcoming events, pictures and inspiration material.

Combined services of two or more of the parishes of the region (notably Gisborne and Waipaoa) have been held on 5th Sundays. The visit of Rev’d Mike Hawke, mission motivator for the Anglican Missions Board in March 2014, was a great encouragement for mission on the overseas and home front.

Bishop David Rice and Tracy Cappell Rice were farewelled from the region with a service and meal on 30 November 2013 at Holy Trinity Gisborne, before leaving for California in February 2014. Much of the time since Bishop David’s departure has been dominated by processes around selecting a new bishop. Publishing the profiles of those nominated enabled helpful feedback from parishioners and others prior to the electoral college. We look forward to welcome Bishop-elect Andrew Hedge into Eastland following his ordination and installation at Waiapu Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, Napier on 18 October 2014.

During this past year, Sandi Hall has included Eastland under her responsibilities as Hawke’s Bay Regional Youth Ministry Facilitator, with visits to the region on approximately monthly basis. Eastland youth and / or leaders have participated in or attended The Abbey at Waikanae Christian Camp, Wellington, Kawea te Rongopai gospel relay 1-6 October followed by Tikanga Youth Pilgrimage, and Waipaoa Parish cycle trip through Motu Trail 1-2 March. Monthly gatherings of Fish and Chip Club in St Mark’s Hall, Te Hapara and the St Luke’s Youth Group in Waipaoa parish have continued throughout this year. Eastland maintained a strong presence at Top Parish (this year held again in Rotorua 21-23 March 2014) in games, march past, concert and worship (including Samantha Wood being elected Bishop for the Day), and came home with a number of Top Parish awards.

The region has contributed three members to Standing Committee this past term (2012-14), Rev’ds Joan Edmundson, and Ron Elder, and Mr Ray James. Joan Edmundson serves as Standing Committee rep on Children, Youth and their Families committee of the diocese, joined from early July 2014 by Frances White as Eastland representative on this committee.

Opportunities for mission and ministry include:

- Greater co-operation with Tikanga Māori Anglicans across the region.
- Ministry to Seafarers (Port Gisborne has over 100 cargo ship visits a year).
- Social justice and environmental mission.

Ma te Atua tātou e manaaki
Stephen Donald (Rev’d)
Chair of Eastland Regional Executive
19 July 2014