



The Very Revd
Dr Graham O'Brien
Dean of Nelson Cathedral

Kia ora Cathedral Whānau,

As the year races on, I am very much aware that I will be going on sabbatical leave from early July until the end of October. Sabbatical is a time for refreshment, learning, reflection and retreat and the last time I was able to take this leave was in 2015, so I am well past the usual 7 years.

The focus of my sabbatical study is on the question “what is unique about Cathedral ministry,” because over the past 5 years as your Dean, I have realised more and more that Cathedral ministry is a very unique expression of Christian ministry and witness. In the case of Nelson Cathedral this is even more complicated in being both a parish and a Cathedral.

may 2026

CATHEDRAL NEWS



A PLACE THAT MATTERS AS THE SPIRITUAL HEART OF DIOCESE AND CITY

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A significant part of the research I will undertake is interviewing a number of Dean's in Australia and the UK. In early July I will visit Melbourne, Adelaide and Hobart Cathedral's as well as the Australian Dean's conference. Then from mid-Aug I will head to the UK via Singapore Cathedral and spend seven weeks to have similar conversations.

As I prepare, I have been reading a few books and in Holy Ground: Cathedrals in the Twenty-first century (ed Stephen Platten) there are a number of interesting thoughts to ponder. In my AGM report, I mentioned the importance of Cathedrals in their community for “bridging social capital” - as a hub to engage the life of the wider community and as a symbol of local identity; and as places of “spiritual capital” - as a place that “provokes a sense of the sacred and transcendent, even amongst those whose motives for visiting lie elsewhere”. David Hoyle (currently Dean of Westminster Abby) makes some very insightful comments about the historical nature of Cathedrals. Rather than being just historic buildings fixed in stone (often literally), he defines Cathedral's as “living communities with a past” which are to be “re-imagined and re-invented by new generations and new ideas”. A second point which distinguishes Cathedrals are the number of “stakeholders” which Stephen Platten describes in his chapter on worship.

First and foremost, a Cathedral is a liturgical community where worship sits at the heart of all we do. This then provides the structure to be hospitable to other stakeholders who see the Cathedral as “their cathedral”. These include:

- Bishop and Diocese
- All Christian people within our region including special interest Christian groups who may use the space.
- Music and performance groups.
- Educational groups who use the large space for services or gatherings (for example Nelson College for Girls, NMIT).
- Community groups (for example: Te Ramaroa festival, Art in the Cathedral, and RSA ANZAC services).

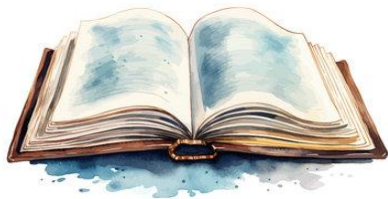
Such a wide expression of Cathedral life is exciting but also demanding on Cathedral staff/teams as we seek to grow. But through all this, the ministry of a Cathedral is an “outward and visible sign of something more profound and transcendent” – God’s presence with us and in our world.

God Bless

Graham

EMMAUS STUDY GROUP Wednesday 12-1:00pm

Reading of the biblical text and a short exegesis followed by discussion.
All Welcome



THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

13 May	10:9-48	At Cornelius’ house
20 May	11:1-30	Peter explains
27 May	12: 1-25	Peter in prison and death of Herod
3 June	13: 1-52	Paul’s first mission Part 1
10 June	14: 1-28	Part 2
17 June	15:1-35	Jerusalem Council



CAMEO FRIDAY 8 MAY 2:00-3:30pm

An opportunity for a catch-up chat, sing-along and afternoon tea.
Bring a friend.



Contact:
03 548 1008
Cathedral Office
office@nelsoncathedral.nz





The haunting notes of the last post are still somehow echoing around the corners of the cathedral as we finish marking another ANZAC Day.

The 1100 service evinced the value of teamwork as so many people and organisations came together to commemorate the important occasion poignantly and successfully.

As ever, we remembered those service members who suffered as a result of war, along with their extended whanau and connections. On the Sunday proximate to Armistice Day we will again consider the wider victims of war.

A conversation I had recently struck a chord with me, and will indubitably resonate with any other cathedralites who have had the privilege and responsibilities of being entrusted to lead others in operational environments. It was with the former commander of special forces in a country with which we are closely allied.

We'd been talking about being in 'tight spots': he'd experienced so many! Inevitably the conversation vectored towards the deaths or serious injuries of those entrusted to our care, both operationally and in training. We both recognised how some leaders we knew had never fully recovered from losing more junior staff, and we debated where the fulcrum comes between guilt and responsibility.

He opined, (wisely, I felt) that any leader that didn't feel a sense of responsibility shouldn't be commanding in the first place. Yet they shouldn't feel guilt if they'd truly done their best to protect their staff and prevent harm in what are by definition, hostile environments. It's a difficult balance and there is no 'set formula'.

But it opens our eyes, and I hope opens our hearts, to the pressures on those in command positions in our armed forces. It is right that they feel the weight of responsibility for those placed under them, and my prayer is that their decision-making is such that they never need feel the burden of guilt when things go badly.

**"O Trinity of love and power,
Our brethren shield in danger's hour.
From rock and tempest, fire and foe
Protect them where so'ere they go.
Thus evermore shall rise to Thee
Glad hymns of praise from land and sea."**



PRECENTORS PAGE

Steve

REV STEVE JORDAN



During term time our 10am Sunday service offers the biblically themed Cathedral KIDS. Based on the Anglican Bible Reading Cycle we learn about the world around us and how God wants us to behave. Activities and discussion relate to the theme of the Sunday Service



**JESUS
is my
ROCK**

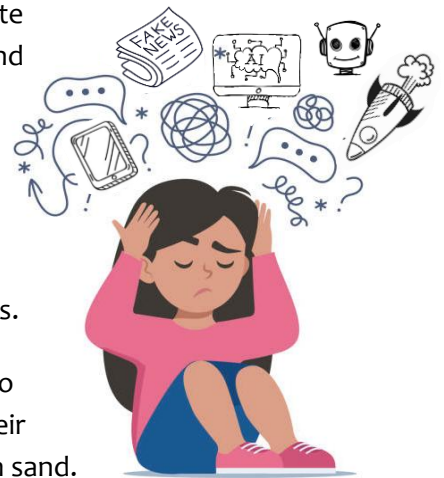


Helpers needed during the 10am service on Sundays. Please email us if you are able to help, even once a month. kids@nelsoncathedral.nz

I am very aware that every child on earth is heading into wild times. I don't think this is an exaggeration.

In their future, they will have to deal with; AI (already well and truly here), robotics (just at the beginning), space travel (plenty to come) social media, fake news developments not to mention lots more as yet unknown technology.

To enable them to navigate this fast moving terrain and stay balanced - they critically need to understand God's Word. To know how to view these developments according to biblical ethics.



They will then (as Jesus so succinctly put it) build their house on rock and not on sand.

They will influence others and steer their course with a perspective of surety and joy according to God's will and not their own.

They will know who to lean on when times get tough and how to make uneasy ethical decisions in whatever field they find themselves living in ...

Biblical education here at the Cathedral and at home is critical. Please help this process.



ANZAC

9am Piki Mai
memorial



Photos Nick Gastrell

11am RSA
Civic Service
in the
Cathedral



CATHEDRAL EVENTS

Nelson Mail Voice Choir held their annual Anzac Day concert at the Cathedral on April 25 and the NBS Nelson City Brass Band also held their popular "Melodies Made for Majestic Spaces" on Anzac weekend.

Photo Tim Cuff



To cap off a busy three weeks at the Cathedral for the events team, Chroma Choir held their highly acclaimed Monumental Concert on 2 May to a full audience.



CAR POOLING

Are you interested?

- Yes, I would like to carpool while petrol prices are high
- Yes, I would like to carpool and share the driving week to week
- Yes, I am ready to enjoy others taking me to church
- No, I am not able to participate in carpooling at this time

What is your name and the best way to contact you?

Can you offer a space or do you need a ride?

Do you like to stay for morning tea?

What area do you live in?

Which Service do you attend?

- ❖ Sunday 8am
- ❖ Sunday 10am
- ❖ Sunday 5pm
- ❖ Wednesday 11am

Under the current conditions of higher priced petrol/diesel people are noting a difference to their budget.

We also note that some people may prefer to stop driving to church and would be relieved to have an alternate option.

We are interested in your feedback regarding this. Please answer the questions outlined in the side bar here and email to the [office](#). This will help us assess what requirements there are around carpooling.

Any idea is gratefully received, so please share what you are thinking may improve or enhance your Cathedral experience – please include your contact details.

All information will be held as confidential and will be stored accordingly, and destroyed when no longer required.

Many thanks

Susanne Croft

027 2535051



LEE SINGERS live at NELSON CATHEDRAL

FREE ENTRY

Wednesday
20 May 2026
7:00pm



CATHEDRAL SERVICES

Worship at Nelson Cathedral is varied and frequent with 4 different services on Sunday:

8am Holy Communion

10am Choral Communion | Livestreamed, Robed Choir, Cathedral KIDS

12:30pm Whakatū Māori Mission Service

5pm Evensong | Livestreamed, Robed Choir

Wednesdays

11am Communion Service (& morning tea)

during School Holidays Sunday services are as follows:

8am Holy Communion

10am Family Communion | Livestreamed

12:30pm Whakatu Maori Mission Service

5pm Evening Prayer with Hymns | Livestreamed

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GRE SERVICES



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