



Kia ora pastors' group convenors

The below Term 1 update for local unity facilitators / pastors' group convenors has some substance to it - and all of it is hopefully superb.

Please take time to consider this update with your three upcoming (Term 1) pastors' group meetings in view.

FIVE sections below are

- 1. Five recent unity stories from NZ**
- 2. In the calendar (including vision for 2026)**
- 3. Spheres of influence**
- 4. In unison strategies** (common goals vs united programmes)
- 5. NZ-based unity articles and unity initiatives**

Please take notes on things you could take for discussion amongst your churches locally.

May God give all his people and leaders great wisdom and favour.

1. Five Recent Unity Stories Within NZ

There are a continuous array of these from across the nation

Here are five. Skim-read if it helps (noting there is plenty of 'food for unity' in this email).

For similar stories and note, join the ['Active Church unity \(Mahi Ngātahi\)'](#) FaceBook page. Be encouraged. God is at work in our nation.

(i) Amazing Kerikeri:

Small towns can sometimes be overlooked, but often they have leaders who foster unity. In Kerikeri, eight pastors from five different churches meet weekly for fellowship



and prayer — which is significant in a town of this size. Their relationships and mutual trust have helped create a culture of unity among the churches. This has enabled shared visioning of possibilities and cooperative efforts where they believe it will benefit the community and add value beyond what individual churches could achieve alone.

Well done and thank you, Kerikeri, for your long-standing example of consistent, invested unity!



(ii) Amazing Whanganui:

As the decades roll on, the unity of Whanganui pastors continues. In the present, as a 'base' pattern church leaders meet **monthly** for fellowship and prayer, with two combined combined services for worship and prayer **annually**.

This strong connection then overflows, making various other areas of collaboration together for the city possible. Churches came together to confront the challenge of **homelessness** by building cabins with the help of volunteers with expertise in different fields.

Churches united to support a **city mission cafe** where volunteers from different churches serve, being concurrently available to disciple the visitors.

In connection with ***work in the prison***, connection is also made with the inmates families. Christmas gifts are given to both the inmates ***and their families*** on the outside - including frozen meat. Relational year-long discipleship options are then made available to those who are interested in understanding the Christian hope, and these are being engaged with.

Again this Christmas churches united for a float in the ***annual Christmas parade***, with the Salvation Army heading this particular effort.

They also unite for the ***city-wide prayer walk*** that takes place alongside the ***Hope Project booklet delivery*** - with Avish of Riverside Christian Church heading that effort up. Their most recent pastors' gathering (usually a lunch) included ***a local MP as a guest***, engaging conversation together.

While various pastors have changed over the years, the DNA and pattern of unity has continued via pastors' having relationship and praying together – with visionary leaders arising to engage with the city in ways that individuals churches might not do alone. Simply amazing!

(iii) Amazing Inglewood:

The faithful efforts and unity of country towns is easily overlooked.

In Inglewood, up to 8 pastors' have gathered monthly (though not always so many) - with some long-standing pastors anchoring this continuity - for decades!

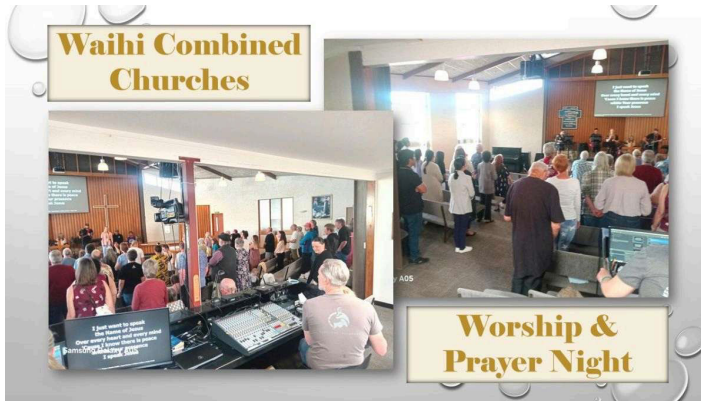


Participating with and within community events has been a long standing focus for these churches together

As a more recent Christmas story, feeling inspired to help Christ remain seen in Christmas churches initiated a Community Christmas event together. This included a large nativity and games within a fun programme. Non-church families joining with their children loved one.

One non-Christian lady expressed that she WANTED her children to hear about Jesus at Christmas. Invited to a Christmas service she then attended, later coming to faith, being baptised and is now growing in faith. Two friends with families then followed her to church and have also come to faith. (Their event was promoted online via social media + by word of mouth. With many years of running church events together in the community there is a general attitude of trust toward these church activities, endearing attendance.)

...And to help the Church thrive - to note it - there aren't many salaries, and I know one of the pastors to have taken a half salary while working full time for many years. Rural ministry can be challenging. God's people are amazing. Well done Inglewood church leaders!



(iv) Amazing Waihi:

Ps Ngaire of Freedom Church updated that they are enjoying a new season of unity amongst the churches. As one recent initiative, churches united in prayer for the region as part of a 24/7 Global Prayer event.

Prayer is central to their activities – with an even greater focus planned for 2026. Another recent combined event (November) was a worship and prayer night - as in the photos. A combined church Christmas celebration with items and involvement from the various churches then followed in December - while the Hope Project booklets will be delivered, concurrent with praying throughout the community, as a united effort just prior to Easter ahead.

Outreach training with a traveling Catalyst Movement team in 2025 saw new confidence built - Ngaire illustrating with the story of a person coming their own church a couple of weeks ago as direct result of the new confidence someone gained. "It has been very exciting, and we see that the harvest truly is ready now."

Regarding women's ministry, Waihi Aglow recently hosted a Ladies High Tea which saw many women from across the different churches and community gathered - many meeting for the first time.

From generation to generation there is unity in Waihi - and fresh vision!

(v) Amazing Auckland:

What does Church unity look like across Auckland these days? A conversation with the 'Auckland Church network' updated:



"Did you know that across our city there are at least 21 suburban-based pastors' networks meeting regularly? These 21 networks have more than 200 leaders participating in them. As we come together to bring flourishing to Auckland, these pastors networks are the engine room. The Auckland Church Network cheers on the men & women who lead these networks!"

The Christmas (Christian) float returned to the Auckland Christmas Parade was also of note - with the charge led by Ben Mai, with a creative team from the Elim - supported by many churches together. Together they are helping Jesus be seen!

(As a comment: Yes, many towns and other cities do the same. Stratford, as an example, had no less than THREE nativity scenes included in its parade this year, and this deserves praise. However, Auckland dynamics are different to most of the rest of our nation. New ground was 're-claimed' here, with unique hurdles to overcome - notably while also engaging wisely within public media. E.g. See a late-November RNZ news article [here](#). Role-model engagement!)

We'll share more stories each term
with others at the '[Active Church Unity \(Mahi Ngātahi\)](#)' FaceBook page.

Let's now look to the future!

2. For the calendar (Vision and planning)

Catch up first...

Consider these questions:

- How did Light Parties go in October?
- How did various Christmas efforts go?
- How did any New Year efforts go?

What can be learnt, affirmed or strengthened, to enhance the sum-total of your churches community reach and engagement?

...then look to the future:

What will your unity achieve for your city/town this year?

To consider - for your unity calendar

- (i) Special events and seasons
- (ii) United prayer
- (iii) Youth
- (iv) Spheres of influence

(i) Special events / seasons:

Waitangi Day (Term 1)

- Are there local opportunities churches could engage with?
- How could this weekend be highlighted within our churches? What stories could be told? (A selection curated videos for church audiences is [here](#)).



- The SLT annual Waitangi Day resourcing update for pastors will be sent to those receiving it in each location next week, inclusive of a few ideas.

Valentines Day (Term 1)

Easter (Term 2)

Note ANZAC (The very start of Term 2)



For all information:

AllTogether.co.nz/hopeproject

Hope Project - Easter

Churches are requested to again unite by some means for a **nation-wide (city-wide / town-wide) prayer walk and gospel booklet delivery** - this being volunteer based in about 180 city/town locations in 2026.

To view the 2026 booklet:

View the above webpage - or click the image to the right.

The volunteer delivery / prayer walk:

The delivery is volunteer-based, amongst the churches, in 180 NZ cities and towns.

- Via AllTogether.co.nz/volunteer we can tell you who your local coordinator is.
- Or for Auckland, Hamilton, Blenheim, Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin - you can directly select areas via that webpage.

The finances:

This nationwide effort – including TV, web, booklet and coordination costs, – is funded through donations from individuals, churches and combined churches across the nation.

- AllTogether.co.nz/donate

(ii) United prayer:

- **Events focused:** What about continuing your practices of combined church prayer and worship gatherings?
 - We note Open Heaven - OpenHeaven.nz with gatherings in Tauranga (11 February), Wellington (12 February), Rotorua (13 February), Auckland (17 February), Taupo (19 February), Dunedin (5 March), Palmerston North (16 March).
- **Member focused:** What about a vision for mobilising members to unite - to see a prayer meeting in every workplace and school?
- **Online:**
 - We note 'Pray As One', a united weekly online prayer meeting facilitated by NZ Christian Network - [here.](#)
- **United 24-7 Prayer initiatives:** Various pastors' groups facilitated united church efforts like this in 2025.
 - We note 24-7Prayer.nz has been an encouragement to a number of pastors' groups.

(iii) Supporting youth ministry

This matter deserves increased intentionality across the NZ Church. The majority of those who come to faith *coming from non-church families* do so in their early teenage years.

New development

Denominational youth reps + the leaders of 8 national youth outreach organisations have united in a common vision: *Every youth growing in NZ again hearing of Jesus.*

Four key gaps have then been identified - God-willing, to be plugged through the intentionality of church leaders in all locations who help to catalyse new thinking and action:

- **Unity** - amongst youth leaders locally
- **Equipping** - for gospel witness (conversations, storytelling/testimony - annually)
- **Schools** - the unity of youth where they are
- **Events** - leveraging the power of a crowd to build a bridge and share the message

This is about youth ministry being strengthened by filling these four identifiable gaps - achieved through the efforts of multiple church leaders who see the vision concurrently.

See Christianyouthunity.nz

This is a call to unity of purpose - not uniformity.

How could you support application of the above vision amongst the youth leaders of your own city or town?

(iv) Spheres of influence

With the year ahead in view, who could be affirmed or encouraged - recognising roles they play as representatives of God and his people in your city or town?

- **Schools/Education:** Relationship with local schools? Launchpad/Bible in Schools? Christian groups in High Schools?
- **Council/the Mayor:** Relationship? Support to local government or politicians? Mayoral Prayer Breakfast?
- **Iwi:** Relationship / connection? Have local church leaders heard the story of the land - and Christian faith on it, where you live?
- **Chaplaincy:** Rest homes, Hospital, Prison, Police, Workplace, Sports, School?
- **Support to parenting / marriage / family relationships?** (There is a simple vision for pastors' groups regarding this area in an article in this update)
- **Notable current social needs?** (See NZ initiatives in the 'articles' section at the bottom of this Term 1 update)

For wider awareness

"Pray As One"

This is a weekly 8pm Monday united NATIONAL prayer meeting - hosted by NZ Christian Network via zoom. It is a significant connection point, enabling awareness of both national and regional needs, dynamics and happenings.

(Click image for weblink)



3. Spheres of influence

An article:

Managing agenda in Pastors' groups requires skill.

Very little practical action is otherwise accomplished.

For an article specific to this topic, see Chapter 14 of 'In One Spirit' [HERE](#).

The idea proposed here is that ...facilitators of geographic pastors' groups facilitate a brief yet very intentional quarterly discussion - each time considering just two of the 'spheres of influence' + an upcoming 'season'.

- This enables brief discussion of all eight spheres across a year.
- Church leaders are empowered with perspective of the whole Church in the city as a result - therefore understanding the Church differently. This is catalytic.

This is about getting our unity facilitation *both more simple and more effective*.

TERM ONE SUGGESTED SPHERES + SEASONS

(All 8 spheres + upcoming seasons will be noted in this quarterly discussion guides across the coming year).

1. Biculturalism

What are churches or their members doing in this space? (Affirm and pray for every initiative)

2. Keeping Christ in 'Easter'

What are churches or their members doing individually or together within the wider community? (Affirm and pray for every initiative)

3. Education (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary)

What are churches and/or their people doing in this space? (Affirm and pray for every initiative)

Note:

- Kindergartens
- Launchpad
- Chaplaincy
- After-school care
- Christian school groups (youth-initiated but needing support to sustain)
- Tertiary campus ministries and support.
- Christian principals and teachers

To discuss:

- 1. What are churches and their members doing in these arenas?
- 2. Pray blessing on each church / initiative / person.

4. 'In unison' unity (vs programme-based)

Unity by way of shared goals, not shared methods

A culture of unity in simple and sensible goals will yield more results than busyness in various united activities.



To illustrate: Consider deliberate ongoing promotion by ALL churches in a city of the idea of prayer meetings being formed among believers in connection with every workplace and school.

- This would strengthen and catalyse the united vision of God's people in each workplace and school!
- Few things come as easy as this could - but it only works if local church leaders can perceive it. We otherwise only focus on 'larger programmes', even while knowing they'll never be as effective as the above.
- (14 other similar ideas can be found in an article [here.](#))

Thinking leads to behaviour, which determines results - and results matter!

5. UNITY articles and ideas

Simply outstanding:

"One Heart" - A coming conversation amongst Auckland churches

An initiative of the Auckland Church Network, "One Heart" is an upcoming day for discussion and prayer amongst Auckland churches. Five pressing issues are identified as:

- Homelessness
- Food insecurity
- Family violence and breakdown
- Youth wellbeing
- Social isolation

How could a united Church engage? Understand their starting vision [here](#).



An idea that could surely be replicated:

Consider this outstanding idea from Invercargill churches 'Community Service Day'

This is a truly remarkable initiative a number of churches have united to mobilising HUNDREDS of church members - on a Sunday morning – to achieve about 20 community service projects concurrently.



Invercargill's Community Service Day – a unity story

While their desire was simply to serve - wider profile has then resulted. The reputation of the churches certainly improved. Click the image or [here](#) for a summary of what Keith most-recently facilitated.

An idea that all cities and towns have resources to consider: 'Family relationships - an underutilised gateway'

What if we were to engage more wisely and pro-actively as UNITED churches around family / marriage / parenting needs? This article imparts a simple idea that connects with real needs in our communities, that could make a real difference in people's lives, while benefitting both the community and local churches.



Family relationships – an under-utilised gateway

Resourcing: Of note, most churches, and therefore all NZ towns and cities, have people in them for whom support to marriages and families is a primary passion.

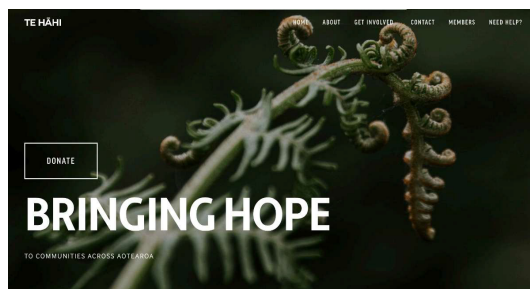
Possibility: If we can release these people in all locations - *with a sensible united vision* - results can be disproportionate *because this about leveraging what already exists!* (Churches run courses already - while links to options from multiple ministries are in the article.)

Click [here](#) for a simple and compelling vision that your churches could achieve together.

A great idea: To engage your community TOGETHER Te Hāhi

Te Hāhi is a faith-based volunteer organisation that provides care and support to people impacted by family harm and hardship. It's about collective impact and an opportunity to work redemptively together in your town/city - with referrals coming from Police and similar to engage directly with people within times of crisis, at their moment of need.

Currently in the following locations across Aotearoa - Gisborne, Napier, Hastings, Morrinsville, Rotorua, Te Awamutu, Kapiti, Upper Hutt, Lower Hutt and Porirua (with others soon starting) this is an opportunity every city and town could consider



- Find a great printable (PDF) introductory flyer to read and share [here](#) (includes data)
- or check out the website
- or pick up a phone and give Teri or Debbie in the office a call.
- tehahi.org.nz

For pastors' groups: [HERE](#)

SLT articles on unity: [HERE](#)

SLT Messages / Q&A related to pastors' groups: [HERE](#)

SLT FB page for city pastors' groups 'Active church unity (Mahi Ngātahi)': [HERE](#)

City by City FB page for city pastors' groups: [HERE](#)

Book on unity: Free download of Dave's book 'In One Spirit' - free pdf - [HERE](#)

Book on unity: Free download of Colin Shaw's book 'A House for His Glory' - free pdf - [HERE](#)