

## Waikanae Refresher Weekend, March 2024

Over 30 members from throughout NZ gathered at El Rancho Christian Camp at Waikanae, 60 kilometres north of Wellington, March 22 to 24.

The weather was fine throughout, with very pleasant autumn temperatures of around 20°. We were delighted to have with us our Australasian Superintendent, Daphne Sidney, who kicked off the programme with a Friday night session focusing on the church's current re-visioning process.



On Saturday morning, Rex Morgan explored the “Why” of small group ministry, followed by two sessions from Dennis Richards on the “How” of small groups. Then everyone had the opportunity to experience participating in two separate small groups, a “Connect” (Bible study) Group and a “Connecting” (special interest) Group.

The Connecting groups were facilitated by Marilyn Wong, leading an enthusiastic and entertaining group for “ABBA” fans; David Wong, a group discussing books and movies; Dennis Gordon, delving into some fascinating areas of macro-photography and biodiversity, and Les Evans, sharing ideas on taking the gospel to our neighbourhoods and communities.



Sunday morning consisted of a debrief discussion of the small group experience of the day before. We reviewed things that had worked well or otherwise, and many points were raised to keep in mind as we continue to work within our current groups and develop new small groups in the future.

The weekend ended with Daphne leading a moving Palm Sunday Communion service.

Once again, the dining room meals were very enjoyable, with plenty of stimulating fellowship around the tables. As always, the delectable morning and afternoon teas and suppers organised by Sue Richards and Brenda Gordon went down a treat.



Phil Baldwin skilfully coordinated the worship sessions and devotionals. The PA system was ably run by Lianne and William Trevarthen, and Regional Director Dennis Richards ensured that the whole event ran smoothly and successfully. The atmosphere was thoroughly permeated with the excited buzz of fellowship and networking of geographically scattered members that never fails to characterise these much appreciated get-togethers.

Thank you for your prayers for the weekend. God certainly answered them, providing and inspiring a wonderful experience for us all, leaving us with a strong incentive to go out and develop Christ-centred, healthy and fruitful small groups wherever the Spirit leads us.

