

## Waikanae Festival 2019

This year's Festival at El Rancho Christian Camp on the beautiful Kapiti Coast was particularly inspiring and uplifting. Attendance was in the 30's for the first few days and increased to 55 on Saturday when members from Masterton joined us. Also able to attend in the weekend was Louis Smith, who surprised us by coming along despite his ongoing health problems, and a number of his children and grandchildren came as well.



This was the fifth Festival at El Rancho and we now know our way around so can easily pick up where we left off a year or so ago without needing to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings. The food was once again plentiful and enjoyed by all. The weather was varied, with a couple of days of brilliant sunshine and a couple of wet days also in the mix.



It was great to have recently retired Regional Director Rod Matthews and his wife Ruth visiting for the Festival, and Rod gave two sermons. The first explored the spiritual implications of the way the roots of trees intertwine and have relationships underground, and the second, entitled "When Heaven Comes to Earth," showed how God loves His entire creation and is going to redeem all things. Dennis Gordon spoke on Judgment as good news, and Phil Baldwin revealed the beautiful hidden world inside an agate stone. Expounding on the Festival theme "Christ Builds His House", Dennis Richards outlined the way God the master builder constructs the Church, and Rex Morgan showed how we are living stones in the spiritual temple.



Warren White from Drug-ARM Wellington gave an afternoon seminar on "Conversational Evangelism". Evening activities included a showing of "The Case for Christ" movie about Lee Strobel's book of the same name, a Quiz Night compered by Dagmar Barnes and a Family Games Night featuring a variety of crazy challenges dreamed up by Les and Kaye Evans.

Saturday afternoon saw us on our annual trip to let off steam at the Kapiti Ten Pin Bowling arena. Many took the opportunity sometime during the Festival to take the scenic walk alongside the river to Waikanae Beach for a close-up view of Kapiti Island.

Following communion on the final day, Festival Co-ordinator Dennis Richards thanked everyone for their participation and presented gifts to Maureen MacDonald and Brenda Gordon for their special service in festival administration and catering. He then made presentations to Marilyn Wong, who has rotated off the church board after six years, and to David Wong for his service on the National Pastoral Team. And finally, Rod and Ruth Matthews were honoured for over 25 years' service to the NZ Church as Regional Director and Board member.

All too soon it was time to pack up and head for home, everybody having had an enriching time and already looking forward eagerly to next year. It was announced on the last day that next year's festival will take place at El Rancho from September 30<sup>th</sup> to October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

