



## Festival 2018, El Rancho, Waikanae

This year's festival at El Rancho was a wonderful occasion, thoroughly enjoyed by the 50 or so in attendance. Members stayed in comfortable rooms surrounding

the festival hall, and shared five delightful days of worship and fellowship, with lots of good food and activities included in the mix.

A series of excellent messages preached at daily services focused around the theme of "God Reaches Out." Guest speaker Kerry Gubb, from Australia, opened the festival with the topic "We are God's Spiritual Temple." Rex Morgan spoke about "God the Seeker", Dennis Gordon showed how the Lord's Prayer is "the Great Exodus Prayer", and Philip Baldwin asked "How Should we Teach the Gospel?" Festival Coordinator Dennis Richards covered the importance of joy and gratitude.



Kerry wrapped up the programme by sharing thoughts on what eternal life will be like, explaining that God reaches out so that we can have communion with Him. Members participated in a communion service on both the first and last days. Louis Smith coordinated the music, and led the opening worship service, which included photos and descriptions of GCI Wellington's contribution to projects

helping the underprivileged.

Kerry Gubb also gave an evening presentation on "Personality Type and Spirituality," showing how we can all better relate to one another. Les Evans and Rex Morgan gave an update on their recent trips to Vanuatu, with photos and short videos. Other activities included a tenpin bowling afternoon, a movie night featuring the film "War Room," dramatically highlighting the need for prayer in the Christian fight. The Best family put together a challenging and entertaining family night, with a mixture of quizzes and games, including a team challenge to see who could build the tallest tower of cardboard coffee cups. And there was always the option of the delightful 30-minute riverside walk to



Waikanae Beach for those who felt like more exercise.



Attendances ranged from 30 to 40 in the first few days, rising to around 60 when the Filipino members from Masterton joined us for the weekend. Some of them weren't able to come because they were denied leave from work, in this busy bee-keeping season.

The first few days were warm and sunny, before a cold snap arrived in the weekend, bringing a definite chill to the air. Meals once again were very

nourishing and plentiful, and the local church ladies treated everyone to a delicious supper at 8.30pm each evening.

All too soon it was time to pack up and head for home, everybody having had a wonderful 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 October 1-6, 2019.

