

Year of Prayer 2021

Sunrise Launch of the Year of Prayer

On Monday 1 February in Wellington, at the Petone shoreline in the still of an early morning, 70 people gathered to signal the beginning of the 2021 Year of Prayer. The territorial leaders, Commissioners Mark and Julie Campbell, issued the call for our territory to use this year as an opportunity to centre ourselves in prayer, placing emphasis on the importance of a collective prayer effort.

Territorial Secretary for Spiritual Life Development Colonel Heather Rodwell had high hopes for the launch to reflect the taglines for the Year of Prayer: make room, come aside, come together. 'I thought about how wonderful it would be if we did something to mark the first of February. As difficult as that is for the summer break and getting things organised, it occurred to me that it would be great to do that in an outside setting, on a shore somewhere, and in a dawn service.'

The launch began at four-thirty to reflect Māori and Samoan family prayer rhythms. Territorial Youth Secretary Captain Mat Badger found the combination of the launch environment alongside the use of our national anthem to be particularly striking. 'In my mind I was thinking it was going to be a very windy morning, but it wasn't. It was incredibly still, the water was calm ... and I loved the sunrise coming up as the national anthem was being 'prayed'. It was a reminder that we have this amazing prayer as part of our national identity.'

Aside from the extended times of prayer, the service involved hymns and worship songs, silence and reflection and input from several speakers within our territory. Further north, Palmerston North Corps had their own morning prayer service, and a dawn service was held on the Hibiscus Coast as well. Heather is optimistic that this strong start will help to build momentum for the year. 'It's very much something that's going to bubble away I think ... I just hope that this is one example of many that will emerge everywhere for the Year of Prayer.'