

The Rev'd Sally Carter

Minister at St Paul's Presbyterian Church, Napier

Address for the White Ribbon Day Service – Napier City says 'Thanks' – Civic Service held in Waiapu Cathedral, Napier, on Friday 25th November 2016, 10am.

Greetings to you all.

Each day, I look out of my office window on the street outside and offer a moment of prayer for those passing by. And I am reminded of a quote I came across 'Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about.'

Each of us encounters a small part of the puzzle which is family and domestic violence in New Zealand. And none of us knows the whole picture of people's lives, or what it is that touches a spark of anger into a flame of violence.

But each of us makes a difference. Perhaps we offer calm and wise advice to someone when life feels overwhelming. Perhaps we provide some warm clothes or some shoes, a blanket or a pair of slippers to ease the pressure on household bills. Perhaps we offer advocacy and companionship as people struggle with the court system and WINZ and other agencies. Perhaps we provide food and a safe place for people to gather,

Perhaps we get alongside families, helping them with budgeting, with food, with counselling, Perhaps we help in anger management and in growing understanding and exploring possibilities for those in situations where abuse is occurring.

Perhaps we are ready with a coffee or a meal for friends and neighbours who are struggling.

On behalf of the churches, particularly the inner city churches of the Cathedral, St Paul's, Trinity and the Catholic Parish of Napier, we thank you. For the moments large and small which ease the tension in households, which show people that they are worthy of respect and love, which help people negotiate the mazes that daily life requires. None of us can solve this alone. But together we can help make our city a safer, kinder and more gentle place.