

Parish and Community Activities

Newcomers are cordially invited to join any of these friendly groups



CHURCH OP-SHOP (behind the Church building, on Owen Street) Phone 867 1104
Open 9 – 12:30 Every Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The Op-Shop is a major supporter of our Parish and also helps many community groups. Please leave clean goods at workroom entrance. **SPECIAL SALE** in Church lounge **23-26 April**

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP- All welcome. Held 2nd Wednesday of every month, 1:30 pm in members' homes. For programme and venue details please ring Beryl Wharton 866 3739 or Ann Harsant 866 4740

FILM and FRIENDSHIP – Films showing 3rd Thursday of every month on the big TV in the church hall. Afternoon tea provided. **17 April and 15 May at 1.15pm.** Contact Madeleine Saunders for further info: 866 0169

LADIES BIBLE STUDY, Wednesday 10 a.m. at St. Andrew's. Details from Julie, 984 9140

MESSY CHURCH - An exciting Sunday experience for all the family, next one on **25 May.** For more info contact Mary 869 5356 or text 027 244 8396 or email mjpetersen@xtra.co.nz



Music and fun for babies, toddlers and their carers. Thursdays 10:00 am in school terms. Music begins promptly at 10 a.m. followed by morning tea and playtime. No sessions 24 April & 1 May. Lead by Mary Petersen and team.

P.R.O.P. People Relying on People. Helpline - Confidential support for families battling with mental health and substance abuse. Freephone 0800 127 359.

TE KOROWAI MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY GROUP meets Thursdays at St Andrew's 11.30 a.m - 1 p.m. Phone Robyn Campbell 869 5244 for information

TOTAL NUMBER of eggs in the newsletter is **27** - chocolate bunnies don't count!

TOUGHLOVE Behavioural support Anyone challenged by the behaviour of someone in their family is encouraged to talk to Nicole 866 5119 or Mary 869 5356

UPRIGHT& ACTIVE: Two friendly exercise sessions for seniors

Mondays at 9:30 a.m. Leader Carol Melrose 867 1097

Tuesdays at 10:00 a.m. in the Church hall Leader Greta Fox 866 4382



MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH - BOX 368, WHITIANGA

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

Corner Albert and Owen Streets, Whitianga.

Minister: Rev Mary Petersen 07 869 5356 Church Office 867 1102

Office email: standrewswhitianga@xtra.co.nz

Hall bookings: Church office 867 1102 ; Newsletter editor: Charlotte Christensen 867 1234

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea
Community Church



Newsletter April / May 2014



*Our mission in this parish is to share
the love of God with all people*



Telling our stories: stories of faith from our community

Dorothy Preece

I would like to share with you my experience at a Smith family reunion in Australia last year; an event that reinforced my faith and gave me an added perspective on life.

My grandfather James Smith was one of five brothers born in the Industrial Midlands of England. The family were all very active in the local Methodist Church, where wall plaques still commemorate their service to the community. When I was growing up, we often re-visited that church where my father showed me his uncles' names, but I never knew their real stories.

One of grandfather's brothers died young, then one by one, his three remaining brothers emigrated to the newly-opened copper, zinc and silver mines in Broken Hill, on the edge of the Australian 'red centre'. My grandfather stayed home and ran the family business, a scrap metal merchant on the canal-side, recycling scrap to the local foundries. My father grew up there.

My great-uncle Isaiah was the first to leave England as a young man, in 1883 – the year that Krakatoa blew up. After a 45-day passage he and his wife Emma arrived in Australia. The reunion I attended last November with Derek and Lesley, commemorated 130 years since Isaiah set foot in Australia. Since then the family has been prolific!

Being a representative of James, the stay-at-home brother, and having grown up in England myself, the reunion presented me with 113 Australians whom I had never met before, and four very dear faces from England



St. Andrew's News

whom I had not seen for many years. (Derek and I broke the mould – in 1966 we emigrated to New Zealand, not Australia.) It was a strange experience, meeting all those people who knew far more about my family than I did. Lesley also knew far more than me.

Just making the journey to Broken Hill was an adventure for the three of us. Derek and I were sailing down the Aussie coast last year, so we flew into Broken Hill from Sydney, while Lesley flew to Adelaide from New Zealand, then took the Indian-Pacific railway from Adelaide to Broken Hill. It was the first time any of us had experienced the real Australian desert, and it gave us pause, to think of those young men coming from the teeming factories of Staffordshire, to the absolute emptiness and dust storms of a very new Broken Hill township. Great-uncle Isaiah wrote, “The heat was fearful, the place was completely burnt up, not a green leaf, or a blade of grass, or a particle of shelter... it was like standing on hot coals.”



Despite the hardships, Isaiah raised a large family and wrote home to his brothers of the marvellous opportunities in the new country. But it was not until 28 years later, in 1911 that the next brother, Joseph made the journey, joined soon after by his wife and family. Brother John had also made the decision to go, but 1912 saw the sinking of the Titanic, and John's wife, Alice was reluctant to board a ship with their children so he travelled to Australia alone, and would send for his family later. In Broken Hill, they found that Isaiah had helped to build two Methodist churches, and was the choirmaster at both of them!

As time went by it became obvious that Alice would never bring the children to Australia and John made plans to return to England. Then the Great War intervened, and he couldn't get home again. Sadly, John died of pneumonia in 1916 before he could return to his family. In 1917, Joseph also died in a mine accident, and Isaiah had the sad task of burying his two younger brothers in close succession. Joseph's and John's families struggled on without their menfolk, on opposite sides of the world.

Things were not good back in England either. The very profitable scrap metal business had collapsed after the war. My grandfather James, having mountains of stock and no market for it, was declared bankrupt, a huge disgrace for any family in those days. From a high status in the community and in the church (they had servants and a carriage in the hey-day), my grandfather's family was ostracised. It seems incredible today, that even the church leaders would add their disapproval, and go so far as to relieve my grandfather of his position as church treasurer, “..as we feel we must not put temptation in his way”. This unjustified move hurt the family very badly, but my own father never told me any of it, except to say that his father, James had been “a man of steadfast faith

COMMUNITY MEALS every Monday 5-6 p.m.

A hot nutritious meal is served at St Andrew's for anyone who wants to come for food and company. Please phone the church office, 867 1102 or text 027 6080762 if you know of someone who needs a meal delivered.

If you want to help support the Community Meals, donations of any of the following are always welcome:

⇒ Fresh fruit and vegetables, tinned or preserved fruit, and we always need supermarket type plastic bags for deliveries

Limited food parcels, including fresh fruit and vegetables are also supplied during the week to some very vulnerable families. If you can help with giving any of the following, we would be very grateful:

⇒ Weetbix, flour, eggs, sugar, pasta and sauces, baked beans, spaghetti, teabags, coffee, 1 litre cartons of long life milk, shampoo, toilet rolls, soap powder

Check out the Church website for the latest information and weekly activities www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz

Combined Churches meet on the first Wednesday of every month to pray for our community. 10 a.m. beginning with morning tea. At **Crossroad Encounter Fellowship** on **7 May**. At **St Peter's Anglican Church** on **4 June**.



Special Events for your Diary

Messy Church next session on **25 May** - please note the change of date to avoid school holidays and Queen's Birthday Weekend. All families with children of all ages welcome to come and join in the fun activities, Bible story time, and with a meal provided

Communion 4 May and 1 June

Colin Gibson Music Workshop 4 p.m. Sunday 11 May at St. James' Church, Thames. If you are interested but need a ride, or could offer one to someone, please let Mary know.

Worship at St Andrew's by the Sea Community Church 9.30 a.m. every Sunday. Children are always welcome – Bible activities are provided for children to explore while seated with their parents; there is a quiet corner with toys at the back of the church; or older children may choose to learn with a Bible teacher in the lounge.

Easter Events

Palm Sunday service 9.30 a.m. Sunday 13 April

Easter Communion 2 p.m. Tuesday 15 April
followed by afternoon tea

Good Friday service 9.30 a.m. Friday 18 April

Easter Sunday 20 April:

Easter at the Beach 7.30 a.m. Combined Churches outdoor service on the Esplanade, opposite the end of Mill Road, followed by breakfast at Crossroad Encounter Fellowship

Easter Celebration at St. Andrew's 9.30 a.m.



Special services after Easter

11 May Mother's Day

8 June Pentecost

22 June Honouring Volunteers

till the day he died". James thereafter worshipped with the Baptist Chapel – where he was appointed treasurer! My grandfather died at age 58, his early death being attributed to stress.



At the reunion in November last year, the descendants of all four brothers were given different coloured badges to wear, so we could try to work out who was who. Lesley had made a stunning 'Brother James' family tree collage, onto which she pinned laminated leaves, with names and photos of all of James' descendants in England. The "four dear English faces" I mentioned earlier, were descendants of John and Alice, the family that never got to Australia. One of them, my cousin Stuart, is a Methodist minister in England. (He has just retired. Stuart was 17 when I last met him.) Stuart conducted the morning worship at the Broken Hill Uniting Church, the original two churches having been superseded. Here too, there are plaques on the wall in honour of the Smith family. Stuart used the verse: "Remember the Rock from which you were carved", bringing together the rock-solid faith of our forebears, the family mining history, and the never-failing promise of God, that we are never alone, never forsaken, never without hope, even in the bleakest of times.

The singing in the packed church on that reunion Sunday was more than joyful – it was triumphant, and to be surrounded by so much faith in my own family, was an experience I will never forget.

The 'Rock from which we are carved' is a strong picture of an everlasting God. Many of us hold fond memories of Bible stories told at our parents' or grandparents' knees as they passed on God's truths to us. But as one of my Sunday school teachers used to say, "You cannot inherit your grandfather's faith – you have to make that journey on your own". How true that is. And how different from theirs, my own faith journey has been. Having 'absorbed' the faith concepts in my mind from a young age, I still had to *take Jesus into my heart, and claim God's promises for myself*. By comparison to theirs, my life has been virtually untroubled. And yet I too, can look back see how God is, and always has been present with me. *As long as I remember to trust God and not try to go it alone*. Maybe I have yet to be tested, but when troubled I always remember the words of my favourite hymn:



We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll
Fastened to the Rock that cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's Love.



A word from Mary...

Dear Friends

Dorothy's story shows very vividly the influence faith can have on a family and individuals. She tells us of steadfast faith in the face of enormous life difficulties and stress.

I wonder whether that is your story too? Do you have an anchor that holds you strongly? Are you fastened to the rock which cannot move? We do each need to make our own faith commitment. **God can be a rock for each one of us in the turmoil of life.** We are never alone, even in the bleakest of times.

Jesus experienced some really bleak times. He was despised, hated and hunted by the political authorities because of his teaching about God's kingdom – encouraging people to live God's way of compassion and care for others. Jesus showed people that God had a claim on their life and had made them for a purpose of service to others. He lived that way as an example to all. The Roman authorities saw him as a rebel, challenging the authority of Caesar, the Roman Emperor. Their way of dealing with rebels was to crucify them. They tortured and crucified Jesus. Yet through all that Jesus trusted God.

I wonder what that means to you? **God is our rock but God is also love. Jesus' life, death and risen life among us, show us God's love in the most powerful way.** The followers of Jesus, throughout the centuries and today, are his new body – we are the life of Christ in the world now.

May you know the power of the love of God in your life this Easter. Rely on God as your rock. God bless you.

Mary Petersen



DAY CAMP at Morcom's farm, Cook's Beach **29 April - 1 May** will have 65 teen leaders and about 70 adults helping more than 300 children to have a great outdoor adventure.

Visitors are welcome on the last afternoon, Thursday 1 May 2 p.m. - 4.30 p.m. *Please pray for all those preparing and organising, and for the safety of all involved*

Parish Register

Funerals

Our thoughts and sympathy are with the families

18 February

Ashes of **Jim Stewart** from Canada were scattered at Ferry Landing Cemetery

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International Dinner about 100 people enjoyed dinner and entertainment at St Andrew's on 3 April

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Why all the eggs?

Fun for the kids (and the young at heart!): how many Easter eggs have we included in this issue of the newsletter?



Answer can be found somewhere in the text of this issue!

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IF YOU NEED PRAYER, FOR YOURSELF OR OTHERS, there are people ready to pray with you at the front of the Church every Sunday after the morning service.



We also have a **prayer chain** - a group of people who are willing to pray for anyone, without necessarily knowing the name, but being aware of the situation to be prayed for. Contact the church office, 867 1102, if you want to share a need for prayer or email Mary mjpetersen@xtra.co.nz