

Parish and Community Activities

Newcomers are cordially invited to join any of these friendly groups

Many activities will be disrupted in the holidays – please ring to confirm dates

CHURCH OP-SHOP (behind the Church building, on Owen Street) Phone 867 1104

Open 9–12:30 Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

COMMUNITY MEALS in the Church hall from 5–6pm every Monday. Providing free, hot, nutritious meals and friendship. Volunteers & donations welcome. Enquiries to Val 027 252 4453 or phone the Church on Mondays 867 1102

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

LADIES BIBLE STUDY Wednesday 10am Please ring Julie for information: 984 9140



mainly music

Music and fun for babies, toddlers and their carers. Thursdays 10:00 am in school terms: **no January sessions.** Music begins promptly at 10 a.m. followed by morning tea, friendship and playtime.

MESSY CHURCH An exciting Sunday experience for all the family, including food! For info & session dates, please contact Julie 984 9140

P.R.O.P. People Relying on People. Supporting families battling mental health and substance abuse issues. For confidential support, freephone 0800 127 359.

TE KOROWAI MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY GROUP meets Thursdays, 11:30, at St Andrew's hall. Phone Robyn Campbell 869 5244 for details of meeting dates

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

UPRIGHT& ACTIVE Two friendly exercise sessions for seniors, held in the Church hall

Mondays at 9:30am Leader Carol Melrose 867 1097

Tuesdays at 10:00am Leader Brenda Duncan 866 5814

WORSHIP AT CONTINUING CARE A Combined Churches event providing devotions every Wednesday at 10:45am in the residents' lounge. Supporters are welcome on any Wednesday. St Andrew's leads on the first and fifth Wednesday of the month.

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

**St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church
Newsletter December 2015 / January 2016**

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

Christmas is Good News!

“Good News”, because our little people can wake up early without having to go to school. “Good News” because they can have a “sugar rush” without feeling guilty. Christmas is “Good News” because these same kids will open prezzies, grinning from ear to ear with excitement over the gift they always hoped for.

Christmas is in fact “Good News” for young and old alike.

For those of us who bring Jesus into the season, we recognise that God stepped into this world of ours, in the form of a baby to “gift” us with LIFE. Not just life eternal, but life here and now, so that his “presence” would bring relevance to every day we live.

This “Good News”, however, is not just for our personal benefit but to pass it on to others around us, especially to those less fortunate than ourselves. When God came to Earth in the form of the baby Jesus, He did so to identify with the poor, the needy, the marginalised.

When we think about the people in countries like Lebanon, Syria, France, etc., the task may look too big. However, how about a little closer to home? Our own neighbourhood!

May I encourage you to bring “Good News” those who are lonely and not so well off at this time. Maybe an invite for Christmas Dinner, or drop off a food parcel or some small gift to show that our “Faith” is not just limited to a personal experience, but finds its way to the world around us.

Wherever you find yourself at this time, may the Spirit of Jesus fill you with his “Good News” of love and grace. There's enough for **US ALL!!!**

God's richest blessings to you all.

John Twemlow

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH -St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

Corner Albert and Owen Streets, Whitianga / PO Box 368, WHITIANGA

Church website: www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz

Parish secretary: Dorothy Preece 869 5452 dorothy.preece@worldnz.net.nz

Church office & hall bookings: 867 1102 or standrewswhitianga@gmail.com

Newsletter editor: Charlotte Christensen 867 1234 or strettoc@gmail.com

Excerpt from the Advent Prayer Letter from our Moderator

Movement of people, acts of terrorism, the clashing of political powers, religious extremism, hope and despair. They are the stories and images in our daily news. They are also a part of the first Christmas story.

Today we struggle to make sense of our world. What is happening to us? How can we respond to events of global violence and terrorism?

In considering these challenges, the Christmas narrative has significant relevance.

It is into this kind of world suffering that God breaks in with the cry of a baby; the hope of the world. It is in our particular hopes, fears and brokenness God comes near.

Notice what is happening in your own hear: is it numb? Unable to feel? Gripped with fear, or moved with compassion?

Is this where you might find the advent (coming) of God?

Start close-in with your own fear and brokenness.

Weep your own tears and for those whose name you know, only then will you have a heart broken open to weep for the world.

Ask God to come near.

May God break our hearts open in love for the world.

Rt Rev Andrew Norton
Moderator Presbyterian Church of
Aotearoa New Zealand



Bits & Pieces

I found this on the Internet!

In this technological age, we need to teach our children about those questions that cannot be answered by Google.



God is not on *Facebook*, but He is your best friend.

God is not on *Twitter*, but He wants us all to follow Him.

God has no *G-mail*, but He's always online.

Even without the Internet, we can stay connected to God. Talk to Him in your heart to FIND OUT MORE! Read your Bible, and come to our TECH SUPPORT sessions on Sunday mornings.
Dorothy P.

Returning to Bethlehem

The ground zero of our faith has always been Bethlehem. It has been sullied by commercialism and crassness, but followers of Christ will return to it again and again, until the bare events of 2000 years ago become part of the story out of which we see the world... To recognise our own flowering hope in the blooming of the pohutukawa is the beginning of our understanding – that the Christmas story is profoundly *simple*.
Mike Riddell.

Our Op-shop needs helpers!

We are sad to record the passing last week of Op-shop stalwart Jean Lowe. Jean will be sadly missed by St Peter's (Anglican) congregation, and by her Op-shop co-workers. Our hard-working team of Op-shop volunteers has been sadly reduced lately, due to retirements and people relocating to other areas. It is time to call for volunteers. The tasks are many and varied, the company is great and the work is very rewarding. If you know of anyone who has a heart for the church and community, and some time to spare, please pass this message on. Call in and see Greer on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday morning.



Remember to support the Christmas House this year!

Gordon and Diana Barnaby, otherwise known as Mr and Mrs Claus, warmly invite you to bring the children to visit the Christmas House, 66 SH25, Simpson's Beach. Lights and decorations are open for inspection from Monday Dec 14th, through to Dec 31st, except Christmas Day. Santa will be in residence for interview and family photos, from 18th – 24th. Donations in the wishing well this year will go to the Mercury Bay Day Camp.



Parish Register



Memorial services at St Andrew's

Our heartfelt sympathy and prayers are with the families

October 14 Glenis Dale Veevers

October 31 Albert Neil Chaney

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 or standrewswhitianga@gmail.com, if you want to share a need for prayer



COMMUNITY MEALS - happening every Monday with a large team of volunteers helping in all sorts of ways. The many very vulnerable people who come for a meal or have one delivered are very grateful for this practical support. Thanks very much to all those who help with donations of money or food or their time in this vital ministry in our community.



Activities over the Christmas/New Year period: as usual at this time of year, some of our regular activities will be on hold or not running to the usual schedule. Please ring the contact numbers listed on the back page of the newsletter to check for up-to-the-minute details!

Save your stamps this Christmas!

We are sorry to be losing Lesley and Lois Jackson from the Church and Op Shop. 'The twins' are moving out of the area after years of dedicated community service and social ministry. We wish them all the best for the future!

Julie St George has now taken over the collection of used stamps for the Leprosy Mission, a job that Lesley has done for years. The stamp box is on the piano in the Church hall. Christmas is now a rare opportunity to receive envelopes with stamps attached.

Please leave a

W I D E B O R D E R

 around them!

Parish Council News

Our Annual Congregational Meeting on October 18th was well attended – thank you to all those who came. There are a few copies of the Annual Reports document available in the Church hall for anyone to take – look for the green cover.

That document shows just how much community activity is centred around our little Church. St Andrew's is in good heart, with a strong preaching team and with Val supervising the meals and social caring aspects of the work. The Annual Meeting confirmed the Parish Council decision that Val should occupy the manse at no cost, in recognition of the countless volunteer hours Val is giving to this Church and community.

It also serves the purpose of keeping the manse occupied and looked after, until such time as we are able to call a Minister.

Thank you, Val!

John Twemlow has kindly accepted the challenge of Chairman of the Parish Council. *Thank you, John!*

Your Parish Councillors are Barbara Blake, Diana Campbell-Barnaby, Dorothy Preece, Julie St George, Robin and John Twemlow. Dorothy and Peter Chaffin have also stepped forward, to be 'co-opted' from time to time. *Thank you all.*

We were sorry to accept the resignation of Alistair Rogers, who has served for many years, first as Presbyterian Elder and then, when we became a Presbyterian / Methodist Co-operating Parish, as Parish Councillor. *Thank you, Alistair, for your work and wisdom over the years.*

Earlier this year we accepted the resignation of Robert Middleton, who has left the district. Robert and his late wife Erin's contribution to the life and work of the parish has been greatly appreciated. The Church is now officially without a gardener, but the mantle of resident fixit man seems to have fallen on John – ready or not!

Rev. Jacqui Cavitt (Tauranga) has been appointed Supervising Moderator for our parish. She is officially responsible for the Spiritual health and teaching in the parish while we are without a minister. Jacqui will meet with the Parish Council, and will visit from time to time.

We are pleased to announce that we have received a grant of \$1500 from TCDC, to help set up our overhead projector. The money will be spent on blinds for the chancel windows, different lighting for the chancel and a new projector bulb, which itself costs nearly \$500. *Thank you, TCDC!*

Combined Churches News

As the newsletter goes to print, three Churches in Whitianga are making last minute preparations to receive 200 primary school children for the 'Walk Through Christmas' on November 30th. Although the event centres around the three host churches, St Peter's (Anglican), St Patrick's (Catholic) and St Andrew's, the Combined Churches Committee has this year invited all of the Whitianga Churches to take part. Hence, the Baptist Church will provide musicians to support 'The 12 Days of Christmas' at St Peter's, Crossroads Fellowship is supporting 'The Stable' at the Catholic Church, and C3 Church helpers are baking cookies and helping at St Andrew's 'Saint Nicholas' presentation.

This year we are very heartened by the news that Whenuakite School children will also be attending Walk Through for the first time, joining Mercury Bay and Te Rerenga children.

The presenters this year are Gillian Reid at St Peter's, Lillian Munn at St Patrick's, and Dorothy Preece at St Andrew's. We are all very much aware that some children have never been inside a Church building, and for most, the concepts of a



loving God or Jesus as a personal friend are not familiar to them. So we each reiterate the basics – that Christmas is Jesus' birthday, and that He came into the world to teach us about God who loves all people in the world.

Please pray that the messages the children and teachers hear at Walk Through will be, for them, the beginning of a new awareness of God.

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The Word of Life - (Thoughts on John 1:1-14)

The Word did not become a *philosophy*, a *theory*, or a *concept* to be discussed, debated or pondered. The Word became *flesh*, a *person*, to be followed, and loved.

Christmas and New Year Worship Opportunities

St Andrew's By the Sea offers a child-friendly space at the back of the Church, where children can sit with their parents. Bible-oriented activities are provided for the children.

Worship events at St Andrew's (worship leaders indicated for each service)

Sun Dec 6th	Communion (Alistair Rogers)
Sun Dec 13th	Christmas Music service (Lynnor Cooke)
Tues Dec 15th	2pm Christmas communion with afternoon tea to follow (John & Robin Twemlow)
Sun Dec 20th	(Dorothy Preece)
Fri Dec 25th	Christmas Day family service (John Twemlow)
Sun Dec 27th	(Sue Beadle)
Sun Jan 3rd	Communion (Rev Viv Coleman)
Sun Jan 10th	(Blake Davison, Faith Bible College)
Sun Jan 17th	(Blake Davison, Faith Bible College)
Sun Jan 24th	(Rev Viv Coleman)
Sun Jan 31st	(Dorothy Preece)

Community worship dates for your diary

Wed Dec 9th	7:30pm 'Remembered at Christmas' <i>Remembering loved ones</i> St Peter's Anglican Church, Dundas Street.
Fri Dec 18th	7:30pm Carols by Candlelight in Soldiers Memorial Park (Combined Churches event) <i>You are invited to come early and bring a picnic</i>
Thur Dec 24th	7:30pm Community Carols (John & Robin Twemlow) Kuaotunu Hall
Sun Jan 3rd	Community worship (John & Robin Twemlow) Kuaotunu Hall