

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

**St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church
Newsletter February / March 2016**

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

Inreach vs Outreach

by Julie St George

I have been part of a small Bible Study group for nearly forty years. Obviously not the same one! As my family have moved a number of times, it has been necessary for me to start again in each new place, finding a church family, and making new friends. (Not to mention: new doctor, dentist, optician, hairdresser, vet, etc.....!)

I have found being part of a small group, very helpful. Churches can be intimidating places. Many can appear 'cliquey' and unfriendly. People shake your hand and make polite conversation, and often that is all until next week – if you return. My first question now, when attending a new church is always, 'Is there a home group that I could be part of?' For me, there is no better way to get to know like-minded people really well.

As the years have gone by, I have found that studying the scriptures with others, and being able to discuss them in depth, is not only a very necessary part of my life, it's one of my favourite activities.

Sometimes church life can be a frantic round of busyness. There is very little time or energy left for quiet contemplation, real study of the scriptures and refreshment. Outreach into the community is fine, good, and Christian – I am involved in it myself – but I would like to see more time put aside for equipping 'the troops'. We're doing the 'outreach'; 'inreach' is just as important. Time needs to be set aside in order to establish and maintain the relationship between ourselves and God, and our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Small group Bible studies can help provide this. Such groups move us from being spectators in a weekly church service, to active participants in a like-minded community dedicated to spiritual growth, and support for one another.

A small group is the place to celebrate life's victories, receive and give prayer support and encouragement in tough times. It also keeps us accountable in our personal growth. Bible study offers a structured time to focus on topics that address our needs or interests. Such groups offer an enlivening arena to help carry us from Sunday to Sunday as well as a safe place to work out the challenges we face.

Maybe you feel that the Bible is no longer relevant in this technical, digital, scientific day, and age. The members of the Wednesday Bible Study group have found the contrary to be true.

We have only one Bible study group in this church at the moment. A group of five women meet weekly to study scripture and pray together. Each of us has found the studies to be relevant and very helpful in our lives. We are committed to pray with and for each other, and are encouraged by God's faithfulness and His answers to prayer.

Here are comments from some of our members:

1. *'To me, in depth, personal Bible Study, prepared and shared with like minded people, is crucial for our growth as Christ Ones.*

This verse which was given to me when I was Baptised, is 2 Timothy 2 , verse 15 .

Study to show yourself approved, a workman needing not to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of Truth.'

2. *'About our Bible Study Group...Study is inspirational, practical and relevant to today's life. Sharing is confidential . Friendly group. Good leadership.'*

3. *'Each week we meet in a home for Bible Study and prayer. The leader digs deeply into the passage we are studying to provide extra information which helps our understanding. We always finish with prayer for family and friends, and are encouraged when our prayers are answered.'*

I would like to suggest that you get together with some fellow believers and really study one of the books of the Bible in depth. Look at the setting, the history, the times, as well as the content.

There are very good Bible Study notes published for this purpose, so there is not a huge burden placed on the leader to prepare material. Discussion questions are given out before each meeting to give each member time to mull over answers. Byways and topics can be explored along the way. There are excellent commentaries available.

If you are interested in forming a small group, or being part of one, please contact a member of Parish Council and we will be happy to provide you with material and point you in the right direction.

As Paul reminds us in Romans 12:2 *'And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.'*

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Community Meals Update



If there are any readers who are still not convinced that the St Andrew's Community Meals Mission is not meant to be – here is the latest example of God's bountiful goodness, in Val's own words:

"I was making macaroni cheese, and I really needed something more to make the meal more substantial as well as interesting.

I was just writing a shopping list. On the top I wrote, "Ham or bacon whichever is on special." I was just walking out the door to do the shopping, when some people from St Peter's Anglican Church came in and almost bowled me over with a large Christmas ham. 'We thought you might be able to use this for the Monday Meals,' they said."

The St Andrew's Parish Council is constantly blown away by the way God provides for the meals, through caring people who are prompted to outrageously generous acts. Our treasurer, Pat tells us there is funding for another two months of meals. Just yesterday I received a phone call from Taupo, from a woman who occasionally attends our Church when in the district. She had deposited \$100 in the Parish Bank account and wanted to make sure we got the money.

THANK YOU, everyone who helps us with this work.

Thank you from the Children in Siliguri (Northern India)

The money that you contributed, before Christmas, in Robin's Christmas Stocking Appeal allowed these children to enjoy a wonderful Christmas celebration. This Christmas, each child was given a warm jacket; made possible by your generous contributions. Although these children are from a Leprosy colony, they do not have the disease, however, one or both of their parents do. A.I.M. Women (a local trust) have been able to provide finance that allows around thirty of these children to attend school. After school each day, the children break rocks with hammers to raise money for their families.

Pastor Magdalene

Once a week these children go to Pastor Magdalene's house where they get help with their homework, and are given a good, nutritious, cooked meal. A.I.M. Women provide their school uniforms, school fees, and school bags etc. Magdalene teaches them about Jesus, and some of the children go to her church on Sundays. She loves the children. She always goes to the Leprosy Colony with gifts of food. The children follow her like the Pied Piper.



Recent News

Barbara has knitted warm hats for these children that Sue Beadle is delivering this week.

The shaded part between Nepal and Bangladesh is the known as the Siliguri Corridor. This is where Siliguri is situated.



Parish Council News

Getting the message out... or... rethinking Church.

With no resident Minister, the Parish Council now has the task of finding and approving worship leaders for our Sunday services. Since August, as well as ordained Clergy, speakers at St Andrew's have included Bible College students and members of our very able local team. Each worship leader brings a different approach to the concept of 'preaching', which they variously describe as 'proclaiming the Gospel', 'delivering the message', or 'leading the meditation'. ALL, of course, are constructed to help us THINK about the meaning of a specific Bible passage, or about the Life of Jesus, or some aspect of the Christian Life. ALL worship leaders study and pray long and hard, to try to discern the message that God wants them to deliver. We, the congregation, go along with open hearts and minds to receive the message, however it is proclaimed,.

One particularly interesting and thought-provoking approach came from Ross Millar, who has specialized and trained in the technique of oral story telling. Ross has taken his Bible story-messages as a missionary to Bangladesh. Many cultures have strong traditions of teaching through telling oral history. But we all love to hear a story, whatever our age or ethnic background might be. Jesus knew this!

Last year we welcomed Ross to St Andrew's, and experienced his amazing vitality in telling the Old Testament story of Jonah, and the whale, and God! If you think you know the story, maybe you are mistaken. Have you thought about its implications for the world, and for Christians today?

We don't usually expect to answer-back while the sermon is progressing, but through *question and answer* Ross managed to tease out our private thoughts and feelings about the well-known story. Personally, I was surprised at how many people had something to say on the subject – and yet I was still expecting Ross to 'sum it all up' with wise words. (He was the preacher, after all.) But no, there was no summing-up. No final, pre-prepared words of wisdom. *The wisdom was in the questioning.* We were simply encouraged to "carry on thinking about it". We, of course, have to be the story-tellers in our community.

Ross Millar has agreed to lead our worship in a further series of story studies, and we look forward to that. Thank you, Ross.

Look for the worship dates further on in this newsletter.

Dorothy Preece.

<p><i>He came singing Love and He lived singing Love, He died, singing Love. He arose in silence. For the Love to go on we must make it our song, You and I be the singers.</i></p>

Parish Register

Baptism:

6th January - Isla Rose Shepherd, at St Andrew's.
Daughter of Kylie and Joshua Shepherd



Weddings:

At St Andrew's -
December 19th - Kirsty Yeoman to Christopher McLaren
At Mercury Bay Boating Club -
January 16th - Kimberley Gould to Lance Macfarlane

Funerals:

1st January - Carol Bryson Daniels
5th January – Betty Mavis Thomas

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A Good Friday Meditation by Father John Westerman

Money Chinking, Dice Rattling.....

Money talks. It talks alright. If you've got enough, you can feed the family... every day. If you've got more than enough, you can buy things that will make you the envy of your neighbours. And what a lot of things you can buy. Bread and wine, fruit and vegetables, a comfortable bed and well-made furniture. Land – lots of land – a fine house, servants, upper class friends, a good education for your children.

You can even buy loyalty, and respect and political power. But everything you buy comes at a cost. I wonder how much it costs to buy a human soul.... *Thirty pieces of silver?*

While Jesus was suspended, naked, in agony on the cross, his Roman guards threw dice to decide who would get his robe. Good strong cloth, village made, made to last. It seemed too good just to tear it up and share the pieces out among them.

So they diced for it. Winner takes all.

Strange that the soldiers should hesitate to rip up a piece of cloth, and care so little about tearing apart a man's body.....

See: *Matthew ch.27; Mark chs.14-15; Luke chs.22-23; John chs. 18-19*

And then read on – to the wonderful Easter Day Miracle!

Worship Opportunities

*Families with children are always welcome at St Andrew's.
A child-friendly area is set aside at the back of the church where
children and parents can sit together, with Bible related activities and
quiet toys provided.*

Feb 7 - Communion—Peter and Dorothy Chaffin
Feb 14 – John Twemlow
Feb 21 - Janice Purdie
Feb 28 – Rev Jacqui Cavit
(Superintending Moderator for the Mercury Bay Parish)

Mar 6 – Communion—John Twemlow
Mar 13 – Ross Millar
Mar 20 – Robin Twemlow
Mar 25 – GOOD FRIDAY 9:30—Dorothy Preece
Mar 27 – EASTER DAY COMMUNION
Peter and Dorothy Chaffin
Christ is Risen! Halleluia!

*Combined Churches Prayers for the Community
Held on the first Wednesday of each month at 10 am.*

Weds February 3rd, at St Patrick's Catholic Church
Weds March 2nd, at St Andrew's Community Church

Spotted on a Church noticeboard:

HONK IF YOU LOVE JESUS TXT WHILE DRIVING IF YOU WANT TO MEET HIM



Mainly Music – an important announcement
*Mainly Music has been discontinued at St Andrew's,
due to the lack of leaders who can regularly attend to
run the programme. It was a difficult decision. The
Parish Council is inviting feedback on this and would
like to hear from families affected by this decision.
Please contact Julie 984 9140.*

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 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/venue details: Beryl Wharton 866 3739 or Ann Harsant 866 4740

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

MESSY CHURCH An exciting Sunday experience for all the family, including food!
For info & session dates, please contact Robin Twemlow (869 5054) or Val Ransome (027 252 4453)

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 Friendly exercise sessions for seniors, held in the Church hall
Mondays at 9:30am Leader Carol Melrose 867 1097
Tuesdays at 10:00am Leader Greta Fox 866 4382

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.

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