

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

Newsletter April / May 2016

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

Telling our stories: Angela Taylor

as recorded by Dorothy Preece



Angela now holds the role of treasurer for both the church and the St Andrew's Op-shop. Her story reads like a novel, full of setbacks and difficulty, but it does have a happy ending.

Three years ago, after a life of emotional hurt, Angela was at her lowest ebb. "I really wondered whether life was worth the effort" she says, "but now, with a new awareness of God, the future is full of love and hope."

Angela was born in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, where her father was working. When she was two, after a marriage break-up, Angela's Mum brought her back to live in Tauranga, where her Mum subsequently remarried. At age 12, Angela was run over by a car. "It was a life-threatening accident," she says. "They thought I wouldn't make it. I was in a wheelchair for three months, then I had to learn to walk again.

"The accident affected Mum big-time, and her marriage broke up shortly afterwards. I realise now, that there had never been much love or support in the marriage, and my accident added to the stress between them. Eighteen months after the accident my stepfather left us.

"Three months later my mother died."

Angela was 13. She was passed around "like a parcel" from one relative to another, until she finished school in Rotorua. "In those years there were several more deaths in the family, and none of my relatives wanted me in their homes."

Still at school, Angela did work experience with a firm of accountants, and from there moved up to a junior, paid position. She moved in with a boyfriend, worked, studied and saved. She went through "a few rocky relationships," put herself through Massey University, majored in

Accountancy and came out with a Bachelor of Business Studies. She worked for the prestigious firm of Ernst & Young, and then moved to the corporate world in Auckland.

At 25, Angela was married and career-oriented.

“I had no experience of what a real marriage should be. For me, life was about personal survival. I earned good money and I had already bought my own home in Palmerson North. I bought another in Auckland, as security for my life.”

The marriage lasted three years, and Angela says she married again “on the rebound”. Soon afterwards, she suffered a spinal injury and was unable to work. “I couldn’t sit at a desk, and I had to take redundancy.”

It was then that Angela bought a section in Kupe Drive, Whitianga and had a new home built. She and her husband sold up in Auckland and moved here. Angela was still recuperating from her injury, so she started her own accountancy business from the Whitianga home. Her husband was still working in Auckland, and commuting to Whitianga on weekends.

Then Angela became pregnant with their son, Alex.

“It was a very difficult pregnancy because I was still very ill, and in a lot of pain. The month before my son was due I found out that my husband was seeing another woman and in the same week found out my father was dying and wasn’t likely to live long enough to meet his grandson, due in three weeks. When Alex was born I was rushed in for an emergency Caesarian. The next day, I heard that my father had died. I was his only child, and although I had very little contact with him over the years, it was down to me to arrange the funeral. My husband had to deal with the arrangements.”

Baby Alex failed to thrive. Angela and baby spent time away at the Mothercraft unit, and all the time she knew that her marriage was falling apart. “My in-laws told me I must forgive and forget, but the problem was still there.”

Two-and-a-half years on, Angela became pregnant again, this time with daughter Addison.

“Addison also had health problems from day one. She screamed constantly, and I was struggling to even function. I was exhausted. It was too much for my husband, and when Addison was nine months old, he left us for his other relationship.” There was never any love or support in our relationship, but still I was heartbroken. He left a mortgage and a string of debts for me to pay, and I had no way of

earning an income with my two little ones. Just dealing with Addison's immune disorders was a full-time job. I was at my wits' end."

The final blow came when Mark 'reported' to CYFs that Angela was an unfit mother. Angela received a phone call from CYFs, who had removed the children to Mark's care. She was stunned.

"Friends put me in their car and drove me to see a lawyer in Hamilton. I underwent a psychological examination, which I passed with flying colours, but it destroyed me. It was at that point that I felt there was no reason to live. My life had turned completely, from earning a corporate city salary, to not being able to afford food and living on a WINZ benefit. That was three years ago.

"There had never been any Christian influence in my life. I had never met any person of faith until I came to Whitianga, but when my life was falling apart, people began to offer help and friendship.

"I was surprised by random acts of kindness, from people that I hardly knew. Very reluctantly, I accepted the offer of St Andrew's Community Meals, and I wondered what motivated such kindness. Bonnie Clarke became my friend. She told me that there was a loving Christian family, waiting to welcome and support me in the Church, and I went along with her to the Baptist Church.

"That was a turning point for me. I began to realise that God, whom I had never known, cared about me. I knew that I was not alone."

With her life back on track, Angela volunteered to use her accountancy skills for the Church Op-shop, and now she is doing the same for St Andrew's Church. She is still a member of the Baptist Church, where she and the children feel very much at home.

"We can afford to eat now – I never thought, working in the city, that I would have to say that," Angela says. "God has brought caring people into my life, and now He has given me a new start, a new relationship with a man who really cares about me and the children. I have never felt so loved.

"How I wish I had known about the caring Church when I was young and needed support so badly. The St Andrew's meals team probably have no idea how much their work is needed. I want to encourage you all to keep building those friendships, because that's where it starts."

Thank you Angela, for sharing your honest and courageous story.

*Isn't it amazing to read about the experiences of others in our community? Maybe now's the time to share **your** story too! If you want to talk about sharing your story with us— whether a life story or just about something in particular like last issue's bible study groups story— please do phone Dorothy on 869 5452 or email Charlotte on strettoc@gmail.com*

News

Two (not five!) Gold Rings for Sale

A very generous donor has given some items of jewellery to be sold 'for the lovely old church'.

Damon Christensen has already sold several items on TradeMe, but there are still two gold rings for sale.

One has a central zircon and smaller stones, and fits a slender hand, and the other, heavier (perhaps a man's ring?), is set with several small diamonds.



Details on TradeMe (search for member name **diode**) or contact Damon on 027 355 1650 or diode@xtra.co.nz

New team manager for the Op-shop

After years of dedicated work, Greer George is stepping down from her role as Op- shop manager, and Madeleine Saunders is stepping up to the task. We owe both of these women a great debt of gratitude, and we wish them both well for the future.

The St Andrew's Op-shop is still our financial mainstay, and thanks to a keen team, the shop is now open on **Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday** mornings. They are always on the lookout for new helpers, so -

if you have a heart for the Church and community,
are reasonably active,
and can spare a few hours one morning a week

please call in and meet the team to discuss how you might help.

News

Bouquets in Appreciation

On February 14th, we presented flowers to retiring treasurer **Pat Rogers**, in recognition of the sterling, and sometimes stressful, work she has put in to our Church accounts over the years. Pat has kept us up to date on the financial situation and has put in many unpaid hours on our behalf. Thank you, Pat!



On the same day, we gave flowers to **Barbara Blake**, not because she is retiring, but because when there is work to be done or people to be fed, Barbara is always there. She travels in from Kuaotunu, sometimes four times a week, she is chief caterer and an op-shop volunteer, and we want to say Thank you, Barbara!

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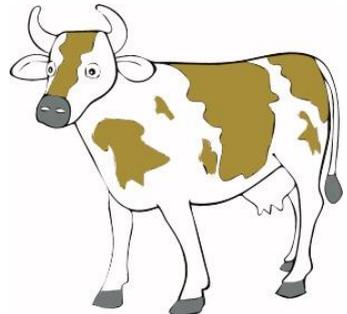
Still on the topic of flowers, Lorraine Hunter has taken on the task of looking after the Church gardens, and has plans to brighten the place up with spring bulbs. If you can donate bulbs - and we need about 150 of them for the best display! - Lorraine will welcome them. Please drop them in at the church. The garden is much tidier, thanks to the removal of a couple of old trees which has also let more light into the Church. John Twemlow has been helping with the heavy work. Thank you, Lorraine and John.

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Givealittle Fundraiser

Robin Twemlow and the AIM Christian Women's group are raising funds to build a cow-shed to help an orphanage in Myanmar.

They have set up a page called "**Build a Cowshed**" on www.givealittle.co.nz where you can read about the project and donate to this fundraiser.



Parish Register

Weddings: at St Andrew's

12th March—Sharnie Williams to Paul Warren

19th March—Sally Driscoll to Matthew Rogers



Sharnie and Paul: An Historic Connection

Strong family connections prompted Sharnie and Paul to be married at St Andrew's last month.

Sharnie's great-great-grandfather, John James (JJ) Wilson, arrived in New Zealand in 1862. His wife was Sarah (nee Cleaver). They were early pioneers in Whitianga, running a large boarding house for mill workers. Their son, Arthur Wilson (Sharnie's great-grandfather) married Ella White.

The Whites were also early pioneers. Before the Undenominational Church (now St Andrew's by the Sea) was built in 1898, weekly church services were held in Billy White's boatshed. Ella married Arthur in the church in 1912.

104 years later, Sharnie and Paul returned to be married. We wish them a long and happy life together.

Sally and Matthew: A Homecoming

Matthew Rogers is the son of our church stalwarts, Pat and Alistair. Matthew met Sally, the love of his life in Australia, where he has lived for some time. The couple married in Australia on Tuesday 15th March, then hopped on the plane the very next day to celebrate a wedding blessing with family on this side of the ditch.



We wish both of our wedding couples a happy, healthy and blessed future together.

Worship Opportunities

Services at St Andrew's

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.

Apr 3 – Jenny Chisholm will lead our worship

Apr 10 – Ross Millar continues the Exodus story

Apr 17 – Dorothy Preece

Apr 24 – Robin Twemlow

May 1 – John Twemlow—Communion service

May 8 – Brendon Ward (Grace Bible College)

May 8 – Parish Council Team will lead our worship

May 22 – Alistair Rogers

May 29 – Ross Millar

Other opportunities

May 29 Combined Churches Worship, St Patrick's Catholic Church, Campbell Street. Begins at 5pm with a light meal. Worship begins at 6pm, with each Church taking part.

Combined Churches prayers for the community: everyone is welcome to come and pray. Hosted by the Churches, first Wednesday each month at 10am, beginning with morning tea.

Wed 6 April at the Baptist Church, Cook Drive.

Wed 4 May at Crossroad fellowship, opposite New World.

Worship at Continuing Care

A short service of songs and prayer is held every Wednesday at CCU at 11am, led by the Churches in turn. St Andrew's leads on the first Wednesday of the month. **Supporters and helpers are warmly invited.**

Wed 6 April – leader Dorothy Chaffin

Wed 4 May – leader Dorothy Chaffin

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 Wednesday to 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 GRAB GROUP meets Thursdays, 11:30, at St Andrew's hall. For more information ring Judith Godwin 07 808 0033

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 11am 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

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