

# MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH *St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church* Newsletter February/ March 2017

*Our Mission in this Parish is  
To share the Love of God with all people.*

## **Our Faith Stories: *Community Meals* – and *Val*.**

Many who receive this Newsletter will know that our St Andrew's Community Meals project has not always been easy to deliver. When the Parish first embarked on the meals mission four years ago, we faced criticism and suspicion from people who questioned the rightness of our thinking, and the motives behind it. As time progressed, some have changed their views, but not everyone.

St Andrew's Parish Council however, has been in a position to see the hand of God at work here. We are constantly surprised by the support received from so many caring people in this community. Generous gifts of food and money, accompanied by words of encouragement, continue to give us confidence that the Spirit is leading the work.

We have also been supported by successful applications to various community funders. St Andrew's congregation could never meet the cost of the meals, but it takes time and dedication to keep this funding effort going. In this we are indebted to the Mercury Bay Community Support Trust committee, acting as the outreach arm of St Andrew's Church. To date, all the meals costs have been met without recourse to the Parish account. That is truly remarkable – but that's only one aspect of the work.

*The real good news faith story is Val Ranson herself.*



Val took over the cooking and organizing of the meals when Rev Mary Petersen was sidelined by illness, two and a half years ago. Since then Val has been very much in charge of the menus, the ordering, the cooking and the delivery of meals. Val has worked tirelessly, not just as 'the cook' but as helper and adviser to many who find themselves in need.

Now, we are facing a time of transition. Val's contract as Meals Coordinator finished on February 1st, and due to family circumstances Val can no longer keep up the work.

We need to find another Val!

Circumstances have not always been easy for Val, juggling other work commitments, family and health complications, but her dedication to this mission has never wavered.

At times she too, has been witness to miracles small and large. "Sometimes when I've been really down, the most amazing things have happened," Val says. "Complete strangers have offered help, food has miraculously appeared when we needed it – like the dear soul who gave us a whole Christmas ham, when I was worried about being able to put on a real Christmas dinner for our meals people.

"It has been an amazing journey for me, and I know it has strengthened my faith. If I could, I would love to continue with the meals, but it's just not possible. The meals are as much about people as about the food. Whoever takes on this mission needs to be, not just a good organizer, but a confidential, patient listener. "I know some people think we shouldn't need to provide meals, that's Social Services job - but we fill in the gaps. Not everyone is financially stressed. Some just don't cope with life, some just need a friend. Often those who come to the hall on Mondays will donate to the meals.

"There is criticism too, about the number of meals we deliver to homes. Sometimes it's been up to 100. But if you've got young children and no car, it's hard to get them all into town for a meal, especially in the winter. Admittedly, some just don't want to come to the church hall and be seen to be 'needy'. I can understand that. I think it is important preserve people's privacy if that's what they want.

“The other churches are all very supportive, but we need more people from the churches to come to the hall on Monday nights, just to talk - no strings attached, and offer friendship to those who come for the meals.”

We are greatly indebted to Val for all her dedicated work, and we all realise that replacing her is going to be hard. Parish Council is discussing the way forward, but in the meantime we ask for your prayers, that God will guide us to the right person for this task.

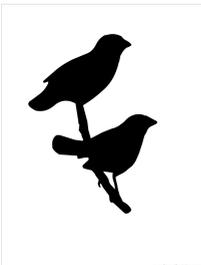
Val now faces the upheaval of moving out of the manse and probably moving to Tairua to be closer to Mary. We pray for improved health for both of these dear friends.

The manse roof now needs substantial repairs before we can find a tenant, or offer it to a parish worker. It will be an expensive job, and we are looking at ways to finance this. The Church has ‘property funds’ held in Wellington, but there are some very strict rules about using those funds, especially as we need to use it for the manse, not the church itself.

### ***Garage Sale Result***

*St Andrew’s Garage Sale, held in January netted a final total of \$525. Grateful thanks to all who helped.*

*A person from Whangarei who came through to Whitianga said when they have items to sell, their church members hold garage sales at their own homes, and give the takings to the church. – Sounds like a fine idea to me! - Dorothy P.*



*If you haven’t yet seen Helen Stephenson’s wildlife drawings, do have a look. She has a selection of them on the sales table in the hall. Beautiful!*

## ***Mission News – Little Flower Orphanage.***

Thank you to all those who have donated to the Give-a-Little appeal for repairs to the dormitory in India. We have now sent \$4,000 to the Little Flower Orphanage, and the work has begun on renewing the hostel floor, and renewing a bathroom.

The page is still open for donations.

***Thank you. Robin Twemlow***



## **Visiting Preacher : Julie Calvert**

We welcome Julie Calvert to our service on February 19th.

Julie is an ordained minister, and NZ National Director for the International Association of Healing Rooms. Julie has helped to pioneer and establish over 50 Healing Rooms in New Zealand.

An excerpt from her biography reads:

“Her desire to see God’s love and healing power in the lives of others, is what motivates Julie to take Jesus to those who are in desperate need of Him...”

On February 19th Julie will lead our worship and tell us more about her work.

**A word for Waitangi Day** from the Moderator of Presbytery, Rt Rev Richard Dawson.

It is fitting to pray for the whole nation, on what is our nation’s proper birthday – Waitangi Day. Also to think about what Waitangi means for each of us, because one thing is clear – if we don’t take some *personal responsibility* for making Waitangi truly a part of our own hearts, then we will not see the blessing that can flow from a united country, and united peoples. The Maori proverb says it well:

*He waka eke noa. (We are all in this canoe without exception).*

In other words, we are all in this land together.

This nation was begun to create a fair and just society. We should not lose sight of this, because there are still deep injustices to be dealt with today.

## ***Difficult Times.....***

*With so much unrest in the world, and so much uncertainty in the current political climate, it is worth re-reading some of former Presbyterian Moderator Andrew Norton's reflections, in his publication 'Green Volunteers' - Copies available at church.*



### *The first, written in 1931 by German Pastor, Bertolt Brecht:*

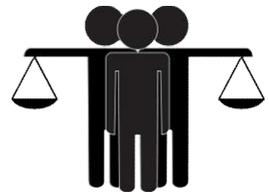
In gloomy times of bloody confusion, ordered disorder  
Planful willfulness, dehumanized humanity,  
When there is no end to the unrest in our cities;  
Into such a world, a world like a slaughterhouse -  
Summoned by rumours of threatening deeds of violence  
To prevent the brute strength of the short-sighted people  
From shattering its own tools, and trampling  
Its own bread-basket to pieces –  
We wish to introduce  
- GOD.

### *The second, an anonymous Prayer for Justice*

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your land

As your Love would make it:

- a land where the weak are protected,  
and none go hungry or poor;
- a land where the benefits of civilized life are shared  
and everyone can enjoy them;
- a land where different races and cultures live  
in tolerance and mutual respect;
- a land where peace is built with justice  
and justice is guided by love.
- and give us the inspiration and courage to build it,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.



***Amen.***

## ***St Andrew's Op-Shop News***

The Church Op-shop, next door to the church, continues to be our Parish life-saver. We already know that we cannot afford to call a full-time Minister to the Parish. Our Op-shop ensures that the church and hall doors remain open to serve the community.

Madeleine Saunders, our Op-shop 'team manager' says she is more of a team player than a manager. "I absolutely love it," she says. "We have about 30 volunteers keeping the shop open from 9am – 12:30 Wednesday – Saturday. I like to encourage them to put their own ideas forward. As well as St Andrew's ladies we have Anglicans, Baptists, and Catholics, and some who are not church people. One lady is 92 and as fit as a flea. They all enjoy working together.

"I am always looking for volunteers to fill in at odd times when any of the regulars are away," Madeleine says. It's hard to find people who are prepared to just be on call.

"Unlike other Op-shops, we don't pay wages to a manager or anyone else, and we are not supported by any outside funding from government, or membership subscriptions. This shop exists to support St Andrew's, but we do also make regular donations to all the churches in Whitianga as well as various community groups.

"People are very generous with their donations of clothing. On average, we make \$200 to \$300 per day. It used to be a lot more, but market forces have caught up with us. When we get overstocked we have a half-price sale. By far our biggest expense is rubbish disposal. You wouldn't want to touch some of the stuff. It goes straight into the skip. That costs \$20 per week to hire, and it's \$50 a time to empty. We cram in as much as we can. We put out as many blue council bags as we possibly can, but they also cost."

The Op-shop is currently being painted, at a cost of around \$12,000. Tony Courtenay, the painter has had to re-putty a few windows, but apart from that he says "it's 'a sound little building'".

***Thank-you, Madeleine and team!***

If anyone would like to help at the Op-shop, please ring Madeleine Saunders - 866 0169.



## ***Come and Worship !***

***Services at St Andrew's:  
9:30 every Sunday***

***Families are warmly invited. We have a child-friendly space where the family can sit together, with quiet toys for the little ones, and Bible activities for children of reading age.***

*Feb 5th - Communion service led by Peter Chaffin*

*12th – John Twemlow*

*19th - Julie Calvert (see note inside)*

*26th – Dorothy Preece*

*March 5th – Rev Jacqui Cavit*

*12th – John Twemlow*

*19th - Alistair Rogers*

*26th - Dorothy Preece*

### **Visiting Preachers:**

Your Parish Council takes every opportunity to invite visiting preachers who are recommended to us, and therefore to provide a wide range of Gospel-based worship and teaching. We thank all of our worship leaders most sincerely for their willing work. If any parishioners have friends who are preachers in other churches, please let us know. We can arrange accommodation for them. (See the notes about Julie Calvert, elsewhere in the newsletter).

### **Worship at Continuing Care**

A short service of songs and prayer is held at 11am every Wednesday at CCU, led by the Churches in turn. St Andrew's leads on the first and fifth Wednesdays.

**Supporters and helpers are warmly invited.**



## ***PARISH AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES***

*Newcomers are cordially invited to join any of these friendly groups*

**St Andrew's by the Sea - Services 9:30 every Sunday**  
**St Peter the Fisherman (Anglican) Service – 11:00 every Sunday.**

**CHURCH OP-SHOP** (behind the Church building, on Owen Street)

**Open 9–12:30 Wednesday to Saturday. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

If you can help, please phone 866 0169 or 867 1104 for the shop.

**COMMUNITY MEALS** in the Church hall from 5-6pm every Monday.

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.**

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month @1:30pm. For programme/venue details:

Beryl Wharton 866 3739 or Ann Harsant 866 4740

**FAMILY COUNSELLING** Anyone who needs advice or family counselling is encouraged to contact Nicole 866 5119

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

**PARKINSONS' SUPPORT GROUP** For all those affected by Parkinson's, with their carers and families. Held approx once a month, with various activities. For details/ dates contact Raewyn Thorburn 866 2609.

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

**UPRIGHT & ACTIVE** Friendly exercise sessions for seniors.

**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. Devotions every **Wednesday at 11 am 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](http://www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz)

Parish Secretary and Hall bookings:

Dorothy Preece 869 5452 [dorothy.preece@worldnz.net.nz](mailto:dorothy.preece@worldnz.net.nz)

Church office ; 867 1102 or [standrewswhitianga@gmail.com](mailto:standrewswhitianga@gmail.com)