

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church Newsletter December 2017 / January 2018

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

A Message for Christmas from the Resource Minister

Dear friends of Mercury Bay Parish,

December – the month when the days just seem to rush by: gifts to think about, food to cook, travel to arrange, church to decorate, Christmas services to arrange.....



Even more important than during 'ordinary' days then, is to set aside precious time for prayer/meditation/reflection. In the NZ Prayer book from the Anglican Church, that I often use as the basis for beginning my day, the call to worship for a Monday says: 'always be joyful, pray continually; give thanks, whatever happens.'

Every time I sit with those words they call me to attention. 'Always... whatever...'

One of the scriptures often read around Christmas time is from Isaiah 11 – the peaceable kingdom. It's a kingdom of predator and prey: the wolf and the lamb, calves and lion cubs together. It causes me to think that most of our lives, contain a kind of mix – of things that challenge and worry us, and of things that comfort and bring us joy. To always be joyful seems inconsistent with life – tears and sadness are certainly part of living aren't they?

But, yes to pray continually. It doesn't, I find, need to be a conscious process all the time – rather to have an attitude of prayerfulness, perhaps we might say an awareness of the presence of God always with us, so a communication occurring in the space where Love is held. Perhaps then in that space it becomes possible to say 'always be joyful', just as it becomes possible to imagine 'the calf and lion cub together'.

At Christmas especially we celebrate the coming of God into this world in the form of Jesus – the incarnation. In this time leading to Christmas, let us be particularly sure to set aside a time ‘to always be joyful’ in God’s presence, and to carry that out into our day to be a blessing to others.

And as we think about gifts: what do I really have to give this Christmas, apart from money or goods? When we read the gospels, Jesus walked the dusty roads with very few possessions it would seem – Yet the gift of God’s grace and love turned the people’s lives right around. Can we in our church this Christmas put that precious gift in a stronger package in our families and communities than we generally seem to manage?

Peace and hope to each one
Shalom, Jan

Thoughts on depression....

Christmas is a time when many people are affected by depression, and we need to be aware that some of our neighbours or friends may need support.

The following is a piece I chanced to find on the web - maybe it will help our understanding.....

‘Depression isn’t always crying your mascara off in the shower and playing sad songs in bed. Sometimes it’s not wanting to talk to anyone for days, and other times it’s desperately needing to be around people. Sometimes depression is having no appetite, even though you haven’t eaten since yesterday, and sometimes it’s eating everything you have in the fridge. Depression isn’t your boyfriend holding you and telling you that it’s going to be okay. It’s sitting across the table, not eating, having him ask you what’s wrong, and knowing that you’re ruining his night because you can’t seem to snap out of it and just be happy. It’s the frustrating feeling of desperately wanting to enjoy something and just be ‘normal’ for once. It’s keeping things a secret from people you love, because you don’t want them to look at you like you’re broken.

No, depression isn’t beautiful black and white images. Depression is lonely and frustrating, and mostly just intensely exhausting.’

paraphrase of widely-shared quote attributed to **Midnight thoughts (Depression isn’t trendy)**



Walk Through Christmas 2017

The Combined Churches Walk Through Christmas this year saw almost 200 primary age children walk the circuit from Crossroad Church, to St Patrick's, to St Andrew's, with a different presentation of the Christian Christmas at each stop. Numbers were a little depleted this year, as Coroglen School were on a school camp and Te Rerenga School children were affected by a tummy bug, and the teachers were disappointed to have to cancel.

At Crossroad, Gillian Reid and the Anglican team presented a Christian twist on the Twelve Days of Christmas. At St Patrick's, Estelle Thompson and team got the children thinking about 'Gifts that cost nothing' and hanging them on the tree. At St Andrew's, Dorothy and Julie used the Christmas wreath candles and the overhead screen to tell about God's Christmas gifts to the world, beginning with Jesus, then hope, peace, joy and love. We were delighted that the Whenuakite children all wore Christmas Santa hats, (so cute) taking time to visit the elderly residents at CCU, and take Christmas cards they had made for them.

As always, St Andrew's was the last stop. Before going back to school, each class received gift envelopes made up of contributions from the churches. A busy team of inter-church helpers kept the relay of drinks and bikkies coming – no easy task, with a new group arriving every half-hour.

Thank you, to all the churches and individuals who generously donated biscuits, time and effort once again to this important mission to the schools. And thank you, Damon, for delivering the gift envelopes to Te Rerenga for the children who missed out.

Social Services food basket

Special Christmas Treats can be left in the Church basket to be delivered to Whitianga Social Services.



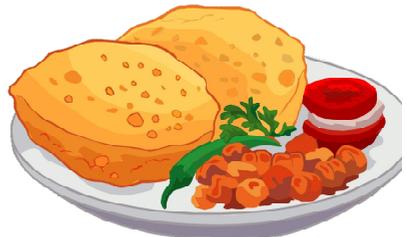
Community meals update: funding change

Tania continues to do an amazing job with the Monday meals. She has words of encouragement for all who receive the meals, and Tania has been active in sorting out the meals deliveries. All who are able, are now invited to eat in the hall, or come and collect the meals to take home to young families. This has resulted in a drop-off of numbers of meals served from 120 to around 90 meals each Monday, and Tania and the team are now sure that those who receive them are in need of a home-cooked meal. "It is not always a question of poverty," Tania says. There are those who are house-bound or physically unable to fend for themselves, or those who have no cooking facilities and might eat only takeaways.

At a Congregational Meeting on November 5th, the Parish agreed to hand over the responsibility for funding to the Mercury Bay Community Support Trust. (The Trust was set up when Day Camp first began). Further recent conversations with the Trust have moved this along. Health and Safety and other compliances are being put in place, and in the New Year Tania will be employed by the Trust, not the Parish. As far as St Andrew's involvement with the meals is concerned, preparation, serving and deliveries will stay the same. At the Congregational Meeting it was decided that, should the Trust be unable to continue the meals mission in the future, funding responsibility will return to the Parish.

The change has come about because as a Parish, we do not have the fund-raising power that the Incorporated Trust has.

Funds in the meals account will eventually be transferred to the Trust, and all those who so generously make payments to support the meals will be given the new bank account number.



Please watch the February newsletter for more information.

Please note: The Monday meal will not be available on Christmas Day.

Frozen meals available for pickup between 5pm and 6pm Christmas Day and New Year's Day

Parish Register

Funerals

Bryan Burr - died in Whitianga on 26th October.

His funeral was held in Wellington. It is with deep regret we record the passing of our friend Bryan

Diana Cleverly - funeral held 1 November at Crossroad Church, Rev John Twemlow officiating. Diana was a much-loved former member of the Kuaotunu fellowship

Stewart Wayne Hutchison - funeral held 3 November at Mercury Bay Club, Rev John Twemlow officiating. Stewart and Lorraine are relative newcomers to Whitianga

Our thoughts, prayers and heartfelt sympathy go out to these families, and to all who are grieving this Christmas season

A WELCOMING CHURCH

If you hear of newcomers to the area, please let the Leaders know the address so we can send a welcome card from the Church. Also, invite them to Church if you can!



The perfect church -- Mavis Williams

If you should find the perfect church,
Without one fault or smear,
For goodness' sake – don't join that church –
You'd spoil the atmosphere!

If you should find the perfect church
Where all anxieties cease,
Then pass it by – lest joining it
You mar the masterpiece.

But since no perfect church exists
(Made of imperfect kin,)
Then let's cease looking for that church
And love the church we're in.



Reasons for Rejoicing!

✦ We were delighted to see Jenny Chisholm in church a couple of weeks ago. Jenny has undergone serious spinal surgery and is not yet allowed to drive, but with daughter Lesley and family visiting from Canada, Jenny was able to be chauffeured from Wellington to her holiday home at Matarangi. Her sciatic back pain is all gone – now Jenny is waiting for surgery on her knee!

✦ Considering that we have no resident minister, we do very well for visiting clergy who like us so much they keep coming back! Rev Viv Coleman also holidays at Matarangi and always supports St Andrew's. Viv has kindly offered to take two services back-to-back on December 30th and January 1st – these are the hardest dates to fill with everyone otherwise engaged. Rev. Shirley Barker-Kirby is also a regular visitor. Shirley enjoys camping and has booked camp accommodation in Whitianga so that she too, can take two services back-to-back on January 28th and February 4th.

✦ Our Church Op-Shop is now open FIVE days a week, Tuesday to Saturday, 8:30 to 12:30. Twenty volunteers recently enjoyed a Christmas lunch organized by Op-Shop team leader, Madeleine.

Nothing is lost..

Robin Twemlow took this picture. It is one of the pictures Julie and Dorothy are using to make a book of favourite hymns and photos. Hymnwriter Colin Gibson has kindly given us permission to use his hymn 'Nothing is lost'. Colin says the picture is a perfect fit for the words of the hymn:

*'Nothing is lost on the breath of God, Nothing is lost for ever,
God's breath is love, and that love will remain,
Holding the world for ever.
No feather too light, no hair too fine,
No flower too brief in its glory,
No drop in the ocean, no dust in the air,
But is counted – and told in God's story.'*





Come, let us adore Him!

*Christmas/New Year worship at St Andrew's.
Bring the children! The family-friendly area in the Church
has soft toys, with Bible-related colour and puzzle sheets.
Sunday Worship 9:30am*

*Dec 10th - Bible Study Group will lead our worship
17th - Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby
24th - John Twemlow
25th - Christmas Day family service, Dorothy Preece
30th - Rev Viv Coleman*

*Jan 7th - Communion - Rev Viv Coleman
14th - Dorothy Preece
21st - John Twemlow
28th - Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby*

Feb 4th - Communion - Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby

Whitianga Community Carols in the Park

Friday 22 December at Soldier's Memorial Park (by Info Centre).
Carols commence at 7:30; come early and picnic
in the park. Bring a candle, a warm jacket, and a
blanket or chair.

(A Whitianga Combined Churches event)



Kuaotunu Community Carols

Sunday 24 December at Kuaotunu Hall, 7:30pm.
Led by John and Robin Twemlow

Joy to the World!

St Peter's @ St Andrew's - Anglican Services

Christmas Eve - no morning service. Evening service, 8pm

Christmas Day - morning service, 8am

Parish and Community Activities

Newcomers are cordially invited to join any of these friendly groups

St Andrew's by the Sea—Service 9:30 every Sunday

St Peter the Fisherman (Anglican) - Service 11:00 every Sunday

AA DRIVER LICENSING - all day 2nd Friday of each month. Next session 12 January

CHURCH OP-SHOP opens Tuesday-Saturday 8:30-1pm every week. Open on Boxing Day (Tuesday) and New Year's Day providing staff are available

COMMUNITY MEALS in the Church hall from 5-6pm every Monday. The kitchen will be **closed** on Christmas Day and New Year's Day (Mondays) but **frozen meals may be collected from the hall between 5 and 6 on both days**

Meals phone (attended Mondays only): 021 0294 2234

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP All welcome. 2nd Wednesday of every month @1:30pm. Meets 13 December and 10 January: For venue: Ann Harsant 866 4740

ENLIVEN (Presbyterian Social Services for seniors) every Thursday. Last meeting 21 December, then starts again on 18 January. Ring Jenny 866 0556

LADIES BIBLE STUDY Wednesday 10am. Now in recess until February. Ring Julie for further details: 984 9140

SCRAP BAGS (Quilting) every Wednesday from 11am in the Hall. Now in recess. Recommence 17 January.

STITCH N' CHAT every second Tuesday in the Hall. In recess until 23 January.

UPRIGHT & ACTIVE Friendly exercise sessions for seniors, held in the Church hall
Mondays - exercise for more active seniors. Last session will be 11 December, recommence 15 January

Tuesdays - exercise for the less active. Last session will be 12 December, recommence 16 January

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St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

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