

Parish and Community Activities

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

CHURCH OP-SHOP - Next door to the church. Phone 867 1104

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

Thank you for supporting the Op-shop, helping the work of our Parish, and many other local causes. Please leave clean goods at workroom entrance.

- **and watch the notices for special sale days.**

UPRIGHT & ACTIVE: Two friendly exercise sessions for seniors:

Mondays at 9:30 in the hall, Leader Carol Melrose 867 1097

Tuesdays at 10:00. **Last session for the year 9th December**

Leader Greta Fox 866 4382

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY every Wednesday, 10:00 am at the home of

Phyl Bullin. For more information ring Julie 984 9140

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP - All welcome.

Held 2nd Wednesday of every month except January, 1:30 pm in members' homes. For programme and venue details please ring

Beryl Wharton 866 3739 or Ann Harsant 866 4740



**mainly
music**

Music and fun for toddlers with their carers.

Thursdays in school terms. Action songs begin promptly at 10:00 am, followed by morning tea, friendship and playtime.

We need music leaders for 2015 – if you can help, please come to a Thursday session and/or talk to Rev Mary Petersen and team.

MESSY CHURCH *An exciting Sunday experience for all the family.*

4:30 - 6pm, including a meal provided. **7 December MESSY CHRISTMAS!**

Contact Mary: 869 5356 or text 027 244 8396 or email mjpetersen@xtra.co.nz

FILM and FRIENDSHIP – Films showing 3rd Thursday of every month

in the church hall. **THURSDAY 18th DEC – showing "WHITE CHRISTMAS"**

by popular demand. For further details, ring Madeleine 866 0169

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

TOUGHLOVE Behavioural Support. Anyone challenged by the behaviour of a family member is encouraged to talk to Mary 869 5356 or Nicole 866 5119.

P.R.O.P. People Relying on People - Confidential support Freephone **0800 127 359** for families battling mental health or substance abuse issues.

Te KOROWAI MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY GROUP meets in St Andrew's hall. Phone Robyn Campbell 869 5244 for details of next year's meetings.

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church - P.O. Box 368, Whitianga 3542
Corner Albert and Owen Streets, Whitianga. Secretary: Dorothy Preece 869 5452
Minister Rev Mary Petersen 027 244 8396 or leave a message on 8695356
Church Office 867 1102 Office email: standrewswhitianga@xtra.co.nz
Website: www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea

Community Church Newsletter

Christmas/ New Year 2014-15



Our Mission in this Parish is to share the love of God with all people.

Our People and Their Stories – Margaret Moses.

Many of us can relate to Margaret's story. She is asking herself the hard questions – and is still looking for answers.

Born Margaret Sollitt, in the historic city of York, Margaret remembers air-raid shelters and the noise of bombs. "It wasn't as heavy as in the industrial parts. Many children were evacuated to York, but we all had to take gas masks to school.

"I have always asked myself why there has to be wars."

Her mother took Margaret to watch live plays at the Theatre Royal. Her father was a painter and decorator. "My parents were good people, not church-goers. My brother and I didn't go to Sunday School except when I went along with my friends, giggling on the back row. I don't remember learning anything about the Bible, but I think even then I felt there was something to it".

When she left school Margaret worked in a shoe shop, working Saturday mornings and having Wednesday afternoons off.

"I changed my job to work at a printers' because I joined a cycling club, and wanted my Saturdays free." It was cycling that brought David Moses into Margaret's life. "We were married in York, at St Lawrence Anglican Church where I had sometimes attended Sunday School. Even then I asked myself, was it right to get married in a church, when church really meant nothing to me?"

Margaret says she has never been one to follow the crowd, or to conform. "I don't see the point of doing things just because people say you should. I suppose I have always been a bit of a rebel that way".



Together, Margaret and David cycled for miles round the mountains of Scotland and Wales, staying at youth hostels. David was a plumber, and had fitted out the Royal trains for British Rail but when he moved to repairing council houses he got bored with his job. "We began to read books about New Zealand. It seemed to offer good job opportunities, as well as plenty of beautiful scenery to explore."

They arrived in New Zealand aboard the P&O liner Orsova, in 1960. It was the first time they had ever travelled overseas, and was a huge adventure. In the Suez Canal, they watched troops gearing up for war on both sides. "Shortly after that, the war broke out and the canal was closed." Again Margaret wondered why people had to fight. "They say all this war is caused by religion, but I think it's just power and greed. It's convenient to blame religion. I think we all should accept people, regardless of their faith. It can't be right cause to harm others, for any reason."

They settled in Henderson and lived there for several years, exploring NZ and keeping up their love of outdoor adventure. Together they covered most of the major walking tracks. The family expanded with the arrival of two children, Danielle and Robert. "The children weren't christened because we felt they would make up their own minds later in life."

David started his own plumbing business, Acomb Enterprises, after the old name for the city of York. Margaret helped with the bookwork and stayed home with the children. "I think it's sad today, the way Mums are forced to go out to work. They miss so much of their children's lives."

They bought a bach in Hahei and spent their summers at the beach, but when Robert was only five they decided to take a chance, and move to Hahei permanently. "It was quite a gamble, we didn't know if Dave would have enough work. There were not so many permanent residents in Hahei then, but always a big influx of bach owners in the summer. We loved the life. The beach was the backyard for our children."

Both children went to Whenuakite School. Later, Danielle went to Hamilton Girls' High and resented having to wear shoes in the city! Robert attended Mercury Bay. David built three family homes in Hahei, and eventually became Fire Chief. Then disaster struck.

"One day, David went out to shift the vehicle, and I heard it crash in the driveway. He had suffered a sudden heart attack and died. That was 1987. He was 58. It was a massive shock to us." Robert was 17 and had just left home. The funeral was held at St Peter's Anglican Church in Whitianga. Margaret says the Hahei community was very supportive.

"We were a very close couple, and both practical people. The children had moved away and I realised I was on my own now and I just had to get on with it. I found the strength somehow. There's no point in asking, 'Why Me?' I say, why not me? We are all human, and no-one is immune."

Margaret stayed on in Hahei for 10 years after David died. (Cont. over...)

O Come, let us adore Him!

Everyone is invited to celebrate Christmas and enjoy Christian fellowship at the following events.



COMMUNITY CAROLS

Whitianga: Friday, 19th December at 7:30 p.m.

Soldiers Memorial Park. Dramatic celebration of 200 years of Christian Gospel in NZ. Carols begin at 8 pm.

Cooks Beach Hall: Sunday 21st December 7.30 pm

Kuaotunu Hall: Christmas Eve, 24th December 7.30 pm



"Remembered at Christmas"

Wednesday, 10th December 7.30 pm.

St Peter's Anglican Church, Dundas Street

A reflective service for those for whom

Christmas is not always a happy time.

HERE AT ST. ANDREW'S BY THE SEA:

Child - friendly Sunday Services 9:30 am every Sunday.

Communion service - first Sunday of every month.

**Christmas Communion Service,
Tuesday 23 December, at 2 pm**

This will be a short meditative service, conducted by Rev Mary Petersen, followed by afternoon tea. Everyone is welcome.



Christmas Day - Thursday 25 December

9.30 am Christmas Day Family Celebration.

Children are welcome to bring their presents.



Kuaotunu Hall Community Worship January 11th at 10 am.

Led by John and Robin Twemlow. For more info. ring 869 5054



Walk-Through Christmas 2014

This year the primary schools' 'walk-through' brought 300 children through St Peter's Anglican, St Patrick's Catholic, and St Andrew's Co-operating Church. They came in their class groups from Mercury Bay

and Te Rerenga Schools, and the teams at each church were kept busy from 9:30 until 12:30, repeating the programme for each group that came through. This year, all the churches emphasised the Bible accounts of the birth of Jesus, with music, videos and stories.



The Walk- Through Christmas programme is a Whitianga Combined Churches initiative, and this is the 12th year it has been held.

(Top) MBAS students perform their Blessing in Maori and English, as a thank-you to the churches.

(Left) Rev Mary Petersen tells a Christmas story.

St Andrew's Grand "Everything Sale"

Tuesday 6 January 2015

Please offer whatever you have to sell and/or come and buy at this fundraiser: plants, baking, jams, furniture or anything you no longer need might just be what someone else is wanting. If you can help in some way, contact Dorothy Preece 869 5452.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

St Andrew's Film and Friendship Presents:

'WHITE CHRISTMAS'

In the church hall THURSDAY 18TH DECEMBER

Commencing 1:15 pm. Come and watch this classic favourite, and enjoy afternoon tea. No admission charge - donations welcome.

Funerals:



our prayerful thoughts are with the families and friends of

Stan Wilson

4 November at St Andrews

Robert Feldhofer-Feeney

17 November at St Andrews
and Ferry Landing Cemetery

Les Wright

27 November Twentymans' Chapel Thames

www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz Worth a Look!

Have you checked out our church website yet?

Julie updates the site each week and gives advance notice of events in the pipeline.

You can read the history of our historic church, browse the various weekly activities and checkout the latest newsletters. Photographs, feedback and suggestions are welcome.



Thank You to all those who responded to our annual Thanksgiving Appeal. We recognise that the distribution of envelopes belongs in the snail-mail age, and many computer-savvy, generous people now make donations on-line. Account details are on the website!

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church, Whitianga

CHRISTMAS AFTERNOON TEA and TRADE- AID SALE

In the church hall at 2:30 pm

Tuesday, 9th December

Enjoy afternoon tea and select unique

Christmas Gifts in a friendly Atmosphere!

ALL WELCOME - no charge - donations appreciated.



Advance Notice: Joy Cowley -

This inspirational speaker and writer of prayers, psalms and children's books, will visit Whitianga to conduct two, one-day retreats on March 7th and 8th, from 9:30 - 4 pm:

"Coming Home to Who You Are"

at Aotearoa Lodge, Racecourse Road,

\$45 per person, includes morning/afternoon teas and lunch.

Booking is essential. Registration forms are available from pedersen.jm@xtra.co.nz ph. 869 5131 or from any local church.

I think I lost my confidence for a while, didn't want to do things on my own, but David and I had been planning a trip overseas. Eventually I did pluck up courage and signed up for a six-week trekking holiday in Nepal! It took a lot of courage, meeting all those new people without David there. We were under canvas, camping above the snowline and trekking through the snow every day. Physically, it was hard and I don't know how I ever managed it, but I gained confidence by it. Nepal is a very spiritual place, up there in the mountains, with prayer wheels everywhere.

"On that trip, I learned that we shouldn't be afraid of life. People are all equal. Even those with very different backgrounds can support one another and share their love of life, and we shouldn't isolate ourselves."

Eventually, Margaret bought a home in Whitianga. "I still miss that view, but my home here is very convenient and I have no regrets.

"I used to do a lot of patchwork, made quilts for all the grandchildren but I don't do that now. I joined Probus, and the Health Group, and I go along to Upright and Active at the church, and I do have good friends."

Margaret now has five grandchildren and four great-grandies. Danielle lives in Fielding and Robert still lives locally.

"Two years ago, I decided to go to church at St Andrew's, and I really don't know why I did. I had visited a couple of other churches, but St Andrew's is where I have settled. I still don't know anything about the Bible, and I'm still asking why there has to be wars.

"I have often visited the cathedrals and churches around York, just to look at them. What impresses me most is the way the old steps are worn down by centuries of people's feet. Since the dawn of time people have worshipped – trees, the earth, something – I am sure there is a spiritual dimension to life and I certainly feel that, especially in the great outdoors.

"My sister-in-law studied theology and I think the history of all the religions is fascinating, but again, there's more to it than that. I can't just dismiss it. What is it that draws me to church? I do get something out of it.

My daughter told me, 'You've changed Mum, you are much more spiritual than you ever were.' So something must be rubbing off!

"I know I have changed. I am thinking more deeply about things, and reading more deeply. I would like to know a lot more, but I am sure I do benefit from Sunday mornings. I think it does strengthen me. I am satisfied with my life, but I want to understand more about myself.

"I suppose you could say that I have faith in life itself, and the source of life, whatever that is. I think I always felt that life must be more than just living and dying, that life continues on, in another form, in the spiritual realm.

"This story is unfinished. I need to investigate further!"

Thank you, Margaret, for sharing your life experience. We look forward to the next episode! - ed.

A word from Mary.....



Dear Friends,

Margaret has been very honest in telling her story and speaking of thinking deeply about the spiritual dimension to life.

We are all on a spiritual journey, even when we do not realize that or acknowledge it.

Thinking and reading deeply can certainly help us. **However, while you are searching and thinking, even though you may not know what you are looking for, God is actually always very close to you.**

God reaches out to us in many ways – and does help us to understand ourselves better, if we are open to that. Margaret, like many others, feels the spiritual dimension "in the great outdoors". Some people describe their experience as 'feeling closer to God when close to nature' - on the beach, out on the water, up a mountain or in the bush. We can indeed feel close to God in the natural world but **God is always within and around us, waiting for us to become aware of that or reach out to God.** Some will feel closer to God in a church or some other place that is special to them.

For others, it is through reading the Bible, that the clearest guidance and understanding comes. **We cannot limit the ways in which God speaks today – they are infinite as God is.** We just need to be open to listening and growing in our relationship with God.

May God bless you richly on your spiritual journey.

God is with you.

Mary Petersen

Parish Council news

At the Annual Meeting on October 12th, Mary advised us that she has decided to reduce her Mercury Bay Parish workload. From February 2015 Mary will be based in Tairua, and from then on she will work part time in Mercury Bay until August 2015. At that time Mary will resign from the Parish.

The news came as a shock to many of us, but we are all aware that Mary has been seriously ill this year, and was working on overload. That cannot continue. We will miss Mary. Not just this church, but this whole community and the communities beyond Mercury Bay owe a great debt to her. Mary's completely selfless caring and ceaseless work are an inspiration to us all, and will continue to inspire us as the years go by. Parish Council will have some decisions to make next year, and we are praying for guidance in those decisions.

Your Parish Councillors are: Barbara Blake, Diana Campbell-Barnaby, Robert Middleton, Dorothy Preece, Alistair Rogers, Julie St George, John and Robin Twemlow. As a team, we are encouraged by the way we have been guided in the past, and we trust in God to show us the future.

