

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. 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, 1:30 pm in members' homes.

For programme and venue details please ring

Beryl Wharton 866 3739 or Ann Harsant 866 4740



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.

Led by Rev Mary Petersen and team. **More leaders are needed – if you can help, please come to the Thursday**

session and talk to the team.

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

Next dates: November 2nd, December 7th. 4:30 - 6pm, including food!

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

FILM and FRIENDSHIP – Films showing 3rd Thursday of every month on the big TV in the church hall. For programme 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 Thursdays St Andrew's hall 11:30 – 1 pm. Phone Robyn Campbell 869 5244 for details.

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church - P.O. Box 368, WHITIANGA
Corner Albert and Owen Streets, Whitianga.

Minister Rev Mary Petersen 027 244 8396

Church Office 867 1102 Office email: standrewswhitianga@xtra.co.nz

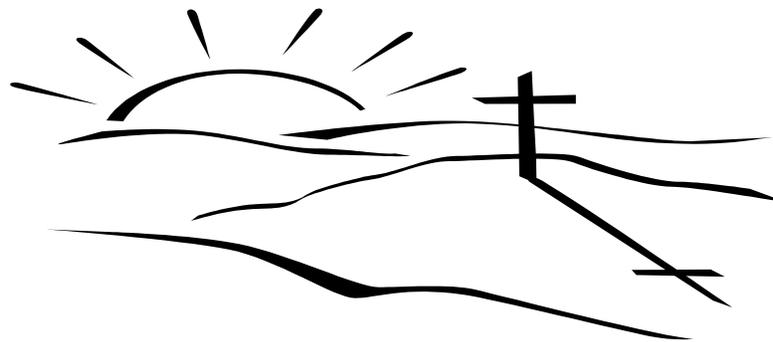
MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea

Community Church

Newsletter October/ November 2014

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



Vision Day 2014

Our Faith Story this month comes in the form of a report from our Annual Vision Day, held on August 23rd. It is a faith story that involves a group of people in our church – and many more besides.

It was on Vision Day 2013 that the Monday meals concept was born - to provide meals to those people in our community who need food, friendship and support. Those who took that step of determined faith in May 2013 had no idea how it would work out – except they felt certain that God had called them to the task. It is a task that has proven to be very demanding, and very rewarding. *We now have a team of willing workers preparing, cooking and serving the food every Monday – and many of them are not church-goers. Some days we serve 200 meals.*

So it is not surprising that the 12 people who attended Vision Day on August 23rd this year, came with a sense of anticipation, as we gathered to determine – What is God calling us to do next?

To begin, Mary led us in a study of the ancient story of Moses, from Exodus. It tells how God attracted Moses' attention to the burning bush, and gave him a task that Moses felt was too impossibly big –
“Go, speak to Pharaoh and tell him to let my people go.”

After Moses' many fearful objections, God said, "Here is your brother Aaron, who will speak for you." Eventually, although very reluctantly, Moses did as God had instructed him. Moses had to learn to trust God. We discussed this powerful story at length, and then took time out to think about what the Bible passage was saying to each one of us. Some of our thoughts were: *We shouldn't be afraid to step out in faith – God never leaves us to 'go it alone' – God always provides others to support us – We shouldn't make excuses - God never lets us down.*

We shared stories from our own experience, of how God has always been there for each of us. These were very personal stories, told in confidence, which served to reinforce the message from the Bible story: *That we can trust God.* Then we asked – where to from here, for us as a Church family, and for us as individuals?

When we began to voice our thoughts, we realised we had all had been thinking along the same lines: Our Mission Statement at St Andrew's calls us - **"To share the Love of God with all people"**.

Every human person needs more than food. We all need to know the unfailing love of God for us. The only way we can come to that knowledge, is through the friendship and support of those who already experience it *and are willing to share it.* *There is a need NOW, for understanding people to simply 'be there' for those who attend on Monday nights, to share a meal and show God's love through undemanding listening and friendship.* One or two people who came to the Vision Day meeting, had *already decided* that they would come on Monday nights to offer support and friendship. We realised that this is what God is now leading us to do. It is the next step in the Monday meals initiative. As in everything we do, at St Andrew's, we are very short of people to carry out the task. To this end, we have shared the vision with all of the other Churches in the Bay, and extended the invitation, to become involved in this whole-community programme.

The physical and financial help we constantly receive for Monday meals is a wonderful reminder that this is a Spirit-led outreach.

Local businesses, as well as many individuals not normally associated with the Church, have come forward and offered invaluable help in many ways. Some, who first came to receive a meal, now come every week to help prepare it. Others regularly give fresh produce from their gardens, or generous gifts of money. **To all those who are supporting the meals programme in any way, we say a heartfelt THANK YOU.**

If you feel that God is calling you to offer your support in any way, either to the Monday Meals initiative or any other programme at St Andrew's – take courage, talk to Mary Petersen and find out where you can help.

Worship Opportunities in our Parish

St ANDREW'S BY THE SEA - 9:30 every Sunday.

Children are welcome. They can choose to learn with a Bible teacher, or stay in church and explore Bible activities and quiet toys in the Kids Friendly corner.

Communion: First Sunday in the month



October 12th – Favourite Hymns service.



There is a box on the hall table for your favourite hymn requests. *Also this day -*

Parish Annual General Meeting

and lunch to follow.

Combined Churches Prayer Meetings

You are invited to join in prayer for the Mercury Bay community and for the work of all churches, on the first Wednesday of every month. Morning tea at 10 a.m., finish by 11.15 a.m:
November 5th – St Peter's Anglican Church, Dundas St.
December 3rd – St Patrick's Catholic Church, Campbell St.

Worship at Continuing Care

A short service of praise and worship is held every Wednesday at 10:45 in the residents' lounge. Supporters are welcome every Wednesday. Our Parish provides the worship leader on the first and fifth Wednesdays of each month.

Personal Notes:

Our usual Newsletter Editor, Charlotte Christensen and husband Damon are expecting their first baby anytime now. We wish them every blessing.



We are pleased to report that our Minister, Mary Petersen continues to improve slowly from a bout of pneumonia. We continue to pray for her speedy recovery, and that of all our members who are experiencing health issues.

With sadness we note the passing of Peter Johnston, respected Elder of Ngati Hei and loved Christian worker in this community. Our sympathy and prayers go to Ros and family.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish will be held at St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church immediately following the morning service on Sunday, October 12th.

That service is also our annual **Favourite Hymns Sunday**. There is a box in the lounge, for your hymn requests. Lunch will follow. All members, friends and interested persons are encouraged to attend the meeting, and have their say.

Parish Councillors will be elected at the meeting, the annual financial report will be presented and discussed, and reports on the many activities of the St Andrew's Parish will be received.

This will be a very important meeting. We all know that our Minister, Mary is carrying a very heavy workload, and we need to find ways to share that load. Please come and share in this important discussion.

Group Activity Reports:

If you are involved with any church group or activity, please arrange to have your group's report lodged with the Parish Secretary by 8th October for inclusion in the Annual Report.

Financial News

The St Andrew's Church Op-shop continues as our main support for the work and ministry of the church. Without the Op-shop and its team of dedicated workers, we simply would not be able to keep going. It seems inadequate, but we say a heartfelt, **"Thank You, Team."**

Thames Coromandel District Council has again recognised the work we do at St Andrew's By the Sea and in the wider community.

In Council's Annual Grants allocations this year we will receive \$3,000 towards upkeep of the hall and facilities
\$2,000 to Day Camp for hire and supply of equipment.

Community Meals Mission. COGS has also recognised the need we are addressing, with a grant of \$5,000 for the Community Meals.

The **Methodist Church (PAC)** granted \$3,000 for the meals,

None of the church general fund has been used for the meals.

Since it began in May 2013, to the end of the last financial year



(June 30th, 2014) donations for the meals programme from all sources, amounted to **\$13 more** than the overall outgoings. God's goodness is best demonstrated by those who share it generously with those in need. We greatly appreciate the gifts of food, money, time, and skills from all those involved in this important community outreach.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT of the Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish

A brief outline for your information:

The **Parish Council** is the governing body of the parish. It makes decisions about POLICY in accordance with the parish VISION. This parish is officially a Presbyterian-Methodist Co-operating Venture. As such, we are part of the Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand – UCANZ – and we report to them. Historically, this congregation has Presbyterian and Methodist roots, but actually we come from all kinds of traditions, or from no particular tradition. The parish currently has a Presbyterian Minister.

Co-operating Ventures usually have some form of Parish Council which has responsibilities for spiritual health and growth, as well as financial and practical management. If required, we can have sub-committees with responsibilities for particular aspects. The St Andrew's church building, Op shop and Manse titles are held by the Presbyterian Church Property Trustees (Wellington) - but this parish is responsible for the buildings and all the costs involved.

Parish Council is responsible for the overall organisation of the parish, with adherence to UCANZ requirements. Other people may carry out the policy, vision and practical action. Many of these tasks are done by our Minister, but everyone is encouraged to be involved.

This parish called Rev Mary Petersen to a specific task - to focus on "leadership in community ministry" – not just worship, study and pastoral care for "members only". Part of the vision of this parish is to welcome everyone and recognise that all are on a spiritual journey – and that all may be in different places on that journey.

We reach out in love and acceptance to all in the community and seek to help people have a living and joyful relationship with God.

Your current Parish Councillors are:

Rev Mary Petersen (chair) Tina Herrick (Secretary)
Barbara Blake, Dorothy Preece, Alistair Rogers, Julie St George,

Diana Campbell-Barnaby and Robert Middleton. Diana and Robert both have Leave of Absence at present, due to illness.

We need more Parish Councillors.

Nomination forms for additional Parish

Councillors are in the church hall. Elections will take place at the Annual Meeting, after the service on Sunday, October 12th.

We encourage your participation, both in the Nomination process and at the meeting, which will be followed by lunch.



The Way of Peace

The recent too-close-to-home terror scares, and to a lesser extent the recent elections in Scotland and Fiji, have reminded me of a conversation with my brother many years ago. John and I grew up in a very loving – and sheltered – Methodist family. As the years went by, my brother and I developed deeply convergent views about religion, church, faith, the universe... and everything! At age 21 John was conscripted to serve the British Air Force Base at Akrotiri, in Cyprus. This base is now in the news, being the base for British counter-terror air strikes, but John was involved in the Cypriot war between Turks and Greeks.

That war experience challenged my brother's thinking and drove him away from much of the church's 'religious' teaching. However, in one memorable conversation he told me, "I can't believe a lot about the church, but one thing I do know. Jesus got it right."

After the hatred he saw in Cyprus, my brother became convinced that forgiveness of old wrongs, and acceptance of all others as equals the world over, was the only hope for peace in the world.

He still holds this conviction and it is the one of the few things we agree on! Every race and tribe on the planet is nursing old grudges, even the Scots against the English, the Fijians against Indian Fijians – scratch the surface anywhere and you will uncover racial bigotry.

My brother's solution is too simplistic, you say? *I invite you to read the simple but uncompromising words of Jesus.* He pointed people past all their religious follies, to God's love, which translates to justice for all.

Jesus said, "Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven".

He also said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you".

Jesus points us to a peace that transcends global disharmony, but which takes enormous courage. Citizenship in God's Kingdom of Peace is open to all who trust him, but we have to

be willing to let go of old hurts. We have to be determined NOT to let those old wounds fester and infect our children and their future.

In the church hall there are **free Bible Study**

to help you understand more about God and His Way of Peace through Christ Jesus. I encourage you to pick up a copy. It could change your life!

Dorothy Preece

Thanksgiving Time Again

Our Annual Meeting signals the time of year when we, as a church and as individuals, give thanks to God for the blessings of the past year. Our financial status is as precarious as it has always been, but we are still here, taking on new challenges and trusting God to continue to lead us into the future. The vision of the Women's Fellowship many years ago, to found an Op-Shop attached to the church, was one which enabled us to move forward. Originally founded to pay off the mortgage on the Manse, the Op-Shop now helps to pay the regular outgoings for the church, as well as supporting the Minister's salary. It also helps many local charities. We thank God for the Op-Shop! We also give thanks for our Minister Mary, who leads and inspires us. Our Annual Meeting lets us take stock and find our *new vision* for the way ahead. We ask you now, to consider the things that YOU might be thankful for, and respond with the envelope enclosed, or by bank transfer to Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish account, BNZ Whitianga **020 496 0062562 00**. Any contributions that YOU can make, will help us to continue God's work in this community.

Thank You.

Dear Friends

2014 has been a very difficult year for me, with many more crises of all kinds to deal with than usual, including some major health ones for me personally. I have not taken even one day of 'sick leave' since 2006, so two extended times of illness this year have been a shock! Yet through all the challenging times, and in spite of them, I am still thankful to God – for family and friends, opportunities to serve, for being able to live in this wonderful country, and life itself. I hope you are thankful too, for people and opportunities in your life.

*We never know exactly what lies ahead of us, but we can **trust God to be with us in that unknown future.** The coming year may be full of challenges for the Parish Council and congregation of St Andrew's, but we can keep trusting God to guide us and give us strength and wisdom to cope with whatever happens.*

God bless you all.

Mary