

# MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

**Newsletter February / March 2018**

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

## ***Our people and their stories... Jenny Christensen***

The Christensen name is well known in Whitianga. Charlotte Christensen is our newsletter editor, and her husband Damon is Jenny's nephew. Jenny came into St Andrew's Fellowship a couple of years ago - but we'll start at the beginning.



Jenny was born in Palmerston North in 1937. Her mother was Anglican, her father Brethren. They moved around a bit. Jenny went to various Sunday Schools and attended Bible Class. She remembers being baptized at age 9, when the Vicar, Rev Smallfield, "came to our home in Taihape and baptised all the kids".

The Christensen forebears came from Denmark. The first of them, Mads Christensen was a Lutheran Pastor, as was his son 'Uncle Ansgar' who married Jenny and Arthur in the Lutheran Church, Palmerston North. Jenny was just 18. "I met Arthur when I was 16, and I knew right away that we would be married. We met at a dance, which the Lutherans frowned upon, but Arthur got permission from Uncle Ansgar. We both loved dancing, and kept it up all through the years".

Jenny and Arthur lived in Taupo, growing strawberries by the Waikato River. "I didn't know a soul, it was a very remote place, the main road through Taupo was still metalled in those days. We didn't get to church, and very soon I got far too busy." Soon, Jenny and Arthur had their hands full with three children under 3 years old! "We were five hours from my parents and I sometimes felt isolated, but people were very kind."

They bought land in Huka Falls Road and planted an orchard. Soon there were six children, five boys and a girl, all before Jenny was 30. Another baby didn't survive. "Arthur was a builder, very strong and our sons all carried the Christensen Viking genes, big, strong fellows. But they could never beat their father at arm-wrestling, and that really annoyed them.

"The orchard idea didn't work. You can't grow an orchard in Taupo. When our youngest boy was four, I went to work in the footwear retail industry." It was an occupation that kept Jenny busy at the same firm for 29 years. Arthur worked for Fletcher Wood Panels where he soon got promoted to a management role. "We tried to keep the orchard up in our spare time, but eventually we swapped the property for a house in Taupo." Arthur built a big steel boat in their back yard, bending the sheet steel by driving over it with the car. It took 10 years to build. Arthur called it 'Sofugl' - Danish for 'Sea Bird'.

In 1977 Arthur and Jenny bought a section in Catherine Crescent, Whitianga. They put a caravan on it, and often came for holidays. 'Sofugl' was moored in the river. The growing boys all pitched their own tents on the section. "I remember one year the whole Christensen clan arrived. Murray and Lynn were there, with Damon and his brother Kent."

Eventually Arthur and Jenny built a house in Meadow Drive. "We moved here permanently, two days after the 9/11 terror attack." Sadly, Arthur died in 2009.

Over the years the family have had more than their share of tragedy. Jenny now has only 2 sons and a daughter. But she is blessed with a resilient spirit. "It's life. You just have to get on with it," Jenny says.

Last year was particularly gruelling. On Boxing Day 2016 her great-grandson died in a car accident at age 15. And then in August 2017 Jenny's grandson Troy, died suddenly. "It was a double blow and it

did pull me down for a bit, but when I look back I have so much to be thankful for. We never had much money but Arthur and I were very happy. I have lots of lovely memories. My lovely son Eric, and his 3 children live locally and Eric looks after me. And this year has started off very well. I have a new great-granddaughter, Heidi. She was born on 14th January. That makes 26 grandchildren and 26 great-grandies. Equal numbers! Not many people can beat that!"

A couple of years ago, Jenny joined the stitch-and-chat group in St Andrew's hall. Jenny's eyesight is very limited, so she 'has permission' to chat and not stitch, although she is still doing some crochet. "When I met Julie I said, 'I think I know you'. It turned out Julie had lived opposite my in-laws in Taupo. She was very young, but I certainly recognised her.

"I don't drive now, but Julie said if I would like a ride to church, she would take me. I thought, 'It's been a long time since I went to church. Maybe it's time I did' but I would never have gone on my own. I liked the friendly atmosphere and here I am. Eric brings me on Sunday mornings, and Julie or someone takes me home. Julie is very good, printing large type so I can sing the hymns.

"I think if you're brought up in the faith, it gets you through even if you can't get to church regularly. But I don't like to dwell on the sad times. I have so much to thank God for."

And we thank God for you too, Jenny.



*Funeral*

**Allan Laird**, December 21 at St Andrew's. Rev Gillian Reid officiating

## Parish Register

## Community meals update

Plans are still in hand for 'the Church Trust' (Mercury Bay Community Support Trust) to take on the funding for the Community Meals, as it has more opportunities than the Parish to source funding. The Parish currently has monies in hand from funding grants, which will need to be expended before the handover can happen. For those who regularly donate to the meals, please be assured that this mission still needs your support. All donations held in the Parish Meals Account will eventually pass to the Trust, and you will be advised of the new account number for your donations.

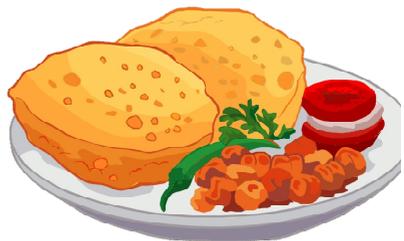
**Thank you all, for your generosity in upholding this work.**

### **Community Christmas Dinner?**

On the Monday before Christmas Tania cooked a special roast dinner for our Monday Meals families. On Christmas Day, frozen meals were available for people to pick up. In the event, very few people took frozen meals. Tania's view is that people get together with family and friends on Christmas Day, no matter what their circumstances, and she did not expect there to be a large uptake. **However...** over the weeks before Christmas we received several calls to ask where the Community Christmas Dinner was to be held. All those who rang, wanted to volunteer to help.

Many communities offer a Christmas dinner for all who wish to eat in company on Christmas Day. Not just for those who are struggling financially, but everyone who might otherwise be alone. As the question came up repeatedly, it has stayed with me. There seems to be a will for this event to happen, but it is too big for the Church to take on. Is it time the community got motivated to do this? Who would organise it? Who would sponsor it?

I'm putting the questions 'out there' and I would welcome your feedback.  
Dorothy Preece.



## St Andrew's Op Shop News

Our Op Shop volunteers work very hard over the holiday period, catering to visitors who have the Church Op Shop on their 'must visit' list.



Team Leader, Madeleine is kept busy making sure there are enough people on deck every day, Tuesday to Saturday. It is also a busy time for the 'sorters and pricers' as holiday wardrobes get thrown out and replaced, and the books, cushions and linens in holiday homes upgraded.

Please note -we can't take large household items or electrical goods. These present a huge problem and big bills for disposal at the dump.

### ***Volunteers needed for the Men's Room***

We really need people who are willing to spend three hours, (9-30 – 12-30) one morning a week on the counter in the Men's Room, as this is separate from the main shop. When no-one is available to do this the work-room ladies have to leave their duties to answer the Men's Room buzzer. Duties entail: giving change and keeping the racks tidy. It is not very busy, so bring a book to read. Morning tea provided!

If you know of anyone who might be available, please contact Madeleine 866 0169, or call in at the Op Shop.

***Surveillance Team!*** We are deeply indebted to our neighbours, Christine and Peter Lowe, who keep an eye on the Op Shop after hours and move donated goods into the Op Shop at all hours to prevent theft. Peter also does odd jobs around the property. Christine and Peter see this as their donation to the Church and community, and we are very grateful to them.

***New Paving*** The area outside the Op Shop is being paved, to make a tidier frontage. Parish and Op Shop are sharing the cost.

**Op Shop is open Tuesday – Saturday, 8:30 – 12:30**

**The Op Shop remains our main source of income for the Church.**

## Reasons for Rejoicing!



✦ First on the list this month is Jenny Christensen's 26th great-grandchild. What an achievement! Well done the Christensens.

✦ Over the holiday period we have welcomed visitors from many places, home and overseas. All of them remark on the friendly welcome they receive at St Andrew's. They also appreciate the 120-year-old kauri church, and tell us we are SO blessed to be living in such a beautiful corner of God's earth. Don't we know it!

✦ Some of you will know that Julie and Dorothy are working on a book, featuring local photos and 'matching' them to well-known hymns. It's coming along nicely. Most of the hymns are old favourites, out of copyright, but we really wanted to use a couple of Colin Gibson's lovely modern hymns. Colin gave generous permission to use them free of charge. Colin said "Your next book should be Christmas hymns - and here's one to start you off." The hymn is '*When Angels rove the restless skies*' and Linda sang it on Christmas Day. Thank you Colin.



✦ The Christmas House, Diana and Gordon Barnaby's amazing gift to the community, netted just over **\$1700** for Day Camp this year. Hundreds of people came through to see the breathtaking displays, and of course, Santa in his grotto. It is a particularly great achievement this year, as they cope with Diana's ongoing illness. Please pray for them.

✦ The Local Ministry Team continues to be supported by visiting clergy and others who so generously give their time to the St Andrew's fellowship. We thank God for them and for the messages they bring.

# ***Come and worship!***

***Sunday Worship 9:30am***

***Families are welcome. The family-friendly area in the church has quiet toys, books and Bible-based activities.***



*Feb 4th - Communion - Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby*  
*11th - Rev Jan Fogg*  
*18th - Nick Harry - Gideon's (Bibles) International*  
*25th - Dorothy Preece*

*Mar 4th - Communion - Rev Jan Fogg*  
*11th - John Twemlow*  
*18th - Alistair Rogers*  
*25th - Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby*  
*30th - Good Friday (usual time) - Dorothy Preece*

*Apr 1st - Easter Day Communion - John Twemlow*



# 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. See notice board for dates

**CHURCH OP-SHOP** opens Tuesday-Saturday 8:30-12:30 **Volunteers welcome!**  
Enquiries, ring Madeleine 866 0169

**COMMUNITY MEALS** in the Church hall from 5-6pm every Monday. Meals phone (attended Mondays only): 021 0294 2234

**CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP All welcome.** 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month @1:30pm. For venue: Ann Harsant 866 4740

**ENLIVEN (Presbyterian Social Services for seniors)** every Thursday, by arrangement only. For more information, ring Jenny 866 0556

**LADIES BIBLE STUDY** Wednesday 10am. Ring Julie for further details: 984 9140

**PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP** Meets approx. every six weeks. Enquiries: contact Raewyn Thorburn 866 2609 or 0274 797 120

**SCRAP BAGS (Quilting)** every Wednesday from 11am in the Hall.

**STITCH N' CHAT** every second Tuesday in the Hall. To join this friendly group, ring Julie 984 9140

**UPRIGHT & ACTIVE Friendly exercise sessions for seniors, held in the Church hall**  
Mondays, 9:30am - exercise for more active seniors.  
Tuesdays, 10am - exercise for the less active.

## **MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH**

### **St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church**

Corner Albert and Owen Streets, Whitianga / PO Box 368, WHITIANGA

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**Resource Minister:** Rev Jan Fogg (Thames)

**Local Ministry Team:** Rev John Twemlow 021 0222 1394

**Parish secretary:** Dorothy Preece 869 5452

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