

# MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

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

### Newsletter June / July 2017

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

#### ***My walk of faith – Elizabeth Nicholls.***

I was brought up in the King Country town of Taumarunui where my parents faithfully took me to “Christ church”, the local Anglican Church, throughout my childhood. Going to church was part of our Sunday family routine on Sunday. My mother was part of Mothers Union and helped with fundraising at the local saleyards providing lunches and my father became a member of vestry and helped in other ways. As a young teenager I was confirmed, as this was what you did in those days to demonstrate a commitment to live God’s way through your life. Confirmation required attending classes for about 3 months prior to the Bishop of Waikato coming to lay hands on us admitting us as adults to the family of God and to take communion. I was told that the Holy Spirit would come up on me when the Bishop laid hands on me and I was very excited about this. It was a very special solemn occasion as I processed up the aisle to the altar, girls dressed in white and boys with long pants and white shirts after which we would take our first communion. I really believed that God would touch me as we had been taught, however I remember feeling very disappointed when nothing appeared to happen. In hindsight when I was an adult I realised that God’s Holy Spirit did touch me, unbeknown to me, and kept me for the future – He took my commitment at that time and held me in the hollow of His hand till there was a time in my life when my heart not just my head became drawn to Him once again. My teenage years saw me wanting to be accepted by my peers, have boyfriends and have fun so for a number of years, though I sometimes attended church, I walked a different path to what I’m sure the Lord wanted me to walk.



I went to Teacher's College qualifying as a Specialist teacher of Music and taught for several years during which time I met my husband Bob, and we started our married life in Hamilton. I visited church from time to time while teaching there.

About 1972 my husband was promoted within the Ministry of Works and we moved to Paeroa. We wanted to have children and by 1978 with a miscarriage and an ectopic pregnancy behind me, during which time I almost died, we had two beautiful daughters and a wee son, Brian. We had had the girls baptised and I took them to church and Sunday school, following in my family's tradition. God was still important in my life but I hadn't allowed Him to reach the far corners of my heart yet. Our precious wee son was the instrument God used to draw me to himself again to begin a deeper walk with Him.

Unbeknown to us, when Brian was born he had a terminal muscular disease. As the weeks went by, my husband and I noticed more and more how different Brian's development was from our daughters at the same age. He didn't "feel his feet" and barely kicked when changing his nappies and his little arms didn't move much either. A Pediatric specialist appointment when he was three months old gave us the shocking news that he had a very rare terminal genetic muscular disease, and that he probably would die within the next few months!! We were devastated. I had prepared myself for the possibility of him not being able to walk and being in a wheelchair but certainly not dying!

We had to endure several very traumatic medical stays in hospital with him, Bob having to return to Paeroa to look after the girls. A biopsy and tests had to be performed to confirm the diagnosis. Student doctors came and looked at him and his symptoms while I was nursing him and medical photographs were taken of his dear little body. In the midst of the hurt and thoughts of losing our son, I started crying out to God and asking people to pray.

One day after we were home finally, I had had to call the doctor as Brian was very drowsy and more floppy than usual. The doctor told me that he had pneumonia and that he could die before the day was out due to his limited lung capacity. After I'd rung my husband I cried out to God, asking him to please send someone to help.

Immediately I finished crying out, there was a knock at the front door and there stood the Baptist minister. I had talked to him a week or two prior to this time. He told me that he had had a book he thought I'd like to read and that he had been at Bible in Schools and felt strongly to come to my home right then!! My times are in Your hands (Psalm 31: 15)

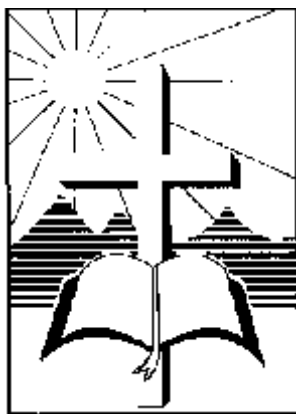
The pastor had very wisely suggested that I discuss the possibility of laying on of hands with my husband. God works in mysterious ways and His timing is always perfect – never too late or too early so there's no need for impatience and frustration with His timing.

I immediately asked the pastor to come in and pray for Brian as I already had my husband's agreement for this to take place. The pastor asked for some oil and started praying in a way I had never heard anyone pray before – he really *knew* God and was talking to him like He was right in that room. He prayed for me too, in a way that really touched my heart. I just knew from that time on that God was in control and that He would work this out and would be with me throughout.

During the months after this incident there were many times when God continued to remind me that He was with me and the rest of the family during this time. I started to visit the Baptist church where I found a real presence of God and it was wonderful to worship God in spirit and in truth.

Very sadly Brian continued to lose weight and we had got to the point of having to make a decision to have a tube inserted for feeding.

He still loved nursing and these times were very special for he and I – he was happy there and happy when the girls talked to him and sang to him. I had held him one night when I was up feeding him and had remembered how Abraham was willing to give up his son so I lifted him up to God for Him to have His way. The only thing I asked was that if God was to take him that He not take him while I was on my own. One Friday night we all went to bed and as usual he woke and needed feeding about 2.30am.



We had a lovely time, he and I, while I kicked his legs. I hesitated before deciding to feed him in the sitting room. I was tired and felt I wanted him in bed with both Bob and I that night.

As I lay him in our bed I sensed he was saying, "This was where I wanted to be, Mummy." Both of us went to sleep but Bob and I both woke suddenly about 5.30am

and I reached for Brian, to find his chest was quite still. Bob went to ring for the doctor. I tried mouth to mouth resuscitation but knew that the Lord had gently taken him from our arms to His own in those early hours of the morning.

Those were very sad days, as anyone who has lost a child at any age will know. But God knew best and I am certain I will meet with my darling son as I will meet with other loved ones who have died since. I did ask why God hadn't healed him, because all of us who were praying in both the Anglican and Baptist church believed that this would happen. "As the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your way and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55: 9). His ways are perfect and we have to trust Him with the outcome. Healing on this earth or healing in heaven. God knows best.

Since then there have been other things to deal with in my life which have caused pain for myself and my family but I **KNOW** that God will never leave me. He has promised. He has been there even when I didn't think He was or I thought He didn't care anymore. Even when I have become angry with Him when I thought He wasn't doing anything to help with the crisis threatening to overwhelm me. However I am still learning, after 40 years of acknowledging my sin whenever it appears, asking forgiveness and getting to know God in a deeper way that He knows all about me. He can handle my emotions which are up and down from time to time, He knows how I personally hear Him speaking to me and receive His words of wisdom. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb (Psalm 139: 13).

I was part of the Paeroa Baptist church for about 7 years, then part of an Elim Pentecostal church for about 28 years and now I am in a Presbyterian/ Methodist church. The type of church doesn't matter as long as it preaches the word of God and encourages its members to continue to walk with God on what is a very challenging but rewarding walk. I need Christian Fellowship at church and at my bible study group to support me in my growth towards Him and being with Him. "And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28: 20) "For the LORD your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31: 6)

## ***Pentecost - Read all about it in Acts chapter 2.***

*These days, it's probably only church-goers who actually know this word, and how to pronounce it! Some still call it Whit Sunday. Most people only know it as Queen's Birthday weekend.*

*For Christians, Pentecost is the day when the Holy Spirit was revealed to the world, through the ecstatic experience of those first disciples in the upstairs room.*

*"There came a mighty, rushing wind and it was as though tongues of fire sat upon each of them". For those who have also experienced the Power of the Spirit in their own lives, this event is at least as significant as Christmas on the church calendar, because they too, know the euphoria of Life in the Spirit. Living every day in a close relationship with God – knowing His peace, His power to heal, His readiness to forgive - you have to live it to experience it - you have to experience it to believe it!*

*Elizabeth's story demonstrates this. Having placed her life and the lives of her family in God's loving care, she was able to experience the peace of God through all the turbulence of losing a little one, and in every turn of her life since.*

*Thank you, Elizabeth, for sharing your personal story with us.*



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### ***DAY CAMP 2017 REPORT – John Twemlow- Director 2017***

Day Camp 2017 was again highly successful for over 300

6-13 yr old children. Again Graeme and Selma Morcom hosted us on their Flaxmill Bay farm; a perfect setting for three days of full-on fun. With over 20 different activities to choose from, they were spoiled for choice. Flying fox, waterslide, sack sliding and a mystery trailer ride were just a few of the crazy activities on offer. To keep everything safe and running like clockwork, around 50 Teen Leaders and 80 adult supervisors gave their valuable time and encouragement for over six hours each day.

As always, Tent Time was central, teaching the children about the Spiritual element in life, essential for their over-all growth.

There were so many stand-outs; so let's just say **'Thank You'** to all who in so many ways made Day Camp amazing yet again.

## ***Honouring Volunteers Event – Sunday June 25th***

This year the thanksgiving for community volunteers will be combined with St Peter's (Anglican) Church. **Start time will be 10 am** – a compromise for both fellowships. It is important that everyone knows the start time. Many people are reluctant to come to church when they don't know what to expect, so please, spread the word and invite YOUR friends to the event. Last year's theme 'Young Volunteers' made for some inspiring stories from young and old.



This year the theme is 'Our Environment'. All community volunteers, in one way or another, are caring for our living environment, whether it be protecting life and limb, beach care, recycling clothing, or minimising damage to forests and rivers. The special morning tea is an added bonus. Last year 34 community groups were represented. Let's beat that this year!

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### ***St Andrew's Parish Register***

**Marriage:** April 29th: Svetlana Sgibneva to John Phillips.  
John Twemlow officiating.

#### ***Baptism Invitation:***

Charlotte and Damon Christensen extend a warm invitation to the Baptism of their son, Nathan Allan, at St Andrew's on Saturday **June 17th at 10 am**. Rev Mary Petersen officiating.

A special morning tea will follow. Everyone is welcome.

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### **Important Notice – Community Meals Donations**

A new BNZ bank account has been set up for Community Meals, to separate it from the general Parish account. This will make it easier to comply with funding accountability reports. The Meals mission stands alone and supports itself. Funding is sought from all sectors and all donations to the meals will go to this new account.:

**BNZ Whitianga 020 496 0062562 001**

**Thank you!**

## **Come and Worship - Every Sunday!**

### **St Andrew's by the Sea - 9:30 am**

*Families are warmly welcomed. We have a child-friendly space for families in church, with quiet toys and Bible activities.*

#### **WORSHIP Schedule: Pentecost Season**

*June 4th - Whit Sunday (Pentecost)*

*Communion – Peter Chaffin*

*11th - John Twemlow*

*18th – Ladies' Bible Group*

*25th – 10 am start!*

#### **Honouring our Community Volunteers**

*July 2nd – John Twemlow - Communion*

*9th – Dorothy Preece – Bible Sunday*

*16th – Rev Shirley Barker – Kirby*

*23rd – Guest Speaker – Christians Against Poverty*

*30th – Ross Millar*

*ALSO - July 30th - St Andrew's will host the Combined Churches evening worship. Supporters and helpers are needed to provide a light meal, commencing 5pm. Worship follows at 6 pm.*

*The Local Ministry Team wishes to thank all of those who so faithfully provide our inspiring and varied worship. We are delighted to welcome **Rev Shirley Barker – Kirby** to our pulpit on July 16th. She has kindly agreed to conduct services for us occasionally. Many of you will remember Shirley from the time when she stayed at the manse and filled-in for Rev Mary Petersen over Christmas 2013.*

*The Ministry Team needs a person to co-ordinate Pastoral Care and visiting at St Andrew's. Someone who will take messages and pass them on. Could this be YOU?*

***Don't forget worship at Whitianga Continuing Care – 11 am every Wednesday morning – supporters always welcome.***



## ***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) **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

If you can help, JUST SOMETIMES, please ph. 866 0169 or 867 1104 (shop).

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

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

Free, hot, nutritious meals and friendship. Volunteers & donations welcome.

Enquiries : Phone Tania on Mondays 0210 294 2234 or 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)