

Parish and Community Activities

Newcomers are cordially invited to join any of these friendly groups

CHURCH OP-SHOP (behind the Church building, on Owen Street) 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**

COMMUNITY MEALS in the Church hall from 5-6pm every Monday. Providing free, hot, nutritious meals and friendship. Volunteers & donations welcome. Enquiries to Val 027 252 4453 or phone the Church on Mondays 867 1102

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP All welcome. Held 2nd Wednesday of every month, 1:30pm in members' homes. For programme and venue details please ring Beryl Wharton 866 3739 or Ann Harsant 866 4740

LADIES BIBLE STUDY Wednesday 10am Please ring Julie for information: 984 9140



Music and fun for babies, toddlers and their carers. Thursdays 10:00 am in school terms. Music begins promptly at 10 a.m. followed by morning tea, friendship and playtime. **We need leaders** - if you can help, please come to a session and talk to the team.

MESSY CHURCH An exciting Sunday experience for all the family, including food! For info & session dates, please contact Julie 984 9140

P.R.O.P. People Relying on People. Supporting families battling mental health and substance abuse issues. For confidential support, freephone 0800 127 359.

TE KOROWAI MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY GROUP meets Thursdays, 11:30, at St Andrew's hall. Phone Robyn Campbell 869 5244 for details of meeting dates

TOUGHLOVE Behavioural support Anyone challenged by the behaviour of someone in their family is encouraged to talk to Nicole 866 5119

UPRIGHT& ACTIVE Two friendly exercise sessions for seniors, held in the Church hall

Mondays at 9:30am Leader Carol Melrose 867 1097

Tuesdays at 10:00am Leader Brenda Duncan 866 5814

WORSHIP AT CONTINUING CARE A Combined Churches event providing devotions every Wednesday at 10:45am 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

Parish secretary: Dorothy Preece 869 5452 dorothy.preece@worldnz.net.nz

Church office & hall bookings: 867 1102 or standrewswhitianga@gmail.com

Newsletter editor: Charlotte Christensen 867 1234 or strettoc@gmail.com

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

**St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church
Newsletter September / October / November 2015**

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

Our people and their stories:

Dear Friends

Thank you for creating two wonderful farewell occasions for me. I really appreciate all those who made the effort to come to these events. I am very grateful to all who worked to make these happen, including Dorothy Preece and John Twemlow, the MCs for each occasion. I will always treasure the memories of those who spoke, sang and prayed for me. Thank you for all the special gifts I received. The book many of you signed that included photos of you will always remind me of special people in my life. The book especially created for me, *A Community Ministry*, is an amazing photographic record of my time with you. Thank you all.



It is hard to say goodbye – although this is not the last time I will be in Mercury Bay, **our relationship will be different from now on** as I will no longer be your minister. I will, however, keep the promises I have made to conduct special events including funerals and weddings and Anzac services. If another minister was coming into the role here that might be interfering in someone else's sphere, but there will not be anyone for the foreseeable future, so I can still come when asked.

In my final service I tried to leave a **parting message that, through words and music, encapsulated all I had tried to teach and model over nearly**

twelve years of ministry in this place. So I want to put some of that in print here, since I have been invited to share a final message with you all.

In Presbyterian tradition ministers are called Ministers of the Word or teaching elders. So **part of my role with you has been to teach.** For me though that was never about telling you what to do but more about **encouraging and helping you to explore for yourself what God is saying to you,** and showing you how you might do that by being attentive to everything around you. God certainly speaks through the Bible, but also in other ways, through experiences, through the wonders of nature, through music, through other people – God’s messengers to you in words or action. I still want to encourage you to hear what God might be saying to you in this time and place. **Every place is sacred and holy** if we see it as such. **God is everywhere** – beside you, around you, within you. That should not be a scary thought but a comforting one. The God I know and trust is all about love. **God loves the whole world – not just one group of people.** **You are all special to God.**

If you believe that God still speaks today then a so much more than literal interpretation of the Bible awaits you. Being truly Biblical means that we will want to know what God is saying to us today through ancient stories and we will want to **stretch our minds, grow and discover** meaning for today.

The principles of Scripture override particular verses that come out of a time and place so different from 21st century New Zealand. For example, what we know as the Old Testament is the record of God’s dealings with the people of Israel. Books of law, songs, history, poetry and prophecy record how people related to God and understood God as being like their

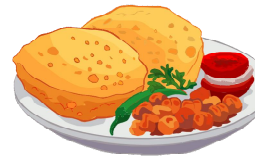
Note from the editor: this issue covers 3 months in order to bring us back into the regular schedule. Never fear, we're not changing to a quarterly issue - we'll be back to bi-monthly with December/January!

Christian Women’s Fellowship

Invites all women to hear Robin Twemlow speaking on her journey with the Lord, into Peru and Lake Titicaca.

Wednesday October 14th, 1:30 at St Andrew’s

No charge. Afternoon tea to follow.



COMMUNITY MEALS - happening every Monday with a large team of volunteers helping in all sorts of ways. The many very vulnerable people who come for a meal or have one delivered are very grateful for this practical support. Thanks very much to all those who help with donations of money or food or their time in this vital ministry in our community.

IF YOU NEED PRAYER, FOR YOURSELF OR OTHERS, there are people ready to pray with you at the front of the Church every Sunday after the morning service.



We also have a **prayer chain** - a group of people who are willing to pray for anyone, without necessarily knowing the name, but being aware of the situation to be prayed for. Contact the church office, 867 1102 or standrewswhitianga@gmail.com, if you want to share a need for prayer

Love our newsletter but wish it came by email instead of on paper? No problem! Just contact Charlotte at strettoc@gmail.com to get added to the distribution list!

Print copies will still be available, or alternatively you can download copies from our website www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz. So you'll never miss out on all our news and stories!

Parish Register

Funerals *Our thoughts and sympathy are with the families*

31 July Bernice Cooper—service in her garden at 96
Albert St, Whitianga, and burial at
Ferry Landing Cemetery



19 August Glynise Cole—graveside service at Ferry
Landing Cemetery

Christening/Dedication

1 August Emily Christensen—a joyful service led by Mary
Petersen at St Andrew's with the support of Whitianga
Baptist minister Mike Renner

Don't Miss the Big Op-Shop Sale!

Thurs, Fri and Sat

October 1st, 2nd, 3rd

9:30 -12:30 In the Church Hall

Supporting your community.



tribal God focused only on them. The life and teaching of Jesus supercede the law and the principles of the New Testament supercede the story of God just focusing on the Jews.

We see that emphasis and an overriding principle at work in the story of Peter in Acts chapter 10. Peter had a vision that showed him that **God welcomes and accepts everyone** and not just the Jews.

God is love and a beautiful presence in our lives – if we let that happen. Our minds need to be stretched and our spirits inspired so that we can truly be God's people in this generation. May I encourage you to keep **exploring different aspects of God that have meaning for you, images that resonate with you** – light, rock, wisdom, friend, creativity, healing, mystery, shepherd, guide, river of life.... In other words, be open to new insights into who is God for you?

Yet I also want to encourage you to keep thinking about **who are you for God?** Keep journeying with God, keep discovering and exploring, growing in God's love – and let God's love flow through you to others.

*Journey inward, journey outward,
stir the spirit, stretch the mind,
Love for God and self and neighbour
marks the way that Christ defined.*

Twelve years ago the church council invited me to come and lead **you in community ministry**. I have been privileged to follow that call. I now implore you to **keep following Jesus into the community**.

The church's task is to provide inspiring, relevant worship, to nurture and nourish Christian pilgrims – helping them to grow spiritually, to develop connections for people with a spirituality that is liberating and life-affirming, and then to **send them out to share God's love with others**.

The Church is not a holy club for the good of its members. It exists to serve those beyond itself.

*Holy Spirit, teach us how to read the signs,
How to meet the challenge of our troubled times.
Love us into action, stir us into prayer,
Till we choose God's life and find our future there.*

The world around us is changing so rapidly many find it difficult to keep up and do not want to hear or see the news because there are so many awful and challenging things happening. If we choose to **dance to God's rhythm** there is strength beyond ourselves – not for marching to a set pattern but for seeing with different eyes and **learning to dance on a moving carpet.**

Keep exploring the mystery and wonder beyond yourself, be open to the spark of God in everyone, use the gifts God has given you and go to make a difference in God's world.

God loves you. God is with you. God will bless you.

With love, Mary



Sunday Worship Schedule

6 September	Fathers Day - Communion service and Church Anniversary. We give thanks for the people whose faith gave us our Church and in Sept 2002, our new hall. Worship Leader – Alistair Rogers
13 September	Faith Bible College Team will lead MORNING WORSHIP at 9:30 - AND MESSY CHURCH @ 4:30 – 6pm, for families with children. Please spread the word and support them.
20 September	Parish Council Team will lead our worship
27 September	Worship Leader John Twemlow
4 October	WORLD COMMUNION DAY Led by Peter and Dorothy Chaffin
11 October	Worship Leader Robin Twemlow
18 October	FAVOURITE HYMNS SERVICE Leader: Lynnor Cooke. Look for the request box in the hall - and also: CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING Please plan to stay and have your say.
25 October	Worship Leader Dorothy Preece
1 November	Communion, led by John Twemlow
8 November	Worship Leader Alistair Rogers
15 November	Worship Leader Brendon Ward, student at Grace Bible College
22 November	Worship leader Dorothy Preece and 4:30 Christmas MESSY CHURCH with Mary Petersen
29 November	Worship Leader Ross Millar, Hamilton and Combined Churches worship - 5 pm at St Andrew's
30 November (Monday)	Primary Schools' WALK THROUGH CHRISTMAS Cookies needed please!!

Special Events for your Diary

Messy Church on **13 September** and **22 November** (no October session). All families with children of all ages welcome to come and join in the fun activities, Bible story time, and with a meal provided.

Communion 6 September, 4 October, 1 November

Worship at St Andrew's by the Sea Community Church 9:30am every Sunday.

Children are always welcome – Bible activities are provided for children to explore while seated with their parents; there is a quiet corner with toys at the back of the church; or older children may choose to learn with a Bible teacher in the lounge.

Combined Churches Prayer meetings: praying together for our community, 10am to 11:15am Wednesdays. 2 September at Whitianga Baptist, 7 October at Crossroad Encounter Fellowship.

On SUNDAY September 13th

We welcome a team from
FAITH BIBLE COLLEGE

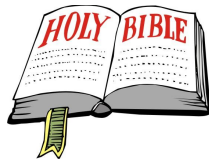
These young, enthusiastic
Christians will conduct

***MORNING WORSHIP @ 9:30 am**

And

***MESSY CHURCH @ 4:30 - 6 pm**

Messy Fun, Food, Faith and Friendship
For families with children



EVERYONE IS WELCOME.

Come, join God's Family!

Further Information - ring Julie (07) 984 9140



Parish Council News

St Andrew's Church is now embarking on a new phase of its faith journey, having no resident Minister. But that does not mean we are without a Leader! Things may change around us, but **GOD IS UNCHANGING**, and God is our guide on this journey into the future.

As a Parish Council **WE BELIEVE** that God's great and loving plan for St Andrew's Church has been unfolding under Mary's Ministry, and that God will continue to reveal His plan for us as we continue to work in His Name, so

WATCH THIS SPACE

Our visitors often tell us that we at St Andrew's are a welcoming Church with a loving heart. That Loving Heart is God's heart, and whatever else we do, we will continue to share the Gospel, and to welcome and to nurture everyone who comes to us.

In the future, under the oversight of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, the Parish Council will be responsible for arranging the Sunday services. In addition to our own worship leaders, visiting ministers and preachers will sometimes be invited to lead our worship. The Parish Council, as a team, will lead the worship on September 20th. While our worship leaders might be more varied, the call is still the same: *Come, lift up your hearts in worship, give thanks to God for His unfailing love, and receive strength for the week to come.*

On **October 18th** after the Favourite Hymns Service (led by Lynnor), we will hold our Annual Congregational Meeting. This is one chance for the whole Church to get together to discuss the future. We will keep the business as brief as possible, to allow more time for discussion. There will be a shared lunch to follow. We will present the financial statement for the year, and reports from all of the groups associated with the Church. If you are a group leader, please write your report and hand it to Julie or Dorothy, well in advance so we have time to print them.

Thank you.

Saying Farewell to Mary

Last week we held two separate Farewell events to say “Goodbye and God Bless You” to Rev Mary Petersen.

Mary has been our Minister for 12 years. Around 80 people attended the service and Farewell on Sunday, 23rd August when the congregation reflected on all that Mary has achieved in that time. It was a joyful, sometimes tearful day of celebration and thanksgiving to God, for bringing Mary to us.

It is only when we take time to look back, that we see how God has worked through Mary in amazing ways, and through others under her leadership. We presented Mary with a ‘Message Book’ full of personal messages, and also a hard-bound book titled ‘A Community Ministry’ with pages of glossy photos recording Mary’s 12 years of dedicated work in so many areas of Ministry.

On Saturday 30th we repeated the thanksgiving theme, this time with the Farewell opened to the whole community. More than 100 people attended, including the Kea Scouts, who presented Mary with their ‘Caring Badge’ as well as an oversize card and flowers, finishing with their ‘Kea Shout’.

MP Scott Simpson spoke of Mary’s dedicated community work, as did others from Day Camp, Whitianga Combined Churches, and Community Meals. Bruce Collier, President of the Mercury Bay RSA, presented Mary with a Life Membership.

It is clear from the attendance, and from so many words spoken, that Rev Mary Petersen has been a tremendous influence for good, and has touched countless lives during her 12 years’ tenure.

In her replies, Mary assured everyone that St Andrew’s is in good heart, and the work of sharing God’s love will continue into the future. On Saturday we presented Mary with a cheque for \$1,000 from the community and churches of Mercury Bay.

Mary will live in Tairua and does not want to lose touch with us.

We will miss you Mary. Thank you, and God bless you.

Footnote: The book we made on-line for Mary is a one-off, and not available to buy. However, having this experience of computer books, we will be making a fundraiser in the not-too-distant future.

Special thanks to Julie, for all her work on Mary’s book.



Left: Mary as we’ve seen her so often, intently sharing her message; this time at her congregational farewell



Above: Mary with her daughter Cath Wightman and sister Val Ranson



Left: Mary holding Emily Christensen whose christening at the start of August was Mary’s last for the parish as minister of St. Andrew’s by the Sea