

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

October-November 2021

Our Mission in this Parish is to demonstrate the Love of God to all people, and by our actions and words to encourage them towards a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our people and their stories:

John and Muriel Pedersen



John and Muriel have a very interesting faith history. From Lutheran and Catholic backgrounds, they share a deep love of the Lord.

John's family roots are in Denmark and he loves to tell their stories. The Pedersen home displays Danish memorabilia. "Many Lutheran immigrants came to New Zealand from Scandinavia and Northern Germany. Some worked on the Napier-Wairarapa railway project, known as Ninety Mile Bush, settling around Mauriceville West, Danniverke, Norsewood and Marton, bringing

with them their strong Lutheran faith and traditions. John's forebears arrived in the early 1900's. His parents, Ross and Johanna Pedersen had 7 children, with John 4th in line. "Grandmother (*Bestamor*), Johanna was a woman of very strong faith. She and my mother kept the faith and traditions alive."

John's family lived in Shannon, and attended Lutheran services "with many of my cousins" in various private homes and halls. The Pastor visited monthly from the Lutheran Church in Palmerston North. John's schooling was in Shannon, and Horowhenua College. "We kids knew we were a bit different, but it didn't worry us," John says. "Denmark is the oldest Christian Kingdom in the world. In 980 King Harold of Denmark declared the country Christian. Today the Lutheran Church is still supported by the State, and all social care services are run through the Church in Denmark."

When John left college he trained as a 'mechanician' with Post and Telegraph, boarding in Palmerston North. "Even after I left home, I was never very far from my faith," John says.

It was there that he met the love of his life, Muriel Wilson. The son of the boarding house reneged on a blind date, so John went instead. Muriel was nursing in Palmerston North, and she was Catholic. "The two faiths are not so different. Lutheran has Catholic roots," John says. Muriel's family soon came round to the idea of her marrying John. "Once they met him, it was fine. John took a Catholic instruction course before we married."

They married in 1970 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Rongotea. They moved north when John took the post as second-in-charge at the Avondale exchange. They alternated Sundays between the Lutheran Church in Mt Eden, and Catholic Church in Henderson. Muriel was no longer nursing, but taking work in the health sector wherever she could. When she became pregnant she realised they needed one spiritual home. They opted for the Lutheran Church at Mt Eden. "There really was very little difference in the two liturgies," Muriel says.

When they moved to Hamilton, "to be two hours closer to the families," they had two small daughters, Helen and Jean. Muriel was employed at the Trevellyn home for the aged, in their special care unit. The family across the road owned a bach in Catherine Crescent, Whitianga. "We were invited to spend Christmas holidays with them, which we did for the next 20 years." John continued to move up in his career, taking the family from Hamilton to Masterton, where Muriel worked as an administrator for CAPs. Then, at age 13, their daughter Jean became ill. For the next ten excruciating years her condition deteriorated, with endless medical appointments. "It was a terrible time," Muriel says. "For a long time we didn't know what was wrong. John's work took him away from home for months. I had to keep a normal routine for Helen, while dealing with Jean's illness." Eventually one rheumatologist diagnosed her condition as an incurable disease of the immune system.

At age 23, Jean was admitted to Wellington hospital, where she died. "It was a desperately painful 10 years," John says. "We were broken, but we never lost our faith, and neither did Jean. We never stopped talking to God, sometimes in anger and desperation, and it was very straight talking." Before she died, Jean had qualified as a radiologist.

John's work took them then to Lower Hutt. Muriel worked as a school administrator at Chilton St James' Anglican Girls' School. Later she became manager for the new and ground-breaking Open Polytech Video Conference Centre complex on The Terrace. Politicians came at all hours to

video-conference across the world. State-of-the-art technology of the sort that John understood.

Their house was on a steep slope and one night there was a tremendous storm. "The tail end of a cyclone, winds up to 186 km and 220mm of rain." Next morning Muriel saw their trees had gone. Their section had slipped down onto the property below, leaving the Pedersen house in a precarious position. After substantial remedial work, John and Muriel had a discussion about long term plans and decided to sell. Not long afterwards, John decided to take early retirement. Christmas 2004 saw them back at their friends' bach, looking for a home. They bought a section and built a home in Acacia Court.

By the time John retired he was part of a Telecom marketing team, devising and managing databases to promote and sell new products. John loved his work and still misses the energy of working with that team.

In Whitianga he joined Lions and Muriel became a Lions wife, an association that still keeps them both busy. John and Kevin Pringle have teamed up as DOC volunteers, setting traps along the local beaches to catch predators and protect dotterel. He is also a volunteer driver for Mercury Bay Community Patrol. Muriel is a born carer. She sings with Golden Girls, looks after people and does very fine needlework with the Coromandel Embroidery Guild. At the time of writing she is making little dresses and soft toys to go into the Christmas Child boxes.

From time to time the Pedersens revisit their roots down country. Muriel's family are in Levin. Many of John's forebears and family are in the cemetery in Shannon. There they are enveloped in the Danish Lutheran culture.

They now have 3 grandsons, Helen's boys aged 9, 11 and 13. They live in New Plymouth – another road trip.

When asked about the differences in worship style at St Andrew's, John says, "All the same worship elements are there – hymns of praise, prayers of confession, Bible readings and meditation on the Word. St Andrew's people are loving and respectful of God and of each other, no matter what their background. That's what drew us to St Andrew's."

Thank you, John and Muriel for sharing your story and bringing your Spiritual energy to St Andrew's Fellowship

Community Meals update

For a couple of years Delwyn Stephens has been providing very popular takeaway meals to her customers at \$8.50 for main meal and a sweet, delivered to their homes. It's good value, and good food. At the beginning of September Delwyn's contract at Mercury Bay Club ceased, and suddenly she had nowhere to cook. St Andrew's Parish Council agreed that she could hire the church kitchen to cook on Tuesday nights. So Delwyn is in business again. After two weeks of working in "the best kitchen I've ever cooked in" Delwyn offered to help on a voluntary basis with our Monday Meals, and now the Trust, which administers the meals, have decided to formerly employ Delwyn. The meals will be fresh, not frozen and sometimes there might even be a sweet treat! This is a great outcome for all concerned. *Welcome to the team, Delwyn!*



Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish Notice of Annual Meeting/ Postponement

The Congregational Meeting is usually held on the 2nd Sunday in October, but this year the meeting is postponed until we reach Delta Level One, and can discuss our ideas unmasked! We will advise when that happens. In the meantime, we have set up a whiteboard in the church lounge, asking for your ideas about our future focus and direction. You can, of course write your ideas or email them to us. Already there are some suggestions, on the whiteboard, including 'Men's and Women's Bible study groups.' Our Ladies' Bible Study group is a powerhouse of prayer and study, but we have long been aware that our church is lacking a men's study group, or one for both men and women. ***Please let us know if you would like to be involved in the formation of a men's group, or a mixed group.***



Church Property Report

Scaffolding surrounds the church and painting has now started on the church exterior. Our friend Rosh Thomas of J.L.Connolly has organised the job . This is a very expensive exercise, but a very necessary one. The church is an icon in the town, and we must keep it pristine.



Following the report in the last Newsletter, the store cupboard in the Hamilton Room has undergone renovation and is now a food store for Community Meals, with their freezer relocated from the outside shed. Meanwhile the Op-shop is looking forward to adopting the shed to increase its much needed clothing storage space. With the shed on the same boardwalk as the shop, it will eliminate the need for the Op-shop ladies to carry heavy boxes and bags up and down the workroom steps. It's a win-win situation and will improve the efficiency of both of these important community missions.

Watch this space!

We are in the process of installing a large-screen TV on the wall in the church lounge, to be purchased with the help of the Methodist Media and Communications Fund. It will be used for church and hall user groups and enhance our mission interface with the wider community.

Pastoral Worker – applications

Several applications have been received for the St Andrew's Pastoral role, which was advertised locally last month. The possible candidates will be interviewed when we reach Delta Level One – masks can be intimidating!

Madeleine Saunders never stops working. Between Op-shop duties she recently spent every hour reorganising the artificial flower vases and cleaning up the porch where they are housed. We now have 2 new vases with beautiful spring flower arrangements at the front of the church. ***Thank you Madeleine!***

The Op-shop is open for business, with some restrictions on numbers of customers and a one-way traffic system through the shop.

Summer clothing now fills the racks and as always, customers are delighted with our prices! Dumping unsaleable rubbish on our doorstep is still a costly problem, but we welcome good, clean used clothing at any time.



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Recent Op-shop donations

As well as supporting St Andrew's and other local churches, our Op-shop donates around \$10,000 a year to local non-profit initiatives. The latest donations have been \$2,000 towards security lighting at the Bike Park, \$1,000 towards the Community Christmas Tree Appeal, and \$833 towards insurance costs for the Community Patrol.

Thank you for supporting the Op-shop!

Christmas Child Gift Boxes

Operation Christmas Child sends gift boxes to underprivileged children in the Pacific Islands. They are distributed at Christmas parties to which the whole village is invited, and no child misses out. In previous years we have had fun getting together at church for a 'packing party', but with Covid still lurking this year we are taking boxes home to pack. The boxes come with information about how to pack, who to pack for, and what the village children need.



Pick up your boxes from church or the Op-shop. We are late starting this year – please bring them in before October 22nd.

Alternatively, you can now pack a shoebox online!

Follow this link: <https://youtu.be/gejNheEn86k>

Church and Parish Donations: Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish
BNZ Whitianga: **02 0496 0062562 00**

Monday Meals Donations: Mercury Bay Community Support Trust
Westpac Whitianga: **03 1578 0108901 00**

Sunday Worship @ St Andrew's

9:30 every Sunday

All of the following are subject to changing Covid alert levels and travel restrictions, but still we plan!

Worship Schedule:

Oct	3rd	Stewart Hanna - Communion
	10th	Dorothy Preece
	17th	Ross Millar
	24th	Dorothy Preece
	31st	Fellowship Sharing Day
		Also: Combined service, 5pm, Baptist Church
Nov	7th	Rev Jacqui Cavit - Communion
	14th	Ladies' Bible Study Group
	21st	Dorothy Preece
	28th	Bill Woodward



In the past weeks we have again found ways to connect remotely as a Fellowship, to worship in our own homes. Many churches have got together on video links. Instead, St Andrew's people have been inspiring one another by sharing clips, prayers and music that we found helpful. Our Pastoral phone calls to the whole fellowship have helped to make sure that no-one is forgotten. ***If you have concerns about anyone who you think might need Pastoral help, please let the leaders know.***

Church is open again!

At the time of writing, we are holding services again, masked, scanning/signing in, suitably distanced and watching music on u-tube.

Some snippets....on the trials of Covid

"It's the trials of life that make us stronger. A tree's growth rings are light and dark. The light ones are the good years, the dark are the difficult years. But it's the dark rings that give the tree its strength."

"Will you let adversity make you a bitter person, or a better person?"

"Faith is strengthened through testing. A faith that cannot be tested, cannot be trusted."

Parish and Community Information

Community Groups may not meet until Level 1 - please ring to check

- Monday **Upright & Active** 9am weekly exercise for active seniors
Contact Carol 867 1097
Community meals takeaway only, every Monday 3:30-5pm
Contact Maureen 027 246 6164
- Tuesday **Sit and be Fit** 10am weekly for the less active
Contact Viv 869 5295
Stitch n' Chat fortnightly 1:30-4pm in the Hamilton Room
Contact Julie 021 169 1637
- Wednesday **Ladies' Bible Study** 10am weekly
Contact Julie 021 169 1637
Inter-Church Women's Fellowship Monthly.
Contact Annie 866 3711
Scrapbags quilting group 10am weekly.
Contact Robin 866 5029
Parkinsons Support 6-weekly.
For dates and times contact Keith 027 459 8683
- Thursday **Enliven** (Presbyterian Support for the Elderly) weekly
Contact Jenny 866 0556
- Friday **Cancer Support Coffee Morning** First Friday of each month.
Contact Ruth 021 363 840
AA Driver Licensing Second Friday of each month.
(8 October, 12 November) No bookings allowed.

THE CHURCH OP SHOP is open Tuesday-Saturday, 9am-1pm

Manager: Madeleine Saunders 866 0169

The Op Shop supports local churches and many non-profit groups

We invite such groups to apply in writing, for donations towards their projects

St Andrew's service 9:30 every Sunday

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

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