

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

December 2022-January 2023

Our Mission in this Parish is to bring the saving love of Christ to all whom we meet, and by our example to encourage them to follow Him.

Celebrating 125 years of history!

Keep the date! Tell the family and plan to be here!

The weekend of 17th to 20th February 2023

We have formed a planning committee, and the programme is being arranged. It will culminate in a Sunday service of Thanksgiving, and include open days Friday to Monday, with the community invited to view history and information displays.

How can you help with this?

Please inform us of past and present contacts

People who went to Sunday School, were married or baptised in the Church, those who held office or worked in the Op Shop...

Your help will be invaluable!

Search out your photos and documents

Wedding photos... or dresses! Baptism certificates, christening gowns, newspaper clippings, family stories of happenings in Church, funerals...

We want them all, and we promise to take care of them!

How do you get in touch?

There's lots of options! Pick one that works for you.

Email: standrewswhitianga@gmail.com

Post: PO Box 368, Whitianga 3542

Parish Secretary Dorothy Preece: 022 1322 061

Parish Councillor Annie Lynch: 07 866 3711 / 027 322 3332

Op Shop Manager Madeleine Saunders: 021 1154 767

Walk Through Christmas—Monday December 5th

*Mercury Bay Area School children will not be attending in their classes this year. Instead, the event will be advertised in the school Newsletter, and parents will be advised that they can take their children out of school to attend the Walk Through. **These families will need all our encouragement** to bring their primary age children and younger siblings, to hear stories, sing songs and (at St Andrew's) see a nativity play to learn about the real meaning of Christmas. Everyone is encouraged to come and follow the Walk Through, beginning at **St Peter's Anglican Church at 9:30, then St Patrick's Catholic Church at 10:00 and St Andrew's at 10:30, where we provide refreshments. There will be a repeat performance starting half an hour later, for Te Rerenga School.***

We need your support to provide biscuits (no nuts please) and encourage the ladies of the Bible Study team, who are practicing their Nativity play. Please come and support us if you can. Thank you.



Christmas Parade Nativity Float Saturday December 3rd

*Please encourage children to dress as angels, shepherds or wise men and join the Combined Churches Nativity Float. Costumes available for late comers on the day. Let's win the prize for Best Float again, and remind the community to put Christ into their Christmas. Assemble 11:30 at the rugby field. For information: **Phone Jacqui Courtenay 027 213 7254.***

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**

A new Christmas Initiative....

Would you like to help us sing carols in town? Elizabeth Nicholls is inviting enthusiastic (not necessarily accomplished) Christian singers, to bring well known carols to the community in the main street on **Christmas Parade Day – Saturday December 3rd**.

You don't have to read music - just enjoy singing, and share our desire to witness to the community. The word is going out to all the local churches. **There will be two practices in the church for those who can make it – 2 pm on Wednesday 30th**. If you can't make it to practice – come and find us on Christmas Parade day, under the sail on the main street. Song sheets will be there. For information: Elizabeth 027 629 7908



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Combined Churches Carols in the Park Friday 16th December 7pm at Taylor's Mistake

With live music!
Bring the family (and a seat) and enjoy singing the old favourites.

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Community Christmas Lunch

***This year the lunch will be held at
Crossroad Church on Saturday 17th December.***

Organised by the Christian Community through Mercury Bay Community Support Trust (the Christian Trust). All are welcome to share this meal, at no cost, with family, friends and neighbours. Please plan to come if you can. **Book early with Maureen Kerr 027 2466 164** for catering numbers. This event is a lot of work for a few people – Maureen would love to hear from you if you can help in any capacity.

From our preachers:

In October, Bill Woodward gave us this:

"Jesus had to come and be just like us, so that He could teach us to be just like Him." A very apt message as we approach Christmas once again.

Also In October, our pianist Elizabeth arranged a service of hymns and shared testimonies. Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby chose the hymn *Amazing Love*, and sent the following testimony:

"The year is 1993. Ted and I are living in Nelson, British Columbia, Canada and I am lecturing at Selkirk College in the Human Services Programme. We are attending the First Presbyterian Church – a church which is both charismatic and solidly grounded in Reformed Theology. I have just been elected by the congregation to the Eldership of the church, much to my surprise. Also, much to my surprise, I have been invited to lead a Woman's Cursillo (a Spiritual Renewal weekend) for the Kootenay Presbytery in south-western British Columbia.

"I have taken a Saturday aside to pray, reflect and prepare for the Cursillo and the tasks that lie ahead. Silence surrounds me, a candle burns, and music plays softly. As I pray, I become aware of words of Graham Kendrick's *Amazing Love*. Though very familiar, for the first time they pierce my spirit and penetrate my entire being.

"I find myself overwhelmed at the immensity of *the Holy*, the puniness of the human, and of the greatness of love poured out with no counting of the cost. I find myself on my knees pouring out my heart in gratitude, contrition, humility, and absolute awe as the room is washed in wave after wave of unadulterated love. "That day and that song set my life in an inevitable direction which was not of my doing, nor my seeking, but which I have tried in all humility to faithfully follow.

There was a sense of an upper room experience that day, and like Thomas I still proclaim, "**My Lord and my God**".



The Season of Advent

On November 27th we begin lighting the candles on our Advent wreath. We are exhorted to 'Prepare the way of the Lord' and get ready for the coming of Christ. What does that really mean to us? **Luke 3:5** (Good News version) says, *'The winding roads must be made straight, and the rough paths made smooth'*. (This is not a reference to the track over the hill from Thames – but it's a nice thought!)

We are asked to prepare our hearts and minds, to look for Christ in the midst of all the inhibiting clutter of the commercial Christmas scene. Like the Wise Men, we keep our eyes on the heavens and try not to get turned aside by the invasive busyness that we cannot avoid. We are called to repent, and receive forgiveness, to remove all those obstacles that get in the way of our personal relationship with the Eternal, Loving Father.

We are called to make others aware that this season is a holy season – that must include our own families, friends and all who come into our homes this month.

Let us pray for the Truth of Christ to be revealed this Christmas.

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Parish Register

Wedding:

October 29th at St Andrew's by the Sea
Thomas Edward Tasker to Myrie Grace Palmer
Rev David Cooper officiating.



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Please save stamps

Yes! We still save stamps for the Christian mission to the Blind, and it is still worth the effort.

Here's what CMB say:

*'Thank you so much for the stamps you sent recently.
The money we receive from used stamps enables us to
restore the sight of an extra 20-30 people every year!'
Please save your Christmas card stamps.*



Please clip them (don't tear) leaving at least one centimetre all around the stamp. The box is on the sales table at Church.

Parish Property Report

We are coming up for an expensive time.....

The back fence at the church house in Catherine Crescent has now been rebuilt. The cost of \$5,200 is shared between Parish and TCD Council. The two side fences will also be replaced after discussion with both neighbours.

The side deck at the church has been cleaned, and deck oil purchased. Vance Cosgrave has kindly agreed to apply the oil.

The church roof needs to be treated for moss, and the whole roof repainted. We are currently seeking quotes for this – and we know it won't be cheap!

The church carpark is in very bad repair. Parish Council is seeking the help of Council to reseal, or at least fill the potholes. This won't be cheap either!

Food for thought

(From Ravi Zacharias - Hibiscus Coast Presbyterian Newsletter)

"I think the reason that we sometimes have the false sense that God is so far away, is because that is where we have put Him. We keep Him at a distance, and then when we are in need and call on Him in prayer, we wonder where He is. He is exactly where we left Him."

....This tells us that we just don't pray enough. Prayer is not just for emergencies. It is a way of life, a way of being, a 'mindfulness' that *The Eternal* is at the root of our very existence. This closeness comes only with practice, but when achieved it brings with it a sense of Communion with God in the everyday.

From St Patrick's Breastplate:

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.....

So may be our experience of Christ, this Christmas and in the everyday.

Amen!



Worship @ St Andrew's, 9:30 every Sunday

Dec	4th	Margaret Birtles (Waikato Methodist Synod) (Communion)
	11th	Rev Jacqui Cavit (Kaimai Presbytery)
	18th	A service of Nine Lessons & Carols, arranged by our pianists, Elizabeth and Jan
	25th	Christmas Day Family Service - Dorothy Preece
Jan	1st	Dorothy Preece (Communion)
	8th	Rev Mary Petersen
	15th	Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby
	22nd	Ross Millar
	29th	Dorothy Preece



We are ever grateful to our visiting ministers and lay persons who open the Word to us. It is becoming harder to fill our pulpit, so if you have any possible contacts for preachers, please let Dorothy know.

Sunday duty rosters

Week	Door Welcoming	Morning Tea
1st	Martin / Ian	Barbara / Annie / Madeleine
2nd	Barbara / Janet	Gina / Christine
3rd	Dorothy / Madeleine	Linda / Heather
4th	Annie / Madeleine	Martin / Enid
5th	Elizabeth / Ian / Janet	Dorothy / Gina

Special thanks to Martin (who has mastered the coffee machine) and to Gina, who delights us with her baking. **Please note: if you cannot attend on the appointed day, please arrange for someone else to take your duty. Thank you all.**

Parish Support Worker

Parish Council has reviewed the job description for the proposed Parish Worker, as agreed at the Annual Meeting. We hope to advertise soon, for a person to join our fellowship and work on contract, for up to 20 hours per week. Ideally this would be someone in the local area, who does not need to find accommodation, as we have a young family in the manse.

Please pray that the Spirit will lead the right person to us.

Parish and Community Information

Please check with these groups regarding their holiday recess

- 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 **Stitch n' Chat** fortnightly 1:30-4pm in the Hamilton Room
Contact Julie 021 169 1637
Enliven (Presbyterian Support for the Elderly) weekly
Contact Jenny 021 071 9539
- 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 021 071 9539
- Friday **Cancer Support Coffee Morning** First Friday of each month.
Contact Ruth 021 363 840
AA Driver Licensing Second Friday of each month.
(9 December, 13 January) No bookings allowed.

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

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Facebook: St Andrews Community Church Mercury Bay NZ

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