

Parish and Community Information

- Monday **Upright & Active** 9am weekly exercise for active seniors
Contact Carol 867 1097
Manawa Kai Heart Food Kitchen 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

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

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MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

October-November 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.

Our people and their stories - Ross and Jo Millar

Ross and Jo have strong connections with St Andrew's fellowship, and Ross often challenges us (and makes us work) with his unique discussion-style preaching. Jo has written their story.

Ross and Jo grew up in Hamilton where we both went to University, met, married and stayed. We've lived in the same house in Fairfield for 28 years. Despite this we would like to think we are not boring! We would like to think our experience is focused, rather than wide-ranging!

Ross was born in Matamata (not high in the excitement stakes). He likes to say he was born in Hobbiton. That's down the road a bit, although, he is on the short side.... After a few years his family moved to Cambridge. Ross has one younger brother, Craig. His father started the Brass Band in Cambridge, and both boys were brought up playing in the band. Craig is now a Music teacher and composer in Australia, while Ross has barely touched an instrument since leaving home.

He was very involved in the local Presbyterian Church, with both his parents being Elders. Although Ross knew God was real, he didn't make his own commitment until he was at university, when he felt that God challenged him to ask Jesus into his life. A cup of coffee was involved, I believe! Almost as importantly, Ross and I met. I invited him to the University Christian group, which kept up his involvement with God. Ross did a science degree in statistics and computing, and then trained as a Secondary Teacher. He taught maths and computing in Hamilton for 3 years before he decided it was not for him.

I (Jo) was born in Ashburton near Christchurch, where my Dad (Alistair Rogers) was sole teacher in a little country school. We soon moved to Rewarewa, another little country school near Otorohanga in rolling sheep



country, and then later to Leigh, a seaside village north of Auckland. By this time Mum, Pat, had 3 little girls. When I was ten our little brother Matthew joined us - a great toy for us to play with! Leigh was a lovely place, with lots of swimming, bare feet and bikes: happy memories. I went with my sisters to the local Hall for Sunday School, and sometimes the family went to the local church, with monthly services for Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Catholics.

When I was 9 or 10 I read a Gospel booklet, realised it was true, and committed to being a Christian. Our family moved again to Matamata, and when I was 15 Sarah was born. She was very well mothered with three big sisters, and a big brother! A while after I left home Pat, Alistair and family moved to Whenuakite, where Alistair was Headmaster. When the Whenuakite Hall closed, they became faithful members of St Andrews by the Sea.

With no idea what I wanted to do, I ended up at Waikato University studying psychology, sociology and education. I enjoyed it, but had a longing to be doing something for God, so early in the 2nd year I left University (even though Ross and study were both quite interesting!) and did a Discipleship Training Course with Youth With A Mission (YWAM). Afterwards I came back to Hamilton, and worked and studied part time for the Next 10 years.

Ross and I got married in 1985. After 3 years teaching maths and computing, Ross felt led to join ACT Theatre Company, a ministry of Youth With A Mission. I agreed, so off we went to DTS (second time for me!) We then joined YWAM in Hamilton. Ross became a Missionary Actor, and I became a Mum to Jeremy, and then Cameron, finally finishing my Bachelors degree in about 1992. Later Lauren and Hannah came along and our family was complete.

After 4½ years, our time with YWAM and ACT came to an end, and Ross got a job as a computing tutor at Puketaha Training Farm, a second-chance education provider, based in Hamilton. One of his classes was a group of Deaf students, and Ross realised the Deaf have no written language of their own. Ross was shocked: how can they read their Bible? His passion for sign languages began. Ross developed his own educational database, then joined a database company. By this time we had bought a house in Fairfield near to Ross's work, our church, and local schools, where we have lived ever since. It's a poor area with some big challenges, but we feel it is where we are meant to be. Long term in the community we have developed good relationships and an understanding of some of the challenges people face. We aim to be salt and light where we can.

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

Oct	1st	Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby (Communion)
	8th	Julie and Bible Group
	15th	Kevin Pringle
	22nd	Deacon Margaret Birtles
	29th	John Ormsby
Nov	5th	Dorothy Preece (Communion)
	12th	Elizabeth Nicholls - Hymns and Testimonies
	19th	Bill Woodward
	26th	Bill Woodward

From the Pulpit:

On August 20th we were very pleased to welcome John Twemlow back to our pulpit. At the conclusion of his message, John left us with a very powerful YouTube clip from American preacher Alistair Begg.

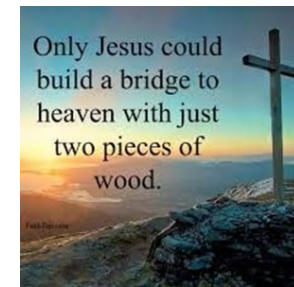
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xk9wgJBoEd8>

He spoke of the thief on the cross, appealing to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom," and Jesus' answer, "This day you will be with me in Paradise."

Alistair Begg posed the hypothetical question - How would that thief answer the angel at the gate of Heaven - 'Why should I let you in?' This thief might not have known Jesus at all. The only answer he could possibly give, would be:

"The Man on the middle cross said I could come."

Surely this is the only answer any of us will be able to give. Nothing in this world can ever make us worthy of entering the Kingdom, except by invitation. But from the cross, **Jesus says we can come.** And as amazing as it might seem, **"The Kingdom is within you."** It all starts here and now - living in the Lord, living in the Light, living in the Spirit, to bring the Good News of God's love to the world - to bring people into the Kingdom.



Manawa Kai Heart Food Kitchen



This is the new name for our Community Meals.

'Monday Meals' originated in 2008 from a 'Vision Day' led by Rev. Mary Petersen. It was a huge step of faith. The meals were cooked 'marae style' in the St Andrew's kitchen with everyone welcome to come and help. People were encouraged to eat together and the hall tables were set up with tablecloths and flowers. Placemats bore Bible verses. Donations of food began to roll in and we could see the Lord's hand in this. When the work grew too much for our small group, we employed a cook. The Mercury Bay Community Support Trust had been set up in 2000 by Rev Stan Stewart, primarily to fund Day Camp, and eventually the Trust also took over the meals mission, which then became '**Mercury Bay Community Meals**'. It became too difficult to serve plated meals through Covid, so they were all distributed as takeaways, and this has proved to be much more efficient.

Now, the meals have another name. '**Manawa Kai**' meaning '*heart food*'. The name has resonated with the community and the demand for meals has grown. Last week 200 meals were distributed. Still cooked in the St Andrew's kitchen and mainly distributed between 2 -4 pm on Mondays, frozen meals are available for emergency needs at other times. With rising food prices, funding for the meals is becoming increasingly difficult. Please pray for this mission, which started in faith and has continued to be a blessing to many in this community.

St Andrew's AGM was held after service on Sunday September 17th attended by 16 hardy members, many having escaped! The Reports were distributed a week earlier, and taken as read. There were no contentious issues. It seems we are all happy to keep the status quo as a Local Ministry Team, and we enjoy the various preaching styles of those who fill our pulpit. With no ordained minister to pay and the manse rented to a young family, the Parish account is looking good. Our manse needs work, and we are arranging a Healthy Homes inspection so we will know the extent of work needed.

All Parish Councillors agreed to stand for a further term. Parish Chairman, Kevin Pringle thanked everyone for their dedicated work and support.

We attended Fairfield Presbyterian Church from University days. Ross joined the lay preaching team which he really enjoyed. He applied to train to be a minister in the Presbyterian Church, but was not accepted. Probably too quirky! We joined Wycliffe Bible Translators intending to work with NZ Sign Language, but progress has been slow. We both trained in Bible Story Telling through Wycliffe, and this has strongly influenced Ross's 'preaching' style. Ross continued to write, perform and direct plays, coached secondary school teams, wrote and performed poetry, and each Easter at Stations of the Cross in the Hamilton Gardens, Ross mysteriously appeared, recited poems, and melted back into the bushes. Ross studied at Bible College (now Laidlaw) and gained a Masters in Theology. His Thesis compared the Lord's Prayer in the NT Greek, with signing done by Deaf church leaders.

When Hannah, our youngest went to school I got a part-time job at the local Kindy, working mainly in the office for the next 19 years. For a year I grew lots of native seedlings, and then got a job at the local Community House next door as the admin person, a role which I enjoy very much. I feel like I finally know what I want to do when I grow up!

In 2011 our second son Cameron drowned in a kayaking accident in Wellington Harbour. He was nearly 20. Cameron was very creative, quirky, and kind, and we miss him very much. Jeremy is married and has two children. Lauren is a costumier in Auckland. Next year the youngest, Hannah, is getting married. Soon after I started work again, Ross became a fulltime student so that he could continue his passion to develop a written form for sign language. He has a plan to develop a "sign processor" – like a word processor, but for writing sign languages. The best way to do this seems to be to do a Doctorate with the University of Auckland, so that is his goal going forward. He hopes to develop a tool that will be a huge help to Deaf people round the world.

In 2021 Pat and Alistair, my Mum and Dad, left Whenuakite, and St Andrew's to live in the Granny flat at the back of our house. We love having them close. For both of us, the best way to live is to keep close to God, and live life the way He wants us to live.

Thank you so much for sharing your story, Jo and Ross.

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**

Christmas Child Boxes

We still have boxes in the church hall, waiting to be packed. The instructions are inside the boxes to give you a guide. They are going to Tonga this year. Every child in the village gets a box when they come to the Christmas party.

Please encourage your friends to pack a box.

Other Options - If you prefer, you can **donate separate items** to go into the boxes, or **donate money** for the shipping costs. All contributions are welcome. Please pick up a brochure from church.

Last Day - Sunday, October 29th - Packing Party at St Andrew's

We will pack all the donated loose items after church. Robyn Balfour, the local co-ordinator, will be here to help us pack. This is always a fun time.

Looking ahead to Christmas Carolling

Yes, it's a bit early – but Jan Bates is planning a carol service for Sunday 17th December.

Soon you will see a box in the hall for you to name your favourite carol – and to say why it is your favourite.

Jan would like a few people to speak at the service.

Watch out for the suggestion box!

Also - Last year a St Andrew's initiative led to combined churches group singing Christian Carols in town as the Christmas Parade crowds gathered. The people loved it, and we had a great time singing and witnessing together. **This year** the Mercury Bay Business Association is encouraging a larger group of carollers, including churches, choirs and all individuals to sing a mixture of carols **before the Christmas Parade on Sunday December 3rd**. The Parade will start at 1 pm. The Community Choir is already **practicing these carols on Monday nights at the Area School, 6.15 - 7pm**. Everyone is invited to these practices. Choir director Kate wants the best sound possible for this event. **Starting in November there will be a weekly practice for all at St Andrews, on Thursdays from 5 – 6 pm**. It promises to be a wonderful time of gathering for all those who love Christmas Music. Please come and join us, children and adults, either at the Monday night practices or in November.



Pink Ribbon Event - October 28th - Tickets on sale now!

Gina is organising a Saturday buffet dinner at church – ladies and men – wear something pink. Limit 50 tickets. Tell your friends!

Call Gina 022 0755 237 to support women with breast cancer

Pink Ribbon Buffet Dinner

St Andrew's Lounge

Saturday October 28th 2023

@ 5pm - \$20 per person

Prizes – Door Prize and

Best Dressed in Pink



Rev Andrew Doubleday

On August 27th we were privileged to welcome Andrew Doubleday, CEO of UCANZ, representing the United Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand. Andrew undertook an epic journey around the UCANZ parishes of the Waikato, reminding them that they are part of Christ's Church nation-wide and world-wide. There are many parishes like ours, under the oversight of more than one parent church. Sometimes this happens when different denominations agree to amalgamate, but in Whitianga we have always been a Community Church. A bit mixed up, perhaps, but most of us don't want to be labelled Presbyterian, Methodist, or anything else. We are just getting on with 'being Church in the Community'. Andrew encouraged us and made us feel good about that!

