

Parish and Community Information

Some groups will be in recess for the holiday period

- Monday **Upright & Active** 9am weekly exercise for active seniors
Contact Kathy 021 254 2769 or Wendy 027 721 5113
Manawa Kai Heart Food Kitchen community meals
takeaway only, every Monday 3:30-5pm.
Contact Maureen 027 246 6164
- Tuesday **Exercise for the less active** 9am weekly
Contact Kathy 021 254 2769 or Wendy 027 721 5113
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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www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz | standrewswhitianga@gmail.com

Facebook: St Andrews Community Church Mercury Bay NZ

Parish Council Chairman: Kevin Pringle

Parish Secretary: Dorothy Preece 022 132 2061

Newsletter Editor: Charlotte Christensen

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

February-March 2024

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 -

A meditation on the Pohutukawa, by Brigid Clark

Here in Mercury Bay we have all remarked on the beauty and profusion of the pohutukawa, which bless our town, and seemed to be particularly lush and vibrant this year.

Our friend Brigid wrote the following meditation some years ago and used it in worship when she lived in New Plymouth. When telling about how it came to be written, Brigid said she kept going back time and time again to examine it more closely, and every time she looked Brigid found some new beauty, some new truth revealed.

It is a treasure worth sharing....

'Today I want to focus on a tree – not just any tree, but the pohutukawa tree that is a common sight up and down the coast. During its time of flowering, this tree has a story all of its own – pointing the way to Jesus – and in using this picture today I want to thank and praise God for His creation, and how it speaks to our hearts.

The psalmist says, "Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them." Here is the prayer:

'Thank you Lord God, that the connection between the Creator and the created is so clearly visible. Our thoughts are drawn to the pohutukawa trees, with their blaze of red and green colours in December, as if they are heralding the Christmas season – heralding the birth of Jesus – reminding us of the depth of Your Love, in sending Your Son into the



world – the key to our salvation.

‘Soft green leaves and clusters of buds ready to bloom represent new birth, new growth or fresh beginnings and we are reminded and thankful, that God has given us new birth into a living Hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in Heaven for each one of us.

‘The buds open with varying shades of red. The deep crimson colour speaks of the heart of God the Father’s Love for each one of us, and of His longing for us to come into a deeper relationship with Him - of His precious blood that was shed for us on the cross, as an atonement for our sins – that through His blood we are forgiven, washed clean, and renewed.

The abundance of blooms more than demonstrates God’s grace being lavished upon us.

‘If the flowers are examined closely, they are made up of multiple soft spikes, the tip of each being dotted with gold, representing Christ in His rightful place, crowned with glory and honour, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

‘We thank you Lord, that the beauty of each tree draws the eyes of the beholder to itself, in the same way the Living God draws us by His presence, power and love.

‘The young saplings at the foot of the tree remind us of our children and grandchildren. Lord, we thank you for each one of them, asking that as they put down their roots, they will grow and be nourished by the Love and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

‘Only one tree out of all your creation Lord, but so much to ponder on, so much to thank you for. We praise you and thank you for the glory of the Living God that is all around us. With the psalmist we say, ‘How majestic is your Name in all the earth.’ Amen.

Thank you Brigid, for sharing this meditation with us. We look forward to seeing more inspirations from your thoughtful pen.

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**

Worship at St Andrew’s, 9:30 every Sunday

Feb	4th	Dorothy Preece (Communion)
	11th	Julie and Bible team
	18th	Ngairie Southon, Methodist Synod <u>*Jules Riding Concert St Andrew’s 7pm*</u> (see below)
	25th	Robin Twemlow
Mar	3rd	Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby (Communion)
	10th	Dorothy Preece
	17th	Kevin Pringle
	24th	Ross McCook <u>*Combined service St Andrew’s 5pm*</u> (see below)
	29th	Good Friday - Dorothy Preece
	31st	Easter Day - Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby (Communion)

*Sunday Feb 18th Jules Riding

Distinguished writer and singer of Christian songs will perform in concert at St Andrew’s at 7pm. Admission is by koha. This will be his only performance in Whitianga and we are privileged to welcome Jules to St Andrew’s. Please spread the word. For more information: www.julesriding.com

*Sunday March 24th St Andrew’s hosts the Combined Churches

We will provide a light meal of finger foods, commencing 5:30pm. Service begins at 6pm. We will need finger foods and volunteers to serve; usually about 50 people attending. Please make an effort to be there.

Looking ahead

On Sunday May 12th, a Parish Review will be conducted on behalf of the Kaimai Presbytery and Waikato-Waiariki Methodist Synod. This is a supportive event, recognising our status as a Co-operating Parish and Local Ministry Team. There will be questions for the Parish Council and the Congregation, to help us determine our needs and goals.



From the Pulpit

On December 31st Ross McCook spoke about his work with 'Heart for Youth' Trust, which supports marginalised young people and helps them to face life's challenges. Ross described how the Lord had shown him that all of life is a jigsaw puzzle, and with the Lord's help every piece, good or bad, is fitted in place to make a complete picture.

But only the Lord can see the finished picture.

When we look back on our lives we can see how some experiences have taught us faith lessons, and prepared us for what the Lord has planned for us.

Ross said, "***This jigsaw has no edges*** – it just keeps growing and growing, and it is limitless. There are no limits to what the Lord can do in our lives." Many young people feel hemmed in, prisoners of circumstance and this limits the way they look at the future, or believe in themselves. Young and old need to know that with the Lord in our lives, we can overcome life's obstacles and achieve the potential that only He sees.

Learn more : heartforyouth.org.nz

On January 7th Rev Viv Coleman conducted our New Year Communion. She too, had a word to say about boundaries: "I heard of a farmer, visiting Australia from overseas. Confronted by the vastness of the Australian properties, the visitor asked, 'How do you manage to fence all this?' The land-owner answered, "In Australia we don't build fences, we build wells. The cattle don't go away."

That is a powerful message for any church! we work hard to 'attract' people to join the fellowship, but sometimes we fall into the trap of expecting too much and people are left with the feeling that they somehow don't come up to expectations. Let's remember that you don't have to know your Bible before you sit in the pew! Let's make the Fellowship a well of open-hearted friendship and loving concern.

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Christian World Service

This year St Andrew's gave \$528 to the CWS Christmas Appeal. If you missed making a donation, you can make payment to 06-0817-0318646 Or go to CWS.org.nz

Treaty Concerns

In recent days both the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches have put out letters and documents to Parishes in response to the growing unrest around perceived changes to the interpretation of Te Tiriti O Waitangi. Copies of these letters are available at church, or request email versions from Dorothy.

The Presbyterian Moderator's Waitangi Day Letter includes the following extract from the Book of Order:

(4) The Church affirms that it is cross-cultural, in that it recognises that the richness of the Christian Gospel and its proclamation can be found in the sharing of experiences, wisdom and learning from many different cultures. The Church stands in opposition to any view that favours one culture over another as holding a monopoly on the interpretation or transmission of the Christian Gospel. In affirming the Church to be cross-cultural, the Church is also affirming that the Christian Gospel creates community across cultures.'

[PCANZ Book of Order].



Please hold the Government and peoples of New Zealand Aotearoa in your prayers, that by the Spirit's power, misunderstandings and long-held resentments might be changed, and the Spirit of peace and reconciliation might prevail into the future.

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Fellowship Connections

One Saturday, Bill and Robyn Woodward were walking on Cook's Beach and got talking to Debbie Gordon and her daughter Roxanna. They had just returned to the area after years away. Bill told them he was preaching at St Andrew's the next day. The Woodwards invited the ladies to church. About to walk on, Debbie stopped to ask, "What are your thoughts on the end times?"

As a result of that lively conversation, Debbie and Roxanna came to church the next day and met Annie Lynch. "I thought I recognised her name," Debbie says. At morning tea, they got talking and realised they were related. They were observed drawing family trees on the service sheet. Debbie has joined the Fellowship and the Bible study group. **Welcome home Debbie!**

Church Garden News – both Bad and Good

Many of you will have read the sad news that recently our church garden was robbed of potatoes and much of the other produce wantonly destroyed. Please pray for the thieves/vandals, that they will seek forgiveness and find peace in the Lord.

In response to that news article, one anonymous donor came to the church with a gift of 20kg of potatoes, and the same of onions. This lady was not known to us, and did not want to give her name. God moves in mysterious ways – and he moves in the hearts of people everywhere.

Kevin and John say the garden has produced a lot of tomatoes, zucchini and beans that are used by the Manawa Kai (Monday Meals) team. They have recently been given a compost bin that will help tidy up the garden, and the worm farm is producing liquid fertiliser.

Thank you, Kevin and John for all your work in the garden. Thanks also to Joy who tends the flowers around the church.

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Loving Creation

Important Message from Bible Society

Bible Society New Zealand announces a transformative journey to ensure our mission's enduring impact.

After more than 30 years, the Bible Society offices in Wellington will close on 31 March. All services will consolidate at 6 Kellow Place, Wiri, Auckland, becoming our new, centralised head office.

On the same date, three Manna stores in Mt Roskill (Auckland), Whangarei, and Nelson will be closed. Sustaining these retail operations has been financially challenging for some time. Additional closures of Invercargill, Gore and Hawkes Bay stores will follow by 31 May 2024.

Prayerful Deliberation: These decisions have resulted from long and prayerful consideration. We recognise the profound impact on our team members and the communities we serve, and carry this responsibility with the utmost empathy and understanding. Making these changes has become a challenging yet inevitable step to ensure the continued vitality of our mission.

Invitation to Partnerships: We extend an invitation to the churches and potential business partners who share our vision. If you want to acquire any of the stores, please contact us. Your involvement could be crucial in preserving the essence of these community spaces, albeit Bible Society New Zealand can no longer financially sustain these operations. In the spirit of resilience and unity, we appreciate your unwavering support as we navigate these changes together. Email: isami@biblesociety.org.nz



Appeal from Christian Broadcasting Association

CBA recently sent this appeal to the Churches:

“At the end of last year, NZ On Air notified us that.... they will no longer be helping to fund the show Real Life.”

The radio programme has been on air for 21 years, interviewing high-profile Christians with in-depth focus on their spirituality – Real Life testimonies from personalities such as Sir Cliff Richard, Jim Hickey, Dave Dobbin, and former National leader Todd Muller.

“Thankfully, we will still receive NZ On Air funding towards Christmas and Easter Christian broadcasts... but we need to find \$53,600 to ensure that Real Life can continue to bring authentic conversations about Faith to a large mainstream media audience.”

For more information go to info@cba.org.nz

Or you can donate to 12-3110-0014706-00

Parish Register

Funeral

Dec 8th - Annette Susan (Lynn) Hickey,

A dear member of the Fellowship and Opshop.

Dorothy Preece officiating.

Memorial Services:

Dec 29th - Melvyn (Jack) Andrews - Dorothy Preece officiating

Jan 12th – Nyall Griffiths – Pastor Mike Walker officiating.

Please hold these families in your prayers

