

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

June-July 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 - Debbie Gordon

Debbie joined us at St Andrew's a few months ago, 'by God's guiding.' She has always been guided by the Lord and trusted his Word.

Debbie's Great Grandfather, Norman "Snow" Gordon grew up in Whitianga, and her Great Aunt Irene used to tell her stories about the old days when Snow was a fisherman here. Debbie was born in Cambridge where she lived with her parents, Bill and Ally Gordon, and her brother Mike.



Her parents were hard workers; Dad drove trucks and Mum was a cleaner. Debbie was introduced to Jesus when she went to a Sunday School in Leamington. "At age nine I gave my heart to Jesus," Debbie says. "I found comfort knowing that God was my heavenly Father and that because of Jesus I would spend forever with him in heaven when I died". Her parents' marriage broke up when Debbie was 12, and she and her brother stayed with Mum. "I would pray to God through my teenage years, especially when I was feeling worried about life, and would ask for his safe keeping."

At age 14 they moved to Hamilton, where Debbie went to Melville High. She got a job at the '1905 Coffee Lounge' in Frankton. "I was so pleased that I could finally help Mum with my wages, although my mum was a very hard worker, I could see how tough being a single mother was." When she was 17, Debbie met her future husband. They quickly embarked on their Big O.E. to Australia and the UK. "We bought a Combi van and travelled around Great Britain and Europe. At Findhorn in Scotland, I was exposed to the New Age Movement, and for a while I blended those ideas in with my very basic understanding of God."

Debbie says. "Christianity was on the back burner."

Once back home in Hamilton, Debbie joined a Spiritualist circle. "I was searching for spirituality but it felt wrong. My own spirit was disturbed. During one session I found myself praying the Lord's Prayer over and over, for protection against what was going on there. The others also heard the prayer in their minds, and wondered where it came from." It was from this experience that Debbie knew with conviction that any form of spirituality, that excluded Jesus, was demonically influenced.

Around the same time, Debbie began a Health Foundation Course at Wintec. There the Lord led her to two young Christians who gave her the book 'Second Warning' by Barry Smith, a book about God's plan for the end times. "After reading the book, I knew I was supposed to be a Christian. I never went back to the Spiritualists. I prayed to renounce all that evil stuff." She joined the AoG church and experienced Baptism of the Holy Spirit. "I felt I was bathed in white light. It was a warm and wonderful feeling."

Soon after, Debbie was married in her husband's Catholic church, which she never identified with, despite marrying into a very Catholic family. "I drifted from church and over the next nine years focused on family. I became a mother of three; however, my marriage was turbulent and traumatic, and thankfully it ended."

Debbie and her children joined a local Baptist Church where she felt welcomed and accepted. "We were embraced by two wonderful homegroups, where The Lord revealed his faithfulness to me."

Debbie's brother Mike was living in Hahei and encouraged her to move to there with her children, then aged 11, seven and five. The children went to Whenuakite School, where Debbie was introduced to some other parents. "We had a wonderful life in Hahei and Cooks Beach. I met Helen and John Hunt through my children, and then joined their homegroup. I still had very little understanding of Scripture, but I had huge faith in the Lord."

During this time, Debbie started the Tairua Workshop with Mike and Mitch – a family friend. The mechanic workshop behind the BP kept Debbie busy for four years, until they shut it down and she moved back to Hamilton

where there was more opportunity for her and her children. She felt that God called her back because shortly after, her father became terminally ill. “When Dad died, the penny dropped. I realised I wanted to be a nurse.” After she received her Bachelor of Nursing, she spent the next decade working with older persons at Waikato Hospital. It was on these wards that Debbie met a Christian nurse, who was off to Israel. “I knew the Bible teachings about eschatology (the study of end times and the return of Jesus) were focused on Israel, and I was interested in that.”

Then Covid hit. “I strongly felt that God was calling me in a whole new direction and I trusted that the big changes in my life due to Covid were part of His plan for me.” Debbie reconnected with the Christian nurse from her old ward at the hospital, where she joined a woman’s Bible study group. This was the beginning of Debbie’s passion for studying Scripture and eschatology.

Debbie sold her house in Hamilton and moved back to Cooks Beach. Walking on the beach one Saturday with her daughters, she got talking with Bill and Robyn Woodward about Jesus and eschatology. Bill was taking the Sunday service and invited Debbie along. “It was my first time at St Andrew’s, and Bill’s preaching resonated with me.” Just the day before Debbie had asked The Lord for connection and fellowship with like- minded Christians. Debbie knew God had led her to St Andrew’s. She was given connection with Annie, a long lost relative, and fellowship with the Bible group who were studying the Book of Revelation. “I feel like I am exactly where God wants me to be; He reminds me that He is faithful and true.”

Please Note: Dorothy is now away until the end of July. We are very happy to report that Debbie has agreed to fill in with admin tasks and hall bookings while Dorothy is away. It is hoped that this will lead to a paid job for Debbie, who will be ‘growing’ into the job, information gathering and getting to know us all. Debbie will be monitoring the church emails:

standrewswhitianga@gmail.com

Welcome to the team Debbie! May God prosper your work.

Parish Review Results

Vanya Wallis (Kaimai Presbytery) and Margaret Birtles (Waikato-Wairiki Methodist Synod) met with the Parish Council on Sunday May 26th. They were surprised and heartened by the number of responses received – 28 in all, a number which corresponds with most of our regular Sunday attendance – apparently not all congregations respond so well!



Many thanks to all those who responded to the Survey.

Printed copies of the Survey results are now available in the church hall.

At the meeting, Vanya and Margaret encouraged us in everything that we are currently doing, but also challenged us to think of new ways to approach our Mission as a church. *In case you don't know –*

Our published Mission Statement says:

“By our words and actions to demonstrate the Love of God to all whom we meet and to lovingly encourage them to build their lives on Christ Jesus.”

How effectively are we doing this? 96% of us agreed we are warm and welcoming place, and the fellowship is seen to be growing - Christians are joining us from other places - but on Sundays we preach to the ‘in crowd’. How do we reach the community at large? Is it enough to welcome the community groups who meet every day in our hall?

we realise that, while we all look after one another, our pastoral caring needs to be on a more organised footing. How do we do that?

These questions and more, will be discussed at **the Annual Meeting, after the service on Sunday September 8th. Keep the date!**

From the Pulpit:

Margaret Birtles gave us this –

“Church is not a place you go to, but a family you belong to.”

Annie Lynch found this online:

“Stop looking for the perfect church. It doesn't exist. Instead, be content to worship the Perfect God alongside a bunch of flawed people who all need God's grace as much as you do.”

Parish Council News

The Parish Survey results seem to show that Parish Council has not been good at communicating its business with the congregation. In future, we will try to keep everyone in the loop! We do seem to spend a lot of time discussing building and maintenance issues – you will all be aware we have had big problems with our lovely kauri folding doors; over the years their weight has caused the rolling gear to fail, and although it has been replaced it is still not properly fixed. Kevin Pringle and John Pedersen are trying to solve the problem.

Also a large area of dry rot has been found in the window frame up near the piano, and it is proving **very difficult to find a tradesman/ joiner** who is prepared to tackle it. It will be a tricky and expensive job, but thanks to the Opshop, the church is in a good financial position.

On the plus side – **The outside deck area** is looking very tidy, thanks to Vance Cosgrave and David Christie who last year re-surfaced the deck, and this year have painted the outdoor benches. We are now investigating a permanent shade structure to encourage more people to use the area.

Also - we are currently in the process of upgrading **the church house** in Catherine Cresc. which is rented to a young family. We sought advice on Healthy Homes Compliance and we have installed extra smoke alarms and extractor fans. Next on the list is the removal of the disused woodburner fire and replacing it with a modern one.

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Help! Are you computer savvy?

Damon is setting up the church to meet the demand for live-streaming at funerals and other events. The cameras are getting sorted. The most efficient way to do this is through YouTube, so to comply we now need

50 PEOPLE who use gmail, to 'subscribe' to the church YouTube;

Please go to www.youtube.com and 'search' for **@standrewswhitianga**
Then click 'subscribe'.

It costs nothing, it just registers you as a supporter. We can all help with this by asking all our **gmail** friends and relations to 'subscribe' to help us with our tech. future.

News from Enliven

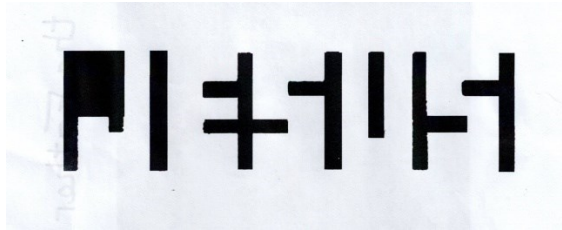
Enliven is a programme for the elderly, housebound and live-alones. They meet to socialise and have a hot lunch together on Tuesdays and Thursdays. For several years, Presbyterian Support Northern (PSN) has been running Enliven at St Andrews Hall. Currently, however it is in recess. Two local staff members have recently left, and at present they have no-one to run the programme.

PSN wants to keep Enliven going at St Andrews, and they are advertising for caring people to apply for the positions.

If you know of anyone who would like to work with elderly people, **please ring the district co-ordinator – Wendy 021 2296 324**

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A few weeks ago, Rev Shirley challenged us with this vision-teaser.
Can you see the word is?



The answer is



Once we have seen Him, we can't NOT see Him, everywhere, and in everything we do.

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

June	2nd	Dorothy Preece (Communion)
	9th	Elizabeth Nicholls - Praise Service
	16th	Bill Woodward
	23rd	Bill Woodward
	30th	Rev John Twemlow
July	7th	Rev David Rolinson (Communion)
	14th	Rev David Rolinson
	21st	Bill Woodward
	28th	Bill Woodward

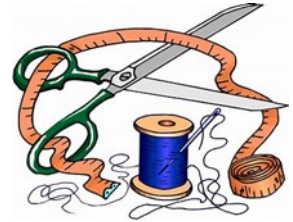


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Made By Hand Craft Weekend **Friday 28 – Sunday 30th June**

Last year, our inaugural Craft Weekend was such a success that we decided we must repeat it. Please advertise it and encourage all craftspeople, men, women and children to display their work.

Please pick up the flyers from the church table and distribute them to your crafty friends.



We want everything from beading to blacksmithing, (but not baking), woodwork to woolcraft. Anything 'made by hand' qualifies. If the items are for sale, the creators can leave their cards to take orders.

The Sunday morning service will be a celebration of creativity, led by Rev. John Twemlow who, by the way, is a clock maker.

Annie is organising the event and she will need help.

Table space is at a premium, so please get in quick.

Annie: 07 866 3711 or 027 322 3332

Or email: standrewswhitianga@gmail.com

Parish and Community Information

- 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) currently in
recess until new staff appointed
- 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) currently in
recess until new staff appointed
- 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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