

# MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

## St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

**December 2024-January 2025**

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.

### **For our Christmas edition we share photos of the Church Fellowship and outreach activities:**

This year we sent 147 Christmas boxes from Whitianga and east coast, and exactly 300 boxes from the whole Coromandel area. That's almost 100 more boxes than last year. This success is largely due to the unflagging work of Robyn Balfour, who is the area co-ordinator for the Samaritan's Purse charity. With flat-pack boxes no longer supplied, Robyn has been collecting shoe boxes and covering them for the past year. On Sunday October 27 she arrived at St Andrew's with a pile of empty boxes, ready for the 'packing party', and after service we gathered to fill them from the heaped collection of toys and loose items kindly donated by our congregation and elsewhere. Helen and Linda Stephenson gave away many of their much-loved Barbie-style dolls, all beautifully dressed by their skilful hands.



Madeline loves packing the boxes each year. She gives a name to each child as she packs. "I'm packing these two boxes for twin girls. Their names are Mandy and Millie," Madeline said.

Each box has basic toiletries and stationery items, as well as age-appropriate toys and often items of clothing. There's a bit of a scramble to choose the best of everything for the child we have each chosen to pack for – e.g. 'Boy aged 7-9'. With these filled boxes added to the pile already filled by individuals, we sent 40 boxes from St Andrew's.

There were other collection points at St Peter's and The Informer office. Robyn collected these and with Damon's help packed them all into the back of her van and onto the trailer, and off they went.

Shipping costs \$12.50 for each box. Many people can't afford this, so the churches also appealed for money to go towards shipping costs.

The Samaritan's Purse charity operates worldwide. Each year the charity identifies the most needy places in the areas where it is working, and every child in the village is invited to take a box. "I would love to be there to see their faces when they open their boxes," Robyn says. The boxes go to remote villages in the Pacific and as far afield as Cambodia, Malawi and Madagascar.



***Thank you, everyone, for your strong support for this unique mission, bringing the Love of Jesus to people in remote areas, regardless of any church affiliation.***

## ***St Andrew's Opshop***

The Church Opshop, behind St Andrew's is often described as the best shop in town, and customer feedback has been even more complimentary this year, with the whole revamp of the shop interior spaces. We are constantly overloaded with clothing donations, which means the prices are very low – we need to get the stock out the door! Seven Fellowship members are involved in the day-to-day running of the shop, and Opshop Manager Madeline Saunders makes it her life's work to pass on love and generosity to the community.

With Madeline in charge, everyone who is in need can be warmly clothed. If you have not yet visited our new-look Opshop, please do. The men's wear is now incorporated in the main shop, not 'out the back' as it used to be, and we now have a separate library, organised by Christine Christie.



As well as supporting St Andrew's, the Church Opshop gives donations to five different churches and to Whitianga Fire Brigade every month. We also invite community groups to apply for help with their special projects (approx.. \$7,000 per year). Recently we have been putting information about these donations into our customers' bags, and the feedback has been very positive. We now realise that our customers had no idea that the money went anywhere but to St Andrew's.

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***The Mercury Bay Community Support Trust Invites You to:  
The COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS AFTERNOON TEA  
Whitianga Town Hall on Saturday 21st December, 2-4 pm.  
Please invite your friends and neighbours and  
RSVP – Phone or Txt Maureen 0272 466 164***



## **MAF comes to town**

The Mission Aviation Fellowship team recently flew into to Whitianga from their Tauranga base, to promote the work and inform the community at a MAF Open Day. Kevin and Dorothy were among a number of local church representatives privileged to go for scenic flights in the Cessna 260, a six-seater plane that has been retired from the work in Cambodia.

On the Sunday they supplied speakers at several churches. At St Andrew's



we are well acquainted with MAF, having the privilege of Bill and Robyn Woodward to preach and lead our services. We took them to our hearts a long time ago when Bill came to tell us about MAF.

MAF is an 'International, Christian, humanitarian relief and development organisation' whose work supports many

other Christian missions and charities worldwide. It operates a fleet of 120 aircraft in 30 countries, working in remote areas where air-borne support is needed and no other help is near. It brings sick or injured people to the nearest hospitals, flies in supplies and personnel wherever they are needed, and responds to emergencies of all descriptions. MAF CEO Mark Fox says, "MAF gives wings to any charity needing our support. It might be Save the Children, or UNICEF, or a Christian missionary group. We go wherever we are needed." For more information go to [www.maf.org.nz](http://www.maf.org.nz)

## **Community Carols in the Park**

*Whitianga Combined Churches Event*

**Friday December 13<sup>th</sup> starts 7pm**

**BYO Family, Friends and chair!**

*Crossroad Church Alternative if wet.*



**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**

## **Manawa Kai and Day Camp**

*Mercury Bay Community Support Trust* is a combined churches trust which operates the Manawa Kai meals, the annual Day Camp and the Community Christmas Meal. These are very big, challenging projects.

Formerly known as '**Monday Meals**,' **Manawa Kai** (Heart Food) started at St



Andrew's in 2008 with Rev Mary Petersen. The meals are still cooked and served from St Andrew's but the programme is now run by the Trust. Over 200 meals are cooked and distributed as takeaway meals every Monday afternoon, at a cost of \$1,000 per week. Only the cook is paid. Volunteers are from local churches. Menus include chicken curry, spaghetti Bolognese, sausage and mash, etc. People who come for the meals might have a large family to feed, or have no cooking facilities, or have no home. No questions are asked. Funding is an on-going challenge, with food prices escalating. Veges are grown in the church garden at St

Andrew's but sometimes the quantities produced are not enough to be incorporated into the meals, so then the fresh veges are given away.

**The Mercury Bay Day Camp** also started at St Andrew's in 2002 when Stan and Pauline Stewart were our ministers. Tina Bartlett is tasked with finding the funding for all the Trust programmes. Day Camp is a mammoth undertaking involving many community and church volunteers. Around 300 children enjoy three days of outdoor activities on a magnificent farm property, with each child having options of three activities per day - a daunting task for the team, and volunteers who supervise over three days. Children attend 'tent time' at the beginning and end of each day where they hear and sing the Christian message.



## **Pink Ribbon Dinner**



For the past two years Gina Mahmud has organised the Pink Ribbon Dinner at St Andrew's, an event that attracts the whole community. Gina commandeers a volunteer team of expert Filipino cooks and helpers, who generously give their time and talents, and bring miles of smiles to the event. Somehow Gina finds local sponsors for food and impressive door prizes and everyone dresses in pink for the night – even the men. This year's dinner raised more than \$1,000 for the Sweet Louise Trust. Gina also blesses us many Sunday mornings with her lovely Fijian – Asian fusion food. **Thank you Gina!**

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## **'Made by Hand' Craft Show**

Also for the past two years, Annie and her team have co-ordinated the craft show, where talented people around Mercury Bay have been invited to show and advertise their work in the church and in the hall. Space is given to everything from wrought iron and kauri, to jewellery and the finest embroidery. Entry is free (koha appreciated), and the craft show has proved immensely popular with the wider community. The best craft on display is the church itself, built of kauri direct from the mill in 1898!



## Worship at St Andrew's

Dec	1st	Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby (Communion)
	8th	Dorothy Preece
	15th	Carol Service
	22nd	Kevin Pringle
Christmas Day		Dorothy Preece
	29th	Rev Viv Coleman
Jan	5th	Rev Viv Coleman (Communion)
	12th	Ross McCook
	19th	John & Robyn Twemlow
	26th	Rev Shona Bettany (Kaimai Presbytery)



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### ***Jesus – not Santa – is the Reason for the Season!***

His arrival was eagerly anticipated – but not just by children  
He came on Christmas Day – but not down the chimney  
He worked as a carpenter – but not making toys  
He had a team of helpers – but they were not elves  
He performed miracles – but not on 34<sup>th</sup> Street  
He rode into town – but not on a sleigh  
He carried a lot of weight – but not in a sack  
He hung on a tree – but it was not decorative  
He was taken up into the clouds – but not to the North Pole  
His return is eagerly awaited – but no-one knows when.....

So – every year at Christmas time, let all traditions be a sign  
To point us back to long ago,  
when God came so the world would know  
He did not want to be a stranger.  
So wrapped as a gift in swaddling clothes,  
He came as a baby in a manger.



## Parish and Community Information

***Please note many groups may be in recess for holidays***

Monday	<b>Upright &amp; Active</b> 9am weekly exercise for active seniors Contact Kathy 021 254 2769 or Wendy 027 721 5113 <b>Manawa Kai Heart Food Kitchen</b> community meals takeaway only, every Monday 3:30-5pm. Contact Maureen 027 246 6164
Tuesday	<b>Upright &amp; Active</b> 9am weekly exercise for active seniors Contact Kathy 021 254 2769 or Wendy 027 721 5113 <b>Stitch n' Chat</b> fortnightly 1:30-4pm in the Hamilton Room. Contact Julie 021 169 1637 <b>Enliven</b> - Presbyterian support for the elderly and house-bound, providing midday meal and social interaction, free of Charge. Currently operating Tuesdays only. For assessment of eligibility, contact Wendy 021 2296 324.
Wednesday	<b>Ladies' Bible Study</b> 10am weekly Contact Julie 021 169 1637 <b>Inter-Church Women's Fellowship</b> Monthly. Contact Annie 866 3711 <b>Scrapbags quilting group</b> 10am weekly. Contact Wilma 027 253 5589 <b>Parkinsons Support</b> 6-weekly. For dates and times contact Erwin 866 5665
Friday	<b>Bible Study Group</b> 1:30pm in the Hamilton Room. Men and women, couples and singles, all welcome. Contact Julie 021 169 1637 <b>Cancer Support Coffee Morning</b> First Friday of each month. Contact Ruth 021 363 840

### **MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH**

### **St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church**

Corner Albert and Owen Streets, Whitianga | PO Box 368, WHITIANGA

[www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz](http://www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz) | [standrewswhitianga@gmail.com](mailto:standrewswhitianga@gmail.com)

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