

Parish and Community Information

Monday **Upright & Active exercise for seniors** 9am weekly
Contact Wendy 027 721 5113 or Kathy 021 254 2769

Manawa Kai Heart Food Kitchen community meals
takeaway only, every Monday 2:30-5pm.
(Tuesdays on Bank Hols) Contact Maureen 027 2466 164

Tuesday **Upright & Active exercise for seniors** 9am weekly
Contact Wendy 027 721 5113 or Kathy 021 254 2769

Stitch 'n' Chat fortnightly 1:30-4pm in the Hamilton
Room. Includes afternoon tea. Contact Julie 021 169 1637

Enliven Presbyterian Aged Support 11-3 pm
Lunch provided. Contact Wendy 021 2296 324

Wednesday **Scrapbags quilting group** 10am-3pm weekly
BYO lunch. Contact Wilma 027 253 5589

Parkinsons Support 6-weekly. 11am-2pm
For dates Erwin 07 866 5665

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

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

www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz | standrewswhitianga@gmail.com

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Parish Secretary: Dorothy Preece 022 132 2061

Newsletter Editor: Charlotte Christensen

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

April-May 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.

Our People and their Stories: Deacon Margaret Birtles



Margaret is the Co-Superintendent of the Methodist Synod District of Waikato-Wairiki, and she willingly travels from Hamilton to conduct our worship from time to time. Widowed three times, Margaret has faced her turbulent life with the kind of courage and equanimity that only comes with a peaceful heart, and a reliance on God. Here is her story:

"I was born in Motueka in 1948, the eldest of 5 siblings. My parents were Alan and Gwen Wratt, both Methodists and very strong Christians. Mum played the organ at church in Motueka and Dad was a Lay Preacher. The Christian heritage goes a long way back. I believe my great-great-grandmother was a Lay Preacher all those years ago. At first we lived on the farm with Dad's parents. Grandfather Wratt was very strict. My grandmother prepared the Sunday dinner on Saturday, to avoid working on Sunday.

"My parents moved to a sheep and dairy farm at Upper Moutere, a strongly Lutheran area and I went to primary school in Neudorf. It was a long trip on the bus to school. I was very shy and I didn't make many friends. My Mum was strong on Christian hospitality, and often we had visiting Ministers and others at our home.

"You don't need a dramatic encounter with Jesus to know that God loves you. I was born into that knowledge and I have never doubted it.

"I went through Sunday School and Bible Class. I remember Rev Loyal Gibson was one Bible Class leader who I looked up to. We were surrounded by many different Christian groups. Lutherans, Open Brethren, Exclusive Brethren, and by tobacco and hops farms. There was also a Methodist Commune, the Lower Moutere Riverside Community.

The Tasman region was an apple-producing area. The Open Brethren held an annual apple harvest outreach with Bible rallies which we went to. "I went to Motueka High School and in my late teens I began to spread my wings. I got involved with Youth For Christ, and I went to a Pacific Convention in Tonga with a CYM Methodist group.

"In Nelson I trained as a nurse. The nurses' home rules were strict, and I wasn't as outgoing as some who climbed out through windows at night. I joined the Nurses' Christian Fellowship. As a Registered Nurse I worked at Nelson Hospital, then trained as a midwife in Christchurch.

"Mum died in her mid-50's but Christmas at home was always a get-together with Dad's extended family. His brother was a Pacifist and that led to some tensions. My father had served on the hospital ships during the war.

"At 25 I married Don Harris at Motueka Methodist. Rev Bruce Mackie was the celebrant. As a child, Don had Stills Disease, a form of childhood arthritis, and he was in a wheelchair when I met him. Don was still very active. He was an engineer, and worked making parts for wheelchairs. We lived in Rangiora and went to Rangiora Methodist. I was a Practice Nurse for a GP. I taught Sunday School and set up a crèche in church. We had two children, Matthew and Sarah.

"After Don's unexpected death I was a solo Mum with two little ones. Looking back, I don't know how I got through, but the young Mum's group were very supportive. My brother Keith was a great support and we moved onto his farm at Reporoa, where I helped with the milking. I went back to my midwifery work as an independent midwife, and worked in several maternity hospitals.

"I loved being a Mum, but I always wanted to be more than a Mum. I wanted to support other Mums and their families. At first I studied to be a Lay Preacher, and then I felt called to community ministry as a Deacon. Historically, the Methodist Deaconess Order was an integral part of the Church, working in many rural areas. We are very proud of that heritage. In the 1970's the Church changed to a ministry of Deacons, so both men and women could serve this ministry. The emblem is the 'bowl and towel' signifying Jesus washing the Disciples' feet.

"The Deacons' work does not always fill pews in the church, but it fills a need in people's lives. It brings Jesus into everyday life and demonstrates His Love practical ways.

Worship at St Andrew's

**10.00 am every Sunday. Communion service first
Sunday each month**

Apr	6th	Dorothy Preece (Communion)
	13th	Julie & Bible team
	18th	Good Friday (10am) Dorothy Preece
	20th	Easter Sunday Rev John Twemlow
	27th	Rev Ngaire Southon (Hamilton)
May	4th	Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby (Communion)
	11th	Dorothy Preece
	18th	Bill Woodward
	25th	Bill Woodward



Some years ago Alistair Rogers gave us this: What shall I give up for Lent?

Give up complaining – Be thankful in all things
 Give up pessimism – We have Hope in Jesus
 Give up worrying – your Father knows your need
 Give up bitterness – Forgive, and be forgiven
 Give up hatred – Return evil with good
 Give up pride – Walk humbly with God

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

- The spouting around the church and Opshop has just been renewed, at a total cost of \$10,580.00. The Opshop has kindly offered to pay their portion of \$3,050 – a generous offer from tenant to landlord!
- We are currently looking at options for a shade cover on the side deck area. The deck was cleaned and oiled by a team of volunteers last year, but it can't be used without significant shade cover, which needs to be a robust, stand-alone structure not attached to the church. Peter Finlayson is doing the research.

OPSHOP NEWS

St Andrew's Opshop continues to serve the community in many ways. We invite funding requests from local non-profit community groups. In March we have donated :

- **\$1,000 to Manawa Kai Heart Food Kitchen (Monday Meals)**
- **\$5,000 to the up-coming Mercury Bay Day Camp**

If you belong to a community group that needs funding , please encourage them to apply in writing.

WINTER STOCK CHANGEOVER

Sadly, summer is past and we are now changing all the Opshop racks to winter stock. Much of the summer clothing taken off the racks will go to Pacific Islands. Madeleine and her volunteers work tirelessly to bring this service to the community and we appreciate your support.

Mercury Bay Day Camp

It's that time of year again, the first set of school holidays and Mercury Bay Day Camp is on again, this year on the 15th-17th April.

2025 camp is full, with all the children and teens we can take, but we could do with a few more adult volunteers. Even if you can only offer one day's assistance, it all helps - just go to the website www.daycamp.co.nz and fill in the form on the Adult Volunteers page.

Want to help but not so actively? You can!

For practical help, we need baking to support all the adult volunteers at camp. Sustaining and thanking them for their efforts with home baking is a greatly appreciated gesture.

Not much of a baker? Prayer for good weather and for the message of God's Word to sow seeds in the hearts of the children attending is always so helpful.



"In 1988 I went to England for the 250th Anniversary of John Wesley's conversion. As well as the celebrations, 40 of us travelled together on a bus, following Wesley's footsteps for six weeks, and that's where I met Lindsay Hames.

"After we married at Reparoa Community Church we lived on his family's sheep and beef farm at Paparoa, Northland. Between the two families we had six children, 5 adults and 3 at home. I got back into midwifery as an independent midwife, travelling all around Northland, and I also worked at Whangarei Hospital, and with the Smethhurst Trust in Northland.

"Then over a period of time Lindsay became sick. He died after six and a half years of marriage. My two children had left school by then, and the extended families were very supportive, always coming and going and making sure I was okay.

"I developed Deacon ministry as I moved around, and I continued with my practice nursing wherever I went, always keeping in touch with the wider church. I went to Synod meetings and to Church Conferences as often as I could. After several years, through Methodist connections and mutual friends, I met and married Alan Birtles from Oamaru. He was a printer with the Oamaru Mail and for years he published the Lay Preachers' magazine *Word and Worship*.

"For years I had been involved with the Methodist Women's Fellowship, on District Executives as well as the Smethurst Trust. In Oamaru I was elected as National President of NZ Methodist Women's Fellowship, for two years in 1999-2000. I also helped to establish the Faith Community Nursing organisation in New Zealand, an international body based in Australia.

"In 2003 I was widowed for a third time. Again I was supported by our melded families and the caring Church. I moved back to the Hamilton area and for a while my son Matthew and I ran a BnB in Ohaupo. Within a week of placing an ad, I got a job with a GP practice in Dinsdale.

"Everywhere I've been I have worked as a nurse, while still developing Deacon ministry. In 2011 I was called to a paid, part-time position as Deacon at St Stephens in Tauranga, where I supported the church ministry for ten years. Still advocating for Mums and children in any way possible, I moved more towards child health governance and oversight, representing the Church and working with many different agencies and community groups. I also got involved with the 'Grandparents Raising Grandchildren' movement which I think is an essential support.

“Four years ago I moved from Tauranga to the Tamahere Eventide Home in Hamilton, and shortly afterwards I was appointed Co-Superintendent of the Methodist Waikato-Waiariki District. Tau Lasi and I are jointly responsible for the governance and support of 40 parishes, the majority being Co-operating/ Union Parishes . The job involves travelling widely to church committees and conferences, and supporting and visiting parishes. “I am no longer officially attached to a particular church, but I don’t mind the travelling and I’m always willing to help out with services around the District.”

Thank you Margaret, for sharing your very moving story of resilient faith. Your energy and enthusiasm are an inspiration to us all. God bless you.

Our Church Lounge

Since it was opened in 2002, our church lounge has been the venue of choice for many community groups and it is used every day. In recent weeks we have agreed to accommodate three more small groups, meeting either in the lounge or in the Hamilton Room.

-The local **Youth Mentoring** group now meets occasionally in the evenings.

-A support group for those who are **sight-impaired** started on April 2nd. Jacqui Courtenay will convene this group monthly, under the auspices of Blind Low Vision NZ. BLVNZ reports that there are about 50 sight-impaired people registered in our community, and they are encouraging others to seek support. Please advertise this meeting with anyone who may be interested. **Contact Sue Sloan 022 0386 795**

-**P.R.O.P.** (People Relying On People) is a local support group for those families dealing with **mental health issues**. Kim Bennett has worked with this group for many years and she feels it’s now time it had a home. These sessions will probably start in May, details to be confirmed.

Kim’s phone number is 027 240 0918

Funeral:

Raewyn Ceruti - 14th March at St Andrews.

Dorothy Preece officiating.

It is with great sadness that we record the loss of our friend Raewyn, who died at Whitianga Continuing Care Unit after a short illness. Raewyn’s husband Des also resides at Continuing Care. We remember a lady of great faith, a dedicated carer of the community. Please hold both families in your prayers.



Pastoral:

Dorothy Chaffin is now residing at Tairua Residential Care Unit.

This was a very difficult decision for Peter.

He thanks us for our prayer support.

Please continue to remember them both.

St Andrew’s Fellowship Link

Your Fellowship Link contact person will give you her phone number and keep in touch with you. If you are not yet sure who that person is, please ask!

We have information about local groups and agencies who can provide support in many situations, and your Fellowship Link contact can share that with you.

Also, if you would like a visit, or if you know of anyone within the Fellowship who might appreciate visit, please let us know.

standrewswhitianga@gmail.com



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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**