

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church Newsletter December 2018/January 2019

*Our mission in this parish is to share
the love of God with all people*

Christmastime with kids - one mother's reflections



It starts with the advent calendars. They appear in shops months early, and my husband and I mutter to each other about where we put last year's perennial ones while the kids point excitedly at the ones they see decorated with their favourite cartoon characters. In the end we'll have a mix of chocolate-filled commercial ones and fiddly-but-pretty decorative ones. Either way, the kids only partly know what they're for: they count down the days to Christmas. To Santa. To presents. And in amongst that, to several extra visits to church.

To be fair, I'm talking about a one year old and a four year old here, so the understanding is unsurprisingly limited. But even for them there are cues to the fact that something exciting is happening.

There are new songs to sing - memorably last year, a delighted three-year-old sang "Jingle bells" repeatedly (by which I mean only the two words "jingle bells" until we begged her to stop) - and some special props are brought out of storage. Snow globes showing foreign winter scenes involving reindeer and a bearded man in a red suit; tinsel and sparkly balls and fairy lights. All these strange objects come with sharp instructions of "Don't touch", or at least "Be careful, that can break!". Little mouths tell us they understand. Little hands try their best. Inevitably something gets broken and there are tears and apologies, cleaning up.

There are also new stories to be told, by which I actually mean old stories that sound new to young ears. There's a strange story about a baby lying in a bed in a stable, but he gets some very cool presents from some nice visitors. And then there's something about a really bright star - the one-year-old loves looking at the stars, so he'll like that - and some shepherds. Yes, darling, sheep go "baa".



Along with the story, some knitted dolls are carefully unwrapped and displayed. A baby in a crib, a mother, a father. That's as far as the scene goes, since mum hasn't had time to knit and now the pattern seems to have been put away somewhere too safe to find, but at least they're touchable. Relatable. Not so fragile as other ornaments.

Twelve days before Christmas we'll put up our tree (and fence it in so that it still has ornaments on it the following day). In the week before Christmas we'll go and visit the Santa House at Wharekaho (Simpson's Beach) so that the kids can see Santa and the wonderful display there. On Christmas Eve we'll celebrate with my husband's family in the Danish tradition. Christmas night the kids will go to bed (eventually) and then my husband and I will rush around madly laying out gifts, all for it to be swiftly and thoroughly dismantled in a few short hours the next morning. So much build up, so quickly gone.



There is an entirely secular and commercial excitement to Christmas that completely enchants children, and I'm happy to indulge that tradition as one I enjoyed too. All too soon, they will grow up and see beyond the so-called magic of commercialism. But instead of simply becoming jaded and cynical about the shallow selfishness of that observance, there is hope that in a Christian household they then may start to explore that deeper wonder and excitement of Christmas which is the real reason why we celebrate. The amazing truth of a baby born in an extraordinary way, of a God who sent him for our sake, of a gift that is greater than all the toys and chocolates and shiny treasures of the world.

Merry Christmas, everyone.

Charlotte Christensen

Armistice Day Centenary

On Armistice Day, Sunday November 11th Carol Pringle read a very special WW1 poem to the congregation.

Here is Carol's story:

"The poem was written by my grandfather during World War 1 but our family didn't know it existed until a year ago. Grandfather was a man of very strong faith. My son-in-law Paul works in IT for the Salvation Army in Upper Hutt. He was archiving old copies of the War Cry when he discovered the poem and recognised the name. My grandfather fought at Passchendaele and was also a Boer War veteran. He survived the war but later was badly injured. He died in 1954."



VERSES FROM A DUGOUT – SOMEWHERE IN BELGIUM

*Sometimes, as down the shell-swept trench I go,
I linger in the sunset's dying hour,
Knowing full well He is by my side,
In might and power.*

*Sometimes, when life seems difficult for me,
And I am like to stumble on the way,
I stretch weak hands to Him for help and strength
And to Him humbly pray.*

*And in the mystic darkness of the night,
When shot and shell from hidden batteries leap,
I give myself to His protecting care
And resting, fall asleep.*

Sgt. F. Raper, Salvationist, NZEF France



Farewell!

On Sunday 25th November we bade farewell to our friend Ann Harsant, who is moving to residential care in Tairua. For years, rain or shine, Ann has faithfully taken the ferry over from Cook's Beach to attend worship at St Andrew's. Ann's faith and determination are an inspiration to us all, and we will miss her. We wish you well, Ann.



Flood, Fridge and Peskylence...



November has been a very 'fraught' month for the Parish Council.

First the big double fridge in the kitchen died. It is essential to our Monday meals team and for catering, so the congregation decided to buy a new one, which is now installed. Cost is around \$2,500.

We are grateful that the Trust has been able to help us with \$1,500 towards this cost.

A week after the fridge broke down, we had a major flood in the lounge and kitchen. On Sunday 11th – Armistice Day of all days – we arrived at church to find water flooding through the lounge and into the toilets. A water pipe burst under the office floor and sent a jet of water up into the sprinkler cupboard from where it flowed right through. As the water had not got into the church, we decided to carry on with the service, led by our Bible ladies – with a most moving accent on Armistice Day. Plumber Robbie Yeomans fixed the pipe after his attendance at the cenotaph. Then the dry-vac machines were running for a week. The floor boards have swollen underneath the carpet, and the floor will have to be sanded back and new carpet laid. We are in touch with our insurers.

Thank you to everyone who helped clean up the mess.

Walk Through Christmas 2018

The weather forecast for Monday 3rd December was awful, but the promised rain and thunder held off just long enough for 250 primary school children from Mercury Bay, Te Rerenga and Whenuakite schools to walk around the town in groups, hearing Christmas Bible stories at St Peter's Anglican, St Patrick's Catholic and finally St Andrew's Church.



This year Julie and Dorothy presented a nativity poem which Diana Campbell-Barnaby found for us a couple of years ago. Dorothy read the poem and Julie found really good images for the screen. Then before they left us, the children got drinks and biscuits, and an envelope containing activities from the various Churches, with the latest children's Christmas activity from the Bible Society.

Please pray for this mission to the children, their siblings, teachers and parents who accompanied them on the day, and give thanks for the weather that allowed them to make the journey.

Financial matters

For donations to the Church and Parish:

Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish

BNZ Whitianga

020 496 0062562 00



For donations to the Monday Meals or Christmas Dinner:

Mercury Bay Community Support Trust

Westpac Whitianga

03 1578 0108901 00



Funerals

October 17th - Kenneth Lawrence Axel Petersen

With sorrow we record the passing of our friend Ken Petersen, on 11th October at Tairua Residential Care. Ken was the husband of Rev Mary Petersen, who conducted the funeral service at St Francis Church, Tairua. Our sympathy and prayers are with Mary and the family.

November 23rd – Reg Ackland

Reg was our Church Treasurer for a number of years. He died in Brisbane, Australia. We remember a man of great faith and an avid debater of Bible topics. Our thoughts go out to Val and the family.



Annual Congregational Meeting 2018 – Report

Our Resource Minister, Rev Jan Fogg chaired the meeting on 14th October with 20 people attending.

The Local Ministry Team is operating well, with visiting preachers generously backing up our hard-working team.

Several new members have been welcomed to the fellowship in the past year, all of them in the senior age group. It was recognised that the Church needs younger people if it is to survive.

Finance: With no Minister's salary commitments, and with the Manse rented to private tenants, the Parish is currently holding its own financially. We have stated in our 5-year Plan that we would like to be able to employ a contract worker to help with outreach and pastoral care, in which case that person would occupy the manse as part of the salary package.

St Andrew's Op-shop is still our main source of funding, keeping the doors open for the whole community. We are greatly indebted to Madeleine and the Op-shop team.

Election of Officers: We are delighted to welcome our newsletter editor, Charlotte Christensen to the Parish Council. Thank you, Charlotte for all that you do, giving time from your very busy life.

Our Parish Councillors are: John Twemlow (chairman) Barbara Blake, Diana Campbell-Barnaby, Charlotte Christensen, Elizabeth Nicholls, Dorothy Preece (Secretary) and Julie St George.

Worship @ St Andrew's - Sunday 9:30am

Everyone is welcome here!

Our family space has quiet toys and Bible-based activities for young children.



Dec 2nd - Communion - Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby

9th - Rev Jan Fogg

16th - John Twemlow

23rd - Robin Twemlow

25th - Christmas Day family service - Dorothy Preece

30th - Rev Viv Coleman

Jan 6th - New Year Communion - Rev Viv Coleman

13th - John Twemlow

*20th - Bill Woodward - Mission Aviation Fellowship***

27th - Dorothy Preece

***Mission Aviation Fellowship pilots fly small planes into trouble spots to bring help in many parts of the world. Flyer Bill Woodward spoke to us earlier in the year and we are delighted to welcome him back to tell us more about this mission.*

Community Carols



Whitianga: Friday 21 December, 7pm,
Soldier's Memorial Park

Kuaotunu: Monday 24 December, 7pm
Kuaotunu Hall



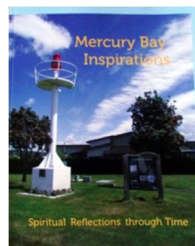


The plans are on track for the first Mercury Bay Community Christmas Dinner, to be held in the Whitianga Hall on Christmas Day.

A committee of community-minded people from various churches and service groups have got together to arrange the function, which is open to the whole community. The aim is to celebrate the season together, so that there is no need for anyone to be alone or isolated on Christmas Day. The care groups have all been asked to canvass their members and let us know if anyone needs transport to the meal. Chocky Brown and our own Tania Iiti are the chefs in charge and a large team of volunteers has been assembled to help on the day. There is no charge. Funding is being sought from all businesses and individuals who feel they wish to support the project. So please spread the word – bring the family – ***no booking required and Santa will be there!***

'Mercury Bay Inspirations'

Our fundraiser book sales are increasing, as people buy them for Christmas presents and souvenirs. Mercury Bay Museum is also selling them to visitors. We were delighted to receive an order from the Otago University Bookstore, with the words 'We have heard that his book is a little gem'. The book is available at \$25 per copy from the church lounge, or by email order.



All the best to all of you over this Christmas season, and for a bright start to 2019.

With blessings, from St Andrew's by the Sea

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

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