

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter Newsletter April-May 2019

Our mission in this fellowship is to share the Love of God with everyone, and encourage all people to follow Jesus

Our people and their stories: Alex Hamilton

Our friend Alex revisits his Whenuakite home every year, on the anniversary of his mother's birthday, 11th March. This year, for the first time, we invited him to preach at St Andrews and heard a stirring message. Alex's grandfather William Lee was Sunday School superintendent in Whitianga for many years, and a plaque on the wall at St Andrew's commemorates his faithful service. William's daughter, Edith Lee, married Owen Hamilton



and moved to the farm at Whenuakite. She was Alex's mother. After years of worshipping with the family at the Whenuakite Hall, the hall closed. Then Edith came in to St Andrew's, and sat under her father's plaque every Sunday until she died age 105. It is a pleasure to tell Alex's story.

He was the third of six children born to Edith and Owen Hamilton on the dairy farm at Whenuakite. Edith's strong faith was a guiding factor in their young lives. The Minister from Coromandel took three services once a fortnight: Coromandel, Whenuakite and Whitianga. Edith Hamilton ran the postal Sunday School and the children of the district did those lessons. Alex's father, Owen, gave his life to the Lord later in life, "after Mother prayed him into the kingdom". After attending Whenuakite School, Alex went away to Mt Albert Grammar and later Pukekohe High School, then he went home to work on the farm. His father also owned a 40-acre pine plantation on Purangi Road. A&W Clarke ran the nearby steam-driven sawmill. "They paid me the princely sum of five shillings an hour to measure the cut timber. It was a good wage. Dad paid me eight pounds a week on the farm."

“I had signed a paper to give my life to Jesus when I was 12 and read the Bible from cover to cover at age 13, but it didn’t make much sense. At 18 I was still going to church, but I was only going through the motions. I knew I wasn’t really good enough to be a Christian. I was conscripted and spent 10 weeks at Papakura camp, but I was never called up. There were films at the Whenuakite Hall, and a dance every weekend, somewhere in the district.” Alex met Beverly Taylor, who was working as a sharemilker for his uncle, Ken Hamilton. The two got together and were married at Beverly’s home church, Onehunga Presbyterian. Owen figured Alex, at 21, was ready to own a farm, so he financed the couple into buying the Bonner’s land, and “2,000 pounds to buy 80 cows.”

Billy Graham came to Carlaw Park in 1959. Bev and Alex went with Edith and Owen. “He gave us 5 very powerful memory verses, and he didn’t pull any punches. Made me think some more, but I still didn’t understand until much later - *Jesus did it all, for every person on earth.* By 1969 Bev and Alex had seven children, and Alex was chairman of the school committee, secretary of the Whenuakite hall committee, and involved with the Social Credit Party. They were working hard, “milking 180 cows, paying workers and getting taxed to the hilt.” Then his Dad saw some farms for sale in Queensland. “Dad brought to Herald round to us every morning, and read the ads. They were real cheap farms.” Alex and Owen went to have a look. “They were poor farms compared to ours, but those Aussies were getting the same income as us, off 40 cows because they weren’t taxed and didn’t need to employ workers.” Alex sold the Purangi farm and moved the family to a farm at Malanda, in the Tablelands inland from Cairns. When they moved, their oldest child was 12, the youngest just one year. “There was no hot water laid on, and the kitchen tap wasn’t even above the sink. But we did have a septic tank – lots of properties didn’t. Bev coped pretty well I reckon.”

They stayed there for 4 years, during which time Alex became very interested in the sermons preached by Rev Roy White at Tablelands Presbyterian. “He gave me the Bible verse that changed my life. “1 Thes. 5:18. *Give thanks in ALL circumstances.* That verse gave me faith like no other had done. God saved my life - twice - my physical life

and my Eternal life. A mobile 'Compulsory Chest X-ray' came round to everyone. They found I had a spot on my lung, which resulted in an immediate operation in Brisbane. I was 35. I never would have suspected anything. So I gave thanks for that X-ray. We sold the farm and came home to Whenuakite, because I thought I was going to die. Bev had no family in Australia and would have had no support."

Alex got work at Ellis and Burnand timber yard in Thames, but wasn't earning enough to feed the family, so they moved to a dairy farm in Matamata, but 18 months later, Alex decided perhaps he wasn't going to die anytime soon, and it was time to get on with life. "I wrote to a kiwi bloke in Australia. He needed a farm hand so we went back. We had four children still at school then. Beverly owned a dress shop in Malanda for a while. The doctors told me they didn't want to see me anymore, because the cancer was completely gone. Praise the Lord!

"I bought a good little farm, but it wasn't big enough, so I bought a bigger farm. But then the interest rates went through the roof and we were struggling to make a living. We sold the farm at a loss. It wasn't a total failure, we came out with enough to buy a house, but it was the first time I had any setback. I had always been successful, and I felt I had failed. We were unsettled for a number of years. The kids were all grown up by then, it was just Bev and me. I spent four months picking pineapples at Gympie, and then went milking until I retired. I was 67. I'm 83 now, but I still do a bit here and there. Bev and I have drifted apart, but I still have faith in the healing power of forgiveness and reconciliation, and I am praying that this might yet be so for us.

Alex has just resigned from the Management Committee at his church in Malanda. He now has 16 grandchildren and 6 great-grandies, all in Australia. "Every time I come home, I do the rounds and visit as many as I can. There's a big clan of Lees and Hamiltons still around here. I hope I can continue in the years to come, but whatever happens, I will continue to give thanks in ALL circumstances."

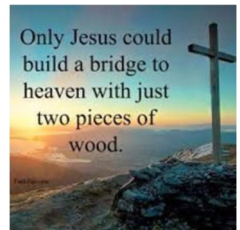
Thank you Alex, for your work and witness.

Martyr Extraordinaire

In light of the tragedy in Christchurch last month where 50 Muslims lost their lives at the hands of a white supremacist, comments have been made which would indicate they were worthy of the title of MARTYR. Over the years many individuals have been called martyrs because they died for their belief or cause. One that comes to mind is of course is Martyn Luther King, who died defending black people's rights. Then we have someone like Emily Davison, a suffragette, who died jumping in front of a horse at the Epsom Derby. She was called a martyr by many women. A number of Muslim suicide bombers thought of themselves as martyrs because they died for their cause, while killing others!

Right from its inception unto this very day, Christianity has seen millions of its adherents killed solely because of their faith. The Bible itself records martyrs such as Stephen, James, Peter and Paul, all who were killed because they would not recant of their Christian beliefs. This month, in the Church calendar, we Christians remember the death of what some call the ARCHETYPICAL MARTYR, Jesus of Nazareth. At the behest of Jewish Leadership, the Romans nailed Jesus to a cross. Jesus was killed by the principalities and powers; a term used by the apostle Paul to describe the very powerful, the very rich, the very religious; the institutions they represent, and the spirits that operate within these institutions. In the Gospel narratives we see the Roman governor, the king of Judea, and the high priest acting in demonic concert to execute Jesus.

Whether we want to acknowledge Jesus as a martyr or not is not relevant. What is important, is that we realise His death showed the heart of a loving God who underwent all the hatred and violence that we as humans could throw at Him, and transfer that into a symbol of DIVINE LOVE. I encourage you, one and all to accept this divine love and walk in the same spirit. God bless you. *John.*



Flood report

As this goes to print, work has begun to sand back floors and install new carpet in the hall. Our insurance company is covering the cost of the flood damage. The old carpet has served us well; it was installed when the hall was opened in 2002, and has seen a lot of action! The philosophy behind turning the old church around and adding the hall and kitchen was to open the doors to the community and provide a safe gathering place: the community has taken this to heart and the hall is used almost every day. A glance at the back page tells the story of how true this is!

Remembering Christchurch

This hymn was one of many offerings that came over the internet, to help us all come to terms with the dreadful events in Christchurch:

*Love is the welcome that comes from the heart,
And opens its door to the stranger.
Which makes of its house a rest-place for all
For the sake of a Babe in a manger.*

*Love is the struggle for justice and peace
That the cause of the weak may inherit,
And the wretched of earth see a new day brought to birth
In the strength of the gentle in spirit.*

*Love is the touch that does not draw back
From the maimed and the hurt and the broken,
But embraces their pain and calls them by their name,
That the word of compassion be spoken.*

(Abridged)

Author: Kathy Galloway.

Beatitudes / BE attitudes

Matthew Chapter 5, 9 lessons for Christian living.

Jesus took his disciples aside and taught them:

1. Blessed are the humble in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.
3. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.
8. Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
9. Blessed are you, when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil things against you falsely, for my sake.
Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

It is hard for any of us to see how rejoicing can come out of evil intent, but one thing we do know – God can make ‘all things work together for good’ if we love God and are Spirit-filled.

Presbytery Meeting in Katikati

Reflections by Charlotte Christensen, as a new Parish Councillor

Very early on the morning of Saturday 16 March, Dorothy and I ventured out through the mist and over the hills to Katikati. The meeting was the sixth of seven such sessions run by the Kaimai Presbytery to discuss their thoughts on strategic planning, and was open to any congregational member of a small number of parishes. Ours was the furthest away, and clearly our willingness to rise early and make the trip was valued by the others present.

The discussion paper put out by the Presbytery* was somewhat challenging, but the discussion boiled down to two main concepts for me: what does a Parish do when it can't support itself any longer, and what support might be available from Presbytery to help Parishes work through different periods in their life cycle when financial aid is essentially not an option.

I found it heartening to compare our situation at St Andrew's with that of some others being discussed, and I found that we are doing well on the measures they were proposing. We have an older congregation, it is true, but an involved one. We reach out into the community in any number of ways and we're willing to take on some risks in faith that they will pan out - the community meals for example. It's true that we currently have no minister to lead us, but we are managing to fill the pulpit every week and we can be pleased with how we have managed. One interesting concept raised on the day was the possibility of having a sermon "beamed in" either as a pre-recorded message or even a live feed - can you imagine the range of speakers we might get if that concept goes ahead!

We must, of course, also remember that we are not simply a Presbyterian Church but also a Methodist one, and so to an extent if they were suggesting something alarming we would still be able to step back from it and choose how best to proceed, but for now I felt that it was a worthwhile meeting to have attended and contributed to, and look forward to seeing how the Presbytery strategy develops once they have compiled the feedback from all seven meetings.

*(*If you want to see the Presbytery paper, please just ask Dorothy or myself)*

Funeral

February 9 April - Brenda Maud Parker, at St Andrew's.
Dorothy Preece officiating



Our sympathy and prayers are with the family

AIM Women's mission to India

On 17th March four women travelled to a number of places in north India, to support the churches and lead Christian seminars on women's health and wellbeing. They are Robin Twemlow and Annie Lynch from St Andrew's fellowship, Ros Johnston, another local Christian, and Althea Ormsby from St Paul's in Katikati. The AIM Ministries team are well known in India and were invited by their Christian sisters to organise the seminars. The women have paid their own way, but before she left, Robin approached Parish Council for \$500 to take the orphanage children out for the day, to give them a treat. Parish Council opened the appeal to the congregation, and promised to make up to \$1,000. Within two weeks our fellowship raised \$2,500 for the mission.

Robin sends her heartfelt thanks for your generosity.

On Sunday April 14th we hope to hear Robin and Annie sharing their experiences in the service.

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

***Families with young children are warmly welcomed.
A family space is provided, with quiet toys and
Bible-based activities***



Apr 7th - Communion - Alistair Rogers

14th - Robin Twemlow shares her India Mission experience

*19th - **Good Friday, 9:30** - Dorothy Preece*

*21st - **Easter Sunday** - Rev John Twemlow*

28th - Dorothy Preece

May 5th - Communion - Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby

12th - The Ladies' Bible Team

19th - Peter and Dorothy Chaffin

28th - Rev David Rolinson

June 2nd - Communion - Rev David Rolinson

David is a retired Methodist Minister who attended St Andrew's on holiday and kindly agreed to help with our services. Thank you David!

Parish and Community Activities

Newcomers are cordially invited to join any of these friendly groups

AA DRIVER LICENSING - all day 2nd Friday of each month. See notice board for dates

CANCER GROUP COFFEE & CHAT - first Friday of every month. For those diagnosed with cancer, and their carers. Contact Penny 027 684 0004

CHURCH OP-SHOP opens Tuesday-Saturday 8:30-12:30, now with EFTPOS! Enquiries, ring Madeleine 866 0169

COMMUNITY MEALS served in the Church hall from 5-6pm every Monday. Meals phone (attended Mondays only): 021 0294 2234

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP All welcome. 2nd Wednesday of every month @1:30pm. For venue: Ann Harsant 866 4740

ENLIVEN (Presbyterian Social Services for seniors) every Thursday, by arrangement only. For more information, ring Jenny 866 0556

HALL BOOKINGS Usually Dorothy Preece, 869 5452, however Dorothy will be away from **16 May to 25 June**. For this period, please instead contact **Madeleine, 866 0169**

LADIES BIBLE STUDY Wednesday at 10am. Ring Julie for further details on 021 169 1637

POWER HOOPING - Tuesday & Thursday evenings 6:30-7:30pm. Contact Kaylin kaylin.debruyne@gmail.com

SCRAP BAGS (Quilting) every Wednesday from 11am in the Hall.

STITCH N' CHAT every second Tuesday in the Hall. To join this friendly group, ring Julie 021 169 1637

UPRIGHT & ACTIVE Friendly exercise sessions for seniors, held in the Church hall
Mondays, 9:30am - exercise for more active seniors.
Tuesdays, 10am - exercise for the less active.

St Andrew's service 9:30 every Sunday

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St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

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