

# MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church  
Newsletter

**March – April 2015**

"Our Mission in this parish, is to share  
the love of God with all people."

## **FAITH STORY    AMANDA JANE MCCARDLE**

(11 April 1973 – 8 January 2015)

Amanda believed that we are all here for a reason – to make an impact on other people's lives. Amanda certainly did that in her 41 years in amazing ways. She made a profound impact on all she met – in her own unique and courageous way. I feel privileged and blessed to have known Amanda and to be able to share her story with you.

Amanda had deep inner beauty as well as immense inner strength, all kinds of strength, and she gained strength too from those she loved, but she also found strength and peace through her faith in God.

Osteosarcoma began to destroy Amanda's body three and a half years ago but Amanda's spirit was never defeated. All who have known her have been touched by that spirit.

As her condition developed, with horrendous tumours, life-threatening surgeries and debilitating treatment, it became very important to Amanda to be part of church services in Mairangi Bay and in St Andrews by the Sea Community Church she loved here in Whitianga, where she felt very close to her grandparents, Max and Jess Stenbridge, who were very involved here for many years.

Every night Amanda prayed three prayers with her children: the first was one taught to her by Max and Jess:

*In my little bed I lie, God my father hear my cry,  
Lord, protect me through the night.  
Keep me safe till morning light.*

The second was the Lord's Prayer, in the 1611 King James' authorised version. The third prayer was for God to bless all the special people in her life.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God, not even death, and Amanda knew that. Prayer gave her strength and hope. Amanda had confidence in God – in the *restoring of her soul*.

Amanda loved those words from Psalm 23. Whatever happened to her body, Amanda knew that nothing could quench her spirit. **Amanda knew that the love and grace of God surrounded her and held her close**, even through that experience of *the valley of the shadow of death*. Amanda asked for *Amazing Grace* to be sung at her funeral.

Amanda's name comes from the Latin 'to be loved'. Amanda was and is much loved. Love does not end with death. Amanda's love has impacted so many lives. Love for Amanda continues - and Amanda is held in the love of God.

Amanda was a very beautiful daughter to Jill and Alan Bowker, a wonderful sister to Joanne, a precious wife to Luke, and an adoring and proud mother of Tim 23, Ben 9 and Emma 7. Amanda told me "My children are my world. My children give total meaning to my life." Amanda loved her children with her whole being and built her life around them.

When Tim was born, Jill told Amanda "It is God's way for you to have children because you will be such a great mother" – and Amanda certainly was a great mother. Amanda was very selfless and that was seen through all her terrible illness, as she was always more concerned about how her children were coping than about herself. She wanted to continue to make wonderful memories for them and she did that in all kinds of ways – with adventures, holidays, patience, love and time. Amanda was extremely determined – we might even say 'stubborn' - but that determination kept her going. Amanda was also a prankster and full of fun.

Amanda wanted to fill her life with exhilarating adventure and she showed her children how to do that too.

Amanda told Ben to push the boundaries and step out of the box, and she modelled that beautifully for him and Emma. She was not just brave and adventurous, Amanda went to the edge of everything. Amanda's passion and confidence was contagious.

Amanda showed no fear and rushed headlong into life as if it was one long ski slope.



Ski-ing was one of Amanda's passions in life and last August, with only one arm functioning, unable to turn her head, and with just one ski pole, Amanda completed her last ski race down Mt Ruapehu, one of her two favourite places in the world. The other very special place for Amanda was Opito Bay – where she was able to see the sunrise with her family just before Christmas 2014.

A few days before Christmas Amanda wrote on the blackboard in her kitchen in Mairangi Bay *I am too positive to be doubtful, too optimistic to be fearful, and too determined to be defeated.*

Amanda also wrote a poem to be read to her family and friends at her funeral. Those precious words include:

*This journey has taught all of us  
Many things. Things we should not  
Have to face in our life  
But with adversity, we learn more  
About ourselves, our children,  
Family and friends.*

We learn that we have the  
Ability to engage in different  
Emotions, feelings and thoughts  
That we can choose what's  
Valued and important  
And let those choices pave our  
Direction

Through these obstacles and challenges  
We weave a thread  
That thread has the strength  
And power to connect  
With our total being.

Happiness

I choose happiness to be that  
Thread. The current through  
My life that I can  
Share, inspire and empower  
All those that shared my life

Time is your choice, no amount  
Of money can ever buy you  
This

Make a promise today for you  
For your children and your  
Loved ones and choose time  
Value it like the most  
Precious of all stones

We can truly thank God for Amanda's life and all she meant to  
those she loved. We can be grateful for her gifts and skills and  
especially for her deep devotion to her family and all she did to  
create special memories for them. I hope that all who read this  
will also be inspired by Amanda's fearless and selfless  
living, her passion for life and her determination to make the  
most of every moment and push the boundaries -- and  
reflect and act on Amanda's wise advice.

We offer our loving sympathy to Amanda's family and our  
grateful thanks to Jill, Alan and Luke for their permission to share  
Amanda's story here. God bless you. Mary Petersen

## PEOPLE NEWS - FOR YOUR PRAYERS



With regret we learn that Erin Morgan is now resident at the Whitianga Continuing Care Unit after a long illness at home. Erin and husband Robert's thoughtful and caring contribution to the life of the church has been very much appreciated. Robert is a Parish Councillor, and for several years has been church handyman and general fixer. He and Erin have also been dedicated gardeners at both the church and the manse. We pray blessings for them both as they face this new life-changing challenge.

Verna Hynds, also a resident at Continuing Care, celebrated her 92<sup>nd</sup> Birthday with family and friends, at a party in St Andrew's hall last Saturday. Her friends, the Golden Girls, sang Verna's favourites, and she beamed as she sang along with them. We wish her a very happy year. We miss seeing Verna in church on Sunday mornings, as we also miss Ken Petersen. Rev Mary Petersen plans to reside in Tairua when she moves from the Parish in August. In preparation, her husband Ken has moved from CCU in Whitianga, where he was resident, to the Tairua Rest Home. Mary and Ken lived in Tairua before they came to Whitianga, and Ken feels at home there. We pray for them both, as they cope with life's changes and challenges.

Greta Fox is currently unwell. Her husband Ken Fox is another CCU resident. We wish Greta a speedy recovery, and hope to see her back in the Op-Shop - and running Upright & Active - very soon.

Terry Cooke is currently undergoing another round of radiation therapy. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Terry and Lynnor.

Please also pray for all those in our community who are in trouble or need of any kind. May they find solutions to their problems, and peace in their lives.

## Future Planning for the Parish.

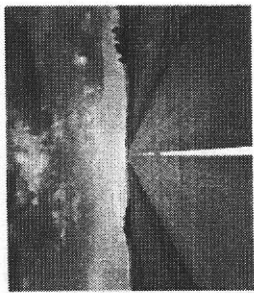
In view of Rev Mary Petersen's recent change to 50 percent ministry with this parish, and her resignation from August 31<sup>st</sup>, the Parish Council is reporting to Kaimai Presbytery and to the Waikato-Wairaki Methodist Synod for guidance through the impending changes.

These two bodies have a shared oversight of the Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish, with the Presbyterian Church currently as the co-ordinating partner. The Presbytery and Synod will help us begin discussions as to how our parish ministry will look in the future. Your Parish Councillors are wrestling with financial issues. We know that we cannot employ a full-time minister, and we are looking for the most effective and affordable ways to continue the many aspects of Mary's work, well into the future.

While Sunday worship will always be the 'powerhouse' of our church life, we are fortunate to have a team of able worship leaders, and communion celebrants who will continue to lead our worship.

The biggest challenge for all of us, will be the continuation of Mary's community ministry, which has been her focus for the past 11 years. These include Mainly Music sessions, Messy Church, the Mercury Bay Day Camp, Community Meals, and of course the vast workload of supporting individuals facing challenges, most of which is confidential. The truth is, none of us will ever know how long and hard Mary works with people.

There will inevitably be many gaps, which will become more apparent as we settle into the routine of Mary's 50 percent ministry! Our prayer is that as we progress towards the August 31st date, we will begin to see how some of these gaps might be filled.



## Parish and Community Activities

Newcomers are cordially invited to join any of these friendly groups.

**CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP** 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month, 1:30 pm in members' homes. For programme and venue details please ring: Beryl Wharton 866 3739 or Ann Harsant 866 4740

**CHURCH OP-SHOP** - Next door to the church. Phone 867 1104

**Open 9 - 12:30 every Thursday, Friday and Saturday.**

Thank you for supporting the Op-shop, helping the work of our Parish, and many other local causes. Please leave clean goods at workroom entrance. - and watch the notices for special sale days.

**COMMUNITY MEALS** - In the church hall from 5-6pm every Monday. Providing free, hot, nutritious meals and friendship. Volunteers welcome

**FILM and FRIENDSHIP** - Films showing 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month in the church hall + afternoon tea. For programme details, ring Madeleine 866 0169



**Music and fun for toddlers with their carers.**

**Thursdays in school terms.** Action songs begin promptly at 10:00 am, followed by morning tea, friendship and playtime.

**We need leaders** - if you can help, please come to a Thursday session and talk to Rev Mary Petersen and team.

**MESSY CHURCH** An exciting Sunday experience for all the family.

4:30 - 6pm, including food! **Easter session: Sunday March 22nd**

Contact Mary: 869 5356 or text 027 244 8396 email [mipetersen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mipetersen@xtra.co.nz)

**P.R.O.P. People Relying on People** - Supporting families battling mental health or substance abuse issues. For confidential support Freephone **0800 127 359**

**Te KOROWAI MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY GROUP** meets in St Andrew's hall. Phone Robyn Campbell 869 5244 for details of meeting dates.

**TOUGHLOVE Behavioural Support.** Anyone challenged by the behaviour of a family member is encouraged to talk to Mary 869 5356 or Nicole 866 5119.

**UPRIGHT & ACTIVE: Two friendly exercise sessions for seniors:**

Mondays at 9:30 in the hall. Leader Carol Melrose 867 1097

Tuesdays at 10:00. Leader Greta Fox 866 4382

**WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY** every Wednesday, 10:00 am at the home of

Phyl Bullin. For more information ring Julie 984 9140

**WORSHIP AT CONTINUING CARE.** A Combined Churches event providing devotions every Wednesday at 10:45 am in the residents' lounge. Supporters are welcome on any Wednesday. St Andrew's leads on the first and fifth Wednesday of the month.



Our situation on Albert Street means the church attracts lots of people coming to look, and we need to present a well-tended image.

If you like gardening, you might like to keep the church grounds looking tidy (the Op-shop pays for the lawn mowing). Feel free to plant flowers, pull weeds, trim bushes.....

The manse garden, in Catherine Crescent, will also have to be kept tidy, even when Mary is no longer there. We see this as a task for another volunteer – one who perhaps likes growing vegetables for the community meals?

We are very pleased to report that Mary's sister, Val Ranson is taking charge of the **Community Meals programme** for the time being. Val has a great deal of experience in the catering trade, and her level-headed approach is a gift to us all. **Thank you, Val!** Organisational skills are required by those who tackle the logistical exercise of packaging and delivering meals to a different list of needy families every Monday, and extra hands are always welcome. If you think you would like to help in some way – just turn up at the church hall on any Monday after 8 am.

**Mercury Bay Day Camp** will happen again 7 – 10 April. It is organized and funded under the umbrella of our Church Trust, known as the **Mercury Bay Community Trust**. Day Camp is run by a sub-committee of the Trust. The Parish Council is very grateful to two new Trust members who have stepped forward to help with the funding aspects. **Sandy Herbert and Tina Bartlett** are two busy ladies who are involved with other churches and community initiatives. We know they both bring very important skills to the Trust and we wish them well in the work they are undertaking.

**Charlotte Christensen** has kindly volunteered to undertake the enormous task of registrations for Day Camp. Charlotte, as a new mother, is already very busy! This task involves allocating around 300 children to three different activities each day (of which there are about 20) for three days of camp. It is a complicated and time-consuming job, but we know that Charlotte is well qualified for it. **Thank you, Charlotte!**

## Most of the World's Religions acknowledge the Creator/Spirit / God.



Here is an 'Eco Version' of the prayer that Jesus taught – it might help us all to see God the Creator, God the Spirit, and Jesus – in a new light :

*Our Father in Heaven –*

We find you in the air, the soil, the forests and the oceans.

*Hallowed be your Name –*

We acknowledge your holiness and honour you, by the way we take care of your creation.

*Your Kingdom come –*

Your reign of love and goodness begins with us.

*Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven –*

It is your will that we should care for all people, and all the living things of your creation.

*Give us this day our daily bread –*

That all may be raised out of poverty, and have sufficient to live life in all its fullness.

*Forgive us our sins –*

Our greed, our thoughtless lack of concern for future generations and all the species of the earth.

*As we forgive those who sin against us –*

As we explore pathways to reconciliation, working towards justice and peace.

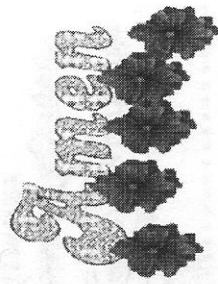
*For yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory –*

Help us to see your power and glory everywhere we look in your world, and as we explore the universe.

*For ever and ever –*

May we never limit your loving plan, which extends far beyond the small insights of our human understanding.

**Amen – So Be It!**



The Parish Council wishes to thank everyone who contributed to our "GRAND EVERYTHING SALE" early in January. It was a great effort from all concerned, raising more than \$2,400 to date.



**Check Out Helen's Pictures!**

Helen Stephenson is the lady who uncomplainingly cleans our church and hall. Another of Helen's talents is drawing, in colour or black and white, broadly following Rei Hamon in drawing bird life and animals, but using her own technique of tiny 'dots, circles or squiggles.'

Helen very generously donated most of her collection of original drawings, along with some smaller prints, to our Grand Sale in January. Many were sold, but a few works still remain for sale. If you haven't seen them, do come and look. They are displayed in the back of the church.

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**Parish Register**

**Wedding:**

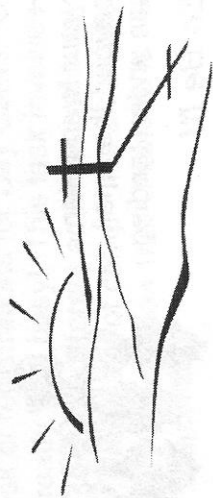
Jean Fletcher and Bede Maher – 20<sup>th</sup> February at St Andrew's.

**Funerals:**

Leslie Wright 27 November at Pauanui Community Church

David Russell 20 December at Twentyman's Chapel, Whitianga

Amanda McCardle 13 January at Mairangi Bay  
Presbyterian Church



**COMBINED CHURCHES EVENTS:**

**Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> Community Prayers**  
at St Andrew's by the Sea  
Morning tea at 10 am, prayer time begins at 10:15.  
Finish by 11:15am. ALL WELCOME

**Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> Combined Churches Worship**  
at St Patrick's Catholic Church, Campbell St.  
Begins with a shared meal at 5 pm, followed by a joint service of worship in which the various churches take a part.

**Easter Sunday – April 5<sup>th</sup> Easter On the Beach -**  
**Combined Churches service on the beach opp. Mill Road,**  
**7:30 am, followed by breakfast at Crossroad Fellowship**  
**before our Easter Day service, 9:30 at St Andrew's.**

Combined Churches of Mercury Bay

**JOY COWLEY**

returning to Whitianga

to lead two one-day retreats

**"COMING HOME TO WHO YOU ARE"**

**A day of reflection and accepting ourselves as spiritual beings on a human journey, with Jesus as our teacher.**

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Joy describes herself as 'a wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and daughter of God.' We know her as a prolific writer of sacred psalms and poems, and a much loved writer of children's and other literature.

**Saturday 7 March OR Sunday 8 March**  
**9.30am – 4.00 pm at Aotearoa Lodge,**  
**70, Racecourse Road, Whitianga**  
**\$45 Booking essential. Lunch included.**

Registration forms are available from any Whitianga Churches, or from Muriel Pedersen:

pedersen.jm@xtra.co.nz

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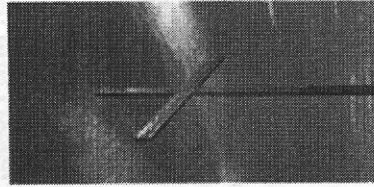
*Worship Opportunities in Our Parish*  
**AT ST. ANDREW'S BY THE SEA:**

*Child - friendly Sunday Services* 9:30 am every Sunday.  
Communion service - first Sunday of every month.

*Messy Church – Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup>. 4.30 – 6 p.m.*

Fantastic fun, food, and friendship !

Rev Mary Petersen will lead a special Easter Messy Church for families – children of all ages, parents, carers, grandparents are very welcome.



*Easter Communion – Tuesday March 31<sup>st</sup>*  
All are invited to this quiet communion service at 2 pm, followed by afternoon tea.

*Good Friday Service – Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>*  
9:30 am - A special service of contemplation led by Rev Mary Petersen

*Easter Sunday – 9:30 at St Andrew's*  
Come and celebrate the living Christ, at work  
In the hearts of people the world over!

**MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH**

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church -

P.O. Box 368, Whitianga 3542

Corner Albert and Owen Streets, Whitianga.

Minister Rev Mary Petersen 027 244 8396

Church Office 867 1102

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Website: [www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz](http://www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz)

There is now a link on our website that allows you to search the week's events on your mobile phone!

**IF YOU WOULD PREFER TO RECEIVE THIS  
NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL, PLEASE ADVISE:**

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