

# MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

## St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

### Newsletter August-September 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: Dorothy's English Roots*

A few weeks ago I travelled with my daughter Lesley and to England to explore our family heritage. This was a mighty, unexpected blessing for me. I had thought I would never again make the journey home, but it was Lesley's research into family history that took us back.

Derek and I left England in 1966. At age 21 I knew very little about family history. So I was delighted when Lesley announced that she would like to go to Ironbridge (I had no idea we had links there) and a lot of churchyards! Of course, this meant that we had the opportunity to visit all my special people, most of whom Lesley had never met. And so it began.

Our base with my sister-in-law near Cannock meant that I was immediately immersed in my home church (Chadsmoor Methodist) and all the lovely people who still remember me and my family. I was enormously privileged to be invited to preach from the pulpit where my father preached for over 70 years, standing under the plaque to the memory of Wilfred Smith, erected above the pulpit. My text, 'Look to the rock from which you were hewn'. Whitianga folk have heard the significance to me, of this text.



From Cannock we travelled everywhere by train. Lesley was following links to her four grandparents' families. We started with my parents. Wilf Smith and Floss Higgins grew up in the same church family, Lea Brook Methodist, and they often took me there when I was young. Wilf was regularly invited to preach, especially at Sunday School anniversaries. What a blessing to go there with Lesley! Memorial plaques on the chapel walls have many family names. Lesley got busy with the camera while I caught up with my cousins.





Next we went to Coventry, where Lesley had a list of churchyards in quaint little villages, to search for old family names. How convenient that we happen to have cousins in Coventry! They were delighted to show us all around the area, and they also arranged for a family reunion.

(Lots of lay preachers there, and a couple of ministers!). We had a marvellous time. Lesley found some really old family graves. We discovered that our ancestors would have been contemporaries with the famous author, George Elliott (actually Mary Anne Evans) at Chilvers Coton Church, where we saw the author's memorial. This appealed to Lesley's librarian's mind. Our cousins are very knowledgeable historians, and gave us an in-depth tour of the bombed-out Cathedral of Saint Michael, which leads the visitor through to the new Coventry cathedral. Both old and new are immensely inspiring.

From Coventry, on to Pershore in Worcestershire. A lovely old village where my cousin Selwyn Higgins now lives. He had many old photos to show us, that I had never seen, and stories that I had never heard. I learned such a lot about my own family – things that I never asked at age 21.

Selwyn is also a historian, and is the custodian of Pershore Abbey. Built sometime in the 900's, the monastery met its demise with the Dissolution, and only the historic Abbey remains. It is beautiful. Selwyn has also done a lot of delving into the family history of John Wesley, the father of Methodism. It seems young John came from a long line of troublesome Anglican clerics who often 'rocked the boat' in church circles. All very interesting for me.



Next we were on the train to Bristol, to my niece Wendy. No family history there – just a lovely interlude of catch-up, a nice change for Lesley to be talking and connecting with family members of her own age. Bristol has happy memories for me, of the time Derek and I took the boat up the Bristol Channel and spent 9 months there on our round

-the-world trip.

Our train travel then took us through more beautiful countryside, down to Worthing, near Brighton on the south coast, with cousin Evelyn. Lots more family photos and stories of things our mothers got up to in their family of 8 girls and one boy - cousin Selwyn's dad – and another young Ancestry addict cousin swapping information with Lesley. With Evie we walked on the South Downs and on the beaches – we were missing the sea!



After a short interlude back at home base, it was time to get to Ironbridge and the Preece side of the story. Lesley has done intensive studies on the area, famous for – believe it or not – the first iron bridge ever to be constructed. In the industrial revolution it became a hot-bed (literally) of foundries, brick kilns, limestone and coal mining and it seems

Lesley's hard-working Preece ancestors were involved in all of that. Nobody was rich, but one family, the Legges, did make money manufacturing clay pipes. During that period Ironbridge must have been a smoke-ridden slum, but is now a very beautiful tourist town, steeply banked on the River Avon, where the remains of all the early industries have been reborn as museums. Lesley's knowledge of the area took us to Legge's Hill, to family graves, to the pipe museum and many other sites which Lesley knew by heart, although she had never been there. It was an eye-opener for me!



When it came time to leave, part of me wanted to stay and for a time after we got home, half of me was still over there! But I thank God for this trip, all the reconnections and the new memories, and most of all for the reinforced knowledge that no matter where life takes us, we all celebrate the blessing and privilege of **One Lord, One Faith, One Birth.**

## Parish Council News

We are currently updating the Parish records, and we are seeking your up-to-date contact details. This is particularly important for our local people, for the purposes of pastoral care and circulating information about church events. We need your formal permission (by signature) to record your information, which will only be made available to the Parish Team.

If you have been to church in recent weeks, you will have seen the slips and hopefully, filled them in. Please make sure you do this, if you feel comfortable with it.



## Fellowship Lunches

The Parish team has decided that the congregation should get together more often. With several newcomers to the church family, it is particularly important that we have more time to chat than just over morning tea. **So there will now be a finger-food lunch after church once a month on Communion Sundays (first Sunday of the month).** Please plan to stay longer on those days. If you can bring a plate, you are invited to do so. If not, please come anyway. There's plenty for everyone.

**On Sunday, September 1<sup>st</sup> we look forward to welcoming Rev Susan Thompson** from Hamilton, representing the Waikato-Wairiki Methodist Synod. After leading the Communion service, we hope that Rev Susan and her companions will be able to stay and share in the Fellowship Lunch.



## A Gift for Heather - from all of us

Sadly, our organist of 38 years(!) Heather Stephenson is no longer able to come to church. Many of you signed the huge card that fellow musician Elizabeth made for Heather, and last week Rev. John went with Dorothy to visit Heather and present her with the card, and a gift from the congregation. We gave her a framed picture by Auckland artist Angie Dennis titled 'Deeds not Words' featuring the teacup portraits of two 'votes for women' campaigners, Kate Sheppard and Meri Mangakahia.



It is impossible to state how important a contribution Heather at the organ, and daughter Linda's sweet solo voice, have made to our worship over the years. In addition, Heather's work with the banners and pulpit falls is amazing. We send our heartfelt thanks and love to the very creative Stephenson family, and pray that they will be richly blessed in the years to come.

We are indebted to Elizabeth Nicholls and Jim Hargreaves who have both stepped forward to each play for two Sundays in the month in future. Thank you both!

## Op Shop Sale Now On ALL WINTER CLOTHING MUST GO!

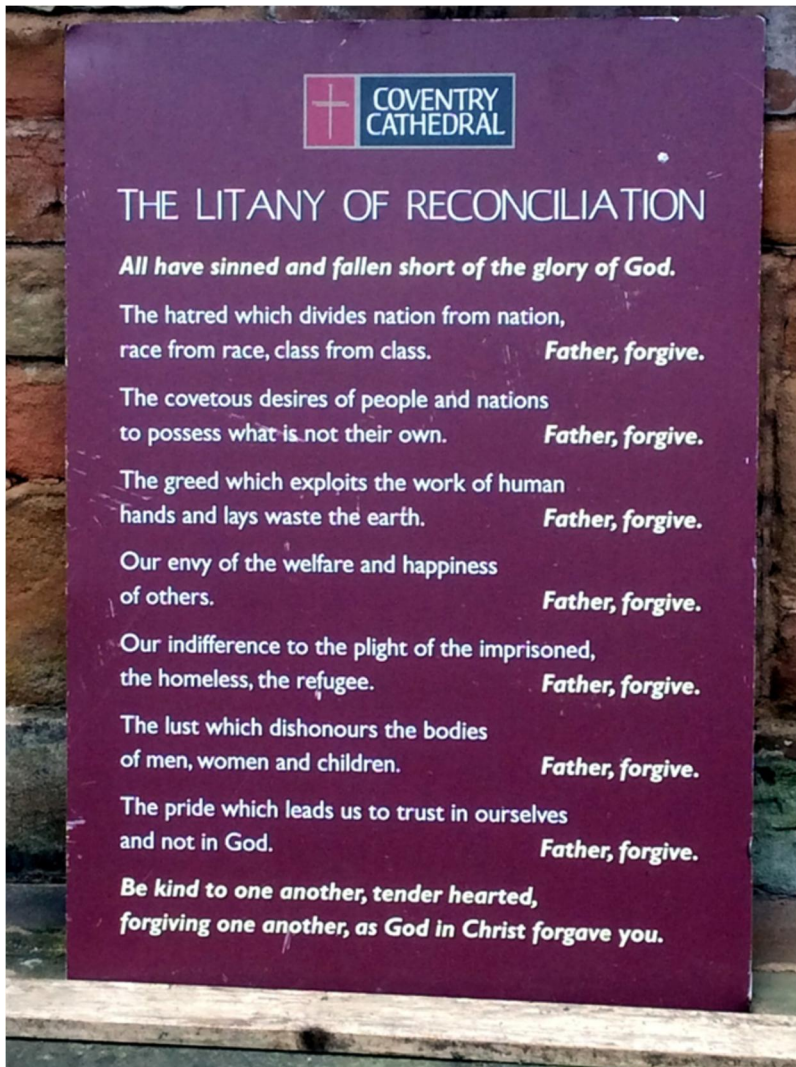
The Church Op Shop continues to be the main financial support for the Parish. Without the help of the hard-working ladies, and Madeleine as team leader, we would probably be in dire straits financially. Volunteers are always welcome. Call in and see us, Tuesday to Friday 8:30 to 12:30...  
AND GRAB A BARGAIN!



## Gardeners Wanted

You may notice that we had some trees removed from the road frontage of the church. This leaves a sunny patch of land that needs some work, but is available for anyone who wants a place to plant food plants or - well - any small plants. We don't want it to go back to jungle. Lorraine would like to put in a couple of fruit trees, but otherwise it's yours to use. See Lorraine for more information.

Dorothy took this photo at Coventry Cathedral. It has great relevance for New Zealand, and everywhere on God's earth.



# **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**

Aug 4th - Communion - Rev John Twemlow - Fellowship Lunch  
11th - The Ladies' Bible Team  
18th - Alistair Rogers  
25th - Robin Twemlow

Sept 1st - Communion - Rev Susan Thompson - Fellowship Lunch  
8th - John Twemlow  
15th - Dorothy Preece  
22nd - Peter Chaffin  
29th - Kevin Pringle



## **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:

**Mercury Bay Community Support Trust**

Westpac Whitianga

03 1578 0108901 00



# 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.** 2<sup>nd</sup> 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

**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**

**MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH**

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

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**Parish secretary:** Dorothy Preece 869 5452

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