

# MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

## St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

### August-September 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: Martin Wigmore***

Martin is always early to St Andrew's on Sunday mornings, and he takes



pride in his set-up duties. The Wigmore family is one of the oldest in the Bay. His great grandfather, Judge Robert Wigmore, came to New Zealand from Ireland. Calgary Castle was the family seat and he came from a noble family. Robert is said to have married a scullery maid, and perhaps that is why he settled in New Zealand. Working with a surveying team around New Zealand, he first saw Hahei in 1841 and made up his mind to come back to it.

He finally settled there in 1872. Martin has the family Bible, which shows that the two early settler families, Wigmores and Harsants, soon began to intermarry. The Bible records that Judge Robert's son Henry married Kate Eliza Harsant in 1883.

The Wigmore family home, which Judge Robert built, still stands near the beach at Hahei, with its iconic Moreton Bay fig tree. The Wigmore memorial and graves are also close by. (**See pictures on page 6**) Judge Robert was said to be the biggest man in the land, standing 6'8" tall and of heavy build. History records that he had to build a special oversize bed for himself. He ran a farm on the property as well as acting as Circuit Court Judge. All Court sessions were held at the house, as well as weddings and other formal events.

When Martin's father, Edwin Wigmore married his wife Yvonne in 1951, they lived in Kate Eliza's house on the dairy farm near Cook's Beach. Edwin milked 40 dairy cows. Martin has fond memories of Aunt Kate Eliza, and the days on the farm. Yvonne had an older boy, Kevin. It was his step-brother Kevin who brought Martin to faith.

As the babies started to arrive, Edwin built a family home across the road. There were four children in the family when that house sadly burned down. “There was a crack in the chimney. It set the wall on fire and took only 3 minutes to burn down,” Martin says. “We all escaped. I was six at the time. Mum carried me out and we both got burned. My burns quickly faded, but Mum carried those scars all her life.” Martin and his Mum stayed in a bach at Flaxmill Bay, but he can’t recall where the others were billeted.

After that, Edwin built another home on the site. “It began with just two rooms, but as the family kept growing, so did the house,” Martin says. It ended up with seven rooms, and it never really got finished. The family consisted of Kevin, Martin, Marceine, Fiona, Dean, Clement, Michelle and Edwin-John. There was no electricity. They cooked on a coal range, and Edwin brought water in from a waterfall several kilometres away. That system still works today.

Martin went to school at Whenuakite and Mercury Bay. It soon became obvious that he was dyslexic, a problem that plagues him still. “I was also asthmatic and I missed a lot of school. I hated school,” Martin says. He much preferred to be outside.

Martin’s Mum was a woman of faith but there was no regular church service. The Marist Brothers had a retreat property at Cook’s Beach and they went to the services when the Brothers were there. Martin remembers Father McCabe as ‘a 100 percent genuine man of God.’ Kevin was working away, but when he came home he brought Christian literature and talked to Martin about his faith. “Reading was hard, but I worked at those.” When he was 8 years old, Martin heard someone call his name. “Marty, come to me.” He ran outside but he couldn’t find where the voice came from. “I became aware that God was everywhere, and that He loved me.”

When he was 16, Martin read a pamphlet with a ‘private prayer’ encouraging him to invite Jesus into his life. “I prayed that prayer and I meant it.” Pastor Fred Parr and his wife Erna started a fellowship at Cook’s Beach which Marty attended. He has very fond memories of the Parrs, who befriended and affirmed him, and strengthened his faith.

After some local farming jobs Marty worked for the local Council on the roading gang. At 18 he left home and went to Auckland as a building apprentice. He enjoyed the work, but not the city, and after a while he returned home.

At midnight on New Year's Eve 1974, at age 22, Martin was baptised by Fred Parr in the tide at Cook's Beach. "A new year and a new life." Martin was then employed by the Preece family, making aluminium windows. He really enjoyed the work and became expert at it. Derek Preece said Martin was the most dedicated worker he ever employed. Eventually Martin went back to Auckland and became a qualified welder. He worked for a firm installing lifts. He also took study courses by correspondence. He always put every effort into his work, but living in hostels was a constant trial.

Martin has not had an easy life. His mother was a troubled soul who in her early life had been abused. Yvonne battled mental issues and alcoholism. She also had heart problems and eventually ended up in hospital in Auckland with a brain aneurism. Marty was living in Auckland at the time. His parents' marriage had broken up, and when his Mum came out of hospital Marty was able to look after her in Auckland until she died. Now retired, Martin shares the Purangi Road house with his sister Marceine, also a strong Christian. Marceine trained as a nurse. Now 'retired' she looks after elderly folk in their own homes.

Martin likes tinkering with cars and puts his welding skills to use. Their house has never been finished and there's plenty to do around the property. He has a long list of duties on Sunday mornings, everything from raising the welcome flag to making the coffee. When he is asked to lead the prayers, Martin prays strongly from the heart.

On Sunday mornings Martin gets the ferry across the river. He first came to St Andrew's "because it was the shortest walk from the ferry" and he immediately found another family to belong to. He is a much-loved member of the Fellowship.

***Thank you for sharing your story Martin. You are a blessing to us.***

**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**

## ***Our 'Made by Hand' Craft Expo***

Sincere thanks to Annie and Madeline, and everyone who helped to make



this year's event a great success. The sun finally came out on Saturday and it drew in the crowds to admire the fantastic display of creative handwork. Helen and Linda's stunning collection of custom-designed dolls' clothes and many knitted and patchwork items filled the tables. Delwyn's fascinating sock



machine making 'Sole Mate' Socks kept people intrigued and entertained. Throw in unique padded bowl holders and earrings made from rubber inner tubes and feathers, Oh – and not forgetting Charlotte's length of rhubarb string!

The Creative Fibre group brought two spinning wheels and Annie brought in hers, with a quantity of Annie's multi-dyed homespun wools. Add into the mix the Church Opshop's collection of fabrics and haberdashery, and Peter Finlayson's carved kauri stirrers. The church pews were dressed in patchwork quilts and knitted blankets.



Helen Stephenson's stunning original blanket made a backdrop to the communion table, and Janet Brown's latest blanket of knitted strips for Operation Coverup was over the front pew. Muriel Pedersen supplied crafts and patterns suggested for the Christmas Child boxes.



Faye Flegg had the courage to display a matinee jacket that has taken 45 years to complete!

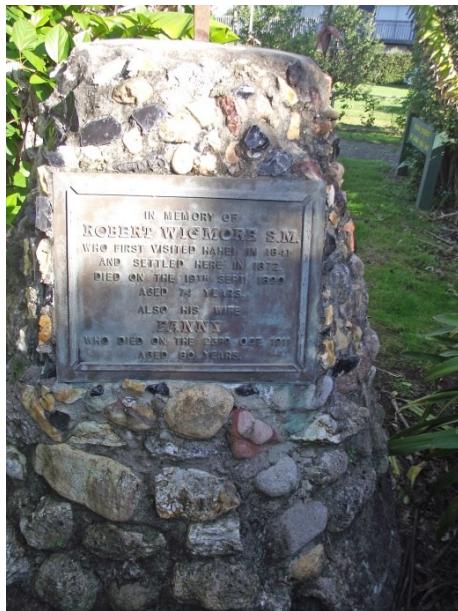
Helen Otto's crocheted Christmas tree and menagerie of crocheted animals greeted everyone who came in the door. At the end of the weekend Helen generously gave the little animals to go in the boxes.



Julie's continuous PowerPoint show had a variety of Scripture texts and pictures designed to encourage faith questions.

Deacon Margaret Birtles led our Sunday worship, themed around the appreciation of skills, before the team of helpers packed it all away until we celebrate creativity again next year.

# Robert and Fanny Wigmore Memorial Cairn, on their gravesite near the beach at Hahei And Wigmore and Harsant Memorial at Kotare Reserve, Hahei



## News snippets

**Parish Council** is hopeful that the rotten window near the piano will be repaired in the coming weeks. In anticipation of the work, a team headed by John Stephenson have moved the piano and rearranged the furniture in the chancel. This move might be permanent as the pianist now faces the congregation.

**The series of Bible Study videos** on 'Jewish Feasts' held on Fridays at the church, has now finished. The study has been well attended and appreciated. Julie will plan another video study in the Spring.

**Presbyterian Enliven** for older persons now meets twice a week in the church hall, providing safe and friendly social interaction and a cooked midday meal. There are currently places available for people who meet the Enliven criteria. If you know someone who would benefit from the programme, **see contact details on the back page**.

# Worship at St Andrew's

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



Aug 3rd Dorothy Preece (Communion)  
10th NZ Bible Society representative  
17th Rev Carl Glastone\*  
24th Bill Woodward  
31st Bill Woodward  
*Combined Churches service 5pm at*

**\*Rev Carl Gladstone** is visiting from Detroit, Michigan, where he is Director of the Motor City Campus Ministry

Sept 7th Dorothy Preece (Communion)  
14th Robyn Balfour - Christmas Child boxes  
21st Kevin Pringle  
28th Deacon Margaret Birtles - Spring festival

Margaret has suggested that the Sept 28<sup>th</sup> service could be a Spring Festival. If there are any flowers around we will put them in vases - potted flowers would work too - and perhaps wear our florals on the day.

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## From the Pulpit:

In July, Deacon Margaret Birtles told us this story:

A little girl was frightened by a thunder storm in the night. She ran into her parents' room and said, "Daddy, I'm frightened." Her Dad replied, "Don't be scared Sweetheart. It's only a storm. God will look after us." She replied, "I know. But I'm scared, and I need someone with skin on."

Margaret reminded us that from time to time we all need 'someone with skin on' to comfort us or be there for us in practical ways. We are the Lord's hands and feet in this world and those we meet need to recognise Him in the person that we present to them.

## Parish and Community Information

Monday      **Upright & Active exercise for seniors** 9am weekly  
Contact Wendy 028 411 3004 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 028 411 3004 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

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

Friday        **Blind / Low Vision** group meets 10-12 on 2nd Friday of each month in the Church hall. Contact Jackie 07 866 5054

**Cancer Support Coffee Morning**  
First Friday of each month. Contact Ruth 021 363 840

**Church Op Shop** open 9:30am to 1pm Wednesday to Saturday.  
Contact Madeline 021 169 1637

### **MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH** **St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church**

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