

Community Activities - St Andrew's Church Hall

Monday – Upright & Active exercise for seniors 9 am 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.(Bank Hols- Tuesdays)
Contact Maureen 027 2466 164

Tuesday – Upright & Active exercise for seniors 9am weekly

Contact Wendy 028 411 3004 or Kathy 021 254 2769

- **Enliven Presbyterian Aged Support** 11-3 pm. Lunch provided.
Contact Wendy 021 2296 324
- **Stich 'n' Chat** fortnightly 1:30-4pm in the Hamilton Room.
Includes afternoon tea. Contact Julie 021 169 1637

Wednesday – Scrapbags quilting group 10am-3pm weekly BYO lunch.

Contact Wilma 027 253 5589

- **Parkinsons Support** 6-weekly. 11am-2pm.
For dates contact Erwin 07 866 5665

Thursday- Enliven Presbyterian Aged Support 11-3 pm.

Contact Wendy 021 2296 324

Friday - Cancer Support Coffee Morning First Friday of each month.

Contact Ruth 021 363 840

- **Blind / Low Vision group** 10am-12 on **2nd Friday** of each month.
Contact Jackie 07 866 5054

The Church Op Shop

Open 9:30 am to 1pm Wednesday to Saturday.

Contact Madeline 021 169 1637

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

Corner Albert and Owen Streets, Whitianga | PO Box 368, Whitianga

www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz | standrewswhitianga@gmail.com

Facebook: St Andrews Community Church Mercury Bay NZ

Parish Chairman: Kevin Pringle - Secretary: Dorothy Preece 022 132 2061

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's by the Sea Community Church, Whitianga

NEWSLETTER

December – January 2025/26

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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
.....

O Come, Let us adore Him!



Worship at St Andrew's by the Sea

Services every Sunday 10:00 am.

Fellowship continues with morning tea after the service. Families with young children are welcome. Quiet toys and Bible-based activities are placed at the back of the church.



Preaching Calendar:

December 7th Communion Dorothy Preece

14th Kevin Pringle

21st Viv Whimster – Methodist Lay Preachers' Assoc.

25th *Christmas Day – 9:30 am Dorothy Preece

28th Ross McCook - Heart4Youth

January 4th New Year Communion – Rev Viv Coleman

11th Rev Andrew and Liz Warren - Tauranga

18th Bill and Robyn Woodward

25th Bill and Robyn Woodward.

***Please note – Christmas Day service time is 9:30**

Combined Churches Events:

Carols in the Park Friday 12th December, 6-8 pm

Bring a folding chair and enjoy the readings and carols from the various church leaders, and witnessing to the people in the eateries on Albert Street.

Christmas Parade Day – Saturday 13th December

Carol singers wanted!

Join Christians of all Churches to sing traditional carols by the Christmas tree. Gather at 12:30 before the Parade starts and continue singing as the Parade passes. You don't have to be a good singer – just enjoy the singing and share the real Christmas message.



From the Pulpit:

Christmas is the time when we celebrate the fulfilment of God's promise to send a Saviour (Messiah) to redeem the world.

Rev Shirley reminded us that the Bible tells the ongoing story of God interacting with His people, teaching them (and us) about Himself. Shirley reminded us that God made many promises (Covenants) to His people.

Here are some of them:

The Covenant with Noah and the world: (Genesis 9)

God said, "I promise that never again will a flood destroy the earth. As a sign of this everlasting Covenant, I have set my rainbow in the clouds."

The Covenant with Abraham and his descendants: (Genesis 12)

God said, "Go to a country that I will show you. You will have many descendants, and they will be a great nation, and through you all the nations of the world will be blessed."

The Covenant with Moses and the Israelite nation: (Exodus 6)

God said, "I will make you my own people, and I will be your God. I will bring you to the land that I solemnly promised to Abraham and his descendants."

The Covenant with David and his descendants: (2 Samuel 7)

This is God's promise that King David's lineage would endure forever, and that one of his descendants would establish a never-ending Kingdom.

"I will be his Father, and he will be my Son," said the Lord.

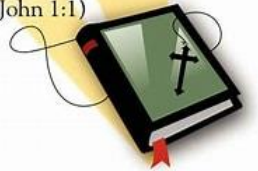
"To you, in David's town this day,

is born of David's line

A Saviour, who is Christ the Lord....."

We all need to know our Bible. If you don't have a Bible at home, please take one from church, with love from St Andrew's.

***"In the Beginning
was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God."
(John 1:1)***



Banking Information:

To donate to St Andrew's Church online:

Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish - BNZ Whitianga 02 0496 0062562 00

To donate to Manawa Kai Community Meals:

Mercury Bay Community Support Trust - Westpac 03 1578 0108901 00

Our people and their stories –

Introducing Judith Armstrong.

Judith is on a six-month holiday from Scotland, visiting her brother David Wilkins. Many of you will remember David's wife Val, who for years was a stalwart in our Opshop and a member of St Andrew's Fellowship.

Val died two years ago, and Judith's husband also died last year. So Judith decided it was time to come and spend some time with her brother. Although in phone and email contact, brother and sister hadn't met for about 16 years. Since arriving last month from Scotland, Judith has been attending services and is already helping with the Opshop.

Here is Judith's story:

Judith describes herself as 'a Yorkshire lass who was unfortunately born in Lancashire'. The Wars of the Roses are not easily forgotten! Judith had two older brothers, one of whom is David. Their parents were farmers, "Mostly dairy – sheep are a pest," says Judith. After 6 years the family moved to a bigger farm in the village of Denham, over the border into Yorkshire. "Mum was always busy on the farm but she sent us all to Sunday School at St Paul's Anglican Church. My brothers were choirboys – hard to imagine now! We went to church three times on Sundays – Bible Class in the afternoons and Youth Club at the church on Sunday evenings. The Vicar sometimes visited Mum at home. When I was about 16 we used to go with him from the Youth Club to the local pub, where they served us soft drinks. I was very sad when the Vicar left."

Judith passed the 11-plus exam and went to Keighley Tech. "I loved school, especially games. I was good at tennis, hockey and athletics."

Judith trained in early childhood education in Bradford, with week-about college and nursery experience. "I was sent to work at a nursery with underprivileged children for six weeks. I was just 17 – it opened my eyes as to how lucky I was with my family, and how some others have such a hard life. I have never forgotten it." In another nursery, the Headmistress was really horrible. "We all asked to be placed somewhere else."



When her training finished, Judith was looking for a job. "My boyfriend saw an advertisement for a nursery manager. I was only just out of college, but he persuaded me to apply – and I got it! The nursery was attached to a woollen mill in Keighley – I was in charge of 40 children!" Judith held that job for more than 2 years. At age 20 she got talking to an interesting man when they were both visiting family at the local hospital. "I married Nigel and was with him for 5 years. Sadly the marriage didn't last, but by that time I had two beautiful children, Nathan and Natalie." Judith attended church regularly, but she found the church was not supportive during the marriage break-up. Judith and the children went home to the farm.

Judith loved being a Mum. "I couldn't wait for the school holidays."

The owner of the local bakery, Tony, used to come to the farm to buy eggs.

"I had known him for years, and we got on well. Eventually we were married. Tony was also divorced. We couldn't be married in church. It had to be a civic ceremony, which was very sad, but this time I had got the right man. We were very happy."

Judith and Tony had two more children, Emily and Robert. Judith helped in the bakery, taking the small children with her. After Robert was born they sold the bakery and moved to run a fish and chip shop in the village of Hatton Cranswick, on the east coast. The two older children were able to take care of the young ones in the evenings, when Judith and Tony were busy in the shop. Judith had never stopped going to church. She joined the local Anglican Church and became involved with the Women's Guild. She specially enjoyed Christmas with the children at church, doing handcrafts for decorations and helping with Christmas events. "Tony didn't come regularly, but he was always there to help when we needed a hand."

Judith and Tony lived in Hatton Cranswick for 20 years, before they decided it was time for something different in their retirement.

"My son Robert decided we needed to be nearer civilisation, but the places he found all seemed so cramped after living with so much space round us." In the end, they found it for themselves. In 2004 Tony and Judith were on a caravan holiday in the village of Whitehills in Scotland. It was such a pretty place, they thought it might be a nice place to live. "We went to the local Estate Agent. He had just listed this house in Whitehills. We took one look and bought it."

It was a wrench, leaving long-time friends and church life behind, but they were ready for a change.

"My good friend from Hatton Cranswick came to stay, and she made sure that I went to church. It was the Church of Scotland. They were a very welcoming group, and I was soon involved in church activities – including Christmas events. One year we built an igloo out of milk cartons. For the church Christmas meal Tony always baked the Christmas pies and the turkey."

The last few years have been rather bleak for Judith. In 2024 Judith's church was closed and the congregation amalgamated. Church is now a long bus ride away. Judith had operations on her feet, and then her hip, and Tony also broke his hip, so no-one could drive. Tony became ill and there were some desperate times trying to get medical help for him, waiting hours for doctors and ambulances to arrive. Tony died last year. "Our family were there for us both, and then for me, and my Christian friends have been very supportive, but for a time my faith was wavering," Judith says.

"Before I came to stay with David in Whitianga, I hadn't been to church for quite some time, but he had told everyone I was coming, so his friends were keen to meet me. They soon got me to church and I have found them very welcoming. Now they've got me involved with the Opshop as well, even though I'm only here for a while. I've also helped Madeline to put up the Christmas tree. Christmas will be very different for me this year!

"I have missed going to church. My friends in Scotland are keen to get me there again, even though it means nearly all day to get there and back on the Sunday buses. I can see how the Lord has looked after me through all the trauma, with the help of these good Christian friends. I have seven grandchildren, ages 11 to 22, and my daughter lives close by. I know I am blessed.

Why did Jesus have to come as a baby?

Bill Woodward posed the question recently. Why did Father God to send a vulnerable human baby to this earth, susceptible to all the frailties and temptations of human life? Surely, anything could go wrong? Surely, Jesus could have gone off track? But that's the point. Jesus did not sin.

Ever. Certainly Jesus was brought to tears, roused to anger, forced to His knees in despair, but Jesus saw it through to His life's seemingly bitter end. Jesus, the Sinless One, *understands us, and now He stands before the Father and intercedes for us.* Now every human soul is assured of salvation if we will but believe, and follow Jesus.



'Don't love your stuff – Love your Saviour!'

This was the message we heard at the Friday Bible Study. Pastor Gary Hamrick was leading us on video through the Book of James, which holds many practical life lessons. In Chapter 5 James (the brother of Jesus) condemns land owners who have piled up riches at the expense of their labourers, and abused those too weak to resist. We all know that wealth can be a stumbling block to faith. Those who have nothing find it easier – necessary even - to rely on God's providence.

Jesus said, "You can't love God and money." Let's be thankful, and be sure to follow the Spirit's leading, to use our resources to bring glory to God.

This year we sent 336 Christmas boxes from the Coromandel to children in Fiji. The whole village is invited to the parties where the boxes are given out, as missionaries share God's love with the families. Many thanks to all who contributed – thank you for generously sharing!



More Ideas for 'God's GPS'



Lynnor sent us these from Gisborne: *DOUBLE GPS - God's Good Promises Provide Spiritual Strength God's Guidance Promises Pathways Straight and Sure God Gladly Provides Peace, Strength, Solace God's Goodness Promotes Praise, Song, Surety*

Please Save Stamps!

They are a rare commodity these days, and Christmas is about the only time when we might expect to receive letters in the mail, so please preserve them for the Blind Foundation charity. Whether from NZ or overseas, they are all needed. We need to leave ***at least one centimetre of paper around each stamp*** – so that means being very careful how we open the envelopes!

We collect them in the box on our sales table at church, and Lea Jooste faithfully prepares the stamps to send off. Each year we receive a letter of thanks from the charity, telling how the money raised from the stamps is spent on cataract operations, etc.

