

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

October-November 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: Joshua Muwanguzi

Joshua was born in Jinja, Uganda, where the River Nile flows out of Lake Victoria. His parents named him Muwanguzi, which means 'overcomer' in their language. He has three siblings. Their parents are Ministers in the Rivers of Life Church, an evangelical, Pentecostal fellowship. Joshua has been surrounded by people of strong Christian faith since he was born.

We first met Joshua a couple of years ago when he answered our advertisement – 'Church organ free to a good home.' Joshua took the organ home to Cook Drive – and we are about to learn more about him, and why his home is a 'good home'.

We recently met Joshua again when he came to St Andrew's to tell us about his 7-yr-old self. That year, in his home town of Jinja, Joshua received a Christmas Child box from the Samaritan's Purse Mission.

"We were living in a poor area, so to celebrate Christmas we always got new clothes. The clothes were welcome, and needed, but it wasn't very exciting. So when I received a Christmas box filled with toys, I was overjoyed. It was my first real present. I came to realise there were Christian people in the western world who had things to give away –and they had given them to me! I began to understand that I was part of the world-wide family of God, and to realise how much God loved me.

Joshua was blessed by God from a very young age. "I was born with club feet, but my parents prayed for me and the condition was immediately healed." Joshua recalls another healing miracle in his early life.



"I used to have bouts of pneumonia. One day I had a very bad attack and the Ministers were called in to pray for me. I felt nauseous. Then I threw up and the illness had gone – forever."

Joshua explains that Uganda has a long tradition of witchcraft and superstition. "Those practices are evil, and the Church is fighting to overcome them, but it means that the people are open to the Spiritual – in Uganda Christians have no trouble believing in miracles! Ministers of the Church are respected and people of no faith are open to conversations, in fact they enjoy them. It is so different here in New Zealand.

"God had a place in my heart from a young age. When I was five years old, coming home from Kindy, I felt a warm glow within me, and I knew it was a Divine touch. I raced home and asked Mum to lead me in prayer. I felt compelled to ask Jesus into my life. When other children played schools, I played at being a preacher. I knew God would always use me in ministry."

Most of the schools in Uganda are Church schools. Joshua says his faith got firmly grounded at senior school, where he led the Christian Fellowship. "My Mother was involved with YWAM (Youth With A Mission) and she had a ministry to young people. There were always a lot of people, young and old, at our home."

Joshua recalls another miracle. "I got a job selling baby diapers! I was a passenger on a public transport van one day when it was involved in a multi-vehicle accident where several people died. I survived, with a knock on the head, and no lasting damage, thanks to the bag full of diapers! Everyone said it was a miracle. I am sure God saved me that day, because He has so much for me to do."

At an Anglican University in Kampala, Joshua studied accounting and business practice. "My Christian friends and I were on fire for the Lord, and we started a Fellowship. God used us to bring many young people to the Lord through our witness. We all wanted to bring Christian ethics and honesty into Ugandan businesses. Corruption is rife, and it is hard to change the culture, but honesty is what God wants, and it's good for business!"

Joshua joined a firm of accountants in Kampala and as a trainee he gained experience with all types of business enterprises, setting him in good stead for the future.

Joshua met his future wife, Pam, a Kiwi from Wanaka. She was in Uganda as a Missionary, working with a community that was going through post-war trauma. The Lord brought them together when Pam came to the Fellowship which Joshua was leading. "I was working in a remote area," Pam says. "The work was challenging and isolating, so I came to Joshua's Fellowship whenever I could." Eventually, they got engaged, and 11 months later they had a traditional Ugandan wedding at Pam's village base in the North of Uganda. There were 1000 people there! Later they had a Christian wedding in Jinja, on the banks of the Nile, where Joshua's father officiated.

After Covid the visa rules changed and it became easier for Joshua to apply to come to New Zealand with Pam. They felt the Lord's hand in that too. They arrived in Whitianga in 2023. Joshua took the church organ home, because he wanted to invite people to his home to worship and fellowship with the family. They now have two little girls, Lily (4) and Eden (2). They attend C3 Church, where Joshua leads worship.

"Wherever I have been, God has always used me in the Ministry," Joshua says. He is currently employed as an accountant for Te Korowai, and travels to Thames three times a week. He also has a couple of contracts with private businesses. "Few New Zealanders show any regard for God, but they are mostly honest in their business dealings. I enjoy working in a context that has godly morals as the foundation."

But still, Pam and Joshua are both missionaries at heart, and they plan to take the family back to Uganda in the not-too-distant future.

Thank you for sharing your story, Joshua. May God bless you and the family, in all that you do.

Christmas Child Box Packing Party – Sunday 19th October

Can you help? This year the church office is stacked up, not with filled boxes, but with items that need to be packed. There are bags full of soft toys, clothing and other things generously donated. The packing party is always fun, and Robyn Balfour will be there to direct us, with a ready supply of empty boxes. **We hope you can join us after service on Sunday 19th.**



Visit from Jamie Bester

Jamie Bester is from *City-to-City*, a Church Consultancy organisation. He was invited by Kaimai Presbytery to visit all the churches in the Presbytery region. Dorothy and Julie met with Jamie and Vanya Wallis, the Kaimai Mission representative.

We answered Jamie's routine questions about the Fellowship. We told him that our numbers are gradually building, mainly from retirees who come from churches in other parts of NZ. Then he asked, "How do you encourage outsiders into the Church?" It was a challenging question.

We know it's not enough to say, "Many people use the hall and the Church Opshop and they know we are here on Sundays."

We acknowledge that we need to 'cast our bread upon the waters' much more widely than that. ***It is a matter for prayer. Please pray for Spirit guidance to grow our Church – and for God to bring in the people who will help with that.***

New Bible Study Series

Earlier in the year Julie led a series of video studies on the history of the Jewish Festivals, and how they relate to Jesus and the New Testament. These were held on Friday afternoons in the church. They attracted people from outside of our Church Fellowship and were very well received.

Julie is now planning a new series of video studies on the ***Book of James, beginning Friday October 17th. 1:30 to 3 pm, then afternoon tea.***

It will probably be an 8-week series. We will advertise this around the other churches. Please invite (and bring) anyone who you think might be interested.

Funeral:

Graeme Menzies – September 5th at St Andrew's, and burial at the Whitianga Cemetery. Jo Martin officiating. Please remember the Menzies and Gould families in your prayers.



Parish Annual Meeting Report

The Parish Annual Meeting was held after service on September 14th. As usual, it was not well attended, with 17 stalwarts present. The Reports were distributed for a couple of weeks before the meeting, so we take the poor attendance as a sign that no-one has any real concerns about how the Fellowship is progressing.

There were some good outcomes from that meeting, in particular the formation of a long-awaited **Property Sub-Committee** to handle maintenance issues. In the past our Parish Council meetings have been bogged down in the detail of repairs and maintenance, instead of the real work of the Church. Now, these issues will be handled between meetings as they occur, and reports brought to Parish Council.

Those appointed to the Property Sub-Committee are Peter Finlayson, Debbie Gordon, Joy McGregor and John Pedersen. Thank you all!

At the meeting John reported that all excess vegetables from the church garden that cannot be used in the Monday Meals, are now going to Social Services and received with gratitude.

Debbie has been working with FENZ (Fire and Emergency NZ) to get our Fire Compliance up to scratch. Our systems update is necessary because the building can house more than 100 people. It will probably be an expensive exercise, but without the proper Compliances we could be in for a very big fine. There will have to be fire drills – watch this space!

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
03 1578 0108901 00

Do you know your sums?
1 Cross + 3 Nails = 4 Given!

FOR
GOD
SO
LOVED THE WORLD
HE
GAVE
HIS
ONLY
SON

Cause for Rejoicing!

Finally - the church window has been repaired, after two years of searching for a tradesman who would tackle the job. It was costly - total in excess of \$18,000. When the window was removed, the kauri cladding below was found to be rotten also. Miraculously, kauri boards of the right size to match the cladding were found on Trade Me – an answer to prayer! Our joiners, Luke Lawrence and James Arthur experimented with different oils and tints to get an exact match with the 127-yr-old timbers. They were the right men for the job!

Before.....



.....and After



Worship at St Andrew's by the Sea

10am every Sunday.

Communion Service on the first Sunday of each month.

Quiet toys and Bible activities are provided for young families at the back of the church.

Preaching Schedule:

Oct 5 Rev John Twemlow
12 Julie and Bible Team
19 Ross Millar
26 John Ormsby

Nov 2 Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby - Back from Canada!
9 Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby
And NZ Trio Concert 2pm – pay at the door.
16 Dorothy Preece
23 Bill and Robyn Woodward
30 Bill and Robyn Woodward *Combined Service 5 pm*

From the Pulpit:

Last time they were with us, Bill Woodward mentioned how these days, everyone relies on the GPS to find their way. Bill said God gives us a GPS too – Bill called it

God's Providence and Supply.

We have been thinking about this, and we've come up with a few more:

God's Power and Spirit

God's Perfect Sacrifice

God's Promise of Salvation

Let's keep this going – let us have your GPS ideas!



St Andrew's Church Hall Calendar

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 1 pm Wednesday to Saturday.

Contact Madeline 021 169 1637



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St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

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