

## Parish and Community Information

Please check with these groups regarding their holiday recess

- Monday **Upright & Active** 9am weekly exercise for active seniors  
Contact Carol 867 1097  
**Community meals** takeaway only, every Monday 3:30-5pm  
Contact Maureen 027 246 6164
- Tuesday **Stitch n' Chat** fortnightly 1:30-4pm in the Hamilton Room  
Contact Julie 021 169 1637  
**Enliven** (Presbyterian Support for the Elderly) weekly  
Contact Jenny 021 071 9539
- Wednesday **Ladies' Bible Study** 10am weekly  
Contact Julie 021 169 1637  
**Inter-Church Women's Fellowship** Monthly.  
Contact Annie 866 3711  
**Scrapbags quilting group** 10am weekly.  
Contact Robin 866 5029  
**Parkinsons Support** 6-weekly.  
For dates and times contact Keith 027 459 8683
- Thursday **Enliven** (Presbyterian Support for the Elderly) weekly  
Contact Jenny 021 071 9539
- Friday **Cancer Support Coffee Morning** First Friday of each month.  
Contact Ruth 021 363 840  
**AA Driver Licensing** Second Friday of each month and now  
also fourth Friday of every second month.  
(11 February, 25 February, 11 March)  
No bookings allowed.

### 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](http://www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz) | [standrewswhitianga@gmail.com](mailto:standrewswhitianga@gmail.com)

**Facebook:** St Andrews Community Church Mercury Bay NZ

**Parish Council Chairman:** Kevin Pringle

**Parish Secretary:** Dorothy Preece 022 132 2061

**Newsletter Editor:** Charlotte Christensen

## MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

### St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

**February-March 2023**

*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.*

### **125 Years Young! They were good years!**

#### **Our 125-Year Celebrations – Programme**

**Friday Feb 17<sup>th</sup>**

**10.00 – 4 pm Church displays open to all**

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>**

**10:00 – 12:00 Church Displays open**

**3:00 pm History Tea (by Invitation)**

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>**

**9:30am Thanksgiving Service**

**Followed by lunch . Children's Competition**

**Prizes will be awarded at lunch**

**Church Displays open until 4 pm.**

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup>**

**10:00 – 3:00 Church Displays open**

**Please encourage everyone to view  
these displays of community interest.**

**Catering at afternoon tea is limited to 70 people.**

**Congregation - Please register early!**

## ***A Brief History of Whitianga's Community Church***

(With acknowledgements to local historian Janet Riddle, in her books  
*'Seaspray and Sawdust'* and *'By Saddle to Pulpit'*.)

After James Cook's visit to Mercury Bay in the Endeavour in 1769, the news was out – there was good timber to be had in far-off New Zealand.

By the 1820's ships began to arrive to carry off the kauri and settlers were pouring in from Europe in the hope of new opportunities and prosperity.

Mercury Bay soon came under the loggers' axes and saws.

The first recorded Christian worship was at Gordon Browne's boatshed, when in 1838 the *Glatton* was wrecked off the Alderman Islands. Everyone was saved, including Rev W. Wade who led a service of thanks. Thereafter Browne's shed became a regular place of worship for Maori and Europeans, until 1882.

The kauri bushman's life was hard and dangerous. Accidents were frequent and life-threatening. Many men lost their lives in the bush, far from help. Men were trapped under giant rolling logs, or they lost limbs to the saws. The cry went up for a hospital to be built, and a dedicated church, so that the dead could be given a decent Christian burial, as in the old country.

When the kauri mill moved across the river (to where the Museum now stands) the ever-growing Whitianga population grew around it. The new mill hall was then used for church services.

In 1893 a Church Committee was formed to 'erect a small church for religious services'. The church was to be available for the use of all Protestant denominations. To raise money, public subscription forms were placed at strategic locations in Whitianga, Kuaotunu, Coroglen and Whenuakite. The Lee family were prominent fundraisers. As the forms filled up, new forms replaced them. Land on the main thoroughfare (now Albert Street) was purchased for fifteen pounds, from Mr Thomas Peacock. The Undenominational Church Trust was formed in 1895 with seven Trustees appointed.

## **Worship @ St Andrew's, 9:30 every Sunday**

Feb	5th	Dorothy Preece ( <b>Communion</b> )
	12th	Ross Millar
	19th	<b>125-Year Anniversary Service</b> - Mary Petersen & others
	26th	Dorothy Preece
Mar	5th	Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby ( <b>Communion</b> )
	12th	John Ormsby
	19th	(tba)
	26th	Julie and team

***We are ever grateful to our visiting ministers and lay persons who open the Word to us. It is becoming harder to fill our pulpit, so if you have any possible contacts for preachers, please let Dorothy know.***

***The preaching plan*** for the year is in the early stages of development.

Preachers will be advertised as the dates are filled in. If our members would like to recommend possible preachers from your previous parishes, please let us know. Some of our faithful visiting preachers have already promised their services for later in the year and new visiting preachers are always being sought. Also our own Fellowship members are growing in confidence to 'stand up' sharing their own testimonies or leading in prayer. Julie and the Bible Study ladies will also lead some services. Parish Council will continue to encourage and support all those who feel called to this work.



## **From the Pulpit**

*Methodist Deacon Margaret Birtles gave us this:*

A Deacon went to heaven and was shown articles from Christ's Ministry, all held in the sacred archives: A fishing net, the widow's mite, a broken perfume jar, folded grave clothes. She asked, "Where is the bowl and towel that Jesus used to wash the disciples' feet?"

The guide replied, "Oh, they're not here. They're still being used in the world."

## Parish Register

### Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January - Celebration of Life service for Carol Pringle

Celebrant: Rev John Twemlow

Carol finally lost her battle with cancer on December 30<sup>th</sup>. Our deep sympathy and prayers go out to Kevin and the family.

Shortly before Christmas an impromptu group of carol singers from our Fellowship stood in the garden to sing to Carol. We went to bring blessings to her – and came away feeling that Carol had blessed us by her strong faith and indomitable courage. She will be sadly missed.



## Parish Council News

Our Chairman Kevin Pringle currently has Leave of Absence from Parish Council. We hope to see him back when he feels he can get back into the job after the sad loss of Carol.

Ian Brown has signalled that he would prefer to step down, due to health concerns. Janet Brown will remain as a Parish Councillor.

There have been no formal meetings over the holiday period, but some business has been conducted by email consultation.

## Monday Meals News

Monday meals chefs Delwyn and John Stevens have sold their house and moved away. They have been there since 2021 and have done a great job of providing tasty, nourishing meals from St Andrew's kitchen.

The Stevens family are very well loved in this community, and we will miss them. We wish them every success in their new home.

A new chef has been called for interview – watch this space!



Puriri blocks for the underfloor were supplied free of charge from McLeod's farm, and the interior kauri framing was all cut by volunteer labour at Leonard Lee's boatyard on the beach, just behind the church site. The walls were built of kauri board and batten, white painted on the outside and varnished on the inside. The fingerprints of the men who erected the roof lining can still be seen in the varnish, positioned while still wet. Such was their hurry to get the roof on the church!

Money was tight and the original plans had to be reduced in size, but the Trustees were determined to see the church completed. Second-hand pews were purchased at ten shillings each and also a bell, weighing 60 pounds. The Minute Book records that the final cost of building the 'Undenominational Church' was three hundred pounds.

It was agreed that use of the church should be shared (and financed) by the Church of England (now Anglican), Wesleyan (now Methodist) and Presbyterian Churches. The Presbyterians designated the Whitianga Church a 'Mission Station' of the Coromandel Parish.

Church of England Archdeacon Maunsell officially opened the church on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1898, but as the pews had not yet arrived the first Sunday worship was March 27<sup>th</sup> 1898.

That day, the morning service was conducted by Presbyterian Missioner Rev James Marshall. In the afternoon Mr W.W. Symons led a Church of England service, and the evening preacher was the Wesleyan Minister, Rev. G. Frost. The church was packed for all three services.

Worship leading continued in this way, with preachers riding 20 miles on horseback from Coromandel, through mud and rain. They often travelled on to take services at Coroglen or Kuaotunu. Stories abound about their travelling misfortunes.

Hospitality was generously offered by local families, in particular William and Catherine Lee who lived in Campbell Street. William Lee Jr. was the first Sunday School Superintendent and also Chairman of the Undenominational Church Trust.

A scale of charges paid the preachers and the upkeep of the church. Pews were rented to families who reserved them. The first two rows were reserved for the Amene family. It was agreed that individual preachers should not be charged for use of the pulpit! The pew fees were dropped after the first year.

In the 1950's a Baptist congregation also used the church. Baptist member Dave Bruce led the Sunday School and also built church furniture.

In 1969 the Anglican congregation built their new church in Dundas Street, and the Baptists built in Cook Drive shortly after. This left the (now combined) Methodist/ Presbyterian congregation as the sole user of the church. The property remained under the umbrella of the Church Trust until after the Centennial celebrations in 1998 – a great weekend event which overflowed into the Whitianga Hall and involved the whole community.

The Undenominational Church Trust was finally wound up in 2000, and remaining monies paid out to the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, with fourth generation W.A. (Bill) Lee appointed as Liquidator for the Trust. The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand then purchased the property, and the name was changed to *St Andrews by the Sea Community Church*.

The original small porch entrance on Albert Street was by-passed in the 1970's when Dave Bruce built an extension at the back, with space for a Sunday School and toilet. For many years funeral directors had complained about the complexity of bringing a coffin up the steps through the tiny front porch entrance. The back entrance remedied this difficulty. After the Transfer of Title in 2000, the interior of the church was turned around, with pulpit and pews reversed – a rather controversial change! In 2002 the new hall and kitchen facilities were added. Today many non-profit community groups use our facilities. The name 'St Andrew's by the Sea Community Church' reflects not only its rich history, but also its on-going commitment to the people of Mercury Bay.

## Church Property News

You will notice that work has been happening around the church property recently. It was great to have the outdoor deck area spruced up for the summer. Sincere thanks to Vance Cosgrave and David Christie. We now need to consider the question of solid outdoor furniture. Particularly noticeable is the carpark repair, which happened very quickly once we found a contractor, and it is a great improvement. No more potholes! The cost was in excess of \$12,000. Unfortunately the intermittent flooding problem is not so easily remedied.



John Pedersen and Kevin Pringle have been working away at the church vegetable garden and harvesting the vegetables. The garden gave up its Christmas crop of potatoes to the Social Services foodbank, and the pumpkins are growing well.

After years of faithful devotion to the church flower gardens, Lorraine Hunter has stepped down. Lorraine has done a great service and blessed us all with her 'old-fashioned' flowers that delight everyone who walks past. Joy McGregor and Elizabeth Cosgrave have volunteered to take on the task, and Annie Lynch sprays the weeds around our pavers. Elizabeth and her husband Vance have also kindly volunteered to check the church property each evening. It's amazing how often lights or heaters are left on... ***To all our valued volunteers – a big Thank You!***

**Secretary's email addresses:** Please note Dorothy has a new **personal email address:** [dorothypreece8@gmail.com](mailto:dorothypreece8@gmail.com) Please put this in your address books. There are still a lot of messages going to the old one, and Dorothy would like to shut it down.

For formal church business, please use [standrewswhitianga@gmail.com](mailto:standrewswhitianga@gmail.com)

**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**