

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's Community Church Newsletter

February—March 2022

Our Mission in this Parish is to demonstrate the Love of God to all people, and by our actions and words to encourage them towards a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our people and their stories: Barbara Blake, 2nd instalment

Barbara first told us her story in 2006, when she had recently joined the St Andrew's Fellowship. Hers is a story of sadness blessed with the hope of the Gospel of Christ Jesus.



Just to recap: In 1982 Barbara's son Peter (the second of four sons) died tragically in at 23 in a motorbike accident. The devastating news took a toll on her husband Ken's health and he was forced to retire at age 55. They came to Kuaotunu to live in 1985. Ken was diagnosed with bone marrow cancer, and while he was so sick, tragedy took another son. Keith suffered a massive heart attack and died, leaving a wife and five-year-old son in Wellington. Ken died in 1995 after a long and painful illness. When she first told us her story, Barbara said, "These things happen to people. You don't blame God. You trust God to get you through."

Barbara's faith was forged at her mother's knee and it has never wavered. For years she was part of John and Robin Twemlow's AIM Ministries Fellowship in Kuaotunu, coming to St Andrew's only after the Twemlows moved to Hamilton to pastor a congregation there. "I missed the Twemlows and the church family I had enjoyed there. John Twemlow led Ken's funeral in 1995 and in 2001 he baptised me at Jacob's Well in Tairua. John also officiated at my son David's wedding in 2005, so there were lots of connections. I knew hardly anyone in Whitianga.

My friend Sue said she would bring me to church in town. I had a vision of a green and white church, but I didn't know where it was or anything about it.

It turned out to be St Andrew's, and I soon found that I was related to one or two of the people. My Grandfather Henry Alexander came to Kuaotunu for the gold mining in the early days, but I never knew about that until Ken and I came to live here! My father was born in Auckland. I now have a photo of granddad and a group of gold miners in Kuaotunu. In St Andrew's hall there is a portrait of Ethel Patience Hamilton—Ethel Patience was Granddad's sister. Through the Alexander/Hamilton connection I've met several distant cousins, including Alex Hamilton who visits from Australia, and Annie Lynch! So St Andrew's does feel like a big family to me now." Very quickly after her arrival, Barbara became an essential part of our team. A born carer and caterer – and born to serve the Lord - she continues to enrich all our lives.

In 2006 Barbara told us, "In church at Kuaotunu we sang praise songs for an hour every Sunday – we Presby's tend to be very reserved." Barbara now says she loves the old hymns and the new. "A lot has changed since I joined. I love Elizabeth's medleys of praise songs, and all the different preachers who lead our services. We have seen many familiar faces taken from us, including my dear friend Phyl Bullen and Edith Hamilton, and I've got older, of course."

Barbara has had her share of crosses to bear and still they come. She is plagued by Polymyalgia, and her son Murray is now suffering from Motor Neuron Disease. "Murray lives in Dunedin. It's very hard being so far from him and Donna as Murray is going through this deterioration of health." That said, no-one says "Praise God" or "Thank you Lord," more often than our Barbara. It comes at the end of every sentence.

"In January I flew to the South Island and had two lovely weeks with the family. Such a blessing, and I have my fourth boy David living close by. David and Bronwyn are very good to me, and I have good neighbours. I thank the Lord I can still drive. At 86, I drive better than I walk!

"New people are joining our church all the time. I'm no longer in charge of funeral catering – Praise the Lord! But I'm still part of Julie's Bible study group and they are a bunch of lovely caring ladies. We have so much to be thankful for especially here in this piece of God's Paradise."

We love you Barbara – thank you for (albeit reluctantly) sharing your story and your wisdom with us.

Temporary Closure of the Op-shop

Over the past year we have put a great deal of time and effort into keeping our Op-shop open to ensure staff and customers safety. This involves having a staff member checking vaccination passes at the front door, and checkout/ exit at the rear, and regulating the number of people in our small, not-well-ventilated spaces. We need a bigger shop!

On the whole, our customers have been very understanding and supportive, with only the odd grumble. But the regime involves more staff.

With the new threat of Omicron, plus long weekends and lots of visitors, some volunteers have opted not to work. We are all over 70!

But this has highlighted the fact that our numbers have been dwindling for some time. We now cannot operate the shop safely until we get some new recruits, so the decision was taken to close the shop from January 25th, until we have enough staff to re-open safely.

PLEASE PRAY that our advertised recruitment drive will lead people to join the team and carry on the work. We hope to re-open within weeks.

The regular monthly donations to churches and community groups will continue for as long as we can. If you know of anyone willing to volunteer, please let Madeleine know. 866 0169

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From our friend Lynnor Cooke in Gisborne:

By this I have known the presence of the Lord:

In the rising of the sun;

In the smile of another's face.

In the touch of a hand or the sound of a laugh.

In the scent of a flower, holding the promise of spring.

In the healing of hurts, and the forgiveness of sin.

In the giving of gifts beyond all expectation.

In the shower of love that comes from God's Son.

Let us give thanks to the Lord with all our heart!

Let us worship our God, whose presence and power

Endures forever!

Lynnor's new address is

107B Ormond Road, Gisborne 4010

There is nothing new under the sun.....Ecclesiastes 1:9

This one phrase alone has come down to us as a common saying, but the rest of the passage in which it is set must be one of the most depressing in all of Scripture. It is one of those passages that leads us to ask, *why is this included in the Bible?* Verse 1 begins, 'It is useless, all is useless...' However, if you are in a buoyant mood it will actually make you smile at its rank pessimism.....

When the world was hit by the Bubonic Plague in the 1500's, the great theologian Martin Luther wrote this:

'I shall ask God mercifully to protect us. Then I will fumigate, purify the air, administer medicine, and take medicine. I shall avoid places and persons where my presence is not needed in order to not become contaminated, and thus perchance inflict and pollute others and so cause their death as a result of my negligence.

If God should wish to take me He will surely find me. But I have done what He has expected of me, and so I am not responsible for either my own death or the deaths of others. If my neighbour needs me however, I shall not avoid place or person, but will go freely. This is a God-fearing faith because it is neither brash nor foolhardy, and does not tempt God.'

Nothing new under the sun indeed!

New Bible Study Group

At our Annual Meeting in October, the call went out for a Bible study for couples or singles. Christine and David Christie have generously agreed to host this new group and are in the process of pulling it together.

New Mid-Week Bible Study for couples or singles

To be held at 6, Little George Place (off Kupe)

Date and time to be decided. Everyone welcome

If interested, please email your time preference -

Christies4@xtra.co.nz 07 866 0107 or 021 256 2808



The Vaccination Debate

In line with the congregation decision as reported in the last Newsletter, we are continuing to check vaccination passes for all who attend St Andrew's Church, hall and Op-shop, and while we know we must keep everyone safe, this is a cause for prayer and ongoing concern for many of us. We are aware of two church family members who cannot attend worship because of it, and all of us know others in our own families or close friends whose health issues have not been deemed sufficient to warrant an exemption, or who strongly object to the government's call to be vaccinated. Parish Council has considered whether those not vaccinated could be seated separately in the hall on Sundays, but it would be impossible to meet proper separation requirements.

Worship for the non-vaccinated

The Baptist Church in Cook Drive is now offering an alternative worship time for those not vaccinated, on Sundays at 5:30 pm.

Pastor Mike Walker says, "Please ask people to confirm before attending, as we will be monitoring the Omicron outbreak and may have to suspend these services if we're having a lot of cases in Whitianga, or if for any reason the leaders taking it have to isolate. Apart from that, we intend to carry it through."

People wishing to attend should ring Mike: 021 793 431

At our New Year Communion, Rev Viv Coleman gave us this:

'I came to the end of my own hope, O God, and found that your hope held me still. I saw through the ruin of my own happiness, and saw that your better joy stood firm – an unassailable fortress that even death could not throw down. And you have lifted me from where I lay on war-torn fields, and have planted my feet solidly upon your ramparts.

And so I will celebrate your goodness in the land of the living.

I will delight in this life, even as it is lived in the shadow of death.

In this created space I will mourn with all my heart – and that is right.

And yes, I will rejoice with all my heart as well, for that is also right.



Annie's Prayer

A couple of weeks ago Annie led the Prayers of the People. It was such a lovely prayer, several people asked for copies. Here is the first part of Annie's prayer:

Gracious Father, the One who was in the beginning, who is now, and who has no end, our Eternal Father, we come to worship you in prayer.

We marvel at your creative power – a butterfly as he visits the garden, the call of a bird in the early morning, a gust of wind that rustles the leaves...

Your creation speaks of you. Thank you Lord, that you are in control, that you are faithful. Lord, we pray that all mankind may see you in creation, and seek you out. For this is what we were created for: to know you, to fellowship with you, to praise you and to worship you.

Thank you for our being. Thank you for your presence in this very moment - a gift from you, our Loving Father. We thank you for the knowledge of your Son, our Saviour, who came to make you known and bridge the gap our sin had made between us.... in Jesus we have peace with you, our God.

Oh, the wisdom and plan of God our Saviour! Foolishness to those who are perishing – life and joy to those who are saved and being saved.

We surrender to you. Come, dwell in us... may our lives be a testimony to your goodness, love and faithfulness, Lord. Help us to hunger for your Word ... to make time to read, to meditate, and know your ways.....

This year, help our resolve to know you better, to allow your Word to dwell in us, and guide every thought, every word, every deed.....

We ask these things in the Name of Jesus, and for His glory. Amen

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In Memoriam

Wilson James Kerr – funeral held December 11th

Ross McCook officiating

(Linda) Jean Carr – funeral held December 30th

Dorothy Preece officiating

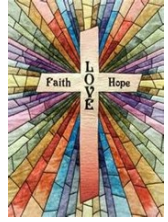
Wendy Young – private memorial service January 26th.



Our thoughts and prayers are with the families at this sad time.

St Andrew's Worship Schedule

9:30 every Sunday (Vaccine pass required)



Feb 6th Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby - Communion
13th Dorothy Preece
20th Kevin Pringle
27th Elizabeth Nicholls / Annie Lynch

Mar 6th Pastors Stuart & Joy Hanna - Communion
13th Julie St George & Ladies' Bible Team
20th Ross Millar
27th Dorothy Preece

Sincere thanks to all who help us preach the message every Sunday.

It is a blessing to see our home-grown Bible Group ladies answering the call to share their faith and inspiration.

The Methodist Church offers a highly recommended online study course for prospective Lay Preachers. If you would like to know more, talk to Dorothy. I thoroughly recommend it!

New duty rosters for 2022

Julie has been trying to fill gaps in the duty rosters, but there are still some open opportunities! Please if you can help, let Julie know.

Door Welcoming:

1st Sunday – Martin Wigmore (**another needed**)
2nd Sunday - Barbara Blake, Gina Mahmud
3rd Sunday - Dorothy Preece, Carol and Kevin Pringle
4th Sunday - Annie Lynch, Christine Christie
5th Sunday - Elizabeth Nicholls (**another needed**)

Although it was resumed in the last couple of weeks, we have again decided to suspend morning teas for the time being.

Morning Tea roster (for when we resume):

1st Sunday - Barbara Blake, Carol Pringle, Annie Lynch
2nd Sunday - Gina Mahmud, Christine Christie
3rd Sunday - Linda Stephenson, Heather Anderson
4th Sunday - Dorothy Preece, Martin Wigmore

Parish and Community Information

All persons using St Andrew's facilities must now show vaccination passes. The only exemption to this rule will be AA Driver Licensing.

- 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 **Sit and be Fit** 10am weekly for the less active
Contact Viv 869 5295
Stitch n' Chat fortnightly 1:30-4pm in the Hamilton Room
Contact Julie 021 169 1637
- 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 866 0556
- Friday **Cancer Support Coffee Morning** First Friday of each month.
Contact Ruth 021 363 840
AA Driver Licensing Second Friday of each month.
(10 December, 14 January) No bookings allowed.

***THE CHURCH OP SHOP is currently CLOSED, needing volunteers
If you can help, write to Madeleine Saunders c/- PO Box 368 Whitianga***

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**

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

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