



Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2020



Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Minister:	Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph Ph: 027 371 4733 tokerau.j@gmail.com
Administrator	Jo Wyman-Macer Ph: 478 6180 office@bayspc.nz
Office hours:	Wednesday via phone and email Thursday—Friday 9am to 1pm
Vehicle Access	10 Penzance Rd
Street Address	9 Hastings Rd Mairangi Bay
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Website	www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz
Parish Clerk	Stewart Milne Ph: 478 5786 Mobile: 027 293 8499
Treasurer, property and finance	George Wyman Ph 478 6411
Family Coordinator	Angel Matapo angeljmatapo@gmail.com 022 486 5409
Support worker for the elderly	Margaret Pont 021 679 019 mpont@xtra.co.nz

***This month's newsletter contains photos of parish activities.
Many thanks to Karel for collated photos.***

REGULAR PARISH ACTIVITIES

- **ACTIVITIES MORNING - 1st Tuesday of the month 9.30am - 12pm**
Book Group 9am / Games & Gatherings 10am
Discuss, swap, borrow books, play cards & board games & a cup of tea
Contact Raewyn **410 4423** or Margaret **021 679 019**



- **GIRLS' BRIGADE - Tuesdays during School term.**
6.30-8pm Church Hall .
Kay Barbour Ph **478 7603**



- **LADIES HOME GROUP -**
10.15am Wednesdays
Contact Heather on **479-8822**



- **GARY SYME'S BORN AGAIN BODIES**
1.00-2.00pm Wednesdays Church Hall.
Further information Gary Syme Ph 479 2212



- **ENGLISH CONVERSATIONS**
1pm - 2.30pm Wednesdays Meeting Room 2.
Further Information John Shadbolt 479 3953 Grace Liu 021 0487978



- **HOUSE GROUP**
7.30pm Wednesdays at the Shadbolts
Contact Dorille Shadbolt Ph 479 3953.



- **LUNCHEON GROUP**
12-2pm 2nd Thursday of month in Church hall
Further information Jill Wyman 021 066 1059.



- **DEE'S SOCIAL GROUP**
Thursdays 10am-2pm Mairangi Bay Church Hall
For further information Tangi Joseph 022 657 3223.



- **FRIDAY NIGHT DISCUSSION GROUP**
Meeting 3rd Friday 6.30pm shared meal. Venue circulates.
For further information contact Jenni & Allan Jones Ph 478 5694.



- **MAINLY MUSIC**
Fridays during the school term. Church Hall 10-11am
Ph Angel Matapo 022 486 5409



- **FAMILY STYLE FUN NIGHT**
1ST Friday every month Church Hall 6pm
Ph Angel Matapo 022 486 5409

UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

I want to share with you an article that blessed me. It is written by a young man I know personally and with whose family I'm very close. Caleb Haurua a young writer from Auckland (originally from Otara) won the 2020 NZ Basil Sellers Award presented at the annual young writers conference on the Gold Coast. His paper is entitled:

“Haircuts and holy moments: my barber the pastor.”

How do you pastor a pastor? I have tried many ways to answer this question in my short time in ministry. Supervision and counselling, networking with fellow pastors and leaders, as well as sabbath-taking.

Pastoring is hard enough without taking into account the fact that you need to be pastored yourself. Theologically (and actually), the Lord himself is my Pastor, the great High Priest who ministers to me by His Holy Spirit and mediates to the Father on my behalf. What a delight it is to be able to articulate and live in this reality.

As a person whose vocation intersects with the sacredness of spiritually guiding others, however, it is important for me to have others care for me as well. As a pastor, your soul needs to be fought for and curated too. You need to be seen and heard as you are. So where does a pastor go to find this? I go to the barbershop.

My barber the pastor

Eugene Peterson, pastor-theologian, grew up with a father who was a butcher. He described in his memoir, that his father was in fact more than just a butcher who provided meat for the community. In his eyes his father was a priest, like those from the Levitical order, preparing and offering meat to people as a priest would. He could see a holy vocational call in the seemingly ordinary job. If Peterson could see a priest in his father's vocation as butcher, then I can see (with careful consideration), the role of a pastor in my barber.

Sacred presence

The barber shop itself is unassuming, ironically situated directly next to a small church building. Every time I park up to go in, having booked my haircut earlier in the week, I am excited to see my mate. The walk into the building has a kind of holy routine to it—I step through the door and head to the seats (ironically, old pews from a church) and wait for my turn. My

barber greets me personally and with gusto. Often when I come in he is doing the finishing touches on another client and if he is I get a glimpse of a pastor-at-work. As he cuts, he listens, counselling the person sitting in his chair with as much care for their soul as for haircut itself. Broken relationships, problems with raising children, social issues like racism, politics, local and global news and spiritual conversations about God... I have heard him counsel people about all these things. When I am in the chair, he provides the listening ear to whatever it is I am thinking about that week from how I am doing as a parent and husband, to the latest news about the NZ Warriors, to the deeper stuff happening in the community and the world. We rejoice together and grieve together. The pastor St. Paul would be proud of.

Missional connection

One of the most profound experiences I have had sharing in this space with my barber is the amazing way he is a missionary to those around him. All sorts of people grace the shop. At my last haircut, he stopped midway to greet a passerby - a guy whose story he knows in full detail: struggling with job loss and a battle with depression. My barber told me with much joy (and a pastoral heart) that the man was now back on his feet. In amongst our haircuts he lets me know (in purposely vague terms to honour confidentiality), about the lives of his clients (or more appropriately, parishioners). One group in particular are those who have finished serving their prison sentences. The first thing they do - recommended by people on the inside who are ex-clients - is go for a haircut. I can see how this simple act provides a sacred entry into their newfound freedom. Another group that he cuts for are those from the disability community. Just the other day he had folks on the autism spectrum. Due to COVID-19 restrictions they were able to freely move around, with music blaring loudly for them, engaging in the room with joyous wonder. To both these groups of people, my barber is missionary who shows care and connects with them on a human level.

To me, my barber connects through a shared faith in Jesus Christ. To others, he speaks their language and in their dialect. Like Pastor St. Paul, he too lives out the principles of “becoming like a Jew to the Jews” so as to win them over. When me and my barber meet in that sacred place in that chair of confession and connection, for a moment, our vocations become one in the same. In the midst of the ordinary I meet a pastor disguised as a barber.

THE FOODBANK

We have organised for the stock of food and knitting to be collected and distributed through PSN . Since we won't be able to collect food while we're restricted from meeting, those of you who are handy with a sewing machine and have close weave cotton material left over (e.g. quilters supplies) might like to follow one of the many mask patterns online and make up a few washable masks to go with the next lot of food we send to the Food bank.



A WORD FROM KAREL

Astronomy, science, wilderness, nature, God and love

A couple of weeks ago I read Sara Seager's book, "The Smallest Lights in the Universe." The book is the most beautiful book I have read in a few years. Sara is an astrophysicist. The book intertwines her remarkably interesting personal biography with the world of astronomy. She recounts how a fellow astronomer, Bob Williams, Director of the Space Telescope Science Institute, used his position to permit himself the use of the Hubble space telescope for ten days, over the loud objections of his fellow astrophysicists, to point the telescope at an empty portion of the sky that was considered dark, dead space. This was considered a tragic waste of telescope resources where every minute counted. Bob pointed the telescope to this dark patch about the size of a small coin held at arm's length. He took hundreds of images. This revealed three thousand previously unseen points of light. Not three thousand stars - each point of light represents a galaxy of billions of stars and millions of billions of possible worlds. The universe is immense.

The stars and wilderness have been inspirational to human religious reflection. In our Judeo-Christian tradition, to select a few examples, think of Abraham, Moses, and then the people of Israel wandering in the wilderness,

the composer of Psalm 8, John the Baptist, and Jesus. Wilderness and nature formed the mysticism of Francis of Assisi, Meister Eckhart, Julian of Norwich, the philosopher Baruch Spinoza and so forth. The wilderness of the sea and its religious symbolism finds form in poetry such as the Rime of the Ancient Mariner, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

These mystics and thinkers, as well as modern mystics and thinkers, including those from other religious traditions, experience connectedness to everything in creation. Francis of Assisi was moved to write in his, "Canticle of the Sun," about brother Sun and Sister moon, brothers wind and air, brother fire, sister mother earth and so forth. These experiences of connectedness, awe and wonder turned into love and compassion for all creation and people.

Science has since revealed the connection these mystics, poets and philosophers experienced and wrote about. We are connected to everything. The big bang 13.7 billion years ago produced gasses which turned into the chemicals which form everything in the universe, including us. We are composed of star dust. Evolution of life on earth over the last 3.5 billion years including our own evolution means we share genes with all other living things. We are very distant cousins of the Kauri tree we stand beside and the lettuce on our plate. Reflecting on these findings of science fills me with overwhelming awe and wonder. Sometimes I have to do a little skip dance in celebration when I think of it.

Scientific discoveries grow apace. Speculation has been round for many years that there might be other planets like those in our solar system. In the 1990's one exoplanet was discovered. As of the beginning of September 2020, more than 4,000 have been discovered. Astrobiologists made a list of biogases that would be potentially indicators of life on these planets. Surprisingly one of those gases, phosphine, was recently discovered in the atmosphere of Venus. There has been speculation for a long time that there might be microbial life in the atmosphere of Venus. But early days yet.

Some sections of traditional Christianity have found these scientific discoveries, particularly the now settled science of evolution, disturbing and threatening. I sympathise with their difficulty. Traditional Christian beliefs were formulated when it was believed that the earth was flat, the centre of the universe and the dwelling place of God, a cosy distance just above the sky.

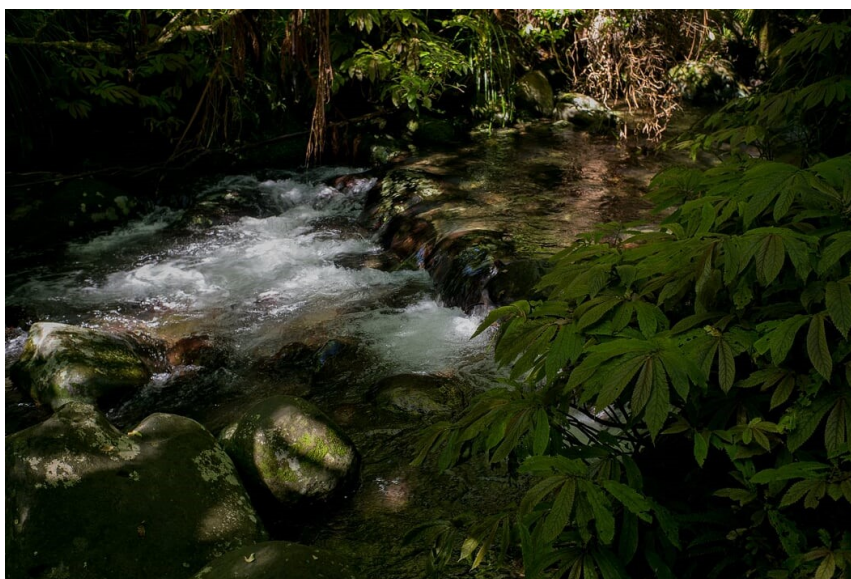
Obviously, our thinking about God needs to grow. Such thinking leads too easily into an idolatry of words. Maybe we should just stick to Charles Wesley's words and be "lost in wonder, love and praise." We need to retain areas of dark sky and wilderness in National Parks and other places, so that we can experience "wonder, love and praise" and our connection with all that is. One cannot avoid prayer in the form of awe

experienced in such places. The experience is humbling.

Probably, Jesus was a disciple of John the Baptist before spending 40 days (a Hebrew/Aramaic phrase for a long time) in the wilderness. After this he emerged with a message of love, forgiveness, compassion, love for enemies, not judging others and accepting people who were perceived by others to be outcast and sinners. He was a healer using the methods of his time. Jesus' habit was to go to wilderness or lonely places to pray. The American Quaker poet, John Greenleaf Wittier, summed it up in these memorable lines," Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee, the silence of eternity, interpreted by love!"

Away from the humanly built environment, in the bush, among the mountains, at a beach or looking at the night sky in a dark place, I experience the awe of being part this vast universe. I am connected to those far off galaxies. I share genetic material with distant cousins, the moss on the ground, the giant kauri, piwakawaka catching the insects I disturb, the crab scurrying along the beach and the gulls screaming overhead. I am part of this, "lost in wonder, love and praise." When I return to human built surroundings, other connections spring into life, connections to my brothers and sisters, including "these least brothers and sisters of mine," and individuals whose life experiences and beliefs are vastly different from mine.

I am able to reflect and imagine, engaging in what the neuroscientists call consciousness. Human beings, as far as we know so far, are the only animals capable of that, in this vast universe. That's humbling. For me scientific knowledge, while opening up even more mysteries, enhances my experience of the "silence of eternity interpreted by love."



UPDATE FROM PARISH COUNCIL

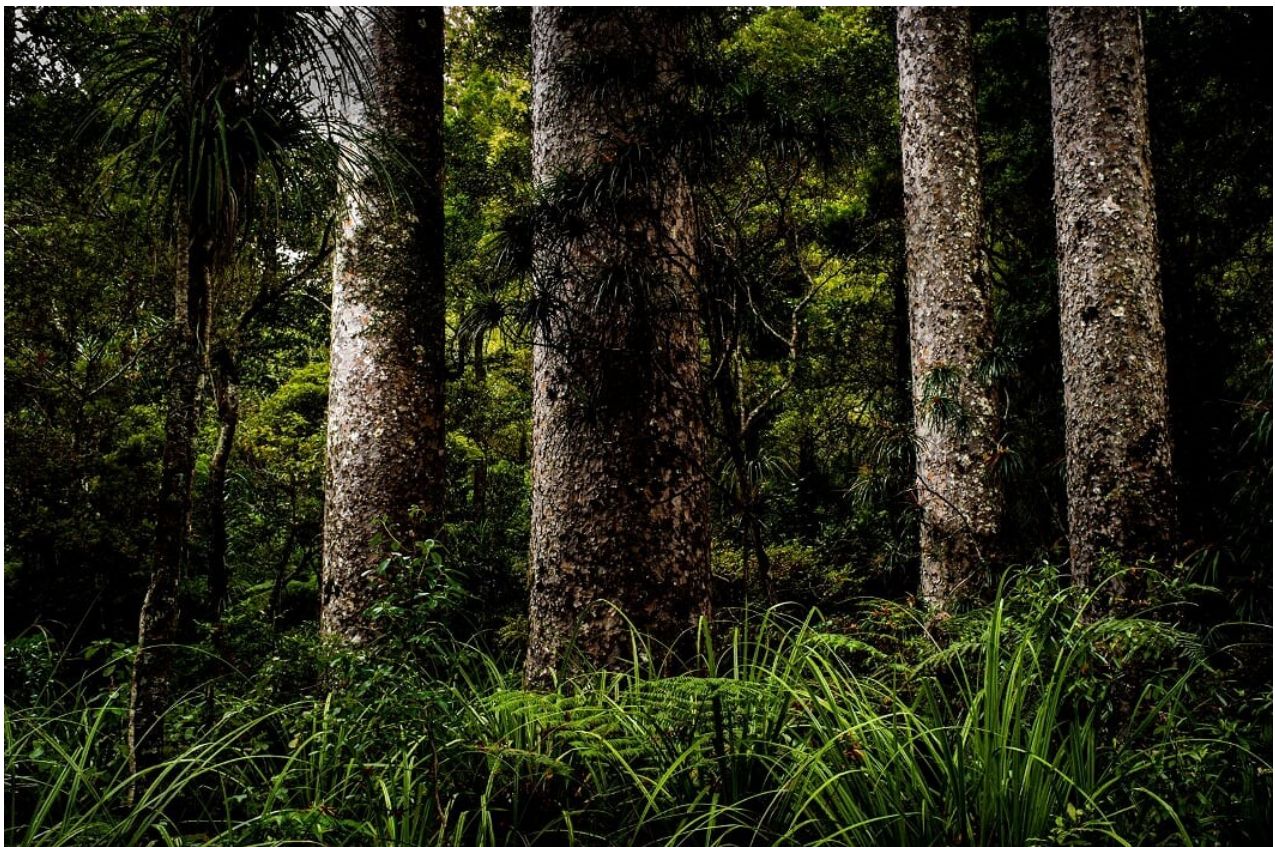
At the September Meeting of Parish Council (which again had to be Zoomed) we :

- Discussed pastoral matters. Prayers were requested for those of our members facing operations and for those who are unwell
- Decided to advise the members of our congregation that the Presbyterian Support Northern Foodbank which we support is having an unprecedented run on its supplies and would very much appreciate food donations or dollars to allow purchases. Food can be left at the church (in the foyer) on a Thursday or Friday morning. A financial donation can be deposited in the PSN Bank Account 06 0101 0075933 18 . If making a bank deposit please identify Foodbank and give your name. For a receipt email Suzanne.ward@psn.org.nz and advise your name and amount deposited.
- Decided to set up a working group to revise our parish strategic plan which was last revised in January 2017. The Northern Presbytery has recently circulated its plan and we will be considering whether ours needs change. Ian Watson will be convening the Working Group and anyone who would like to be involved with this should contact Ian on 478 4817 or me on 4785786
- Provided positive feedback to Tokerau on his short mid week devotions. He has agreed to continue these through to the end of September.
- Agreed in principle with the proposal to change the hall heating to heat pumps and also provide these in meeting rooms and Family Works office.
- Decided to reschedule the planned joint service and meal with our Hindi Congregation from the evening of 4 October to the evening of 25 October due to uncertainty as to when the current restrictions on large gatherings will be eased.
- Received reports from our committee convenors which indicated that contact with members is being maintained throughout this difficult time. However if you are needing contact please let Norma (443 3108) or me (478 5786) know.

- Firmed up on a recommendation to make to the congregation on the purchase of the vehicle accessway from Penzance Road. This will be on the agenda for our AGM
- Decided to make an application to the Presbytery for a grant to assist with enhancing and growing our Hindi Mission
- Set a date for our AGM of 11 October by which time we hope that we will be able to meet together. However if this is not the case we will hold the meeting via the internet (Zoom) with those of our members who do not have access to the internet getting their information via the post.

LUNCH GROUP

YES OCTOBER 8th is on!!!! From 12noon – 2pm.
 Bring your lunch & enjoy fellowship once again over tea or coffee.
 We will be entertained by THE TROUBADORS
 a group which includes our very own
 Helga, Betty & Jimmy's son David.
 Raffles & trade table operating.
 Gold coin donation at the door.



A special thank you to Karel for the stunning coastal and bush photos to go in this month's newsletter.



CALENDAR OF PARISH EVENTS FOR 2020

EVENT	TIME	PLACE	FREQUENCY	CONTACT
Activities Mornings, Board & Card Games	10am-12noon	Mairangi Bay Church Lounge	1st Tues of the month	Margaret Pont 021 679019
Born Again Bodies	1 - 2pm	Mairangi Bay Church Hall	Every Wednesday	Gary Syme 479 2212
Church Choir	Sun 9am before Choral services	Mairangi Bay Church	Thursdays before special services	Norma Baker 443 3108
Dees Social Club	10am -2pm	Mairangi Church lounge	Every Thursday	Tangi Joseph 022 657 3223
English Conversations	1 - 2.30pm	Mairangi Bay	Every Wednesday Meeting Room 2.	John Shadbolt 479 3953
Friday Night Discussion Group	6.30pm	To be Advised	3rd Friday of the month	Karel Lorier 414 6321
Girls Brigade	6.30 - 8pm	Mairangi Bay Church Hall	Every Tuesday in school term	Kay Barbour 478-7603
House Group		22A Hastings Rd Mairangi Bay	TBA	Dorille Shadbolt 479-3953
Ladies Home Group	10.15 am	10A Newhaven Tce Mairangi Bay	Wednesdays	Heather Gibson 479 8822
Luncheon Group	12.00 noon	Mairangi Bay Church Hall	2nd Thursday of the month	Raewyn Henderson 410 4423
Mainly Music	10.00-11a m	Mairangi Bay Church Lounge	Every Friday in school term	Angel Matapo 022 486 5409
Parish Council	7.30pm	Mairangi Bay Church Lounge	3rd Tuesday of the month	Stewart Milne 478 5786
Transportation Available	<i>Arranged as required and as requested</i>			Norma Baker 443 3108
Youth & children	10am	Mairangi Bay Church	Sundays	Angel Matapo 022 486 5409