



Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church

NEWSLETTER

July 2019

Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph



Girls Brigade Service

June 2019

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Minister

Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

Email: tokerau.j@gmail.com

Ph: 478 6180

Administrator

Jo Wyman-Macer

Office hours:

Wednesday via phone and email

Thursday—Friday 9am to 1pm

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Vehicle Access

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Mairangi Bay

Website

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Parish Clerk

Stewart Milne

Ph: 478 5786

Mobile: 027 293 8499

Treasurer, property and finance

George Wyman

Ph 478 6411

Support worker for the elderly

Margaret Pont

027 225 8893

This month's newsletter has a range of photos of some of the community outreach undertaken by the church.

Many thanks to Yoshiko Tregathan and Karel Lorier for sharing.

REGULAR PARISH ACTIVITIES

- **ACTIVITIES MORNINGS** - 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month
10am - 12pm, Boardgames, Rummikubs, Cards etc
For further information Margaret Pont 4893176 or 027 2258893
- **GIRLS' BRIGADE** - Tuesdays during School term. Church Hall 6.30-8pm.
Kay Barbour Ph 478 7603
- **LADIES HOME GROUP** - Wednesdays 10.15am.
Contact Heather on 479-8822 for further details.
- **GARY SYME'S BORN AGAIN BODIES**
Wednesdays Church Hall. 1.00-2.00pm
Further information Gary Syme Ph 479 2212
- **ENGLISH CONVERSATIONS**
1pm—2.30pm Wednesdays New Meeting Room 2.
Further Information Stewart Milne 478 5786
- **HOUSE GROUP**
Wednesdays 7.30pm at the Shadbolts
Contact Dorille Shadbolt Ph 479 3953.
- **LUNCHEON GROUP**
2nd Thursday of month 12-2pm in Church hall
Further information Jill Wyman 021 066 1059.
- **DEE'S SOCIAL GROUP**
Thursdays 10am-2pm Mairangi Bay Church Hall
For further information Stewart Milne Ph 478 5786.
- **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 Tangi Joseph 0226573223



AN UP-DATE FROM TOKERAU

Earlier this month I attended a conference called “Confident Christianity” at Northcross church. It was put on by an organisation called “Thinking Matters” that basically promotes Christian apologetics. Apologetics comes from the Greek word *apologia*, which means a defence, as in a court of law. Christian apologetics involves making a case for the truth of the Christian faith.

I have not usually given apologetics much thought before, but the conference made me begin to pay more attention to it. I like to debate issues, but I’m more of a person who tries to work relationally (pastorally) with others. I feel comfortable sharing my faith with them and prefer not arguing about it. Perhaps some might think that we should just preach the gospel and love others and let the Holy Spirit do the work of convincing people.

Is apologetics biblical anyway? First Peter 3:15 says, “Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.” My reading of Jesus shows that he appealed to miracles and fulfilled prophecy to prove that his claims were true (Luke 24: 25 – 27; John 14:11). In dealing with other Jews, the apostles appealed to these as well including the resurrection of Jesus to prove Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 2: 22 – 32). Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost sought to show that Christianity is true.

Apart from some biblical examples, why else is apologetics important? I’ve been reading some works by philosopher and theologian, William Lane Craig, which I’ve found interesting. He gives at least three reasons.

First, he proposes that apologetics can shape culture. We live in a time where many mainline denominations are in serious decline and that Christianity is being pushed further and further to the margins by secularism as irrational and irrelevant. Perhaps this is reflected in how theology and religious studies are diminishing significantly in our universities here in New Zealand. Christians are usually portrayed by media in a negative light as fundamentalist, bigoted, and hypocrites. Speaking of the American context, Lane argues that “if the gospel is to be heard as an intellectually viable option for thinking men and women today, then it’s vital that we Christians try to shape American culture in such a way that Christian belief cannot be dismissed as mere superstition. If Christians could be trained to provide solid evidence for what they believe and good answers to unbelievers’ questions and objections, then the perception of Christians would slowly change. Christians would be seen as thoughtful people who should be taken seriously rather than as emotional fanatics or baffoons.”

Second, apologetics can strengthen believers. Knowing why you believe and what you believe can make you more confident in sharing your faith with others. Apologetics can also help you keep the faith in times of doubt and struggle. Emotions can carry you so far, and then you're going to need something more substantial. Regarding those who go onto tertiary education in the U.S., it is estimated that nearly 40 percent of Christians who leave high school abandon their faith when attending university. Lane suggests that the church is failing these young people. "Rather than provide them training in the defense of Christian truth, we focus on emotional worship experiences, felt needs, and entertainment. It's no wonder they become sitting ducks for teacher or professor who rationally takes aim at their faith. In high school and college, students are intellectually assaulted with every manner of non-Christian philosophy conjoined with an overwhelming relativism and scepticism." Although apologetics cannot guarantee a person will keep his/her faith, it can help none-the-less, even if to help make you a deeper and more interesting person.

Third, apologetics can help bring others to faith. As mentioned above, we believe people come to faith through God's work rather than by winning an argument. Yet, a conversation with people can still be part of planting seeds of the gospel. You don't have to convince people of Christian truth; you just share it with them (with gentleness and respect) and leave them to make up their own mind. In this respect, Lane offers that "when apologetics is persuasively presented and sensitively combined with gospel presentation and personal testimony, the Spirit of God is pleased to use it to bring people to Himself."



So, I'm enjoying this exploration so far. Maybe we could explore it together.

(William Lane Craig, *On Guard: Defending your faith with reason and precision*, D. C. Cook, Colorado Springs, 2010)

A note from the editor: This month's newsletter contains some stunning photos of the Girl's Brigade courtesy of Erica. Enjoy :)

YOUNG MUM'S GROUP - 11 July, 7:15pm

A time for mums of young people of all ages to get together and share fellowship. Hosted by Heather Gibson on the second Thursday of the month. Phone Heather, 027 499 9808; email: gibson-family@xtra.co.nz



Fellowship Group Lunch

We will be having our annual Roast lunch **12pm Sunday, 21 July 2019** at Montrose Café in the Mairangi Bay Village, so please put this date in your calendar.

The cost will be:

Small size meal	\$15
Medium size meal	\$18
Large size meal	\$21

There will be an additional cost for dessert, drinks and coffee/tea.

Please contact Dorille on 479 3953 before Wednesday, 17 July 2019 so that she can confirm numbers with Montrose. Come and enjoy a fun time of fellowship. Let's see if we can beat last year's number of 34 people!!

FAVOURITE HYMNS SERVICE, SUNDAY 14th JULY

Come and join us at this fun and uplifting service.

Please send in your hymns by Wednesday 3rd July.

Get your thinking caps on to choose a favourite hymn.

If you have a tune that you like it sung to, send in info about that and the two verses you'd like sung. Please include the reason why it is special to you, the title, first line and where I might find the music, if possible (especially if it's a little obscure!)

Contact Bronwyn Stone Ph 479 6631 or
pebros@gmail.com.



KAREL LORIER'S REFLECTIONS

Going Full Circle

Evolution was discovered by Charles Darwin and other scientists in the mid-19th Century. This changed people's perception of the world irrevocably. His discovery is now settled science. We can observe it happening in microorganisms such as evolving flu viruses. Since Darwin, scientists have discovered that the universe started 13.7 billion years ago in a "big bang" and all things evolved from that. That includes humankind- us, our cultures and religions.



We can trace the development of these cultures and religions through archaeology, oral traditions and, when written language evolved, through written histories, myths, and various scriptures, including the collection of books we call the Bible.

There was a time, long, long ago when our ancient ancestors had no religion. From studying the religion of primitive tribes (used here as a technical term) anthropologists have discovered that religion evolved out of a sense of awe and interdependence with the natural world of which humans find they are part. A careful reading of the Bible clearly shows it to be part of this development. It reinterprets ancient Middle Eastern myths and shows the evolution of the idea of God from a tribal deity, to God of the nations, finally to God of love.

These developments took place over thousands of years during which there were periods of religious transformations brought about by adaptations to the changing understanding of the world and human culture. In our Judaeo-Christian tradition a transformation took place at the time of the 8th century BCE prophets - Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah.

Jesus challenged religious ideas which had been part of his Jewish religion for centuries and which appeared to be unchangeable because they were part of Jewish identity in tough times. Jesus taught people to love God and love each other to transform the world into what he called the Kingdom of God, to contrast with the Kingdom of Rome which conquered and ruled by oppression and violence.

For a time, the followers of Jesus, or followers of "the way" as they were called, were transformed. They were known for their love of one another, for outcasts, poor, disabled, widows and orphans. They were admired for this by Roman officials and scholars.

Christianity spread rapidly throughout the Roman Empire, until in 312 the Emperor Constantine adopted it as the religion of the empire. Almost immediately there was seen to be a need for uniformity of belief and with great pressure and interference from the Emperor the first creed was drawn up. This creed was heavily influenced by the Greek philosophy of the time. It marked a dramatic change in Christianity. Orthodoxy, right belief became important and was enforced by the power the Empire. Christians changed, from being a persecuted group, to persecutors of the Jews and those who did not believe the creed. From being people who refused to join the army, now one had to be a Christian to join the Roman army.

The creeds created huge controversies and many councils were called to revise and change creeds. Those who did not believe or questioned the creeds were called heretics and tortured and murdered. Disagreement eventually split the church into the Western church and the Orthodox churches.

At the time of the Reformation in the 16th century, confessions were created stating what Christians were to believe. Again, these were attempts to create uniformity. This stopped the Christian faith developing along with the explosion of knowledge through the sciences, cultural knowledge and the discovery of the Americas and the Pacific.

This arrested the development of Christianity which became a matter of believing the right things but downplayed the way Christians ought to behave in love and compassion towards their neighbours. To-



wards the end of the 19th century many Christians, particularly in America, became fearful that science was threatening Christian beliefs. They drew up a list which they called the five fundamentals, and with the help of a very wealthy donor circulated these to clergy, libraries and schools. "Right belief" became all important. Fundamentalism was born. Interestingly these fundamentals do not include anything of the teachings of Jesus.

This and the confessions attempted to set in unmovable concrete what Christians need to believe. Many churches in the West embrace fundamentalism in either a soft or hard form. This means accepting things as true which contradict all that we know about the world through science, history, archaeology, medicine and common sense. This arresting of the development of Christianity is one of the reasons Christians struggle to

come to terms with our 21st century world. For example, when the PCANZ sought to update a Creed in recent years it returned to 4th, 11th and 16th century thought forms translated into modern language. The ideas are ancient and outdated.

This is the main reason, I believe, for the decline of Christianity in New Zealand and other Western countries. People have voted with their feet. They have left churches to find their spiritual nourishment elsewhere. Many have found this in environmental movements and the sense of awe aroused by the wonders of God's creativity. They have been moved to love, forgive, seek peace and justice through what Jesus taught and lived, which has influenced them through nearly 2,000 years of Christian culture.

We have come full circle to what started religion in the first place – a deep sense of awe.

Presently, Christianity wrapped in ancient and in late medieval thought forms is incomprehensible to most 21st century people.



LUNCHEON GROUP

The next meeting of the LUNCH GROUP is

Thursday 11th July 12 – 2pm.

Bring your own lunch & enjoy fellowship over a cup of tea or coffee.

Entertainment from 1-2pm will be

*The U3A Music Group - **The Troubadours***

which includes our very own

BETTY DANCE and HELGE GREENWELL.

Raffles & trade table operating.

Gold coin entry.

PS. Our Midwinter Xmas lunch last month was a real treat with great food and entertainment from the Albany Women's Choir along with lots of audience participation singing Christmas Carols with great gusto.

UPDATE FROM PARISH COUNCIL

At the June Meeting of Parish Council we:

- Spent time on pastoral matters which concluded with Tokerau praying for those of our members who were identified as having health problems.
- Agreed that in the future we will share some of the food that is donated for the Family Works Foodbank with the Browns Bay Lifeboat Mission which is run by Rita and John Brothers.
- Discussed the joint service of worship which we recently held with Yedarm and their positive response.
- Approved a Cook Island language service of Worship to be held on 4 August between the Yedarm service and the Hindi Service
- Prayed for our Youth Ministry that we may be guided on the way forward
- Agreed to a \$1,500 donation being made to Christian World Service which came mainly from the birthday mission donations which Jean Allan is responsible for.
- Decided that we need to reintroduce the activity bags for young children who need an activity during the service
- Agreed that a roster be developed for those willing to take a session for the young children (Sunday School/K@MP) given that all the material to be used has been prepared and is available in the Resource Room. Those willing to be included on the Roster are to contact Pauline 021024 49616 or pgulliver73@gmail.com
- Agreed to the Church and Community Committee's plans to hold 2 sessions in early August on Local Body elections covering the various positions (eg Mayor) and organisations (eg Council and Local Boards) their responsibilities and how they relate to each other as well as the issues – current and into the future
- Considered who to approach with a view to enhancing membership of Committees and Parish Council
- Were reminded of the Special Communion Service and lunch coming up on 9 July for those who have difficulty getting along to the Sunday morning services and the Roast Dinner coming up for all at the Montrose on 21 July
- Received an update on the Indian Cultural Event programmed for 5pm on Saturday 29 June to be followed by a meal.
- Were advised of the continuing success of the Dees Group which has now reached a membership of 15. We will be reviewing the future of Dees over the next few weeks.
- Considered a report from Rev Karel Lorier on the subject of Cannabis which subject will be much discussed when the Government releases its draft bill next year in the lead up to the referendum and elections. Parish Council decided to organise two study sessions next year which will be part of our 'Community Conversations' Series to provide the facts but not to give recommendations on how to vote.

Stewart Milne

FAMILY GAMES EVENINGS

To be held on the **first Friday of every month (July 5)**, 6:30-8pm

All ages welcome

Indian Cultural Event

Saturday 29th June 5pm onwards



This is your opportunity be part of an Indian themed family event. If you have Indian dress wear it and come and watch Indian dance and listen to Indian music. There is also a free meal but we do need numbers for catering purposes so please sign the list on the clip board at the back of the church. All are welcome so bring friends and family.

Photos from the Combined
Korean Service

June 2019



CALENDAR OF PARISH EVENTS FOR 2019

EVENT	TIME	PLACE	FREQUENCY	CONTACT
Youth and children	10am Church	Mairangi Bay	Sundays	Pauline Gulliver 021 0244 9616
Girls Brigade	6.30pm - 8.00pm	Mairangi Bay Church Hall	Every Tuesday in school term	Kay Barbour 478-7603
Parish Council	7.30pm	Mairangi Bay Church Lounge	3rd Tuesday of the month	Stewart Milne 478 5786
Born Again Bodies	1 - 2.00pm Church Hall	Mairangi Bay	Every Wednesday	Gary Syme 479 2212
English Conversations	1 - 2.30pm	Mairangi Bay	Every Wednesday Meeting Room 2.	Stewart Milne 478 5786
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
Church Choir	7.15pm	Mairangi Bay Church	Thursdays leading up to special services	Norma Baker 443 3108
Dees Social Club	10am -2.00pm	Mairangi Church lounge	Every Thursday	Margaret Pont 021 670 019
House Group		22A Hastings Rd	TBA	Dorille Shadbolt 479-3953
Friday Night Discussion Group	6.30pm	To be Advised	3rd Friday of the month	Karel Lorier 414 6321
Mainly Music	10.00-11a m	Mairangi Bay Church Lounge	Every Friday in school term	Tangi Joseph 0226573223
Transportation	Arranged as required and as requested			Norma Baker 443 3108
Activities Mornings, Board and Card Games	10am-12noon	Mairangi Bay Church Hall	1st & 3 rd Tues	Margaret Pont 021 679019