



Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church

DECEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz

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**Preparing for the 4 Dec Packing Christmas treat Service
– the treats are mounting.**

UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

I want to thank you, the Parish, for your support. The congregation meeting last Sunday agreed that my parish work reduces to half the time from 1st February 2023 enabling me to be seconded to Northern Presbytery to undertake the new Minister Enable position (half time).

I didn't say much in the meeting, but now would like to share with you some thoughts in this newsletter article. I'm very grateful to the Parish Council for its prayerful and practical support in terms of discernment and working through how halftime ministry might look for our parish moving forward. Words of affirmation and an open-mindedness to the developing future of the parish and myself means a lot to me.

We can move ahead knowing that I'll still be here as your Minister and continuing to do most things currently experienced. It will also provide opportunities for others to assist in our mission and ministry together. We are making progress as a parish and part of that involves adopting and adapting to opportunities presented.

Coming to this point has not been a recent or instant decision for me. Rather, it's something I've been wrestling with for some time. While I appreciate my calling to serve in Parish Ministry (23 years now), I've always thought about how my ministry experience could be broadened. My academic journey brought ideas of perhaps developing skills into a teaching capacity. But taking on the research project requested by Northern Presbytery in August 2021 not only got my study juices flowing, it also became aspirational for a pioneering way of doing ministry. Taking the research findings and proposals further will involve working with people in parishes, presbyteries, and the wider PCANZ to find ways of encouraging and increasing the number of people for ministry. As I mentioned in the congregation meeting, the Minister Enabler position was not one of the proposals in my report. Instead, Northern Presbytery deemed the issue so important to address that it subsequently decided to create the Minister Enabler position as part of its response. I've been prayerfully discerning this direction and through wise counsel from a few trusted people I believe this is the path God has put before me.

Since this is our last newsletter for the year, I want to extend my Christmas and New Year wishes to you. I hope you get a chance to relax and enjoy the good company of family and friends during the festive season. Despite the increasing busyness that the build-up to Christmas brings, I think it's important that we manage that in ways which minimise stress and anxiety. While we may make great effort to show our appreciation and love for others by giving gifts and extending hospitality, it should not come at the expense of our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Perhaps we can add financial wellbeing to

that as well. But at a deeper level, the Advent season encourages us to prepare for Christ's coming with hope, peace, joy, and love. These aspects may not only be what we want to attain at Christmas time, they can also be the motivation for what and how we do things. They are the qualities we find in Christ whom we wait and prepare to encounter in this season; the qualities which we are also encouraged to live out.

Shirley Murray's hymn sums it up nicely where Christ came singing love, faith, hope, and peace. For these to go on, we must make them our song. You and I be the singers this Christmas.

On behalf of manse family Tangi, Paul, Manu, Angel, Ananiah, Kimi, and Mastell, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Tokerau



Change in Ministry arrangements from 1st Feb 2023

At the meeting of the Congregation on Sunday 27 November it was agreed that our Minister Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph be seconded to the Northern Presbytery position of Minister Enabler for 50% of his time for the next 3 years commencing on 1 Feb 2023 and that Tokerau's parish activities and responsibilities during this period of secondment will generally be as per the Clerk's paper titled "Tokerau; Current Activities with Proposed Changes in Italics" dated 16 November 2022. It was noted that the parish would be reimbursed for 50% of the Minister's costs during the period of secondment. Copies of the 16 November paper which identifies the changes, are available in the foyer of the church or can be emailed to members on request.

Stewart Milne (Clerk)

A Word from Karel

Advent – the beginning of a New World.

In this season of advent, we look forward to Jesus' birth which has been told in two different stories at the beginnings of Matthew's and Luke's gospels. Our calendar of years has its beginning from his birth (although a miscalculation shows that he was likely to have been born six years earlier). In this way Jesus is seen as the beginning of a new era. That is accurate. We need to stand back from the detail of the stories that were told about him and the various interpretations of his life to see the effect he has had on world history.

In my article last month, I wrote a little about the difficult history of Israel. They experienced euphoria when they were allowed to return to Jerusalem by Cyrus, king of Persia from their captivity in Babylon. That euphoria did not last long. There were subsequent conquerors that made life miserable for them. They suffered enormously under the domination of foreign powers and many people were reduced to servitude and poverty. For most of us it is difficult to imagine such a life. Bill Loader, a New Testament Scholar, writes, ... (We) "find it hard to imagine, but for some people then and now, life is hell. Bodies plagued by sores, wracked with pain, malnourished, beaten by abusers, enslaved by "big" people—life here is not worth living. Sadly, for some, suicide beckons. For others, life is simply a struggle, an uphill struggle because malnourished, they lack the energy to protest or to do so in a way that might excite the media."

For Israel this raised a huge dilemma. Why was the God with whom they had a covenant, punishing them so much? Could God really be trusted to do the best for those who trusted God? Why did good people who obeyed the religious laws - which were also the law of the land- suffer? There were a variety of answers to these questions. They are recorded in the books of the apocrypha, in other books written at this time, and in the Dead Sea Scrolls (which were found in 1947). One of the ideas was that there is a wicked god who created the world to torment and punish humankind for his enjoyment. Variations of this idea had this god controlling many of the demons plaguing humankind. Only the true God could release humankind from these demons.

Others believed that there would be justice in a life hereafter where those who had suffered much but had done the will of God would "stand up" while others would be tormented and punished. Another idea was that God would intervene in the world with a great "clean up" of the world (like in the myth of Noah) through a mighty supernatural event, or through a divinely anointed military leader, the Messiah. There were those who thought they could persuade God to intervene in this way by meticulously following the 630 religious laws. At the time of Jesus there were two dominant groups among many. The Pharisees who lived in the community and the Essenes who withdrew from the community into monasteries, the major one being at Qumran.

They were the creators of the so called “Dead Sea Scrolls.” The Essenes believed God would send two Messiah’s, - a spiritual and a military Messiah. They thought that if they denied themselves any pleasures in life, they would persuade God to intervene to “clean up the world.”

Yet others responded by forming bands of guerrilla fighters who hid in the hills and came down from there to attack Roman soldiers and Jewish leaders who supported the Romans. In addition there were those who thought that God would respond in setting things right in the world if they re-enacted the events of the past in which Israel believed God had intervened in their history. For example, the escape out of Egypt and entry into the promised land. There were several of those in the years before Jesus. John the Baptist was one of those. The scant knowledge we have about him through the gospels and what is written about him elsewhere at the time suggests that he was imitating people going through the Jordan river as they did at the time when they returned from the exile in Babylon. This was with the intention that God would intervene. (An interesting aside is that there was more written about John the Baptist than about Jesus in history written at the time.)

It appears that Jesus was one of John's disciples but then after a time alone in the wilderness he changed his mind. Jesus’s approach was radically different from any other. God's intervention, God's rule was already present. Humankind had all the resources to bring about peace and justice. Jesus squarely put the responsibility on us, humankind, to love, be compassionate, to forgive, to love enemies. Together these things would bring about justice and peace. As we look back, we see that it has clearly not happened overnight, nevertheless there are many signs that it is happening ever so slowly. Space does not permit, but you can probably think of the things that have happened towards a just world. In the Christian centuries there has been an increasing concern for justice, human rights and latterly for the environment, animals, and plants.

Unfortunately, there are still those who think that God will intervene in a miraculous supernatural way to address our problems of war, violence, famine, greed, injustice, exploitation, slavery, and climate change. Probably this not going to happen.

Rather the invitation is to do some Jesus thinking **and imitate his love.**

Karel Lorier

Love
Like
Jesus

Special Communion service Tues 6th December 11.30am

Our final Special Communion service for 2022 will be held in conjunction with the Tuesday Seniors Club.

Please join us for a time of quiet reflection and Christmas fare including those who are not always able to attend regular Sunday services. Transportation will be available for those requiring it. Please let Norma Baker 443 3108 or you Pastoral Visitor know you would like to attend by December 2 for catering purposes.

Up and coming activities

Ladies Group 10am - 12pm, 2nd & 4th Tuesday Church Meeting Rm 2

Seniors Social Club 10am 1st & 3rd, Tuesday, Meeting Rm1 & Hall

Girls Brigade 6.30pm Tuesdays (School terms)

Born Again Bodies 1pm Wednesdays Hall

English Conversations 1pm Wednesdays Meeting Rm 2

Dees Social Group every Thursdays 10-2pm

Mainly Music Fridays 10am (School Terms)

Family Night 6pm Games & Shared meal 1st Friday of the month

Men's Fellowship Group Lunch - 12pm Last Tuesday of the Month at the Browns Bay 'Bays Club'



Joint evening Service with Hindi Mission

UPDATE FROM PARISH COUNCIL - November Meeting

At our November Meeting we :

- Spent time on pastoral matters
- Worked through the proposal that our Minister be seconded to Northern Presbytery for 50% of his time over the next 3 years to undertake the position of Minister Enabler. Parish Council was unanimous in its support for the proposal and to recommend it to a meeting of the Congregation to be held on 27 November.
- Were provided with an update on donations of treats and of money for the purchase of treats for families in need of some Christmas cheer who have been identified by Presbyterian Support. The packing service will be held at 10am on Sunday 4 Dec.
- Discussed the Mairangi Bay Placemaking Event which the Local Board has engaged the Catalyse Consultancy to bring together. The idea is to have an event next March which launches a getting to know key places in Mairangi Bay walk with a bit about them and the services they provide. There are also other activities planned. Our hope is that it will assist in publicizing what services we provide.
- Received the news that the Auckland Council has not completed the consultation and Reserve Status cancellation which is needed for the sale of the accessway from Penzance. They have asked for an extension of time. Needless to say we are frustrated by the delays and now realise that it will probably take another year or more before the ownership of this accessway is resolved.
- Confirmed the Special Services in the lead up to Christmas:
Sunday 4 Dec 10 am Packing of Christmas Treats for needy families -**Tuesday 6 Dec 1130am Special Communion Service** and lunch for those who have difficulty getting to the 10am Service and members of the Seniors Group. If coming please let Norma Baker know.
Saturday 24 Dec 7pm Christmas Eve Service. Carols and family focus
Sunday 25 Dec 9:30am Christmas Day Service with family focus
- During January we will again be combining with other Presbyterian Churches for joint services as follows:
Sun 1 Jan 10am at Mairangi Bay;
Sun 8 Jan 10 am at Browns Bay;
Sun 15 Jan 0930hrs at Forrest Hill;
Sun 22 Jan 10am at Glenfield.

Stewart Milne (Parish Clerk)



*Joint evening Service with Hindi Mission followed by a joint meal
Nathan Sunil, Mani Kharbanda, Angelika Singh*

Joint Service with the Hindi Mission Congregation

On 6pm Sunday October 30 we held a joint service with the Hindi Mission Congregation. It was the second such service for the year and was followed by some fellowship over a meal.

Over 40 people attended the service which was led by the Rev. Raju George. The sermon was delivered by the Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph. The accompanying photos are from this service.

The Hindi Mission Congregation services began five years ago, in 2017, at the initiative of Raju and Parish Council. They are held at 6pm on the first and last Sundays of the month, and apart from Covid interference have continued to this day. Originally the congregation was largely made up of Indian Christians from the other side of the Bridge, but over time, more of the attendees have been from the North Shore. Not all of those attending are Christian-there have been Hindu and Muslim attendees. Nor are all Indian - some adults from the 10.00am congregation also attend.

A feature of the evening is always the shared meal of Indian food and subsequent socialising after the service. The average attendance is 19 adults and 8 children. Whilst the Hindi congregation contribute financially to its sustenance, the offering is insufficient to grow and sustain the mission. We have though been successful in obtaining grants from the PressGo project and Northern Presbytery.

This has enabled us to employ Raju for an average of 10 hours per week covering preaching, pastoral activities, bible studies and growing the mission. It should be noted that the Hindi congregation itself has organised fund raising activities. Raju is strongly supported by Roopali Dayal and daughter Angelika. Parish Council has set up a Steering Group to oversee the project which involves key members from this congregation and members of Parish Council. Ours is the only Hindi Speaking Christian Community on the North Shore and we are impressed by the commitment, enthusiasm and family like culture which has developed amongst this congregation. As they say, regularly during their service **“Praise the Lord”**

Stewart Milne



THE MAYONNAISE JAR AND THE TWO CUPS OF COFFEE

Over the years, Bronwyn has collected a number of anecdotes and bon mots which she often shares with us when on welcoming duties. What follows was told to her by her mother.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, he silently picked up a very large empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the spaces between the golf balls. He asked again if the jar was full, and the students agreed that it was. Next the professor picked up a box of sand, and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

Once more he asked if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous “Yes.” The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the grains of sand. The students laughed.

“Now,” said the professor as the laughter subsided, “I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things – God, your family, your children, your health, your friends and your favourite passions, and if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter to you, like your job, your house and your car. The sand is everything else – the small stuff.” “If you put the sand into your life first,” he continued, “there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. There will always be time to clean the house or fix the dishwasher. Take care of the golf balls first – the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.”

One of the students put her hand up and inquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled. “I’m glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there’s always time for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend.”

As told to *Bronwyn Stone*



Church Giving

There are a number of ways people contribute financially to support the running of the church and our ministries to the wider community:

- Cash or cheque donations into the Sunday plate

Regular giving through the Envelope system. We will soon be preparing numbered offering envelopes for January – June 2023.

If you would like to be added to the system for income tax donation purposes **contact Norma Baker on 443 3108 before December 6th**

If you have spare envelopes you can use them. Just change the dates. Please let Norma know if you have plenty or need more printed.

The Automatic Payment system. This is particularly good for busy people and can be used for intermittent or regular donations.

The account number of the church is **03 0180 0052341 02**

Receipts are issued annually for regular giving, can be used for tax deductions



Award winning Cook Island singer Ridge Ponini -

Sharing his wonderful talents at the last

Cook Island Service.

REGULAR PARISH ACTIVITIES

- **Seniors Social Club**
1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month 10am - 12pm
Contact Raewyn 410 4423 or Tangi 022 6573223
- **LADIES GROUP -**
2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month 10am Church (Courtyard if fine)
Contact Raewyn 410 4423
- **GIRLS' BRIGADE - Tuesdays during School term.**
6.30-8pm Church Hall
Kay Barbour Ph 478 7603
- **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 Stewart Milne 478 5786 Grace Liu 021 0487978
- **HOUSE GROUP**
7.30pm Wednesdays at the Shadbolts
Contact Dorille Shadbolt Ph 479 3953.
- **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 Karen Ruffell 021 02263846
- **FAMILY STYLE FUN NIGHT**
1ST Friday of the month Church Hall 6pm
Ph Tangi Joseph 022 657 3223
- **Parish Council**
7.30pm every 3rd Tuesday Church Lounge
Ph Stewart Milne 478 5786
- **Transportation - arranged as required and as requested**
Ph Norma Baker 443 3108



Please send photos of Parish activities through to office@bayspc.nz

Quick Contacts

- Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph Ph: 027 371 4733 tokerau.j@gmail.com
 - Office Ph: 478 6180 office@bayspc.nz