



# **Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church**

## **OCTOBER 2023 NEWSLETTER**

**Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph**

[www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz](http://www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz)

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***The Big Quiz Night - TearFund Fundraiser***

## **UPDATE FROM TOKERAU**

As I write this article, I am also preparing for General Assembly 2023. It will be held at St. Kentigern's College from 27th September to 1st October. I'm approaching it with some excitement and nervousness. Excited because I will reconnect with colleagues I haven't seen for a while, but nervous because I'm presenting our Northern Presbytery report which will include launching the Candidacy for Ministry handbook and the Ministry promotional video I've put together as Minister Enabler for the presbytery. I'm also a little apprehensive that contentious issues might again arise and inflame division within our denomination.

The PCANZ is a diverse church in more ways than one. I can appreciate that members will have differing opinions and approaches to the Bible, worship, mission, and property, to name a few. While our diversity is important and valid, being able and willing to appreciate and cooperate with those who have a different or opposing position is just as necessary. We are, after all, people of God as well as brothers and sisters in Christ. We are united in faith. The real challenge for us is how we can uphold our diversity in unity.

My prayer is that those who attend General Assembly 2023 will engage together in loving respect and humility. Debates and voting are part and parcel of the Assembly process, but they do not have to be a platform for grandstanding or hijacking a meeting. It should also be an opportunity for new voices to be heard rather than the usual folk who dominate procedural process. My hope is that discussions will be both constructive and productive; that they will be positive experiences for individuals and for the gathered church there.

So, please join in praying for our General Assembly 2023. Pray that all who attend may feel their presence and contributions are valued. Pray that our unity as Christians be just as strong as our diversity. Pray that, in all that is said and done at General Assembly, God is glorified and our church is blessed.



## **A WORD FROM KAREL - LONELINESS**

In the first creation myth in Genesis 2, God says “It is not good for the man live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him.” So God formed all the animals and birds from the ground. And brought them to the man that he could name them. But not one of these was a suitable companion to help him.

“ Then God put the man into a deep sleep and formed woman from his rib.

Two things emerge from this myth; we are dependent on nature, and it is not good for us to be alone. We are made and have evolved to be in community. Reading the Bible, we discover how much it is about creating a community. A right relationship with God cannot occur without a right relationship with other people.

Every few days I catch up with the news in the New York Times. I am particularly drawn to the articles written by Nicolas Kristof. Recently he wrote this rather startling first couple of paragraphs: -

“Loneliness crushes the soul, but researchers are finding it does far more damage than that. It is linked to strokes, heart disease, dementia, inflammation, and suicide; it breaks the heart literally as well as figuratively.

Loneliness is as deadly as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and more lethal than consuming six alcoholic drinks a day, according to the Surgeon General of the United States, Dr Vivek Murthy. Loneliness is more dangerous for health than obesity, he says — and, alas, we have been growing more lonely.”

After reading this article I explored further. I discovered that most of the wealthy nations have a problem with loneliness. Research in the USA shows about 1 in 5 people report chronic loneliness; the UK have appointed a minister for loneliness; Japan has as well, Sweden has a minister for social affairs, and Australians are debating whether they should do so.

Aotearoa NZ also has a problem with loneliness but lacks thorough research. Most of the research that has been done on loneliness is among the over 65 age group, but they are not the loneliest group in Aotearoa. Young people between the ages of 15 and 25 have shown up as probably the loneliest group, but a large proportion of other groups report loneliness. The wrong use of the internet and social media are suspected as being responsible for this loneliness. The internet has become the destination rather than a way of initiating face to face intimate connection between individuals.

For the older age group complex sociological factors which have led to a breakdown of close-knit communities. We know for example, that fewer people claim a church connection and many other groups such as bowling clubs, Rotary, and so forth are struggling for members.

Neuroscientists reveal that the parts of the brain we use for social connection are the same ones that, under different circumstances, can turn people defensive and vigilant — more apt to hunker down instead of reaching out. Loneliness changes the brain.

It grows like a snowball reshaping the brain. What starts as a breakdown of community through complex sociological reasons ends up being a problem for a lonely individual who is fearful of reaching out to others for the companionship they desperately need. As the US Surgeon General writes,

“Loneliness may be a communal problem, but healing begins with the individual.”

Stephanie Cacioppo, a foremost researcher on loneliness, developed a pill for loneliness, it worked, but she abandoned it because of the unacceptable side effects.

Instead, she discovered that:

“The steps to tackle loneliness aren’t grand, high-tech, or expensive. In fact, one of the strategies is simply to get people back into old-fashioned patterns like eating meals together, holding parties and volunteering to help one another out.”

Her research, and that of other people, supports the ancient Hebrew and Māori understanding of health as being whole, - body, mind, and spirit - in a community which cannot be separated into bits. Our Western ideas about health, until recently, has been to fragment these elements and treat them separately. The church was supposed to do the spiritual bit. Furthermore, there has been more emphasis on the individual rather than the community.

Stephanie Cacioppo, writes, “We are each other’s key to a long life and healthy life,” she says. “We need to be accountable for the well-being of our friends and teammates and others.”

What we do in church and in our various activities, is important for the health of our community. Touch is important. Spending time with people we suspect may be lonely. Moving people slightly out of their comfort zone. We need to distinguish between loneliness and social isolation. Social isolation is objective, we can see it. A socially isolated person may not be lonely. A person who is deeply involved in groups and social activity may experience chronic loneliness.

When we read the gospels between the lines and see what Jesus did, he frequently broke people’s loneliness. They were separated from the community by disease, social or religious stigma or isolating wealth. For example, he called lonely, Zacchaeus, who had isolated himself by being rich, corrupt and a tax collector for the occupying power, out of his tree and had dinner with him. An alienated, lonely individual was healed and restored.

Lonely people feel stigmatized, as if it is their personal failure which is responsible. In fact, it is the breakdown of community through complex reasons which is the culprit. Our responsibility is to reach out to people indiscriminately. We don’t know who is lonely. It’s a personal feeling. An invitation to a cup of coffee, meal, walk, activity, or a conversation which goes beyond the superficial “How are you?” an appropriate hug or a simple “Good morning to a stranger,” which leads to a conversation, can be a life saver.

We are indeed “our brother’s or sister’s keeper.”

## **UPDATE FROM PARISH COUNCIL**

The September meeting of the Parish Council was constituted by Karel who shared research on the negative effects that loneliness has on people's health and wellbeing. This contains a very strong pastoral care message.

At the meeting we:

Spent time on pastoral matters as we do each meeting with emphasis on what prayer and support are needed.

Had a report back on the Quiz night (9 Sept) where \$610 was raised for the Tearfund Charity, and also of the pre-election public meeting where political party representatives talked about themselves and what their party's policy is on the various questions that were raised.

Were advised that the 1130am Special Communion Service followed by lunch will be held on Tuesday 14 November

Heard from Alastair and myself on the progress being made by the group set up by the Local Board to improve the resilience of the Mid Bays (Murrays, Mairangi and

Campbells Bays) with regard to emergency situations whether they be floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, fires. Our church has volunteered to become an Emergency Community Hub.

Learned of the plans for marking the wind-up of 13th Company (North Shore) Girls Brigade which has been a part of this church for the last 61 years. Kay Barbour has been involved in leadership roles for all that time. There will be a celebration and thank you function at 6:30pm on 24 October in our hall. Past members and supporters are invited to attend. If you are coming, please bring a plate for supper.

Learnt of Margaret Pont's departure from the role of Support Worker for the Elderly and the message of appreciation that has been sent to her. While we are not planning to advertise to fill that position, we would like to stress that there are Pastoral Visitors and Council Members with knowledge of what services are available if people have queries. Just ask your Pastoral Visitor, Norma Baker or me if you know of someone who is seeking advice on what their options are.

Considered a request from the Mairangi Bay Business Association to participate in the end of year/Christmas activities in the Village and agreed to meet with other organisations to work out who will do what.

*Stewart Milne (Parish Clerk)*

## SUCCESSFUL QUIZ NIGHT

On Saturday 9th September, we held the annual Tearfund Quiz in the Church Hall. It was a team effort with Alastair having the overall responsibility, Joanne producing the advertising material, Rouxveen doing a great job in getting prizes from the local business community, Karen and Gerry working the scoring technology and Stephen on the door registering the teams and collecting the fees.

It was a fun night with a healthy, competitive spirit, plenty of laughs and about 50% of those who attended were community members from outside our church.

We raised \$610 for the Tearfund Charity from registrations and silent auctions.

It was a happy occasion with quite a bit of head scratching and laughter and some of us even learnt some new facts like the activity rate of Genghis Khan.

*Stewart*

**First Prize went to “The Laughter Club”** who managed to get Vineeta from our Indian Congregation to join them (smart move).



**Second Prize to “The Norfolks”** consisting of Helga’s Team from Norfolk Apartments supplemented with Roopali and Angelika (another smart move)



**Third Prize went to the “MandV” Team** who at one stage were leading but got overtaken (sad).



## ENABLING MISSION



The Reverend Dr Emma Keown is employed full-time by the Northern Presbytery to help churches establish mission plans and implement mission initiatives. She also leads a team of volunteers to help churches undertake congregation reviews and explore collaborations with neighbouring parishes. Recently she delivered to us a powerful and challenging address that stressed the centrality of mission in the life and being of a church.

Emma began her address with the creation story in Genesis, where the purpose and nature of God was revealed and went on to observe how God had used Abraham and his descendants to tell the world (both Jews and Gentiles alike) about that purpose and his continued presence. Jesus Christ his son, had furthered the messaging, through his admonition, as articulated in the book of Acts to the disciples to tell the world of the Good News, who, in turn, as recorded in the twenty one letters in the New Testament, urged their followers to spread the gospel. And so, Emma said, that had continued over the centuries, as the church, through missionaries like David Livingstone, reached out from places where the church was established to places where the Word of God was not known.

In recent times, said Emma, the wish for missional activity by churches had, perhaps waned a little, with churches becoming a little inward living. Sometimes too, churches came up with a plan for outreach which was well constructed but destined for failure because it was in the wrong place. She illustrated this point through the picture above showing a well-designed bridge built in the wrong place!

Emma finished her talk by inviting us to think about our own missional activities. As it happens, community outreach it has been a strong feature of this parish and in more recent times we have engaged with the Hindi Speaking Community, for which, incidentally we have received some welcome financial support from the Northern Presbytery.

But there is more to do so that the question How do we connect with our Communities remains a challenges, the more so because their ethnic mix, physical needs and our understanding of the human condition is rapidly changing.

Thank you Emma for your Stimulating address.

*Ian Watson*

## **PRE-ELECTION “MEET THE CANDIDATES”**

On Friday 15 September we hosted representatives of the four major parties for a session of hearing a presentation from each, and then questions from the floor were presented for answers.

There were no major revelations, but each party made its position clear, and we received differing answers to the questions which reflected the policies and ideologies of the parties.

By the end of the evening all of the audience had a clear idea of each parties position on the major issues facing the electorate, as well as hearing divers approaches to questions about such things as the Treaty of Waitangi, support for low income earners and changing the tax system

We look forward to election day in what is looking like a close contest, possibly decided by the minor parties.

*Alastair Emerson.*

## **HINDI MISSION REPORT**



In Hindi mission, we are doing very well, and the congregation is growing.

Last Sunday there were around 28 people, and all were Indians from Northshore. I can see people are taking interest to come for the fellowship rather than Christian service. Therefore, I am planning to have a sports event maybe in October, last Sunday of the month after the service, if I get permission from the ministerial committee. I do visit people for coffee as well as visiting families.

I have supervision with Ricky Waters, chaplain at Massey university on a monthly basis and we are planning to invite students to attend the Hindi service if all goes well.

*Raju George.*



# STEPHEN MARTIN'S ORDINATION AND INDUCTION



The Ordination and Induction of Stephen Martin as an elder in our Church took place on Sunday 10th September, The Martin family (Stephen, wife Olga, Mother Rosemary and son Max) have become an important part of our church family. Stephen has joined Parish Council and the Church Community Committee.

## **HOLY COMMUNION TUESDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2023 11.30am**



Our next Special Communion Service for those parishioners who cannot attend church regularly will be held on Tuesday, November 14th at 11:30 am. There will be a time of fellowship and lunch following the service. We will provide transportation to and from the church if required. If you would like to attend, could you please let your Pastoral Visitor know or call Norma Baker on 443- 3108 before November 9th.



## WE FAREWELL TO 61 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE GIRLS BRIGADE



Diana Olwyn Kay Bruce  
The family



On the 24th of October at 6.30pm, there will be a function to mark the winding up of the Girls Brigade which has been operating at this church for 61 years.

We will be celebrating 61 years of leadership from our very own  
Kay Barbour who will be retiring.

Those with a connection to Girls Brigade are invited to attend and please bring a plate of food to share with everyone.

# **NOTICES**

## **CONTACTS FOR CHURCH PROPERTY MATTERS**

Under the current situation please ensure that any matters with respect to church property are referred to Peter Stone (4796631) or John Shadbolt (4793953) or the Office (4786180)

## **WORKING BEE (INSIDE AND OUTSIDE WORK) COMING UP**

This is being planned for **Saturday 4 November**. More information closer to the day.

## **CHURCH LIFE SURVEY**

37 Members of our Congregation completed the Church Life Survey which was quite extensive with 13 categories of questions covering the various aspects of church life. This is a NZ wide survey involving all church denominations. Participants are not identified in the Report. The feedback from members of our church are generally positive. However as always there are messages within the results which we will need to take note of and look for adjustments.

Anyone wanting access to the results for our church should email me at [stewart.milne@xtra.co.nz](mailto:stewart.milne@xtra.co.nz) and I will send you the link

To those who took the time to complete the Survey - Thank you

*Stewart*

## REGULAR PARISH ACTIVITIES

- **SENIORS SOCIAL CLUB**

1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month 10am - 12pm  
Contact Tangi 022 657 3223 or Raewyn 410 4423



- **BORN AGAIN BODIES**

1.00-2.00pm Wednesdays Church Hall.  
Further information Ian Rankin Ph 479 2320 or 027 332 7235



- **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 Shadbolt's  
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.



- **MAINLY MUSIC**

Fridays during School Term only. Church Hall 10-11am  
Ph Karen Ruffell 021 02263846



- **FAMILY FUN NIGHT & SHARED MEAL**

1st Friday of the month Church Hall 6pm  
Ph Tangi Joseph 022 657 3223

- **PARISH COUNCIL**

7.30pm every 3rd Tuesday of the month Church Lounge  
Ph Stewart Milne 478 5786

*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  
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