



Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church

DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz

<https://www.facebook.com/bayspresbyterian>



Working Bee at the Church Saturday 4th November

UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

As we anticipate the coming of Christ at Christmas, we enter the Advent Season with weekly themes of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Unfortunately, much of the news is saturated with the opposite of these themes. Even as our new coalition has been negotiating joint policies and then being sworn in as our new Government, there is already much distrust and threats of resistance from various parts of society. The war in Ukraine continues with increasing costs and the effects of the Israeli-Hamas conflict has spilt over into rising tensions in the streets and university campuses around the globe. There doesn't seem to be signs of hope, peace, joy, or love.

Is there much point, then, in celebrating Advent? Are we as the church deluding ourselves with our faith and Christian traditions in light of the reality going on around us?

In my mind, just because things look or are actually that bad in the world doesn't mean they can't change. It doesn't mean God has stopped working or can't intervene no matter how bleak or dark the situation. Therefore, there is room for something better despite the overwhelming sense of despair. It means that even the small spark of hope, peace, joy, and love can pierce the darkness.

The season of Advent is about reclaiming or reigniting that spark when lighting the Advent candles. They represent the reality that hope, peace, joy, and love are the things we truly value and want in our life. Moreover, they are gifts from God incarnated to us through Jesus Christ, reminding us of how much we need a saviour at Christmas.

“These people who live in darkness will see a great light.

They live in a place covered with the shadows of death,

but a light will shine on them.” Matthew 4:16





*On behalf of, Tangi and the Manse family, I wish you all a very
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
Tokerau*

Mainly Music Family Service

10am Sunday 17th Dec

Christmas Communion service December 10th 10:00am

Our Christmas Communion service will be held on December 10th at 10:00
If you or you know someone who is unable to attend the service and would like
to have Communion delivered, contact your Pastoral Visitor or Norma Baker
on 443 3108. We will prepare and deliver the Communion
elements at a convenient time.

CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY CAROLS SERVICE

7pm Sunday 24th Dec

CHRISTMAS FAMILY SERVICE

9.30am Monday 25th Dec



WORDS FROM KAREL

Parent Circle an example to us all.

For over a hundred years there have been skirmishes between Jews and Palestinians which every few years erupt into full scale war. We sit on the sidelines appalled at the cruelty and devastation between the two groups. We feel that we must take sides in the conflict, but there is no easy answer as to whom we should support. The USA because of its Jewish population has supported Israel. The Western world has largely followed. There was a strong sentiment towards the Jews after the Second World War when the holocaust was revealed and support for a Jewish state grew. Our sentiment was moved by Leon Uris's book, "Exodus" and the film with the powerful song "This land is my land, God gave this land to me." But the reality is much more complex than that; starting with the Jewish people being expelled and forbidden to live in Jerusalem in 135 CE by the Romans; the breakdown of the Ottoman empire during the First World War and the Sykes Picot agreement of 1916 which drew lines on the map dividing the Middle East into spheres of influence between Russia, Great Britain, and France. God comes into the picture with the division between Judaism and Islam.

The result is that both sides in the conflict have powerful stories upholding the rightness of their cause. Over the years they have demonised and dehumanised each other. The hatred between the two sides is intense. Seven out of ten people killed on both sides is either a woman or a child as each side wants to show to the world how cruel the other is. Many overseas funded peace initiatives to break down the hatred between Jews and Palestinians have been tried and failed. There seems to be no end to the conflict.

Nikolas Kristof, a New York Times opinion writer whom I follow, has written extensively on this conflict over the last few weeks showing the apparent hopelessness of the situation. But one organisation appears to offer a glimmer of hope.

He writes, "...let me tell you about an Israeli woman I met, Meytal Ofer: A couple of weeks ago, I sat down with her in Tel Aviv — 10 years to the month after two terrorists from Hamas murdered her father with 41 blows of an axe. "How could they do that?" she wondered aloud to me. "You need so much hate in your heart to do that." "It would just grow the cycle of revenge," she told me. After her father's murder, she often pondered where that venom came from. In the aftermath of the murder, she wondered about demolishing the killers' houses, as sometimes happens in Israeli-occupied territories. She concluded that would not help.

Instead she joined Parents Circle — Families Forum, a joint Israeli and Palestinian nonprofit made up of people who have lost loved ones to the conflict. They hold dialogues, bonding in grief with those on the other side of the chasm and give talks together aiming to end the escalating bloodshed. Kristof expressed his scepticism: "Is this accomplishing anything?" "I think there is no other choice," she told me.

“This is my home. I don’t want to give up my home,” she added. “I don’t want to go, and Palestinians will not go anywhere either.” So she persists. “We have to do something,” she said. “You cannot stop violence with violence. We tried it for 100 years, and it’s not working.”

Hearing from bereaved Israelis and Palestinians together is “mind-blowing” for children, she said, because many of them have never thought much about losses outside their own group. One indication that these talks are effective: The far-right government this year barred Parents Circle from public schools.” Reconciliation, and forgiveness is difficult and costly. We must give up the dehumanising and demonising image we have of our enemy, not until we see our enemy as vulnerable, weak human beings like us is reconciliation possible.

Kistof writes further, “Bassam Aramin is sometimes the Palestinian speaker in these Parents Circle appearances. Imprisoned by Israel as a 17-year-old for belonging to a then-banned Palestinian organization and possessing a weapon, he spent seven years behind bars. Then in 2007, his 10-year-old daughter, Abir, was killed outside her school by an Israeli soldier firing a rubber bullet.

Instead of turning to bombs, Aramin turned to reconciliation. He studied the Holocaust in a master’s program, learned excellent Hebrew and tried to see the humanity in Israeli soldiers at West Bank checkpoints.

A process of mutual dehumanization has led each side, he said, to regard the other as morally inferior. He noted that Israelis often suggest that the problem is that Palestinians don’t love their children and are ready to sacrifice them for the struggle, while Palestinians traffic in a similar stereotype about Israelis.

“We don’t see each other as human beings,” he said, and he told me of the Palestinian mother of a teenage boy killed by Israeli soldiers who reluctantly came to a Parents Circle meeting, still fuming at Jews.

“She believed that they were animals,” he recounted, quoting her as saying, “They don’t have hearts like us; they hate their kids because they send them to the army.” But she met an Israeli mom who told of losing her child to a Palestinian, and soon they were both sobbing and embracing.”

Aramin recognises the fear of the other in both sides. The people in Parent Circle are optimistic that peace will come. Parent Circle is more likely to succeed in stopping fear and hate because it has arisen out of the situation and is organised by the people who have suffered most. It will take time.

I think there is a lot to learn from Palestine and Israel. Reconciliation and forgiveness are difficult but important. Violence demonising and dehumanising the other create fear and fear begets distrust and the wish to retaliate. Situations where there are differences between groups should not be allowed to grow and should not be created. Addressing the problem through early reconciliation is important.

Without mentioning, Jesus Parent Circle are doing what he taught.

UPDATE FROM PARISH COUNCIL

At the November Meeting of Parish Council we :

- Spent time on pastoral matters and in particular on the situation faced by our dear friend Maureen Webley who has played the organ in our church on the fourth Sunday of the month for the last few years and who has advanced cancer. Tokerau led us in prayer for Maureen, her husband John and the Webley family as well as for those in our parish needing support.
- Were advised by Dorille of a surge in donations of money and items for our Packing of Christmas Treats Service which will be held on 3 December.
- Were advised that Fire and Emergency NZ requires us to conduct a trial evacuation from our premises each 6 months.
- Gave further consideration as to how to distribute the Communion Sacraments to those who are housebound. If you would like this service please let Norma know on 443 3108
- Were delighted to support Roopali Dayal's call to Ministry which will be advised to the Northern Presbytery who will be carrying out Assessments next year.
- Heard from Stephen Martin, Convenor of Property Committee about the work done at the Working Bee as well as on some of the other matters identified for action.
- Received a financial Report for the month of October thanks to the work of our Administrator Joanne who has been able to successfully explore and understand how the system works.
- Received Ian Watsons Report from the Worship Committee including the plan showing who will be leading the worship services over the next 8 months.
- Were advised of the continuing growth in the numbers of those attending the Hindi Services of Worship which are held twice a month
- Discussed what we understand will be expected of our church at the Christmas in the Park event to be held in Mairangi Bay Children's Playground at 6:30pm on 8 December where there will be Carols, Christmas songs and readings.
- Decided that the Special Communion Service and lunch which we hold twice a year will be open to all. It is a great spiritual and social occasion.
- Gave early consideration and support for the proposal from CTCA and Northern Presbytery to work with parishes to rejuvenate/ reinvigorate their life. A decision on our involvement can be made next March.
- Received advice on what needs to be done for our church to be ready to act as a Community Emergency Hub which we have agreed to become in the event of another disaster such as was experienced with the floods in January. See separate information on this elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Stewart Milne (Parish Clerk)

COMBINED SERVICE 5th NOVEMBER

The second of the combined services involving the morning congregation and the Hindi group was held at 6.30pm on November 5th. The service was led by Rev Raju George and the sermon. Preached on the theme of the Servant King was delivered by the Rev Dr, Tokerau Joseph. The service was attended by 39 people and featured robust singing of hymns well known to both groups. Also featured in the service were solo by Roopali from the Hindi congregation.

Following the service a shared meal followed with the main course being provided by the Hindi congregation and the dessert by the morning team. It was a time of fellowship as each group sought to interact with those attending. A special thank you to all who contributed food for the meal.

These services are proving to be an important link in the combined mission of our church.

CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE (CWS) CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Each year we request and receive the CWS Christmas Appeal information and envelopes and distribute them with our December Newsletter as well as having them available in the pews for picking up. As individuals we support many charities . This is the only one of the many which the church receives that we distribute to everyone. It is recommended and if you are able to contribute this can be done direct to CWS or through the church.

November was Men's Health Month

The Women's Fellowship group provided a fabulous morning tea after the service on the 26th November in support of the Men's Health month initiative.

We were so pleased to enjoy it and also make a donation of \$122

Thanks to the Women's Fellowship group

Mid Bays Resilient Communities (MBRC)

Our Church has agreed to be a Community Emergency Hub (CEH) which could be activated in the event of an emergency such as occurred with the January floods.

Stewart Milne is representing our church on the MBRC.

The Community Church in Maxwellton Drive, Windsor Park and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Sunset Rd have also agreed to be CEHs.

What Is A Ceh And What Is It Expected To Do?

A CEH is a place where people affected in the community can meet , support and help each other and make decisions about how to best ensure the safety and comfort of others in their community during an emergency.

A CEH can provide local on the ground information back to Auckland Emergency Management (AEM) Coordination Centre where trained staff will be coordinating the official response to the emergency. The January floods showed very clearly that communities cannot expect assistance from AEM in the first few days. It is over to the community.

What Is The Process By Which We May Be Asked To Activate Our CEH?

- MBRC Members are to monitor an emerging situation with contact to First Responders (Police, Fire Service, Met Service and AEM). MBRC members can communicate with each other through their own WhatsApp group.
- As intelligence/information is gathered the MBRC Convenor and one other MBRC Member can decide on activation in which case contact will be made with the appropriate CEH or CEHs to activate.
- The contacted CEH(s) will then need to decide whether they are in a position to activate. This may depend on the state of their building, the availability of volunteers and/or other factors. (Volunteers don't necessarily need to be members of the church).
- In making the decision that we can activate we will need to establish whether there are enough initial volunteers available to go to the church. Minimum is probably about 8 or ideally 10 or more.
- We would use emails, phone calls to establish who is able to come depending on their own situation including whether they can get to the church.
- Before advising that we can and have activated we would need to have sufficient volunteers on site.
- The MBRC will then advise its network and the Auckland Emergency Management that we have activated and we will be shown on the Website and on Facebook as an activated CEH.

What Personnel Will We Need To Have In The CEH?

- Have a Supervisor.
- Have a receptionist with a sign in sheet so we know and can advise who is at the CEH
- Have an information gatherer and recorder using a whiteboard to show the situation as our knowledge of it develops including damaged houses.
- Have someone to keep a note of Needs and Offers to see what can be matched up. MBRC is bringing together a data base of what equipment is available

- . Have a radio operator who can also be on the desk top in the office if it is operational.
- . Have a data base of people who we know with skills/experience eg first aid, nursing, counselling, handy fix it person.
- . Have some people comforting, providing cups of tea etc
- . We will also need equipment and supplies.

Request: Would anyone who is willing to be listed as a volunteer who could be contacted and if free and able to do so to come in to the church during an emergency if we are activated as a CEH please let me know.

Thanks ***Stewart Milne*** stewart.milne@xtra.co.nz or 027 293 8499

Combined Services Summer 2023-24



31st December at 10am:

Browns Bay Presbyterian Church

45 Anzac Road, Browns Bay 0630

7th January at 10am:

Glenfield Community Church

82 Chartwell Avenue, Glenfield 0629

14th January at 10am:

Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church

10 Penzance Road, Mairangi Bay 0630

21st January at 10am:

Forrest Hill Presbyterian Church

151 Forrest Hill Road, Forrest Hill 0620

Have a happy and safe summer!



“Working Bee at the Church” Saturday 4th November.
We undertook a big clean up outside and inside the church. It was a fabulous turnout from so many of our Parish and the community groups who use our facility. Thank you all so much.



**English
Conversation
Group**
Wednesdays 1pm



**MAIRANGI BAY - CHRISTMAS IN THE
PARK**

Our church has been invited to take a leading role in the Mairangi Bay Christmas in the Park celebration which will be a family event.

It will be held in the children's playground which is behind the Z Petrol Station and will start at 6pm on Friday 8 December.

People from the Community Church in Maxwelton Drive will also be participating. We have an agreed programme with well known carols, Gospel readings, entertainment items, a sharing of the Christmas Story and some Christmas songs.

We need singers. If you can come along to help with the singing please do so – We are all needed. If you can please let me or Norma Baker know that you intend coming that will take some pressure off and will be appreciated.

Thanks. Stewart Milne

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
Office Ph: 478 6180 office@bayspc.nz