



Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church

FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz

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Mainly Music Service December 2023

UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

Hello and Kia Orana to you all in 2024. I trust you had a wonderful Christmas and New Year time with family and friends. If not, then I pray that this year will bring a turning point for better things ahead. I'd like to reflect on events since our last newsletter and what aspirations I have for this year.

December 2023 was a very eventful time. We kicked off with our packing service (3rd) which was amazing in terms of the generosity of food items provided and the community spirit of folk preparing the bags of gifts as our worship. It was an awesome effort and great opportunity to demonstrate the good news of Christ through loving service to those in need.

Following this was our involvement with the Carols on the Green event (8th) held in the children's park. Along with some from the Mairangi Bay Community Church, it was a beautiful expression of our unity in Christ while telling again the Christmas story through scripture and carols. Participation from the public was fantastic; especially with our Cook Islands drumming and dancing demonstrations. It was a brilliant afternoon for families and a joyful occasion for the wider community.

As well as our quarterly communion service (10th), the Mainly Music service (17th) was a highlight. Seeing our church full of children, young parents, grandparents, and a handful of youth was simply inspiring. Well done to our Mainly Music team for their preparations and delivery of children's activities incorporated into worship. The conversations with families during a beautiful morning tea after the service were so affirming of this ministry to children in our community. Praise God!

Our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services were also well attended. For some unfamiliar faces, it was the only time of the year they would do so. Yet, it was a privilege sharing that time with them. A couple visiting from Ireland commented how much they enjoyed the family approach to our services and will encourage their home-church to follow suit when they return. Despite some carols having been sung on a number of occasions already, they were sung with much gusto and joy by those present.

To end off the month, I did a baptism service for Charlotte Annabelle Halpin, granddaughter of Zara and Roger Foote. The family originally wanted the baptism in one of our Sunday services, but because of our post-Christmas combined services with other congregations, the baptism was done on Thursday 28th December. About twenty people gathered for such a special occasion for a special girl.

Next were our combined services with Browns Bay, Glenfield, and Forest Hill beginning as mentioned above. Well done to our folk who supported these services which have become opportunities of connecting or reconnecting with Christian brothers and sisters as well as appreciating the different styles of worship. Our hosting of such a service on 14th January 2024 was simply marvellous. Full to capacity for worship and morning tea was a good problem to deal with (if a problem at all).

I want to thank you for your prayers and support during our family bereavement. Tangi's father passed away at about 4pm on Christmas day after struggling with heart failure and leukaemia. We are grateful for being able to celebrate his 76th birthday on December 8th with extended family and also now that his suffering is over and reunited with his beloved wife, the late Matamua Bates. Your presence at the funeral service and encouraging words offered were sources of encouragement for us all. Please accept our heartfelt gratitude.

Looking ahead, my hope is that we might be one of the congregations selected to participate in Northern Presbytery's rejuvenation project. As part of its vision, Northern Presbytery has partnered with City To City Australia (CTCA) to work with some of our congregations as well as train some of our folk for such tasks. We are doing well as a faith community, but any extra help to grow our mission and life together is welcomed. Please keep this in your prayers.

As an aside, I also want to thank you for your support regarding my recently published book "Ethnic Flames of the Burning Bush". It is drawn from my doctoral research exploring how our theological understanding of church and our cultural preferences shape our church membership and practices, particularly at the congregation level. If you would like to buy a copy for yourself, please see me.

Blessings, *Tokerau*



Hindi group singing carols at the Manse - Dec 2023

WORDS FROM KAREL - How do we deal with the post truth world?



Karel Photographing in a Village in Ukraine where houses were recently shelled.

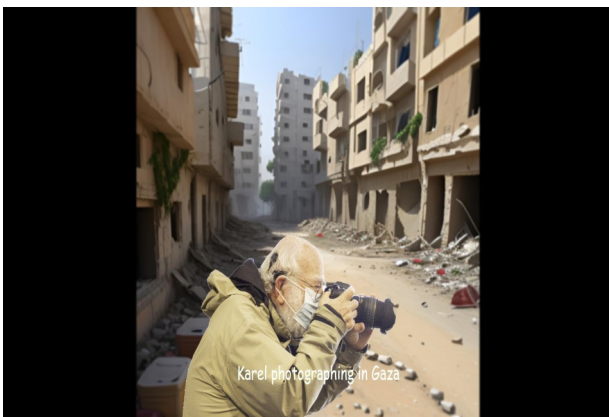
A couple of months ago I was invited by an agency to be a part of a group of five photographers from several countries to photograph and document some things in the Ukraine. We met at Heathrow airport. It was very difficult finding each other and our leader who would take us as a group to document what the agency wanted recorded. I cannot share with you some of the images I took : they are with the agency. But some of my fellow photographers in the group took photographs of me using their phones and they are okay to share.

One was taken at Heathrow while I was looking at an illuminated notice board hoping to gain some idea of where I was and how I could find the rest of the team. Three of us had found each other and it took a long anxious time to locate the other two, despite numerous mobile phone calls. We eventually met each other, had a meal, and then we were on a plane to the Ukraine where we spent ten days photographing the images the agency wanted. I was glad that I had been warned to take warm clothing and my simple manual camera which could operate in the cold. My more convenient camera to use (with autofocus) just would not operate in the extreme cold. We were treated well and most people we worked with or were introduced to spoke some English and were very friendly fellow followers of Jesus.



Karel looking at a screen for details to find two other team members

The agency we were producing the photographs for was interested in assisting ordinary people caught up in the war. All I can tell you is that some of the images I took were harrowing. Towards the end of the project the agency was pleased with our efforts as they had gained a body of images from which to select what they wanted to use. They asked at this time whether any of us would be willing to go to Gaza to take similar images.



Karel photographing in Gaza

Three of us volunteered. Security immediately tightened. I cannot tell you much about Gaza. We were taken there by plane and then in a minibus and deliberately not told where we were for security reasons. At the border crossings my NZ passport served me well and I avoided the long interrogations the other members of the team were subjected to.

Again, the sights were harrowing. At times the stench of people living in ruins with no sewage system was overwhelming. The only image I have is of me photographing, taken by one of the other members of the team. As you can imagine this was an interesting, demanding and moving assignment.

This story is not true. The above story is a lie. It was partially written, and the photographs produced, by AI (artificial intelligence). The photographs were generated by computer on my instruction of what I wanted and then I popped myself in. I was at home in our apartment at Northbridge all the time.

The problem is that the sort of technology I used to create the story above is being used more and more to persuade us to a particular way of thinking and acting. At least one political party used it in our November elections. False, persuasive stories and pictures are now easy to create.

Worldwide there is move away from caring for the poor, the weak and those who need special help to live worthwhile and productive lives. There is an increasing trend for political and economic settings to be those which benefit one group of people to the detriment of others less advantaged. Sadly, religious groups, and some who claim to be Christian, are also caught up in this.

Lies created by technology are used to persuade us to particular points of view. Systems are created which lock out the poor and disadvantaged. There is a heap of disinformation about climate change and environmental degradation.

It's like the problems followers of Jesus faced in the ancient world but with a very different understanding of the world, when the author of Ephesians wrote, "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

We live in a post truth world where confusion reigns. Some of you who knew that I was at home recovering from sciatica will have been confused when you read the above story. Confusion is one of the tactics used to persuade us to doubt our own thinking: to dismiss what we know to be the right. Think big tobacco and the fossil fuel industry.

How can we react to such a deluge of falsehood - encouraging behaviour which is the opposite of what Jesus taught?

My way of dealing with this is to focus on the way Jesus taught us to love others including the disadvantaged, the poor, those in prison - those who are viewed by others as outcasts, not worth even bothering about. I like to put things through what I call the "Jesus' filter." To examine what I am confronted with, using the question, "How would the Jesus I know and love, react to this situation or point of view."

PACKING SERVICE

On Sunday 3 December we held our annual ‘packing service’ in the hall.
This again lived up to expectations as a positive joyful event.

Thanks to the generosity of our congregation who had donated treats and money for the purchase of treats (actioned by Dorille and Pauline). We were able to fill 85 bags for delivery. These went to families who had been identified by Presbyterian Support as those who would benefit from a token of Christmas Spirit. Representatives from PSN (Family Works, Communities feeding Communities, Family Start and Shine) participated in the Service with enthusiasm and were able to depart with a share of bags to deliver.

This joyful occasion included a spontaneous item by Bronwyn and Peter Stone’s granddaughter Koko Stone who sang “One Little Candle” (Audrey Snyder version) where the theme was *HOPE*. Below are the words to the song.

One little candle burning bright
One little flame of radiant light
Shimmering softly in the night
Makes the darkness fade away.
One little song that’s freely sung
One little bit of kind that’s done
Brightens the world for everyone
Like a candle’s golden ray.

Keep your light shining bright
Like a torch of hope held high
Let it glow, let it show
Keep the flame of love alive (Chorus)

One little smile for someone new
One little word of kindness too
Kindles the friendship flame anew
Soon the loneliness is gone.
One little candle flame, when shared
Spreads through the darkness everywhere
Reflecting in hearts of those who care
And they pass the light along.



We have had a **BIG** “thank you from Anne Overton” (PSN), for our church’s continuing support for their welfare work, which is reproduced here. “We are very grateful for the ongoing generosity and caring spirit of the Mairangi & Castor Bays congregation. Having the Christmas food bags full of



Christmas treats alongside our standard food parcels will give many families a feeling of hope and the knowledge that others care for them. Also thank you for your ongoing support of the Kai Space with donations of food. As you can imagine the demand is very high. Please pass on our thanks and blessings to everyone who was involved. It was fun being part of the special service”.

Gracias e paz, Anne

OUR OWN MAIRANGI BAY CHRISTMAS IN THE PARK

Mairangi Bay had its own Christmas in The Park at 6:30pm on Friday 8 December with ‘The Park’ being the children’s playground.

We were blessed with good weather, no wind and even some afternoon sun. The programme of Carols and Christmas Story Readings was presented by members of our Church and the Community Church. The carols were all well known and those present joined in with song books provided by Sally Cargill of the Business Association who organized the event.



Rev Tokerau Joseph took the lead and Pastor David Yeh from the Community Church contributed with a prayer. Entertainment of a different sort was provided by a musician from the Community Church. We provided the Cook Island drummers and dancers whose performance got everyone’s attention. They succeeded in getting good audience participation in the dancing.

Altogether a good community event in the lead up to Christmas.

PRESBYTERY EVENTS

There are two forthcoming Presbytery events which are open to us all to attend. These are :

Rejuvenation of Churches Workshop which will be held from 10am to 3pm Friday 16 Feb at the Greenlane Presbyterian Church. RSVP by 2 Feb to administrator@northpres.org.nz

Northern Presbytery Leadership Conference 10am Saturday 17 Feb Samoan Presbyterian Church Cnr Grey St and Onehunga Mall. Register on line through Northern Presbytery by 2 Feb. A \$15 contribution to costs is sought.

Stewart Milne (Parish clerk)

MAINLY MUSIC SERVICE DECEMBER 17TH 2023

On December 17th 2023, the Mainly Music Group drew their year to a close with a special church service . There was a great turnout, with over 24 children and parents attending, swelling the congregation numbers to over 70. The service was run entirely by the group, featuring a number of action songs especially practiced for the service prior. All were thoroughly enjoyed.

The Mainly music team is run by Karen Ruffell and Norma Baker and they are assisted by Kay Barbour, Margaret Callaghan, Helga Greenwell, Yoshika Tregathan and a friend of Karen's Ann who has volunteered to be on door duty. The leaders looked splendid in their blue T shirts. Enrolments for 2024 are rolling in. Our thanks to all concerned for a memorable morning.

Ian Watson





COMBINED CHURCH SERVICES

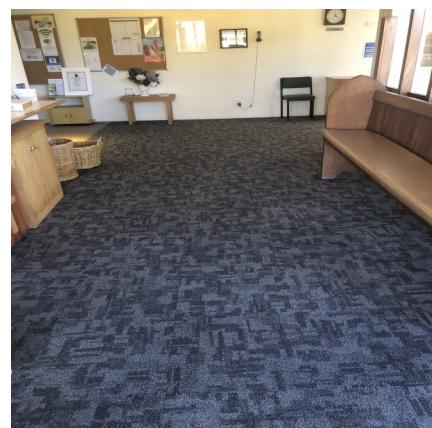
This year we continued our practice of holding combined services with Browns Bay, Forrest Hill and Glenfield during the holiday period. These were again well attended. There were 130 at the Service at our church on 14 January. It was great to meet up again with our friends from the other churches and to meet new people. Experiencing different formats and theological approaches at the different churches also gives us matters for discussion.

Stewart Milne (Parish clerk)

NEW CARPET IN ENTRANCE WAY AND MEETING ROOM

Leaks from the roof onto the plain carpet that was in the foyer by the entrance had left bad stains and so that whole area has been recarpeted as has the Meeting Room/Lounge which was showing the result of many coffee/tea spills. The replacement carpet type is with tiles (yes we have plenty of spares) and the strong pattern should preclude future spills being so evident.

Stephen Martin (Property Manager)



“The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi: a Christian perspective” by Dr Stuart Lange NZ Christian Network,

February 2024

Unsurprisingly, there are many varying interpretations of Te Tiriti o Waitangi / the Treaty of Waitangi, some of them helpful, and some of them distorting.

Any interpretation of the Treaty does need to reflect both what it actually said, and how it was understood at the time.

A key historical factor behind the Treaty/Te Tiriti was humanitarian Christian concern to have Māori protected from lawless Pākehā and from the destructive impacts of unregulated colonisation. From the late 1830s it was clear that New Zealand was about to be colonised by the New Zealand Company, which had little regard for Māori wellbeing.

Christian missionaries in New Zealand did not want or welcome colonisation. But, in order for Māori to be protected, they wanted New Zealand to come under British law and order. For that to happen, Māori chiefs had to assent to British jurisdiction by way of a treaty, and to receive reassurances about their rights. This Christian humanitarian motivation behind the Treaty needs to figure more strongly in public discussion of its meaning and intent.

The assumption (by some) that the Treaty was just a deceptive pretext for colonisation and injustice is mistaken, and seriously confuses intentions and outcomes. Harmful outcomes did not arise out of the Treaty itself, but primarily from its disregard.

In Clause 1, Māori chiefs agreed to the British Crown’s governorship over New Zealand: “kawanatanga” in the Māori version, and “sovereignty” in the English translation. The Crown’s overall governance over New Zealand was primarily so that the British Crown could regulate Europeans and protect the rights of Māori. The treaty was not about initiating large-scale European colonisation, but in effect it did help facilitate that. In accepting the Treaty and rule of the Crown, however, the Māori chiefs were not in any way signing up to subjugation, cultural domination by settlers, or the loss of their own land and language.

In Clause 2, Māori chiefs were guaranteed full rights to their own chiefly mana and authority (tino rangatiratanga), lands, fisheries, and property. It also implied a considerable degree of Māori self-determination, at least at that time. The subsequent breach of these promises, especially with regard to land, caused considerable harm and hurt among Māori, which has required redress in various ways.

Times have changed. Māori have become a minority in a country that was once theirs alone. Māori rangatira no longer exercise anything like the same power over their people that they once did. New Zealand is now ethnically and

culturally very mixed. Māori themselves hold many differing views. But the co-existence and balance of Crown pre-eminence in Clause 1 and chiefly rights in Clauses 2 does lend support to the idea of an ongoing symbolic partnership between Crown and Māori, and that there should be an appropriate recognition in New Zealand of Māori voices, guardianship, language and culture. Such recognition is not really “racism” or “apartheid”, as some suppose.

Clause 3 gave to Māori the same rights and privileges as British citizens. This was an important assurance to the chiefs, that in effect Māori would not become second class citizens subjected to injustice and oppression from Pākehā. This clause was likewise significantly compromised. Nowadays, it reminds us that all

New Zealanders, whether Māori, Pākehā, Pasifika, Asian, or whatever, have equal rights in law. There is indeed one law for everyone in New Zealand. However, that does not preclude honouring Māori as the tangata whenua, the original people of the land, who in signing Te Tiriti in effect opened their country to all who have subsequently made New Zealand their home.

Christians should neither disregard nor distort the Treaty, nor deify it. It was a governmental document, not a religious document. But we do well to remember that among other things it reflected Christian biblical values of justice, order, and human equality.

Te Tiriti was also promoted among Māori chiefs by Christian missionaries, who in good faith assured the chiefs that the Crown would always act justly. It was signed in trust by Māori chiefs, many of whom were also Christian. Many Māori – though by no means all – came to regard Te Tiriti as a sacred kawenata (covenant), an agreement made in the sight of God which should be honoured. Later, British governors and settler governments violated the treaty, but against the strong protests of a number of prominent missionaries.

Of all people, Christians must always be on the side of justice, truthfulness, respect, generosity, and reconciliation.

Also, we need to remember that ultimately, in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, Māori nor Pākehā nor anyone else: in Christ, despite all our cultural differences, all can become spiritually one.

Tokerau



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

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