



Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church
MARCH 2024 NEWSLETTER

Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph
www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz
<https://www.facebook.com/bayspresbyterian>



FAMILY GAMES and SHARED MEAL NIGHT

1st Friday of every month starting in March 2024

UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

I thought you might like this short piece entitled “Challenges for the New Zealand church in 2024” by Rev Dr Stuart Lange from the NZ Christian Network. Although God is ceaselessly at work, and there remain countless wonderful Christian people and churches in this county, in our current context the New Zealand church is undoubtedly not as robust or effective as it could be.

Within many churches there appears to be some weakening of confidence in the uniqueness of Christ, the power of the Gospel, and the truth and authority of the scriptures, and some waning of spiritual zeal. Among many Christians there is also some uncertainty about biblical moral values.

Across much of the church, there is a crisis with regard to evangelism. Many Christians feel unmotivated to share the faith with unbelievers. Others feel intimidated by the world views of many people in our post-Christian society, and unsure how to connect with them about God and the gospel in a way that will be heard. There also appears to be a shallowness in Christian discipleship. Influenced by society’s moods of consumerism, individual choice, pleasure seeking, and scepticism, many churchgoers have fallen away.

Some churches do reasonably well in proclaiming the Gospel, and some churches do quite well in loving service to those in need. Some do both, and some do neither. Not all do well at both.

Across secular society, a growing number of people have rejected God, and have become wary of the church. Reported sexual abuse in church-related contexts has helped lower respect for churches. Also, some social legislation in recent years has cast some shadow over Christians’ freedoms of belief and expression.

In the face of such challenges, what should Christians and churches do? Succumb to pessimism? Lie low? Blame someone else? Give up?

No, challenges to Christian faith are neither new nor surprising. The purposes of God can never ultimately be thwarted. Difficult challenges are always a call to Christian believers to be more faithful, more genuine, more grace-filled, more loving, more prayerful, more discerning, more whole-hearted, more strategic, and more truly active in God’s work. (See 1 Cor. 15:58 and 16:13).

Living Lord, by your Holy Spirit powerfully renew and strengthen your Church in 2024 – beginning with every one of us.

Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki, nana koe e tiaki.

Seniors Club Lunch - Dec 2023



***Come and join us every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10am - 2pm
for some socialising during morning tea and fun activities.
Starting 5th of March 2024.***

WORDS FROM KAREL - CHANGE

Change is difficult. Sometimes we grab change with open arms such as when we seek change by going on holiday. In those circumstances we might go for quite a dramatic change from the way that we normally live. For example, we might go camping in a tent. We talk about change being as good as a holiday. We come back refreshed and eager to cope with what is at hand. Other changes are more difficult such as the death of a spouse, the loss of a job, and having to move house. With the change we may experience profound sadness, anger, guilt, and depression. Some of us may have trouble moving on, getting stuck in the past golden time and thinking that we can never again be happy or content with life.

Some change is inevitable as we move through life. We mature, and age and it gradually dawns on us that we are growing old and cannot do things as easily and as quickly as we did in the past.

Recently Erica and I experienced an enormous change. We realised we could not stay in our home but needed to move to something smaller. This precipitated a change that was thrust upon us. It was not a change we had anticipated. We thought that we could remain where we were enjoying the garden Erica had planted. We moved to a retirement village. It was an immense change and had consequences. All the familiar patterns of our life were disrupted. We could not find many of the things we needed because they were no longer in familiar places. As well we had to get rid of a lot of things – some of them quite precious as we had had them for many years. We went through the normal stages accompanying big changes, a feeling of being disorientated, mixed with the feeling of pleasure with the change and hopefulness for the future. At times we wondered whether we had done the right thing. But we cannot turn the clock back.

One of the aspects of our life where we find change most difficult is in our faith journey. We think that our thinking and belief about God and Jesus is something that is unchangeably fixed for all time. In the meantime, there are deep cutting changes in the culture around us. We experienced it in conversation with our grandchildren. We realise, as Alastair Emerson pointed out to me in a conversation, that our children and grandchildren “live in a different culture.” No wonder then, that we find it difficult to communicate the gospel of Jesus to other generations. If they are going to be persuaded of the importance of good news of Jesus. We first need to persuade them to change culture. We know that is a difficult, if not impossible task; pretending that the knowledge explosion has not happened; pretending that the digital revolution has not taken place; pretending that human

made satellites do not circulate above us; pretending that microbes and virus don't exist and evolve, or that the world of quantum physics doesn't affect us.

From time to time there are those who announce that we need to get to the "basics of our faith," for Christianity to grow. Forgetting that those basics were developed in the 4th, 12th and 16th century, in different cultures from our present time with very different knowledge of the world, let alone the universe. A lot has happened since then!

We fail to grasp that there are ways of thinking about God which incorporate evolution and our understanding of the universe and its development over the last 13 .5 billion years. Yet in many ways this has not reached many people in the churches. Some people are very comfortable repeating the traditions of the past and the questions arising from science and technology don't bother them. They feel no need to change. Others feel uncomfortable and have difficulty embracing their faith feeling it jars with present understanding of the world and universe. Many have opted out of a faith journey finding it too difficult to reconcile with present knowledge.

I think if we are to be true to the teaching of Jesus, we need to change. We need to change from traditional expressions of the faith that rely on using despotic kings and their honour as a model for God or using Greek philosophy in attempts to define God. We don't normally think in such categories. The God produced using such categories or ways of thinking produces a God that is far too small for our understanding and experience of the universe. The challenge of the present age to the churches and to ourselves is to relinquish some of our beliefs which we hold dear, which no longer make sense in the present world. Instead, we need to step out in faith, trusting in the leading of the spirit, to lead us to the wondrous and magnificent experience of the God of the universe whose creativity permeates all that is. We discover that in the words of Isaiah 6:6 "The whole earth is filled with the glory of God." We find that the universe lives in us in what the ancients called soul. To experience God in this way, is to be overwhelmed by the source of all love which we encounter in Jesus. Over the centuries Christian mystics and contemplatives have known this. They have been ahead of us.

Many will find the change difficult, but it is worth the effort.

Many people holding on to traditional beliefs find evolution a hindrance to their faith. But someone has written "evolution is a gift to theology."

UPDATE FROM PARISH COUNCIL

- At the February Meeting of Parish Council :
- Stephen Martin constituted the meeting with reference to the findings of the Faith and Belief Survey which was carried out in 2023. These and other references that Stephen quoted are all relevant to our church as we consider the possibility of entering into a rejuvenation process. (Anyone wanting access to the findings of the survey should contact me)
- We followed our normal practice of spending time on the important matter of pastoral care. We rely on the Pastoral Visitors and the members of our Congregation to pass on to Norma Baker, Tokerau or myself information about any pastoral situation that we can help with. Support for those in need is so important.
- We received feedback on the response to our recently introduced practice of delivering the communion elements to those at home who couldn't get to the quarterly or Special Communion Service. The elements will have already been blessed at the service. Those wishing to be included in this service should let their pastoral visitor know.
- We were advised by Stephen (the Property Manager) of work needing to be done at the Manse and at the Church which we will be proceeding to undertake during the year and which will result in a deficit against budget in this year's accounts.
- We noted the good community responses to our church initiated activities with numbers of participants in Mainly Music, Dees Group, English Conversations and Born Again Bodies all being well attended.
- We spent time considering whether our church should apply to be one of the first 6 churches in the Northern Presbytery to become involved with the City to City Australia (CTCA) church rejuvenation process. We are supportive of being involved in the rejuvenation process however our decision is not to seek to be included in the first group as that would require us to agree to the ethics and theology of CTC Global. Our church has a policy of inclusiveness and the CTCA requirement will not apply to subsequent groups of churches chosen to go through the process. We have decided to apply to be included in the second or third group.
- Agreed that the Mid Bays (Murrays, Mairangi and Campbells Bays) Resilient Communities Working Group (MBRC) can use our church buildings for their meetings including if there is an emergency.
- Agreed to create some space in our filing cupboard by sending some of our older papers to the PCANZ Archives for storage.

- Adjusted the Administrators' hours of work to address the situation that has arisen with the death of George Wyman who is being greatly missed for many reasons one of which is the amount of finance and property work that he carried out in our parish on a voluntary basis. We need a Treasurer. I am acting in the position with most of the work being done by Joanne.
- The arrangement whereby our Minister is employed for 50% of his time by Northern Presbytery has now been in place for a year and we held a review of how it is working out. Part of the agreement is that Tokerau takes the first three services each month with other people (mainly from the Congregation) taking the services on the 4th Sunday and when there is a 5th Sunday. There is some flexibility in the arrangement and we came to the conclusion that it is working satisfactorily.

Stewart Milne (Parish Clerk)

GROWING HEALTHY CHURCHES NORTHERN PRESBYTERY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE AND BUSINESS MEETING

This meeting was held on Saturday 16 February at the Onehunga Pacific Island Church.

Andrew Katay the City to City Australia (CTCA) CEO gave the Keynote address on Healthy Churches. His main points were that in the past there has been emphasis on Leadership or Mission or Discipleship but all 3 are needed. He stressed that leadership is facilitation – not ‘bullying’ and that is the way that CTCA operates. Discipleship depends on a transformation – it gets loves in order of priority. Andrew highlighted the need for curiosity and the way that Jesus asked questions – sometimes back to the questioner. CTCA and Nthn Presbytery are combining to offer to assist churches to rejuvenate.

In the Workshops we had sessions on :

Starting, restarting congregations : Rev Won Joung (Inner City). Rev Bruce Graham (Takanini). Rev Mark Chapman (Maraetai)

Building connections with community : Riverhead and the children's ministry. Onewa – Greg Morgan and building relationships. The Storehouse – Rev Fa'amanu.

It was interesting to learn about experimentation on the new ways of doing church and how they are proceeding/ succeeding.

Business Meeting : There were 18 reports from the various Presbytery groups which had been circulated prior to the meeting. The attendance was about 160. It was a good opportunity to hear what some other parishes are doing. Not only through the Workshops but also in the morning tea and lunch breaks.

Stewart Milne

14 Years of Dees Social Group



Our Dees Social Group for those with dementia has now been meeting for 14 years. During that time more than 100 people have spent time in the group. Some have only stayed for a short time, others for an extended time and in the case of one special member (Helen) who joined the group when it first started and is still attending.

The programme has remained fairly much the same with socializing over morning tea, then doing some exercising which Tangi (our Coordinator) introduces music and flowing movements into, then a noisy competition with one group keeping the balloon in the air with noodles while the other passes a ball – who can reach 20 first!

Indoor bowling in the hall follows, then board games (Rummikub and Tri-Dominoes) and lunch.

After lunch it is bingo, quiz or cards game and then the last half hour is singing which we all love and which the standard of has improved with Tokerau leading on the guitar.

Tangi keeps in touch with the caregivers and volunteers during the week and that personal contact is very much appreciated. The success of the group depends on the Coordinator and the Volunteers.

The photo shows the Dees Members and Volunteers playing boardgames on 22 Feb when 12 members were present.

Stewart Milne

Practicing having conversations in the English Language



This activity was introduced about 7 years ago when Karel Lorier was our acting Minister. Karel was visited in the Church Office one day by a Chinese lady by the name of Grace Liu who asked if our church was running any classes in English for newly arrived Immigrants. We weren't but we got started and it continues.

We meet on Wednesdays from 1pm to 2:30pm in Meeting Room 2 in the church extension. The finishing time allows for parents to pick up their children from school or be home for them when they return from school.

Raewyn Henderson, John Shadbolt and I run the classes which are more focused on learning how to string words together in conversations than on formal ESOL teaching. They do like to have a piece of paper with new words or phrases on so that they can make notes. We have a slot in each session where we introduce them to some of our strange Kiwi sayings like – 'bring a plate' and 'she'll be right'.

We have met many really interesting people (mainly Chinese but also Koreans, Ukrainians, Russians, Japanese and Taiwanese) and very much enjoyed their company. There is plenty of laughter and some of the participants have gone on to help at Dees and also to bring family along to the first Friday of the month meal and Games. Grace has been baptized in our church and has become a valued member of our Parish Council.

The photo shows those attending the class on 21 Feb.

Stewart Milne

FELLOWSHIP GROUP

At our last Parish Council Meeting we received a very interesting report from the Fellowship Committee who over the year, organised a number of events for our congregation. So, for instance during the last few months of 2023, the group organised a well attended Quiz Night a morning tea for Men's health, and some mince pies after the service on December 10th.

The group has now turned its thoughts to 2024 and as well as “the usual favorites” such as a roast lunch at Montrose’s, an armchair travel talk and the “S” lunch following the AGM, it is looking to organise some new events like a Bowls evening, a Fashion Show, an outing to hear the Albany Singers and an intriguingly titled Pickle Ball. Hot Cross Buns will be provided following the Palm Sunday Service and of course there will be the usual meals following the combined services of the Morning and Hindi congregations. To that end Roopali is now part of the group, the team is led by Karen Ruffell and is made up of Jimmy Colville, Julie Reid, Grace Liu, Norma Baker, Raewyn Henderson, Dorille Shadbolt, Bronwyn Stone, Sue Bowden and Val Crawford. Thank you all for what you do.

Ian Watson



MAINLY MUSIC

Fridays 10am -11am during School Terms Only



HINDI SERVICES

First and Last Sunday of the month.



ALL are WELCOME!

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**

3pm 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