



Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church

JULY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz

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Northern Presbytery Youth Service



UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

I'm encouraged with some of the things happening in our parish. At the forefront is the development of seven of our young people ranging from the ages of 12 to 16 years. Some have grown up in the parish for some time while others have recently joined. Their coming together seems to have progressed organically without push to form a youth group as such.

The last Whanau service was highlight. It demonstrated the level of talent that our young people have as well as a the potential for their future. This was not only clear in their musical aptitude, but also in other giftings which contributed immensely to our worship. We appreciate these aspects including the involvement of Maxim and Mastell who regularly light the Christ Candle. Altogether, their input is amazing and uplifting for us all.

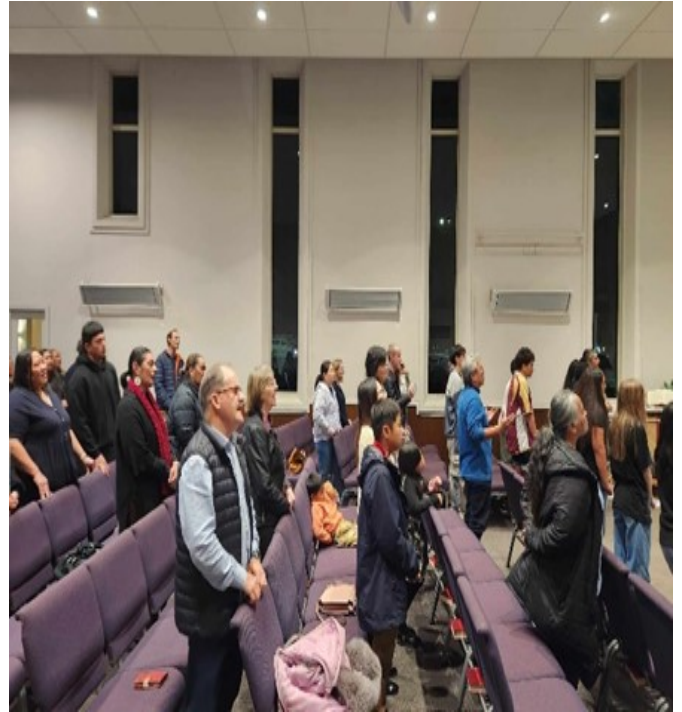
During Matariki weekend, three of our youth attended the Northern Presbytery Youth Camp at Hunua. About 50 young people and various camp leaders were involved. We dropped them off at 8am and, before leaving, made sure they were settled in their cabins, met the Youth Coordinator, Masele Bakulich-Tufeao, and had a good breakfast. They were a little shy because they did not know anyone. But by the time we arrived to pick them up at 1pm on Sunday, they were chatty and laughing after making new friends while excitedly telling us of their experiences.



The three of them can't wait for next years camp. I'm truly grateful to parents for allowing their children to attend the camp and for those in the parish who kindly sponsored the camp fees. The hope is that all of our youth will go to camp together next time.



NORTHERN PRESBYTERY YOUTH SERVICE



Coming up is a Northern Presbytery Youth service hosted at Hope Mahurangi. Since the parish has a brand-new sports facility (that is also used by the local High School), the plan is to incorporate games before the service. This is another opportunity for our youth to connect with other young people in the presbytery. It is also a way of helping to build a sense of identity as a youth group of Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church. After Tangi and I went to the last Youth Service hosted at Greenlane Presbyterian Church, we hope that we can take our youth to the next one at Hope Mahurangi.

So, please keep praying and encouraging them when you get the chance.

WORDS FROM KAREL

Loving your enemies

Jesus most difficult teaching is to love our enemies. Matthew records it this way in 5:43-45:

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour, and hate your enemy.'

44. But I tell you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who mistreat you and persecute you,

45. that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven."

This teaching becomes very challenging in our divided world. Can a Ukrainian love Putin or his Russian soldiers? Or a Gazan love Netanyahu and Israeli soldiers? Or Israelis love Yahya Sinwar? Or the Hutus love the Tutsis? and so forth. Jesus was addressing his words to people who had daily contact with their enemies, rulers and soldiers of the occupying power who belittled them and could ask them to carry a heavy load.

That is placing the problem at a distance from us. How do we love our enemies? those who gossip about us, belittle or discount us, go out of their way to make life difficult for us or those who dismiss our opinions or ideas as rubbish or just ignore our presence. As well there are those who try and influence us to adopt other people as enemies.

Part of our problem is the word "love" in English which does the work of several words in other languages. Greek has three words translated to love in English.

1. Eros: Often associated with romantic or passionate love, eros highlights the intense desire and attraction between individuals. It is characterized by its focus on personal fulfilment and satisfaction.

2. Philia: This term refers to affectionate regard and friendship, emphasizing mutual care, respect, and shared interests. Philia embodies the warmth and companionship that develop in relationships built on common values and experiences.

3. Agape: Unlike eros and philia, agape stands apart by its unconditional nature. It transcends emotions or circumstances, representing a deliberate, selfless choice to extend compassion, kindness, and goodwill to others. This concept of love is foundational to Jesus' teachings and is exemplified in his life and ministry.

The love Jesus teaches is agape love. This love is a choice. We recognise "our enemy" is a human being like us created in the image of God. In showing agape love they cease to be our enemy.

In the Gospels Jesus introduces agape as the essence of true discipleship. One of the most profound illustrations of this teaching is found in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). In this parable, Jesus challenges societal norms by portraying a despised Samaritan as the excellent example of compassionate love, while religious figures of the day fail to demonstrate such care.

The Samaritan's actions reflect agape: he extends practical assistance to a stranger in need, regardless of racial, religious and social barriers, exemplifying Jesus'

commandment to "love your neighbour as yourself." This parable underscores that true love knows no boundaries and compels us to act with empathy and generosity toward all.

Martin Luther King Jr is a 20th century example of someone who, inspired by Jesus' teachings, advocated for civil rights and social justice through nonviolent resistance, rooted in a deep commitment to agape. He writes:

"The strong person is the person who can cut off the chain of hate, the chain of evil. And that is the tragedy of hate, that it doesn't cut it off. It only intensifies the existence of hate and evil in the universe."

In his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail," King writes of the importance of agape, challenging both oppressors and oppressed alike to embrace love as a unifying force that overcomes hatred and division. He writes, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," echoing Jesus' call to confront systemic injustice with love-driven action.

King's leadership during the civil rights movement was grounded in the belief that agape has the power to heal wounds, reconcile differences, and foster genuine community. His Christian commitment to nonviolent resistance, guided by love and forgiveness, remains a testament to the enduring relevance of Jesus' teachings in confronting social inequities and promoting human dignity.

Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi

We in Aotearoa NZ have our own example of such passive resistance and working for justice in Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi who founded Parihaka in the 1860's. Both men were deeply influenced by Jesus' teaching to love unconditionally. They incorporated Jesus' teaching into Māori spirituality. This has made a lasting impact in Aotearoa, but also worldwide through Mahatma Ghandi in India.

The Importance of our Response

Loving our enemies is very important at this time when there are many who seek to be divisive. (And yes, we must love them too.)

In our community of Aotearoa New Zealand, the call to love our neighbour as ourselves, including our enemies, challenges us to confront prejudices, biases, and indifference that threaten to divide us. It invites us to go beyond self-interest and embrace a broader understanding of our Māori and Pakeha and multicultural community.

Practicing agape requires intentional acts of kindness, empathy, and respect toward all individuals, regardless of their background, beliefs, or circumstances. It compels us to advocate for justice, support those in need, and actively promote the common good within our spheres of influence.

Moreover, Jesus' teachings on love remind us that genuine transformation begins with the renewal of our hearts and minds. By cultivating a spirit of agape within us, we contribute to a more compassionate and inclusive society, where each person is valued and affirmed.

In a world yearning for reconciliation and unity, may we obey Jesus' call to love with a love that surpasses understanding — a love that transforms hearts, transcends boundaries, and brings hope to all.

UPDATE FROM PARISH COUNCIL

Our June meeting of Parish Council was constituted by John Shadbolt with a focus on the depths of God's love.

As usual we shared pastoral information and Tokerau advised of the inclusion of all those needing support in the 0930 Tuesday prayer meeting which is now a regular feature of our weekly activities.

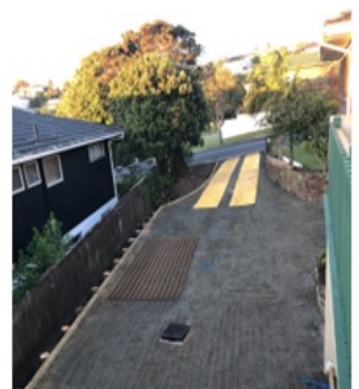
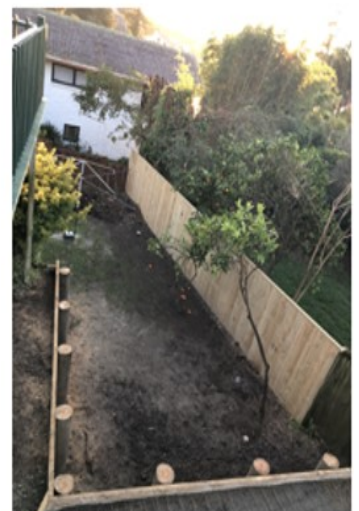
- Among the other matters handled at the meeting were:
- Arrangements for some of our young people to attend the Northern Presbytery Youth Camp at Hunua Falls over the Matariki Weekend and appreciation for the contribution to costs from members of the Congregation.
- Expressions of appreciation for the very successful Whanau Service held on 16 June when our young people shared their talents. Those involved were Henry Liu (violin), Jessica Xu (piano), Eloise Lara (flute) , Ananiah Matapo (song) , Angelika Singh (prayer) and Max Martin (reading).
- A report from Stephen Martin on the Manse projects with the interior work now completed and the driveway and retaining wall replacement underway.
- The valuation reports for insurance purposes for the church and for the manse with the knowledge that there will be significant increases in the insurance premium for the coming year.
- The schedule for who will be taking services for the period through to the end of the year including the combined service with our Indian Congregation coming up at 10am on Sunday 7 July including lunch in the hall after the Service .
- The updating of the Church Roll and a planned meeting of Pastoral Visitors to be held after church on 14 July.
- Reports on the meetings of the Mid Bays Resilient Communities and on the preparedness of our Community Emergency Hub were also shared.
- We also held preliminary discussions on the 2024/25 Budget which will be fully considered at our July meeting with a view to recommending it to the AGM on 1 September.

Stewart Milne (Parish Clerk)

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE WORKS

- As reported in the June newsletter, recently the congregation approved significant expenditure on maintenance works for the Manse property in Maxwellton Road.
- The interior works are complete with our Minister and family now settled back into a much-improved standard of accommodation.
- Outside at the Manse, work on replacing the driveway and associated retaining walls is well advanced. During the demolition and extraction of the old walls, it was plain to see that they had deteriorated significantly causing the old driveway to slump and crack. New retaining wall posts are being embedded in concrete at a depth of 1.8m. The new concrete driveway will be graded to convey stormwater away from the house and garage to a newly formed cesspit, significantly reducing the likelihood of water ingress into the Manse during heavy rain events. Work is running to schedule and should be completed in early July.
- The Property & Finance Committee continues to deal with water ingress related issues at the Church. Work to replace a section of roof above the foyer outside the worship area was completed at the end of June. Most of the Church buildings are now between 40 and 84 years old, and a regular programme of maintenance will be crucial to keeping them fit for purpose.

Before and After
photo's



INTERVIEW WITH GOD

In her words of welcome at the Morning service on June 9th, Bronwyn Stone read the following piece, once brought to our attention by the Rev Don Hall, who picked it up from the Internet. We are very grateful to Bronwyn for the many bon mots she brings to us in her words of welcome, and to Don for his spotting of it on the Internet, now some years ago.

I dreamed I had an interview with God. "So you would like to interview me?"

God asked.

"If you have the time" I said.

God smiled. My time "is eternity." "What questions do you have in mind?"

"What surprises you most about human kind?"

God answered...

"That they get bored with childhood, they rush to grow up, then long to be children again."

"That they lose their health to make money ... and then use their money to restore their health"

"That by thinking anxiously about the future they forget the present, such that they live in neither the present or the future"

"That they live as if they will never die, and die as though they had never lived".

Then I asked, "As a parent, what are some of life's lessons you want your children to learn?"

God replied...

"To learn they cannot make anyone love them. All they can do is let themselves be loved"

"To learn that it is not good to compare themselves to others".

"To learn to forgive by practising forgiveness"

"To learn that it only takes a few seconds to open profound wounds in those they love, and it can take years to heal them"

To learn that a rich person is not one who has the most, but one who needs the least"

"To learn that there are people who love them dearly, but simply have not yet learned how to show or express their feelings".

"To learn that two people can look at the same thing and see it differently"

"To learn that it is not enough that they forgive one another, but they also must forgive themselves"

"Thank you for your time", I said humbly. Is there anything else you would like your children to know?"

God smiled and said "Just know that I am here... always.

(Bronwyn Stone)

UNEXPECTED SURPRISES – THE WHANAU SERVICE ON JUNE 16TH

A feature of the June Whanau service was the involvement in it of our younger members. This began with Mastell Matapo , lighting the Christ Candle, included a Talent Time which featured items by Henry Liu (Violin), Eloise Nel (Flute) Jessica Wickens (piano) and Ananiah Matapo (Song). Also contributing to the service was Maxim Martin who read the New Testament Lesson, and Angelika Singh who led us in our prayers of Intercession.

As part of his sermon, Tokerau invited responses from the congregation to Talent Time. All were very positive with respect to the outstanding talent displayed, and many were of the view that all would go on to greater things. In underscoring this last point, Tokerau went on to observe

“It’s easy to see and appreciate only what is before us in terms of the person and what they can do now. What is much harder is to envision their future potential. Can we imagine them eventually playing in the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, singing or speaking to crowds of tens of thousands or playing rugby league for the Warriors or rugby for the All Blacks? This may surprise as something we don’t expect. The story of David being chosen as the new king of Israel, our Old Testament reading, demonstrates this. Therefore, we are encouraged to consider our future potential as a congregation with our young people as signs of hope and promise”.

Ian Watson

Talent Time with Our Young Member's



EAST COAST FLOODS EMERGENCY

The June floods which were particularly bad in Wairoa - with more than 100 houses evacuated and reportedly 80 people overnighing in the Emergency Hub, caused me to think - could we cope?

We are an Emergency Hub for Mairangi Bay and we have some supplies on hand and we have procedures in place.

Last year 25 of our congregation responded to a request to go on our call out list for volunteers. They will be needed if and when we are activated. They will know who they are because I recently emailed to them notes of our Volunteer's meeting and also advice that I was opening up the opportunity for more volunteers.

The role of a Volunteer is to come to the Church (if they are able to) when contacted. At the church we will be registering those who turn up. They will have had to leave their homes and we will be providing them with shelter and comfort.

If you are not on the Volunteer List but would like to be please let me know. I am happy to give more details.

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

FAVOURITE HYMNS SERVICE - Sunday 11th August

Favourite Hymns Service is coming up on Sunday 11th August. It's success depends on contributions from YOU!

Please get in touch with me pronto to let me know which two verses of your favourite you would like us to sing, and IMPORTANTLY, what is the special significance of this hymn for you. The best "back-stories" will ensure your choice is definitely included!

Deadline to let me know is 14th July, so I have time to do the research, plan the service and get the music to Prue, in a timely manner. Many thanks,
Bronwyn Stone pebros@gmail.com or Ph 479 6631



ROAST LUNCH AT MONTROSE – SUNDAY 28 JULY

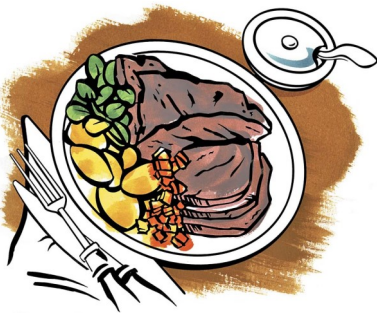
We will be having Winter roast lunch at Montrose
12 noon on Sunday, 28 July. All are welcome.

There will be a choice of pork, beef and lamb and the cost is:

SMALL	\$24
MEDIUM	\$26
LARGE	\$28

Please let Dorille know by Wednesday, 24 July for catering purposes. Contact her on 479 3953 or 027 692 3738 or let her know at church.

Looking forward to you joining us for some fellowship, good company and food. Thanks ***Dorille***



EXERCISE GROUP TO RESUME

We are pleased to advise that the 1pm exercise group is due to recommence this Wednesday 10th July in the hall starting at 1pm

Leader: Brad McCullough

Contact; Ian Rankin 027 332 7235

OFFER OF HELP

We have 3, Year-10 boys from Kristin school who are part of a Community Project and are keen to do jobs such as weeding, raking up leaves, or other suitable jobs. They are also keen to help anyone to make the most of technology (phones and computers) so if there is anything you would like help with please let me know and we can decide whether to have a workshop or handle on a one to one basis. Contact Stewart ph 027 293 8499 or email on

stewart.milne@xtra.co.nz

REGULAR PARISH ACTIVITIES

- **SENIORS SOCIAL CLUB**

1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month 10am - 12pm

Contact Tangi 022 657 3223 or Raewyn

410 4423



- **ENGLISH CONVERSATIONS**

1pm - 2.30pm Wednesdays Meeting Room 2.

Further Information Stewart Milne 478 5786 Grace Liu 021 048 7978

- **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

- **MEN'S GROUP LUNCH**

Every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 12pm, at the Bays Club

Contact Ian Rankin

027 332 7235

- **LEADER FOR THE YOUNG**

Angelika Singh

027 310 3284



- **BORN AGAIN BODIES**

Every Wednesday 1pm in Church Hall

Leader: Brad McCullough

Contact Ian Rankin 027 332 7235

- **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