



Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church
NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER
Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

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

Some of the many knitted items produced by Pat Pratt & Kay Barbour and donated to Family Works, Presbyterian Support.



UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

Greetings in Jesus' name.

My article in our last newsletter about the waning trust in the media had a “heavy” feel to it. I wanted to provide something “lighter” for this month’s newsletter. Then came the “Response of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand to the Royal Commission of Inquiry’s findings into Abuse in Care” from the Council of Assembly. It acknowledges and expresses sorrow of the findings of the Royal Commission as well as a commitment to have safe spaces for everyone in our church.

The report is not light reading (3000 pages). Neither is it light on the mind and heart when at least 200,000 people have been abused, and even more neglected, by the state and faith-based institutions since 1950. So, this matter is important enough for us to pay attention.

As I read through the Council’s document, I sensed the weight of the seriousness of the events and apology. Yet, there was somewhat of a disconnect or gap of what abuses occurred in our denomination (PCANZ) that warranted an apology. The document does not say. So, I searched online and found the following:

Royal Commission of Abuse in Care Inquiry Key findings

<https://www.abuseincare.org.nz/reports/whanaketia/preliminaries/summary-of-key-findings/>

Under the section: Faiths

K The Presbyterian Church were at fault for:

- i) its reluctance to confront abuse
- ii) failing to remove people who posed risks to children, young people and adults in their care from unsupervised participation in the Church
- iii) its reluctance to make binding rules
- iv) failing to recognise ministers, elders or leaders as people who could cause harm
- v) its dynamic of protecting the congregation from outside interference, creating a risk of abuse and neglect
- vi) discounting complaints of abuse
- vii) failing to report complaints of abuse to proper Church authorities or to NZ Police, allowing perpetrators to continue abusing
- viii) not supporting survivors to make complaints, making them feel isolated, discouraging them from taking complaints further and not believing them
- ix) removing perpetrators from one area but allowing them to continue in other areas without considering the risks
- x) deliberately attempting to suppress reports of abuse at times

- xi) failing to apply its policy of zero tolerance of abuse of people in the case of the Church consistently and thoroughly
- xii) failing to consistently uphold its Code of Ethics in relation to pastoral care adopted in 1995
- xiii) failing to consistently report breaches of its Code of Ethics.

After reading these, I had some regret because the matter looks uglier than I thought. While the above points don't give figures of the various abuses that have occurred in our denomination, the fact that such points have been identified is bad enough. So, we need to ensure that our church spaces and ministries are safe contexts for all people, especially the vulnerable.

Acknowledging Knitted Donations:



At the 10am Service on 27 October we had the opportunity to recognize and warmly thank Pat Pratt and Kay Barbour for the more than 100 knitted items which they had produced and donated through our church to Presbyterian Support Family Works during the last year.

The photo shows a youngster wearing one of Pat's jerseys.

WORDS FROM KAREL

Albert Schweitzer and the search for the Historical Jesus

A few weeks ago, I was searching through my old vinyl records and discovered a record which I purchased in the 1960's of Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) playing Bach's Preludes and Fugues. Schweitzer was one of my heroes, I listened to his music and read his books about his mission, "On the Edge of the Primeval Forest," and its sequels. I admired his giving up fame and fortune to go and work in Lamabaréné to build a hospital and serve African people who had no medical care.

Not until I studied theology, did I realise how great his contribution has been to theology. In the 19th century, because of the enlightenment, there was a much questioning of Christianity and particular about the man Jesus. The gospels we have were all written in the last third of the first century. They were written about the man Jesus who lived in the first third of that century by people of post resurrection faith. The gospels then were a mixture of Jesus the man who lived in Palestine and the Christ of the faith of the early church. It was difficult to disentangle the two. Starting with Frederick Schleiermacher (1768-1834) Professor of Theology at Berlin, after him there were several lives of Jesus written - all different. Others claimed that the gospels were works of fiction and Jesus did not really exist as a person. Yet others said he was God, inserted like superman into human history. This view repeated what is considered the first heresy, that of Docetism, the claim that Jesus was not truly human.

Albert Schweitzer in 1912 critically examined all these lives of Jesus in his book, "The Quest for the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede." In this book he said that those engaged in the quest for the historical Jesus were "looking down the well of history and seeing their own reflection." Schweitzer's own position was that Jesus was an apocalyptic prophet forecasting the end of the world which he expected soon but Jesus was wrong. However, Schweitzer ended his book with a most significant paragraph:

"He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lakeside, He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: 'Follow thou me!' and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil in our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is."

Schweitzer followed Jesus and left fame and fortune and the admirations of thousands for his organ playing and his interpretation of the music of J. S. Bach, returning occasionally to play and raise funds for his hospital. His book marks the end of the first Quest. There was a second Quest led by Rudolph Bultman (1884-1976) and Ernst Kaseman (1906 -1998). This Quest

ended at the second World War. They reached almost opposite conclusions. The third Quest, commenced after the second World War and appears to have reached some sort of an answer (but much criticised) identifying the Jesus of history in his short sayings, his parables and as a healer. This Quest was achieved in the Jesus Seminar using the votes of more than 100 scholars of the various biblical scholarship disciplines and lay people - like a jury - and dealing with them statistically. It can therefore not be the opinion of one scholar seeing his own reflection in the "historical bottom at the well." However, they may have excluded some important things about Jesus.

The Jesus who emerges from this third Quest for the Historical Jesus, is a man who has a passion for God and God's kingdom (God's rule, in contrast to Rome or another kingdom). He is a teacher of wisdom, the way of living as God intends of love, compassion, forgiveness, and justice. Jesus' love reflecting God's love is for the world.

Jesus taught in parables and short pithy sayings. He had a particular concern for the poor and outcasts. His teaching can be summed up in what he considered the two great commandments when he was asked, "which was God's greatest commandment," "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind*" and "*Love your neighbour as you love yourself.*" In Luke's gospel (10:25 -37) Jesus gives an example of loving one's neighbour in the parable of the Good Samaritan. It's not necessarily the person of our own social class, ethnicity, church and culture we are called to love. The person might be difficult, an enemy, and not a very nice person.

Schweitzer had it right: "*Follow thou me!*" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil in our time." It is in following the human Jesus, (being disciples) as our example and mentor for God's way of life that we discover, the living risen Jesus Christ who is mysteriously among us. He can become for us the window into God, opening us to experience God in our life.

Schweitzer's words "*fulfil in our time*" are important. We live in a different time. Jesus lived in an occupied country where Rome and priestly power were dominant and controlled much of life. We live in a democracy where, theoretically at least, we have some say in what happens. We are not as powerless as a first century peasant. Our following or discipleship will be different in the way we act in compassion, forgiving, accepting, loving and how we work for justice.

Sadly Schweitzer, was not able to keep up with what he wrote as times changed, his attitude to the Africans, his adoption of new medicines and techniques did not keep up to the new standards that were developing. In that new world he appeared racist, autocratic, and out of touch, but his heart was in the right place.

What he wrote and by starting his hospital to discover who Jesus is, **by following,** is spot on. Through Jesus we may find our way to God.

UPDATE FROM PARISH COUNCIL

At our October Meeting of Parish Council:

- ♦ Roopali constituted the meeting with a prayer of appreciation and thanksgiving
- ♦ Pastoral information was shared and Tokerau led the Council in prayer, and we gave thought to what can be done for those who had been identified as needing support
- ♦ Received the report from the Property and Finance Committee and agreed to holding a Working Bee on 9 November to tidy up the grounds and do some cleaning inside.
- ♦ Noted the reasons for the lower revenue and higher expenditure in our September Financial Statement against our budget and the effect that the loss of revenue due to the discontinuation of Kids Choice and Family Works will have.

Went through the Worship Schedule and noted:

- a) The importance of the service on 3 November when the CTCA Consultant (Rev Tim Loftis) will be with us
 - b) The 1130am Special Communion and lunch is to be held on Tuesday 5 November which is especially for those who have difficulty getting to the 10am service on Sunday but which is open to all and a great opportunity for reconnecting.
 - c) The Combined Service with the Hindi Mission Congregation on the evening of 24 November followed by a meal. There will be no 10am service that day.
 - d) The always popular Packing Service with Christmas treats for Families needing some Christmas Cheer which will be held on 1 December
- ♦ Had a report from Alastair on the work being done to reorganize the church website to provide inquirers with information about us and to provide our members with information about activities
 - ♦ Had a report from Karen and Alastair on the fund raising Quiz to be held at 4:45 on Saturday 16 November. Members are encouraged to come along with or without a team
 - ♦ Were advised of the work being done by Northern Presbytery and decided we needed to find ways to pass on some of this information to Congregation members
 - ♦ Spent time considering the steps which will be followed in the church rejuvenation project and how it is to be evaluated
 - ♦ Received the good news of a grant of \$5,000 from the Lister Trust towards the cost of our Dees Group
 - ♦ Set a date (30 Oct) for a meeting of the Volunteers for our Community Emergency Hub.

Annual Catchup with Presbyterian Support Northern



Each year we invite a spokesperson from PSN to participate in our service of worship and to bring us up to date on what is happening at PSN and its various branches (Family Works, Enliven, Shine and Lifeline).

This year Vivienne Riddell who is responsible for planned funding filled that role and showed us a video which covered the various PSN activities.

Our church has strong links with PSN, which is one of the largest Social Welfare Organisations. These include:

- ◆ Family Works (who work with families at risk) where we make weekly donations to their foodbank and annual Christmas treats donations to families needing some Christmas cheer. In addition the Family Works North Shore Hub is currently situated in our building.
- ◆ Enliven (who provide services for the elderly, the disabled and those with dementia) through our Dees Group which Enliven provides professional oversight for.
- ◆ Shine (who provides services, including safe houses, for those experiencing family violence) by way of linen for those who are setting up a new place of residence after leaving a safe house.
- ◆ Lifeline the long standing and very busy telephone Counselling Service.

PSN pamphlets on each of these services are in the foyer. PSN, like many Social Services Organisations, is struggling to maintain services in the face of funding cuts and so is very appreciative of any donations.

Our Future



As I write this, we are getting ready to welcome Rev Tim Loftis, the CTCA Consultant who will be working with us over the next 2 years to review what we are doing as a church and to develop and implement new ideas.

We had a good response to the request for participation in the first CTCA online survey (more than 70 of our members completed the survey). This was to establish our current situation. As a next step we will be receiving a picture of what that survey has shown.

Meantime the Northern Presbytery has engaged Rev Dr Steve Taylor to evaluate the process, and he has developed a base line (starting) survey which I have sent out the link for. Please complete it. Anyone who missed out on getting the link please contact me. If you would rather complete a paper copy, there are copies on the bench in the foyer together with a box to return your survey to. These surveys are all anonymous.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO LUNCH?

On Sunday October 20th about 28 of us were hosted, (6 apiece) for lunch at the homes of Yvonne Ambler, Julie Reid, Karen Ruffell, and Dorille Shadbolt. The photo shows those at Karen's. As indicated by the feedback, it was a splendid occasion being enjoyed by hosts and participants alike.

A huge thank you to the hosting families and those who attended.



THE NORTHERN PRESBYTERY -STRUCTURE AND FINANCE

For administrative purposes. The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand, has been divided into five regions called Presbyteries. Our church is part of the Northern Presbytery, which is the largest with respect to the number of churches (77) As a Presbytery it is extraordinarily active, but its actions are largely unknown to the parishioners of the churches in the presbytery. This was evinced by a recent presentation from the Operations Team of the Presbytery, where, from four of its parishes less than a dozen people attended. The Operating Team had produced a most informative paper for that meeting which those of us who attended felt deserved a wider audience, a view that was supported by a recent meeting of our Parish Council. Accordingly, it was agreed that the contents of that paper be made available to our congregation through a series of articles in the Newsletters over the next few months. These will cover, the Structure and Finances of the Presbytery, the Operating Team of the Presbytery and the Initiatives it has recently undertaken. We begin today with the Structure and Finances of Presbytery.

There are nearly eighty churches that make up the Northern Presbytery. With two elected members from each parish, it is a very large body, and as such only meets twice a year. A less wieldy body is the Presbytery Council, which comprises two members of each of the five subdivisions of the Presbytery. These five sub-divisions are the Far North which has 14 churches; Coastal, which includes us, with 13; East and Central (20); West (17) and South (23). The Presbyterian Council which meets four times a year is chaired by the Moderator of Presbytery with the Executive Officer in attendance and the minutes taken by the Administrator. John Shadbolt is one of the two people from the Coastal region on it.

Each of these sub-divisions also meet four times a year., and there are four work groups of the Presbytery as a whole who also meet as required. They include the Property and Finance Committee, the Mission Fund Committee and the Candidate Co-convenors.

The Northern Presbytery has access to funding through (a) a levy on each parish by the Presbytery itself (b) funds resulting from the sale of church properties which are held for the Northern Presbytery by the Church Property Trustees, (\$7.1m) and (c) Trust Funds (\$1.m)which have come from various sources and which have various limitations on how they can be used.

The Operational costs for last year was around \$2,9m. Of that, \$0.5 million was spent on core expenses, and \$2.3m on property development, mission outreach and ministry initiatives.

In our article next month, we will talk about the activities of the Operations Team.

Ian Watson



ANNUAL DONATION of CHRISTMAS TREATS

Our packing Service will be in the hall on
Sunday 1st December at 10am.

To put together a Christmas gift bag is approximately
\$45: Tim Tams, packet of lollies, mini chocolates, muesli
bars, potato chips, Christmas tarts, steamed puddings,
Christmas puddings, can of fruit salad, tooth brush and
tooth pastes.

If you are making a money donation, please do so online
to the Church bank account 12-3042-0002489-00, Ref:
'Christmas' or place cash in an envelope in the offering
plate with 'Christmas Donation' written on it.

If you are donating items, please place them in the
specially wrapped and labelled box in the foyer.

Thank you for your generosity.
This is one of the highlights of our year.

SPECIAL COMMUNION SERVICE TUESDAY 5th NOVEMBER 2024 11.30am in the church

Our next Special Communion Service for those who cannot attend
church regularly will be held on Tuesday,
November 5th 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 by November 3th.

CHURCH WORKING BEE



**Saturday 9th November at 9am
“weather permitting”**

We will be undertaking clean up and tidy up jobs outside and inside the church premises.

If you can come along to help that would be great. Bring equipment's for gardening and cutting back growth.

If in doubt about weather, please call Stewart on 027 293 8499. Thank you Stewart.

Quiz night: November 16th, at 4.45pm
Venue: Mairangi Bay Presbyterian Church Hall
Entry is \$10.00 per person

We are running another Quiz night using the Believe It Or Not program as a fund raiser for the Community activities in our church.

Teams of 4-6 will be competing for prizes and the honour of best team in various categories on the night.

There will be spot prizes, raffles and silent auctions.

Snack foods will be available for purchase.

Complimentary Tea, coffee.

Last year was great fun and we hope that you will all take this opportunity to have a fun night making up a team with family and friends.

To register your team, please phone office on 478 6180 on Thursdays and Fridays between 9am - 1pm or email at office@bayspc.nz before 15th November.

We would also be grateful for any donations towards spot prizes, Raffles and Silent Auctions.

Contact Karen Ruffell on 021 0226 3846 for any queries.

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 Mondays & 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**

2nd Friday of the month Church Hall 6.15pm
Ph Tangi Joseph 022 657 3223

- **MEN'S GROUP LUNCH**

Every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 12pm, The Bays Club
Contact Ian Rankin 027 332 7235



- **LEADER FOR THE YOUNG**

Angelika Singh 027 310 3284

- **EXERCISE GROUP (Born Again Bodies)**

Every Wednesday 1pm in Church Hall
Leader: Brad McCullough Ph 021 230 3421



- **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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