



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

[www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz](http://www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz)  
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**November Family Games & Shared Meal**



## UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

Greetings in Jesus' name.

As this is our last newsletter for the year, firstly, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank you for a great year of working together in our ministry. So many of you serve voluntarily giving much in your time and effort. It reminds me of Jesus declaring his purpose, "I did not come to be served, but to serve" (Matthew 20:28). In many ways it is sacrificial service, echoing Paul's urging of the Christians in Rome, "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Romans 12:1). I count it a privilege to serve alongside people such as you. Your commitment and willingness to proclaim the good news of Christ in word and action is inspiring.

As I write this, we are preparing for our packing service on Sunday in the hall. It's a chance to put into action of what it means to love God and one's neighbour. Giving to others in need over the Christmas period is not only our worship to God, but also a ministry to those whom God loves as much as God loves us. It's both a spiritual and practical experience, a good and right thing to do, that testifies to who we are as God's people. As Paul again encourages believers, "So let us become tired of doing good" (Galatians 6:9).

This Sunday is also the beginning of the season of Advent for a new Christian year. It's a time for Christians to prepare for and celebrate the coming of Christ. While this is very evident for the birth of Jesus at Christmas, there is also the dimension of anticipating his future second coming. On the first Sunday in Advent, the focus is on hope. Hope is something we all need, especially when facing uncertainty or in times of difficulty. Without some confidence that things can improve for us, we are left in despair. I believe hope is just as important to us as eating food, drinking water, or breathing air. Our hope, as Christians, is grounded in Jesus Christ. Without hope in Christ, we could not exist or function as the church. It is so foundational that Samuel Stone beautifully captures it in the opening words of his hymn: "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord."

I believe the hope for our future as a congregation is in Jesus Christ. We've begun a journey of revitalisation with an organisation called City-to-City-Australia (CTCA). We've completed different surveys, given various reports, had a SWOT analysis with parish council, and interviews with some of our members with the CTCA consultant, Tim Loftis. We await a full report back this December with a Re-visioning day proposed for earlier 2025. We are doing well in our ministry, but there are some aspects which we might need assistance for to enable us to flourish spiritually, pastorally, numerically, and financially (just to name some). At the heart of it is the gospel or good news – what God

has done for us in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is transformational, hence why we are his followers and church. It ought to continue transforming us including the communities we are part of as we faithfully “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). This is encouraging and inspires our future.

On behalf of Tangi and our children and grandchildren at the manse, I want to extend to you our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. This is because we will be going away to the Cook Islands for a few weeks to celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday of Faith Matapo (our son in-law Manu’s sister). You might remember that Faith lived with us for a while and came to church here while she had medical treatment and attended the special needs unit at Glenfield College. It will be the first time we will not be here to join you for the festive season. God bless and have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



## WORDS FROM KAREL

### Christmas: The Celebration of Jesus Birthday

Our first Christmas in New Zealand when my family arrived from Holland in 1952, was a shock, but very memorable.

In Holland at the time when we left, Christmas was a strictly religious festival that lasted two days, Christmas Day and the day following, second Christmas day. There were family gatherings over coffee and special food treats. Our Christmas tree at home had real candles in special candle holders and only silver glass balls. I remember, prior to Christmas day, being with my grandfather standing in the snow beside a tripod holding a collection box for the Salvation Army. It was bitterly cold, but a charcoal brazier kept us from freezing, and drew people closer so my grandfather could talk to them about the Christmas appeal. Close by the Carilion in the Town Hall clock tower played popular Christmas carols.

Early on Christmas morning, in the dark through the glistening snow, we walked to the service in the Salvation Army Hall which had a Christmas tree lit with real candles and decked in silver balls just like the one at home.

Another vivid memory was an evening carol singing occasion at my kindergarten. Most of the singing was done seated then suddenly people stood up to sing with a passion I have rarely experienced since, "Ere zij God," the English translation is:

Glory to God,  
in the highest, in the highest,  
in the highest!

Peace on earth,  
and goodwill to all people.

Glory to God,  
in the highest!

Peace on earth,  
peace on earth, and  
goodwill to all people.

Imagine this just after the liberation of Holland as an occupied country!

In Holland, gift giving and a much more boisterous celebration takes place on the 5th of December at the feast of St Nicholas, Sinterklaas. Sinterklaas in his bishop robes and mitre accompanied by a black servant, Swarte Piet, Black Pete, and often in a coach drawn by white horses paraded through the city. We sang special Sinterklaas songs at school and as a family. Much of this happened when it was dark and cold with beautiful decorative lights throughout the city which lasted until Christmas was over.

Christmas in New Zealand was a shock. No Sinterklaas and no gifts until Christmas. And in Ashburton it was hot- very hot. We got a Christmas tree and decorated it with the beautiful silver balls we had brought from Holland. Dad wisely decided not to use the candle holders for the candles in the Christmas tree, deciding that the fire risk in the dry heat would be too great. We biked to the Farmer's department store and bought a set of electric lights. Mum carefully arranged the lights in the tree. We were

gathered round the tree when Dad ceremoniously turned them on. There was a flash of light, a loud bang, a burning smell and the plug blackened, but no lights. Obviously, the lights had been wired incorrectly. Dad, taking me as translator, raced to the Farmer's on our bikes, to get replacement set of lights before the shop closed. We got a replacement set of lights and a card of fuse wire as well, as the shop assistant correctly assumed the fuse would have blown. We got our gifts that Christmas eve. It was such an exciting evening that my brother, four years younger than me, suddenly burst out into English sentences. For seven months, although understanding a little, he had refused to speak English - a worry to my parents and his school teacher.

At this time of the year there are articles in the Newspapers and sermons how we have taken Jesus out of Christmas, and it has become a purely secular celebration, heavily commercialised and often with an excess of alcohol. I can remember years ago writing newsletter articles and preaching sermons mentioning this. But I have had to think again and changed my mind. Despite the commercialisation of Christmas, there are lots of good things that happen. Here are some.

Even the much-criticised office party can be a time for community building and changing relationships. Some are undoubtedly occasions for over consumption of alcohol. But I have also heard stories of people, who would have spent the festive season alone, being incorporated into the family of a fellow worker when, at the office party, it was discovered they would be alone over the festive season.

Community Christmas dinners where people who are isolated are gathered up, the lonely shut ins, the homeless, the poor and disabled. Erica and I volunteered to assist one Christmas. The occasion was delightful with much hilarity. Some probably had their only sit-down meal for the year. I am sure some isolated people discovered potential friendships there.

Jesus was on about parties where everyone was invited, barriers broken and people fed.

There is the joy of carefully taking the time to choose a special gift for someone and seeing their delight when they unwrap it. A learning for young people, and us all, of the teaching of Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Families get together, if they are scattered, perhaps once a year to share this day and a meal together and share gifts. Yes, there are families where this is difficult. When I was counselling there were people who made appointments before Christmas to discuss how they would face their "dreadful family Christmas day." But I think these families are a minority. Most families find it an occasion for strengthening family ties, offering support, comfort and healing to family members who have had a tough year. Many families have a wonderful celebration of their togetherness.

So, when we lift the bonnet and look carefully at the engine of our secularised and commercialised Christmas, it's not all bad, there are some good things going on much in line with the love, compassion, caring, giving and sharing exemplified by Jesus. This may be the one occasion when Jesus' name is uttered in some places when it is not a swear word. The memory of his birth, how he lived and died, and lives again, not forgotten.

## **UPDATE FROM PARISH COUNCIL**

The November meeting of Parish Council was constituted by Sue Bowden whose theme was handling stress and anxiety. Sue's message included helpful references from the Bible.

As we do at each meeting, we had a pastoral segment where we learned of and prayed for those needing support and also identified where some practical assistance can be provided.

We had a report back on the Quiz night held on 16 November where \$1,350 was raised for church activities made up of registration fees, raffles, auctions and food sales. It was a fun night. Appreciation was expressed to organisers.

We spent time on property matters and welcomed the news that Family Works (Presbyterian Support) is going to continue to use our premises until at least June next year. As previously advised Kids Choice (before and after school program) have ceased using our facilities and we certainly are missing them both in terms of their presence (absence of children and their leaders) and revenue.

On the financial situation I can advise that for the first one third of the year our income is down by \$7.5k against budget (mainly due to offerings being down by \$4k) and our expenditure is about in balance when we take into account that we have paid the full year amount for insurance.

Norma reported back on the lunchtime communion service where the numbers were a bit down this time but which is much appreciated by those who participate. We intend to continue to hold these services next year.

We learned that the teenager's group will be helping with the preparations for the Christmas Treats packing service and they will then be having a social time with bowls and pizzas to end their year

Alastair advised us of his developing thoughts on restructuring the church website and Council set up a small working group to advance this matter.

John was appointed as the Presbytery Elder for 2025 with Raewyn as Deputy

The early November visit of Tim Loftis (the CTCA Consultant for our revitalizing project) was discussed with positive comments on the interactions that we had. We await Tim's first report which has been promised by Christmas.

The Revitalising Project is being evaluated by Dr Steve Taylor who has produced a base evaluation survey. This is available online (link available from me) or hard copy in the foyer. Please complete it if you haven't already done so.

We have accepted the request from the Mairangi Business Association to provide carols and entertainment in the shopping area at 10am on 30 Nov and Carols in the Park (children's playground) at 6 pm on Friday 13 Dec. Please join in – bring your singing voice.

Norma passed on her learning from participating in an on line Ethics Workshop which is run by PCANZ and which covers matters such as how to handle complaints.

Parish Council sends seasons greetings and best wishes to all our members and those we have contact with.

Stewart Milne

## **BELIEVE IT OR NOT QUIZ NIGHT**

Our annual quiz evening was held on Saturday 16 November. It was well attended with 13 teams mainly from local organisations.

Good fun was had by all with plenty of subdued debate in each team over answers coupled with laughter and cheers for successes.

Competition was intense. The quiz time was supplemented by food, raffles, silent auctions and even a few jokes. The Quiz Master Gerry Ruffell used his experience and technology to keep us well informed as the night progressed.

**\$1,350 was raised to help fund our community activities.**

The winning team was “The Fighting Wildebestees” from Knightsbridge Village and Glen Stanton’s “Checkmate Team” came a close second.

A huge thank you to all the event organisers and volunteers and to everyone that attended and supported this event.



### Christmas & New year Services

7pm Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December (Christmas Eve) Family Service with Puppet Show,  
Christmas Message and Carols

9:30am Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December (Christmas Day) Family Service with Carols  
and Christmas Message

10am Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December

Combined Service at Glenfield Church - 82 Chartwell Ave

10am Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Combined Service at Browns Bay Church - 45 Anzac Road

10am Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Combined Service at Mairangi Bay Church

10am Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Combined Service at Forrest Hill Church 151 Forrest Hill Road

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025, we resume normal service times and venues including the  
10am Service and 6:30pm Hindi Service at Mairangi Bay

## **CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE CHRISTMAS APPEAL**

In this Newsletter you will find the CWS Appeal envelope. We all get plenty of opportunities to support various appeals each year. This is the only one that our church regularly distributes information and envelopes for individual decisions.

If you wish to and are able to support this appeal the envelope can either be returned through the church or posted off direct. Thanks, Stewart



## **NORTHERN PRESBYTERY- OPERATING TEAM**

This is the second of three articles based on a presentation by the Operating Team of the Northern Presbytery in October. The first, in the November Newsletter, covered its Structure and Finance, this one covers the Operations Team itself, and the final one will mention some recent initiatives that the Presbytery has undertaken

Four of the team are directly associated with the running of the Northern Presbytery. The Executive officer is Rod Watts who is employed part-time for 30 hours per week. Rhonda Togipau is employed for 10 hours a week to assist with special projects. The Administrator's position a full-time position is held by Natalie Stubbs and there is another Full time position held by Masele Bakulich-Tufeao who is both Youth co-ordinator and Intercultural Facilitator. Two of the team have specific roles. Rev Dr Emma Keown the Church/Mission Enabler is full time, and Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph, the Minister Enabler is half time on a three year fixed contract.

In addition to these six, Cuny Atchison, the Convenor of the Property and Finance Group and Neil Raines, the Treasurer are paid honorariums, and the Moderator receives 20% of their costs to reflect an average of one day a week in their role for Presbytery.

To unpack this a little more, as Executive Secretary, Rod oversees the operations of the presbytery, provides reports to Presbytery Council and Presbytery, oversees all staff, and directs the strategic initiatives. Rhonda is currently helping in churches to meet PCANZ requirements re child Safety. Natalie has the huge task of running the Office, acting as secretary at meetings of Presbytery and Presbytery Council, managing communications including the weekly update, and responding to queries. Masele as Youth Co-ordinator is involved in equipping leaders for Youth Ministry, Youth Leadership development, and as Intercultural Facilitator facilitating Intercultural Growth and Building Intercultural capacity.

In her role as Mission Enabler, Emma is tasked with promoting new initiatives, enabling mission in the presbytery in conjunction with the Mission Fund Committee. For his part Tokerau as Minister Enabler was tasked with encouraging and assisting people to ordained ministry, and specifically to produce a handbook and a promotional video for the above task. He has also been asked to work with candidate Convenors in the Presbytery, and with other bodies like KCML

Our next articles, as well as talking about some initiatives of the Presbytery, will look at some of the fruits of these labours.

*Ian Watson*

## A PICTURE'S WORTH

Once there was a very wealthy man, who with his devoted son, shared a passion for art collecting. Together they travelled the world, and priceless works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet and many others adorned the walls of the family estate. As winter approached, war engulfed the nation, and the young man left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram saying his son was missing in action... Within days, his worst fears were confirmed; his son had died while rushing a fellow soldier to a medic. On Christmas morning there was a knock on the door of the father. As he opened the door, he was greeted by a soldier with a large package in his hand. He introduced by saying "I was a friend of your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something to show you.". "I am an artist, and I want to give you this gift."

The gift was a portrait of the man's son. Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail. Overcome with emotion, the old man thanked the soldier, promising to hang the picture above the fireplace. True to his word, the painting went above the fireplace, pushing aside thousands of dollars' worth of art. During the days and weeks that followed, the painting of his son soon became his most prized possession, far from eclipsing any interest in the pieces for which museums around the world clamoured. He told his neighbours it was the greatest gift he had ever received.

The following spring, the old man died. The art world was in anticipation, that with the collector's passing and his only son dead, those paintings would be sold at auction. According to the will of the old man, all of the art works would be auctioned on Christmas Day, the day he had received the gift of his son's portrait.

The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings..." The auction began with the portrait of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid, but the room was silent. "Who will open the bidding, with \$100?", he asked. Minutes passed and no one spoke. From the back of the room came a voice, "Who cares about that painting? It's just a picture of his son." "Let's forget about it and move on to the good stuff," more voices echoed in agreement. "No, we have to sell this one first," replied the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?" Finally, a neighbour of the old man spoke. "Will you take \$10 for the painting? That's all I have. I knew the boy, so I'd like to have it." "I have \$10. Will anyone go higher?" called the auctioneer. After more silence, the auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice, gone." The gavel fell.

Cheers filled the room, and someone exclaimed, “Now we can get on with it and we can bid on the real treasures!” The auctioneer looked at the audience and announced that the auction was over. Stunned disbelief quieted the room. Someone spoke up and asked, “What do you mean, it’s over? We didn’t come here for a picture of some old guy’s son. What about all of these paintings? There are millions of dollars’ worth of art here! I demand that you explain what’s going on!”

The auctioneer replied, “It’s very simple. According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son....gets it all.”

Kind of puts things into perspective, doesn’t it? Just as those art collectors discovered on Christmas Day, the message is still the same.

The love of a Father, whose greatest joy came from his Son who went away and gave his life rescuing others. And because of that Father’s love.... Whoever takes the Son gets it all.

*Author Unknown.*

## **COMBINED SERVICE ON NOVEMBER 24<sup>th</sup>**

Around 45 people attended a combined service of the Mairangi and Castor Bays Presbyterian Church and Hindi Mission Congregations on Sunday November 24<sup>th</sup> at 6.30pm. The service was led by Roopali Dayal, the Sermon was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Tokerau Joseph and the Benediction pronounced by the Rev. Raju George. In the course of the service, there was a musical interlude from some members of the Hindi Congregation. There was a shared meal and a time of fellowship following the service which was gratefully appreciated by all who attended. A big thanks to all who contributed to this important event in the life of our church. *Ian Watson*



# 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, John Shadbolt,  
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](mailto:office@bayspc.nz)*

## Quick Contacts

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