



Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church

June 2025 NEWSLETTER

Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

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May Special Communion Service

UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

As we continue our journey through the CTCA Revitalisation process, I want to keep us encouraged about our aspirations as a *Parish*. I'm thankful that Parish Council and the various subcommittees are working hard at addressing the recommendations from our CTCA Report. Although we are at the early stages, good and steady progress is being made. Ultimately, within five to ten years' time, we will be:

*“...a vibrant growing church,
representative of the demographic of Mairangi Bay and the surrounding
communities, known for being gospel-centred in all we do.”*

As we keep Christ at our centre and follow as the Spirit leads, I believe we can realise this vision. Nothing is impossible for God and so I believe God is able to turn things around for us.

I'd like to share with you an article about how things seem to be turning around for the church in the U.K. It's entitled “A Quiet Revival” by Rev Dr Malcolm Falloon.

A “Quiet Revival”

Something remarkable appears to be happening in the Western church. Church attendance is up. News of this has come anecdotally at first, and you might have noticed it in your congregation, that young men (in particular) seem to have more openness towards the Christian faith.

There is also now some hard data to support these intuitions. The Bible Society in the UK commissioned the polling agency, YouGov, to map the changes in church attendance between 2018 and 2024. They surveyed 19,000 people in 2018 and another 13,000 in 2024 and found that over this period monthly attendance had increased fifty percent: from 8% of the population to 12%.

What is even more remarkable is that the increases are not even over the whole demographic. They found that church attendance among young men aged 18–24 in 2018 was less than 4%, but in 2024 this had increased to 21%. This represents a six-fold increase. As one commentator stated: men are waking up!

There is also a smaller, yet still significant, increase among women of a similar age. It means that in the UK, the average 21-year-old is three times more likely to attend church than a 51-year-old.

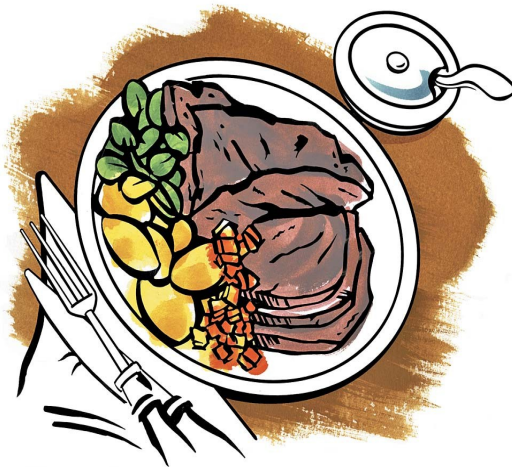
Among this 18–24 age group, 35% report a belief in God(s) or some higher power, while 40% report that they pray at least monthly.

Is it the start of a revival? It is probably too early to say, but certainly, the spiritual tide seems to be moving. Is the Secular Narrative, which has long been contradicted by the ongoing growth of churches in the Global South, now also beginning to lose its grip on the Western mind-set?

To listen and read further:

Glen Scrivener interviewing Justin Brierley on YouTube.

John Stevens, National director of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (UK), "The 'Quiet Revival' Breaks Spiritual Stillness in the United Kingdom".



Roast Lunch at Montrose Sunday, 13th July 12pm

There will be a choice of pork, beef or lamb and vegetables.

The cost is: Small \$24, Medium \$26, Large \$28.

Contact **Dorille 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.

Proposed Home Group

Reverend Karel Lorier is proposing to hold a 'Home Group' based on the study of the book "Jesus" by Marcus Borg. This book explores in easily understood ways the fruits of modern scholarship about Jesus. The Group could meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at either 1030am or 7:30pm. Please let Karel know if you are interested in attending and if so which time you would prefer. **Karel's number is 021 903762.**

WORDS FROM KAREL

Good Grief

Grief happens to all of us. It happens when we shift houses, change country where we live, jobs or with the death of a pet. The most intense experience of grief occurs in a separation, death of a partner, child or loved close friend. We experience intense overwhelming emotions.

Modern understandings of grief were formed by Sigmund Freud and his follower Helene Deutsch, which eventually resulted in Elizabeth Kubler Ross in 1969 formulating her five stages of grief, - denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. These have become the popular and influential understanding of grief through popular hand out booklets given to people in grief.

More recent research has revealed there is a lot of wrong with the original five stage plan. Firstly, Kubler Ross created her plan on the observation of people who were dying. Not people who had a close relative die. She herself was upset by the way her theory was being misused. Secondly, the research on all these theoretical understandings of grief were formulated with small samples, usually on people who were experiencing prolonged complicated grief. Freud formulated his theory based on four Viennese women who were obviously going through an unhealthy prolonged chronic, pathological and debilitating grief.

When I was working as a counsellor it was not unusual for people to seek grief counselling because they felt they were not going through these stages. Sometimes they were referred by anxious relatives. They would say things like, "Dad is going fishing with his mates and it's only three weeks since mum died," or "Mum has found a new male friend and it's only five months after dad died, " or "Uncle George has not shown any signs of grief since his wife died." Sometimes these people ended up in my counselling room and I unwittingly prolonging their grief because I followed this model of "the grief process" which I had been taught in my counselling training. In what we now know about grief they showed natural resilience and healing which is part of grief.

I changed my view on grief counselling once my attention was drawn to some more recent research on grief using the experience of thousands of people who had lost a spouse or child. This showed that more than 80% of people are resilient and get on with life. They will have the moments of tears and experience some of the odd things that happen during grief. More of that later. There are also cultural differences in the way that grief is handled and experienced. A small minority (12%-20%) of people get into a stuck grief where they cannot accept what has happened. These people will benefit from

counselling and pastoral care. Everyone else gets on well without such help. We all experience grief in our unique way. In healthy grief the theme is resilience and getting on with life.

My own experience with the death of Erica, my wife, in February has been that I have generally been able to get on with things. I have my moments. For a few days in early May I was distressed because I could not remember her. That's one of the odd things that happen during grief. I was distressed, despite knowing that this was a common experience during grief. Memory returned as I expected, but it was nevertheless distressing while it was happening.

Recent research has shown that people grieve in their own way and within their own culture. Expectations put on them by other people that grief should be prolonged without moments of joy, happiness, fun and enjoyment are unhelpful. The other unhelpful expectation is the one of "acceptance" in the traditional models. There is no goal or finality to grief. The loved person and your experience with them remain part of your life. Some memories will dim over time. They remain with you. There will be moments when they affect you intensely. The word "acceptance" in the five-stage grief process does not adequately describe this.

How do we know that grief has gone wrong? When a person's grief is prolonged more than is culturally acceptable, denies that the deceased person has died, cuts themselves off from all social engagement, suffers depression, is unable to get on with normal tasks and work, and carries on as if the deceased person is still alive.

An important part of healing in grief is to have support from family and friends. Talking about the person who has died is important for healing - even if it results in tears. Warm hugs are gold.

I have found my faith helpful and supportive. John's gospel, which is the gospel which exalts Jesus to the status of the divine wisdom, has Jesus weeping at the death of a friend. Grief and loss are real. To experience God's love in the knowledge that healing through the process of grief is a God-given natural process is a source of hope and strength. I can echo with the words of Paul in Romans 8 that "nothing can separate us from the love of God."

UPDATE FROM CHURCH COUNCIL

We had a longer meeting than usual on 20 May – there was a lot on the agenda. It was my turn to constitute the meeting, and I did so with a prayer seeking God's guidance in our handling of the changes which our church is embarking on.

We then went through our normal agenda with reports from our church committees covering what is happening. We saw and discussed the reports from all our committees (Worship, Christian Education, Property and Finance as well as from Pastoral Care, Fellowship and Church and Community).

In our Pastoral News Agenda Item, we again gave the opportunity to learn of those needing support and how that can be given. We also shared the good news over Joanne (Jo) our Administrator joining the Church as a Member and a new member Lynn Liu joining us.

In the Property Agenda Item, we learnt of the need to replace the butanol membrane over the North side flat roof (kitchen and storerooms). We have been having leaks into the kitchen. This will cost \$17.5k

We considered the future of the Hindi Mission (see a report on this change elsewhere in the Newsletter).

However, our main time was spent on looking at progress reports from the committees who have been asked to look at different recommendations from the Loftis CTCA Report. It is clear that the Committees have been busy and are progressing with quite a lot of ideas and I have included a summary in another Newsletter item.

The Congregation has already agreed to our new goal and strategies, and we are looking to have some changes occurring over the coming months.

CHANGE: SOME OF THE MATTERS BEING CONSIDERED

Rev Tim Loftis (the CTCA Consultant), who made recommendations on changes which he believed are needed in our church has certainly got us thinking and coming up with ideas.

At our May Parish Council meeting the Church Committees shared their ideas, some of which were:

- A video of church activities to be shown in the lead up to the 10am

Service, accompanied by music.

- Creating a family friendly area at the back of the church on the left on entry
- A part-time Community Worker who could be shared with one or more neighbouring churches.
- Clearing the obstructing flax and scrub from the Hastings Road bank to allow a better view of the church
- A home Group on Modern Theology
- The introduction of appropriate artistic features on the walls
- Covering more topical issues in the sermons/addresses
- Inviting more outside speakers
- The re-introduction of shared testimonials / experiences
- Improved Church signage with at least one sign having the ability to change the message/information
- Approach people in the Congregation to seek their agreement to be trained to become 'deputies' for some of our leaders
- A changed name for our church

And more. The Committees are now working through the ideas to establish which should be developed and given priority. Meantime further ideas will be welcomed. These can be made through me or directed to Committee Convenors. ***Stewart Milne 027 293 8499***

NAME CHANGE FOR OUR CHURCH

Parish Council has agreed with the recommendation in the Loftis CTCA Report that the name of our church needs to be changed. While many of us know and appreciate the reason for Castor Bay being included in our name the time has come to better reflect where we are based and what we value (e.g. welcoming, openness, friendly).

Some Presbyterian Churches are dropping the word Presbyterian from their name but are still remaining as members of PCANZ. Do we want to do that?

Others are adopting the name HOPE – do we want to do that?

Some are introducing the word 'Community' into their name – however there is already a community church in Mairangi Bay.

Parish Council would welcome ideas from members of our Congregation on possible names for our church. These can be made by email to me at stewart.milne@xtra.co.nz or communicated by phone 027 293 8499 by the 15th of June. We will then be in a position to recommend a name change to a meeting of the Congregation.

HINDI MISSION CHANGES

Our Hindi Mission, which we started in 2017 as a group within our Mairangi Bay Congregation has been meeting for worship at 6:30pm on the first and last Sundays of the month followed by a social time over a meal.

A recently completed review showed the average attendance in 2025 has been 19 and with offerings, fundraising and a grant, 75% of costs have been covered.

The Core Group of members has decided to trial a change:

- Meet for worship at 6pm on the first and third Saturdays of the month
- Change their name to Indian Congregation of Mairangi Bay Church
- Use more English in their Worship Services including in the hymns
- No change in the meal and socializing after the service, which is such an important part of the fellowship
- There will be a further review in 6 months

This has been approved by the Parish Council and the first new format will be held at 6pm on Saturday 7 June. Roopali will be leading.

All are Welcome!

Stewart Milne (Clerk)

May is Mission Month

Traditionally we have always celebrated our church mission activities in May. For those of you who receive a birthday card and respond with a donation, now is the time for you to submit your donation to the church for mission outreach. We would like to encourage more people to be part of the birthday card scheme so if you would like to join us, please let me know the day and month of your birthday so that I can include you on the list.

The bank details are:

ASB 12 3042 0002489 00 or Westpac 03 0180 005234 002. You can use your offering number as identification or use your name – whatever you prefer. Thank you. *Dorille*

Over the last Month Parish Council and its sub-committees have been giving some thought as to how to respond to the recommendations of CTCA. The Worship Committee for instance brainstormed a number of suggestions as to how our Sunday services might be enhanced. One of its members, Ian Rankin put his comments into an e-mail to which was attached in the piece below. I struck a chord with all those associated with the exercise and we thank Ian very much for sharing it with us.

“USE YOUR IMAGINATION”

If we are going to have an eternal impact on our culture, we can't just criticise it or copy it. We've got to create it. If we are going to reach our generation with the Gospel, we can't just appeal to logic. We've got to capture their imagination. And C.S. Lewis is a great example of both. Can you think of anyone more left-brain logical than Lewis? His theological writings, from Mere Christianity to The Problem of Pain, are as logical as logic can be. But Lewis combined left-brain logic with right-brain creativity. The Chronicles of Narnia continue to capture the imagination of new generations. The church ought to be the most creative place on the planet. And there are certainly pockets of ingenuity and imagination, but we're nowhere near our creative potential.

Could our lack of faith be based on a false definition of faithfulness? Faithfulness is ***not*** doing it how it has always been done, and it's ***not*** preserving the status quo. Bottom line: ***our message must never change, but our methods of displaying and sharing the message must*** change if we are to gather in the harvest for the Lord.

As is written in Ephesians 3:20, “God’s ‘power at work in us can do far than we dare ask or imagine”.

SoulFood: Num 34-36, May 7 2025

Ian Watson

Elaine Rankin



The following is an abridged version of the Eulogy delivered by Bronwyn Stone at Elaine's Funeral. Our thanks to Bronwyn for her permission so to abridge.

I was Elaine's Pastoral Visitor for many years. We used to be called Elders, so I guess I'm her "younger" Elder!

Elaine had a deep faith, and over the years was involved in many aspects of this parish's life. She served on various committees and groups, including the Secretary of the Mission

Group for a long time and Luncheon Group. She was an active helper at several fund-raising Church Fairs, and often provided food for functions through her association with the Fellowship group. Her artistic talents came to the fore, when she took her turn on the flower roster – a job that suited her well with her love of gardening.

Elaine had an amazing voice and love of singing. She could harmonise with almost any tune. It was really uplifting standing near her, particularly if it was a tune, you didn't know very well, because she surely did. Each Christmas, a group of us would go carols singing around the parish. We'd visit the homes of those who were recuperating or had been bereaved. Elaine's voice enhanced that group. Latterly, our carol singing has taken place on the village green in Mairangi Bay, as a community outreach.

In more recent years, she took part in Born Again Bodies, helped out at Mainly Music and played a key role at House Group meetings, sometimes hosting them. Elaine was very much a "people" person and lived her life in practical service to others.

Maya Angelou wrote "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will NEVER forget how you made them feel."

Elaine made you feel special, if your path in life was fortunate enough to cross hers.

Thank you for your memories and friendship Elaine.

We will all miss you.

A word of thanks from Ian, Alistair and the Rankin Family

Elaine Rankin's family would like to thank the members of Mairangi and Castor Bays Presbyterian Church for your prayers, cards, and the many words of support and practical assistance during Elaine's recent illness and subsequent Celebration of Life Service.

Elaine (Mum) will be sadly missed, but the support of our Church family at times such as this is greatly appreciated. *Ian Rankin*



The Big Quiz Night

Saturday 14 June 2025
6:30 for 7:00pm
Mairangi Bay Presbyterian Church Hall
8 – 10 Penzance Road
Team of 6 players
\$10 per person
Snack food available for purchase, BYO
Silent auction, Raffles

Questions about our church's Big Quiz?
Contact [Alastair Emerson](#) on [0276880076](tel:0276880076)

T 0800 800 777 E bigquiz@tearfund.org.nz 64C Stoddard Rd, Mt Roskill, Auckland, NZ tearfund.org.nz/bigquiz

REGULAR PARISH ACTIVITIES

- **SENIOR FRIENDS**

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

Contact Carole 021 0235 7398 or Raewyn 027 733 7612



- **ENGLISH CONVERSATIONS**

1pm - 2.30pm Mondays & Wednesdays Meeting Room 2.

Further Information Stewart Milne 478 5786, John Shadbolt 0211087700

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 022 657 3223 or Stewart 027 293 8499

- **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

- **BORN AGAIN BODIES EXERCISE and FITNESS**

Every Wednesday 1pm in Church Hall

Leader: Brad McCullough Ph 021 230 3421



- **PARISH COUNCIL**

7.30pm every 3rd Tuesday of the month Meeting room 2

Ph Stewart Milne 027 293 8499 or 09 478 5786

*Please send photos of Parish activities through to
office@bayspc.nz*

Quick Contacts

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