



Mairangi Bay
Presbyterian Church
Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph
November 2025 NEWSLETTER



Quiz Night 11th October 2025

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UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

Since I wasn't at our last service (26 October), I'd like to offer some thoughts on the Gospel reading for that day, Luke 18: 9 – 14, about the Pharisee and the tax collector. The story begins: "Jesus also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt."

In this introduction, perhaps we tend to write off the Pharisee as a religious hypocrite. But he is actually a model believer in terms of his life and conduct. By all the standards of the law, he is righteous. The difficulty, then, isn't his righteousness, but his self-righteousness. "Lord," he prays, "I thank you that I am not like other people.... I fast...I give...." (vv.11-12). He may direct the prayer to God, but it seems addressed to himself and is entirely about himself.

Bad as this is, the real tragedy is that his self-righteousness leads him to discount others and hold them with contempt. The Greek for "contempt" is *exoutheneō* which means to utterly despise. It's more than just a judgement about someone else; it's hateful discrimination. He becomes stuck in his prejudice and intolerance of others. His thinking, his words and his actions close himself off to others different from himself. His righteousness becomes the standard by which he judges all others. The world, for this man, is clear-cut, black and white. It's divided into two sides: between the righteous and unrighteous, the moral and the immoral, the just and the unjust, those who are in and those who are out. He is stuck in and blinded by a judgemental approach to life. Such a moral territory leaves no room for either uncertainty or for mercy, or for grace, for undeserved favour.

The tax collector's vision, by contrast, is at the same time both narrower and more expansive. Narrower because he is overwhelmed by his own need, his own desperation, his own shortcomings to give any thought or judgment to the failings of others. Yet expansive because he cannot imagine standing over another in judgment but rather sides with all those who recognise their need for mercy and grace. In this man's prayer is the belief that God alone has the potential to act, to forgive, to restore him. The tax collector is open to new possibilities, to new ways of relationship.

The temptation, of course, is to allow this parable to transfer into a predictable and bland morality tale: "Be humble!" But to do so is to miss the punch of this parable. The Pharisee is righteous in terms of keeping or doing right by the law. But his righteousness seems empty in doing right by the heart of the law – to love God and neighbour. He believes God approves his

own goodness. But sadly, he also believes that God approves of his attitude and treatment of others, especially those whom he deems unworthy of his company. He desires to be close to God, but not to others. The tax collector, on the other hand, draws near to God by simply confessing his unworthiness.

Jesus concludes that the tax collector went home justified rather than the Pharisee. How is this possible when both turned to God in prayer? Shouldn't both be considered righteous? It's not easy to answer these questions. But maybe we should ask who went home changed or unchanged by his experience of turning to God? Or, who went home still stuck in his understanding of God, himself, and others as opposed to going home set free and transformed by the encounter with God? What do you think?

Tokerau

11.30am 2nd Dec Tuesday Special Communion Service

This service is open to all, it is especially for those who cannot attend church regularly. There will be a time of fellowship and lunch following the service. We will provide transportation to and from the church if needed.. If you and a friend would like to attend, could you please book in by letting your Pastoral Visitor know.

A PSALM FOR PRAYING

On October 26th we were privileged to hear something of the work of Presbyterian Support Northern from its Community Relationship Manager, Anne Overton. At the conclusion of her address, Anne read the following piece from "Psalms for Praying - An Invitation to wholeness" by Nan.C.Merrill. It struck a chord;

O Beloved. You invite us to rest in the abode of your Heart, to forgive our weaknesses and renew our love. Who will respond with hearts opened wide to Love? Those who walk with integrity, who are in harmony with your Word and sing the heart's song:

*Those whose tongues speak truth judging not others and seeking only the good;
Whose eyes behold not the outer garments of the body, but see within the inner robe of Love;*

*Whose own weaknesses are acknowledged and brought to light in prayer
Those who are just in all affairs of life and take not advantage of another;
Those who dwell in the Heart of Love, who act justly with integrity, will join the Dance of Life and sing the Songs of Joy!
Their family, friends and, indeed the world will be blessed by their love.*

Words From KAREL - In the beginning was the meal

I think most of us enjoy our church meals. The “Guess who is Coming to Lunch” occasion, going out to lunch at the café, or a shared potluck lunch in the hall. The Indian Worship service is followed by great food. It’s a time to talk to meet new people and share experiences. When we have these meals, we follow an ancient church custom. You will remember some years ago Hal Taussig, a New Testament scholar, author of the book, “In the Beginning was the Meal,” spoke to us in a weekday seminar about early Christian meals. He showed us how people reclined on their left elbow around a low table to eat. For us it's a very uncomfortable position. Taussig is among other Biblical scholars who have written about the importance of meals to the early followers of Jesus.

For the first 200 years after Jesus was crucified Christians carried on his custom of having meals that were open to all. A practice for which Jesus was much criticized by the religious authorities because “he ate with sinners.” Those meals attracted the poor, rich, those of other races, orphans and widows, and those who had been estranged from their original community by Roman conquests. These outcasts found a home among those very earlier followers of the way of Jesus.

Those meals fitted in with some of the culture of the times. So-called supper clubs were common at the time throughout the Roman Empire. A group of fellow workers in a particular craft would meet in a rented room which had a table in a “u” formation and couches to recline round it. The way this was set out allowed servants to come to the table. They would have a meal and a speaker. Some had a list of rules with which you had to abide if you were to be a member of the club. This could include benefits such as organising a member’s funeral. The wealthy had this dining room on the ground floor and open at one end so that passersby could admire their important visitors and the wonderful food they were able to serve. Christians rented upper rooms. They were poor. It was probably at such a dinner when a young man listening to Paul fell out of the window and was resuscitated. Sometime churches met at the home of a wealthy member. For example, the letter to Philemon suggests this.

When the followers of the way of Jesus met on Sunday, bread and wine remembering Jesus was part of this full meal. Although there was no set liturgy, there were prayers, discussion about Jesus and his teaching and singing of hymns. The Didache, a short book, written in the 90’s of the first century suggests that the theme of getting together was thanksgiving. Many of the leaders and organisers of such dinners were women. There was no hierarchy. Doctrine was not important. There were itinerant preachers who travelled round and spoke at such gatherings. Some tests were developed to ensure they were genuine and not people who were free loaders wanting food without working for it.

The way that these meals were structured varied from place to place. Because of the lack of communication between various areas, developments in the

church were slow. In 1 Timothy, written between 110 and 130 we see the beginnings of imposing order. Leadership and hierarchies (male) developed. From books which did not make it into the canon of scripture we know that women were prominent in leadership until this time. The open fellowship disappeared, and only baptised members were admitted. By the mid to late second century the battle for uniformity of belief and action began. What had started with Jesus as an open invitation to all, now became an exclusive club. The concern for social justice and Jesus' concern for the poor took second place to arguments that raged about correct doctrine and who was the superior Bishop.

One could argue that at this point the church "lost its mojo," the original way of following Jesus' example gave way to endless doctrinal disputes, divisions, wealthy and powerful clergy who in the Middle Ages competed with princes and Kings for wealth and power. It was not all bleak, from time-to-time people like Francis of Assisi, Teresa of Avila and Meister Eckhard recovered the simple way of Jesus, caring for the poor, feeding the hungry and a concern for social justice. For the most part they battled against powerful church leaders.

For us today there is the opportunity to look back over this history, see that it has missed what Jesus lived and taught and make amends. There are churches that are experimenting with having meals together as their worship. We came across one in Seattle, and although, because of time constraints could not attend, but spoke with people who attended the church. They were attracting a cross section of their community, including people who were questioning faith. Some churches break-fast together on Sunday morning and have worship and a speaker over breakfast. They are attracting a diverse community.

The future of Christianity may be people meeting over a meal at a church or in a home listening to the teaching of Jesus and answering his call to follow.

Karel



Guess who came to lunch!

UPDATE FROM CHURCH COUNCIL

The October meeting of Council was constituted by Rev Tim Loftis who joined us by zoom from Melbourne. Tim is the CTCA Consultant who many of our members will have met last year when he conducted our planning workshops. After reading from Paul's letter to the Corinthians, where the need for all working together was stressed, Tim referred to the progress that we are making as we set goals and strive to reach them. The third set of goals which will take us through to the end of February are in this newsletter.

After Tim left us we went on to consider the following matters:

- . The best current option for us as we look ahead and consider our current financial situation. We have now paid for the accessway and that together with property and repair costs has left us in a tight financial position. Council decided that the Congregation must be kept informed and that our efforts need to go into the Revitalisation Project and into growing our church for sustainability.
- . The Goals for the next 4 months which were approved. These involve change and trying some new things. They will not be achieved without the active involvement and support of us all.
- . Pastoral matters – these were shared and Council members committed to praying for the support needed for those identified.
- . The Minister's Report with the welcome advice on the newly started Chinese Alpha program which is attracting some of those attending our English Conversations Class
- . The Property Report where Stephen spoke of the steps to be taken as we deal with the use of the newly acquired driveway and parking area by others.
- . The Finance Report which provided an overview of the situation and a deficit for September of \$3k. The loan of \$15k is still to be refunded
- . The Worship Report together with the schedule of services and leaders through into next year
- . The Christian Education Report where Dorille advised of the games night where our 'Elevate' Youth Group was joined with some of the youth from the Forrest Hill Church. We are planning to invite those from other close-by churches to our Family Games nights.
- . The Quiz night which was a great community event - has raised just over \$2k
- . Under the heading of Revitalisation and Growth the following actions were noted:
 - . Incubator training- 7 from our church will be attending the 25 Oct session on Spirituality at the Orewa Church

- Our church name now being used is Mairangi Bay Presbyterian Church and once formally agreed we will change the registered name.
- We agreed to make an application to the Northern Presbytery Mission Fund for financial assistance to allow us to employ a part time Family and Community Worker. The next step is to seek Regional support.
- We welcomed the response from the Congregation on the favoured group of new logos which had been created by Rachel Burn, circulated and decided to take the next step of getting a view on which of the 6 individual logos within the group is favoured. Number 2 was the favourite voted in.
- We warmly welcomed the news that Evelyn Chiu and Jessica Li have joined our church.
- There will be a meeting of the Congregation after the 10am Church service 9th November to agree on the change of Church name & logo.



Stewart Milne (Clerk)

PENZANCE ROAD ACCESSWAY

- Back in 2015 it was discovered that our use of the Council accessway from Penzance Road had never been formally authorised, despite having used it for access to the Church since 1944.
- A long process of negotiation with the Council and the neighbours ensued, managed on our behalf by George Wyman and Stewart Milne. Eventually the Council agreed to allow the sale of the accessway land to the Church, subject to the imposition of an easement providing for on going public pedestrian access between Penzance Road and Hastings Road.
- A key condition of the sale was that the Department of Conservation had to revoke the reserve status applying to the land. That was finally achieved in September this year.
- Recently, the sale was completed and now the accessway land forms part of the Church's property title, in the name of the Presbyterian Church Property Trustees.
- We are all grateful to George and Stewart for their work over the years leading up to this milestone achievement

CHURCH WEBSITE AND LOGO

- On Tuesday 21 October prior to the Parish Council meeting Sandy Burn , who is creating our new church website, showed us what is now available for viewing and how easy it is to find the wealth of information that is on it.
- We have long acknowledged the inadequacy of our old website and talked about the need for change. Sandy volunteered to build a new one and it is near to being launched. The new one can be readily accessed by Googling bayspc.nz It is still in the development stage. When it is launched the old website will be removed.
- Our challenge will be to keep it up to date with relevant information past, present and future. Alastair is bringing together a group to do this.
- We will be finding a suitable time to acknowledge Sandy for the huge contribution she has made to the church with the development of the website. Also to husband Andrew for his role as the technical IT expert for the church IT systems, including the website.
- The family contribution doesn't stop there however as the great range of possible church Logos that have been sent around for voting on have been created by talented daughter Rachel.
- We are so fortunate in having these contributions from the Burn Family. The Wyman influence and dedication to service has certainly continued to come through for the benefit of our church.

Knitting for Love

Pat Pratt and Kay Barbour were recognized and thanked at the service on 26 October for their wonderful knitting which is regularly donated to Family Works which is part of Presbyterian Support Northern. Anne Overton who is the Community Relationship Manager for PSN spoke at the service about the great relationship that our Parish has with PSN who pass our various donations onto those in need.



Examples of a few of Patt & Kays donated knitting



Believe it or Not Quiz night - 11th Oct

Following on from our successful Quiz Night to raise money for the Tear Fund, we held a second equally successful quiz event. This time it was to raise funds for our own Church activities.

It was organised by Karen and Gerry Ruffell, and again MC'd by Glen Stanton. The event attracted over 70 participants who made up 12 teams. The quiz raised over \$2000 for the church.

Our thanks to all who organised it and to all who participated.



To grow our worship attendance by developing a relevant, inspiring and family friendly gospel-centred worship experience.

1-year goal

<p>To spend dedicated time in prayer and to inform and inspire the congregation about the vision.</p>	<p>To get the Worship Committee to explore, plan and prepare for changing the Worship Service to a more relevant and family friendly style for the future.</p>	<p>To get the P & F Cttee to look at the facilities and make recommendations to Parish Council about changes which will make the church spaces more family friendly and missional.</p>	<p>To address the communication to the outside community. This includes website, Facebook, media, signage and any other relevant ways of communicating missionally.</p>
<p>Encourage more people to participate in prayer for our vision. Continue informing the congregation of developments. Encourage and increase members of Parish Council to attend the Incubator Trainings so they can all contribute to inspiring the congregation.</p>	<p>That the following actions be implemented in our worship services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a welcome video • Introduce pre-service music • Put sermon points & Bible reading on screen • More relevance in preaching (down to earth) • More appropriate videos for children learning • Introduce appropriate contemporary songs • Have a Messy Church service 	<p>That the P & F Cttee implement the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create family area at the back of the church • Improve visibility of church & signage from Hastings Road. • Install appropriate gospel messages/visuals in the church space. • De-clutter the stage area at the front of the church 	<p>That we employ someone part time to keep our website and Facebook up to date.</p>
<p>That the previous goals continue and with the following actions be implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue with the 8-week study on prayer 	<p>That the previous goals continue and with the following actions be implemented in our worship services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal testimonies 	<p>That P & F, Christian Ed, & Parish Council explore and establish a Community & Family Worker to develop ministry to children, youth, and young parents in the wider community.</p>	<p>That we launch the revamp of our church website.</p> <p>Update church Facebook and links to our Indian congregation the Mairangi Bay Village.</p>

Second 90-days

That the previous goals continue and with the following actions be implemented:

- To continue with the 8-week study on prayer
- Implement the “inclusion strategy” from the incubator training.
- Implement the “reaching out strategy” from the incubator training.

That the previous goals continue and with the following actions be implemented in our worship services:

- Personal testimonies
- Explain one or two aspects of worship content
- Learn songs in other languages
- Trial having pre-service tea & coffee to encourage people to arrive earlier for worship
- Encourage people to fill the front seats of the church

That P & F, Christian Ed, & Parish Council explore and establish a Community & Family Worker to develop ministry to children, youth, and young parents in the wider community.

- Secure funding by 31 March 2026
- Employ the worker by 30 April 2026

Continue the 11-week Chinese Alpha course with the view to include attendees as members.

That we launch the revamp of our church website.

Update church Facebook and links to our Indian congregation the Mairangi Bay Village.

Achieve approval of the Accessway and negotiate access with neighbours.

Develop Penzance Road church signage.

Third 90-day goals

COMMUNICATOR WANTED

Help Us Share Our Story! Our church is growing, and so is the need to communicate all the wonderful things happening in our community.

We’re looking for someone to take the lead in our public communications— sharing updates, events, and stories through the right channels.

What’s involved?

You’ll work with the Clerk, the committee convenors, and others to identify what needs to be shared, choose the best platform newsletter, website, social media, etc and help make it happen.

Interested? We’d love to chat!
Contact Stewart Milne – 027 293 8499

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

- **HOME GROUP**

10.30am on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month.

Contact Karel Lorier 021 903 762



- **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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