



# Mairangi Bay Presbyterian Church

Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

## February 2026 NEWSLETTER



Check us out our new website [www.baypcs.nz](http://www.baypcs.nz)

## **UPDATE FROM TOKERAU**

*Happy New Year to you all. I hope 2026 brings much hope and wonderful experiences.*

Reflecting on last year, it was a time of doing different things in our ministry. These were responses to the CTCA report to help revitalise our church. We want to do better in the way we reach out and draw new people into the church, assist them toward membership, and see them grow in spiritual maturity and service to God. In essence, we want to grow as a church in all these areas.

The reality, however, is that we have struggled with this for some time. We connect with and provide services to people from the wider community. Yet, a very small number of them come to Christian faith and become members in our church. Sadly, the majority do not.

It might be argued that the purpose of these services, or mission, is for the sake of others – to show love in practical and helpful ways to people, and not for our sake – to increase our membership. Some may also assert that we ought not impose our Christian faith on others. Instead, we should let them be them and not try to change them. While there may be some degree of truth in these points, more important is that from a gospel perspective, faith and actions go together (James 2:14-26). James says, “Separate faith and works and you get the same thing: a corpse.” (v. 26, The Message)

Part of our vision for the next 5 – 10 years is to be a gospel-centered church in Mairangi Bay. This means that the gospel, the good news of Christ, is to be at the heart of our proclamation and service. We cannot do good works without incorporating the faith component. Could this be the part that is lacking, weak, or missing in our mission?

I can appreciate that for some, or perhaps most church folk, sharing the Christian faith with non-church people is difficult. It seems easier to share it among ourselves in the church setting, but not with the wider secular community. Yet, making Christ known is fundamental to our discipleship as followers of Jesus. His parting instruction to his first followers were that they “go and make disciples” (reaching out & drawing in), “baptize them” (include), and “teach them” his words (growth) (Matthew 28:19-20).

I believe the Revitalise journey we have embarked on give us opportunities to do the same. On the 21st March, we will be hosting workshops on evangelism led by Julie-anne Laird from CTCA. They will offer ways on how we can convey the Christian message at a personal level in whatever context or activity you’re in. Integral for this and for the growth of our ministry is getting all of us involved. We cannot expect a few to carry the rest. We must all do our part. Together we can achieve and realise our vision going forward.

***Tokerau***

## **Words From KAREL**

### **Faith, Science and the Modern World**

The first scientists of the enlightenment in the western world, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) and Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) were deeply religious people. In their science they understood themselves to be uncovering the glory of God.

But this was not to last. In the 18th and 19th century Christians became very suspicious of science. Particularly they were suspicious of critical and scientific research into the Bible. This all came to head in the 19th century with the publication of Charles Darwin's book in 1859 "The Origin of Species;" the Work of Michael Faraday on electricity and magnetism; and James Maxwells linking magnetism, electricity and light.

These started ugly debates between Christians and scientists. People were fearful that they would lose their faith if the God they depended on was different than they had previously supposed. This was particularly so in the United States of America and England. Many communities sponsored debates between scientists and Christians where all sorts of extraordinary claims were made. Reading accounts of some of these debates shows how fearful Christians were. The very foundations of their faith and world view was challenged.

In 1878, and for some years following, there were Bible studies at Niagara Bible Conference in the US where the fundamentals of Christian belief were stated. This marks the birth of Christian fundamentalism. These fundamentals were cut down to five and affirmed by later conferences and promulgated in publications called "The Fundamental Series" which were funded by Lyman and Milton Stewart who owned Union oil. They posted over a million copies free to pastors, Christian leaders, missionaries, libraries and churches in the English-speaking world. It defined the Bible as the "verbally inspired and inerrant word of God." They believed that the Bible was dictated by God and therefore without error.

Although evolution and its difference from the story in Genesis was the touchstone, in many ways this was a revolt against the modern world. Since then, there have been many challenges that fundamentalists have had to face. In the 1920's it was discovered that the universe was so much larger than had ever been envisioned. The work of Albert Einstein with his theory of relativity showed that things that we take for granted in our normal day-to-day lives are just not so. Since then, there have been discoveries in genetics and in quantum physics which challenge our "normal" understanding of reality. Fundamentalist Christians have developed their own pseudoscience and young earth theories to counter the advances of scientific understanding of the world and universe. Critics from within, and outside, fundamentalism have pointed out that there is a real risk in fundamentalism making the Bible into an idol.

In the United States the Christian fundamentalist right is so persuasive that last year the budget for scientific research was cut, harmful to medical research, climate research and the collection of important data. The US Congress is attempting to reverse this as I write. The effect of fundamentalism has been worldwide. This is the understanding of the non-Christian person in the street of what it means to be Christian.

But how do we cope with our faith and the scientific understanding of the world? There are three common approaches.

To battle it out and declare that science is wrong, develop pseudoscience to “prove” the Bible is right. The fundamentalist position.

To say that Christianity is a different sphere from the scientific sphere. This requires considerable mental gymnastics. I know a researcher in genetics. At her work she deals with gene development over many thousands of years of evolution. In her faith she believes in six-day creation by God as reported in Genesis. I have difficulty understanding this and the mental gymnastics involved.

To accept science and its findings and structure our God and faith within the world that we know through scientific investigation. This is what many Christians have done before the rise of fundamentalism. They understood their faith within the context of the knowledge available to them in their time.

Martin Luther, the Leader of the reformation, shared an insight which was understood by several of the reformers. In his larger catechism of 1529 he writes, “What does it mean to have a God? Or what is God? Answer: that means that from which we are to expect all good and in which we are to take refuge in all the stress, so to have God is nothing else than to trust and believe in him with your whole heart. That to which your heart clings and interests itself, is say, really your God.” We construct God for ourselves, it could be a false god like money or power, or God following the teaching of Jesus.

In our modern understanding of language we fill word symbols with meaning. So, our understanding of the word “God” is shaped by what we read in the Bible, what we’ve heard at services, hymns we sing, and experiences of life and so forth. Current theologians realise that our understandings of God are constructions. They have developed theological understandings which can cope with science and the problems of the current world. Among these theologians, Alfred North Whitehead, Paul Tillich, Isabel Carter Heywood and Gordon Kaufman and many more there are large areas of agreement although they have their interesting differences.

But we don’t have to resort to complex theological dissertations, unless we are particularly interested. Rather, by looking at the life and teaching of Jesus we discover God for ourselves by imitating his unconditional love for all people, not just those whom we find easy to love. We have faith (trust) in Jesus which gives meaning and purpose to life. It’s life changing.

***Karel***

## **COMBINED SERVICES IN JANUARY**

For the third consecutive year, the parishes of Browns Bay, Glenfield, Forrest Hill and ourselves, combined our services from the last Sunday in December and the first three Sundays in January.

For a number of reasons, it was a most rewarding experience. Each of the churches has its own distinctive style and approach as it seeks to proclaim the Gospel message. At Browns Bay, for instance a weekly newsletter is produced in three languages, focussed on biblical passages, and prayer topics.

Perhaps the greatest buzz, though comes from worshipping with a larger group of people than our usual number, the greater diversity of age spread and the increased number of children in attendance. At the service at Mairangi Bay, for instance, there were 108 adults and 16 children who came along to join in real engagement both in the singing and in the listening to a very thoughtful sermon delivered by Tokerau.

*Ian Watson*

## **CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE CHRISTMAS APPEAL**



We donated on your behalf the \$432 we collected to the CWS Christmas Appeal. We all get plenty of opportunities to support various appeals each year. This is the only appeal that our church regularly distributes information and envelopes for individual donations.

**Home Group - 10.30am on Monday 2 February**

Rev Karel Lorier's study on "**Contemporary Theology**" will be resuming at 10.30am on Monday 2 February in meeting Room 2. All welcome.

## **Update from Parish Council – December Meeting and coming workshop**

We don't usually have a Council meeting in December but on 16 December we held a special meeting to focus on our church revitalizing project.

We are increasingly realizing that to a great extent the future of our church here\_at Mairangi Bay depends on the success of this project and that it will only succeed if our Congregation is behind it with members playing an active part.

At the December Council meeting we considered the wording in a draft pamphlet that Tokerau has produced which explains our journey for the last 12 months with this revitalizing project. The pamphlet includes our various 90 day goals .

Our focus for February will be on the Inclusion and Growth Systems. One of the strengths of the CTCA approach is to look at the various systems that a healthy church needs to have in place. We rate quite highly on our Outreach system which involves community services and contact but not nearly so well with Inclusion or Growth. Inclusion involves newcomers being integrated to eventually become Members. Growth requires a conscious effort from us all to let others know what Christianity and our church has to offer and encourage them to join us.

An opportunity to work through and learn the skills and approaches that we need will present itself at a 'Ripple Effect' workshop which will be held in our church on Saturday 21 March. This Workshop will be led by an experienced CTCA specialist. The Workshop Leader is asking for an 80% participation from the Congregation. Other churches here in the Northern Presbytery have had this workshop and speak highly of it. Please mark it on your calendar and participate to find out what we can all do to grow our church.

***Stewart Milne***

## **Packing and Distribution of Christmas Treats**

One of the special church services here at Mairangi Presbyterian is the annual packing service. It is based around the packing of treats for families and individuals in the community who are known to be in need of some Christmas cheer.

We start collecting treats, as well as donations for the purchase of treats, in October and hold the service early in December. The Packing Service includes the elements of worship as well as the act of packing the items into bags and including a message for the recipients.

The recipients are identified by Family Works, Family Start and Shine which are all branches of Presbyterian Support Northern a large and active welfare agency. The North Shore base for Family Works is in our church premises.

This Christmas we were able to fill and distribute more than 80 bags full of treats with each including a message of goodwill, peace and love.



# **ACKNOWLEDGING THE WONDERFUL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE BURN FAMILY**

At our Packing Service in December we showed our appreciation to Sandy, Andrew and their daughter Rachel Burn for the wonderful contributions they have made to our church in the last 6 months.

There is no doubt that the majority of people who are looking for information about a church and what it has to offer (young and old) look to social media for the options that are available.

Our old clunky website simply did not deliver and for several years we have been saying “a new website is needed.” Meetings have been held but nothing has happened. Then what I described at the presentation as a ‘modern miracle’ occurred. Jill Wyman’s daughter Sandy Burn volunteered to build a new website for us and did it. All within a few months.

If you haven’t already had a look please do so. Just Google bayspc Try it. Sandy’s husband Andrew (only he could get such a short search title!) has been, and still is, our voluntary unpaid IT expert. He has kept our IT systems going, has gifted equipment, sourced software and greatly improved our whole set up.

Sandy and Andrew’s daughter Rachel helps us as a volunteer at Dees on Thursdays for several years. Rachel has strong artistic talents and she freely responded to our request to design a new logo for our church. Rachel provided several groups of options and worked the process for step by step narrowing it down to a great logo that has been accepted and now appears on our notice board, website and stationery.

Wow. What a contribution from the Burn family – mostly all in the last 6 months.

We said a big thank you to them at the Packing Service and made some gifts to show appreciation but it’s on occasions like these that words are inadequate. We are so fortunate.

**Stewart Milne**



# Packing Christmas Treats



## **Born Again Bodies**



The BAB's exercise class has been running from our hall for around a decade and has now stopped.

That means the Wednesday 1pm time slot everyone has become accustomed to is available for someone else to run a class. The class has been very popular and has been low cost, charging only \$7pp. Anyone who is interested in running a low impact exercise class is welcomed to come and talk to us about hiring the hall.

## **Family and Community Worker update**

Tim Loftis from CTCA (City to City Australia) spent time with us and provided advice on what we need to do to revitalise and grow our church. One of the recommendations was "... find a way of employing a youth and children's ministry worker who could come in and start building and running programs for children and youth in the church and in the community."

Our Church Council decided to pursue this recommendation. However, it was realised that our financial situation is such that we need funding assistance to implement it. Consequently, we applied to the Northern Presbytery Mission Fund for a grant. We learned before Christmas that we have been successful in gaining partial financial assistance which will extend over a 3-year period, if we can find a suitable person to fill the position.

The position is a part time one (up to 20hrs a week) and we are keen to see the person being or becoming a member of our church. We will now proceed to advertise the position.

## **Rental Property Wanted.**

Rev Paul Sawrey, his wife Katy and their 4 children have recently arrived from Scotland. They are wanting to rent a house in the East Coast Bays area. Paul and Katy are the Pastors at Shore Vineyard Church in Forrest Hill Rd. If anyone knows of a possible rental property, please let me know or email Paul directly [paul.sawrey@aol.com](mailto:paul.sawrey@aol.com)  
Thanks Stewart Milne 027 293 8499.



## **CAROLS IN THE PARK**

On December 12th 2025, about a dozen of us, under the leadership of Tokerau, gathered in the Mairangi Bay Park beside the Service station, to sing a number of Christmas Carols.

We were joined by some members of the Mairangi Bay Community Church who sang two items. A number of our people participated in the Carol singing. It was organised by Sally Cargill on behalf of the Mairangi Bay Business Group. A particular favourite of those gathered was our New Zealand song, Te Harinui.



*The photo shows the community church choir leading the singing.*

### **Parking on Church property - Car parking changes Your Vehicle will NOT be towed away!**

Your Vehicle will NOT be towed away if you are at the church premises for any activity. You are welcome to park in vacant parks unless those parks are labelled reserved eg Ministers car park, Family works.

In February we are introducing yellow lines & signage to show that unauthorized vehicles who park on our church property may be towed away. We have advised our neighbours of this change and offered a way they can get a license to park here if they wish to and are prepared to pay for it.

Our church team are the ONLY ones who can request the towing company to remove a vehicle. We will NOT authorize ANY vehicle that has brought people to a church service or to any activity being run in the church to be removed.

**Stewart Milne**

## **Mairangi Bay Presbyterian Church Weekly & Monthly Activities**

 **Sunday Service** 10am Sundays – Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

 027 371 4733 |  tokerau.j@gmail.com

 **Seniors Social Group** 1st & 3rd Tues, 10am–12pm

Carole 021 0235 7398 | Raewyn 027 733 7612

 **Advanced English Conversations** Mon 1–2.30pm – Meeting Room 2

John 021 108 7700

 **English Conversations** Wed, 1–2.30pm – Meeting Room 2

Stewart 478 5786 | John 021 108 7700 | Grace 021 048 7978

 **Home Group** 1st & 3rd Mon, 10.30am – Karel 021 903 762

 **House Group** Wed, 3pm at Shadbolt's – Dorille 479 3953

 **Dee's Social Group** Thurs, 10am–2pm – Church Hall

Tangi 022 657 3223

 **Mainly Music** Fri (school term), 10–11am – Church Hall

Karen 021 0226 3846

 **Family Fun Night** 2nd Fri, 6.15pm – Church Hall

Tangi 022 657 3223 | Stewart 027 293 8499

 **Men's Group Lunch** 2nd Tues, 12pm – The Bays Club

Ian 027 332 7235

 **Leader for the Young** Angelika 027 310 3284

 **Parish Council** 3rd Tues, 7.30pm – Meeting Room 2

Stewart 027 293 8499 | 09 478 5786

 **Office Hours** Wed & Fri 9–1pm | Tues–Fri 9–1pm 

office@bayspc.nz |  09 478 6180 / 021 055 1640

 *Please send any Parish photos to **office@bayspc.nz***