



# Mairangi Bay Presbyterian Church

Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

## April 2026 NEWSLETTER



### Ripple Effect Workshop

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

## **UPDATE FROM TOKERAU**

Tangi & I are away for a couple of weeks for a few family functions in Rarotonga. Because we won't be with you for Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday services, I offer some thoughts as a contribution to such a significant time for us as Christians and as church.

The cross, suffering, and death of Jesus always looms large at this time. It is the absolute cornerstone of Christian theology, separating it from all other world religions. While Jesus is remembered for his teachings and miracles, Christianity hinges on his death, burial, and resurrection. Without the crucifixion, the narrative of salvation is incomplete. But so is his resurrection. Both are important for salvation.

Yet, the death of Jesus seems to be the main focus for people. We often ask today, "why did Jesus have to die or what did his death achieve?" Jesus himself spoke about his impending death and resurrection with his followers on various occasions (Matthew 16:21, 17:22-23, 20:17-19; Mark 8:31-32, 9:31, 10:33-34; and Luke 9:22, 9:43-45, 18:31-34). They did not appear to fully grasp what Jesus was telling them at the time. Yet after his resurrection, they came to view Jesus' death in a particular way – a sacrifice atoning for people's sins to enable reconciliation with God. This led to various theologies being developed such as Penal Substitution (Jesus punished for our sins), Ransom (Jesus paid for our sins), Propitiation (Jesus' death appeased God's anger), Christus Victor (Jesus' victory over sin and death), just to name some.

While these different views have their strengths, they also have their weaknesses. For some people, Penal Substitution Atonement is a horrible concept. British Baptist minister Steve Chalke argues that the traditional view of the cross as a vengeful Father punishing his innocent Son is morally flawed: "If the cross is a personal act of violence perpetrated by God towards humankind but borne by his Son, then it makes a mockery of Jesus' own teaching to love your enemies." (Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus*, HarperCollins Religious US, Nashville, Tennessee, 2004, 182-83).

So, how did Jesus' death become seen as some kind of sacrifice at all? The early followers of Jesus were Jews and they were familiar with the Temple sacrificial system. They linked Jesus' death during Passover to the death of the Passover lamb. The Passover pointed to the moment when God spared judgement from and "passed over" any home in Egypt that had its doorposts painted with the blood of a sacrificial lamb. For the early Christians, the Passover Lamb as a means of saving people became reinterpreted in Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29).

This view was further affirmed when recounting their experience of Jesus at the Passover meal or Last Supper. "While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'" (Matthew 26: 26-28).

John's account goes further to say that: "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day" (John 6:54). Jesus' declarations of his impending death now seem to reveal a purpose through what he also conveys about the Passover meal. His disciples interpret his suffering and death as a means of sacrifice for forgiveness of sin and salvation/reconciliation. It becomes a fulfilment of establishing a new covenant relationship between God and all who trust in him.

But as I said, the death of Jesus is only part of the salvation story. Jesus' resurrection is the other. According to 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, the Apostle Paul states: "For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures and that he was buried and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures." This is considered by Biblical scholars as an early Christian creed conveying the belief of the fledgeling Christian community that "Christ died for our sins." While affirming this, this goes onto argue, "Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised, and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:12-14).

Paul is basically saying that just because you believe Jesus' death alone saves you from sin, doesn't mean that's what saves you. If Jesus had just died on the cross and not resurrected, Christianity would have faded into oblivion. Paul bluntly says that without the resurrection our faith would be vain, pointless, empty, worthless. The early Christians were certain of both Jesus' death and resurrection. This is what they boldly proclaimed, rather than any of Jesus' teachings, since breaking free from the despair of Jesus' crucifixion and the fear of the authorities who tortured and killed him. In their minds, Jesus' resurrection overcame death and sin thereby validating the sacrifice he made on the cross and sealing our salvation. Without the resurrection, the blood of Jesus would have been spilled in vain.

The Easter story is not just about the cross. Jesus did not say, "I am the cross. I am the crucifixion." He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live" (John 11:25). Jesus does not say here that we have eternal life because of his death or his blood, but simply because we believe in him, who is the resurrection and the life. And he said this before his crucifixion and resurrection.

Both the crucifixion and resurrection are central for us followers of Jesus. Without the crucifixion, there would be no resurrection. Without his death, Jesus would not be able to completely overcome death. But the resurrection is equally important if not more so, to Jesus' story and God's work of salvation. It is about Jesus' full story: his birth, his ministry, his healing works, his teachings, his life example, his crucifixion, his resurrection, and ascension. But above it all, Jesus' resurrection, his victory over sin, death, and the grave, must be the keystone of our faith. Otherwise, as Paul says, our faith is vain, futile, and worthless and we are still in our sins.

***Tokerau***

## **Words From KAREL –**

### **Faith, Truth, and Authority in a Post-Truth Age**

We live in an age when words travel faster than wisdom. With the rise of social media, the old structures that once filtered and refined what was published – editors, publishers, peer reviewers – for the most part have fallen away. This has brought some benefits, more voices can be heard and ideas can circulate freely. Yet it has also created the landscape in which truth claims are often not subjected to scrutiny.

In this environment the loudest voices can easily be mistaken for competence. Frequent repetition strengthens these ideas. Such ideas gain authority not because they have been tested, but because they are widely shared. For people of faith, this raises an important question: how do we discern truth amongst all this noise.

In the sciences, the answer has long been clear. Knowledge advances through disciplined methods – observation, experimentation, repetition of these experiments and critical review by experts in the field. Experimental evidence, tested and retested, remains our most reliable guide to understanding the physical world. It does not offer certainty in an absolute sense, but a large degree of probability. This provides a self-correcting process that steadily refines our grasp of reality.

Yet we cannot approach all truth in this way. History, ethics and theology do not lend themselves to laboratory conditions. They require a different, but no less rigorous approach. Evidence still matters – texts must be examined, context reconstructed and interpretations carefully weighed up and re-evaluated - but the conclusions are often more open to debate. Disciplined inquiry remains essential. Without it we are left with the situation where the loudest voices and their frequently repeated assertions prevail.

This is where the historical – critical study of the Bible has made its most significant contribution. Over the past two centuries, scholars have sought to understand the biblical text in the original context. Who wrote them, when, for whom, and why. They have distinguished between layers of tradition, identified theological developments within the early church and placed Jesus firmly within the world of Judaism.

The result is not a diminished Jesus, but a much more historically grounded one. We can encounter him shaped by his time and place, a teacher, a prophet, one who spoke of God's reign with urgency and conviction. We also see how the early Christian communities interpreted his life and death in diverse ways giving rise to the rich and sometimes complex portrait preserved in the New Testament.

For some people these findings are disturbing. They challenge familiar assumptions and raise difficult questions about how Christian doctrine has developed. It's perhaps not surprisingly that many churches have been hesitant to engage fully with this scholarship. Pastoral concerns played a role in this. Ministers are rightly sensitive to

the impact that new ideas can have on faith. There are also the weight and clutter of traditions, and the fear that critical study might erode that which has long been held as sacred.

Yet this reluctance has carried its own cost, in a world where information is readily available, many thoughtful people – both within and beyond the church – are aware of the questions that scholarship have raised. When the church appears to ignore or side step these issues, it loses credibility. Special pleading is no longer seen as a satisfactory answer. Faith can come to appear disconnected from intellectual integrity that requires a suspension of honest questioning. As the late Marjory Warwick, a prominent member at Castor Bay, used to say, “You shouldn’t have to leave your brain at the church door.”

The challenge to us is not whether to engage with critical scholarship, but how to do so faithfully. This requires both humility and courage. Humility acknowledges that our understanding is always partial, and courage is required to follow the evidence where it leads. It also calls for a broader vision of truth. Scientific methods help us understand the physical world. Historical methods help us to reconstruct the past. But faith speaks to another dimension of humanity – it's about meaning, purpose and relationship. It's to discover as reliably as we possibly can what Jesus taught and did and what he expected of us his followers.

If the church accepted this it would not abandon its traditions, but would hold them with openness, recognising that understanding deepens overtime. It would take seriously the insight of scholarship, not as a final answer, but as an important contribution to a larger conversation. Faith – trust – at its best is not fragile. It can withstand honest enquiry and even be strengthened by it.

The loud and frequent repetition of what were considered certainties no longer holds thinking people within the churches, nor do they attract new people into the churches. Fundamentalist, Charismatic, Pentecostal churches and those teaching the prosperity gospel attract younger people for a while but there are fewer mature and older people among them. They drop out disillusioned with Christianity.

In this post truth age, the task of the churches is both more difficult and more necessary. It is an exciting journey discovery of what Jesus taught and how this has been interpreted in various contexts through the ages and what Jesus means for us in our context. Such a journey requires careful reflection, discernment and a willingness to listen. In doing that the church offers something that our noisy world deeply needs. The reliable truth that Jesus taught that God loves us unconditionally and for us to respond by loving other people unconditionally.

***Karel***

## **Update from Parish Council – March Meeting**

Karen constituted our March meeting of the Church Council with a reading from Luke on the message from Jesus to “trust me and cast out the net”. Which is very appropriate for our growth and revitalisation project. The meeting then went on to:

- Consider pastoral matters – there are a number of our Congregation who are not well as are others in the community. Tokerau led a prayer for their recovery.
- Discuss an email from Anne McLean which provided information about the Homeless on the North Shore project which she and Norma Baker are volunteers for. See article elsewhere in this newsletter.
- Approve a letter being sent to our neighbours in 8 and 10 Penzance Road who use the accessway which we have purchased. They are being offered an easement right to continue their usage provided they fund the professional costs involved with getting the easement approved and registered and paying an entitlement to the church.
- Accepted Alastair Emerson’s offer to develop and trial streaming of church services.
- Discussed a draft Code of Conduct for Ministers which has been referred by PCANZ to Presbyteries for comment. Our Council has a number of queries and comments including questioning the need for such a Code given that there is already a Code of Ethics.
- Gave further consideration to a proposal from Tokerau to change the structure of our church committees to reflect the 3 Church Systems of: Outreach; Inclusion and Growth. We will be further considering this at our April Meeting.
- Considered a PCANZ request for our views on the proposed changes to the Book of Order and the requirement to ensure that our whole church is aware of the way that Redress issues must be handled. This will be covered in a Notice on the Church Hall Noticeboard.
- Discussed and measured ourselves over the urging of PCANZ to have regard to the principles of Whanaungatanga – Belonging, in the way that we operate
- Received an offer from Rev Tim Loftis (our CTCA Consultant) to run Workshops on Church Culture and Ministry Systems on the morning of Anzac Day and to preach on 26 April. This is being considered.

**Stewart**

## **Ripple Effect Workshop March 21st, 2026**

On March 21<sup>st</sup>, twenty-four of us gathered in our church to hear Julie-anne Laird speak about evangelism. This event, known as the Ripple Effect Workshop, was one of three major events delivered by City-to-City Australia (CTCA) as part of our revitalisation journey. (The other two were the planning process undertaken with the Rev Loftis, and the Incubator series led by the Rev Andrew de Ville.

Julie-anne has been involved in evangelism for nearly forty years. A natural extrovert, she has an engaging personality, and a positive disposition towards evangelism. Over the years she has put much thought and prayer into this topic. Her message largely went around how we might communicate our faith to our friends and contacts. In her preview of her talk, which we heard through a video link up the previous Saturday, she gave us four basics for evangelism they were Pray, Proclaim, Prioritise and Prepare .

At the workshop, Julie-anne, drew our attention to six kinds of attitudes our friends and contacts might have towards embracing Christianity, and how we might respond to that attitude . Those attitudes were Apathetic, Thoughtful, Interested, Hostile, Religious, and De-churched. For each of those categories, Julie-anne suggested a response .

In the course of the workshop, there were many questions and comments made to the points raised by Juile-anne, and much to take to heart from her responses.

All in all, a very worthwhile exercise which provided us with examples of what we each can do to help bring Jesus into the lives of more people.



## **Personal Testimony - Why did I come to faith?**

I have been asked to give testimony on why I came to faith. I could say that I was raised in a home where we attended Sunday school as children (although with regular protest I might add). Or, that my grandparents on either side were members of Church congregations and therefore my coming to faith was based on family history & tradition.

But that's not truly the reason or at least is only part of the reason. From a young age, I've always had a sense that the complexity and beauty of the world around us must have its origins in something other than pure cosmic coincidence.

And in addition, I felt that without a solid foundation upon which to base one's life, one's core beliefs and values, and something that helps you understand why the world is like it is, confusion and disorder reign. I asked myself the questions: Why does anything truly matter? Everything is just different people with different views. Does any single view carry more weight or importance than another? If so, why? But unpacking all that is not easy. Life has enough challenges and there are always more immediate issues to absorb a young person's time.

Fast forward all the way to 2020, Covid had struck and suddenly the world as we knew it had changed. The Covid period was a once in a generation event, and marked a change in my life, not as a consequence of serious illness thankfully, but because it forced a change and separated me from the constant pressure of a life routine dominated by a corporate office environment, commuting, school and other rigid family life patterns that had been the norm for decades. The forced isolation of lockdowns and a slower pace of family life gave me the opportunity for quiet contemplation.

It was the time that I decided I would try to unpack deeply held convictions with some hard research and reading to attempt to give them "real life" or perhaps to "bury them" once and for all.

Unlike in my youth, I now had the time and inclination, and the assistance of the digital tools that children these days take for granted. This exercise exposed a massive body of information, historical and contemporary, presented or written by a multitude of people.

I liked those with a solid professional background, scientists, great teachers, and those far more qualified and brighter than me, those with decades of study and learning behind them, full of wisdom and able to quote and pass on information they themselves had absorbed from shining lights of wisdom before them. Examples include Dr John Lennox, mathematician from Oxford University who often quoted from CS Lewis, and Bishop Robert Barron (Yes, sorry – I didn't just stick to Presbyterians), who along with his own insights often related wisdom from Thomas Aquinas, one of history's most influential thinkers in harmonizing faith & reason.

Although in the background, the constant media reporting and focus on numbers of sick and dying around the world and the impact on the economy and livelihoods made this a bleak period in our history, I found the task I was engaged in hugely uplifting. The more I read and watched of these educated and esteemed scientists, theologians and teachers, the more obvious it seemed to me that not only was spiritual faith and a belief in God

reasonable, but it was also compelling. To me, reason and logic, (not to mention a huge body of scientific work) made atheism seem like the more unlikely of the possible options.

It seemed to me that the core Christian doctrine concerning:

- The creation of the Universe & Man
- Man's purpose and duty in the world
- The Commandments & the wisdom therein
- Man's fallenness and Christ's mission; and
- The ultimate judgement and end of the age provide a perfect lens through which to see and make sense of the world around us. As CS Lewis put it: "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen not only because I see it, but because by it, I see everything else."

From my personal perspective I came to faith because:

I had, and still have, an innate feeling or conviction (that can't easily be explained) that there is more to the world and the Universe than mere matter. I believe that without some form of greater intelligence and design that has at its core, the quality of love (the willing of good for another), then the Universe would not exist.

I came to faith because:

It provides me with the basis upon which I see and understand the world in both its order (given by God the creator) and its chaos (caused by Man exercising his God-given free-will in rebellion against God).

I came to faith because:

The truth of it allows me to experience great joy in the good times and gives me the resilience to deal with the times that are not so good.

I have Faith, and I therefore have Hope, that Christ's sacrifice for us has opened the door to eternal life.

**Stephen Martin**



## **Special Communion Service Tuesday, 21st April 11:30 am**

Our next Special Communion Service is being held for those parishioners who cannot attend church regularly as well as members of our seniors special group. 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 and a friend would like to attend, please let your Pastoral Visitor know or call Norma Baker on 443- 3108 before April 17th.

### **Survey for Completion**

Northern Presbytery engaged an independent organisation to survey the congregations and leaders of the churches working with City-to-City Australia (CTCA) on revitalising and growing their churches.

The survey can be completed either online or on paper. The online link was sent out over the weekend of 21–22 March, and paper copies are available in the church foyer along with a box for completed forms.

If you haven't already taken part, please do so. Your input is important as we assess our progress. If you did not receive the online survey link, please email me at [stewart.milne@xtra.co.nz](mailto:stewart.milne@xtra.co.nz) and I will send it to you. Thanks, Stewart

### **Homeless on the North Shore**

A group of churches and other organisations have set up support for homeless people on the North Shore. The Salvation Army in Glenfield are providing food and facilities on a Tuesday. Morning tea is served, a hot meal is provided along with takeaway food in containers. A van from the charity Orange Sky is on site with a washing machine for clothes, a clothes dryer and a shower which those attending can use. Another van is present with clothing and shoes.

Anne McLean and Norma Baker from our church are among the volunteers who are rostered on for assistance on a Tuesday.

**Day trip to Tiritiri Matangi April 17th** Contact *Norma Baker* [crnjbaker@gmail.com](mailto:crnjbaker@gmail.com) or 09 443 3108.

**Born Again Bodies** We've been advised by the instructor the last weekly fitness class is 9th April 2026. If you or someone you know would like to take over running classes and book the hall please contact the office.

### **New Trestle Tables –**

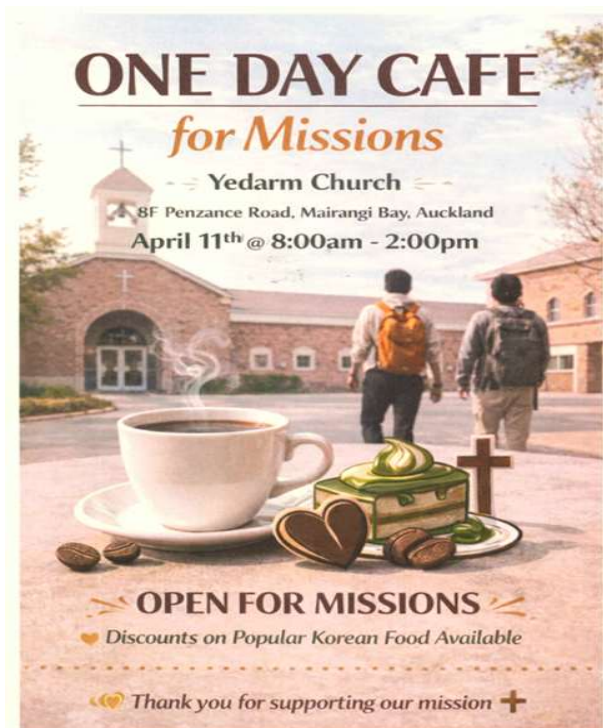
We're delighted our old trestle tables went to Mairangi Bay Primary school and now we only have the lightweight folding tables to use and store.

This upgrade has made our shared space easier to use. A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who contributed toward the cost, with special appreciation to The East Coast Probus Club for sponsoring a table. Your support helped make a small but meaningful improvement for all who use this space.

**A Wish List For My Grandson** Recently Bronwyn read to us a piece from the April 2007 Grapevine Magazine with the above title written by Paul Harvey. She also read from another piece, Advice for the Day, The following are some snippets from each article. We thank Bronwyn for making them available to us.

### **From Paul Harvey - A Wish list for my Grandson**

- *I'd like you to know about hand-me-down clothes and home-made ice cream and left over meat-loaf sandwiches*
- *I hope you learn to make your own bed and mow the lawn and wash the car and that no-one gives you a new car when you are 16*
- *I hope you have to share a bedroom with your younger brother and let him creep under your covers because he's scared*
  - *I hope you let that same little brother tag along with you to a movie*
    - *From - Advice for the Day*
- *If you have a lot of tension and you get a headache, do what it says on the bottle "take two asprin" and "Keep away from children"*
- *You spend the first two years of a child's life teaching them to walk and talk. Then you spend the next 16 years telling them to sit down and shut up*
- *Children seldom misquote you. In fact they usually repeat word-for-word what you should not have said.*
  - *Be nice to your children, they might choose your nursing home one day*



### **Yedarm One Day Café**

**8am to 2pm on Saturday 11 April**

Yedarm Church is holding a fundraising event for Mission in our grounds and Church hall.


There will be food including popular Korean food at discount rates, coffee, tea and other drinks.

We are all invited to come along to support Yedarm's Mission.

## **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 | 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**