



Mairangi Bay Presbyterian Church

Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph

July 2026 NEWSLETTER



Our Mainly Music Team

Check out our new website www.bayspc.nz

UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

Jesus said: “Now, to what can I compare the people of this day? They are like children sitting in the marketplace. One group shouts to the other, ‘We played wedding music for you, but you wouldn't dance! We sang funeral songs, but you wouldn't cry!’ Matthew 11:16-17

When we talk about faith today, I wonder whether we too play the religious game and experience the burdens that come with it. Those who claim some kind of authority play the tunes while others are expected to dance or sing along. And when people are unresponsive and don't want to play the game, they are negatively judged and written off.

In the church, fundamentalists might condemn those who are too liberal because they do not want to dance to the music of long held and unchallenged beliefs and traditions. On the other hand, those who consider themselves very progressive might condemn those who are too conservative because they do not want to dance to the radical music of change.

Rather than working out together a game or tune in which all can enjoy, we prefer our own sound, our own ideas and rules. In doing so, we often push our views and practices. We essentially make our position the measure of all things spiritual, right, and true. It's bad enough when, like the Pharisees, we define Christian discipleship by rigid rules. And when we make ourselves, our theological perspectives and practices the measure of godliness, that's a heavy burden indeed. But in response, Jesus announced that he had come to set people free from their burdens. He came to free the people who, no matter how hard they tried, could never live up to the requirements of religious performance.

The rule-makers went around declaring everybody, but themselves, impure and unclean for some reason or another. But what gets hidden in all of this is that those who make themselves the judges of holiness or right belief carry an incredible burden themselves. If people are honest to themselves, they would concede that they do not have all the answers for the life of faith and do not always live faithfully. Even the great Apostle Paul anguished over his inability to keep the rules.

We live in a society where the Christian faith or religion, in general, is often perceived as a burden upon people. It's no longer the norm for many today. And if people are honest to themselves, some might find church involvement a burden rather than blessing; stressful rather than blissful; meaningless rather than inspiring and purposeful. Maybe the music and songs are not to our liking. Maybe the preaching is not stimulating enough.

Maybe the liturgy is too predictable, mechanical, and impersonal. Maybe the fellowship is shallow. Maybe we're tired of playing church because it's not enjoyable anymore. We endure church rather than enjoy it.

But Jesus wants us to be free from a life weighed down by the cares and concerns of religious life and life in general. Playing that game of religious conformity becomes a burden that can crush anyone who tries to carry it.

When we try to live that way, we rob ourselves of joy, and love, and life. The wisdom of the ages has taught us that the burdens that we carry only trap us in prisons of our own making.

The only way to live, to truly live, is to let go the illusion of control, whatever it is. Jesus said come to me, lay down your burdens, and I will give you rest. When we lay down that which drains our life, we can open our hearts to receive the joy, love, life, and rest that comes from Jesus. Amen.

Tokerau



Our music team at the Whanau Service. Joining Tokerau are Shane, Paxton & Gerry.

Words From KAREL

Compassion, Justice and the Ballot Box

Recently I talked with a young man who has become a Christian. He has been reading the Gospels and taking seriously what he finds there. One of the things he does is spend time talking with people in CBD who are homeless. Sometimes he buys them a coffee and a cheese roll. Sometimes he simply listens to their story.

I find that deeply encouraging.

In a world where many people hurry past those on the margins, this young man has noticed them. More importantly, he has begun to see them as people rather than problems. In doing so, he is following the example of Jesus, who consistently noticed those whom society ignored.

His actions reminded me of the words of Jesus: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink." Compassion matters. It always has. The Christian faith is not merely about beliefs and doctrines. It is also about the way we treat people.

Yet as I reflected on this young man's kindness, another question came to mind. Is compassion enough?

Suppose every week he buys coffee and food for people who are homeless. That is a good thing. But why are they homeless in the first place? Why are increasing numbers of people sleeping rough, living in cars, or struggling to find secure housing? Why are so many battling mental illness, addiction, loneliness, or family breakdown without adequate support?

At some point compassion leads naturally to questions about justice.

The Old Testament prophets repeatedly challenged the rulers of their day about the treatment of the poor. The prophet Amos thundered against those who prospered while neglecting the vulnerable. Isaiah condemned religious observance that ignored social injustice. Micah famously declared that what God requires is "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

For the prophets, faith and public life could never be completely separated.

This raises an interesting question for Christians. What role should we play in politics?

Some Christians are uncomfortable whenever politics is mentioned in church. They fear that the church will become partisan or that Christians will begin identifying the Gospel with a political party. Those concerns are understandable. The church should never become the religious wing of any political movement.

Yet avoiding party politics is not the same as avoiding public issues.

The Gospel speaks about poverty, wealth, justice, peace, truth, integrity, hospitality, and care for the vulnerable. These are not merely private concerns. They have social and political dimensions.

Throughout Christian history many theologians have argued that believers have a responsibility not only to help those who suffer but also to address the causes of suffering. The German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing during the rise of Nazism, famously said that Christians are called not merely to bandage the wounds of those crushed beneath the wheel of injustice but to put a spoke in the wheel itself.

That image remains powerful. There is a place for helping the victim. There is also a place for asking why the victim was harmed.

As New Zealand moves toward another election, Christians have an opportunity and perhaps even a responsibility to think carefully about these matters. This is not about telling people which party to support. We will reach different conclusions. Intelligent and sincere believers can disagree on economic policy, taxation, welfare, housing strategies, and many other issues.

However, Christians should be asking questions.

Which policies are most likely to reduce poverty?

Which approaches offer hope to those struggling with mental illness?

How can housing become more affordable and accessible?

How can families and communities be strengthened?

What support is available for those living on the margins of society?

How can we create a society in which fewer people fall through the cracks?

These are not merely political questions. They are moral questions.

Voting is one of the ways we participate in shaping the society in which we live. To vote thoughtfully is not a distraction from Christian discipleship. It can be an expression of it.

Perhaps we need both the young man's compassion and the citizen's concern for justice. We need people willing to buy coffee and cheese rolls for those who are struggling. We also need people willing to ask why so many are struggling in the first place.

The Gospel calls us to love our neighbour. Sometimes that love is expressed through a conversation, a meal, or a helping hand. Sometimes it is expressed through advocacy, public engagement, and careful participation in the democratic process.

The challenge before us is not to choose between compassion and justice.

The challenge is to practice both.

As election day approaches, perhaps Christians should pray not only for our political leaders and candidates, but also for wisdom as citizens. May we have eyes to see those who are suffering, hearts moved by compassion, and minds willing to consider how our society can better reflect God's concern for the least, the last, and the lost.

Karel





Update from Parish Council – April Meeting

The June meeting of our Church Council opened with a reflection from Ian Watson on the changes that have been made in our church over the last 18 months as we seek to revitalise and grow. A copy of Ian's reflection is included in this issue of the Newsletter. Our newly appointed Family and Community Enabler Amelia Fan had provided her first report to Council and she attended and spoke to this. Amelia explained that her focus initially is to become familiar with the many activities that we have here at our church and see how she can assist them in growth and in showing the Gospel. We then went on to pastoral matters which are such an important part of our ministry. We do expect our Pastoral Visitors to advise of important pastoral matters which they become aware of as they visit and keep in touch with those on their list.

During the rest of the meeting we:

- Received and discussed Tokerau's report where he emphasised the need to focus on our 2 year goal which was reproduced in the June Newsletter.
- Heard a report from Stephen on the property matters under action and those completed including an update on the accessway where we await the neighbours responses to the suggestion that if they want to ensure legal access to their properties (by way of an easement) over our land they make a proposal for us to consider.
- Were advised of the acceptance of a favourable quote from Salili Tua (Tua Painting) to repaint the eastern side of our buildings including the south facing apex. It is 10 years since the properties were last painted and we can currently afford to have this work undertaken.
- Were advised of our current financial position with a \$1.4k deficit. We had budgeted for a \$8.4k deficit for the year and so with 1 more month to go in the financial year it is encouraging to see that the deficit is less.
- Received favourable feedback on our experiment with a messy church service which we held in the hall on 31 May sitting around tables with morning tea and the opportunity to consider and react to two of the parables of Jesus. We decided to hold further Messy Church Services on the last Sundays of August and November.
- Spent a long time considering how the 3 church systems that we were introduced to when we attended the CTC Workshops (ie 'OUTREACH', 'INCLUSION' and 'SPIRITUAL GROWTH') could best be implemented here. The one that we are struggling with most is 'INCLUSION' which involves how best to follow up with folks who come to our church and to ensure that they are and feel truly included. Would anyone with ideas or willingness to be involved with an Inclusion group please contact me. This is such an important matter. Further consideration of this will be on the Council's July agenda with a view to reporting to the AGM in August

Learning from each other

Ian Watson opened our June Church Council Meeting with: Learning from each other.

We are now eighteen months into our revitalisation project, and already we have seen some remarkable results with respect to our worship activities. I think particularly of the Alpha Course for Chinese seekers, but there are other actions we have taken as well such as the creche and the texts that now adorn our walls. On another front , recently we have learnt of Norma and Anne's involvement with initiatives on the North Shore for homeless people, an initiative that has caught the eye of our young people. And on yet another front we have now appointed Amelia as our Family and Community Enabler.

On reflecting on all of these activities it has occurred to me that there is an enormous amount as a Parish Council we can learn from each other regarding our service to Christ through the revitalisation process. For instance, one of our goals is to better match our population profile with that of our community. It so happens that there has been an enormous change in the ethnic mix our community and there is a rich diversity of ethnicity and culture that sits around or is closely associated with Parish Council. As well as the Scottish presence, we have Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Cook Island, Southern African, Dutch and Canadian representation and a loosely attached Korean Church alongside. All of us are some distance from the culture that Christ walked amongst, yet all of us have heeded his message and sought to follow his teachings. What is it that has caused us to respond to his word? Is there merit at some time exploring this matter amongst ourselves, with our revitalisation project very much in mind. I believe it is relevant to our quest to have a parish profile that closer matches that of our community which embraces all of these ethnicities.

Let us pray,

Living God, we thank you for the collective support and encouragement we receive from our fellow disciples, and for the teachings and examples of those first group who followed your son, our Lord Two thousand years ago. We ask for your blessing and guidance as we continue our revitalisation journey. Be with us in our deliberations as we seek to do your will and may all we say and do be acceptable in your sight.

Amen

Many Thanks Ian

A number of the tasks here at the church are carried out without fanfare but they are important for our smooth running.

One of these tasks is production of the monthly newsletter and Ian Watson has been undertaking this for as long as I can remember. This involves identifying potential items, notifying contributors, setting deadlines, chasing up content including photos and working on a balance of items to fill 12pages.

At the time of his retirement from this responsibility we want to say a big thankyou to Ian for his role in keeping our church news flowing.

ANNUAL ROAST LUNCH



We're gathering for a warm and friendly afternoon at **Papa Brizio** (formerly Montrose) on **Sunday, 26 July at 12 pm** and You're invited.



Sunday, 26 July 12 pm

Papa Brizio (formerly Montrose)



\$24-\$28

To help with catering, please RSVP to **Dorille** by **Wednesday, 22 July** at **027 692 3738**.

Choose from delicious **lamb, pork, or beef** roasts, with meal sizes ranging from **\$24-\$28**.

More importantly, it's a chance to enjoy fellowship, connect with familiar faces, and meet new members of our congregation. Come share a meal, a conversation, and a moment of community. We'd love to see you there.

Helen Mackay “100 Not Out”

At the first session of our Dees Social Group for those living at home with dementia which was set up 16 years ago, Helen Mackay joined as a spritely 84 year old.

In July 2026 Helen is still a member of Dees. Helen is the only original member of the group who still attends and who is celebrating her 100th birthday.

At our Dees Group on Thursday 26 June Tangi organised a special celebration for this wonderful occasion.

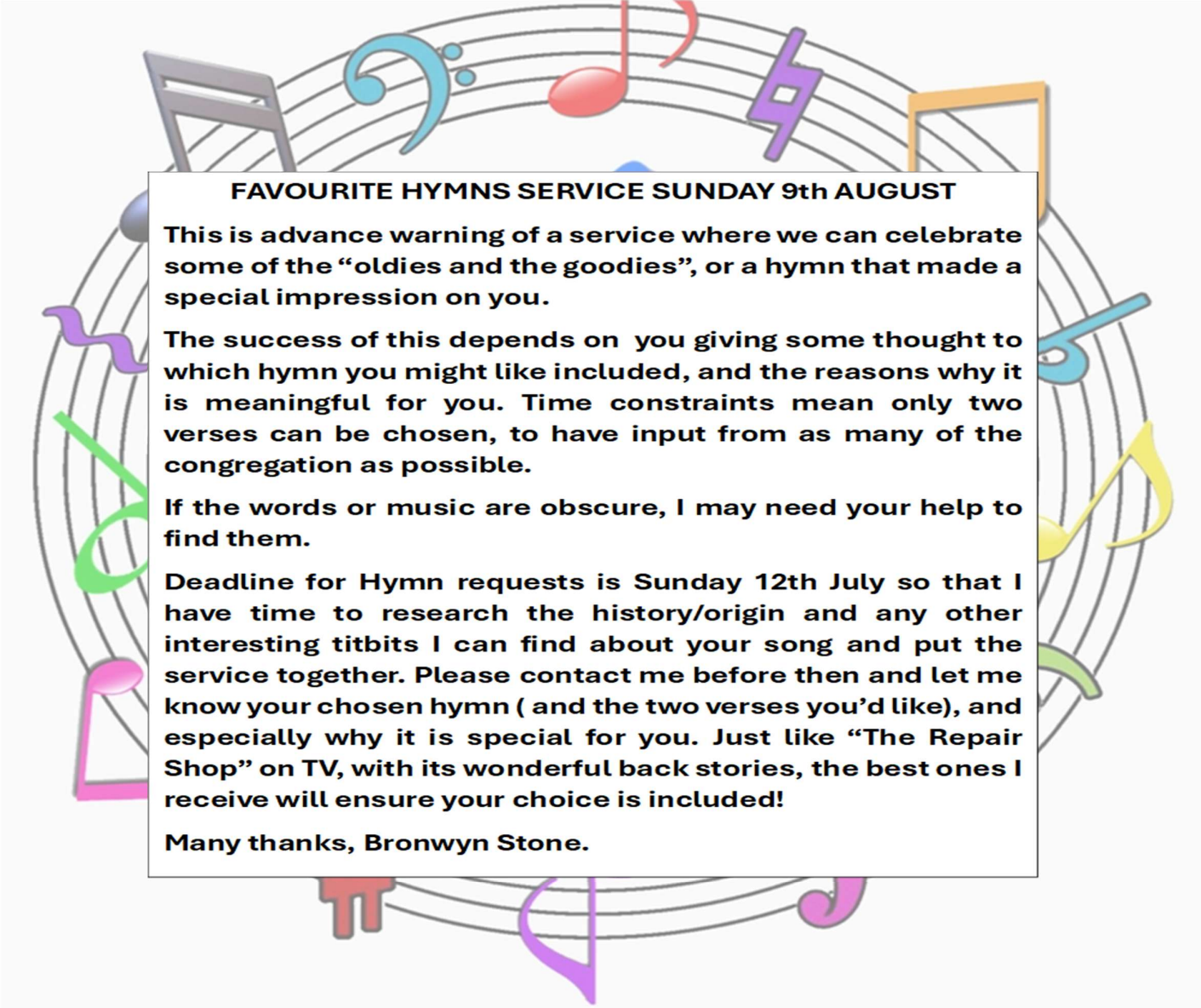
Over the last 16 years Helen has excelled at indoor bowls, where she has usually partnered and competed with Cliff, and has dominated at tri-dominoes where she can still spot the moves - even before the volunteers can.

We have also grown to appreciate her candid views on a number of subjects.

Helen is a wonderful lady – a delight to be with.



*Helen holding her bouquet of flowers with sons John and Douglas
and with other Dee's members and volunteers*



FAVOURITE HYMNS SERVICE SUNDAY 9th AUGUST

This is advance warning of a service where we can celebrate some of the “oldies and the goodies”, or a hymn that made a special impression on you.

The success of this depends on you giving some thought to which hymn you might like included, and the reasons why it is meaningful for you. Time constraints mean only two verses can be chosen, to have input from as many of the congregation as possible.

If the words or music are obscure, I may need your help to find them.

Deadline for Hymn requests is Sunday 12th July so that I have time to research the history/origin and any other interesting titbits I can find about your song and put the service together. Please contact me before then and let me know your chosen hymn (and the two verses you’d like), and especially why it is special for you. Just like “The Repair Shop” on TV, with its wonderful back stories, the best ones I receive will ensure your choice is included!

Many thanks, Bronwyn Stone.

Revitalise Workshop 11th July 9.30am – 12.30pm

Our Revitalise consultant, Pastor Tim Loftis, continues to assist us on our Revitalise journey. He will be leading a workshop on Church Culture and ministry systems. Parish Council members are encouraged to attend, and it is also open to anyone in the congregation. Tim will also be preaching at our service the next day.

When: Saturday 11 July 2026

Time: 9.30am – 12.30 pm

Where: Our church

Please bring something for morning tea.

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 Tuesday of the month, 10am–12pm

Carole 021 0235 7398 | Raewyn 027 733 7612

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

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

 **Contemporary Theology Study** 1st & 3rd Monday of the month Rm 2

Rev Karel Lorier | 09 414 6321

 **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 only), 10–11am – Church Hall

Karen 021 0226 3846

 **Family Fun Night** 2nd Friday of the month, 6.15pm – Church Hall

Tangi 022 657 3223 | Stewart 027 293 8499

 **Men's Group Lunch** 2nd Tuesday of the month, 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**