

# **St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Newsletter**

**November 2023 – February 2024**



## **Our Vision**

- ❖ **Accepting all people**
- ❖ **Striving for Compassion**
- ❖ **Seeking to live out Christ's selfless love until we see God's justice realised**

# Jill's Musings.....



Kia orana,

There is no doubt that this has been a tough year. So many people are finding themselves exhausted and depleted as this year draws to a close. The cyclone has had a huge impact on our community, requiring so many to dig deep for such a long time. For many who have been impacted the stress and uncertainty continues. A friend pointed out that this is the first year in four years where we haven't been hugely impacted by covid in terms of having to go into lockdown or pause normal life as we know it. While that had its own stresses it did provide some stops during the year and this year has in a sense been the first 'full' year in a while. The brevity of this newsletter points to that reality.

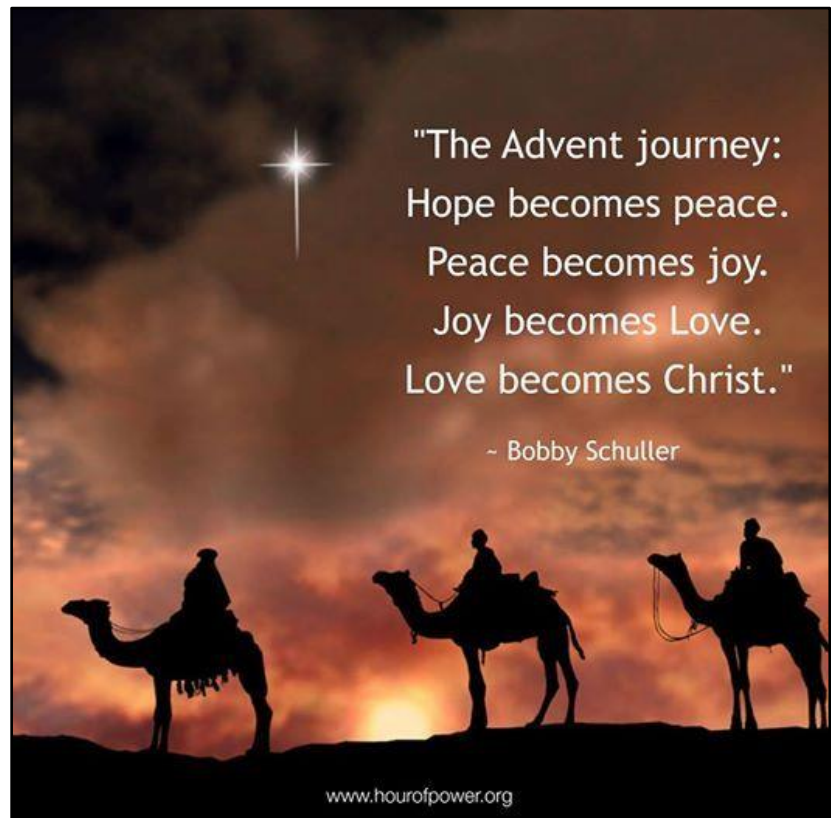
I am certainly looking forward to some time of rest and renewal.

In terms of the calendar year, we are heading towards the end of the year, but within our church calendar we are right at the beginning. In fact, I write this the week before Advent 1 as we enter into that poignant time that reminds us that Jesus was born into the ordinary. These words from the late Rachel Held Evans say it all

*"The whole story of Advent is the story of how God can't be kept out. God is present. God is with us. God shows up - not with a parade but with the whimper of a baby, not among the powerful but among the marginalised, not to the demanding but to the humble."*

I hope and pray that in this season of Advent and Christmas, that you might experience God anew.

*Blessings Jill*



# Notes from Parish Council Clerk...Jim Spall

Kia orana.

After a tumultuous year it doesn't really seem possible, but December arrives on Friday! I'm not sure about you but I find myself looking back with fondness on years gone past with an absence of dramatic events and predictable hot dry Hawkes Bay summers. In a year like 2023 we can feel overwhelmed by the natural disaster we have been through and the many problems in the world.

As our Moderator Right Rev Rose Luxford in her Advent Message points out, we are about to light the first Advent Candle- the candle of hope. She quotes Martin Luther King who said: *"We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope"*. It reminds us of a much bigger narrative that is full of hope and comes through our faith in Jesus Christ. Christ has come to us and is leading us on both in our own lives and the collective life at St Andrews.

At Parish Council's September Meeting our focus was on the need for both new Elders and Members of Finance and Property, the proposed Mural, and a Co-Governance Workshop. Jill was on the organising committee for the workshop which had the goal of informing and educating people about what co-governance means and why it matters. Council discussed whether it was appropriate for the St Andrew's Logo to be on the publicity material. In the end our Logo was on the publicity material for what turned out to be a well-attended and informative event.

Our October Meeting provided an opportunity for the parish clerk to report back on General Assembly. I attended on behalf of St Pauls in Napier and found it to be a fulfilling and faith affirming GA. You can read about it in this newsletter! October also saw the arrival of the Rev Linda Pollock from Scotland. I'm sure, like me, we all feel blessed to have Linda in our presence with her extraordinary life experiences, deep faith, warmth, many talents and beautiful lilt! Our 134<sup>th</sup> AGM on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October allowed us to review an extraordinary year in which we were all tested but as a faith community worked hard to bring the love of Jesus into our community.

At our most recent meeting we discussed the many activities and initiatives St Andrew's was involved in but with it the need to make the workload more manageable, particularly for Jill. Where possible we are trying to share some of the workload with both Elders and members of our congregation. If you have time or a hidden talent you would be warmly welcomed.

There are many events in the next three weeks. Let us all take time in the midst of all the activities to remember the true focus of how God reached out to humanity with the birth of the Christ child. May you all celebrate this wondrous event with friends, family and community as people of infinite hope.

Arohanui

Jim



## LETS PLANT PEACE SERVICE

**FRIDAY 24  
NOVEMBER 2023**

On the last Friday night of November, we had an incredibly moving time of worship as



we gathered before God to lament, pray and stand in solidarity for peace. This was in response to what is happening in the Holy Land. Our church was filled with people from all faiths and none. A especially moving part of this time of worship was hearing from four women who have all experienced the horror of war and conflict first hand whether it be Belfast, Zimbabwe, Cambodia or Rwanda, and how it continues to impact them.

It is very special to now have the peace pou planted in our garden with the foundation of lived stories of places

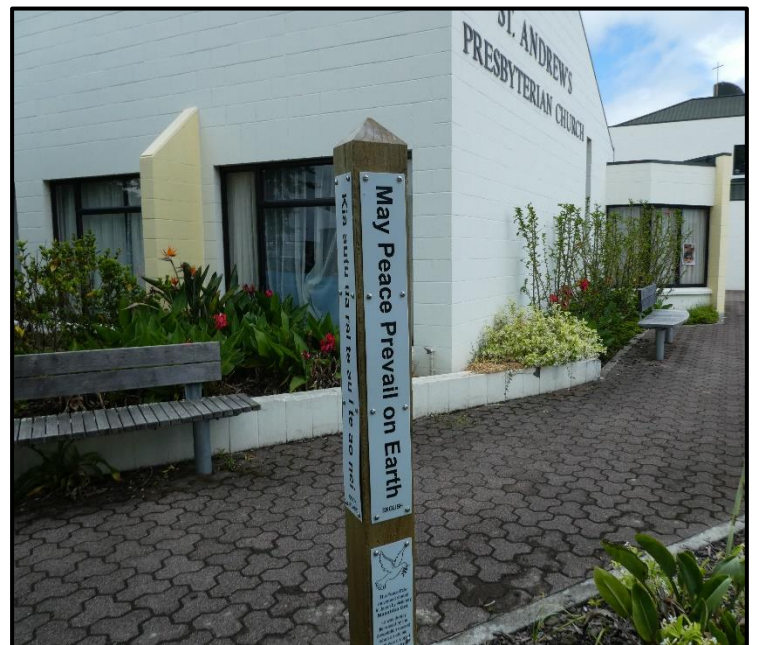
where peace was lacking. We pray that this peace pou may remind all who walk by that peace matters.

In relation to the Israel Palestine conflict we are going to have a special Common Good at the Common Room on January 17<sup>th</sup>. Rev Anne Weirich, a close friend of Linda Pollock, is going to be visiting from the US. She leads around six pilgrimages a year to the Holy Land and I will be interviewing Anne about her experiences there to help us better understand what is happening there.

<p><b>THE COMMON GOOD</b></p> <p>PUBLIC THEOLOGY: CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ISSUES THAT MATTER</p> <p>COMMON ROOM 227 HERETAUNGA STREET EAST 7.00PM</p>	 <p>THE HOLY LAND IS BEAUTIFUL, MEANINGFUL AND COMPLICATED.</p> <p>REV. ANNE WEIRICH, A MINISTER FROM THE US, HAS BEEN LEADING PILGRIMAGES TO PALESTINE ISRAEL FOR YEARS. JOIN US AS WE CONVERSE WITH ANNE ABOUT THIS LAND THAT HAS BEEN SHAPED BY WAR, TRADE, RELIGION AND REVELATION.</p>
<p><b>ENDEAVOURING TO UNDERSTAND THE HOLY LAND</b></p> <p><b>WEDNESDAY JANUARY 17TH</b></p>	



**Photos from the  
LET'S PLANT PEACE  
SERVICE  
FRIDAY 24 NOVEMBER**







## Fran Wulf – Bridging Hawke's Bay Co-Ordinator



Going out is never the same. Each day is unique depending on who you are fortunate to meet. Gabriel brought many to their knees when fear, trauma, loss and grief became a big part of our living experience. These feelings are common and known to us all.

But woven strongly throughout is a very loving, supportive, caring community.

The coming together with kindness, to be with the pain, trauma and grief transforms it somehow. What might start as feelings of anger, hopelessness and loss can become in the moment a tear in the eye.... a loving hug.

To hear amazing brave stories of survival that unfold into the gratefulness for being alive and to be with loved ones who also survived, the word survive somehow transforms into thrive which brings more tears but also joy.

Resilience is in us all and sometimes it just needs the simple gift of some baking, a listening ear and a good dose of kindness to remind us of how great we are and can be.

I have a bitter-sweet pill to swallow as I am preparing to leave this wonderful community of friends, I have come to know here in Hawkes Bay. I have a beautiful family of grandchildren who I left 15 months ago in England and I want to spend more time with them while they are still young. Being here around such deep loss has highlighted to me how important family is and so I will be departing mid January. I want to thank everyone for all the kindness, acceptance and love that has been extended to me.

I feel very blessed and grateful to have been part of Bridging Hawkes Bay in these early days and I encourage anyone who is seeking to connect through kindness, to give it a go.

***On behalf of St Andrews Church we sincerely thank Fran for all that she has done over the last few months.***

***We wish all the best as she returns to England and her children and grandchildren.***

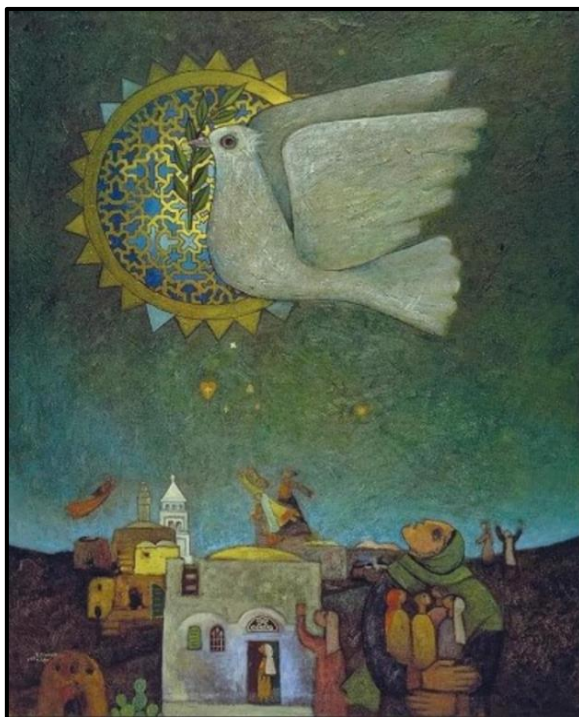
***Do you like  
baking?***

**Would you like to bake  
a little something for  
us so we can bless our  
community with them**

A few of us recently met together at St John's Church kitchen and spent a few fun hours baking chocolate chip cookies for our freezer supplies. Our freezer stocks are getting low again so we will plan another baking day in the New Year but if you love to bake and would like to bake a little something for us we would love to then bless our community with we when we go out.

We now have a freezer for Bridging Hawkes Bay koha to be stored in until our volunteers take them out which has been a fantastic resource for us to utilise.

We have been blessed by a number of donations of baking ranging from loaves to biscuits which our volunteers have been taking out with them as they visit cyclone affected areas, so far mainly Pakowhai and Puketapu.



**Someone asked, "whose  
side are you on?"  
I answered, "*I am on the  
side of LOVE and LOVE is  
on the side of  
Humanity.*" *We ALL are  
ONE. There are no  
"chosen people."*  
**LOVE thy Neighbour.****

## REPORT on GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023 – Jim Spall



St Kentigerns College Chapel

The theme for General Assembly 2023 recently held at St Kentigerns College, Auckland was *"Authentic and Hopeful in Christ"*. This proved to be a very appropriate backdrop to what was a fulfilling and faith affirming General Assembly.

The powhiri and opening service was a moving and powerful service with wonderful singing. It saw the installation of Rose Luxford as Moderator and the passing over of the Kororo tapu from the former Moderator Hamish Galloway.

The following three days consisted of business sessions with reports from the many groups that are part of our church, two addresses by the keynote speaker Rev Dr Andrew Callander, discussion in dialogue groups, and debate on proposals.

Each day commenced with worship. Thursday's opening theme was based on Isaiah 41:17-20 and Revelations 22:1-2. *We move in the flow of God's love and it is Jesus who offers life giving water.* Highlights for me that day included:

- + Hamish Galloway's presentation on *Sexuality, Biblical Morality and Leadership*. General Assembly voted for people in various regions to have conversations about the issues using the same model as that for the dialogue set up by the 2022 Special Assembly.
- + Te Haere Tonu (*Keep Going*) Work Group -discerning a strategic direction for the Presbyterian Church and reflecting on how the national structures serve our church. This is a work in progress but the proposals include:  
*Careful listening across the church; Encouraging a culture based on relationships; Recovering the 5 faces of mission; Encouraging presbyteries to develop mission strategies and Seeking the guidance of God's Holy Spirit.*
- + Rev Dr Andrew Callander's first presentation titled *"Authentic and Hopeful in Christ- beginning with what is wrong"*
- + Reports from The Council for Mission, Inter-church Bioethics Council, Doctrine Core Group, KCLM, and the Pacific Presbytery

Thursday evening was a fitting presentation to mark the winding up of PWANZ.

Friday's opening worship was based on Romans 10:8-14 lead by Rev Joshua Tepou. The topic was *sharing our faith*. We need to be: Ruthless in our pursuit of God; Real ie. Authentic about our own brokenness; Realistic -remembering a heart change is not our work but Gods; Relevant- listening to people and their story and Respectful.

Again we heard numerous reports. These included:-

- + The announcement of the Moderator Designate- Rev Peter Dunn
- + Earthquake -prone building policy
- + A proposal that the Church recognise the 2022 Bi-Lingual edition of Te Paipera Tapu as its preferred Bible - this was passed
- + The second keynote address by the Rev Dr Andrew Callander " *Authentic and Hopeful in Christ - beginning with what is life giving*"



✚ During the evening event on Emissions Reductions I fielded a number of questions on St Andrews Manaaki Energy program

Saturday's Opening Worship was lead by the Rev Erin Pendreigh. Erin had us making crowns and writing bible verses on them that: *Give you Hope; Get you out of your chair into the wider community; Reveals God; Sustains your call to follow Jesus; Holds you during times of conflict/chaos; and is your solid rock.*

We voted on a number of proposals:-

- ✚ Recognition that there is a shortage of Ministers and that Church Councils may need to meet without a Minister present
- ✚ That a person other than the Moderator may be elected or appointed to be a Convenor of a Presbytery Council
- ✚ That a restart of a worshipping community can be under the leadership of another congregation
- ✚ A Prayer of Repentance. (This related to the heresy trial of Rev Dr Lloyd Geering 56 years ago when he was charged with "doctrinal error" and "disturbing the peace and unity of the church"). After considerable debate and an amendment to make the prayer more generalised Assembly adopted the prayer. The prayer asks for forgiveness when we have ignored the fundamental doctrines of the church as well as forgiveness over the way we have treated each other.
- ✚ A proposal for the Book of Order Advisory Committee to reconsider the ability of a presbytery to decline to transmit a proposal
- ✚ A review of Assembly costs

As well as the proposals, the Moderator hosted a panel discussion on ministering in non-standard contexts such as prison chaplaincy

Sundays Closing Service was as powerful and joyful as the Opening one.

### My Reflections:

- ✚ Attendance at General Assembly gave me a renewed appreciation of the diversity of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand both with respect to our ethnicities but also our beliefs.
- ✚ I was encouraged by the unity we experienced particularly during worship.
- ✚ It gave me a sense of pride in the depth and breadth of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand's national life.
- ✚ The value we place on Te Aka Puoho, our Maori Synod, was evident with the Moderator, Rev Tamiana Thrupp, sitting at the front table with our national Moderator during General Assembly.
- ✚ While we live in challenging times for the church there was a sense that the Holy Spirit is at work reforming us for the future; that we can and must be "*Authentic and Hopeful in Christ*".

Jim Spall

## MONTH SERVICE at EVERSLEY

**If you are keen to  
help out with the  
monthly Service at  
Eversley  
Jill would be delighted**

### COMMUNITY GARDEN at ST ANDREW'S CHURCH

A number of people have been considering the possibilities and benefits of setting up a Community Garden on the grounds of St Andrew's Church. Some of the benefits we see - if it is in view of passers-by and we share our produce and possibly our gardening knowledge and experience with them, it would be a different way for us to live out our church's missional intention to be active and connected and generous in our community.



We are still at the "careful consideration" stage of this project. It is really important that everyone and anyone who has a connection with our church, and/or an interest in the idea of a community garden, shares their view. Whether you're in favour or against it, or just curious, it's important to voice your thoughts. We've had one meeting, a number of walks around the site, and many informal chats, and there's good support for moving ahead with the concept. So we're planning to put forward a proposal to the Parish Council.

If you want to know more, or to share your ideas, please get in touch with Vicki either in person or by phone or text (0274374420) or email: [v.v@extra.co.nz](mailto:v.v@extra.co.nz).

- ✚ Have you been loaned a book(s) by Jill?
- ✚ Please check that you have returned them all
- ✚ Jill is very keen to get back any books that have been loaned to you
- ✚ PLEASE - Can you return these before Christmas

**Jill is missing  
some Books**

# IMPORTANT DATES

## DECEMBER – KEY DATES

Friday	1	Maraekakaho Event 5.30pm – 7.30pm
Sunday	3	Advent 1 – HOPE - 10.00am
Tuesday	5	Last Parish Council Meeting for 2023
Wednesday	6	Eversley Service 2.00pm
Sunday	10	Advent 2 – PEACE - 10.00am
Wednesday	13	A Special thank you morning tea for anyone who has helped out at St Andrews. This includes you. 10.00am in the Lounge
Thursday	14	Kereru Carol Service – 7.00pm
Sunday	17	Advent 3 – JOY – 10.00am
Sunday	24	10.00am Sunday morning service. <i>This includes a space where we remember those who we have lost this year</i>
Sunday	24	Christmas Eve Service
Monday	25	Christmas Day. Please note there is <u>no</u> Christmas Day Service <i>Parish Council decided because of the way that the Christmas dates fall this year – to not have a Christmas Day Service but to make Christmas Eve the big one</i>
Sunday	31	10.00am Worship at St Andrews. We will be joined by St Johns and St Matthews



**The Church Office is  
closed from  
Friday 15 December  
until Monday 8  
January 2024**

### MINISTER ON LEAVE

**Jill is on leave from Dec 25<sup>th</sup>  
until January 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Jill is on leave again from  
Feb 7<sup>th</sup> until Feb 18<sup>th</sup>**



### **JANUARY KEY DATES**

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>No worship at St Andrews, instead there will be a combined service for Epiphany at St Matthews</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Service at St Andrews – 10.00am</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Common Good – Common Room -7.00pm Rev Anne Weirich talking about the Holy Land</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>Service at St Andrews – 10.00am</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Service at St Andrews – 10.00am</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Parish Council - 7.00pm</b>

### **FEBRUARY DATES**

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Service at St Andrews – 10.00am</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Service at St Andrews – 10.00am</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Service at St Andrews – 10.00am</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Service at St Andrews – 10.00am</b>

A linguist dies. At the funeral, a fellow academic asks the wife, "Do you mind if I say a word?" She nods. He stands and says "Plethora", and immediately sits down. She says, tearfully, "That means a lot."