

MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH
St Andrew's by the Sea Community Church, Whitianga.
NEWSLETTER AUG- SEPT 2026

Our Mission: To bring the saving love of God to all whom we meet, and by our example encourage them to follow Jesus.

Our People and their Stories: Sue Subritzky

Our friend Sue is a contemplative person with a surprising story.

It is a privilege to get to know her.

"I was born in Oamaru. My father, Vassil Ervine worked for the Dairy Company as a clerk, and my mother, Ainslie was a receptionist for a Chiropractor. I have two sisters and a younger brother. From as far back as I can remember we attended Sunday school/church. Mainly Pentecostal, AOG and Elim. I thank God and feel fortunate that I grew up in a loving family with Christian values, always knowing that He was there and wanted a personal relationship.

My mother held weekly Happy Hours (Sunday School) for school age children at our home. Even now at 96 she loves to spread the love of Jesus to anyone she comes across.

We attended many family church camps and conferences through the years and at the age of 9, I gave my heart to Jesus at Auntie Sunny's Bible Class. I was baptised at 12. I went to Girls' Brigade for many years, completing my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. I loved the practical side of it, the camping and cooking, and I learnt many skills.

We moved from Oamaru to Dunedin where I attended Otago Girls' High School. During my teenage years I slipped away from Christian things and did my own thing. But always knew and felt the love of Jesus protecting me. We then moved to Hamilton when I was 16. It was one of the hardest times I can remember, moving at that age to a new city with no friends, I felt very lonely. I worked in a Stationary shop for a few years then on to Telephone Services as a typist.

I met my husband, Mike Subritzky at a Disco, he bumped into me on purpose to get my attention, I turned and gave him a dirty look. Somehow we



ended up dating. I went to a movie called 'Thief in the Night' (about the Rapture) at an Elim church. God lay on my heart that I needed to get my life right with him otherwise I would be left behind.

Mike was a distant relative of Bill Subritzky, a famous figure in the NZ Pentecostal scene, but Mike had no knowledge of Godly things. I took him to a Barry Smith meeting. It was all very new to him.

I soon realised I needed to break my friendship with him. A few months later, Mike had a revelation. He asked God, if He was real, to reveal himself somehow, which God did. Mike knelt at his bed and asked God's forgiveness and asked him into his heart and life. I said to God, if we were meant to be, Mike would grow in faith. From that moment, he grew so much spiritually. We started dating again. We attended the Hamilton Central Baptist Church. We got engaged and we married, in 1983.

Mike was asked to be a Youth Pastor, which he did. We led many Youth Camps over the years and went with YWAM on a Youth Mission to the USA.. It was amazing how God brought funds together, when we had very little. Before we went, we trained for 3 months at Teshemakers in Oamaru, where and practiced an Outreach play called 'Toymaker and Son'. We performed at parks and churches in Los Angeles and casinos in LA. We witnessed to many people, including prostitutes on street corners, and the homeless, who we invited for meals. It was an amazing and very rewarding time.

Once back in NZ we stayed working with the Baptist Church and had our two children, Rachel and Samuel. Those years were a real struggle in many ways, especially financially, but I also felt a lot of pressure from church folk, to be a Deaconess and work within the church, all while coping with a new baby and a pre-schooler. Mike at this time was attending Bible College in Auckland one to two days a week and was super busy when he was home with meetings, visitations and general church work. I felt like a solo parent and mentally didn't cope well with the pressure, a young family and giving out so much.

There was one moment I remember, resting on the couch, so drained, feeling like I couldn't carry on. My three year old daughter came up to me and gave me my Bible. At that moment I knew God was telling me, "You've got this, I'm with you and will give you strength." It was a tough time. I remember thinking all I wanted was a normal, quiet life, my family, and a house with a white picket fence, but God had other plans.

We were called to pastor the Ngaruawhia Baptist Church. From there to the Epuni Baptist Church in Lower Hutt.

Mike was then called to do Army Chaplaincy work in Burnham, Christchurch, where we spent 7 years, during which Mike did many 6 month deployments. Afghanistan, East Timor, Malaysia. Our children had left school and home and I thought, well, now it's my time. Sadly, things were also a little rocky in our relationship.

I trained as a Beauty Therapist in Christchurch, which is something I had always wanted to do. I went to London, to extend my training and worked on the Holland America cruise line for 8 months, sending money home. It was an exciting time, waking up in a new port each morning but extremely hard work and long hours. But deep down I knew I was running away from things.

Then we were posted to the Papakura SAS camp. Sadly a combination of things led to Mike and I separating in 2010. Mike stayed in Papakura for a time, and I went to live and work in Howick. My son Samuel and his wife went to live in Perth, and they now have 3 amazing children, all home-schooled and doing well in their chosen sports.

My daughter Rachel at the time lived in Hunua. When her wee family moved to Whitianga in 2017, she suggested for me to move over too. We had always camped here as a family. I loved the Coromandel and thought it would be a great place to live. Three months later I secured a job at The Lost Spring and moved over. Rachel and her husband Mike attend Crossroads and are involved with the Intercessor prayer group nationwide.

Five grandchildren later, Eli 6, in Whitianga, Heeni 18 in Auckland, and Isaac 14, Charlie Rose 12, and Jesse 10, in Perth. What a blessing they all are. I love the outdoors, reading, and herbal remedies.

I've joined the tramping club, and a book club, and I try to walk 2-3 days a week. I go camping when I can, although these days it's becoming a major effort.

I attended the Baptist Church and C3 and Crossroads, trying to find a home where I felt comfortable, till I went along to St Andrew's one Easter (really to have a look inside and learn the history). There I found such a loving, caring family, not asking anything of me, but to just be. I enjoy helping where and when I am able.

Thank you all for your love, God Bless.

And thank you Sue, for sharing your story.

Bible Studies

Julie leads our regular Ladies' Prayer and Bible Study group on Wednesday mornings, 10:00 am, usually at Dorothy's home. Recently our numbers have been reduced by people moving away or with other commitments.

We are currently studying Pastor Stephen Armstrong's series on the Gospel of Matthew – and we're learning heaps! For instance, when Jesus says, "It is written..." we know He is referring to the Scriptures. But when he says, "You have heard it said..." He is referring to the erroneous teachings of the Pharisees. Their own 'book of religious law' was known as the Mishrah. The Pharisees used it to control and intimidate people.

There's something new to learn every Wednesday. When the study got to "Cast not your pearls before swine" (Matt 7:6) Annie brought us this visual aid. Any ladies who are interested in joining the study, are invited to **contact Julie 021 169 1637**



Mixed Bible Study

Steve and Martha Williams are keen to host a Bible study for all who want to meet in fellowship and increase their knowledge of God's Word.

If you would like to be in at the start of this new group – **Please contact Steve 021 729 427**

Manse Renovation Update

Peter Finlayson and John Pedersen have been chasing trade estimates for the proposed extensive renovation of the Manse. This week we sent off our request for permission to use the funds we have invested with PCANZ (Presbyterian Church), as recommended by our Special Congregational Meeting on June 7th. We have been advised that 'the bar is very high' for such approvals, so it is by no means a foregone conclusion that we will get to use those funds, but we are ever hopeful!

Please pray for the very best outcome.

Book Review – From Julie.

The Greatest Story Ever Told - Bear Grylls 2025

Bear Grylls, adventurer, and strong witness to God's importance in his life, tells *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. It is the story of Jesus, and his time on earth, as seen through the eyes of five eye-witnesses.

In writing this book, Bear Grylls made a strict rule for himself not to alter or invent a single quote spoken by Jesus. Every line of dialogue spoken by Christ is taken directly from existing English translations of the New Testament Gospels.

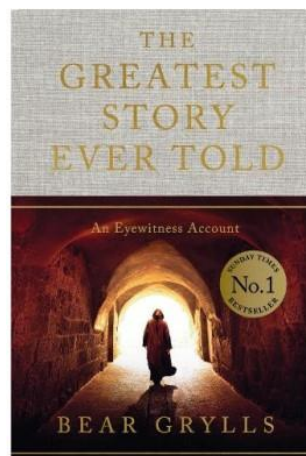
To avoid accidental heresy or scriptural errors, Grylls partnered with various theologians to verify that his overarching narrative stayed true to first-century history and orthodox Christian theology.

The main timeline sticks closely to the canonical Gospels, ensuring that real miracles, teachings, and details are kept strictly accurate to the text.

By telling the story from the point of view of five eyewitnesses, Bear Grylls is able to convey the emotions and the cultural realities of the time. We have Mary, bearing the weight of being Christ's mother. Thomas gives us his pragmatic perspective. Simon Peter narrates such events as the Feeding of the 5000, and Jesus walking on water. John gives an unflinching description of the trial, the beatings and the crucifixion, and finally Mary Magdalene recounts her life-altering moments with Jesus.

Because *The Greatest Story Ever Told* is a historical novel rather than a direct translation or commentary, it mixes strict biblical text with creative filler. It is not a text or reference book – rather an easy, enjoyable read, and great for those who are not active Bible scholars. It is available to borrow from the Mercury Bay Library (free to join).

Have you read a good devotional book lately? Or listened to an inspiring podcast? Let us have your recommendations for the next Newsletter.



'Made By Hand' Craft Show 2026 **Friday 18th and Saturday 19th September**

Annie is the keen co-ordinator for this event.

The posters are up around town, and Flyers are now available in the church hall, for distribution to all who may be interested. Please take them and invite any local craftspeople known to you – men, women and children!

The set-up will be on Thursday after Enliven.

Doors open to the public on Friday and Saturday. We want to attract as wide a mix of crafts as possible, so if you know of anyone creating something unusual, please let them (or us) know about it. It's only six weeks away!

There is no charge for people to display their work. Koha appreciated.

We see this event as a way of getting our community together, to appreciate individual skills and celebrate the creativity that surrounds us.

For information:

Contact Annie 027 322 3332 or Dorothy 022 1322 061



Samaritan's Purse Christmas Boxes

Earlier this month a crowd of people got together at Crossroad Church, to cover shoe boxes ready for this year's Christmas Child Appeal. It was a very enjoyable time, and we hope to do it again soon – date to be advised.

There's now a stack of covered boxes in the church hall, all ready to be filled. Instructions and ideas are in the boxes.

Individual items to go in the boxes, and/or money donations towards the shipping are welcomed.



If you would like to Donate to the Church and Parish:

BNZ Whitianga – 02 0496 0062562 00

Or to Donate to Manawa Kai Meals:

Westpac Whitianga - 03 1578 0108901

Worship at St Andrew's

We are blessed and encouraged by the regular addition of new faces to our services on Sunday mornings - some who have recently arrived in the area, and others who have lived here for years. We encourage all who fellowship with us to invite their families, friends and neighbours to join our warm and welcoming Christian family.



This month we welcome Rev. Richard Small to the pulpit. A long-time summer visitor to the Bay, Richard was recently ordained and is the Minister with a newly formed congregation at Hobsonville.

Preaching Schedule August – September 2026

August

2 nd	Julie St George and Bible Team. Communion – Dorothy
9 th	Rev. Andrew Warren
16 th	Kevin Pringle
23 rd	John and Robin Twemlow
30 th	Rev. Richard Small

September

6 th	Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby	Communion
13 th	Dorothy Preece	
20 th	Deacon Margaret Birtles	
27 th	Julie and Bible Team.	

From the Pulpit:

John Ormsby on peace: Peace is not achieved by simply avoiding conflict. Peace takes positive action. We must plant the seeds of peace – and nurture it.

Bill Woodward: What is a Missionary?

Is it someone who crosses the sea, or someone who sees the cross?

Rev Shirley on humility: Christians are not supposed to be doormats.

She quoted C.S. Lewis, "Humility is not about thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less."

St Andrew's Church Hall Community Activities

Monday – Upright & Active exercise for seniors 9 am weekly.

Contact Wendy 028 411 3004 or Kathy 021 254 2769

- **Manawa Kai Heart Food Kitchen** community meals.
- Takeaway only, every Monday 2:30-5pm. (Bank Hols- Tuesdays)
Contact Maureen 027 2466 164

Tuesday – Upright & Active exercise for seniors 9am weekly

Contact Wendy 028 411 3004 or Kathy 021 254 2769

- **Enliven Presbyterian Aged Support** 11-3 pm. Lunch provided.
Contact Wendy 021 2296 324 for assessment
- **Stitch 'n' Chat** fortnightly 1:30- 4pm in the Hamilton Room.
Includes afternoon tea. Contact Julie 021 169 1637

Wednesday – Scrapbags quilting group 10am-3pm weekly BYO lunch.

Contact Wilma 027 253 5589

Thursday - Enliven Presbyterian Aged Support 11-3 pm.

Contact Wendy 021 2296 324

Friday - Cancer Support Coffee Morning First Friday of each month.

Contact Ruth 021 363 840

- **Blind / Low Vision group** 10am-12 **2nd Friday** of each month.

Contact Jackie 07 866 5054

The Church Op Shop

Open 9:30 am to 1:00 pm

Tuesday to Saturday.

Active volunteers needed – come and see if
this is for you!

Contact Madeline 021 169 1637



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St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

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