

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

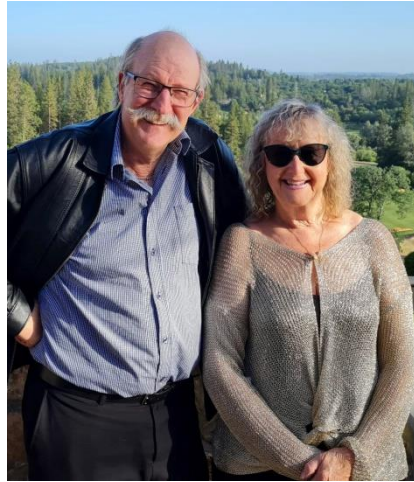
Our Mission: To bring the saving love of God to all whom we meet, and by our example encourage them to follow Jesus.

Our people and their stories - Steve and Martha Williams

Steve and Martha joined the fellowship after they sold their business in Auckland. "We have found such a loving and welcoming Church," Martha says.

Here are both of their stories:

Steve was born in East London, a coastal city in East Cape, South Africa. His father was of Welsh origin, his mother German. Steve was the fifth in a line of six children. "My parents were very strong Baptists" Steve says. "My father was very strict, however there was not much love in the home." Steve came up through all the usual youth groups, Scripture Union exams and Easter Camps. In the Baptist tradition he was baptised by total immersion at 16.



At 17 Steve left home. "I was fixated on radio communications and in Cape Town I got a job in that field. When I was 18 I joined the Navy and trained as a radio technician." Until he left home, Steve's whole social life had been orientated by Church life. "It was very restrictive, no movies, no dancing.... So when I joined the Navy with all its freedoms, I have to admit I went off the rails. The Truth was always there in the background, the seed was sown, but for a long time I managed to ignore the pinpricks." Steve was in the Navy for 3 years.

In January 1977 he met Martha. She was working at the Revlon cosmetics counter in a big department store, the OK Bazaar. They married on Christmas Eve, one year later. "We had absolutely nothing," Steve says. "It was only later I learned that I was supposed to pay the Pastor who married us."

Martha was born in Riversdale, on the Western Cape, a very beautiful farming area. When she was very young the family moved to Namibia, to the diamond mining town of Oranjemund, where diamonds were dredged from the ocean. It was a company town, surrounded by electric fences, and quite grim.

When she was 6 they moved to Cape Town. "My parents were not actively involved in the Church, but I learned about the Bible from my Grandmother.

She was English Methodist." Martha went to a Presbyterian Church, attending youth club and youth camps.

"I always wanted to go nursing, but somehow that never happened. Instead I found myself in a jewellery store. I worked for Mr Summerfield, an English Jew who made beautiful jewellery. Then I worked at the OK Bazaar, where a friend introduced me to Steve. He was in the Navy when we met."

Steve was due to be drafted to Durban with the Navy, but instead he resigned and married Martha. They moved to Riversdale, Martha's old hometown. Steve started work with the South African Broadcasting Corporation, installing and maintaining Radio & TV transmitters. Martha worked in a pharmacy and they attended the Methodist Church. It was the only English-speaking Church. All the others were Afrikaans.

Steve loved his job, and after 5 years he got a transfer to King William's Town on the Eastern Cape. There they attended Bethany Emmanuel, a very big Baptist Church. Steve says, "It was here that Pastor Rev Pentz challenged them both with the question, 'Are you certain that you are saved?' We both had to answer, No. We were each led in a confessional prayer. We admitted our need and were assured of Salvation." A year later Steve's cousin Brian Staples became the senior Pastor there. Steve & Martha got involved with youth, working with up to 50 young people.

Five years later, Steve and Martha were transferred to Port Elizabeth, where they lived for 12 years. They attended Trinity Baptist Church and adopted two daughters. Claire came first. She was two weeks old. Then when Claire was five they adopted Sarah, at just 6 days old. Sarah had respiratory problems and feeding her was very difficult. It was an exhausting time but Martha pulled her through. "Martha always wanted to be a nurse," Steve says. "Nobody else could have done that."

In 2000 the family no longer felt safe in South Africa and they made the decision to move to New Zealand. Claire was 12 and Sarah 7. Steve had a job offer which made the move easier. They settled on the North Shore as they had friends there and bought a home in Torbay. They attended the East Coast Bays Baptist Bible Church and then later the Windsor Park Baptist. Steve joined Tait Communications as a Support Engineer in Auckland, doing what he loved. Martha went back to retailing, working with Sheridan Linen in the Farmer's building.

Later Steve moved to a private company. Electrotest Ltd was a new business importing and distributing electronic test equipment.

In 2006 Steve bought shares in the company and in 2007 he acquired 50%, eventually taking ownership of it in 2011. “We had to mortgage the house to buy the company. It was a steep learning curve but it paid off. I knew the electronics industry, but not the accounting side. I had to work hard to get that under my belt, but it proved to be a very successful company.”

Steve had sold a yacht in South Africa, and in Auckland he bought a 26-foot racing yacht which he and Claire enjoyed sailing. In 2009 he bought a 34-footer which he owned for 10 years.

Through the Windsor Park Church Steve got involved with prison ministry at Paremoremo maximum security prison, where he became a prison Chaplain. Inspired by Mathew 25 he loved the prison work. “They are all hardened prisoners, but nobody is born that way. They all have something in their past that sets them on that road. I got very close to some of the worst of the worst, and always when I left them I couldn’t wait to see them again.”

Steve and Martha had bach in Mangawhai, and Steve kept a light aircraft at Kaipara Flats. “As I knew that one day I had to retire, we started looking for a holiday place where we could settle and keep the plane. In October 2024, we went unconditional on Oscar Place and in February 2025 we sold the bach at Mangawhai.”

For a while Martha and Steve were in the process of selling the business and commuting to Whitianga every weekend. That came to an end when the business sold in June 2025 and the Torbay home sold in December 2025. Now they are permanently settled in Whitianga with ZK-WIL, their aeroplane housed at their home on the runway. They are settling into the community and the Church and Martha, ever the nurse at heart, loves helping with the services at the Rest Home. They have begun hosting a Bible study group on Sunday afternoons. “It’s early days, but we’ll let the Lord show us the way He wants us to go,” Steve says.

*Thank you, Steve and Martha, for sharing your story with the Fellowship.
We all look forward to seeing what the Lord will do!*

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 00

A Meditation for Dog Lovers

*Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.
When someone is having a bad day, be silent,
sit close by and nuzzle them gently.
Eat with gusto and enthusiasm.
When loved ones come home, always run to
greet them. Thrive on their attention.
Let others know when they’ve invaded your territory.
When you’ve got it wrong, don’t buy into the guilt thing –
Just run right back and make friends again.
If what you want lies buried, dig deep until you find it.
Never pretend to be something you’re not.
Feel free to take naps whenever you need to.
Allow yourself the enjoyment of fresh air and the pure ecstasy
of the wind in your face. Delight in the simple joy of a long walk.
Take time out to play every day. Most of all – be loyal and
practice obedience to your Master – it’s in your best interests.*

(Origin unknown)



From The Pulpit:

August 9th - Rev Andrew Warren told us his parents had been overseas missionaries. They had a saying – “God will provide just enough – just in time.” Andrew said his own experience has taught him differently.

“God provides abundantly more than we can ever imagine.”

August 23rd – Robin Twemlow spoke about the Good Shepherd, and forgiveness. “Sometimes the sheep have to be shorn. It’s for their own good. They gather mud and thorns and become very uncomfortable with themselves. They go leaping for joy from the shed when all that load is taken off them!”

September 6th – Father’s Day – Rev Shirley Barker-Kirby told the men “In the Father’s eyes you are worth a mint!” before proceeding to hand out Minties.

From TV Professor/ Scientist Brian Cox

“The Earth is the only planet so far observed to be in the ‘Goldilocks zone’ – just the right distance from our sun – not too hot, not too cold to support life. This makes the Earth and all the people, all the life it supports, extremely rare and precious..... (As if we didn’t know that. – Ed.)

Our 'Made by Hand' Craft Show

Huge thanks to Annie, and everyone who helped make this year's show such a success. A success gauged by the number of smiling people who came through the doors and stopped to admire, not just the variety of creativity, but the church building too. We are still astounded by the number of people who say, "Wow! I've lived here for years and I've not been in here before. It's beautiful!" This year we were pleased to see more menfolk showing their crafts and skills, and we noted that there were more men in the crowd too. As usual, the church was blessed with a rainbow of coloured quilts and blankets. Robyn's display of Christmas Child boxes and the little dresses made by Muriel and others also attracted a lot of attention, and the boxes rapidly went out the door with people excited to start filling them.



We will print out more pictures and put them on the notice board in the church hall.



In Memoriam

*We hold these families in our love
and prayers*

**August 14th - Funeral of Mrs Beth Hopping,
and burial at Ferry Landing Cemetery.**

**August 21st - Memorial Service for
Mrs Claire Glazer**



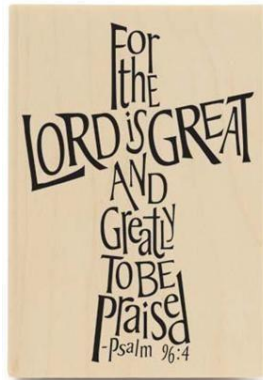
St Andrew's Preaching Schedule

October

- 4 John and Robin Twemlow - Communion
- 11 Bill and Robyn Woodward
- 18 Bill and Robyn Woodward
- 25 John and Althea Ormsby

November

- 1 Dorothy Preece - Communion
- 8 Ngaire Southon (Methodist Lay Preachers' Assoc.)
- 15 Kevin Pringle
- 22 Julie St George and Bible Team
- 29 Deacon Margaret Birtles
and Combined Churches Service 5:30 at C3 Church, Coghill St.



Property Update

As reported at the Church Annual Meeting, we are still waiting to hear the result of our application to PCANZ to use our Parish Invested Funds to renovate the Manse and bring it up to Healthy Homes Standard. That work is currently on hold. In the meantime, Peter and John have been busy improving the gates and fences on the South side of the church, to be compliant with our church Fire Evacuation Plan. *Thank you, Gentlemen, for all your work!*

At the same time, our administrator Debbie has been working with FENZ (Fire and Emergency NZ) to make sure that everything else is in order – not an easy task! *Thank you Debbie.*

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

Contact Ruth 021 363 840

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

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



MERCURY BAY CO-OPERATING PARISH

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church

Corner Albert and Owen Streets, Whitianga | PO Box 368, Whitianga

www.standrewsbythesea.org.nz | standrewswhitianga@gmail.com

Facebook: St Andrews Community Church Mercury Bay NZ

Parish Chairman: Kevin Pringle Secretary: Dorothy Preece 022 1322 061