



# **Mairangi & Castor Bays Presbyterian Church**

**August 2025 NEWSLETTER**

**Minister: Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph**

[www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz](http://www.bayspresbyterian.org.nz)

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**We are our Community's Emergency Hub**

## UPDATE FROM TOKERAU

Below is an article from NZ Christian Network about prayer which you may find interesting. I've edited it for our newsletter, but the full article can be accessed at:

<https://preview.mailerlite.io/emails/webview/702598/160852687111325240>

*“Can Christians participate in workplace Karakia in good conscience?”*  
*By Malcolm Falloon*

“Increasingly, workplaces are adopting the practice of starting and ending meetings with a Karakia (prayer). This is intended to express respect for Māori tikanga (protocol) and the bicultural partnership enjoined upon all New Zealanders by the Treaty of Waitangi. If this was the only consideration, then Christians would have nothing to object to and much to value. However, the increasing adoption of traditional forms of Karakia that invoke pre-Christian Māori atua, raises concerns for many Christians that participation in such prayers compromises their allegiance to Christ.

As Christians, we acknowledge that Christ is Lord of all and has a name that is above every name. While this does not necessarily mean for the Christian that all reference to traditional Māori gods needs to be banished entirely, they do need to be dethroned from assuming a place of power and authority over believers. While there are still references to the pagan gods within English language and literature, it is clear that such pagan gods' power and authority has been replaced by that of Christ. For Christians, whether Māori or Pākehā, the same will apply to the Māori atua of pre-Christian times. Although some may wish to see some form of syncretic pantheism as a possible future spiritual foundation for New Zealand, Christians will always resist such an idea and will always be uncomfortable when people weaponise Karakia/prayer for their own political objectives.

For Christians, Karakia can never be just a matter of tikanga (custom) devoid of spiritual significance, just a form of words with no power to achieve the purpose of which they speak. While modern forms of karakia are often intentionally designed to be spiritually “neutral”, these secularised forms of Karakia represents a significant departure from a Christian understanding of Karakia. For Christians, Karakia is a petition to a gracious God who hears and answers our prayers. In fact, for many early Māori converts, it was their experience of the power of Christian Karakia that lead to their confession of Christianity.

Merely being present while Karakia is said should not be seen by Christians or anyone else as, in itself, a compromise to their faith or worldview. Christians and others can listen respectfully to Karakia, on those occasions when it expresses a viewpoint they disagree with, without feeling that their

mere presence is an endorsement of what is being said. Likewise, when Christian Karakia is said, whether in te reo Māori or English, Christians hope that people of different religious viewpoints would listen respectfully and not feel the need to interrupt or withdraw. That is how it is in the New Zealand Parliament where a Christian prayer is recited at the beginning of each sitting day. It is not to be expected that everyone in the Parliament agrees with the content of the prayer, but all are expected to be respectful.

Most people are not particularly impressed when Karakia simply becomes a perfunctory action in order to tick the corporate box on Treaty compliance. Christians, however, should always be happy to pray for their workplace knowing that such Karakia is spiritually powerful when addressed to the true God through Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. Christians should welcome the opportunity to pray for God's blessing on their meeting with colleagues, knowing that God alone brings the harmony and unity of purpose which makes for a productive workplace. “

*Tokerau Joseph*

*Mark in your diary that our next*  
**Special Communion Service and lunch**  
*will be held on **Tuesday, Sept. 16 at 11:30***  
*for those unable to regularly attend church.*  
*Contact Norma Baker for more information.*

# WORDS FROM KAREL

## Wisdom

A working definition of wisdom reads as follows, “wisdom is more than knowledge or intelligence; it is the ability to apply insight, experience, and moral discernment to make sound judgments and to live well. At its core, wisdom involves understanding what truly matters in life, choosing actions that promote flourishing, and living with humility, compassion, and responsibility.”

The Hebrew Bible includes wisdom books such as Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Psalms, and Song of Songs. Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach are not included in our Bible but occur in Roman Catholic Bibles. These wisdom books are distinct from the history books of the Judges and Kings and the books of prophecy. They don't focus on Israel's covenant with God or national identity. Instead, they explore universal human questions.

For example:

Proverbs offer practical advice on how to live well. Wisdom is seen as coming from God.

The book of Job wrestles with the problem of a good God and innocent suffering.

Ecclesiastes questions the meaning of life and the limits of human understanding.

These books have deeply influenced Jewish and Christian ethical thinking. They challenge us as readers to seek a deeper – sometime paradoxical - understanding of God's presence and the understanding of life.

In the gospels Jesus is referred to as teacher, rabbi or my teacher. His followers were called the disciples, or pupils indicating that they were learners. Clearly, he had a teacher pupil relationship with them as he taught his wisdom.

Numerous biblical scholars regard Jesus as a figure noted for his teaching of wisdom. He radicalised the wisdom tradition. His wisdom uses the riddles and proverbs form of the ancient wisdom tradition - but Jesus adds a twist. He taught that the wisdom of God often appears foolish to the world (as Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 1:25). Jesus turned conventional wisdom and values on its head. For example:

The beatitudes elevate the poor and humble.

He calls for forgiveness, non-violence and love of enemies - practical but revolutionary wisdom.

Jesus challenges religious certainties. This was and is particularly challenging to those who have the world and God sorted out.

Jesus' wisdom was characterised by parables, riddles and short pithy statements. His audience must have been left scratching their heads wondering at such statements as “let the dead bury the dead” or “first take the log out of your own eye before you take the splinter out of your neighbour's eye,” or “whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it.” (Matthew 16:25)

And for us who live in a community wracked with anxiety and a lack of trust,

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin... Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.” (Matthew 6:28-29)

Jesus’ parables can be interpreted in various ways. Regardless of interpretation, they are challenging. His wisdom is always related to God. Central to his teaching was the Kingdom of God. As the philosopher and theologian Alfred North Whitehead said, “The Greeks explored the “good” in their philosophy, Jesus lived it and taught it.”

Today there is a growing sense - among both secular and religious thinkers - that wisdom is in short supply. People and institutions value:

Speed over reflection

Ideology over nuanced thinking.

Certainty over humility

Power above compassion.

In the faith traditions, including Christianity, valuing orthodoxy or cultural identity can overshadow the call to wise living, justice, and humility. In politics short term gains, looking toward the next election and party positions, take precedence over long-term, ethical decision-making for the common good.

In the last decade, trust among nations and within nations has eroded. People have become more divided. The internet, social media and television which were lauded because they would bring people together have instead created more division. We find people scrambling over one another for influence, power and wealth. In such a world who can we trust? Not surprisingly people are anxiously withdrawing into themselves or into their own groups which protect them from the world.

The world and the nation in this condition are open to charlatans, scams, cheap grace, get rich quick schemes, magic and unfulfillable promises. The claim that ends justify means resurfaces, suggesting violence leads to peace and extreme wealth reduces poverty. In the meantime, many people are suffering, victims of conflicts, homelessness and hunger. The desperate and disorientated take to living on the streets. Young people are left directionless, unemployed, poor and wondering how they can live a good life. No wonder they tune into their devices where they become victims of influencers and charlatans, and particularly for boys, pawns at the hand of misogynist gurus. Christianity, as traditionally taught, is making insignificant inroads into this anxious violent world. In its fundamentalist form in many places, it is adding to the divisions, distress and anxiety. Jesus would have been appalled if he knew that his life and teaching and death would lead to this. Where do we turn?

If someone handed me the role of being Doctor to the world and nation today, I would prescribe a large dose of Jesus wisdom. Read the gospels of Matthew and Luke taking careful note of the parables and short pithy statements that Jesus makes and discover how if we followed these, the world would change. At the same time, we would discover aspects of the character of God.

*Karel*

## **UPDATE FROM CHURCH COUNCIL**

Sue Bowden constituted the meeting with the theme of 'Keep trusting in God'. In this context Sue referred to Job and his many problems and ultimate success.

After sharing pastoral matters and the known needs of some of our members and those under pastoral care were shared, Tokerau led a prayer for them and we identified what assistance we could provide.

We then worked through the agenda with the main points being :

- **Social Media with Information about our Church:**
  - **Rebuilding the website:** Karel is taking photos and video shots of our activities which will be included. He is producing a brief which will be given to Ricardo Grecco for bringing together into a new look website
  - **Facebook Page:** Jo is responsible for including new material and has recently included photos from our trial as an Emergency Hub. This page can be accessed from our current website (Home Page). The Facebook Page for our Indian Congregation can be accessed from our church Facebook page.
- **Property and Finance:** The most important matter under this heading was consideration of our end of year financials and the recommended 2025/26 Budget. For the year ending 30 June we had a deficit of \$5k and we are budgeting for a deficit of \$8.8k for the 25/26 year. This will be recommended to the AGM which is to be held at 11am on Sunday 17 August.
- **Indian Congregation:** The change to holding the Service of Worship on a Saturday evening at 6pm with a meal afterwards is now settling down with attendance being maintained.
- **Fellowship:** There was a good turnout for the mid-winter roast lunch at Montrose which was enjoyed by 24 of our members – a good social occasion.
- **Homelessness on the North Shore:** we considered the report from the Onewa Christian Community on the meeting they had organized to consider what can be done to assist with this growing problem. We applaud this initiative and await the recommendations from the smaller group that is being set up.
- **Moderator Designate for PCANZ:** We voted on the candidates for this position. The appointment will be made at the Assembly which is being held in Christchurch in October. John Shadbolt will be the Commissioner from our church.
- **Growing our Church:** This was our main item of business and we considered and will be recommending to the AGM our Vision and Goals for the next 90 days. These are included in this Newsletter. Any queries can be raised with a Parish Council Member or raised at the AGM on 17 August.
- **We reduced the number of options for the change of name of our church down to 5. These being :** Mairangi Bay Presbyterian Church; Mairangi Presbyterian Church; Mairangi Presbyterian; Bays Presbyterian; Connect Church Mairangi Bay. For discussion at the AGM.

*Stewart Milne*

# THE NAME OF OUR CHURCH

*Background:* The name of our Church is Mairangi and Castor Bays Presbyterian Church. Tim Loftis in his Report on changes pointed out that the name is long and confusing. The decision to continue to include Castor Bays in the name when the Castor Bays property was sold in 2012 was based on retaining that historical link. However with rejuvenation and the changes that are planned it is clearly time to make some changes including dropping the reference to Castor Bay and consideration of the other words.

*Comment:* Considering the other words:

*Presbyterian:* Several Presbyterian Churches have dropped the word Presbyterian from their name whilst still remaining as a Presbyterian Church. Eg Onewa Christian Community; Mahu Hope Church. It can be argued that the word Presbyterian does not mean much if anything to the young families and migrants who we are trying to attract. On the other hand any new residents in the Bays who have come from a Presbyterian background may be looking for it.

*Mairangi:* On the one hand we are situated in Mairangi Bay and so this is seen as an important word to include. On the other hand our membership comes from other places on the North Shore and we want to continue to attract people from outside of Mairangi Bay so it can be argued it is too restrictive.

*Church:* The inclusion of the word church also has its pros and cons. The pros are that we are a church and proud of it so that word should be included whereas the major con is that recent negative publicity has resulted in the word church being a turn-off for some.

*Connect:* This word is included in one of the options . The suggestion for it came from the question “What are our strengths?” The response was – we connect with the community; we connect with groups needing assistance (Dees, Conversations); we connect with young families (Mainly Music); we connect with Nthn Presbytery and PCANZ and PSN and with each other. However at first sight it’s a bit strange.

Parish Council has considered this matter and has reduced its options down from 14 to 5 but is still open to suggestions. The 5 on the list Are : *Mairangi Bay Presbyterian Church; Mairangi Presbyterian Church; Mairangi Presbyterian; Bays Presbyterian Church; Connect Church Mairangi Bay.* In the June Newsletter we opened the subject up and sought suggestions but only received one viz “Bays Presbyterian Church and Welcome Centre”. It is important that we progress this matter with adequate consultation and consideration.

*Logo:* In rebranding, logo’s are also important. Our current logo is based on : the sea, caring hands, Pohutukawa leaves, the burning bush and the Jewish symbol of Hanukkah. It is not a modern logo and depending on the name we select it seems that we should also decide on a new logo for our signs, stationery and possibly the communion table. Note: There is a different symbol on the notice board of activities facing Hastings Road.

*Next Step:* This matter will be on the agenda for the AGM when we will be seeking a 1,2,3,4,5 preference rating against the 5 names. Meantime anyone not attending can participate and email the office or the Parish Clerk. Ideas on a logo also welcomed.

We are nearly at the end of our first **90-Days Goal**.

We have set out the second lot of 90-days goals which will begin on 1 August to 31 October. This has been approved by Parish Council and will be recommended to the AGM which is to be held on 17th August. These are goals in four areas of our church life. They all contribute to help us realise our first 1-year goal:

**“To grow our worship attendance by developing a relevant, inspiring and family friendly gospel-centred worship experience.”**

So please keep these in your prayers and help to make them happen.

**Tokerau**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>To grow our worship attendance by developing a relevant, inspiring and family friendly gospel-centered worship experience.</b></p>			
1-year goal			
<p>To spend dedicated time in prayer and to inform and inspire the congregation about the vision.</p>	<p>To get the Worship Committee to explore, plan and prepare for changing the Worship Service to a more relevant and family friendly style for the future.</p>	<p>To get the P &amp; F Cttee to look at the facilities and make recommendations to Parish Council about changes which will make the church spaces more family friendly and missional.</p>	<p>To address the communication to the outside community. This includes website, Facebook, media, signage and any other relevant ways of communicating missionally.</p>
First 90-days			
<p>Double the number participating in the prayer meeting for our vision. Continue informing the congregation of developments. Encourage and increase members of Parish Council to attend the Incubator Trainings so they can all contribute to inspiring the congregation.</p>	<p>That the following actions be implemented in our worship services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a welcome video</li> <li>• Introduce pre-service music</li> <li>• Put sermon points &amp; Bible reading on screen</li> <li>• More relevance in preaching (down to earth)</li> <li>• More appropriate videos for children learning</li> <li>• Introduce appropriate contemporary songs</li> <li>• Have a Messy Church service</li> </ul>	<p>That the P &amp; F Cttee implement the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create family area at the back of the church</li> <li>• Improve visibility of church &amp; signage from Hastings Road.</li> <li>• Install appropriate gospel messages/visuals in the church space.</li> <li>• De-clutter the stage area at the front of the church</li> </ul>	<p>That we employ someone part time to keep our website and Facebook up to date. Investigate also using Instagram</p>
Second 90-days			



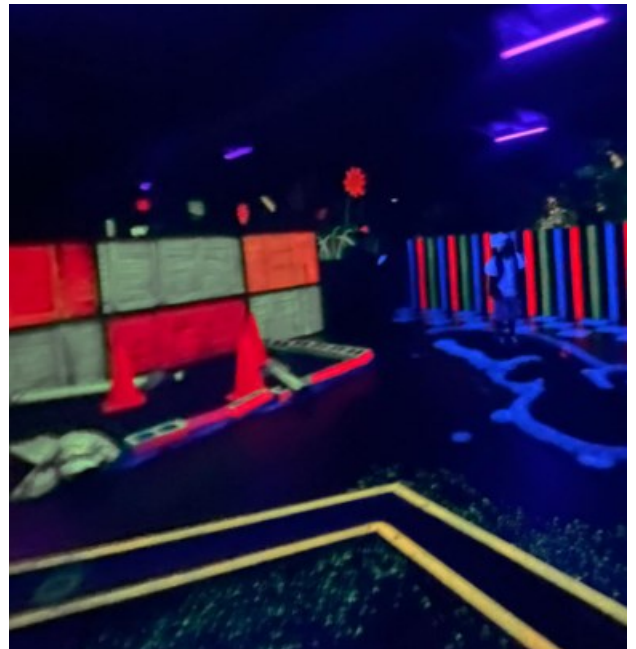
## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Over the past two months our Youth Group Now Known as Innovate Youth have been involved in a number of activities.

This month there was a visit to the ten-pin bowling alley on September 13th organised by the Yedarm youth group who invited us along.

This is part of a relationship building exercise which we hope to add to.

A visit to Glo-put (mini golf) also took place in June as part of the farewell to Mastell, Kimi, and Ananiah Matapo and was thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part.



## Community Emergency Hub Trial

We are all becoming more aware of the likelihood of another flooding event in the mid-bays . Recently a Community Emergency Hub has been set up at our church. A simulation of an emergency was held on the morning of July 5 with the church volunteers being called in to welcome and attend to the problem and needs of those who had to leave their home through flooding. The roles of victims were played by actors who had been briefed on the scenario. Those in authority were impressed both with the organisation and the way the church volunteers handled the situation



## Roast Lunch at Montrose

On Sunday, July 13th, about 25 members attended a lunch at Montrose. It was organised by the fellowship group. It has become a popular event in the life of our church. A special thank you to Dorille who organised the event



## Tearfund Quiz June



# REGULAR PARISH ACTIVITIES

- **SENIOR FRIENDS**

**1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month 10am - 12pm**

Contact Carole 021 0235 7398 or Raewyn 027 733 7612



- **ENGLISH CONVERSATIONS**

**1pm - 2.30pm Mondays & Wednesdays Meeting Room 2.**

Further Information Stewart Milne 478 5786, John Shadbolt 0211087700

Grace Liu 021 048 7978

- **HOUSE GROUP**

**3pm Wednesdays at the Shadbolt's**

Contact Dorille Shadbolt Ph 479 3953.



- **DEE'S SOCIAL GROUP**

**Thursdays 10am-2pm Mairangi Bay Church Hall**

For further information Tangi Joseph 022 657 3223.

- **MAINLY MUSIC**

**Fridays during School Term only. Church Hall 10-11am**

Ph Karen Ruffell 021 02263846



- **FAMILY FUN NIGHT & SHARED MEAL**

**2nd Friday of the month Church Hall 6.15pm**

Ph Tangi 022 657 3223 or Stewart 027 293 8499

- **MEN'S GROUP LUNCH**

**Every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 12pm, The Bays Club**

Contact Ian Rankin 027 332 7235



- **LEADER FOR THE YOUNG**

Angelika Singh 027 310 3284

- **BORN AGAIN BODIES EXERCISE and FITNESS**

**Every Wednesday 1pm in Church Hall**

Leader: Brad McCullough Ph 021 230 3421



- **PARISH COUNCIL**

**7.30pm every 3rd Tuesday of the month Meeting room 2**

Ph Stewart Milne 027 293 8499 or 09 478 5786

*Please send photos of Parish activities through to  
[office@bayspc.nz](mailto:office@bayspc.nz)*

## Quick Contacts

Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph Ph: 027 371 4733 [tokerau.j@gmail.com](mailto:tokerau.j@gmail.com)

Office Ph: 478 6180 [office@bayspc.nz](mailto:office@bayspc.nz)