

## Mercury Bay featured in new book

Dorothy Preece, Parish Secretary

**Mercury Bay, Whitianga is at the end of the road, unless you want to keep driving in a circle and go back where you came from. Mercury Bay Co-operating Parish comprises just one church - St Andrew's by the Sea in Whitianga.**

It struggles to make ends meet, with regular congregations in the low 20s, swelling to maybe 40 in the peak holiday season.

Nonetheless, this busy little church is full of life and love, and a centre for community activities (holding pride of place on the main street) and meaningful memories, even for many of the town's younger residents whose history was written in the church. This

connection with the community was one of the drivers for a fundraising initiative.

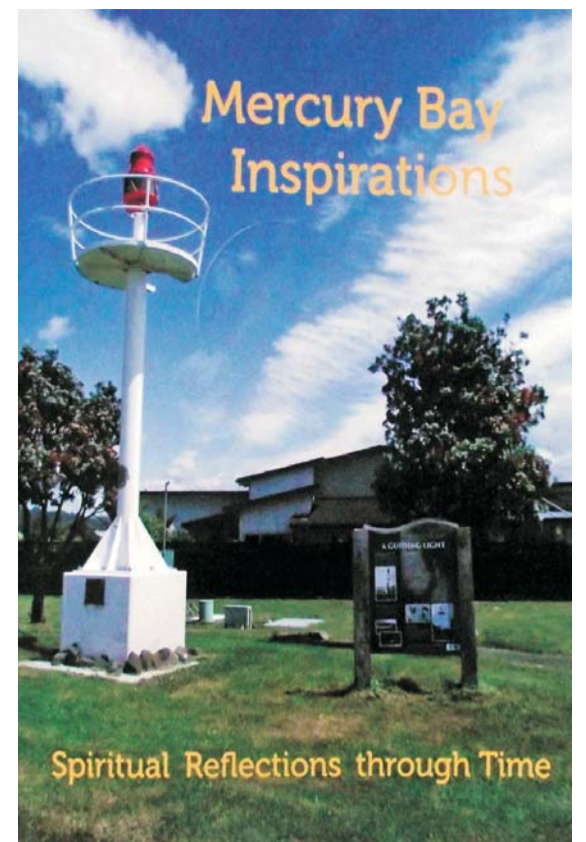
When Rev Mary Petersen moved on in 2013, St Andrew's produced a book for her as a one-off keepsake gift. That experience gave a couple of our parishioners the confidence to produce a fundraiser publication. The book, *Mercury Bay Inspirations*, includes glossy photos of many of the historic aspects of Whitianga town, coupled with snippets from old, well-known hymns. The idea was not only to stir memories, but to raise awareness of the Holy in the everyday scene 'Through all the changing scenes of life...!'

Most of the hymns featured are the ones many of us remember and love from the *Methodist Hymn Book* but no longer use in our services because the

18th and 19th century language is not the language of today. *Will your anchor hold* features a picture of the HMS Buffalo memorial on Buffalo Beach. Two of the hymns are modern favourites; Colin Gibson's *Nothing is lost on the breath of God* and *Where the road runs out and the signposts end* - a fitting hymn for Whitianga.

Last August, a book launch and history tea proved a successful catalyst for book sales and these continue to be very encouraging. Several copies of the book have already been sent overseas as gifts, and others have been distributed throughout New Zealand. It is hoped that visitors to the area might buy the book (\$25 per copy) as a souvenir.

The publishing team say their next book will feature the natural beauty of the Coromandel, probably teamed with praise phrases from the Psalms.



## Let the Children Live, Timaru



Morven Sidal, Lay Minister, St David's Union Church.

**In December, members of St David's Union Church in Timaru treated more than 70 children from Oceanview Heights School to a barbecue lunch and a trip to the local swimming pool with a grant of \$500 from the Methodist Church's 'Let the Children Live' fund.**

In consultation with school principal Sandi Abel, it was decided that children would be given a barbecue lunch, ice blocks and a lolly-scramble, as well as a visit to Caroline Bay pool. Inclement weather made walking unpleasant to and from the pool so remaining money from the grant subsidised the school providing a bus to transport children and staff.

It was an opportunity for members of our congregation to meet and interact with the

children and the teachers of the school who constantly express their gratitude for our ongoing support of their students. The children enjoyed their lunch and, as they only get two weeks of swimming each year, they were very excited to be going to Caroline Bay pool for a swim.

The lunch and swim concluded the fifth year of our 'Let the Children Live' project with this decile 2 school. We have a drop box in the church and, each Sunday, gifts of toys, books, stationery, personal hygiene items and clothing are collected. These gifts are taken to the school twice each term and used as end-of-term prizes and gifts for encouraging good behaviour and endeavour. A gift is provided for each child at the end of the year. For some children this will be the only gift they receive at Christmas.

St David's Union Church thank Mission Resourcing and the 'Let the Children Live' fund for their generous grant toward our mission in this school.

## Fire drill a big success

**Having a safety plan in the event of unexpected incidents is important for every parish. Christchurch South Tongan Methodist Parish held a fire drill late last year at Falelotu Kosepeli that involved the entire congregation and the local fire brigade.**

Rev Moimoi Kaufononga (Moi) considers safety vitally important, not only for the members of his church but for everyone visiting or using the parish facilities. "Everyone should have a safety plan. We never know what will happen."

Given that his chapel and church hall are located in Christchurch, Moi has a healthy respect for seismic activity but, as he points out, earthquakes, fire or tsunami can affect anyone, anywhere and it is important to be ready. The fire drill is the first of regular drills that will be undertaken throughout each year.

During a Sunday service, as the sirens blared, more than 70 children and adults were directed out by wardens in high visibility vests towards well marked exits. In the assembly area, a fire engine and crew were on standby, observing the entire process. Members of the property committee are wardens, including some with a first aid certificate. It is envisaged that all wardens will eventually hold current first



Rev Moimoi Kaufononga oversees a fire drill in his Spreydon parish.

aid certificates.

Trudy Downes, Health and Safety Coordinator for MCNZ, worked with Moi to develop the evacuation plan. She has created a power point presentation with slides in English and Tongan highlighting the key exit procedures and doors.

Trudy says, "Buildings with capacity for more than 100 people must have a Fire Services approved evacuation scheme. This is the first one I have been involved with. MCNZ has not started tracking who does or does not have an approved scheme or if they need one, but it is on my priority list."

Moi informed the local Spreydon fire brigade of his planned drill and a team of six firefighters turned up to meet and greet the assembled congregation before they all headed back inside for a well deserved cup of tea.

