



# VISION SUNDAY 2024

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*everyday people, loving God, living it out*





## 2025: A YEAR TO ANSWER THE CALL TO BE BOLD & COURAGEOUS

This time last year, we sensed that God had been calling us into a new season over a number of years. A season of even more prayer, of even more focus on Jesus, to be the church that He is building. The addition in 2024 was a call to be 'bold and courageous'. We have wrestled with this call all year long, asking what does that mean for us, His people, here, in this place, at this time?

As we looked towards 2025, we've prayed, held many prayer meetings and encouraged all the congregation to share what you've sensed God is saying to us. We've discerned God revealing a number of themes, one of which was particularly surprising and genuinely bold and courageous. To further test and discern God's will, we looked back over the last five years and reviewed all the pages and pages of prophetic words, pictures and leadings collected. Over that time, as a church, we had some disruption and change, in particular the challenges of navigating COVID and associated lockdowns.

Over that time, we've been continuously brought back to the Gospels, to Jesus, His character, teaching and actions and the need for us to patiently, prayerfully abide in God's presence. Over the last three years in particular, every time we've looked at our Sunday teaching focus, it's always taken us back to the Gospels and Acts, rather than the Epistles.

In the last two years, Ephesians 6, Paul's teaching about the armour of God has come up, only for us to discern that the time was not yet right, until now! Why is that? Is it to protect us as a church for when we are bold and courageous?





As the elders and pastoral team have looked forward to 2025, a clear pattern emerged;

- In spite of some challenging phases over the last five years, this has also been a time of real equipping, deepening and growing as a church.
- We have been continuously reminded that we are a church in a very specific context, at a very specific time. A 'light on the hill' during what, in many ways, is a post-Christian time. The peninsula is our land, not in a dominating sense – but in a serving sense, the local people and place, we are here to serve. The theme of our church as a 'light on the hill' has been continuous for decades. We are a church of a *particular* community, a *particular* people and a *particular* place, a peninsula with very bounded geography. We are 'local', which is why, for a number of years, we've used the phrase 'WBC *Your local church*' – 'Everyday People Loving God and Living it Out - Together'
- We have been reminded that everything starts with a deep *abiding* with God and this starts with prayer and holiness, an ongoing continuous call to be an abiding people, totally trusting in God. From this we are *transformed, grafted* in connection with God and each other and *fruitful* as we grow together, with each other and God, both individually and collectively. From this we can then *overflow*.
- In our *overflowing*, we are here to serve the lost people of this community, drawing the people of this place to God, drawing them to Jesus, through the power of His Spirit, through our being - 'who we are', and our actions – 'everything we do' – *everyday people loving God and living it out*.
- We are called to ensure the legacy of those who've gone before us at WBC is honoured and built upon, and we do that best by building up the Next Generation, ensuring Jesus in this place continues beyond us. 'NextGen', has been and is a key 'leaning' and emphasis for us. Christ is building His church.





In this overall context, we believe we have been prepared for a time to be 'bold and courageous' in 2025. In the prophetic words, pictures, sensings and leadings collected over the last five years, there has been a strong message of that God is doing a "new thing" that we are called to perceive;

**Luke 5:36-39:** <sup>36</sup>He told them this parable: "No one tears a piece out of a new garment to patch an old one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new garment, and the patch from the new will not match the old. <sup>37</sup>And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. <sup>38</sup>No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins. <sup>39</sup>And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, 'The old is better.'"

**Isaiah 43:18-19:** <sup>18</sup>"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. <sup>19</sup>See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

But for 2025 this has left the question, how are we to be bold and courageous? Is it just incrementally adding more, or is there a bold and courageous step we need to "perceive", a catalyst for even more? If so, what is this?

- This led to the elders and leadership to be drawn to a surprising and unexpected step, but one that seemed obvious, once we reviewed and prayerfully reflected on our journey and how God has been speaking to us as a church over the last five years. This bold and courageous step is to reframe our church name! To move from saying 'WBC – Your Local Church' to simply being 'Local Church'. **Local Church – Whangaparāoa: *Everyday People Loving God and Living it Out - Together.***

This was not a gradual discernment, it was a sudden unexpected one, a *Kairos* moment! But one which, once we looked back over God's Spirit guiding over the last five years, became obvious in the context of God's *Chronos* revelation over that time.

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Once embraced, this reframing gave a clear energizing, unifying and motivating framing to all we do. As elders and pastoral team we didn't come to this rationally, we believe it was of the Spirit, spontaneous and unexpected. We see this reframing as a catalyst to further energise and focus our *abiding*, our *transforming* and our *overflowing*, as a people in this place and towards the people of this place, locally, here in Whangaparāoa.



## WHAT CHANGES, WHAT DOESN'T CHANGE?

In many ways, with this reframing, not a lot changes! Yet, in terms of really energising who we are, and the people and place we are called to, everything changes! It inspires our God given imagination. It gives an overarching clarity and purpose to all our ministries, to all our trusts, to our individual and collective calling to this local people and this local place.

It challenges us to ask how we are impacting the Whangaparāoa Peninsula for Jesus. How are we truly being the light on the hill? It challenges us individually and collectively to ask how we are bringing Jesus to this local community, to this peninsula.

Our eyes and ears are opened to perceive more deeply how the Spirit is guiding us, 24-7, in our local streets, in local cafes, local shops, local clubs, local schools, local rest homes and local activities – What are the needs in this local community? Whatever they are, the answer is to be found in Jesus, and we a local church are challenged to bring that!

What doesn't change is that we remain a Baptist church, a congregational church, a 'priesthood of all believers', with Christ as our Head guided by His Word and Spirit. Our official name remains Whangaparāoa Baptist Church, but our communication is that we are **'Local Church – Whangaparāoa'**. This is just like 'Coast Kindy', which is officially Bay of Whales Children's Trust. We honour our past as we look forward to the future, we continue to abide, to be transformed and to overflow, but are more energised in our focus on being Local Church in everything we are and everything we do.





## **WE WILL CONTINUE TO BE A BOLD & COURAGEOUS *ABIDING* PEOPLE IN 2025**

As we said last year, 'abiding' in God, sometimes translated 'remaining', must be at the centre of our being and all we do. We must be a praying and worshipping people. Our identity is in Christ as a people of Word and Spirit.

For 2025 this means we continue to encourage, support and grow personally and collectively through our;

- worship and prayer rhythms,
- understanding of God's Word, and
- practice of hearing what God's Spirit is saying to us now, at this time in this place.

## **WE WILL CONTINUE BE A BOLD & COURAGEOUS *TRANSFORMED* PEOPLE**

We are both individually and collectively transformed through our abiding in Christ. Our grafting to God and with each other, leads to fruitfulness in our lives – to Transformation.

For 2025 this means we continue to encourage, support and grow personally and collectively through our;

- understanding of God's Word,
  - sharing of Spirit led words, pictures, and revelation,
  - regular courses and events, such as Café Chats, visiting speakers, and curating and sharing resources, and
  - connection through shared food, home groups and organic relational connection at all times.
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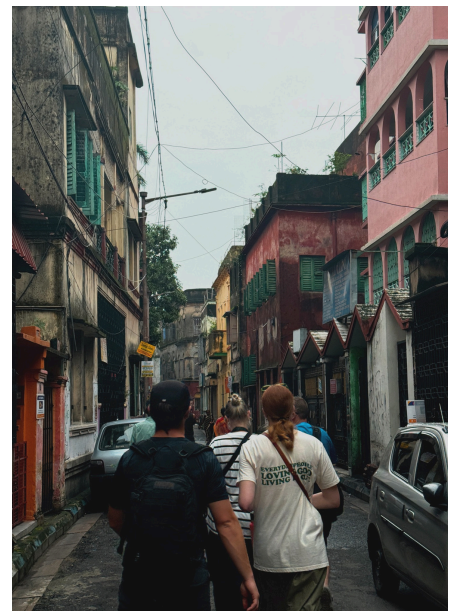


## WE WILL CONTINUE BE A BOLD & COURAGEOUS OVERFLOWING PEOPLE

Everyday People, Loving God and Living it out Together - Overflowing locally and beyond...

For 2025 this means we continue to encourage, support and grow personally and collectively through our;

- Local community impact through events such as Community Service Day, our WBC Foodbank, and our Trusts - CYC and Coast Kindy.
- Personal missional responsibility, wherever we are, whatever we do, 24/7.
- Global impact through the missionaries we support, such as Whitney Lake, and our partnership with Joyya in India, our people and place overseas.



# LOCAL CHURCH WHANGAPARĀOA: *EVERYDAY PEOPLE, LOVING GOD AND LIVING IT OUT TOGETHER - BOLDLY AND COURAGEOUSLY*

By now in reading this, some of you may be excited and inspired, some of you may have questions. Reframing ourselves as 'Local Church Whangaparāoa' is bold and courageous, it invites us individually and collectively to be bold and courageous. Because of this, we want to take time to test and discern whether this really is God's will – whether it seems good to the Spirit and to us collectively (Acts 15:28). So, all we will do for the next year is to use this naming, to use it in different places and different ways, to use different variations of it, to see how it resonates and in what ways.

For example, below are ways it may be used, just brainstorming (please don't take literally!);

- Local Church Whangaparāoa – *Your Local Church*
- Local Church Whangaparāoa – *Everyday People, Loving God and Living it Out Together*
- 'Local Kids', 'Local Kindy', 'Local Youth', 'Local Toy Library', 'Local Food Bank'...'Local Church'...

Also, we want to see how it inspires our individual and collective Spirit led imagination – How does it open our eyes and ears to perceive what God's will is for us, His local church, the church that Christ is building, in this local community.

Over 2025 we ask you to pray into this, share the words, pictures and leadings you receive, test whether it changes how you perceive things and whether it seems in line with God's will.





# THE ENEMY WILL NOT LIKE THIS! PUT ON THE ARMOUR OF GOD – EPHESIANS 6

At the same time as prayerfully discerning all this, we were drawn back to Ephesians 6, 'the armour of God', and clearly sensed that with such a bold and courageous step, now was the time to step into this passage, to dwell in it, to meditate on it, to pray into it, to put on the armour of God. The enemy will not like a bold and courageous move that acts as a catalyst to deeper and wider Godly imagination, of how we can truly be Local Church Whangaparāoa, *everyday people loving God and living it out together*, here in this place, at this time!

**Ephesians 6:10-18:** <sup>10</sup>Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup>Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup>Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup>and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup>Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup>And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.



## A WORD TO PONDER

When we relooked back into the past, and particularly at the last five years of prophetic words, pictures and leadings, we were shocked and surprised - in a good way - by a word from 2019. A word we'd largely forgotten. It was as if God was summarising in the past, what he's been leading us through and into over this period - God can have a habit of doing this! The word was from a prophetically gifted person from outside our church, who doesn't know our church. He was speaking with Adam Harris and offered the following word, perhaps we've just caught up?

### ***Word 9.20am Wednesday 25th September 2019***

*Your church is called to be an overflow Centre into the community where the people know how to carry the presence of God to those around them.*

*Now is a time of reshaping and preparation of what is to come.*

*It is time to prepare for an influx of young, young adults and families. The foundations that you prepare now, will be the rich soil ready for a fresh outpouring and resourcing of these ages in the time ahead.*

*You are on the cusp of an exciting season of growth as a church, one where the Spirit of God will move powerfully. Remain in the word as this will keep your course.*

*Do not be afraid of bold changes, but rather, expect to place deep lines in new ground in order that the new wine come.*

*The horizon is rich with life, and you can expect that while preparing for the day ahead, some will question your actions, but stand true to the Lord, create space in all things for his presence to move, value his presence at the heart of all and stay the course.*

*This is a little out there, but I feel to say that 'you may even need to change your name'.*

*I see your church as a hub within the community. A hub where people's needs are met. Remember to keep Father, Son and Spirit at the centre of all you do. This will keep you on track to see lives transformed and rich in Kingdom value.*

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: Will there be any opportunities to discuss this Vision Sunday document, key proposals and to ask questions?**

A: Yes, there will be two Vision Sunday Q+A spaces, Sunday December 8th and Sunday December 15th at 11.15am in the church lounge.

**Q: What is the Core Leadership Group (CLG)?**

A: The Core Leadership Group or CLG is the group of Associate Pastors that collectively fulfil the traditional role of a Senior Pastor, hence the term 'pastoral team'. We adopted this leadership approach in 2006. This allows us to not be reliant on one single person, and to have a wider range of gifting and experiences available, guided by the five-fold expression of prophets, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Eph.4:12).

The current CLG comprises Olga Oosthuizen, Adam Harris, Wendy Wakerley, and Mark Powell. All other ministry leaders in the church link with one of the CLG. Currently, the CLG's main responsibilities are divided as follows; Olga - Seniors, Pastoral Care, Part of Preaching & Teaching Team, Welcoming & Connection, Home/Life Groups, WBC Foodbank; Adam - NextGen, CYC Team Leader, Part of Preaching & Teaching Team; Wendy - Administration Support, Communications; Mark - Team Leader/Facilitator, Part of Preaching & Teaching Team, Finance, Community Trusts. This list is not exhaustive, but gives a picture of where main responsibilities lie.

**Q: Who are the Elders of WBC?**

A: The current elders are Susan Williamson, Shaun Cooper, Ron Kyle and Janelle Coombridge.

**Q: How do I become a church member?**

A: If you are interested, please speak with any of the CLG, Olga, Wendy, Adam or Mark.

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**Q: Where does the money come from to fund the church?**

A: We are an independent church, that is part of the Baptist Association of New Zealand. Most of our income is from the generous giving of our congregation. On top of this we have some income from commercial and residential property we own. But we are not part of a large institution which gets money from a national organisation. We are a local body of Christ, generously funded by that body, to do His work in this place at this time.

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