



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

APRIL 2026

*Note the odd time

3 April	Good Friday service, with the Catholics, all welcome (at San Antonio)	3:00pm
5 April	'Sonrise' service, on beach, by RSA, HCBs and tea/coffee after	6:30am
5 April	Shared Easter Sunday service with the Anglicans (at San Antonio)	9:00am*
12 April	Informal worship (WTW ¹)	9:30am
19 April	Formal service Rev Graeme Munro	9:30am
26 April	Informal worship (BYO ²)	9:30am
3 May	Shared service with the Anglicans (at St Ronan's)	9:30am

<i>The more we get together</i>	2
<i>Clerk's corner</i>	3
<i>At the ends of the Earth</i>	4
<i>As war rages, an old myth is being rolled out again</i>	5
<i>Oh, the sweet scent of war</i>	7
<i>Rood Screen – Something borrowed</i>	9
<i>Stories of justice in action</i>	11
<i>Everything is connected</i>	12
<i>Power Hour –What did Jesus say about foot washing?</i>	13
<i>Eastbourne Retired Person's Association</i>	14
<i>Phil's photo – Tennis fundraiser</i>	15

Power Hour – Sundays 9:30am

Mainly Music – Thursdays 9:15-11:15am

For pastoral care needs, please contact one of the Local Shared Ministry Team

Reg Weeks 027 491 5947, Simon Shaw 562 8772, Colin Dalziel 562 7238, Sandy Lang 562 8753

¹ What's The Word. We are given a bible passage to read, and we discover what this has to say to us.

² Bring Your Own. We each bring to share a song, a reading, a poem, a prayer etc. Or just come and discover what others may bring.

The more we get together...

In a sense, I'm revisiting a theme I wrote about once before - a popular children's song which goes '*The more we get together, the happier we'll be.*' That was just before we began our monthly, first Sundays, shared communion services with St Albans congregation. And haven't they gone well...!



And come Ash Wednesdays, Easters and Christmases, all three Eastbourne churches get together - St Ronan's and St Alban's and San Antonio.

It reminds me that, back-in-the-day, during the closing years of last century, Colin Wright (Vicar of St Albans) and I (Minister of St Ronan's) persuaded our respective congregations to celebrate Maundy Thursday together, with an evening foot-washing service in St Alban's. And it was warmly received...!

Like that first sharing of the bread and wine which shapes our respective communion liturgies, it was part of Jesus' last Passover meal with his disciples.

You can read about it in any one of the four Gospels, but as Mark's is the earliest account, and regarded as being based on the recollections and preaching of Peter, it's interesting to compare his version with the accounts of Mathew, Luke and John. It is only John who recalls the foot-washing, along with much more of Jesus' teaching. Luke's account appears to be based on that of Mark, particularly in the careful instructions given to the two disciples about how to find the house where they are to set up for the meal.

If you've been following the TV series *The Chosen*, that is the account they follow in Season 5 Episode 7. This picks up the early church tradition where John Mark himself helped with the preparation, as the upper room, where it was held, was in his parents' house.

Not only that but when he recounts the arrest of Jesus in the Gethsemane garden, many commentators believe that his account of the 'young man' fleeing naked on that occasion is the author's 'signature', suggesting that he also was present at the scene, along with his mentor, Peter.

Further support is found in Luke's second volume, the Book of Acts, in chapter 12 which describes how Peter, immediately after his escape from prison in Jerusalem, goes straight to the 'house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark'. And it is widely held that the disciples continued to meet in the same upper room where they had shared the Last Supper.

However, be all that as it may, no account tells us who cooked the lamb. Luke tells us that Peter and John were told to meet and follow a man carrying a

water jar, who would lead them to a house with a large upper room where they were to set up for the Passover. In the evening, Mark records that 'the Twelve' arrived with Jesus.



But roasting a lamb over an open fire takes four to six hours³, which suggests the household servants, under the instructions of John Mark's mother, would have been the ones who made sure that all was ready in good time.

So it is, with any celebration, the leaders take the limelight while, behind the scenes, many unsung others give their time, energy and expertise. Whenever we sit to eat, let's remember to honour with a heartfelt word of thanks, those who faithfully meet our needs.

Reg Weeks

Clerks corner...

Room rate rise: At St Ronan's we have the tradition of making our buildings available to the wider Eastbourne community. This way we connect and stay connected with it. This fits with the second part of our mission statement '*Our God calls us to worship and grow together and to show the love of Christ through serving our community*'. I see it as pretty simple - the community needs spaces - we have spaces - we make our spaces available to the community - this creates opportunity for engagement. This was Jesus' pattern...



With *Mainly Music* and *Toy Library* now well over 20 years old, a whole generation of Eastbournites knows its way around our place and feels at home here. They are comfortable, at a whim, just to wonder in, to access the community fridge, to play in our garden, sometimes just to use a loo... Today, while I was there attending to some matter, a mum and her little girl came in for a few minutes - the mum to sit down on the memorial seat, her little girl to play quietly on the swings and slides.



³ Plus, an earlier two hours to get the fire hot before cooking could even start. *Ed.*

For pre-schoolers, St R's is birthday 'party central'... We also have regular community bookings for ~25 hours a week. Mainly of our Hall and after school, term-times, Monday noon to Saturday noon. Our biggest client is *Legacy Dance* (Tues, Weds, Thurs, Sat), mostly girls from preschool to late teens.

We charge for room hire but our hire income covers only ~30% of the high cost of building maintenance, rates, power, insurance etc. Every now and then we raise our hire rates in line with inflation. The last time we did this was 5 years ago in April 2021. At our recent PC meeting we again raised them in line with the CPI since that date. Hall is now \$30 /h, Fellowship room is now \$25 /h

e: slang@outlook.co.nz **t:** 562 8752 **m:** 021 222 0383 **Sandy Lang**

At the ends of the Earth...

"For us, here in Aotearoa New Zealand, beloved God, here at the ends of the Earth, we are vulnerable when foreign leaders go rogue and childish, when they lack experience and wisdom.

Today we pray for a swift end to the wars begun by the United States and Israel in Iran and Lebanon, and we pray for those who are powerless to stop the bombs and the drones from falling...

Give us peace of mind that the river of your spirit can flow around all the obstacles humanity can put up, in the way of the peace you seek..."

Diane Gilliam Weeks

Taken from Diane's 'prayers for others' at our service on 15 March.

This date also marked the 6th anniversary of the mosque massacre in Christchurch.



As war rages, an old myth is being rolled out again...

Whenever war erupts, the language of moral justification is never far behind. Governments insist that force has been used reluctantly. Military leaders assure us that targets are chosen carefully. Civilian deaths are described as tragic but unavoidable 'collateral damage.'

Even the names given to military campaigns reveal this dynamic. Modern operations are often described in grand or mythic terms: Desert Storm, Rolling Thunder, Enduring Freedom, Epic Fury. Such language frames war as epic drama rather than human catastrophe. It evokes images of unstoppable natural forces or heroic struggle.



Rev Graham Redding

The effect is subtle but powerful. When warfare is wrapped in the language of destiny, power and liberation, the suffering it inflicts becomes easier to overlook.

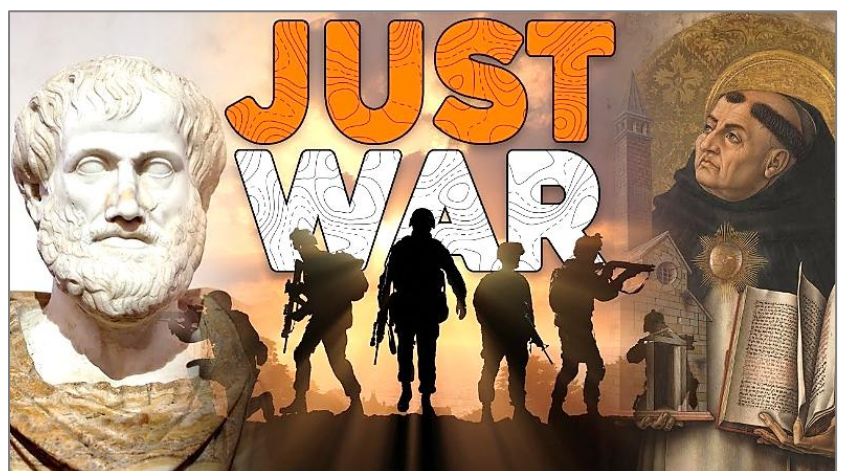
For centuries, one of the most influential ways of giving moral legitimacy to warfare has been the Christian tradition known as 'just war theory'. Originating in the writings of thinkers such as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, the theory attempts to place ethical limits on war.

It asked whether a war had a just cause, whether it was declared by legitimate authority, whether it was fought with right intention, and whether the harm inflicted was proportional to the good sought. It also insisted that non-combatants should be protected.

At first glance, these criteria appear humane and responsible. In fact, they were often framed as attempts to restrain violence in a brutal age. Yet the history of war suggests that the theory has functioned less as a restraint and more as a justification.

Almost every war in modern history has been presented as a 'just war' - by at least one of the parties involved.

Each side claims legitimate authority. Each insists its cause is defensive or necessary. Each believes its intentions are honourable. Even when civilian casualties are high, the language of proportionality is invoked to argue that the overall good outweighs the harm.



In practice, the criteria are so elastic that they can be stretched to fit almost any conflict. What begins as an ethical framework quickly becomes a moral vocabulary that allows leaders to reassure themselves and their citizens that what they are doing remains righteous.

More troubling still is the way the theory can disguise the realities of modern warfare. The concept of collateral damage illustrates this clearly.

The phrase sounds clinical, almost technical. It distances us from the human truth it describes - families killed in their homes, children buried under rubble, communities permanently scarred. By placing such suffering within a framework of moral calculation, we risk normalising it.

The deeper problem is the assumption that war can ever truly be just. War inevitably unleashes forces that exceed moral control. Once violence begins, fear, anger and the desire for revenge quickly distort the intentions with which it started.

War begets war. Military necessity expands. Rules loosen. Targets multiply. Even disciplined armies struggle to contain the chaos they unleash.

History repeatedly demonstrates this dynamic. Wars that begin with limited objectives escalate. Civilian infrastructure becomes a strategic target. Entire populations are drawn into the conflict. The moral boundaries that once seemed clear become blurred or ignored.

In the 21st century, these dangers are magnified. Precision weapons may reduce some forms of destruction, but modern warfare still devastates cities and societies. Drones, cyber-attacks, and long-range missiles extend the reach of conflict far beyond traditional battlefields.

Meanwhile, the speed of modern media ensures that narratives of justification spread instantly across the globe.

Against this backdrop, the language of just war can function less as a moral safeguard and more as a comforting illusion. It reassures us that violence remains under ethical control when it rarely is.

None of this means that nation states do not have the right to defend their citizens. The geopolitical realities of power, threat and security cannot be ignored.

But acknowledging this reality is different from claiming moral purity in the midst of war.

Perhaps the most honest starting point is to recognise that war is always, at best, a tragedy. At worst, it is a catastrophic failure of human community. It should never be framed as morally clean.

For faith communities, this recognition invites a deeper self-examination. In the Christian imagination, the church's calling is not simply to provide ethical frameworks that make war appear respectable.

It is to bear witness to a different vision of human life, one grounded in reconciliation, restraint and the recognition of every person's dignity, including one's enemy.

That witness does not eliminate the difficult decisions faced by political leaders, but it does challenge the seductive myth that war can ever be comfortably justified.

When bombs fall and civilians die, the question is not how convincingly we can argue that the violence was just. The more important question is whether we have become too comfortable believing that it could be.

Graham Redding

Graham Redding is the Douglas Goodfellow Lecturer in Chaplaincy Studies, Theology programme, University of Otago. He was formally Master of Knox College, Dunedin. This article was published in the Otago Daily Times on 15 March 2026. Contributed here by Anne Manchester.

Oh, the sweet scent of war...

*Oh, the sweet scent of war,
when the power-driven sniff the air,
the thrill of gain pumps in their veins.
To take over, and make over
the small, the weak, it delights the soul.
All sense of fair and right
is lost in the fragrance of might.*

**Gird us
Guide us
Guard us
Oh God of all good.**

*Oh, the sweet scent of war;
Its taste licks lips,
A smirk sends shivers where targets pose
to pluck the bounty off losers.
A regime change
can be done on a whim
to tilt the Order from them toward me.*



**Gird us
Guide us
Guard us
Oh God of all good.**

*Oh, the sweet scent of war;
an aroma that teases
the greedy, the reckless.
Who can't pay the tariff?
Who won't bend the knee?
They wallow in fake news
and woken in glee.*

**Gird us
Guide us
Guard us
Oh God of all good.**

*But who does forget
the stench of past death,
when plans of the haughty
died in the mud of plunder?
Too easy bad memories fade
mid the elixir to conquer.
Just what, and who, will stop all the madness?*

**Gird us
Guide us
Guard us
Oh God of all good.**

*Dictators and generals
smell the lure of invasion.
But each of us sees war in our sights -
the Treaty, the planet and equitable living
need defending, protecting.
So, who will take up arms of banner and song?
Oh, the sweet scent of war – does this perfume smell wrong??*

**Gird us
Guide us
Guard us
Oh God of all good.**

Lionel Nunns

(Lionel wrote this poem to use in his service at St Ronan's on March 15 but then decided Diane's prayers had covered the topic sufficiently.)

Rood Screen – Something borrowed...

Those of us with English as our mother tongue seldom pause to consider how un-English our language is...

Imagine a scene where you take off your *jodhpurs*, put on your *pyjamas*, and sit on the *verandah* of your *bungalow*. Perhaps there is a baby in a *cot* wearing *dungarees* snuggled under a *shawl*, its mother with freshly *shampooed* hair wearing a *pashmina* and a *bangle* or two – looking very *cushy* or even *pukka*.

These words have all been unashamedly usurped (borrowed) from various Southeast Asian languages - but we now claim them as our own.

And our American cousins have taken (and passed on to us) many Spanish words. *Corral*, *bronco*, *chaps* (short for *chaparreras*), *rodeo*, *lasso*, *bonanza*, *canyon*, *stampede*, *lariat* and *vamoose* – to name but a few.

Some words were already 'stolen' before we got hold of them. *Peace* comes from the French *paix* – which in turn came from the Latin *pax*. *Monsoon* came to us from Arabic via Portuguese or maybe even Dutch.

But does it really matter? *We* know what we mean when we use these words and our listeners (hopefully) know what they mean when they hear them. They are now 'English', and that's the bit that counts.

We will soon celebrate Easter and I suspect that, like me, you enjoyed chocolate Easter eggs and hot cross buns. But did you know these quintessential Christian traditions have pagan origins that precede Christianity?

Hot cross buns: Many will tell you that the cross on a hot cross bun (HCB) represents the crucifixion, while the spices inside symbolise those used to embalm Christ.

Historians believe HCBs date back to pagan traditions of ancient Britain. The Saxons (invaded in 1066 from Saxony in Germany) used to bake buns marked with a cross during their spring celebrations to honour Eostre, the goddess of dawn and fertility. The cross symbolised the four quarters of the moon. It's likely Eostre is the origin of the word Easter.

As Christianity spread through England, the church adapted/adopted many pagan customs. By the 12th century, these springtime buns were given a religious interpretation, with the cross now representing Jesus' crucifixion.



In the late 14th century, Father Thomas Rockcliffe started distributing these buns to the poor in St Albans (a town in Hertfordshire, England) on Good Friday. This cemented the association of HCBs with Easter and the end of Lent. They were typically made with ingredients forbidden during Lent, such as sugar and butter, making them a special treat for the end of the fasting period.

In 1592, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, a decree was issued limiting the sale of HCBs to funerals, Christmas and Good Friday.

The Victorian era brought a transformation in the recipe and appearance of HCBs. Bakers added dried fruits (currants, raisins) and spices (cinnamon, nutmeg) making them sweeter and more aromatic. Around that time, HCBs became a popular street food in England, with vendors selling them on Good Friday. They would sell them still hot from the oven – hence the 'hot' in the name.

Does any of this history really matter? Of course not...! We enjoy them and they help us celebrate Easter.



Chocolate Eggs: Easter in the Northern Hemisphere occurs in spring, a time of rebirth and renewal. It doesn't require much imagination to find a link with eggs. Decorated ostrich eggs dating back 60,000 years have been found in southern Africa! In ancient times, particularly in Persia and Egypt, it was customary to offer eggs decorated or dyed red at the arrival of spring.

Until the 17th century, Christians were not allowed to eat eggs during Lent - but the chickens did not stop laying, so by the end of Lent, when the fast was broken, families had dozens of eggs on their hands. Then the idea arose, in order not to waste them, to decorate them and offer them as gifts on Easter Sunday.

In the Victorian era, chocolate was seen as an extravagant and luxurious treat and with the development of moulds that allowed the production of hollow eggs, the chocolate Easter Egg was born.

Once again, does their pagan origin really matter? Of course not... We enjoy them and they help us celebrate Easter. What really *does* matter is that while we enjoy our Easter treats, we remember the 'reason for the season' and celebrate the Risen Christ.



John Harris

Stories of justice in action...

Sometimes I think my life has come full circle. My journalism career began in the late 1980s - nearly 40 years ago - when I joined the Presbyterian and Methodist national



JUST STORIES

newspaper *Crosslink* as its first journalist. They were exciting days. There was even a budget to send me to different parts of the country to attend conferences and visit churches that were living out their faith in service to their communities.

Over recent months, I have become involved as an editor and occasional storyteller for 'Just Stories', a new website offering a collection of stories of 'justice in action' from the Presbyterian whānau. This whānau includes the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, Presbyterian Support and Presbyterian Church Schools. The website also includes stories from beyond the Presbyterian whānau, reflecting responses from other community organisations that work to transform and foster hope in our communities.

Just Stories is managed by a small oversight team, with funding and support from Presbyterian Support Northern, Presbyterian Support NZ and the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand as part of its commitment to PresCare. PresCare is a partnership between the Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Support that seeks to respond to the needs of children and families in Aotearoa.

A grant from the Justice Compassion Trust of Aotearoa New Zealand helped establish the Just Stories website.

St Ronan's former minister, the Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, and Anne Overton from Presbyterian Support Northern are among those who spearheaded the Just Stories initiative. They and others on the team were aware how powerful stories can be to spark imagination and provide new perspectives to energise, encourage and empower people to act.

Many wonderful things are happening in the Presbyterian whānau but how do those in the wider church get to hear about them?

So go to the Just Stories website (<https://www.juststories.nz>) and start exploring some of the stories that show justice and compassion being put into action at the grass roots.



Two stories I wrote recently are about some incredible things happening in and around Whakatāne. It all started with one Presbyterian congregation and its minister, Chris Barnard, but now involves all 10 churches in the town, and the community beyond. Nowadays it's run by an independent charitable trust, Have a Heart. This reaches hundreds of people each year through various

initiatives and activities. These include an annual Expo and Family Festival, a community store, Food Hub and low-cost grocery store, and 18 Pātaka Kai situated among Māori communities. How all this is funded is an inspiring story in itself. These stories will be posted on the website in a couple of months' time.

Maybe these stories will spark ideas and conversations as we work to put justice into action in our own context and community. Let's reflect on them, either on our own, or in the various groups we belong to, within and beyond St Ronan's.

Anne Manchester

Everything is connected...

Whakataukī are traditional Māori proverbs that convey wisdom, values and cultural teaching. They are often used in both everyday life and formal speeches.

It's a poetic form of the Māori language, is almost always anonymous, and often merges historical events or holistic perspectives. Whakataukī are extremely influential in Māori society.



The whakataukī pictured reminds us that everything is connected; from Ranginui (Skyfather) to Papatūānuku (Earth mother), to the moana (lakes, rivers, oceans), to te herenga tangata (people), and all exists in harmony. It is often used as a karakia to start formal meetings, even school assemblies. It is also set to music and is sung as a hymn.

It translates as:

*Write it in the sky
Write in the land
Write it in the hearts of all people
For the greatest thing is love
Behold there is life.*

Why not send me your favourite whakataukī and we'll publish one each month in the *Record*? It'll be a way of increasing our knowledge of te reo Māori and deepening our cultural understandings.

Anne Manchester

Power Hour —What did Jesus say about foot washing...?

In our Power Hour theme this term, *Following in Jesus' Footsteps*, we have now journeyed to the week of Passover and the first Easter.

Jesus was freedom camping with his disciples on the Mount of Olives which overlooks Jerusalem's main eastern gate. At the beginning of the week, coming from Bethany, Jesus headed towards the East Gate riding on a young colt of a donkey — the equivalent of today's economy car.

This is exactly as the long-ago (approximately 500 BC) prophecy of the prophet Zachariah. He foretold of a new kingdom of peace with justice, caring, forgiving and hope. This new king would ride on the foal of a donkey, rather than on a war horse and would do what was right. (Zechariah 9:9)

A crowd hurried down to join Jesus with cheers and shouts. Some threw down their cloaks in front of him and others called out, 'Hosanna! Save us now, God! The long-promised King has come! God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord!' (John 12:12-14)

Later, on the day of the Passover supper, Jesus and his disciples arrived at the upstairs room in a Jerusalem house where Peter and John had prepared the Passover meal. Everyone was hot and dusty having walked through the busy streets in open sandals or bare feet. It was very convivial and Jesus looked upon them with great affection. Alas, the disciples became restless and wanted to know where the servant was to wash their dusty feet, the first gesture of hospitality upon entering a home. The equivalent today would be taking our shoes off at the door of someone's house.

No servant appeared to wash their feet and yet all was laid out ready — the table of food, the wash basin, the pitcher of water, the towel. No one there would think of washing the guests' feet. It was not the 'done thing'.

Then Jesus took off his outer coat, wrapped a towel about him, poured water into the basin and went from one disciple to the next, washing their feet in turn. The disciples felt shame.

When Jesus sat down, he asked, 'Do you understand what I have been trying to tell you? You call me Teacher and Lord because you are right. If I your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash each other's feet. I did this as an example so you should do as I have done for you. A messenger (Jesus) is not greater than the one (God) who sent him. If you know these things, you will be happy if you do them.'



Power Hour reenacts how Jesus washed his disciple's feet

Said another way: 'I am willing to do anything for you, even wash your feet, because I love you. I want you to follow my example. Care for each other and love one another as I love and care for you. Don't always be thinking of yourselves and your own importance.' (Corollary: Don't be holier than thou or think that you are God. Be humble in all ways.) (John 13: 1-20)

Susan Connell

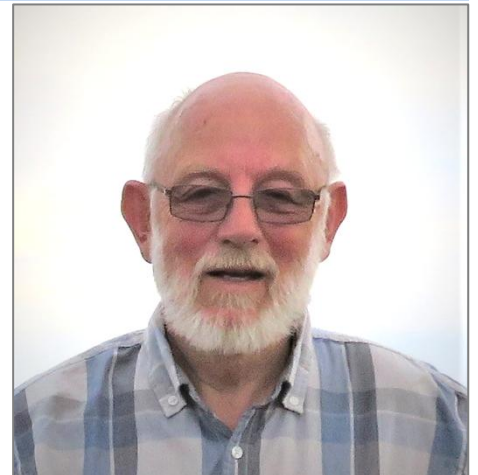
Term 2: 20 April to 28 June 2026

Eastbourne Retired Person's Association (ERPA)...

John Harris is the guest speaker at the next ERPA meeting on 20 April, in St Ronan's Fellowship room. The meeting begins at 10:00am with a cuppa and biscuits.

Titled 'Around the World in 51 Days', John will share a few highlights from his 2024 holiday. These will include tales from the Seychelles, and visits to Münster and Freiburg, the Hebrides and Skye.

(This is an archival photo of John – he's much shaggier now...! Ed.)



Phil's photo – Tennis fundraiser...



**Wellington Rotary's 'Jumbo Tennis' fundraiser at the Renouf Tennis Centre
6 March 2026**



Our God calls us to worship and grow together and to show the love of Christ through serving our community.

Directory

St Ronan's Presbyterian Church,
234 Muritai Road, Eastbourne, Lower Hutt, 5013

Local Ministry Team

Reg Weeks	027 491 5947	third.age@outlook.co.nz
Sandy Lang	021 222 0383	slang@xtra.co.nz
Simon Shaw	562 8772	simonjshaw@xtra.co.nz
Colin Dalziel	562 7238	colinjdalziel@gmail.com

Parish Clerk

Sandy Lang 021 222 0383 slang@outlook.co.nz

For...

- Hall bookings
- Information & general correspondence
- The Record
 - Contributions to the Record are welcome
 - Request monthly delivery of the Record to your mailbox
 - Note: *The views expressed in the Record are those of the authors they don't necessarily represent those of St Ronan's Church*

Deadline for the May Record is Sunday 26 April 2026