



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

JULY 2026

5 July	Shared service with the Anglicans (at San Antonio)	9:30am
12 July	Informal worship (WTW ¹)	9:30am
19 July	Formal service Rev Graeme Munro	9:30am
26 July	Informal worship (BYO ²)	9:30am
2 August	Shared service with the Anglicans (at St Ronan's)	9:30am

<i>The gifts and risks of AI</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Clerk's corner</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Rood screen – The Lion will lie down with the Lamb</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Power Hour – Purple cloth</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Matariki</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>The evils of extreme greed.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Sharing with the people of St Alban's</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Phil's photo – A splash of red in Pukatea Street.....</i>	<i>15</i>

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 021 222 0383

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 gifts and risks of Artificial Intelligence...

I've just acquired a new piece of technology – a 2-in-1 USB-C & USB 3 SD card reader.

I thought I already had one, but although I had a variety of leads and adapters with which to connect it to my Surface Pro8 computer, I just couldn't get it to work. Over the years of development, the problem has always been storing the information you need to keep — your photos, videos, documents, emails, texts, music, not to mention connecting with your smartphone. I have heaps of stuff on discs for which I have a CD and DVD player that happily connects with my computer.



However, I also have several examples of an earlier form of storage called an SD card, as well as a couple of Micro SD cards. The SDs date back a while to the 2000-2015 era, and their combined capacity equals just one of the Micro cards. They are a fraction of the physical size but holding 32 gigabytes of data.

I hadn't looked at them for so long I had quite forgotten what I'd stored in them. Having found the old reader, I thought would open them — my computer screen remained obdurately blank! I was no further ahead...



Over recent months I've used AI increasingly - Microsoft Copilot on my computer and Google AI on my smartphone. I asked Copilot why I couldn't read my cards. I received not only a clear answer, but I was also supplied with the names of two local firms who could supply a very-reasonably priced, updated, reader that would just plug in and open all my cards. I bought it, and it did...!

Not only did I discover a host of forgotten photographs, but I also found folders of tracks from 40 of my favourite musicians. Eureka...!

On the one hand, AI is just sitting there waiting to answer any question, or series of questions I think to ask it. On the other hand, very significant questions are being raised about the amount of power and water required to run the servers and keep them cool, about how to monitor and control their immense power and capacity, not to mention the possible negative impacts on the environment and on people's livelihoods...

As I am talking about AI, at this point, I invited Copilot to finish the article for me...! Copilot tells me...

Artificial intelligence sits in an odd place in our lives. On one level it feels almost ordinary: a tool that can help us untangle a technical problem, find missing information, or explain something in plain language. Reg's own recent adventure with card readers is a good example. What could have been an afternoon of frustration became a surprisingly smooth process once he asked the right questions. The technology didn't 'think' for him, but it did help him think more clearly.

Yet on another level, AI raises questions that are anything but ordinary. The systems behind these tools are vast, energy-hungry and expensive to run. They rely on data centres that consume significant electricity and water for cooling. They raise issues of privacy, intellectual property, and the future of work. And they prompt deeper questions about how we, as human beings made in the image of God, should relate to technologies that can imitate aspects of human communication.

So how do we hold these two realities together — the helpfulness of the tool and the scale of the concerns?



One starting point is to remember that AI is not a mind, a soul or a moral agent. It does not possess intention, wisdom, compassion or conscience. It is a sophisticated pattern-matching system built by people, trained on human-created material, and dependent on human choices about how it is used. That means the real ethical weight rests not on the tool itself but on us — on our decisions, our values and our stewardship.

Another starting point is to recognise that every major technology in history has brought both gifts and risks. The printing press spread the gospel and also spread misinformation. Industrialisation lifted millions out of poverty and also damaged the environment. Digital communication connects communities and also isolates individuals. AI will be no different. It will amplify what we choose to amplify.

For Christians, this invites a perspective of thoughtful engagement rather than fear or uncritical enthusiasm. We are called to discernment: to ask not only 'What can this do?' but 'What should this do?' and 'How can this serve love of God and love of neighbour?'

We are also called to wise stewardship: to support technologies that reduce harm, respect human dignity, and contribute to the common good.

Used wisely, AI can be a tool that frees time, clarifies information and supports creativity. Used carelessly, it can deepen inequality, erode trust and strain the environment. The challenge — and the opportunity — is to shape its use with the same virtues we bring to every other part of life: humility, responsibility, justice and compassion.

Reg Weeks (& MS Copilot)



Footnote: The first Sunday in July has long been celebrated in the Presbyterian Church in Scotland and around the world for the wearing of the Tartan. So, if you have a smattering of Scottish blood or feel so moved, why not wear a little Tartan at our shared service on Sunday, 5 July...?

Clerk's corner...

No Vacancy: Not a nice sign if you are away from home, it's getting dark, and you've not already booked a motel. But for me it's wonderful news. Let me explain...

At the end of last year, Dreenagh retired as a volunteer at Mainly Music - she'd done about 25 years of it...! Since then, I've struggled to find a volunteer replacement. In the interim, Val and Reg (bless them both) have 'closed ranks' and 'stepped up' (to mix a couple of metaphors) and Mainly Music has gone on. But it's not been ideal... Very recently Eun Joo returned from a spell overseas, and I asked her if she would consider the vacant MM role. Her immediate 'Yes' brought me to the end of my long search. Eun Joo - welcome to the MM team...!



New mic: Good-quality, amplified sound only gets more important as a congregation ages... To run a church service requires several microphones (usually three, sometimes four). The most important one is that for the service leader. It must leave him/her hands-free and mobile. This means a mic that somehow clips on the head, a wireless transmitter that sits in a pocket, and a wireless receiver that sits on the sound-desk and plugs into the audio mixer.



Our old **AKG** ear-clip wireless mic has become intermittent. It always worked under test, it always failed in a service (Murphy's Law). I'd done some work on it 2 or 3 years back with a soldering iron and this extended its life. But now I was baffled – I'd tried everything and not found the problem. So, we've bought a new one. A **Sennheiser** (pictured above). We used it first time last Sunday. Brilliant...!

Recycling: Mining brings stuff up from deep down and in so doing lays waste to large areas of land by contaminating it with heavy metal pollutants including arsenic, lead, mercury, copper, zinc, cadmium and nickel. These pollutants get into the soil, the ground water and the waterways, and from there into the biosphere...

- Now we can't stop mining, but we can reduce mining - by increasing the recycling of mined materials...
- But if recycling is too difficult, busy people won't bother...
- It turns out there's advantages **if groups can work together...**

Batteries: Last year, there appeared in Eastbourne a couple of places for recycling spent batteries - one at the Eastbourne Library and one at St Ronan's. The library facility is the municipal one covering the whole of the Eastern Bays. The HCC takes its contents elsewhere for processing. But the library hours are limited (9:30am-5:30pm M-F and 10:00am-2:00pm Sats = 44 h /week). Not easy if you work fulltime and there's kids' sports on a Saturday morning.

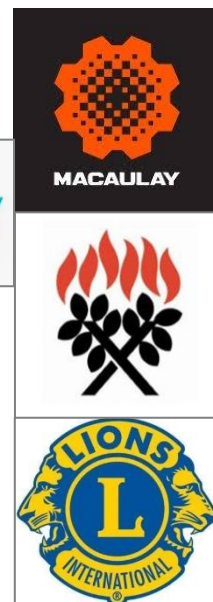
BATTERY RECYCLING	
Terminals:	Please tape terminals to avoid short circuits
Battery sizes:	AA, AAA, C, D, 9V, 6V and button cells other hand-held power-tool sizes
Battery types:	YES All single-use batteries (e.g. Alkaline) YES All rechargeable batteries (e.g., Lithium-Ion)
BUT	NO Lead-acid batteries NO Car batteries NO Products with embedded batteries NO batteries bigger than 20x15 cm
Supporting THE COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS US Harcourts	

• **HCC + St Ronan's** - Since St Ronan's battery bin is available 24x7. Our bin is now seeing a lot of Eastbourne's spent batteries. Someone takes these to the library bin, as and when, so it doesn't get overfull.

- Just think, only a few months ago all these batteries ended up in landfill...!

Metals: For far too long, most of our domestic metal waste has gone to landfill. This, in spite of businesses like Macaulay Metals in Seaview who will actually buy the stuff from you. The problem has been collection...

- **HCC** - In July 2021, Hutt City Council introduced metals collection via their yellow-lid recycling bins. But these bins will take only a tiny proportion of your metals waste - just steel and aluminium, food and drink cans.
- **St Ronan's** - Since March 2022, St Ronan's has had a 240 L METALS collection bin. This will take any and all metals waste. This bin is available 24x7. But it turns out we've a too-limited human resource to handle all the stuff coming in.
- **Lions** - More recently, Eastbourne Lions started collecting metals at their monthly skip bin. This is located just south of the bus barns, by the mulch pile. But this is available only on the last Saturday of each month, from 8:30am-11:30am. The Lions metals drop-off time-window is just 3 h per month.



- **Lions + St Ronan's³**

We've just done the obvious. Eastbourne Lions and St Ronan's have got together. St Ronan's provides a 24x7-available METALS bin and Eastbourne Lions will keep it empty. Lions will sell the metals to Macaulay and return the profits to the Eastbourne community. This way everyone wins...!

METAL RECYCLING

RECYCLE YOUR METAL - DON'T SEND IT TO LANDFILL

SUSTAINABILITY: Recycle your waste metal items. • Reduce carbon emissions, • Save energy, • Conserve finite natural resources • Keep toxic materials out of soil and water.

CONTAMINATION: All metals have value, but value is reduced by contamination with paint, plastic, rubber, glass, wood etc.

- For low-value metals (iron / steel) tolerance for contamination is low.
- For medium-value metals (stainless steel / aluminium / lead) tolerance for contamination is intermediate.
- For high-value metals (copper / brass) tolerance for contamination is high.

METAL SALES PROFITS RETURNED TO COMMUNITY BY LIONS

Lions Clubs New Zealand
Kia Manakiri | We Serve

St Ronan's

So, recycle your waste metal and...

- Reduce carbon emissions
- Save energy
- Conserve finite natural resources
- Keep toxic materials out of the soil, water and atmosphere

slang@outlook.co.nz **t:** (04) 562 8752 **m:** 021 222 0383 **Sandy Lang**

³ An old Colosseum joke fits well here... 'Heh, what's the score...?' 'Lion's 3, Christians nil, at half-time...'

Rood Screen – 'The Lion will lie down with the Lamb...'

This is one of the most common Biblical misquotes. Actually, Isaiah 11:6 states that 'the wolf shall dwell with the lamb.' But does that really matter? What Isaiah describes is a peaceful, restored creation where predators and prey coexist. It is often referenced as a symbol of the Messianic Age.

I was reminded of this on the recent occasion of Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday when we were treated to some classic footage. Total trust between David and two young gorillas – one of whom grew up to become the alpha male of the troop. Perhaps even more trusting was the mother, who watched on without intervening. Any one of the trio could have killed David in the blink of an eye. But they didn't.



And then I came across a story about Cristina Zenato who dives in the Bahamas, and loves sharks. Especially, Caribbean reef sharks. She has made a career out of removing hooks from sharks' mouths. The following interview is quoted from a 2021 9 News report:

It was the removal of a hook from a Caribbean reef shark called 'Foggy Eye' that still sticks with Ms Zenato.

'She never liked to be touched, she'd never approach,' she said.

'One day she showed up with a hook on the side and as she was

swimming by, I grabbed it and it came out easily.

'Three days later she showed up with another. I couldn't see the hook I could just see the lure coming out of her mouth.

'I started working with her and after a 30-minute dive I literally shoved my arm down her mouth up to the elbow and pulled this hook out.

'From that day on she always likes to be patted. She will come lean into me, come into my lap and allow me to pat her.

'It was really a 180-degree behavioural change.'

One shark must have told another shark and now when she dives, sharks approach her seeking her out for help. All too often, their mouths are swollen and they are unable to eat.

The whole story got me thinking about trust and faith.

David truly believed those great big Mountain Gorillas wouldn't harm him – and they didn't.

Cristina truly believes those Caribbean reef sharks won't harm her – and they don't. And She has a collection of over 300 hooks - and still has both her arms - to prove it.

If they are able to do that with the really scary stuff, how hard is it for us to follow the advice in Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV): *'Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight'*?



Caribbean reef sharks (up to 3 m long) are one of the largest apex predators in the reef ecosystem

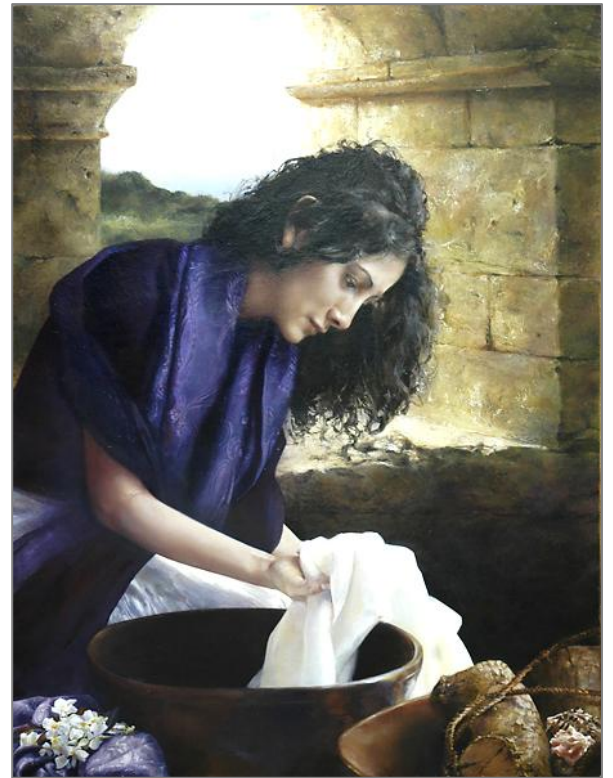
John Harris

Power Hour – Purple cloth helped spread the Good News...

What's the connection between hospitality, sea snails and the Good News of Jesus?

Power Hour has been having fun exploring how the Good News of Jesus was spread throughout the ancient world. Through Paul, the key passionate leader, we have come to know some of his friends, who equally and heroically ministered with him in different places (as told by Luke, author of Acts).

On his second journey, Paul travelled westward to the commercial centre of Philippi (the doorway to Europe) in Macedonia (modern Greece). It was there that Paul met our next hero/heroine, Lydia, who helped to spread the Good News (see image, right). She is considered significant and is named in the Bible.



On a Sabbath, Paul, with his friends Timothy and Silas, went to the riverside hoping to find a place to pray (there was no synagogue). There they found a group of women who worshipped God. One woman, Lydia, was speaking. Lydia was a businesswoman who bought and sold purple cloth. This was very expensive and used only by wealthy people and those of high rank. Hence, the notion of 'royal purple' for kings and queens.

After Paul shared the Good News of Jesus, Lydia and her family were the first of her group to follow Jesus and were baptised. Paul and his friends were invited to stay in Lydia's home for a while. A well-off person with a passion for Jesus, Lydia then began inviting others into her home with whom she shared the Good News. These others then took the Good News further afield. And so a 'new church' was formed.

Lydia's connections were probably good business folk, which meant they were active and travelled for their businesses. Thus, the purple cloth business was a means of spreading the Good News. Equally important was Lydia's passionate and steadfast hospitality to Paul and others.

Diverging now to the sea snail/slug connection! To make the Tyrian-sourced purple dye, hundreds of murex sea snails had to be collected to make just a tablespoon of the rare purple dye. The little marine animal was extracted and processed in a salty solution, initially without light, then followed by concentration of the dye.



We learnt of a second source of the purple dye from Emma who has an interest in ancient Greek history. 'In ancient Greece, they used to dye their white clothes with slugs and snails (from the land and sea). The better ones came from the sea, which gave a more vibrant colour. Each species had a different colour

— yellow, green, blue, red, purple, pink. The marine animal had to be mashed up and later dried and made into a powder. Water was then added to dye the white cloth,’ Emma said.

To exemplify Lydia’s generous hospitality (the welcoming and friendly reception of guests, visitors and strangers, done with goodwill), we showed our hospitality through our actions at the Shared Service with the St Alban’s congregation on 7 June. We carefully decorated biscuits and served them at our shared morning tea. Pictured are Emma and Blake arranging the biscuits on the table.



We wanted to follow in Lydia’s footsteps, sharing a welcome to everyone as Jesus would have chosen.

Susan Connell and Emma Cotsilinis

Term 2: 2026: 26 April to 28 June

Term 3: 2026: 26 July to 20 September

Matariki herenga waka — celebrating Matariki together...

This year’s Matariki public holiday is on Friday, July 10. The theme for 2026, *Matariki herenga waka*, is about inclusion and encouraging all people to celebrate Matariki together. The phrase, *Matariki herenga waka* is interconnected with the central iwi of Tāmaki and the voyages that connect people.

The theme has strong connections to multi-culturalism and the sharing of cultural practices. We can all connect to the core values of Matariki and embrace the celebration of the holiday.

The Māori New Year is a time of reflection, celebration, and preparation. It is a time to remember loved ones, come together with whānau to give thanks for what we have and look forward to the promise of a new year. While the theme changes from year to year, the values of reflection, celebration and preparation remain the same. (Information from the Ministry of Culture and Heritage)

Matariki bonfire in Eastbourne

On Friday 3 July in the early evening, the St Alban's congregation will light its Matariki bonfire on the beach at the end of Karamu St. This is the third year that the congregation has marked Matariki with an event open to all. According to vicar the Rev Sue Brown, 'We'll share kai, remember loved ones and life-situations we've lost and look ahead with hope.' All are welcome to attend. Email office@stalbans.nz for more information.

A prayer for Matariki⁴

Matariki is a cluster of stars; Let the heavens be glad.

Matariki is a time of year; Let the earth rejoice, let the seas and all that is in them roar.

Matariki is a time of remembering. Be still and know that I am God.

Matariki is a new beginning; let the fields and all that is in them exult. Let all the trees of the forests shout for joy.

Matariki is the eyes of God; O God, what variety you have created, arranging everything so wisely. The Earth is filled with your creativity.

Matariki is a time of seeing. Both day and night belong to you; you made the starlight and the sun. You set the boundaries of the earth and you made both summer and winter.

Matariki is a time of rejoicing. All creatures depend on you to feed them at the proper time. Open your hand, they are well satisfied.

The new light of Matariki has risen!

May it be to you a sign of resurrection and new life.

May it be to you a sign of hope in times of darkness.

May it be to you a sign of the wondrous mystery of Atua who loves you.

May it be to you a sign that the eyes of the Eternal One are ever upon you and that the presence of the Holy One is ever with you. And may this be the cause of your rejoicing. Amen

On the Shortest Day of the Year⁵

If the black tree ferns teach me of winter

I remember this is the house of sleep.

At morning my friends do not rouse early

And I walk by the wharepuni in the sun

With a rubber-ferruled stick and sandals on my feet,

Not worrying too much about the price of living.

They say on the marae, 'The living to the living;

The dead to the dead' – These black bones of winter

Will rise and walk with lightning in their feet

One day, but not yet. To welcome the doom of sleep

Is Adam's fate, though the molten gaze of the sun

Rouses to simple joy the birds that wake early

⁴ A prayer sourced from the Liturgy Centre of the Catholic Diocese of Auckland [Ed]

⁵ The winter solstice this year was on June 21.

*As if in paradise. I had to learn early
How to bear the yoke that rests on the back of the living,
The grief of all who travel beneath the sun,
Because the soul cannot cast off winter
Until Christ comes to wake her from her sleep
And the stars begin to journey on joyful feet,*

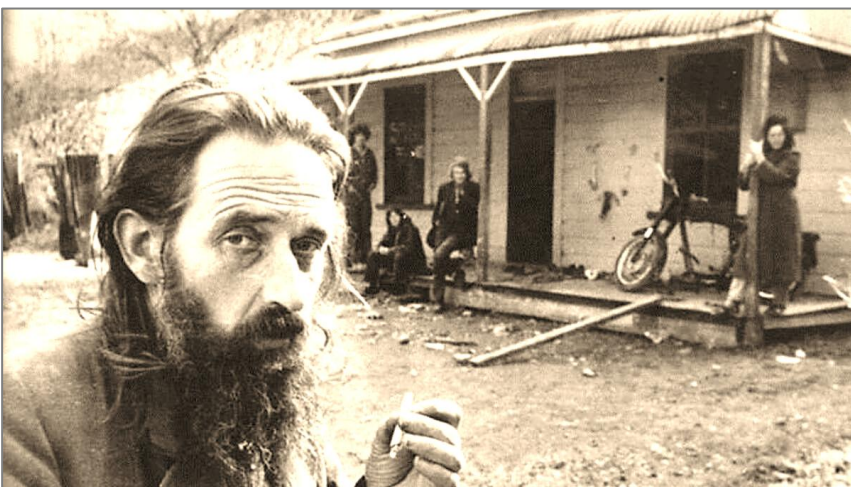
*Those archers with their arrows, whose proud feet
Trample above our roofs. Walking early
On the road from Raetihi, able to long for sleep,
Able to suffer pain, my body cold, but living,
A man in the grip of the dark, I saw the stars of winter
Blaze with the light but not the heat of the sun,*

*Rivers of fire above me. Then I craved for the sun
To shine on my wet head, to warm my feet,
To bring me alive out of the ditch of winter
Like God's arms. Here, though, I lie down early,
Comforted by the faces of the living,
Under a dry blanket, to talk and then to sleep.*

*If the guitar twangs till dawn, and one can't sleep,
Friends are the cause of it. Only when the sun
Lifts the valley fog do I rouse to join the living,
Drink some coffee, put sandals on my feet,
And go to walk on the grass of the marae early
Where pools of muddy water lie in winter.*

*I praise your winter, Lord, from the kingdom of sleep.
You shine like the early light of the sun
On a road that is hard for my feet. To be is hard for the living.*

James K Baxter 1972



A recent convert to Catholicism, James K Baxter⁶ had been living in Hiruhārama, Jerusalem, in a cottage owned by the Sisters of Compassion. He'd arrived in the community in 1969 and established a controversial commune there. He died in Auckland later in 1972.

Anne Manchester

⁶ Photo NZ Herald

Whakataukī o te marama - Hōngongoi

Matariki hunga nui — Matariki of the many people.

This refers to the tradition of gathering together. It emphasises that Matariki is a time for communities to unite, families to reconnect, and people to return home. It captures the essence of whanaungatanga (relationship building).

Anne Manchester

The evils of extreme greed...

Elon Musk became the world's first trillionaire in June 2026.

According to an article in *The New York Times* last month, his wealth now amounts to more than three percent the U.S. gross domestic product, while his net worth is five million times as large as that of the average American family.



Plato, the first Western philosopher to really grapple with economic inequality, contended that in a thriving republic, if anyone acquired more than four times the wealth of the poorest citizens, he should donate the surplus to the city. Not five million times the wealth of the typical family — four times the wealth of the poorest.

Plato grew up in Athens, a city that once was nearly torn apart, as Plutarch wrote, by the 'disparity between the rich and the poor'.

Socrates observed that a state characterised by significant wealth disparity is not a state at all but rather 'two states, the one of poor, the other of rich men, and they are living on the same spot and always conspiring against one another'.

For some, the desire for money extends only so far as is necessary to cover their needs; for others, the desire is infinite. Plato likened those insatiable souls to slaves who are ruled by their desires. 'It is impossible that those who become very rich also become good', he wrote.

Plato was acutely aware that ideal solutions, such as his 4-to-1 wealth ratio, were impossible to carry out where great inequality already existed. Despite that, he urged citizens to do what they could to level society, starting by

shaming those with excessive fortunes. He stressed that true poverty 'consists not in a lessening of one's property but in an increase of one's avarice'.

Only by teaching the evils of extreme greed can society begin to restore the healthy balance of wealth necessary for a thriving republic.

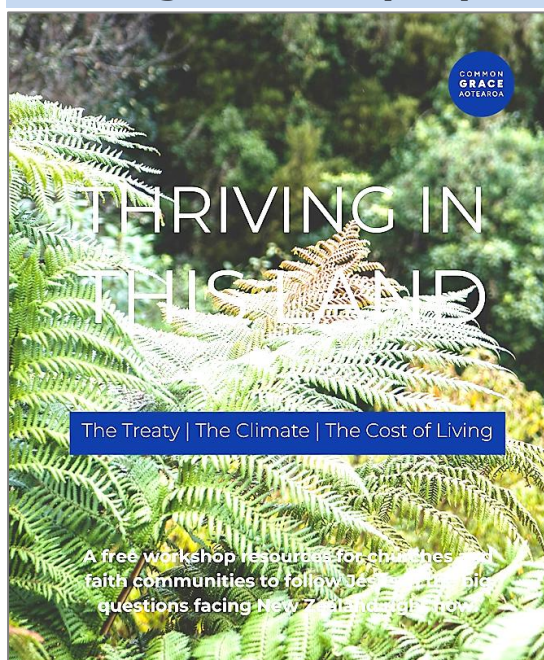
This is a summary of an article titled 'Elon Musk Confirms Ancient Concerns About the Superrich' by David Lay Williams that appeared in *The New York Times* on June 21, 2026.

Anne Manchester

(with thanks to Geoff Mann who sent her the article)

The image was created using 'Perplexity' AI – the request was 'Create an image of Elon Musk looking in a mirror and seeing Plato'

Sharing with the people of St Alban's...



Thriving in this land: On Sunday 5 July, after our shared service with the St Alban's congregation at San Antonio Church, we are invited to a shared lunch for the first 'Thriving in this Land'. This three-part audiovisual series is created by Common Grace Aotearoa to help congregations look beyond the daily news headlines and explore how our values call us to respond to some pressing societal issue. The series consists of three 90-minute sessions with video, guided discussion, and printed resources, and is aimed at helping congregations prepare for this year's General Election.

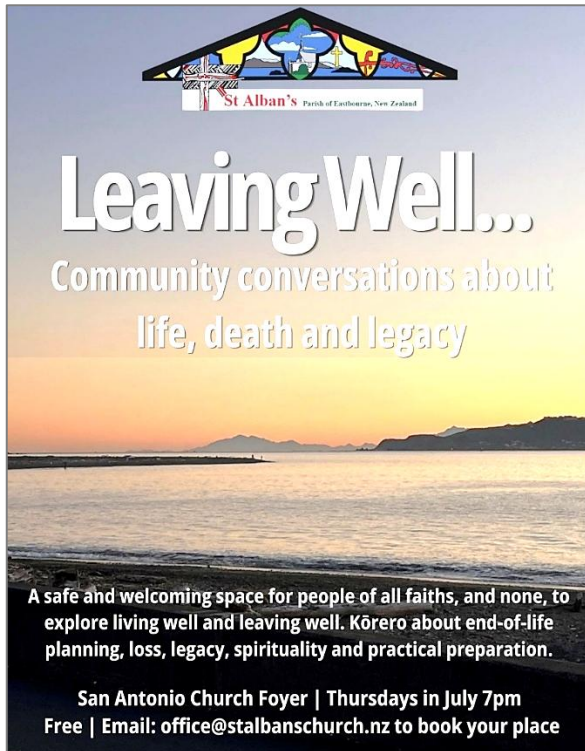
'Thriving in this Land is an opportunity to move beyond the sound bites — to sit around the table with your faith community, to listen deeply, find common ground, and seek the common good,' says Common Grace Aotearoa.

The first session on 5 July will look at poverty and the cost-of-living crisis through the lens of compassion and practical hope. Sessions focussing on climate change and honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi will follow after our shared services on 2 August and 6 September.

If you intend to be there, please bring a small plate of food to share.

Leaving Well:

Thursdays 7:00pm 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 July



St Alban's Parish of Easthorne, New Zealand

Leaving Well...

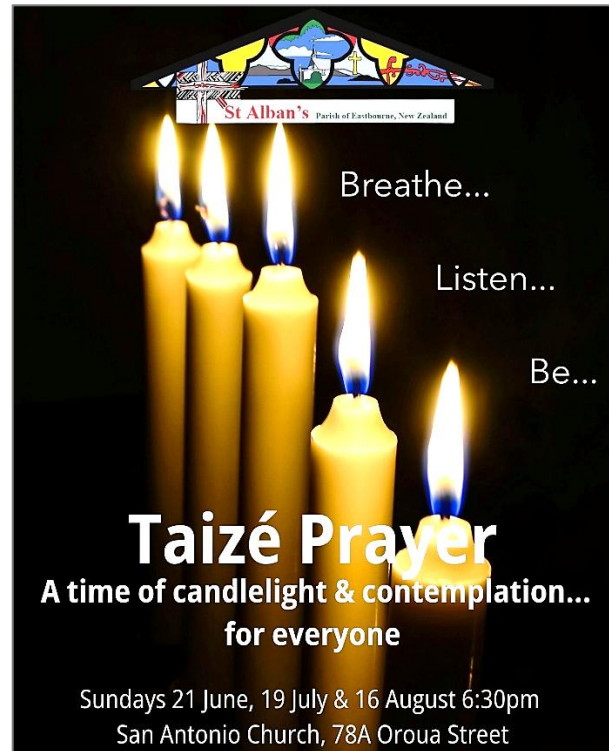
Community conversations about
life, death and legacy

A safe and welcoming space for people of all faiths, and none, to explore living well and leaving well. Kōrero about end-of-life planning, loss, legacy, spirituality and practical preparation.

San Antonio Church Foyer | Thursdays in July 7pm
Free | Email: office@stalbanschurch.nz to book your place

Taizé:

Sundays 6:30pm 19 July, 16 August



St Alban's Parish of Easthorne, New Zealand

Breathe...
Listen...
Be...

Taizé Prayer

A time of candlelight & contemplation...
for everyone

Sundays 21 June, 19 July & 16 August 6:30pm
San Antonio Church, 78A Oroua Street

+Phil's photo – a splash of red in Pukatea Street...





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

Directory

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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 August Record is Sunday 26 July 2026