



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

NOVEMBER 2025

2 November	Shared service with the Anglicans (at San Antonio)	9:30am
9 November	Informal worship (BYO ¹)	9:30am
16 November	Formal worship (Silvia Purdie)	9:30am
23 November	Informal worship (WTW ²)	9:30am
30 November	Fellowship Lunch (Doug Rogers)	12:00pm
7 December	Shared service with the Anglicans (at St Ronan's)	9:30am

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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 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.

² What's The Word. We are given a bible passage to read, and we discover what this has to say to us.

They're changing guard...

That's the opening line from one of my favourite childhood poems by AA Milne in his book *When We were Very Young* all about Christopher Robin. And it refers several times to "the King" who, in 1924 when the poem was written, happened to be George V in a post-World War I Britain where nostalgia and gentle humour were deeply cherished.



And the 'guard' has changed again with a king once more head of the realm. Something of the pomp and ceremony associated with British royalty was on the news just yesterday when President Zelensky visited King Charles at Windsor Castle. And on last Thursday, for the first time in 500 years, the head of the Anglican church, King Charles, and the leader of the Roman Catholic church, Pope Leo, shared in a worship service in the Sistine Chapel. Bob Dylan's iconic song comes to mind – "The Times They Are a-Changin'".



And to a much smaller context, in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, which I attended last week in Christchurch, there was a significant changing of the guard. First off, the Rev Rose Luxford concluded her two-year period as Moderator and passed on the korowai (cloak) of leadership to the new Moderator, Rev Peter Dunne. As almost his first duty, Dunne oversaw the election of his successor, Rev Dr Murray Rae, Professor of Theology at Otago University. Rae will

take up the role of Moderator in 2027. At every Assembly, the korowai, provided by Te Aka Puahou, is ceremonially transferred by the Māori Moderator to the newly inducted Moderator of the General Assembly.

In January next year, after his term of ten years, Rev Wayne Matheson will conclude as Assembly Executive Secretary. Rev Erin Pendreigh, Mission Advisor for Southern Presbytery, was appointed by the Assembly to be his successor. For the first time, the AES will not live in Wellington, home of the National Church Office. However, although based in South Otago, "I will be in Wellington and Auckland often," she says.

Not unlike in the celebration of Matariki, at the opening service of the Assembly, a list is always read of the ministers who have died in the two years since last Assembly. It was a moment of deep sadness when I realised that of the thirty-eight people named, thirty of them were well known to me, and many of these were close personal friends.

St Paul's Trinity Pacific, where the Assembly was held, is a spacious new church built since the earthquake when the original was destroyed. It provided an excellent venue for the 250-strong gathering of commissioners, who were welcomed and well fed by 90 volunteers from the largely Samoan congregation. Their singing was amazing.



Moderator Peter Dunne conducted the business of the Assembly with a touch of wry good humour, ably supported by the Assembly Executive Secretary and the convenor of the Business committee. One of the major reports on the agenda was the response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in Care of Faith-Based Institutions. In concluding their report, the Council of Assembly noted: "Our work is not done. We are committed to fully implementing the recommendations of the Abuse in Care report. We know this work is confronting and challenging but it is necessary. As followers of Christ, we draw strength from His light and guidance."

Other matters and reports reflected the ongoing life of the church, it's Presbyteries and workgroups, with a growing emphasis on whanaungatanga – an invitation to explore how this concept might shape the way we meet together for business and strategy. Full reports and videos of each day's business are on the GA25 website.

Over the three days of the Assembly, we were given an in-depth picture of the life of our church – a bicultural journey with our tangata whenua, and with valued input and insight from the Pacifica and Asian components of our people.

Over the years, we have moved a long way from the settler church which brought a Presbyterian ethos to this land. From time to time it is important to remind ourselves of the distinctive ways and values that shape our identity.

Perhaps the most basic aspect to our name, and the thing that hasn't changed, is our system of government. We don't recognise any ordained office higher than that of 'elder' (Presbyter). There are both 'teaching' elders (ministers) and 'governing' elders (church councillors) who are all of equal rank. Each congregation is governed by a church council, which is responsible to the regional Presbytery.

Presbyteries are responsible to the General Assembly. Both are composed of equal numbers of ministers and church councillors (all ordained).

Presbyterians have always placed high value on competent and well-educated 'teaching' elders, and the word 'elder' is not so much about age, rather maturity of insight and an ability to appreciate and reflect on a wide range of life experience. We look for a faith-filled leadership, both inspired and inspiring.

We of course honour our Moderators (note the non-sexist term) who chair our various councils. They may be either a minister or church councillor but we make clear that at whatever level, their appointment is just for a while. Moderators have no vote, nor can they move motions. Their task is to ensure all are treated fairly, all have an opportunity to speak, and that discussions stay on track. Their position carries responsibilities but no personal authority.

Our system is one of finely tuned checks and balances developed over the years to temper enthusiasm with experience, passion with prudence, creativity with direction, and discipline with compassion. At its best, it continues to reform, guided by new insights and new understandings of both scripture and of the world at large.

We acknowledge that our name is archaic (and Greek at that!) It just means 'the Eldership Church'. But archaic terms have never been a problem to sailors. They continue to use the widest range of archaic and unintelligible terms but sailors just continue to do their stuff to the best of their ability, and when they get it together, as in the America's Cup, not only does the world take notice, it takes the trouble to give support, get involved, and find out what the strange words really mean. May it be so with us...

Reg Weeks

Clerk's corner...

No October Parish Council meeting (not a quorum) so no new PC items to report. But speaking of PCs...

Internet: Ronan's Wi-Fi failed during the recent school holidays (a defunct router, maybe a power surge?). No internet meant the NZDRU were unable to work from their office behind the church,

New St Ronan's Wi-Fi
Two routers, different areas, fuller site cover
Name: SPARK-B618-9519
Password: HEJTMGRQ2GD (all uppercase)
Name: TP-LINK_2F28_5G
Password: 80410256

so a fix was urgent. For us, no Wi-Fi just meant the church PC couldn't update. I replaced the router and reconfigured things, so we now have **two** routers. These are set up facing in opposite directions to provide better Wi-Fi cover for our whole site (there were 'dead' patches before). For *you* it means you'll have to load new router and password details on your phone. This new info is posted in key places. I suggest you load both routers. This will give you best cover as your phone will automatically connect to the router with the strongest signal wherever you happen to be.

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Sandy Lang

Farewell to Gill Burke...

As I read Gill's autobiography (written over her last days as a farewell to family and friends) there was a strong sense of Gill's presence, her face, her laugh, her love, especially for Peter - and her faith. I strongly encourage you to read her own words accessible at...

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1w3YpQtVcU_C6-6S1pfggNlg0TGrctRp/view?usp=drivesdk

...or via the QR code



Gill writes, *'In a world where there are so many conflicts, and people's lives cut tragically short, I feel very grateful for the joy of living in our own house, near a beautiful harbour in a caring community. My walks and cycle rides alongside the seawall near our home reveal the sea and sky in all their moods, and many dogs of all varieties, exercising their owners.'*

Living not far from the bush-clad hills that Pete and many others love to walk across, we often hear ruru close by at night... calling to each other, piercing the dark stillness.'

Gill was grateful to her friend Lindy Monrad for helping write her life's story and Sheryl Selwyn for scanning her photos – providing a portal to vivid memories. Gill ends her story with these words, *'And I thank you for your love and interest in me and my family. God bless you with peace, good health and a long life!'*

Perhaps the part of Gill's extended biography of most interest to readers of the *Record* is her chapter on St Ronan's church family. So, in her own words:

'It was in our family's early years when Pete and I started going to the Presbyterian church in Eastbourne. I was involved with a women's lunch group at St Ronan's church, quite a few of them with small children. My friends Jo Van Der Velde and Jane went along too. Jane was a very kind friend and was very supportive when my father died.

'At that point I thought I'd like to have the children dedicated to God, which is a Baptist thing, and was instead of having them christened as little babies, as they do in some churches. Reg Weeks, the minister, was very obliging and did a nice ceremony. At the time Tom was a toddler and Josie was about ten months old. There were little beeswax candles for both of them and each with their name on. It had been a nice family celebration and something positive during the sad time after the death of Dad.

'Pete and I continued our involvement with St Ronan's where I regularly attended the women's group. Eventually the kids went to Sunday school and Pete started to come with us to Sunday services. He ended up being treasurer for many years, and still is to this day. Back then it was a much bigger church, but it is now quite a small, older congregation that feel like family. There have been many changes throughout the time I have been a part of it. A lot of people have moved on, and there are fewer young people, but it still feels very much like home.

'At one point we didn't have a full-time minister, I volunteered to lead the occasional service. This is something I enjoyed doing and the congregation have been very supportive. I very much enjoy doing Bible study having studied theology for a couple of years back at theological college. Leading a service is quite involved, putting together songs and other parts of the service and doing the kid's talk. I have always put a lot of time into trying to make each service meaningful and to make sure it was something reasonable that I presented to people. I've done that quite a few times now, up until recently when I got sick.

'The congregation have enjoyed many visiting ministers who bring with them different interests and world views, which I think is quite a strength.

'Until recently, I enjoyed the Tuesday morning prayer meeting that I'm now no longer attending. Though it was a small group of us, I found it always made me feel better about whatever is going on in the world. It is nice to pray with people about all the difficulties and tragic things that happen, and trust that God knows and wants to turn it around. The Tuesday morning meeting has made a difference to how I felt personally about life in the world, and in my illness, as I feel that prayer is a real gift and makes an enormous difference.

'I know a lot of people pray for me and that helps me, they pray for my family as well which I really appreciate. Some people think that's not very practical but when you reach the end of yourself and there's nothing else you can do, it's good to trust that God will bring good out of any situation.'

Diane Gilliam-Weeks

[Ed. Anne Manchester watched Gill's funeral while in Portugal via the link <https://geeandhickton.co.nz/upcoming-funerals/burke-74180/#streaming-row> Anne, now adds...]

As would be expected when honouring someone so well-known and so loved, St Ronan's Church was packed for Gill's funeral on 6 October. Taking the service, Rev Leanne Munro said Gill had led a life of "faith, family and friends".

Gill was born in Nelson on 23 April 1960. As children, she and her older sister, Judith lived in Epuni. She attended Epuni Primary School, the Epuni Baptist Sunday School and later the Lower Hutt Baptist Youth Group. In those early years, she met Sheryl (now Selwyn). The two became lifelong friends. They later did their nurse training together at Wellington Polytechnic (along with Lindy Monrad) and worked at Hutt Hospital as new graduates. Gill also went on to do midwifery training.

Peter and Gill met in high school. Later they were flatmates in Petone for a while before realising their relationship was turning more romantic. They then parted as flatmates, were married in 1990 and have stayed friends always.

Gill and Peter had two children, Tom and Josie. Gill was a devoted mother, always upbeat and skilled in baking, sewing and dispensing wisdom and kindness.

Gill was first diagnosed with cancer in 2021. She had major surgery and chemotherapy, making a full recovery. A year ago, a routine scan revealed metastatic lung cancer. "Gill accepted her diagnosis and processed it," said Peter.

Gill continued to enjoy roadies around New Zealand, often sending Peter off to a café with the newspaper while she scoured the op shops. "Gill did not travel light, so we did not travel far. She loved loading up the car for these mini breaks. She also loved animals and her visit to a donkey retreat near Palmerston North some years ago was a highlight."

Peter cared for Gill at home as long as he could. She died in Te Omanga Hospice on 26 September.

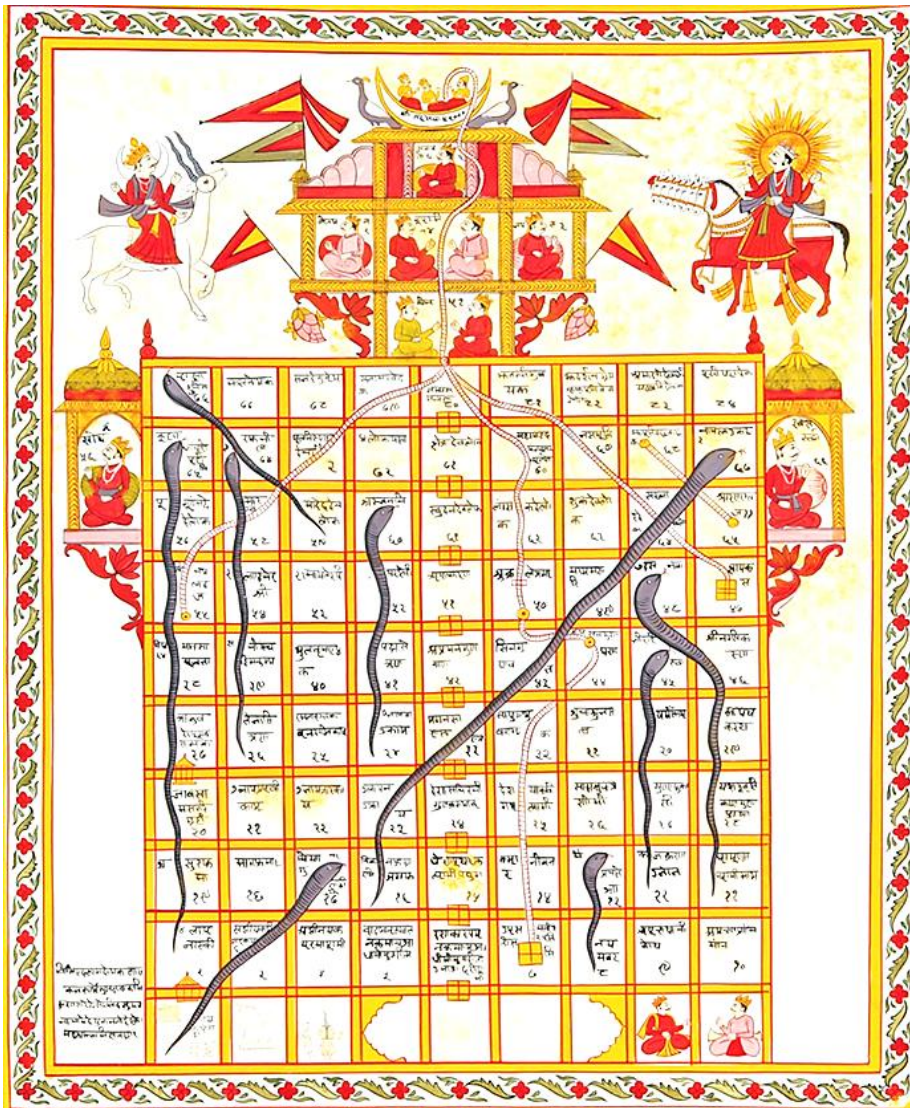
The family has suggested that donations in Gill's memory be given to Nourish Trust and/or to the Leprosy Mission.

Anne Manchester

Rood screen – Snakes and Ladders...

I'm sure you must have played 'Snakes and Ladders' at some time or another or, if you grew up in America, 'Chutes and Ladders'.

Wikipedia describes the game as: *...a simple race based on sheer luck. It is played on a game board with numbered, gridded squares (usually 8x8). A number of 'ladders' and 'snakes' are pictured on the board, each connecting two specific board squares. The object of the game is to navigate one's game piece, according to die³ rolls, from the start (bottom square) to the finish (top square), helped by climbing ladders but hindered by falling down snakes.*



The game was originally called *Moksha Patam* and was created by the Indian poet and saint Gyandev in the 13th century as part of a 'moral instruction' for children. The squares at the foot of each ladder represent virtues, while those at the mouths of the snakes stand for evil.

The 'virtues' (ladders) are faith, reliability, generosity, knowledge and asceticism⁴. At the top of each ladder there was a minor Hindu god to welcome the virtuous climber.

The 'evils' (snakes) on the other hand, are disobedience, arrogance, vulgarity, theft, lying,

drunkenness, debt, murder, anger, greed, pride and lust. I am unclear if there was any sort of welcoming committee at the snake's tail...

There are a few interesting observations to be made from the original:

³ I am often surprised how many people say, "a dice" when the singular is actually "die". So, I thought that I'd add this footnote.

⁴ Just in case (like me) you needed to look that one up: Severe self-discipline and avoiding of all forms of indulgence, typically for religious reasons.

1. There are far more 'evils' (12) than 'virtues' (5). Methinks that this is a pretty accurate reflection of our 21st century life today.
2. Some of the evils and virtues listed are BIG – but most are pretty small and easily lost in day-to-day living. I am reminded of Jesus' words in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46). *Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 'The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*
3. I love the fact that the very last snake on the original board is waiting on square 99. It is so often when we are nearly home that we pat ourselves on the back and think 'What a virtuous fellow I am', that we are most likely to trip over our own feet.
4. Snakes and ladders is a game of luck – and in many ways, so is life. But, as Thomas Jefferson⁵ famously said: "I am a great believer in luck, and the harder I work the more I have of it." Trying to follow in Christ's footsteps can be hard work. But the harder we work at it, the greater the rewards. Victorians living in India saw great potential in the game, so they brought it back to the UK – but they removed the religious aspects.

And that's where our Snakes and Ladders came from...

John Harris

A garden tour - Saturday 29 November – 1:00 to 6:00pm...

St Alban's asks us to promote their garden tour in aid of the earthquake strengthening of their Church and Hall

Explore six stunning private gardens

- | | |
|---------|------------------------------------|
| 11:30am | Plant sale and raffle |
| 12:00pm | Lunch in the Church Garden |
| 1:00pm | Garden Tour |
| 5:00pm | Wine, hors d'oeuvre and live music |



Tickets from <https://events.humanitix.com/eastbourne-garden-show> |

⁵ This saying has been ascribed to Jefferson for a few decades. However, the valuable Thomas Jefferson Monticello website states that there is no evidence to support the attribution. Nevertheless, it is an excellent version of an often-expressed sentiment.

The star is shining...

The star is shining, and hope is smiling
And love has come here to stay.
Magi saw the star, shining from afar.
Guiding them to a King.

Chorus

*Jesus oh blessed saviour,
We put our trust in you.
We worship and adore you
You are our Lord and King.*

Way on to Bethlehem, from Jerusalem
Magi came to a house.
When they saw the child, There with Mary mild,
They rejoiced with great joy.

Chorus

When bowing to the King, offerings they laid,
Gifts they brought to the King, Gold and frankincense
For the King and God
Myrrh anointing to save.

Chorus

Colin Dalziel - January 2017

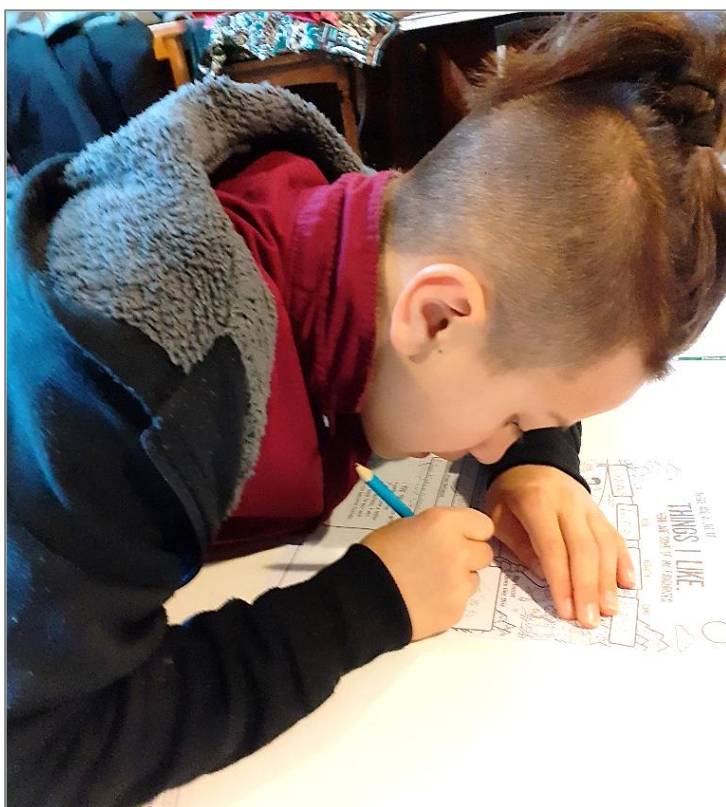
Power Hour – Shoeboxes...

The Power Hour children always love creating 'shoeboxes' for the Samaritan's Purse (Operation Christmas Child), making it an annual mission. They and their families enjoy helping other children.

The Christian based Samaritan's Purse organisation aims to teach children to give generously and to consider the question that prompted the parable of the Good Samaritan: "And who is my neighbour?" Luke 10:29. The children are encouraged to work together to buy and pack a shoebox gift and learn to be generous, to pray for others, and to live out their faith. Last year (Christmas 2024) New Zealand and Australia together sent out a total of 211,502 shoeboxes to remote villages around the Pacific rim.

The following example shows that the receiving child experiences something far deeper than just a gift box. In a small village just outside Phnom Penh, 12-yr Lim Liya received her first-ever gift: a shoebox filled with hair clips, pencils, a doll, shoes and even a beautiful dress—items she had only dreamed of till then.

Overwhelmed, tears rolled down her cheeks. Blessings continued as Lim returned the next day to attend *The Greatest Journey (GJ)* a 12-lesson course led by her local church. She was able to discover, follow and share Jesus. There, she encountered the story of David and Goliath which resonated with her: It showed that God can use even someone small like her for something great. Through these lessons, Lim gave her life to Jesus. Every week, the nearby church that brought the shoebox gifts and the *GJ* to the village, continues teaching God's Word to the children and their parents!



This year our Power Hour children chose to gift two shoeboxes, each packed for a 5 to 9-yr-old girl. There were six different items (something to wear, to love, special, for school, to play with, for personal hygiene), e.g., an embroidered purse, a healing lip balm, a dress, stickers, a case of pencils, a snap bracelet, a ribbon wand and a cuddly toy dog.

Our children's excitement and enthusiasm built with each step.

First, choosing the recipient child's gender and age, then shopping wisely with their families, next bringing their gift to Power Hour and admiring what others had brought along. Then, as a team, folding up a flat-packed shoebox and packing it – quite a challenge to get it all to fit in. Last, closing the lid and inserting the filled-in label and placing their shoebox on the communion table in the church. The children appreciated Ross Scott's thoughtful blessing.



Colin Dalziel took the shoeboxes to the Lower Hutt drop-off point for sorting and packing into shipping containers, ready for their journey to a Pacific rim country. Quite a journey!

The Power Hour children had a good sense of completion of a job well done for a cause greater than themselves! Very glad they could bring happiness to another child somewhere far away. They felt the fruits of God's Spirit flow into them, such is the growth of a lasting faith in a child.

Susan Connell

Term 4: 12 October to 1 December

A reflection on the General Assembly: The spirit of 'We believe'...

From Alpine Presbytery Moderator
Rev Lynmaree Sopoaga (Aunty Lyn)

My dear friends

The speed at which the last month has vanished is astounding. We arrived at the General Assembly 25 under the banner of "We believe" and I can think of no better message to carry us forward.

The cornerstone of the entire event was the incredible generosity shown by Rev Makesi and Ramona Alatimu and their dedicated team at St Paul's Trinity Pacific Presbyterian Church. They didn't just facilitate the Assembly; they nurtured it.

Their gracious hospitality flowed from every corner, their Praise and Worship team inspired us deeply, and their cultural performances - a beautiful journey through the islands - were a pure delight. We owe a debt of gratitude to every volunteer, from the kitchen to the tech booth, who worked so hard to make it seamless.

We marked a transition this week, saying a warm farewell to Rev Rose Luxford and Rev Wayne Matheson, and embracing the new leadership of Rev Peter Dunn.

Yet, a shadow of urgency also fell across our gathering. The severe weather and fires near Kaikoura called Rev Martin Harrison away early. I urge you to hold those affected and the community of Grace Vineyard Church in your continued prayers.

One of the greatest gifts of the Assembly was the chance simply to connect. The dialogue groups became intimate spaces where we broke bread with other Presbyteries, bridging gaps between ages, cultures and perspectives. And seeing the growth in our partnership with our Te Aka Puahou whānau filled us all with hope for our shared future.

Our task now is to become the storytellers. We must share the spirit of what we experienced here, with our teams back home.

God Bless, Aunty Lyn

(Contributed by **Reg Weeks**)

Phil's photo...



Two seagulls 'grounded' on a stormy beach, no one fishing from the wharf today - Thursday 23 October 25



Travel disrupted – No flights in or out of Days Bay today...

Phil Benge



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 December/January Record is Sunday 30 November 2025