



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

SEPTEMBER 2025

7 September	Shared service with the Anglicans (at San Antonio)	9:30am
14 September	Informal worship (BYO ¹)	9:30am
21 September	Formal worship (Rev Graeme Munro)	9:30am
28 September	Informal worship (WTW ²)	9:30am
5 October	Shared service with the Anglicans (at St Ronan's)	9:30am

Give me something real.....	2
Clerk's corner	3
Caring for God's creation	4
Rood Screen – Tongues.....	5
Power Hour – The power of kindness	7
Operation Christmas Child.....	9
Phil's Photo	11

Power Hour – Sundays 9:30am
Mainly Music – Thursdays 9:15-11:15am

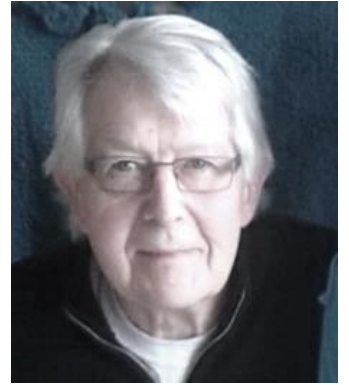
For pastoral care needs, please contact one of the Local Shared Ministry Team
Reg Weeks 027 491 5947, Simon Shaw 562 8772, Colin Dalziel 562 7238, Sandy Lang 562 8753

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.

Give me something real...

Over the weekend, Diane and I contributed to a professional development event for the NZ Christian Counsellors Association. Diane shared a powerful poem by UK Anglican priest the Rev Jon Swales. All attending found this a fitting summary to the reflective exercise we had just completed, and I thought it worth sharing with you.



I don't want to be a Christian

*I don't want to be a Christian
who forgets how to feel —
who hides behind answers,
quotes verses like shields,
and silences sorrow with a song.*

*I don't want a faith
of romanticised abstraction,
where resurrection is polished
and the cross is theory.
Give me something real —
flesh and blood,
grief and grace.*

*I want to weep
with eyes wide open.
Tears that speak truth.
Tears that rise
from the ground of compassion,
from the jagged knowledge
that the world is not
as it was meant to be.*

*I have seen it —
the wounded souls,
the haunted eyes,
the bruises beneath the surface.
I have felt the weight
of injustice
that crushes and isolates,
while the world looks away.*

*These are not tears of despair —
but of resistance,
of aching love,
of holding the pain
when no one else will.*

*I want a hope
that isn't
saccharine.
Not hopium.
Not denial in disguise.
But a defiant, dirt-under-the-
fingernails kind of hope —
the kind that walks through the
valley,
sits in the ashes,
and still whispers,
"Even here... God."*

*I want a gospel
that holds the wound.
A Christ who draws close,
a Spirit who groans,
a God who gathers every tear
in a bottle,
holds every sorrow
like a fragile flame,
and knows
what it is to break.*

*I want to believe —
not cheaply,
not loudly —
but with trembling trust,
that one day,
every tear
will be wiped away.*

*Not erased,
but remembered,
redeemed,
and transfigured.*

*Until then,
let me be the kind
who weeps.
Who walks in holy realism.
Who holds vigil*

*in the shadow of the cross
and waits,
with aching hope,
for the dawn.*



Rev Jon Swales, MBE, is the Lighthouse Mission Priest in Leeds, where he leads a church community that offers spiritual refuge to adults navigating marginalisation, trauma and addiction. Jon also teaches theology at St Hild College and the Leeds School of Theology. His ministry blends pastoral care with activism, particularly around climate justice and peace-making. Alongside this, Jon expresses deep feeling through poetry and prayer, as in his creative project *Lament and Hope*, featuring reflective verse and meditative resources.

He was recognized in the Queen's New Year's Honours List in 2022 for his service during the pandemic. Find his page on Facebook for a different view of faith.

Reg Weeks

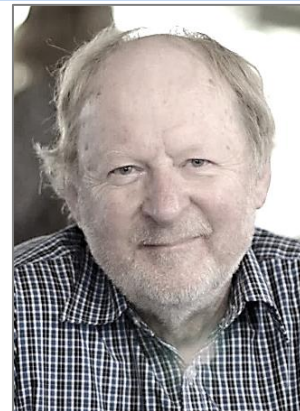
Clerk's corner...

Annual General Meeting: The AGM will be on 21 September, in the Fellowship room, after the service, starting at about 10:45am. Mark it in your diary.

At the AGM, we will treat the Annual Report as read. This requires I get a copy to all by 14 Sept, and this requires I get all the individual activity reports by 7 Sept. If you've done one before, please do one again... So, get writing...!

Wear & tear: A major element of our mission is to serve our community. And a major way we do this is by making our spaces available to the community. Our predominant users are young people and young families. In all, our spaces are used by the community for about 30 hours a week. This high usage is good in terms of our mission. Another good thing is we make significant income from this. A bad thing is our high-maintenance buildings (insurance, exterior paintwork, roofing) cost a lot more to maintain than we make from hiring them out. But then it's true that most of that maintenance would still be required if our buildings were not used at all...!

Another inevitability is that the high usage is accompanied by high wear and tear. You will have noticed the lawn is bare in places. Mostly, this will fix itself as spring rolls in. We also suffer periodic damage by excited young people. We



do our best to protect our asset in this regard, but young people are still young people...! Fairly recently, I've fixed the Hall piano lid, fixed the curtain rail over the dance mirror and added an extra first aid box (screwed to the wall). A bit less recently we've replaced (and upgraded) the Hall lights. So, when damage occurs (as it will from time to time), we just fix it and carry on while also doing our best (in a friendly) way to avert a repeat by talking with our users.

St Ronan's future: Parish Council is currently identifying the various options for our future. I'd hoped we'd have a list by now, but no. We're still working to come up with good ones but this is taking more time than we expected. We still hope to complete the decision process during 2026. The first actions will come a bit later depending on how things go. What's important is we've thought the issues through properly, made a good decision and have an action plan.

e: slang@xtra.co.nz

t: 562 8752

m: 021 222 0383

Sandy Lang

Caring for God's creation...



This September, churches around the world will once again unite to celebrate the Season of Creation — a month-long opportunity, from 1 September to 4 October, to renew our commitment to care for God's creation.

This year's theme is 'Peace with Creation' drawing from the promise found in Isaiah 32:14–18. In this powerful passage, Isaiah offers a vision of deep restoration - not only between peoples but also between humanity and the rest of creation. Across Aotearoa and around the world, ecosystems are groaning under pressure. Yet this scripture extends a hopeful invitation: to become active participants in God's healing work through justice, humility and faithful action.

Seeking 'peace with creation' is not passively achieved. We must actively pursue peace. I'm mindful of places like the Denniston and Stockton Plateaus on the West Coast, which are home to a rich and diverse ecosystem including kiwi, kākā, and a nationally endangered indigenous giant snail found nowhere else in the world. These plateaus are at risk because of plans to significantly expand a coal-for-export mine.

The issues are complex, especially when jobs and livelihoods are bound up with unsustainable planet-heating industries. Seeking 'peace with creation' must go hand-in-hand with a just transition for people, who stand to be affected by a shift towards a sustainable and green economy. Local organisations, including

Christian movement Common Grace Aotearoa, are exploring what a restored earth looks like; a world in which God's people 'will abide in peaceful habitation' with creation and there will be justice for people and planet alike.

Meanwhile, on the 25th anniversary of the Jubilee Debt Project, Caritas International has launched the 'Turn Debt into Hope' campaign. Supported by the Season of Creation team, the campaign advocates for stronger financing to help poorer countries (which have contributed the least to climate change) to respond to the challenge of a heating world. These are just two examples of what it means to pursue 'peace with creation' within our complex economic and social realities.

There are many ways to be intentional and active during the Season of Creation - as a church and in your local community. The International Season of Creation Guide is full of ideas and inspiration, and you'll also find a wide array of resources on the *A Rocha Aotearoa* and *Eco Church* websites to equip your church for meaningful involvement.

Here are a few ways to get started:

- Host a Season of Creation service using the Season of Creation guide, or a bible study using the *Pacific Conference of Churches Bible Study* guide
- Invite a speaker - *A Rocha* and the *Eco Church* network have many people across the country available to speak at services or events
- Join the *Eco Church* network - or take the next step if you're already on the journey
- Plan a local action - such as tree planting, a rubbish clean-up, or a kai-sharing event
- Advocate for change - support the *Caritas Turn Debt to Hope* campaign, and the campaigns of *Common Grace Aotearoa*.

Rev Dr Jordan Redding

Convener of the *Assembly Emissions Reductions Workgroup*
minister@sthelierscentre.org.nz

(This article contributed by Diane Gilliam-Weeks)

Rood Screen – Tongues

Can you touch your nose with your tongue? If you can, you are special because only one in ten of us can.

But a giraffe has absolutely no problem touching its nose with its tongue. A giraffe's tongue is looooong – up to 50 cm long. It can even clean out its ears with it - and does!

A chameleon's tongue may not be very long but in proportion to its size, its





tongue is very, very long. Up to 2.5 times as long as its body. But that's not its most impressive trick. The amazing thing about the chameleon's tongue is its speed.

Watching a chameleon stalking its prey is like poetry in motion. Firstly, the chameleon can change its colour to match its

surroundings. It all but disappears. Then, it moves slowly. Ever-so-very slowly, positioning itself just right. Next are the eyes that move independently. One spots the prey and the other slowly turns to triangulate on the target and allow the chameleon's brain to calculate the angle and the range and whatever else it does. Finally, out comes the tongue. Its speed has been measured at 2500 metres per second. That is 9000 km per hour or three times faster than the muzzle velocity of a bullet!

If you are watching the chameleon, you probably won't see a thing. You will see the chameleon taking aim and then you will see it chewing its prey. But nothing in between, because it all happens so very fast.

Have you ever watched a woodpecker at work? It 'rat-tat-tats' faster than a pneumatic drill and you would think that it was the inspiration for that line in Jerry Lee Lewis' song *Great Balls of Fire – You Rattle my Brain!*

That poor bird ought to suffer the most dreadful headaches. But it doesn't. And the reason is its amazing tongue. The woodpecker's tongue loops right around the inside of its head and cushions its brain.

Aren't tongues the most amazing things...?

But the most remarkable tongue of all, is yours.

Not only does your tongue allow you to taste and swallow and suck, but it also allows you to speak. So far, so good.



But it is you, and only you who decides what words your tongue will speak. Proverbs 15 has a lot to say about what we decide to say. These are the first few verses:

A gentle answer will calm a person's anger. But an unkind answer will cause more anger. Wise people use knowledge when they speak. But fools speak only foolishness. The Lord's eyes see everything that happens. He watches both evil and good people. As a tree gives us fruit, healing words give us life. But evil words crush the spirit.

Is your tongue an instrument for God's word?

John Harris

PS: Or, as my Mum would say,

*A wise old owl sat in an oak
The more he heard, the less he spoke
The less he spoke, the more he heard
Why aren't we all like that wise old bird?*

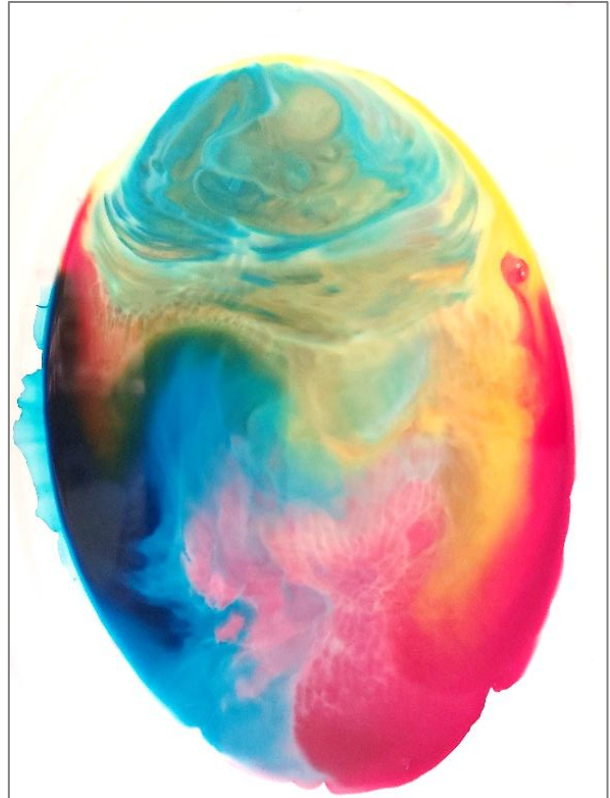
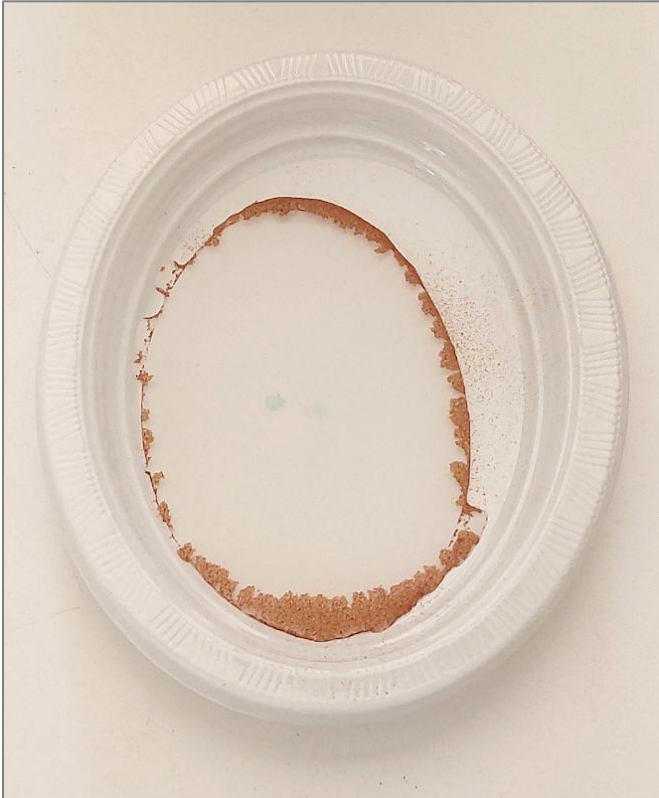
Children's Power Hour – The power of kindness...

This term Power Hour is learning about the Fruits of the Spirit. Each week we are focusing on a different 'fruit' or quality. On 24 August, the fruit we learned about was 'kindness'. The children listened to a story (copied below) and shared their own stories about small acts of kindness that make a difference every day. Their thoughts included having someone to help them with their shoes, a teacher who puts time into helping them at school, and a parent taking time to make them breakfast.

The children talked about kindness and unkindness. To represent what happens when we say unkind words, we did a science experiment with a bowl of water that had cinnamon floating on top. We added a drop of detergent to the middle of the bowl to represent unkind words. All the cinnamon immediately moved away to the edges of the water. We talked about how unkind words can push people away and how hurt feelings can last for a long time. We left the bowl for the rest of the lesson and the cinnamon never moved back to the middle of the bowl where the detergent had been added.

Then we did an experiment to see what kind words can do. We put milk into a bowl with some drops of food colouring. The food colouring represented people who were on their own, and not interacting with one another. We talked about what happens when you smile at someone, or wave, or say hello. This time when we added a drop of detergent, it represented kindness. We watched the food colouring slowly start to move, reach out, and mingle into a beautiful swirl of colour. The longer we left the bowl, the more the food colouring mingled and moved, showing that the effect of the kind words was lasting.

These pictures show the cinnamon after it had moved away from the middle of the bowl, and the swirl of colour that had unfolded by the end of the lesson.



This term, the Power Hour children are sending special prayers and wishes to Susan. Susan puts so much time and care into us all. We are so grateful for her love and kindness.

A story about kindness

One night there was a terrible storm. The wind howled, the waves crashed, and the rain whipped around the houses. In the morning everything was still, and calm, and fresh, but the beach was littered with debris. There were sticks, and piles of seaweed, and thousands and thousands of starfish washed up on the beach. A young girl was walking along the edge of the water picking up starfish and throwing them back into the sea. A man saw the girl and spoke to her.

"Why are you spending your time throwing starfish into the sea?" he asked.

"There are thousands of starfish, and you are only one child - there are too many of them, what you are doing cannot possibly make a difference".

The girl bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it into the sea. She turned to the man and said, "It made a difference for that one."

The moral of the story is that even when a problem is really big, an act of kindness can make a difference, and even a small difference matters.

Elspeth Cotsilinis & Matt McCorkindale

Operation Christmas Child – The Samaritan's Purse

For a number of years, members of St Ronan's have donated many gift-filled shoe boxes to children in and around the Pacific region.



Shoe boxes are available now at St Ronan's, and October 2025 is the national collection month. Gift suggestions include: something to wear, to love, for school, to play with, personal hygiene and something special. Choose a boy or a girl, and an age group, 2-4 or 5-9 or 10-14.

For more information call 0800 726 274 or visit operationchristmaschild.org.nz

Contact me on 562 7238 for information, leaflets and shoe boxes. The leaflet suggests ideas for gifts to suit children of different ages, and lists prohibited items.

A donation of \$12.50 is required in an envelope with each box to cover freight. Donations can also be made through the Samaritan's Purse website (link above) where you can download coded labels and follow your box to its destination.

Filled boxes should be brought to St Ronan's Church by Sunday 19 October 2025. After a blessing during the morning service, the boxes will be delivered to the local drop-off point to continue their journey to Auckland and thence to their destination.

Colin Dalziel

Replacing fossil fuels...

Electrify the Hutt is a community-led initiative dedicated to promoting the adoption of electric technologies in homes, business and transportation. It is one of 29, and growing, similar organisations across New Zealand focused on encouraging Kiwis to replace fossil fuel burning appliances and vehicles with ones powered by electricity.

John Howell's recent message on climate change (Sunday 17 August) reinforced the need to sharply reduce our dependence on fossil fuels given their contribution to global heating.

ELECTRIFY 
THE HUTT

Rewiring
Aotearoa  **COMMUNITY**
PARTNER

New Zealand is fortunately blessed with electricity that is 85% generated from renewable sources – hydro, wind, geothermal, solar. Further investment in generation and the supply grid is underway to reduce the demand for coal and gas fired generation used to meet winter peaks when hydro levels are low. Switching from a fossil fuelled appliance or vehicle is both good for the environment and good for the economy, reducing the demand for imported petrol and diesel.

Electrify the Hutt is holding an Expo on Saturday 4 October, 8am–4pm, at the Lower Hutt Town Hall where you can find out more about adopting electrical devices and generating your own electricity. A range of electric vehicles will be displayed nearby in Dowse Square. Showcasing practical, cost-saving solutions like solar panels and micro wind turbines, the expo offers hands-on demos, expert talks, and interactive exhibits to help attendees take charge of their energy use, reduce emissions, and build more resilient homes and communities. It's a dynamic call to action for a cleaner, smarter and more self-sufficient Hutt Valley. Come along!

More information: <https://electrifythehutt.nz/events> <https://www.rewiring.nz/>

Simon Shaw

Eastbourne Retired Persons Association...

Les Molloy will present *JAPAN'S NATURAL WORLD HERITAGE WILDERNESS* at 10am on Monday 22 September in St Ronan's Fellowship room - Koha \$2.

Les Molloy made about 10 visits to wild natural areas in Japan over the 25-year period, 1993 to 2018. Most of these trips were to evaluate Japan's nominations for natural World Heritage or to advise the Japanese authorities on



suitable WH candidates. In all, nine natural locations were visited and are described in two talks:

Part 1 (from 1993 to 2005) deals with *Shirakami-Sanchi* (a beech forest wilderness in NW Honshu); *Yakushima* (a heavily forested island south of Kagoshima, centred on the highest mountain in southern Japan); four sites in the cold northern-most main island, *Hokkaido*, including the interesting mountainous volcanic *Shiretoko Peninsula*, with its unique relationship with the winter sea ice which surrounds it. I guess there will be a **Part 2** later...!

Phil's photo...



Manners please! Wait your turn...

Phil Bengé



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	colindalziel@gmail.com

Parish Clerk

Sandy Lang 021 222 0383 slang@xtra.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*

The deadline for the October Record is Sunday 26 October 2025