



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

April 2020

- 5 April Palm Sunday** with John Harris e-time
10 April Good Friday with Reg Weeks e-time
12 April Easter Sunday with Reg Weeks e-time
19 April Worship with Liz Barrow e-time
26 April Worship with Niki Francis e-time
3 May Worship with Reg Weeks e-time

e-time=your time=anytime



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**Power Hour & Wiggly Church – Sundays 9.30am;
 Breakfast Prayer - Tuesdays 7.30am
 Mainly Music – Thursdays 9.15-11.15am
 (when there's not a pandemic)**

St Ronan's Pastoral Care

For pastoral care needs, please contact our Pastoral Care Co-ordinators,
Colin Dalziel 562 7238 or Mary Williams 568 3216

A firm foundation

I wonder if, like me, you had to learn bible verses at Sunday School? Well, even more than that, in my early twenties I was head teacher for our Sunday School in Waipukurau, with six teachers and probably over 40 kids on a good day. We gathered together for a brief period of worship before breaking off into our various classes. And part of that was to learn a 'memory verse,' often a short section of a psalm. I taught it over several weeks by having everyone read it out loud from a blackboard. Each week I would make larger and larger random gaps by rubbing out key words. Even when there was little of substance left, they could still read without hesitation.



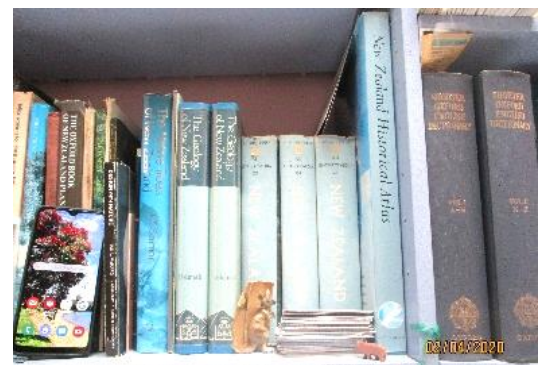
In some senses, a very pale version of the Jewish practice of having the village children memorise the first five books of the bible by the time they were ten; the best of the best went on to learn the rest of the Old Testament by the time they were fourteen! I'll return to this shortly.

Just the other day I heard a well-respected teacher interpreting Jesus' parable about the wise man who built his house on a rock. He saw the house as the way we shape our lives.

If our focus is the outer world of 'trials and tribulations' particularly in this time of extra stress, we are likely to find it very difficult to cope – building our house on the sand.

He recommended taking time to go deep into your inner world to find that centre of peace and tranquillity we all have. He saw that as building our house on a rock.

It brought to mind that for most people the inner world of memory is a tremendous repository of meaning – poetry, songs, favourite bits of the bible, sometimes only half remembered. These are the words that rise up to bless us in times of thankful peace or joy, and to reassure us when the road is long, and the going tough. These treasures we have generally acquired almost by accident. In the stress we all face today, I suggest that it makes good sense to actively commit to memory any new words of meaning in much the same way we did at Sunday school. That will surely grow our always-accessible source of encouragement and support. It will help keep us grounded and balanced when each day brings news of growing threat both world-wide and in our own communities.



Of course, in this wonderful world of internet and smartphone technology, such resources are also resting there in our purse or pocket. So whether it's a visit to your book shelf or a voice-call to Google, we do have access to a vast array of source material right at our finger-tips.

Why not take a little time each day to build that rock-like sense of stability and security by doing a memory refresh, visiting a favourite web-page or doing an online search?

Kia kaha, stay home and stay well.

Reg Weeks

Clerk's corner

COVID-19: A few days ago, I drafted something for the *Record* re the virus. Wow has our little world moved on in so short a time. What I wrote then is hopelessly outdated now. I'll leave the wise advice to the experts on TV.

Community fridge: St Ronan's hosts the Eastbourne Community Fridge. We provide the location and the power. The wider community add things and remove things. Others in the wider community keep it clean and tidy (~weekly). But nobody controls the behaviour of the community. It would be tragic if somehow the fridge were to become a COVID-19 infection source. The fridge is now closed till further notice.

The Community Fridge is closed until COVID-19 no longer poses a threat


Just too big a risk should some person be negligent



Our kid's playground: is another no-go area – potential cross-contamination of COVID-19 by little users.

e-Services: Weekly church services have been held at St Ronan's since (almost) the dawn of time but we have had discontinue these - the first missed service was on 22 March. Reg and I have been busy working up e-alternatives. Last week, you had an e-Service email from me on Saturday 28 March, in time for Sunday 29 March. Niki Francis did a splendid job pioneering this new service format. As I write this article your e-Service email for 5 April is almost ready to go. It contains a little surprise...!



 Reg is developing a more upmarket version of the my e-Service on a new '*st ronan's eastbourne*' Facebook page. This alternative for those that are into Facebook, will have the same key content as the e-Service email but better presented, with a few more bells and whistles...

If you have a problem accessing either of these, others will have a problem too. If we're not told we can't fix these problems – 'we don't know, what we don't know...!' The presentation of our e-Services will get better week by week by Weeks by Lang.



Hand washing: For many years, St Ronan's handwashing facilities have needed an upgrade. COVID-19 has presented the stimulus for this. When we're again allowed back in, you'll find we've removed the obsolete, ineffective, noisy, hot-air hand-driers from the toilets. We have installed new paper-towel dispensers (blue for boys, red for girls). We have provided three towel-disposal bins – one inside each toilet (*for the first, wet, paper towel*), and one just outside in the foyer (*for the second, damp paper towel, which you can also use to open the door to get out, without re-contaminating your clean hands on a mucky toilet door knob*).



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Sandy Lang

From St Ronan's Tuesday morning breakfast/prayer group

Prayers for our Government (Colin)

Father God, we thank you for the Government of New Zealand, may they lead us wisely through the coronavirus pandemic. We pray for your blessings for our Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and her family. Give her strength to manage the many decisions needed at this time.

Our prayers for all government ministers and officials involved during the pandemic, especially the Ministers of Health, Finance and Police. We thank you for the Director General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield and his team who advise and keep us informed of the situation and the condition of people infected by Covid-19. We pray that all actions taken will lead to an end to the pandemic in New Zealand.

Our hearts also go out to all other countries suffering loss of life and hardship from the pandemic.



Albrecht Dürer

Prayer for media people (Paul)

Psalm 29:10 The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth as King for ever.

Our Father in heaven we pray that your righteous and perfect will be done here on earth as it is in heaven. The current situation has not taken you by surprise, nor is there anything of this disease that you do not know about. Many are upset by the changes happening worldwide and now the trauma has struck locally and we are confined at home. Over the coming weeks many will be contemplating 'life', how fleeting it is and the very real prospect of death and the hereafter will get a lot more attention and consideration. Lord, you know and test the hearts of men. We thank you that this has been allowed to happen and that it may be used for the furtherance of your Gospel, the conviction of sin, the conviction of the righteousness of Jesus Christ and the conviction of the coming judgement.

We pray for the uplifting of the precious name of Jesus and the saving of souls.

We also give thanks for the media and ask that balanced information be presented. We also pray that new forms of communication be utilised by churches to encourage all people and especially those of faith. May we stand firm in our faith knowing that we have a sure foundation in Christ Jesus our Lord. Help us to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks us a reason for the hope that is in us with meekness and fear.

Now the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Prayer for frontline workers (Les)

At this time of the global covid-19 pandemic, we pray for all who are working with those already infected or at risk; and for those who are undertaking essential services to keep us safe and provided with the necessities of life. In particular, we pray for God's protection over our hospital nurses and doctors.

We also give thanks for the hard work of immigration officials, police, ambulance paramedics, supermarket and other essential retail staff, and the thousands of manufacturing, laboratory, warehousing and transport workers who are trying to maintain essential services. In addition, we pray for those who care for the elderly in rest homes or provide homecare.

Lord, give them strength and compassion in their care for those who are most vulnerable to infection.

A prayer for all of us at home (Gill)

Dear Father

We are confined and our movements restricted – we miss the close contact of family, friends and neighbours.

We are concerned for them and their health and safety, and for our own.

Lord, You know our hopes and fears.

Please protect them all wherever they are, and give them (and us) the help we each need.

In their isolation, or their work, visit each one and bless them with your company and friendship, and with good health.

For the children on extended school holidays, those with vulnerabilities to disease and their carers, we pray for your strength, joy and meaningful activity.

We pray for your kindness and hope to spread through all nations of the earth

For your kingdom to come and your will to be done.

In Jesus' name, Amen

St Ronan's Church (Allison)

We pray for St Ronan's church ministry team as they find ways to support the congregation in isolation. As a congregation we pray that we will safely reach out to others in Eastbourne with God's love and blessing.

We give thanks for the families that come to *Mainly Music* and pray they will be safe and parents will find occupation for their young children during isolation. We give thanks for Reg and Cath emailing recorded *Mainly Music* songs and words to families to be played on screens at home.

We pray for co-operation between St Albans, San Antonio and St Ronan's church members as we support one another in this difficult time in the power and love of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 121 I will lift up my eyes to the hills From whence comes my help?

My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

Allison and Les Molloy, Gill Burke, Paul Batchelor, Colin Dalziel

Rest now, e Papatūānuku

Written by Nadine Anne Hura (Ngāti Hine, Ngāpuhi) on Monday, March 23 2020,
on the train home, after the announcement of the lockdown. Words for our
mother, the earth. (Submitted by Anne Manchester)

*Rest now, e Papatūānuku
Breathe easy and settle
Right here where you are
We'll not move upon you
For awhile
We'll stop, we'll cease
We'll slow down and stay home
Draw each other close and be kind
Kinder than we've ever been.
I wish we could say we were doing it for you
as much as ourselves*



*But hei aha
We're doing it anyway
It's right. It's time.
Time to return
Time to remember
Time to listen and forgive
Time to withhold judgment
Time to cry
Time to think
About others
Remove our shoes
Press hands to soil
Sift grains between fingers*

*Gentle palms
Time to plant
Time to wait
Time to notice
To whom we belong
For now it's just you
And the wind
And the forests and the oceans and the sky full of rain*

*Finally, it's raining!
Ka turuturu te wai kamo o Rangi ki runga i a koe
Embrace it*

*This sacrifice of solitude we have carved out for you
He iti noaiho – a small offering
People always said it wasn't possible
To ground flights and stay home and stop our habits of consumption
But it was
It always was.*

*We were just afraid of how much it was going to hurt
– and it IS hurting and it will hurt and continue to hurt
But not as much as you have been hurt.
So be still now
Wrap your hills around our absence
Loosen the concrete belt cinched tight at your waist
Rest.
Breathe.
Recover.
Heal –
And we will do the same.*

Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten

I really don't know what it all means.

I find myself taken back to my earliest childhood memories,
to the time when my mother and I were alone in the house,
when the traffic was sparse,
and a tangible silence pervaded all around.
When the women talked together in muted tones,
anxious for their menfolk in strange tropical lands.
And my grandparents fretted for their teenage sons,
preparing for missions to places unknown.
The virus has reawakened a sense of a community in wartime,
as it confronts forces and emotions unfamiliar
that it does not understand and cannot rationalise.
I had a similar sense a few years ago, when, with Mary Williams,
I was one Saturday afternoon at Countdown collecting for Foodbank.
There was a pallor in the faces of those who shuffled in
and a haunted fear consumed their eyes.
These were scenes that brought forth memories of my earliest years.
In that event I realised that vast swathes of our community were in deep
despair.

The verses of the Lorelei I learned as a teenager,
but the words and the poetry echo what we experience now:

*Ein Märchen aus uralten Zeiten,
A story from very ancient times
Das kommt mir nicht aus dem Sinn
that my mind has certainly not dreamed up.*

Two Sundays ago, I was reading of the plague which decimated ancient Athens. And in succeeding days I have read of the plagues which raged through mediæval Europe.

Now it is our turn.

Plagues of insects, pestilence and crop failure, fire, flood, famine and earthquake, are, along with wars, the stuff of our collective consciousness. They make us what we are. They destabilise and destroy, but in the end, Life rises again stronger and more resilient than ever before.

*I glaube die Wellen verschlingen am Ende Schiffer und Kahn,
Und das hat die Lorelei mit ihrem Singen getan.*

The waves finally shatter the sailor and his tiny craft,
Victims of the Lorelei's mesmerising song.

Geoff Mann



The Loreley

I cannot divine what it meaneth
This haunting nameless pain:
A tale of the bygone ages
Weeps brooding through my brain.
The faint air cools in the gloaming,
And peaceful flows the Rhine,
The thirsty summits are drinking
The sunset's flooding wine.

The loviest maiden is sitting
High-throned in yon blue air,
Her golden jewels are shining
She combs her golden hair;
She combs with a comb that is golden,
And sings a weird refrain;
That steepens in a deadly enchantment
The listener's ravished brain.

The doomed in his drifting shallop
Is tranced with the sad sweet tone,
He sees not the yawning breakers.
He sees but the maid alone.
The pitiless billows engulf him!
So perish sailor and bark,
And this, with her baleful singing,
Is the Loreley's gruesome work.

H. Heine

Translated by Mark Twain

Kids (more) friendly

Sure, it may be a while before we're out of isolation but...

For a long time, we've been trying to make our church and its premises more '*kids friendly*'. A year or two ago we changed the garden area (new play equipment), built a new kid-proof fence and gate and re-arranged the Blue Room.

The many young families who use our premises really appreciate these changes – *Mainly Music* averages over 20 families, so over 25 children, so around 50 people, each Thursday morning.

With the same intent, we've also started to re-decorate the Education Block's foyer-passageway-cupboards area – bright new colours to suit our little ones – a chalk-board paint surface so it can be chalked on – thanks Reg.

Kids (own) candle: In the church, you may have noticed some changes with the Christ candle. This is now lit right at the start of the service. When you see someone light the Christ candle – this is the start of the service.

A little later, as the children leave to go to their own programme, they now light a portable candle from the Christ candle, and so carry its flame to their Power Hour room (a shiny new tin can forms a windshield so their candle copes better with the outdoors).

Along with this new little bit of 'ceremonial' we are also trying to increase the focus of the early part of our service to the children (shorter prayers, one short kids song, one short talk) so as to have the kids leave us after about 12 minutes all up. This way, the kids can start their Power Hour programme by about 9.45am and finish it by about 10.30am.



Then (really importantly) the kids can come and join with us for our after-service cuppa and nibble. It would be so good for them and also for us to get to know one another better.

Hmmmmmm: Experience to date, with these new arrangements shows some rather 'crisper' timing is called for all round if all this is to work as planned. And so we will persist until the new way becomes a habit...

I'm convinced this is the way to go...!

Sandy Lang

Seismic strengthening – Hall and Education block

Our Hall (built in the 1920s) and Education Block (1971) are both timber-framed buildings that would be expected to be reasonably resilient in a moderate earthquake. Their seismic strengths have been assessed at 45% and 60% of the New Building Standard (NBS) respectively and hence they are classified as earthquake risks.

PCANZ's Church Property Trustees require all church buildings to be progressively strengthened to not less than 67% NBS. In the case of St Ronan's buildings the deadline is June 2023. The Trustees' rationale is that a building strengthened to a minimum of 67% NBS will "... give an acceptable level of protection in a moderate to severe earthquake". At 67% NBS it still presents five times the risk compared to a new building but it is more likely that the building will remain useable, or can be fixed. It will also result in lower insurance premiums.

Given the high level of use of both buildings by St Ronan's and outside groups, Parish Council has decided to proceed with strengthening both buildings. The strengthening will take the form of adding a tougher, structural form of Gib board to parts of selected walls. This will give us the opportunity to undertake some redecoration in both buildings.

The strengthening work will trigger a requirement to bring the fire protection and access for disabled persons provisions up to current building code requirements. Given the age of our buildings we anticipate work will be required. The scope and indicative cost of this work will be known once the relevant reports have been completed by a Fire Engineer.



The budget for just the strengthening work, including permits and structural engineer's fees, is \$36,600 + GST. This work, and the fire and access upgrading, will be funded from money withdrawn from our Property Investment Fund which principally contains the proceeds from the sale of the manse. To access this fund we will require the congregation's approval.

The work was originally programmed for the July school holidays but given recent viral events this programme will have to be reviewed.

Simon Shaw

This is the time for the Golden Rule

We are not alone, although we are on our own, alone in isolation. But we are not lonely, we are able to communicate, co-operate, exhort each other to be KIND, to think of each other, in other words do to others what you would want them to do to you, how you would want to be treated.

The words most often heard these days are "Be Kind". It is positive and heart-warming to hear those words for all of us. Love our neighbour as ourselves, and our enemies, and we will have peace, not anger, in ourselves, for each other, for the nation, the world. Be mindful, shield others from bad thoughts – and viruses, and lighten our lives with little acts of kindness.

Jan Heine

Rood Screen – A funny thing happened...

...on the way to the forum.

Historians sometimes sanitise their favourite characters. We remember Julius Caesar as a Roman statesman and military general (and for our Julian calendar). We overlook that at the same time, he played a critical role in the events leading to the demise of the Roman Republic and the rise of the Roman Empire. And that he was an egotist who had himself proclaimed *dictator perpetuo* (dictator for life).



On the other hand, Cato the Younger, was a conservative Roman senator in the period of the late republic. He was a noted orator and is remembered for his stubbornness and tenacity, as well as for his immunity to bribes, his moral integrity and his famous distaste for the corruption of the times.

He was a constant thorn in Julius Caesar's side. That he chose to take his own life rather than live under Caesar's dictatorship speaks volumes. But not all of Cato's criticisms of Caesar were valid.

On 8 November 63 BC, there was a fierce debate in the Senate where Cato accused Julius Caesar of being involved in a recently exposed plot. While Cato was addressing the Senators, a messenger came into the chamber and handed a note to Caesar. Cato immediately assumed the note had something to do with the plot and that it would incriminate Caesar, so he demanded it be read aloud to the Senate and duly recorded. Without batting an eye, Caesar handed the note to Cato, who was compelled by his own demand, to read it out.

The note had nothing to do with a plot. It was a love letter from Caesar's mistress Servilia – and the tone and contents can only be described as 'smoking hot'. To make matters even more awkward, Servilia was Cato's half-sister!

2100 years later we still chuckle at Cato's embarrassment, as we read what the record describes as Servilia's 'unchaste letter'. All this because Cato was overly keen to judge and to implicate Caesar and insisted the letter be recorded.

The Good Book has a bit to say about rushing to judge others. I like the King James wording of Matthew 7:1-3 *Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

John Harris



Phil's photo – Bear hunts go viral...

Early last week a beautiful event took place somewhere in New Zealand. A teddy bear sat down in his front window to say "Hi... How are you going?" to passers-by. Then the local media got it "Let's all put teddy bears in our front windows." Then all NZ followed... Then the world... Everywhere now, bears are coming out of hibernation and fronting up to their communities.

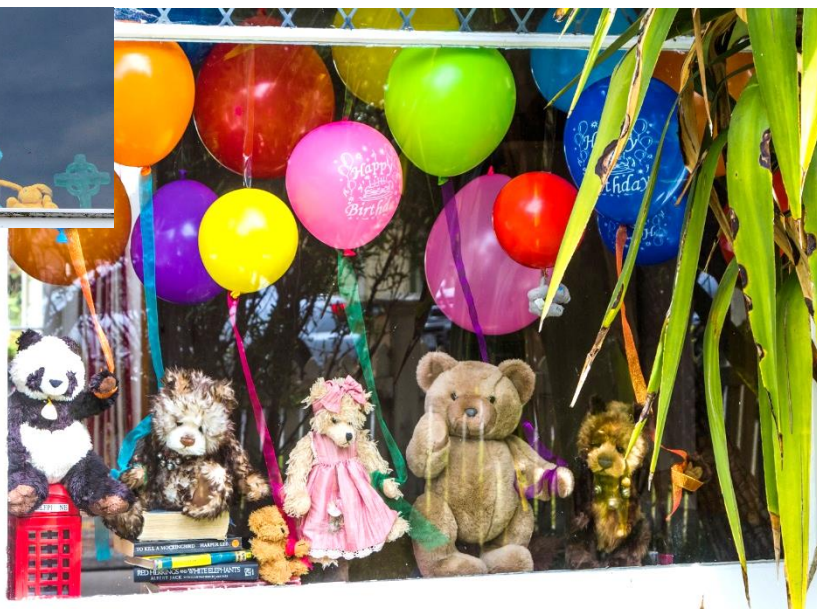


People smile and children love to count how many

teddy bears they see on their daily walks.

Wandering around our village last Saturday it was clear Eastbourne had got right into this.

Happy bear hunting all of you.



Phil Bengel

One-third of the world's population is now living under lockdown to contain coronavirus.

The lockdown is particularly challenging for children who must stay indoors, away from their schools and friends.

In New Zealand, a 30-year-old children's book by British writer Michael Rosen is serving as the inspiration for real-life "teddy bear hunts" and children walk - safely - around their neighbourhoods trying to spot teddy bears in neighbours' windows. Now the bear hunt is popping up in other countries, too.

Charlotte Bellis (Al Jazeera)

These bears are looking after Jan Heine's car.

We're Going on a Bear Hunt

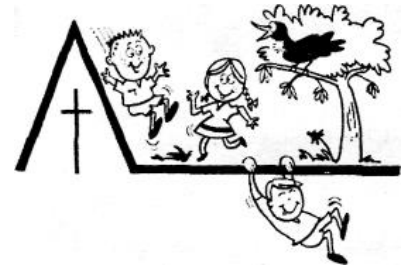
Michael Rosen Helen Oxenbury



POWER HOUR AND WIGGLY CHURCH

Greetings Young and Old!!

Lent, as the 40 days before **Easter**, has been for us a time to quietly share, or give, or go without as a way to honour how Jesus gave up his life for us. (See Record March: 40 Acts for the Family in Lent)



With **Easter** coming very soon, we can celebrate how Jesus has come to bring special new life to us. Jesus loved us so much that he was willing to die for us.

Did you know?

Nowadays, in most countries, it is common for people either to bury dead bodies in the earth or else burn them. In Israel the bodies were placed in tombs alongside of or in rocks. Soon, in such a warm climate, all that was left were the bones. When that happened, the bones were gathered up and placed in a container.

During this unusual Easter month, as we are hibernating in our homes, we can all be on the same page through connecting with Jesus and with our Bible. Actually hibernation connects with Easter time. Hibernation can mean a kind of sleep for a time as nature passes through change and threatening conditions for living. Here is an **Easter suggestion** on which we can sleep. All of us! Short-legged and long-legged!

This Easter, we can celebrate Jesus by:

** Give a short prayer of thanks about something good that has happened to you this week, or about someone you have appreciated.

** Jesus is Alive!!! Discover more about who Jesus is and why he came. Read about the surprising walk in the Bible, Luke 24: 1-24. Or, read from "The Children's Bible in 365 Stories" # 333 and # 334.

** Go for a walk to a new place and discover something new on the walk. Or, see if you can find a waving palm tree in someone's garden. Or, can you find beautiful seed pods on the trees and bushes?



A Verse To Remember

The angel said, "He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay." Matt 28:6

Term 1 and part of Term 2 Power Hour/Wiggly Church is being run by individual families in their homes. Remember our clocks go back on 5th April.

Hopefully, in the latter part of Term 2 Power Hour/Wiggly Church will resume at St Ronan's Church.

*Blessings, **Susan Connell, Elspeth Cotsilinis, Matt McCorkindale***

News on the Foodbank front

Lower Hutt Food Bank activities have been suspended for this isolation period. The arrangement is that the **Salvation Army** is providing food parcels on Food Bank's behalf until further notice.

If someone you know needs food please phone (04) 570 0273, leave full name, address, contact number, number of adults and dependent children, excluding visitors and other relatives. The Salvation Army will deliver the parcel to the home on the same or the following day.

Another way to help is through the **Foodbank Project** which has been set up to support other Kiwis who are less fortunate during these uncertain times.

The Foodbank Project is being sponsored by Forsyth Barr and for every dollar donated, Zuru NZ will match the donation. Donations can also be directed to be spent in your local nominated area.

Donations can be in Small, Medium or Large bundles. Small = \$30.04; Medium = \$60.22; and Large = \$90.70 or Cash Donations of \$20.00

<https://www.foodbank.org.nz/collections/zuru> for details.

Helen Withy



April Fools Day, Days Bay



April 5th Palm Sunday ; April 12th Easter Sunday

And our clocks fall forward at the end of daylight saving in this autumn fall





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,
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Local Ministry Team

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Contributions for the 'Record' are most welcome.
Please place them in the Church letterbox or email to helen.withy@xtra.co.nz or
janheine@xtra.co.nz

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors.
They do not necessarily represent those of St Ronan's Church.

**And the closing date for our next *Record* for May 2020
Sunday 26th April 2020**

