



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

April 2024

7 April	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
14 April	Reg Weeks communion.....	9.30am
21 April	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
28 April	TBA.....	9.30am
5 May	Shared communion service at St Ronan's.....	9.30am

In this issue

<i>"The more we get together"</i>	2
<i>Clerk's corner</i>	4
<i>Rood Screen: Gainesville Tornados v Vanguard College basketball</i>	6
<i>The Bronze Age</i>	8
<i>Jesus Saves!</i>	10
<i>"We Made It!"</i>	10
<i>Remembering the Easter Donkey</i>	12
<i>Power Hour – In the Way of Jesus</i>	13
<i>Recent Harbour Moods</i>	14

Power Hour – Sundays 9.30am
Breakfast Prayer – Tuesdays 8.00am
Mainly Music – Thursdays 9.15-11.15am

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

"The more we get together..."

There's a popular children's song which goes "*The more we get together... ..the happier we'll be*". I don't expect many would argue with that, either for children or for adults.

It seems to me that the three churches of Eastbourne have been exploring the truth of that little song over recent months. Especially since February's induction of a lay-person as minister-in-charge of the Anglican church – in a ceremony which took place in Eastbourne's Catholic church! She had recently been the Methodist appointment to lead the Methodist-Presbyterian Cooperating parish in Ngaio, and many of her previous congregation came to wish her well in this new sphere of ministry.



A week later there followed the annual Ash Wednesday service, also in San Antonio church, presided over by the Catholic priest, assisted by St Alban's new Anglican minister and a Presbyterian minister from St Ronan's.

The denominational sharing continued in a six-week Lenten study series hosted by the Anglicans in the foyer of San Antonio. This was followed by a community vigil for Gaza, organised by a combined group and hosted by St Ronan's. The very next day, a powerful shared Good Friday service was led the Anglican minister in the Presbyterian church. This featured a dramatised presentation performed by various members of each congregation, interwoven with music and video from Leonard Cohen's "Anthem" and Audrey Assad's version of "How can I keep from singing".

Then, undaunted by the cold weather, a small group gathered on the beach by the RSA for the annual 'Sonrise' service led by folk from St Ronan's, followed by coffee and hot cross buns. This was a prelude to the shared Easter Day service at San Antonio led by the Anglicans, followed by a shared gathering for fellowship and refreshment hosted at St Ronan's.

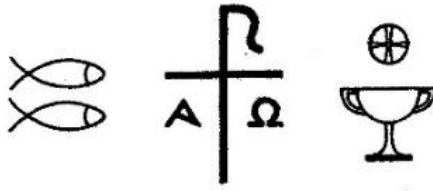
And plans are now afoot for the quarterly shared service alternating between the Presbyterians and the Anglicans to become monthly, starting on May 5. Then of course there's the combined Christmas carols which has run many years in Muritai School Hall.

Many are happy with the growing number of opportunities for Christians to get together. The great spin-off is that 'the more we get together, the more opportunities there are to get to know one another better' – and to become familiar with the variety of ways in which our different denominations approach worship. All this rather begs the question: How come there are different denominations in the first place?" The answer is quite complex...

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

MOVEMENTS OF DIVISION

MOVEMENTS OF REUNION

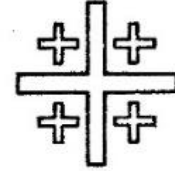


THE EARLY CHURCH

Early schisms and heresies



THE CHURCH OF ROME (WESTERN)



THE ORTHODOX (EASTERN) CHURCHES

The Great Schism (1054) dividing the Church into Western and Eastern churches

RUSSIAN
GREEK
SYRIAN
ARMENIAN
COPTIC (Egyptian and Ethiopian)

THE REFORMATION (16th c.)

MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546)



LUTHERAN CHURCHES

JOHN CALVIN (1509-64)



CALVINIST REFORMED CHURCH

THOMAS CRANMER (1489-1556)



ANGLICAN CHURCHES

JOHN WESLEY (1703-91)



WESLEYANISM (Methodism)

WILLIAM BOOTH



SALVATION ARMY (1878)



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES



GEORGE FOX



RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES



BAPTIST CHURCH

NEW CHRISTIAN GROUPS IN THE U.S.A. (including Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; Seventh-Day Adventist Church; Church of Christ; Scientist; Disciples of Christ; Churches of Christ).

CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA (1947) (Union of Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Reformed and Anglican Churches)

ROMAN CATHOLIC VATICAN COUNCIL

(exchange observers)

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES



At the beginning, in the early years of the Jesus movement, there appears to have been quite a wide variety of house churches in scattered communities across the Roman empire. It has been suggested that for the first hundred years or so, Christians in Alexandria, Phillipi, Corinth and Rome had developed large faith communities, generally led by a college of presbyters.

It was only in the 2nd century that the threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon, became widely established, while the formal definitions of the faith were largely achieved by the Councils of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451). It was during the reign of the 4th century Emperor Theodosius (379-95) that Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire.

However, in the following centuries, differences in doctrine and in politics grew greater until, in the 11th century (1054), there occurred the first major schism in the Christian church. This led to the separation between the Orthodox churches of the East and the Roman Catholic church of the West. The unity of the Roman church was itself later shattered by the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century.

Arguments and doctrinal differences have continued to splinter the Protestant churches of the reformation, continuing pretty much until the establishment of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in August 1948. In many countries the desire for unity has led to the formation of 'uniting churches', bringing together several different denominations but, in the end, these have only resulted in the formation of another denomination. In New Zealand, the efforts, begun in the 70s to form a Uniting church, failed but they did foster the development of over 100 cooperating parishes and led to a much greater level of cooperation and understanding among all the churches. The commitment made by the mainline churches to cooperate where possible has continued to bear fruit in local communities throughout the country.

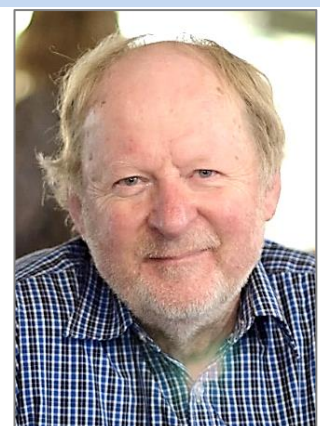
Reg Weeks

Clerk's corner...



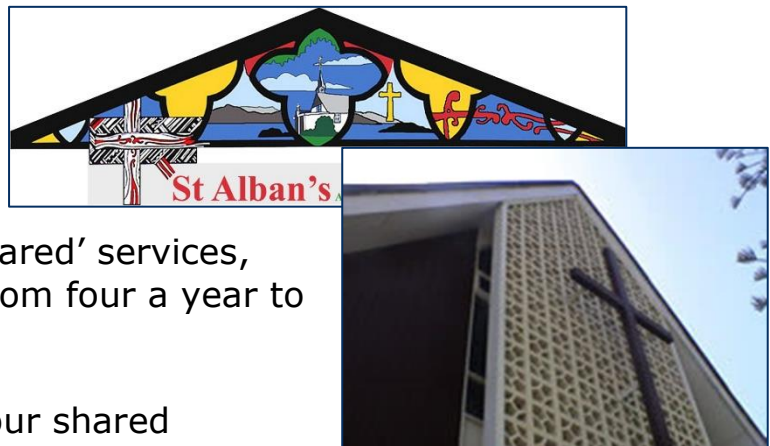
Combined: For many years, twice a year, we've enjoyed 'Combined' services with Eastbourne's two other churches. We, St Ronan's (Presbyterian) + they, St Alban's (Anglican) + they, San Antonio (Catholic).

These 'Combined' services have usually been on Good Friday (in one or other of our churches) and the Community Carols (in late Nov/early Dec, and usually in the Muritai School Hall).



Shared: A couple of years ago (starting 3 July 2022) we initiated quarterly (four a year) 'Shared' communion services with the people of St Alban's. We've taken turns to play 'host' and 'visitor'. The hosts have led the service in their own denominational style and the visitors have provided the bible reader and the preacher.

This formula has worked well for both congregations. So well, indeed, that we've recently agreed with the Anglicans to increase the frequency of our 'shared' services, from quarterly to monthly. So, from four a year to twelve a year...



Starting: For ease of memory, our shared services will be on the first Sunday each month. Starting at our place (St Ronan's church) at 9:30am on Sunday 5 May 2024; and the following shared service will be at their place (now San Antonio church) at 9:30am on 2 June; etc...

Rearrange: The effect of this on our established patterns of worship is we will revert to our 'traditional' 1st Sunday communion. It also means our formal 'non-communion' service will move to the 3rd Sunday. Meanwhile, our informal services (in the Fellowship Room) will move from the 1st and 3rd Sundays to the 2nd and 4th Sundays. A nice simple pattern. But...

Change step: Because our service leaders are arranged several weeks in advance, we will have to cope with a slightly 'messy' pattern of informal/formal services in May and June as we get into step with the new pattern. Have you ever watched marching soldiers change step from left/right to right/left while on the move? It involves a carefully choreographed hop...! I hope we'll get through the transitional 'hop' and soon become used to the new pattern.

Church meeting/chat: The increased frequency of shared services signals a closing of the relationship between our two churches - always close, getting closer. We've felt it important to create the opportunity for a congregational meeting to talk about this as we (parish council) need to ensure we are fully carrying you (the congregation) along with us in this decision.

Meanwhile, it's a while since we last had a 'church chat' (before Christmas) so it's high time you had the opportunity to raise any other church matters for discussion that seem good to you. So, on Sunday 14 April, after our next communion service, we will constitute a formal church meeting in the church immediately after the service (coffee and cake in hand) to give you the opportunity to discuss (1) this closing relationship and (2) any other matters you might wish to raise. The church meeting agenda will reflect these two objectives.

e: slang@xtra.co.nz **t:** 562 8752 **m:** 021 222 0383

Sandy Lang

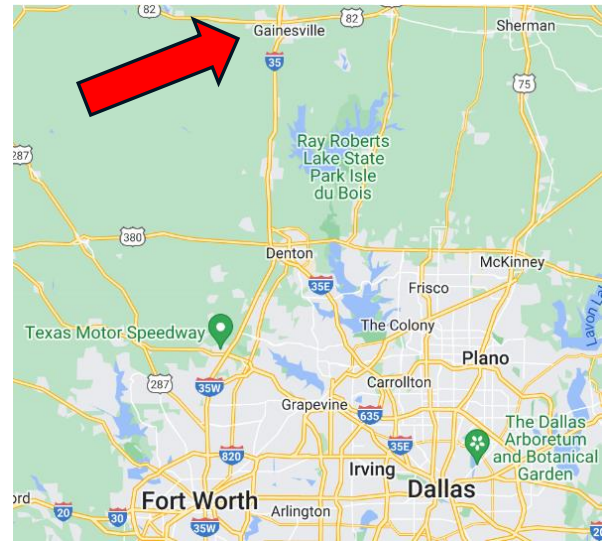
Road screen – Gainesville Tornadoes v Vanguard College basketball...

Americans tend to take their college basketball pretty seriously. Fellow students, parents and even outsiders turn up to games dressed in their team's colours – and of course there are the obligatory cheer leaders keeping the enthusiasm going.

However, there's one Texas team which has none of that. The *Gainesville Tornadoes* come from a juvenile correction facility for felony offenders and their main supporters are fellow inmates who are (obviously) all locked up. And their families are unlikely to be able to travel to watch their sons play either.



A typical crowd of Gainesville supporters



Gainesville players are selected primarily for good behaviour, and it is a sought-after privilege to be allowed briefly to leave the facility a few times a year to play a game against another team.

Typically, at one of their games, when the home team scores a point, there's a deafening roar. When the Gainesville team scores there's a deafening silence.

Vanguard College Preparatory School (Waco, Texas) is advertised as Waco's best private school. Back in 2015, *Gainesville* was scheduled to play the *Vanguards* but two of the *Vanguards* - Hudson Bradley and Ben Martinson - announced they weren't going to play against a team with no fans. So, they asked some of their *Vanguard* fans if they would cheer for *Gainesville*. It seems that somebody spoke to somebody, who spoke to somebody, and...

The *Gainesville* players had no idea of anything out of the ordinary. When they walked onto the court, they found one side of the gymnasium packed with supporters wearing their team colours. There were posters and banners. They even had their own cheerleaders.

Every time the Gainesville team scored a point, their fans erupted. They were so enthusiastic that, as the game progressed, everybody started to cheer for *Gainesville*. I can't find a record of the final score that day, but in the opinion of everyone interviewed after the match, it didn't really matter.

Two quotable quotes:

From a **Vanguard** player:

"I think in a way this is kind of how sports should be. It just kind of showed me the real impact that encouragement and support for anybody can make".

From a **Gainesville** player:

"When I'm an old man I'll still be thinking about this".

I'm sure that there was every good reason why those *Gainesville* players had been sent to that correction facility, but they still remained, first and foremost, real people. Thanks to Bradley and Martinson and the good people of *Vanguard*, something very special happened that day.



A bewildered Gainesville team arriving on court



The Gainesville cheerleaders

I'm reminded of Jesus' words in Matt. 25:35-40

I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

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.'

A story to think about as we celebrate Easter.

John Harris

The Bronze Age

Some months ago, I quoted a line from Friedrich Nietzsche: "*So spoke Zarathushtra*". I have spent many hours since trying to learn more about Zarathushtra and Zoroastrianism, their impact on the ancient world, and their role in the world today.

Zarathushtra lived somewhere in Central Asia (Bactria/Afghanistan area) some 3,000±500 years ago. This was the bronze age, and the time of, amongst other things, the rise of the great empires of Nineveh, Babylon, Persia and Greece. For about 1,000 years Zoroastrianism was the state religion of the various Persian empires until it was supplanted by Islam in 651AD.

The thing which has impressed me most about this era is just how violent it was. Extraordinary cities and buildings were constructed, such as Athens, Babylon and Persepolis. There was great wealth but enormous inequality. These were slave-based economies. The temples of Solomon and Herod were paved with gold but built by slaves.



Above is a representation of Solomon's Bronze Age temple in Jerusalem c.950 BC. It was as tall as a 10-storey building¹. Its inside was lined and paved with gold. Note the enormous entrance pillars and the great ceremonial basin, all of bronze. This would take the work of 1,000s of slaves.

¹ No archaeological evidence remains of this building, which may in fact never have existed. But other nations did build similar edifices.

Greece was the home of democracy (Gk *demos* = people, *kratos* = power). But *demos* referred only to the ruling aristocracy and *kratos* to their power. The slaves and peasants had no power.

Slavery has provided the energy for many societies: Rome, Britain, Brazil, USA. Chile obtained slaves from Easter Island and the Australian cane growers imported theirs from New Caledonia.

The French economist Thomas Piketty has outlined the endemic inequality at the heart of European cultures: a hereditary aristocracy, supported by a property-owning religious class (the church). It is a pattern that we see repeated in many places: in the caste system of modern India, in medieval Japan, Polynesia and ancient Israel.

The inequality at the heart of the USA is paraded in front of us every day and shows no sign of healing.

Poverty, and particularly child poverty, are a feature of inequality in our own society, as are the gangs born of cultural dislocation which prey on their own people. Yet we need our 'slaves', to clean our roads and office buildings, to collect our rubbish, and to ensure the effective operation of our hospitals and 'retirement villages'. If we don't have sufficient home-grown slaves, we import them.

Jesus said: "*The poor you will always be with you.*" (Matt 26:11). I never really understood why. I now know it is because human society organises itself to be unequal, with those who accumulate and/or seize wealth and power sitting at the top of the heap, who then suppress, oppress, repress or exploit those below them. The poor are a necessary precondition for the lifestyles of the wealthy.

On Good Friday we commemorate the trial and death of a young man who had the temerity to tell the dregs of society that they were worth something. In so doing he challenged the aristocratic and priestly castes that ruthlessly exploited them.

Jesus was not condemned by the Romans but by his own people. Crucifixion was a penalty cynically developed by the Persians, happily emulated by the Romans, and religiously endorsed by the Jews. The crucifix is not so much a symbol of sacrifice as one of cruelty and exploitation, of injustice and oppression, of the contempt which humanity has for its fellow humans.

The drama is replayed daily in Russia, Ukraine, China, Burma, Yemen, Ethiopia, South Sudan, the Sahel and Gaza.

Geoff Mann

Jesus saves...!

Our Easter Bible readings recall Jesus celebrating his final Passover feast with his disciples before his death, up to his crucifixion and resurrection.

The previous Palm Sunday Bible readings usually recount either the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem amid crowds shouting "Hosanna" or retell the events of subsequent days leading to Jesus's capture, trial and death - the Passion of Christ.

This year the Jewish festival of Purim also fell on Palm Sunday. It commemorates the deliverance of Jews from a planned genocide, recounted in the book of Esther.

Hosanna means 'save us now' or 'save us please'. The theme of a God who saves runs throughout the Bible. Wonderful and most important as it is to be saved from our sins by Jesus, it seems to me we are saved from other things by God – and saved for a purpose. These things are alluded to in the beautiful songs of Mary, Zechariah and Simeon that we read in the opening chapters of Luke, usually at Christmastime or Advent.

These things we are rescued from include: our enemies, fear, hunger, darkness, the shadow of death and perhaps even from proud or unsuitable rulers. Such 'saving' themes run through the Bible, including the Psalms and the Lord's Prayer.

Zechariah's song came after many months of God-imposed silence. In Luke 1:74 he describes the purpose of God's rescue from enemies as enabling us *...to serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.*

And so our feet are guided *into the path of peace*. We are fortunate that our geographical isolation and other blessings may mean we feel less threatened than many who are closer to conflict zones. But still we cry out to God for others (and ourselves) to be saved, fed and healed, that we may find the light, peace and glory of God personified in Jesus.

Gill Burke

We made it...!

The Alps to Ocean (A2O) cycle trail, beginning from Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park and finishing at Ōamaru on the Pacific Ocean, is a magnificent experience. Crossing both the MacKenzie and Waitaki Districts, it is also very long at 315 km and it has some very challenging, intermediate-grade sections. On three of our five days, we rode 70 km or more – that's many hours on a bike saddle, even on an e-bike.



Mt Cook Airport, about to cross the Tasman River

You would think having power assistance would make the whole thing manageable. But when Sandy and I encountered steep, narrow tracks with sheer drops down to a river or lake below, you needed all your wits

about you to stay in control of the bike and on the path. You always had to be ready to jump aside if you met a rider coming in the other direction or to move over if someone needed to pass you.

Sandy had some bad luck, early on in the journey, with two punctures within as many days. Fixing said punctures proved not that easy either. Then I took a tumble on a comparatively easy stretch and wrenched my back. This proved painful whenever I had to mount or dismount from the bike.

On day three, in the section from Lake Ōhau to Ōtematata, and during a particularly steep climb to the top of Benmore Dam, Sandy's battery ran out. Fortunately, one of our wonderful guides from the Milton Rotary Club's Otago Youth Adventure Trust swapped bikes, so Sandy was not without power for too long. All 19 of us had good reason to appreciate the backup crew's help at one time or another.

The worst day for me was day one. This despite the excitement of having ourselves and our bikes flown by helicopter from Mt Cook Airport across the braided Tasman River to the starting point on the other side. What followed was a 40+ km juddery ride along a badly corrugated (logging trucks) gravel road on the eastern shore of Lake Pukaki. I thought this section would never end. Angry words issued from my lips and I vowed never to do a multi-day cycle tour again!

The experience finally became a pleasure after a very welcome lunch, served on the side of the road from a trailer dragged behind one of our two support vehicles. After this, the trail finally went offroad and I could at last appreciate the beauties of Lake Pukaki.



Above Lake Ōhau, highest point of the track

Of course, the scenery along the way was a wonderful compensation for any hardships encountered. Appreciating the network of hydro lakes, rivers and canals, and discovering little townships like Kurow, Quailburn and Duntroon made it all a fascinating experience.

But above all, I felt, by the end of it, an immense sense of gratitude. I had succeeded in the ride, had been wonderfully supported by our team of volunteers but, most importantly, both Sandy and I had come out of it in one piece and unscathed. *Deo Gratias!*

Anne Manchester

Remembering the Easter Donkey....

Janet Dalziel remembered this Palm Sunday poem taught to her by Jenny Barlow, her English and form teacher at Wellington Technical College (now Wellington High School). Jenny Barlow later became Jenny Patrick OBE, author of Dennison Rose and other historical novels.

The Donkey²

GK Chesterton

*When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born.*

*With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.*

*The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.*

*Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.*



Contributed by Gill Burke

² The Collected Poems of GK Chesterton (Dodd Mead & Company, 1927)

Power Hour – In the Way of Jesus

As an adult, it was said Jesus *grew both in body and in wisdom, gaining favour with God and men.* (Luke 2:51). How do children today gain wisdom? How do children find favour with God and man?

These huge questions beg of our children wanting to be shown 'The Way'.

When Thomas asked, *How can we know the way?*, Jesus replied, *I am The Way, the Truth and the Life. No one goes to the Father except by me.* John 14.

In general terms then, to enable our children to be shown 'The Way', it means the children need to experience life activities with Jesus guiding and mentoring 'The Way'. Here lies the garnering of wisdom and truth with positivity.



The week of Valentine's Day provided a wonderful opportunity for the Power Hour children to experience and do some of the things Jesus advocated: caring for others; including everyone and sharing their good fortunes; and making time to be with Jesus.

First, the children eagerly prepared and served heart-shaped shortbread biscuits for everyone at our church morning tea. There was wonderful care in creating each beautiful biscuit. No slopping about. Then care with carrying the slippery biscuit plates to the morning tea table. Whew! We made it without dropping one! Joyously we blessed our giving.

Following on, very original Valentines cards were crafted to accompany the biscuit parcels for their families. Warm contentment was felt by reciprocating their family's love for them. How else do you learn to love others if you don't express it by doing?

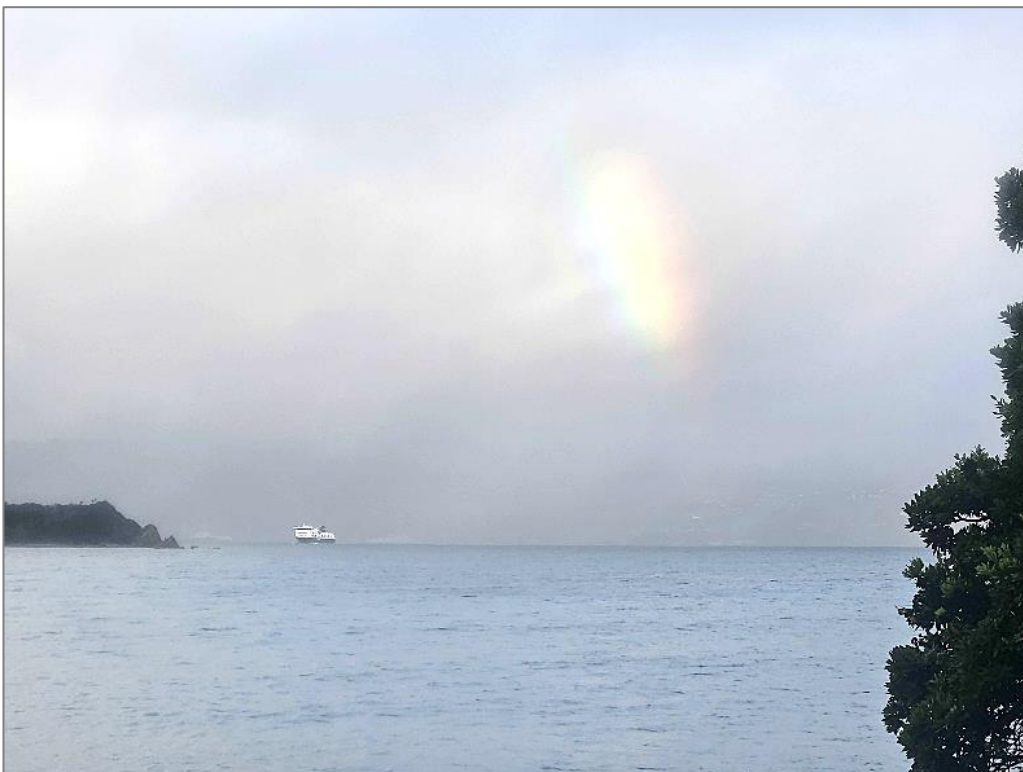
There was recognition of the children's talents or gifts when being called to serve others in a purposeful and caring way not only in the community but also closer to home in their families. Children love being responsible. It was reinforced that they are part of a large human family with a part to play,

interacting in supporting, peaceful ways of which Jesus spoke. No one was excluded or rather all were included, and there was fairness. Asking for a blessing from God gave a capping to the children's endeavours. Herein we see our children's growth being held in the hands of Jesus and God.

Susan Connell

Recent harbour moods...

When 'Southerly Busters' come, they march across the sky, heralding howling winds and pouring rain. But this time the storm passed in just twenty minutes!



On other days the sky and sea are calm and grey - and the city disappears.

And once a small rainbow blessed a ferry departing on its way, reflecting the sombre tones of Easter with God's promise of new life.



And again, and again, those fortunate to look to the west are treated to the full beauty of God's sunset palette.

Reg Weeks



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

Rev Reg Weeks	027 491 5947	third.age@outlook.co.nz
Sandy Lang	562 8753	slang@xtra.co.nz
Simon Shaw	562 8772	simonjshaw@xtra.co.nz
Colin Dalziel	562 7238	colinjdalziel@gmail.com

Parish Clerk	Sandy Lang
Hall Bookings	Sandy Lang

Contributions for the 'Record' are most welcome.
Please email them to lesmolloy7@gmail.com
Phone (04) 568 3377

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 2024
is Sunday 28 April 2024**