

St Ronan's Presbyterian Church Eastbourne

December 2020

6	December Worship with Jenny Dawson (CWS)	9.30am				
13	December Worship with Reg Weeks	9.30am				
	December Worship with Diane Gilliam-Weeks					
27	December Worship with Gill Burke	9.30am				
January 2021						
3	January Worship with Anne Manchester	9.30am				
10	- W 1: W 5 W 1					
ΤO	January Worship with Reg Weeks	9.30am				
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17	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	9.30am				
17 24	January Worship with Diane Gilliam-Weeks	9.30am 9.30am				

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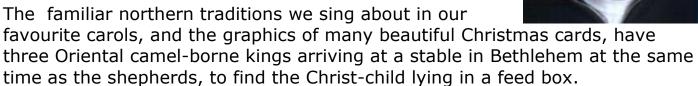
Power Hour - Sundays 9.30am
Breakfast Prayer - Tuesdays 7.30am
Mainly Music - Thursdays 9.15-11.15am
St Ronan's Pastoral Care

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

Carol our Christmas...

Shirley Murray, our hymn writer of treasured memory, blessed us with a Southern-hemisphere carol which features annually in the celebration of Christmas. One verse reads...

"Shepherds and musterers move over hillsides finding not angels but sheep to be shorn; wise ones make journeys whatever the season searching for signs of the truth to be born"



But this picture is quite misleading. The wise ones that the bible speaks about, were looking for a truth to be born, according to the science of their time. They were Persian astrologers seeking a new royal birth in Israel, as the skies they charted had revealed. They turned up in Jerusalem on 25 December, only to find Jesus was a toddler - not a new-born babe.

On that day the planet Jupiter whose course and placement gave rise to their journey reached the end of its retrograde motion. When viewed from Jerusalem that early morning it stood precisely over the town of Bethlehem. This you can check for yourself by using the sky simulations in the package *Starry-Night*, Space.com.

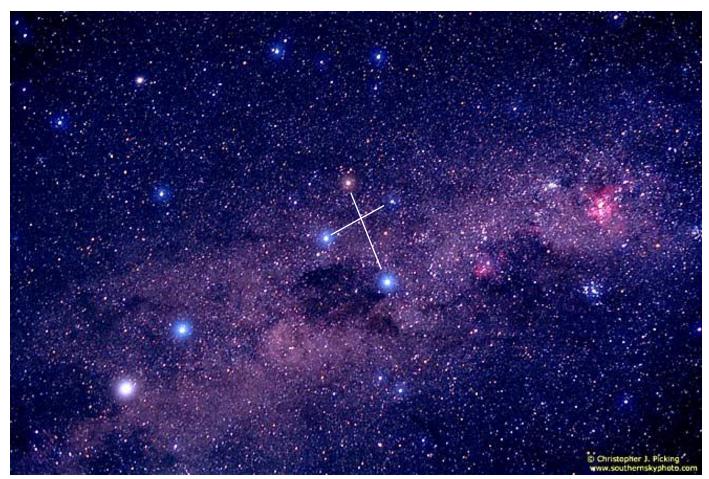
One of our own 'wise men', Dr Jeff Tallon, discovered this back in 2002, when he put his not inconsiderable talents to work researching the Jewish history and astronomical signs recorded in the biblical accounts of Jesus' birth. Jeff also discovered "in that year the Jewish feast of Hannukah¹ fell also on 25 December. The date of Christmas, then, has nothing to do with a pagan feast but seems to refer to the day that the Magi visited Jesus." So, linking Christmas gift-giving with some pagan religious festival is just another prescientific misunderstanding.

And then there's the manger – a feeding trough. It's mentioned three times in Luke's account of the birth, but no mention of a stable. You see the word translated as 'inn' has several meanings, one of which refers to the guest room in a private house. In those days it was normal for the family sleeping quarters to be in the living area just above a lower level where the family's few animals were housed overnight. This was Joseph's hometown. When he knocked on a close relative's door, their guest room was already occupied because of the

¹Hanukkah is a Jewish festival commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. It is also known as the Festival of Lights.

census, so likely they offered the young couple a comfortable bed on the lower floor and the feed trough made a handy crib, when the baby was born.

Knowing these things is unlikely to change the traditions we know and love, but it may give us much more confidence in what the bible says about this one who came as sign to all nations and not least to us who dwell at the very ends of the earth.



Yet stranger still is the fact that a stellar symbol well known to all Kiwis, once was visible in the Northern hemisphere, and on the same day the wise men arrived in Jerusalem stood vertically over Bethlehem. To the wise men the Southern Cross meant nothing, and only after the passage of two full millennia would Christians, having travelled to the ends of the earth, seen the cross in the southern skies, and having developed the computer technology to recreate the night sky, realise that from the dawn of creation, the Southern Cross was destined to stand upright over the temporary dwelling of the Christ child. Who would have thought that his birth, death and resurrection could have been linked in such a powerful way, in a sign the cosmic significance of which is only visible to the eyes of faith in the twenty-first century?

So, sometime before Christmas, when the sky is clear, and we look up at the Cross in our skies, may we remember that it once stood over Bethlehem. "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth." Isaiah 49:6

Reg Weeks

Clerk's corner...

New projector: A great success. Whyever did we wait so long before getting it...?

In the Eye of the Storm: Reflections from the Second Pacific Climate Change Conference. John Howell has given me the link so we can see this book on the internet. But the URL is very long. If you would like it, send me an email and I'll send you the link so you can just click on it.

Pageant: Our annual Christmas 'pageant' service last
Sunday was really great. Thanks so much to all involved in
putting it all together – Susan Connell, Elspeth, Doug and others... Such
successes don't just happen. Here's Phil's record of the event... If you want a
copy of this photo drop me an email and I'll send you the .jpg' file...



COVID: We've updated our St Ronan's COVID response. The 'safe' feeling we've enjoyed here in little Eastbourne amid a wide world of COVID turmoil has probably become a little bit 'too safe'. It's really pretty bad out there...

So, here's a little reminder:

- Please **don't** come to church if you've a cold.
- Please do sanitise your hands, on arrival (to keep high-touch surfaces safe, door handles, light switches).

- Please **do** use your phone to log in with the QR code.
- Do also write your name on the sheet on the foyer table.
 But why both?

Many of us can and do use our phones to log in with the QR code - but not all of us can do this and some of us may forget to do it.

- Suppose we had a 'COVID event' at St Ronan's one Sunday morning. We would look pretty silly if we'd scored (say) 10 QR code logins but had no idea who the other 15 people at the service were. All 25 of us would of us be potential COVID contacts but only 10 could be identified and warned.
- Lastly, we've always enjoyed our little tradition of passing the peace. The
 milling around and the greeting one another is OK, but not all of us are
 happy if you make physical contact handshakes, hugs etc.
 Rather than cause embarrassment, we ask you simply to speak and smile
 and nod etc but let's not touch one another.

Opportunities for service...

It's always a joy to have new people attend our services, and to see the return of previous visitors.

For anyone not acquainted with the duty roster, and who has a skill and some time to offer, there are a variety of ways you can help on some Sundays - volunteers always welcome...!

DATE	COMMUNION	BIBLE	PRAYERS OF	DATA	SOUND	MORNING TEA	STEWARDS'	FLOWER
	SERVERS	READING	INTERCESSION	PROJECTOR	SYSTEM		DUTIES	ROSTER
4-Oct		Geoff	Colin	Anne	Reg	Heather & Phil	Heather & Phil	
11-Oct	Allison &	Susan		Reg	Simon	Jan D	Lois	
Communion	Les							
18-Oct		Simon	Diane	Simon	Anne	Louise & Lois	Jan D	Anne
25-Oct		Anne	Reg	Michelle	Warren	Helen	Gil & Peter	Anne
1-Nov		Reg	Gill	Helen	Reg	Keena	Lois	
8-Nov	Michelle &	Simon		Reg	Simon	Anne	Heather & Phil	
Communion	Warren							
15-Nov		Diane	Simon	Simon	Anne	Lois	Jan D	Susan
22-Nov		Geoff	Anne	Anne	Reg	Jan	Gill & Peter	Susan
29-Nov		Gill	Reg	Michelle	Warren	GIII & Peter	Lois	
6-Dec		Keena	Diane	Simon	Reg	Keena	Louise	
13-Dec	Gill & Peter	Jan		Reg	Anne	Helen	Jan D	Gill
Communion								
20-Dec		Sue J	John	Anne	Simon	Sue J	Gill & Peter	Gill
27-Dec		Les	Les	Michelle	Warren	Lois	Allison & Les	

Roster duties include Bible reading, prayers of intercession, working the data projector or the sound system, bringing and serving morning tea, serving communion, stewards' duties (meet/greet, collect the offering) and flower arranging. Guidelines and training are given as required.

Lois Noble-Campbell draws up the roster and for those who do a few different duties she can group these on a single Sunday for convenience. Phone Lois on 562 7276.

The musicians that play during the service would also welcome new members. Call Colin Dalziel on 5627238.

Having been at St Ronan's for a few decades now, I can't remember who first co-opted me for roster duties. I enjoy being part of the team where other members support and appreciate my efforts. Give it a go if you can...!

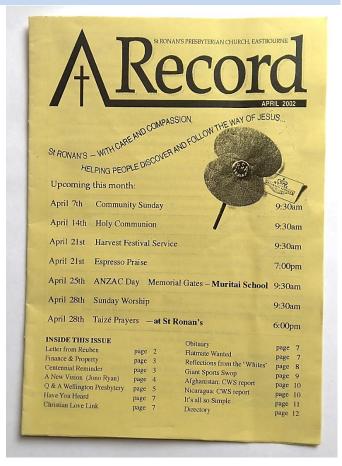
Gill Burke

A shorter history of St Ronan's Record

Since 2005 I have kept a file for the *Record* issues produced for each year to 2020 (15 years). But how did I keep a record of earlier Records? Because for a few years before 2005, I took over producing them from Lois Noble-Campbell and Malcolm Burdan.

Malcolm had brought in new ideas from his advertising work, with a new flair with graphics to the Record. I remember asking him several times how to get pictures into the text? I was a bit slow on the uptake.

As my use of the computer was pretty rudimentary, and I had only a B/W printer (still do actually), we resorted to pasting (with glue) graphics onto the master printed copy (Lois had supplied me with a folder of graphics).



Choosing the most appropriate ones was a challenge, as also was fitting them in the spaces. Lois would help with sheets spread over their dining table. Lois would take the master copy off to Nola Rough to copy the required number on the church photocopier. Then Lois would collate the issue, John would fold them, and Lois would take them to her band of distributors around the bays.

With usually only 8 pages, sometimes 12, occasionally 16 it was reasonably easy to get the work done during the week before the first Sunday of each month. I was using the *WordPerfect* program then. At that time editing was my job and I'd try to use columns, and play around a bit. Then had to progress to the *Word* program in Bill Gates thrall. So, it continued, trial and error at times, learning to use one version of *Word* then another. Issues became larger, 12 pages, 16 and even a 20-page issue in 2020.

Printers got better and faster, so no longer needed to rush off to someone's printer to produce copy, even colour, doing the whole job in-house actually it was in-printer. Michelle Bolger took over the assembly line to produce enough copies for the church, extras to publicise activities St Ronan's is involved in, and so it became St Ronan's flag ship. What took at least a week or more to produce, now takes only 4-5 hours concentrated work by the compiler gathering up what Sandy Parish Clerk supplies such as Ministers for the month, Clerks Corner, and other articles that have become staple items, like Phil's Photo (Phil Benge), Rood Screen (John Harris), health topics (Annette

Davidson), occasional articles by Simon Shaw, Geoff Mann, community activities.

Amendments, errors can now more easily be corrected, and additions added and not hold up the production line very much. Still the odd glitch does get through.

But life is moving on and my fingers are not great at typing – a one-finger job now taking more concentration, and two hands to hold the mouse steady at times. So, the time has come to hang up my editor's hat (or whatever editors wear) and enjoy other people's work.

Jan Heine

An editor's swansong...

This month Jan has edited her last Record. For 15 years, Jan has loyally put together St Ronan's monthly magazine. This envied but not emulated local-church publication is distributed to about 100 Eastbourne homes. Its distribution indicates a readership of, say, 150 - that's about three-times bigger than St Ronan's congregation.² The Record also appears monthly on St Ronan's website, so is quickly accessible globally.

Jan's Record work always begins with a gentle reminder to the congregation that the deadline is looming for contributed articles. This is followed up a few days later by Jan, miraculously, producing the edited version. Anyone in the publishing business will know these smooth, monthly miracles are more-often-than-not fraught with timelines and software issues - but Jan has always delivered.



Many of Jan's reminders would be sent to us from some far-away place where she would be busy planting or tramping, active in her passion for the environment. When ready to print, Jan and her team always got the job done. All this has taken a big commitment - one which St Ronan's has truly appreciated over all these years.

Jan has also been helping at *Randwick School* for five years, where St Ronan's has been involved with a reading programme, helping with fundraising and the *Breakfast Club*. Jan still turns up at 8am weekly to help serve breakfast to the children.

² About 50, with roughly half of these attending church on a Sunday.

But environmental groups have been Jan's main passion. Jan and her late husband Arnold spent years involved in the establishment, governance, running and day-to-day activities of many environmental/conservation groups for which Jan has been awarded the Eastbourne Order of Excellence at a recent ceremony.



Jan's concern for Eastbourne and neighbouring environments began before she and husband Arnold first climbed the 95 steps to their Days Bay home in 1983.

Together, they were founding members of the *Hutt Valley Conservation Society* which was formed in 1972. This society included several members from Eastbourne who later formed the *East Harbour Environmental Association* in 1983. They also became part of the *Eastbourne Forest Rangers* group which undertook track maintenance before the *Regional Council* took over.

They also participated in search and rescue missions. When *Matiu / Somes Island* was opened to the public in 1995, Jan supported the DOC rangers in rodent control and guiding visitors. As visitor numbers increased, so did Jan's involvement. In 2000 Jan became a founding trustee for the *Matiu / Somes Charitable Trust* in partnership with iwi. Jan still enjoys her role as trustee.

She is also a life member of the *Hutt Valley Tramping Club* and later, in 1996, became involved in the *Eastbourne Possum Busters* group. Hutt City Council provided traps, while residents, including Jan and Arnold, ran trap lines into the hills behind Eastbourne and made a significant impact on possum numbers. Jan and Arnold ran trap lines behind Days Bay for many years until 2011, when a storm brought down many mature trees and made the access impossible. The *Possum Busters* group later became known as the *Mainland Island Restoration Organisation* (MIRO) which still operates and is responsible for the significant drop in possum numbers we see today.

In her 'spare time' Jan has also planted dunes around Days Bay/Eastbourne, and been involved in *Red Cross* and the local *Civil Defence*.

Jan has now moved to the *Enliven* complex in Lower Hutt. We would like to think she's going to have some rest there but, knowing Jan, she will remain as active as possible in all her environmental groups.

Thank you, Jan, for your commitment and dedication to St Ronan's Record. *Helen Withy*

Christmas (over)indulgence...!

How to be just a little healthier at Christmas...

Hard to believe Christmas is less than a month away! It can be such a happy time to look forward to, but it can also a very stressful time - catching up with friends and family, thinking of those no longer pulling their chair up to our table, trying to find presents, posting deadlines, functions to attend or excuses to make... And we can put so many more expectations on ourselves too...!



Here are a few ideas we can take on board to look after ourselves, and also those we love...

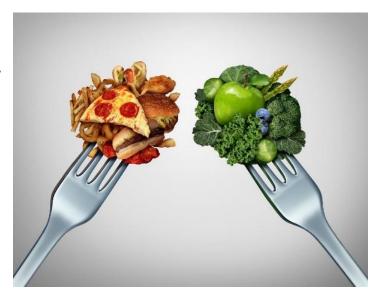
Cassief airy.com

Keep moving: Don't sit down all day on the sofa. Encourage the whole family to go out for a walk, game or picnic. We are so lucky here in Eastbourne to have so many options of tracks, parks, playgrounds and beaches.

but jolly is the last thing many of us feel with overspending, cooking, cleaning, endless to-do lists and visitors we could do without. Try to keep a sense of humour and proportion. Is it really the end of the world if the carrots are overcooked and the house is not tidy? Christmas is just one day of 365. Sometimes when you look at the supermarket trollies you would think the shops are never going to be open again!

Are you part of the Christmas stuffing? Research suggests we consume around 3,000 calories in our Christmas dinner. This much is more than the entire recommended daily intake for a grown man (2,000 calories).

A huge feast contributes not only to weight gain but also to indigestion and heartburn, not to mention to lethargy for the rest of the day, so reducing the chances of exercise.





Eat Fruit: Fruit doesn't usually feature on the Christmas menu - other than berries coated in sugar. At this time of year when we overindulge and party, it is even more important to get vitamins and minerals to stay healthy. Vegetables and fruit are the best sources of these.

Do something for others! Rather than getting to deep into the commercialisation and consumerism that has overtaken Christmas – make some homemade chutney, pickles, mince pies etc. Years ago, a friend gave me a beautiful wee bottle with about four vanilla pods with some alcohol poured over it. today, I still top it up and use it in my baking – the flavour goes on and on, and I think of how clever my friend is with the gifts she makes.

Keep colds and viruses away! Colds are rife at Christmas, partly because many of us travel around the country and mix with large numbers of people and so share their 'bugs'. Minimise your risk by maintaining a healthy immune system, by eating in a healthy way, getting enough sleep, exercising, and not indulging in too much alcohol, sugar or smoking. This will help you fight off viruses.

Think before you eat and drink Try to be aware of what you are eating and drinking, rather than just mindlessly popping in what is on the table in front of you. Get up and get a glass of water in between alcoholic

drinks - maybe two glasses of water! Think of putting fruit like cherries, and apple and pear slices on your cheese board and also raw nuts like brazils, almonds and cashews as well as sticks of carrot, pepper, cucumber and celery.

Engage your brain Instead of blobbing out in front of the TV, keep your mind active by playing games such as 'Trivial pursuit', 'Articulate' or charades, or do a jigsaw. Just some fun ways to get people talking, a bit of rivalry and enjoying the time together.

Be a careful cook If you love your family, don't kill them with really heavy, dense and dead calorie foods. Give your friends and family a good healthy balance of foods and think of including as many unprocessed foods as possible.

Most important, have a happy and healthy festive season...!

Annette J Davidson BN RN Nutritional Consultant

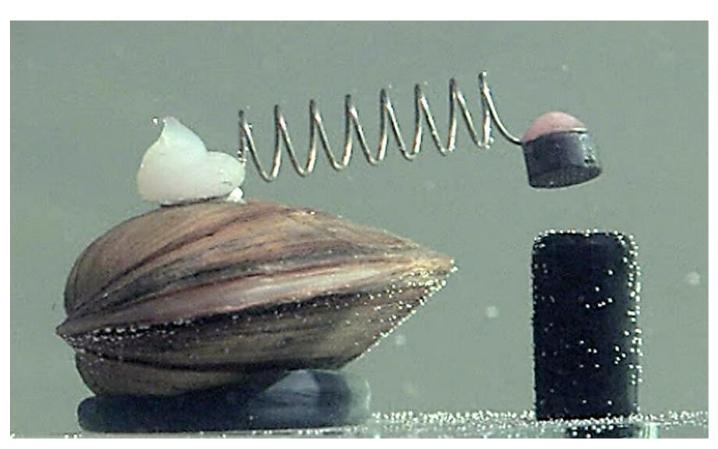
Rood Screen - Mussel power...

Summer is a time for friends, family and barbecues – and one of my favourite pre-main meal nibbles is garlic marinated mussels. Yummm!

But not all mussels are born (spawned) equal and not all are destined to end up on our dinner plates.

Did you know the city of Warsaw draws its water from the river Vistula and that it has a team of eight very carefully selected and acclimatised freshwater mussels that live in a specially-designed stream tank which takes its water direct from the river?

Each of these mussels, analyses about 1.5 litres of water per hour, twenty-four hours a day. Because mussels are filter feeders, they are extremely sensitive to pollutants. They open their shells only to feed and if they detect even the slightest of impurities in the water, they protect themselves by shutting their shells tightly.



Each of these eight mussels has a lever glued to its shell. When the mussel shuts, it triggers a switch, which in turn shuts off the city's water supply. That is when the scientists and technicians are alerted and step in to find out what the problem is and to fix it. In short, eight happy mussels = eight million happy people.

To ensure the mussels do not get too used to the water that's being examined, they serve for just three months, after which they're retired to the same water they were taken from. Their shells are marked by the scientists, so they are not accidently chosen a second time.

Only one other city (Minneapolis) has a similar system – it uses twelve mussels for half a million people.

Of course, it sounds a bit lame to credit a few simple mussels with the task of monitoring a modern city's water supply, so the technically sophisticated term used 'biomonitoring' is used instead.

If you want to learn more about this biomonitoring system, Google Fat Kathy.

There are an awful lot of mussels out there, so what's so special about these twenty? Why are they the ones selected? Frankly, I've no idea but I'm reminded of Matthew 22:14 For many are invited, but few are chosen.

Maybe there's another, deeper, message that can be taken from the parable of the wedding that precedes that line:

The 'approved' wedding guests were unavailable when the wedding feast was ready, so the king invited the ordinary people from the street instead.

Water analyses aren't fool-proof as periodic water sampling may miss a sudden contamination 'spike' - but the humble mollusc is always available. Are you always available when God calls you to do something?

John Harris

Phil's photo - Hitting the air...

When I was 12, I would enjoy listening to *Hancock's Half Hour* on the wireless. A British comedy with Tony Hancock and Sid James. One evening, these two were 'enjoying' a cold, wet, British, Sunday afternoon. The thrill of their kitchen clock – the minute hand creeping between one mark on the dial and the next, the clock's tick



laboriously slicing away, one by one, the seconds left till doomsday.

22 November 2020 was such a day in Eastbourne. A wet, Sunday afternoon. A bone-chilling southerly rattled the eves. Could anything be more dismal?



Obviously, time to get out and experience the elements. Huge seas, a howling wind (or was it a banshee?) made it hard to hear myself shout, and bursts of drenching rain that at times would limit visibility to just a few metres.

Hard even to stand up in all that. My dog refused to come out with me, so I took off all by myself in the car, driving over a seaweed-strewn bays road, heading around the maelstrom of Wellington harbour, bound for Lyall Bay to photograph the planes and the surfers. My happy place...!

I stood there all alone on an exposed spot at the northern end of the runway. The 'breeze' made me wobble – hard to hold the camera steady in that wind. Planes arrived, and planes took off. They used hardly any runway because they were almost at take-off/landing speed while still parked on the tarmac. The bold aviators and trusting passengers bumped their way through the skies to or from their happy places.

Then down to Lyall Bay where a 5-metre swell meant plenty of action for the sail and kite boarders. Tremendous speeds. They would crash into a wave, raced up the side of it, then leap into the air as they came off at the top. One chap looped the loop, over and again – he always landed safely! These guys were either very brave or very stupid. But there was no doubt they were both skilful and having a wonderful time. Obviously in their happy places.

This year has been like none other in our life experiences. What has been so good has been the quality of our leaders, and the resilience of our team of five million. We've made the most of what's happened, faring far better than many much larger, richer and better-resourced nations. So, on this dismal Sunday afternoon, I was able to go out and enjoy myself, knowing I would come back

disease-free and that little bit more hungry, to help me better enjoy my Sunday evening dinner. Just how good was all that...? Enjoy the summer (when it arrives). You'll have earned it!

Phil Benge



POWER HOUR

HOW MANY PROMISES DID GOD MAKE AT CHRISTMAS TIME?

I am fascinated with the word "PROMISE". Would you automatically connect "Promise" to Christmas? No? I reckon too that lots of people would first think about special food and family and summer holidays. However, actually, "Promise" is highly connected to Christmas.



First, a promise is a commitment that a person will make that he/she will do something no matter what. That person will faithfully, without fail, carry out what was promised to be done.

Remember, as a child, we would make a promise to our friend by crossing our heart and point our ten fingers up to God or to the sky? If we did not carry out the promise, we would be challenged. "But you did promise." Such was the making sadly of lost trust and a close friendship turned to "less close". Then do you remember saying, "I wouldn't trust them" or "I don't believe you anymore." Not so good, is it?

For children learning to make and keep promises is important as well as learning the flip side of experiencing the disappointment of a broken promise. Promises are a significant mechanism to building a strong, loyal and deep friendship.

Currently in Power Hour, we have been exploring "Promises" and finding that there are several promises that are significant to the whole existence of Christmas. We

started with feeling some every day promises by doing a walk-about. There were lots! Examples were: Keys will promise to open doors; A Green Exit sign promises a way out of the building; A Red Cross meant there was a first aid box; and A Man/Woman picture on a door promised a toilet.

Then we zeroed in on the Nativity Story and the panorama of Christmas promises.

- Joseph and Mary became engaged and promised to marry each other.
- Angel Gabriel brought God's promises that Mary would have a baby boy. That this baby would be God's son. That he would be great. That he would be a king forever. That his name would be Jesus which means Saviour to all people. And by the way, Mary's older cousin Elizabeth was actually going to have a baby after long last!
- Mary replied to Angel Gabriel that she would promise to do as asked."I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said."
- Joseph in a dream and visit by the Lord's Angel, promised to marry Mary even though he was quite puzzled and concerned by Mary expecting to have a baby and they weren't married yet. And that he promised to call the baby Jesus.

 And the promises keep coming!
- What did the "The Star" promise? That shepherds and wisemen would find directly below in Bethlehem, a specially promised babe in a manger.
- The Innkeeper promised that his door was always open, welcomed all and could always find space for one more (even an animal manger at the back of the inn).
- Angel Gabriel, an angel and a choir of angels all brought for certain, the message of God's promised Son, to the shepherds, and to Mary and Joseph, that the God's Son would come and could be found in Bethlehem. And they did find Baby Jesus born there as promised.
- Simeon, when holding 40 day old Baby Jesus in the Jerusalem temple, said that at last he could go in peace because he had now seen God's long held promise of the Lord's Messiah and the coming of the Saviour.
- Then, as an adult, Jesus carried out God's promise that He would come and be our Saviour or rescuer of all people. Jesus would show us about the meaning and power of love and God's caring love of us. Finally, the costumed children, along with visitors and the congregation, incarnated the sense of "promise" coming true by pantomiming the narrated Nativity Story at the Family Christmas Nativity Service on 29th November, and, also lit the first Advent Sunday candle.

Now we are better able to understand how "Promise" is connected to Christmas. The coming of Jesus is that keeping of God's promise to us and reason for celebration at Christmas. We are celebrating that coming of Jesus into our lives and the importance of love. God's promise came true. So how many Christmas promises do we have so far?

PS Today, we add on a few more earthly promises of customs and "thingies" when we mention "Christmas" which are all of lesser importance. However, the true story of Saint Nicholas is a real example of caring and loving of others and has merit.

Term 4 2020 finishes on the **Sunday 13 December**. The children will help prepare some biscuits for the special Christmas morning tea on that day. And join in the eating of St Ronan's "stirred Christmas Cake"!

Term 1 2021 will begin on 14 February.



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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Local Ministry Team

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Sandy Lang	562 8753	slang@xtra.co.nz
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Colin Dalziel	562 7238	colinjdalziel@gmail.com
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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 February 2021 Sunday 31 January 2021