



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

December 2024 – January 2025

1 December	Shared service with Anglicans at San Antonio.....	9:30am
8 December	Informal worship service.....	9:30am
15 December	Leanne Munro/Pageant/Commissioning.....	9:30am
22 December	Informal worship service.....	9:30am
25 December	Christmas Day service.....	9:30am

Shared services (*italics*) with the peoples of St Ronan's + San Antonio + St Alban's

29 December	Shared Fellowship lunch/Doug Rogers at St Ronan's	12 noon
5 January	Shared Presbyterian service at St Ronan's.....	9:30am
12 January	Shared Anglican service at San Antonio.....	9.30am
18 January (Sat)	Shared Catholic Vigil Mass at San Antonio.....	5:30pm

26 January	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
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Power Hour – Sundays 9:30am

Breakfast Prayer – Tuesdays 8:00am

Mainly Music – Thursdays 9:15-11:15am

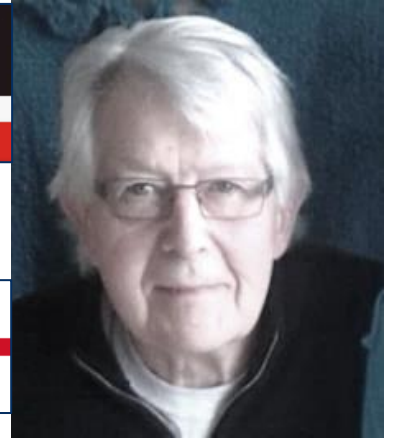
For pastoral care needs, please contact one of the Local Shared Ministry Team

Reg Weeks 027 491 5947, Wendy McCarter 027 255 6928, Simon Shaw 562 8772

Colin Dalziel 562 7238, Sandy Lang 562 8753

Te Kara...

Many people now recognise the *Tino Rangitira* flag which was carried by many at the recent Hikoi Toitū Te Tiriti. You will also have seen another flag prominently displayed – the *Te Kara* flag.



However, I wonder how many of the thousands upon thousands who joined the hikoi are aware of the significance of this other flag... You will see it flying in a place of honour should you visit the Treaty Grounds at Waitangi.



At the top of the flagpole flies New Zealand's National flag.



Below this, on opposite sides of the crossbar, are *Te Kara* and the British national flag - commonly known as the *Union Jack*.



Facing the flag pole some little distance away is the plaque which reads:

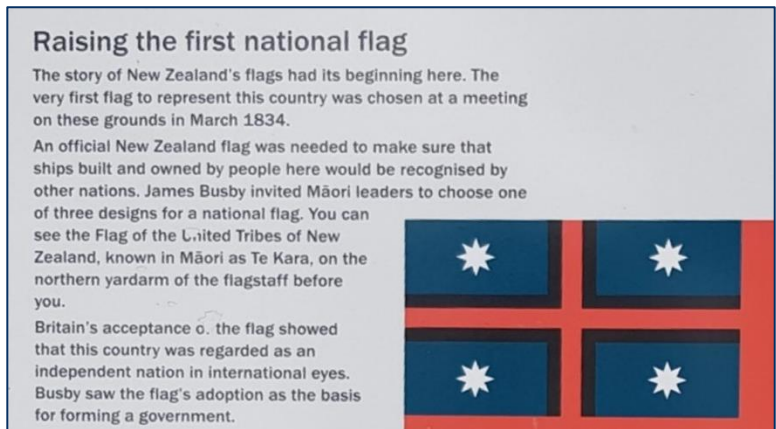
The very first flag to represent this country was chosen at a meeting on these grounds in March 1834. An official New Zealand flag was needed to make sure that ships built and owned by people here would be recognised by other nations.

And on the *Waitangi.org* blog you will find the following:

The official name for Te Kara (The Colour) is Te Kara o Te Whakaminenga o Nga Hapu o Nu Tireni – The Flag of the United Tribes of New Zealand.

The need for a flag, arose as trade grew with the colony in New South Wales. Many Māori leaders and entrepreneurs had already been trading with, and visiting the colony in NSW for some decades.

In 1830, Hokianga chief Patuone and his relative, Taonui, sailed to Sydney aboard the Sir George Murray, the first European-style ship built in New Zealand. It was part-owned by Patuone and Taonui, who provided the timber. Upon arrival on its maiden voyage, the ship and cargo were impounded by customs officials for breaching British maritime navigation laws, which required all trading ships to fly a national flag.



Te Kara was sent to King William IV for approval and a drawing of it circulated internationally with instructions to recognise it as the New Zealand Flag. Te Kara remains a legal New Zealand flag, never decommissioned by the Crown.

Te Kara was sent to King William IV for approval and a drawing of it circulated internationally with instructions to recognise it as the New Zealand Flag. Te Kara remains a legal New Zealand flag, never decommissioned by the Crown.

So, the flagpole tells an historic tale. Te Kara and the Union Jack fly at the same height, from the same yard arm to signify their equal status. It was not the case that the British came officially as a colonising power to gain the cooperation of a bunch of natives. Rather, they were coming as representatives of a sovereign state to offer a treaty to the official representatives of a country their sovereign had already recognised as an independent trading nation.

There is much more to the story than that, but even this brief summary goes a long way to explaining why the term 'Rangitiratanga' in the Māori version of the Treaty but missing in the English translation, has such significance for Maoridom. It means "chieftainship, sovereignty, self-determination" – in other words the right of Māori to rule themselves. The history of the land wars, which wracked the early years of our country, and the confiscation of so much Māori land eventually led to the Waitangi Tribunal. The work of the Tribunal has been instrumental in bringing in many societal changes endorsed by successive governments, endeavouring to redress the imbalance and negative effects of colonialism.

- (1) The anger expressed by the Māori members of parliament in performing a haka (traditional ceremonial dance), at the first reading of the 'Principles of the Treaty' Bill introduced by the Leader of the Act party,
- (2) The lack of support for the Bill by both National and New Zealand First, and

- (3) The thousands of people both tangata whenua (people of the land - Māori) and tangata tiriti (people of the Treaty – all others), who joined the nine day hikoi (march) to Parliament,



Are all expressions of anger at, both the simplistic nature of Mr Seymore's Bill, and its clear intention to disrupt, dismantle and do away with the progress already made, as well as the processes by which it has been achieved.

Joining the hikoi in Wellington, the Maori Queen provided a moderating influence as reported in the NZ Herald: The Māori Queen Ngā Wai Hono i te Pō says Aotearoa New Zealand needs to "embrace our shared identity" as an estimated 30,000 prepare to descend on Wellington in the Hīkoi mō te Tiriti.

Kīngitanga spokesman Ngaira Simmonds said the Queen would join the marchers under the protection of Te Kahu o te Raukura, "which represents peace, honour and goodwill." "Te Arikinui [the Queen] has a message of hope for the nation and for us to come together to work through our current divisions," he said. "The achievements of the past 50 years show what we can accomplish together as partners."

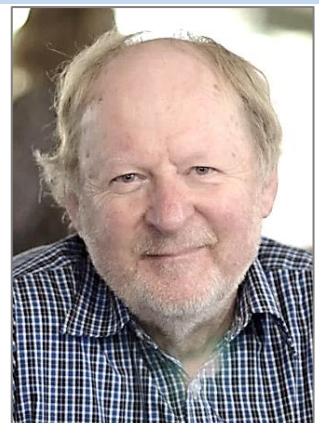
Let us hope, as we celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace, that her message of goodwill, honour and peace, will prevail.

Reg Weeks

Clerk's corner...

Police checks: I'm still waiting on the police checks I requested several weeks ago. Clearly, good things take a long time...

Church office: Our tenant for what was the 'minister's office' has relinquished the lease agreement, so this space will become available for lease in the early new year. It's a very quiet space (most of the time) and it's always a very private space. It is of 17 m², has Wi-Fi and separate external access.



If you know anyone who might like such an office – e.g., a small home-based business with insufficient room at home...! Please contact Simon Shaw simonjshaw@xtra.co.nz Put the word out there, please...!

Tūi and bell: A timely reminder to those doing the PowerPoint slides. Also, to those leading our services.

PowerPoint operator - The original plan with the tūi and bell slides (which we've kinda forgotten) was that the PowerPoint operator should run these two slides a couple of minutes BEFORE the service starts - say at about 9:27am. They are intended to signal the congregation to 'quell the chatter', as some of us like to have a moment of peace to focus before the service starts.

Service leader - The service leader should start the service at about 9:32am after this short lull. Let's try to do this, next year...!

Commissioning, Kids & Cake: Our formal service on 15 December will be led by Rev Leanne Munroe - Moderator of our presbytery - *Presbytery Central*.

This service will include, (1) a section led by Power Hour - a series of six readings and six songs which they've been busy rehearsing for weeks.

It will also include (2) the commissioning of Wendy McCarter as a new member of St Ronan's Local Shared Ministry Team.

And (3) We will consume the Christmas cake we stirred earlier (see below).

Even if you don't care about supporting •our Power Hour kids or about •Wendy's commitment to serve St Ronan's in a largely pastoral role, then you certainly should not miss •eating your share of an excellent Christmas cake, afterwards...!

Battery recycling:

Recently, we've helped Bruce Spedding by providing a new location for his successful battery recycling project.

Previously his little blue bin (see right) was located in the library building but for various reasons it has had to find a new home.



It's new home, is at the southeast corner of our site (to the left as you look at our church from the road). This location is prominent and is available to passers-by 24x7.

The bin takes ●AA, AAA, C, D, 9V, 6V, power-tool, button cell and other handheld size batteries.

It does **not** take ●Acid batteries, car batteries, products with embedded batteries or batteries bigger than 20x15 cm.

Tape ●To avoid potential short circuits and overheating, please tape all battery terminals before depositing them.

Signage ●More/better signage will appear in a few days' time...

Metals recycling: This continues. Two loads of metal have already gone off to Macaulay's for recycling. This will have had a small effect on reducing landfill and reducing mining.



Community fridge: This also continues busy as thoughtful people drop off their surpluses for others to enjoy.

Several Eastbourne food shops contribute surplus product.

We are entering the season for garden gluts of lemons and zucchini, shortly of plums, next of tomatoes and grapes.

Please don't put **empty glass jars** in there. This only encourages Eastbourne's idiots to smash them – and I have to clean up the shards... 😞



Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength [Is 40:31]...

As I write we are entering the season of Advent - the lead-up to Christmas. On each Sunday we will light a new coloured candle of (traditionally) Hope, then Peace, then Joy and last Love.

The apostle Paul had a similar little grouping of what I'll call 'Christian virtues' He writes: *And now, faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love...* (1 Cor 13:13)



While I'd not disagree with Paul (that love is the greatest of these) I feel it's unfortunate that no sooner had he named the first two virtues - before you've even had a chance to think - he immediately diverts your attention to the last virtue and so your mind ignores the first two. In my view, this does *faith* and *hope* a bit of a disservice. Now, 2,000 years later, let's bring back the balance.

To do this, I'll share with you this little essay I wrote, way back in 2,000 AD when living in Palmerston North. It was published in Palmerston North's daily newspaper, the *Manawatu Evening Standard* (now the *Manawatū Standard*¹).

I wrote... HOPE is a funny little word. Hope enters our language at the trivial level - 'I hope to come for coffee'. Hope has a serious side too. 'She hopes the operation will be successful'. 'He's lost all hope'. Hope is the opposite of despair. Without hope, a student drops out of school, an addict returns to drugs and a sports team continues to lose.

The word HOPE occurs 158 times in the Bible. Paul writes, *Who hopes for what he already has?* (Rom 8:24). Hope sits between 'wishing' and 'having'. Hope can be defined as a desire for some good, accompanied by some expectation of actually getting it.

Christian hope looks out from the present into the future. It looks for fulfilment not only in this life but also into the next. It creates the realisation that - we are *strangers in the world* (1 Pet 1:1) - our ultimate home is in heaven.

¹ It now comes out earlier in the day and has gained a macron on the ū. Apart from the masthead Palmerston North's *Manawatū Standard* is almost indistinguishable from Christchurch's *The Press* or Wellington's *The Post*. That's real progress for you...!

Christian HOPE is not focussed on 'things' but on a person – on a loving Heavenly Father. God is our strength and encouragement in the face of whatever life throws at us. Nothing helps like Christian hope, when life hurts and dreams die...

Hope

- Gives us patience when we must wait,
- Reminds us we are not alone when rejected,
- Gets us through when we lose someone we love, and
- Gives us comfort when dying.

There is a book about Christian HOPE near the end of the Bible (1 Peter). Why not take 15 minutes to read it today?

Sandy Lang

Rood screen – The brown tree snake...

Snakes have had a bit of a bad rap ever since that unfortunate incident in the Garden of Eden.

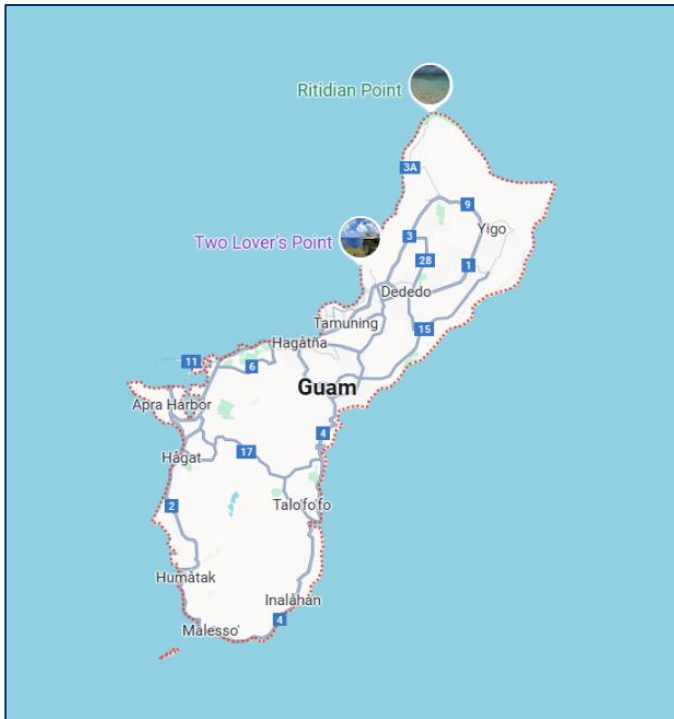
That is (in my opinion) rather sad, because snakes are beautiful and important creatures – provided they are where they are supposed to be. This, however, is the story of a snake that was most decidedly in the wrong place.



Working backwards, it's assumed a brown tree snake stowed away in the cargo of a ship headed for Guam shortly after the end WWII. She arrived unnoticed, her babies hatched there, where they quickly made themselves at home.

It took forty years before people started to notice something wasn't quite right. The forests that used to be filled with birdsong had become eerily quiet.

You see, like New Zealand's birdlife, Guam's twelve bird species had not evolved to deal with predators. As a result, ten of their species are now extinct on the island and the remaining two species are just 'clinging on'.



Although Guam is only 540 km² in size (smaller than Lake Taupō at 616 km²) it's estimated there are now two million hungry snakes there that will eat whatever they can find. Birds, rats, shrews, lizards, poultry and even each other. You can be the judge of which of those is good and which is bad.

And like the old lady who swallowed the fly, there is a flow-on effect. Apart from there being no birdsong in the forests, the spiders have had a free rein, with nothing to eat them. In the dry season there are forty times as many spiders in Guam as on the nearby islands of Rota, Tinian and Saipan - between 508 and 733 million

of them. The forest now looks like it's been decorated for Halloween.

The forest trees require the birds to eat their fruit and distribute their seeds. With no birds to do this, the fruits simply fall to the ground and rot. With no regeneration, the forest is starting to die.

Oh, and one last thing that isn't nature related. The snakes are the cause of at least 100 power outages on the island each year! All this chaos from just one snake that lays only four to six eggs at a time...!

But the same exponential rules work for good things too. I love the words of Henry Burton's hymn:

*Have you had a kindness shown?
Pass it on, pass it on!
'Twas not giv'n for thee alone,
Pass it on, pass it on!
Let it travel down the years,
Let it wipe another's tears;
Till in heav'n the deed appears,
Pass it on, pass it on!*



Love and kindness and charity all obey the same exponential laws, but it is up to you and me to start the ball rolling. Just imagine the chaos we could cause!

John Harris

Bethlehem...

As the crow flies, Bethlehem is 9 km south of Jerusalem. Nowadays, it is in many ways just an outer suburb of the bigger city. However, as the dotted line on the map indicates, the two cities are separated by a 5 m high wall - Jerusalem is in Israel and Bethlehem is in the Palestine West Bank. The map shows the nature of the countryside, it is generally very rugged and barren.

Bethlehem sits on a hill 778 m above sea level (30 m higher than Jerusalem). Travel east for 20 km and you descend 1200 m to the Dead Sea which is 430 m below sea level - the lowest body of water in the world.



The hills around Bethlehem are fertile, due to the many springs which well up from the extensive aquifer in the limestone rocks underlying them.

In times past, Jerusalem, which has poor water resources, became dependent on Bethlehem for its water. Aqueducts wound their way around the hills to convey Bethlehem's water to Jerusalem, which needed it to support the demands of the temple, which increased considerably as the city became a religious and pilgrimage centre in the years after 300 BC.

In the time of David's youth, in c. 1000 BC, the Bethlehem hills were places where shepherds could graze their sheep. This understanding gives us a background to the picture of David as a shepherd, and to many of the psalms. It also gives immediacy to the image of shepherds being among the first to greet the newborn king, the descendent of David. The grassy hillsides enabled the shepherds to settle down. The hillsides were terraced and became orchards of olives, grapes, apricots and almonds.

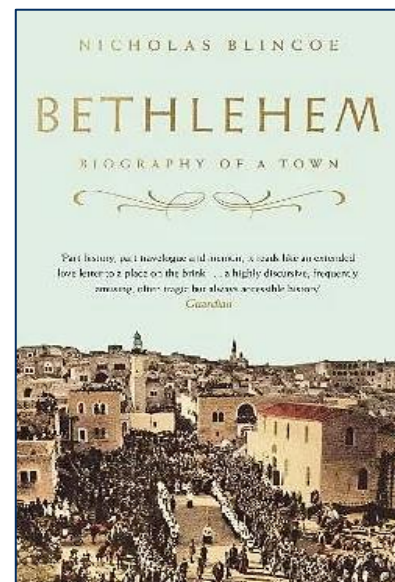
In Hebrew the name is Bet leħm; in Arabic it is Bēt laħm. The Hebrew means 'house of bread or food'; the Arabic means 'house of meat', and it is possible that this mundane name reflected the ancient role of the town as a marketplace for the meat of the shepherds' sheep.

The centuries rolled on and surrounding empires rose and fell; as today, trade carried on. Bethlehem became a cog in the trading routes linking Persia and Greece to the Mediterranean, Egypt and Nabataea (Petra). As such it hosted the travellers passing through in caravanserais, which would have had ample accommodation for merchants, servants and their animals. Such a caravanserai was undoubtedly the inn at which Mary and Joseph were able to put up for the night. One could imagine that they would be pretty worn out after their 150 km donkey ride south from their home in Nazareth.

Herod built himself a summer palace on one of Bethlehem's hills, so the Persian Zoroastrian magi would not have had to go very far to enquire about the newly born king. Herod would no doubt have been quite upset to think that a potential rival was in town right below his nose as it were. He reacted with Putin-like alacrity to swiftly get rid of any potential threat.

Bethlehem's population in 1 AD was perhaps 500 people. Today it is about 25,000. Jesus' birth, put Bethlehem on the world's map. Bethlehem grew from a meat-selling village to an international centre of meditation and pilgrimage. Constantine's mother built the Church of the Nativity there. Jerome found a quiet room where he was able to translate the Bible into the common language of the Roman Empire, the 'vulgar language' now known as the Vulgate. Monasteries and churches were established by Arabs, Greeks, Russians and Armenians, and then later by French and Germans.

A hundred years ago, Bethlehem was overwhelmingly the home of Christian Arabs. Today most of those Arab families have emigrated. The Jews have squeezed them out, taking their land, homes and livelihoods. More than 41 Israeli settlements now surround the city. Emigration has been relatively easy, because so many of the people are multilingual having been trained in European schools.



Much of the information I have noted here comes from the introduction in a book '*Bethlehem – Biography of a Town*' by Nicholas Blincoe. Nicholas Blincoe is an English writer who has lived for some years in Bethlehem. His book is dedicated to Anton and Raissa Santour. Anton Santour was a Palestinian professor of Mathematics who helped establish the Bethlehem University. Raissa was his Russian-born wife whom he met while studying for his PhD in Moscow. Their daughter is Leila Santour, who studied at the University of Warwick, there meeting her future husband, Nicholas Blincoe.

Geoff Mann

Good News, Great Joy for all People...

As we enter the season of Advent and look forward to celebrating Christmas, the familiar Bible readings from Isaiah and the Gospels are read out in churches around the world. We experienced some of these at the Shared Saint Alban's and St Ronan's service (held in San Antonio church) on December 1, Advent Sunday. [*Isaiah 11:1-6 and Luke 1:68-79*].

My favourite phrase of the detailed and unique stories told in the early chapters of Luke's gospel has to be the succinct nighttime message of the angel to the initially terrified shepherds. *Luke 2:8-20*. The birth of Jesus is described as "*good news of great joy for all people*." You can't get more positive or inclusive than that...!

The shepherds had to go and check that out, once they'd recovered from their shock - and they found what they were told to be true. We read that they rejoiced and shared that message.

I read of people from many different times, cultures and languages finding joy in the good news of Jesus Christ; not just a special baby who grew to be a man with great teachings, but a present Saviour who brings us to our loving and glorious God each day.

Gill Burke

Leadership workshop...

Stuart Simpson, Presbytery Central's *Mission Catalyst*, has been arranging Leadership Workshops throughout the Presbytery. On Saturday 16 November Reg, Colin and I attended a workshop held at Knox Church in Lower Hutt. There were around 15 attendees from Wellington, Carterton and Palmerston North.

The workshop was ably led by Dr Rev Ivan Martinez (right), Dean of Studies at the Knox Centre for Ministry & Leadership in Dunedin. A charismatic presenter, Ivan discussed the challenges for all churches in a much more secular age. He threw out some challenging thoughts

- Are we still in the era of the early church?
- Is God pruning the church?

We enjoyed the freewheeling discussion and high level of participation from everyone present.



It was useful catching up with people from a variety of Presbyterian and Uniting parishes over morning tea and lunch. Many were interested in the Shared Local Ministry Team that St Ronan's has had for several years.

One of our final exercises was to list all the things that are going well in your church. This resulted in some long lists and left us all in a positive mood as we departed.

Simon Shaw

Power Hour – Stirring the cake...

The Power Hour children love making St Ronan's Christmas cake batter each year. Something they always look forward to...!

They learnt to crack eggs open (if they didn't know already) and to pick out any broken shell, before beating. Measuring carefully into cups and teaspoons involved such serious focus and dexterity. Of course, they all wanted to do every step but

graciously took turns. The children are such an awesome group with a loving kindred spirit and with a purposeful will, to do useful things.



With pride, the Power Hour team then carefully wheeled the big bowl of Christmas-cake batter (on its rather wobbly trolley) into the morning tearoom, where the adult congregation took over the stirring. A wonderful St Ronan's effort with its spicy



spirit is now ready for celebration of Jesus' birth at our Christmas Nativity Pageant on 15 December. This photo collage says it all...!

Susan Connell
(Photos - Leah Hoffmann)

Term 4 2024 20 Oct to 15 Dec
Term 1 2025 15 Feb to 6 Apr

Wendy's – African wisdom...

He who wants to live, who wants to remain himself, must compromise.

Cheikh Hamidou Kane



Have faith in the child of Christmas...

- 1 Have faith in the Child of Christmas,
Have faith, Mary's son is Christ.
From heaven above,
He came with His love.
To heal and to save us from sin.

Chorus

*Let us give him praise
Like the shepherds did.
Let us sing with joy
Like the angels did.
Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice.*

*Let us worship Him,
like the Magi did,
Bowing down to him,
with our gifts of love.
Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice.*

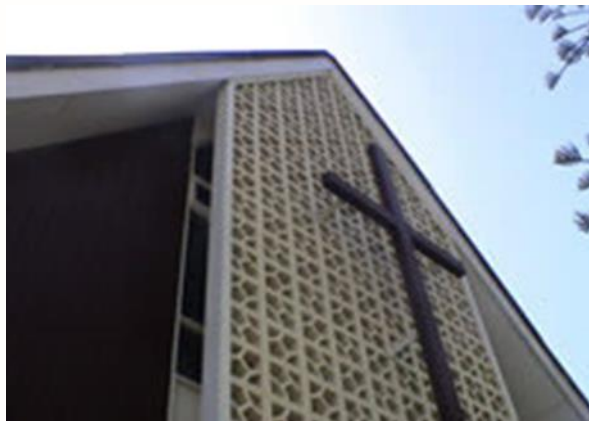
- 2 Have faith in the man called Jesus.
Have faith in the Son of God.
He said stop your ways,
And turn to His ways,
And He will give life evermore.

Chorus

- 3 Have faith in the risen saviour.
Have faith in His gospel truth.
Christ was crucified.
He suffered and died.
In three days, he rose from the grave.

Chorus

Colin Dalziel (2008)



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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Parish Clerk	Sandy Lang
Hall Bookings	Sandy Lang

Contributions for the 'Record' are most welcome.
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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 2025
is Sunday 26 January 2025**