



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

February 2023

5 February	Shared Communion with St Albans, at Wellesley.....	10.00am
12 February	Reg Weeks.....	9.30am
19 February	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
22 February	Combined Ash Wednesday Service at San Antonio.....	7.00pm
26 February	Silvia Purdie.....	9.30am
5 March	Informal worship service.....	9.30am

In this issue

<i>Back to School.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Clerk's Corner.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Comet C/2022 E3 (ZTF).....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Honouring Colin Gibson.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Making use of an under-utilized church space.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Power Hour: 'The Clue is that God is the Glue'.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>From a Cruise on the Danube.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Phil's Photo: Only an Hour Away.....</i>	<i>13</i>

Power Hour – Sundays 9.30am
Breakfast Prayer – Tuesdays 7.45am
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

Back to school...

Over the summer, our beach has thronged with families enjoying the sun and the water. But the esplanade no longer rings with the sound of children's voices, as they are now back at school and St Ronan's again greets caregivers and their toddlers back at *Mainly Music* and at *Pop-in-and-Play*. The picnics on the beach must wait for the weekends or for the next school holidays.



With these thoughts in mind, I recalled this poem by a Christian writer, Edie Askew, reflecting on what he calls the picnic on the grass, where Jesus took a couple of loaves and several fish to make a picnic meal. All the gospels record the story, but it is John's version which carries the detail that the small loaves and the fish were offered by a boy from the crowd.

*Lord, not much to build on
a picnic lunch
for one young boy
who you might think
would have been better off at school
than following a crowd
around the countryside.*

*So easy to ignore a boy,
his head below your eyes.
Not old enough
to have opinions of his own,
and much too insignificant
to affect the outcome.
Easy to talk over him
as they discuss the situation
with all the gravity that comes with age.
Although if wisdom came with beards
we'd honour goats.
Sometimes I think we do
but that's another story.*

*Yet he's the one, the boy
whose gift you use
beyond all reasonable expectations.
While they were working out the odds
and figuring the angles
he was opening his hands to give.
It wasn't much
and yet it was enough
to start a feast.*

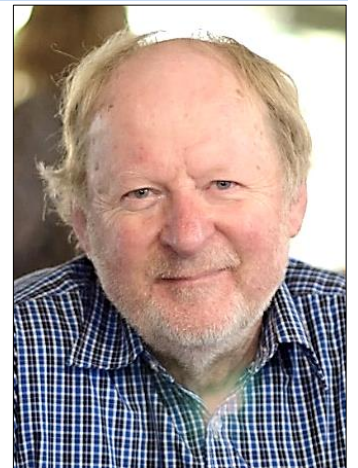
*Lord, take the little I can give.
Sometimes I hesitate
to offer it at all
my talent seems so small.
But if my loaves and fish can be of use
I offer them with joy.
Please take them,

And in your creative love
transform both them and me*

Reg Weeks

Clerk's corner...

Break-in: At the end of December someone forced the padlocks on the two sheds behind the church (the St Alban's, plastic, Pop-in-and-Play shed and the St Ronan's weatherboard, Mainly Music shed). The incident was reported to the police. Nothing was taken (no jewels stored there, just pre-schooler toys...!). The sheds were promptly re-secured (thanks Peter Baldock and Simon Shaw). Nothing much to learn from this...



Metals recycling: The community's response to the provision of metals recycling at St Ronan's has been positive but slow. We expect the first metals collection by Macaulay's to occur soon. I don't expect a major pay out to St Ronan's - but we **have** helped a little bit to save our planet.

Process - For your information, the green-plastic 'METALS' bin in the carport beside the three HCC bins serves as a general 'receiver' bin. Most people are sensible about what they put in there. I've been in the habit of relocating the larger steel items to a 44-gallon drum located outside the Fellowship Room and the (slightly higher value) aluminium and stainless-steel items to a second drum, same place. Meanwhile, I've been taking the (higher value) copper, brass and lead items home (no point in leaving them there to be nicked). There's not very much of that come in...

This process means the METALS receiver bin contains mostly steel (a few small items of higher-value metals may have fallen deep into it, and so been missed).

Tidy up – The accumulation of bins round the back was spoiling the view from the Fellowship Room. I've relocated several unused plastic bins from there to a more-out-of-sight spot. In future, the two drums will sit by the brick wall between the Sunday School Room and the Fellowship Room. There they will be scarcely visible from either room.

Shared Services: Our third 'Shared' service with the people of St Alban's will be this coming **Sunday 5 February** – at 10am, at Wellesley (no service at St Ronan's). We will be sharing an Anglican-style communion service but with a St Ronan's preacher and a St Ronan's bible reader. Our turn to host a reciprocal 'Shared' service will be in three-months' time on Sunday 7 May.

Combined Services: Just a small semantic note. For many years we've used the word 'Combined' to refer to those services/events in which all three Eastbourne churches have been involved – traditionally a Good Friday Service and the Community Carols. The 'Shared' services at this stage involve just the people of St Alban's and St Ronan's.

But, talking of our 'Combined' Services, the next one is on Ash Wednesday, when we will meet with the people of San Antonio and St Alban's at San Antonio Church, at 7pm, on **Wednesday 22 February**. Ministers from all three churches will preside at this usually very poignant service to mark the beginning of Lent - a solemn reminder of our mortality and need for reconciliation.

Church organ: A local person is learning to play the organ. Parish Council has agreed to make our church organ available to them for practice.

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Sandy Lang

Comet C/2022 E3 (ZTF)...

Arguably, the best known of all the 'Great' comets is Halley's, which was first recorded by the Chinese in 240 BC (although the Greeks reported a comet in 467 BC which was most likely Halley's). Halley's Comet faithfully visits us approximately every 75 years. Many of us will remember what we were up to when we last saw it in 1986.



Each time it appears, we are reminded of events that occurred on its previous visits. When it returns in 2061, perhaps my children will remember watching the 1986 visit with their parents, from the banks of the Limpopo River in Africa. At that time, I knew a few folks who could recall seeing it back in 1910, when it was particularly bright, skimming by at a mere 22.4 million kilometres from Earth.



In 1066 William the Conqueror believed that its appearance heralded the success of his invasion, and it therefore appears in the Bayeux Tapestry.

It is also thought it was the inspiration for Giotto di Bondone's 'The

Adoration of the Magi', which depicts a very comet like tail on the Star of Bethlehem.



In 87 BC, Tigranes the Great was so impressed that he had a star put on his crown which appeared on the coinage of the day.

All this brings me to C/2022 E3 (ZTF). At about the time that this edition of the *Record* will be published (2 February 2023), a faint green coloured comet should be just visible to the naked eye. At its closest, it will still be about 42 million kilometres away! But what is so special about C/2022 E3 (ZTF) is that it was last visible from earth about fifty thousand years ago.

50,000 years BC was the start of the Upper Palaeolithic Age. The world was experiencing an ice age and mammoths still roamed the land. Neanderthals existed alongside anatomically modern humans. Animals back then were similar to those we see today - but bigger and looked slightly different.

Fifty thousand years ago was a very long time ago. I am reminded of Psalm 90:
Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

Even though the world was a very different place fifty thousand years ago, God was there. Even though the world might be a very different place in fifty thousand years' time, God will still be there. And this is the same God who loves you and me...



John Harris

Honouring Colin Gibson...

I first met Colin Gibson at the funeral three years ago for his great friend and colleague Shirley Erena Murray. Colin died recently, on December 10 aged 89. His deeply personal and poetic eulogy at Shirley's funeral captured her life and gifts as a hymn writer eloquently and memorably. For Colin, there was never any dispute – Shirley was New Zealand's greatest hymn writer. But there are many who might argue he has an equal claim to that title.

It was during this meeting that the seeds for my deciding to write a biography of Shirley were sown. Within months, I was staying in Colin's home in Dunedin, interviewing him on several occasions -- this despite the fact his wife Jeanette was wheelchair-bound and very frail. Right up to 10 days before his death, Colin continued to support me and answer my emailed questions. He was generous and helpful to the end, and I shall miss his support enormously.

Colin was an Emeritus Professor of English at Otago University where he taught for 42 years. He is credited with 193 published hymns and other compositions, many of

which have been sung all over the world. He was choirmaster and organist of the Mornington Methodist Church for most of his life.

His collaborations with Shirley helped set both of them on the international hymn-writing stage.

Colin, awarded a New Zealand Order of Merit in 2002, was multitalented. In their eulogies, his family described him as generous, kind-hearted, marvellously theatrical, and energetic to the very end, even when his heart was shutting down.



Colin Gibson, 2011, workshop - Fun with Hymns.

At his funeral, family members quoted from a recent essay of Colin's entitled *What does it mean to be human?*

1. To be human is to be a creator, one who makes something out of nothing or one who makes something radically new.
2. To be human is to be a creature delighting in play.
3. To be human is to belong to a race of creatures who consciously seek to give expression to their sense of selfhood.
4. To be human is to be a compulsive storyteller.
5. To be human is to be in a permanent condition of discontent, to be committed to a restless reinvention.
6. To be human is to wish to set our print in the sand.
7. To be human is to be curious about our own personality.
8. Finally, to be human is to be committed to the exploration of those great philosophical moral and ethical questions which we ourselves and no other creatures concern ourselves with.

These eight definitions perfectly capture Colin, the man and his work. Colin's hymns are well represented in all the publications of the New Zealand Hymnbook Trust and in other hymnals published internationally. In 2021, he released his great work, *Knowing the Song*, the companion to the publications of the trust. At over 400 pages, it has become my essential reference book.

Colin was both a text writer and music composer. His language was elegant and thoughtful, theologically rich and compassionate. He also had a great sense of fun and loved expressing that in hymns for children. Think of *'With a hoot and a toot'*. We will all have our favourites, those hymns that touch us most deeply.

My list includes:

- that beautiful song of mourning, *'Nothing is lost on the breath of God'*;
- the hymn about environmental care and care for those most needy in society, *'These hills where the hawk flies lonely'*;
- journeying into the unknown expressed in *'Where the road runs out'*;
- the children's hymn, *'How much am I worth?'*;
- and the hymn of Jesus' ongoing ministry, *'He came singing love'*.

This last hymn addresses our need to keep singing Jesus's message of love, faith, hope and peace. Colin has given us the words in his great body of work to do just that.

Anne Manchester

Making use of an under-utilised church space...



Our Minister's office in the southwest corner of the church has not been fully used for some time and has become an informal storage space.

However, from 30 January it took on a much more useful function. Local clinical psychologist Dr Kerry Makin-Byrd will lease the office; working mainly school hours.

The office has been cleared out, surplus furniture donated to the Salvation Army, new locks fitted and the western entry doors painted.

Parish Council is delighted with this outcome as it:

- Makes much better use of an under-utilised church space.
- Supports the local community by providing a much-needed service.
- Provides some welcome income for St Ronan's.
- Is a catalyst for tidying up other storage areas in the Church, Hall and Education Block.



We look forward to having Kerry as our tenant. Make yourself known to her if you see her about.

Simon Shaw

Children's Power Hour – THE CLUE IS THAT GOD IS THE GLUE

Today, school-aged children's conversations often show a response to the unfortunate condition of our finite Earth by advocating repairing and sustainable action. They do recycling, beach clean-ups, use reusable goods, protest marches, worm farms, composting, speeches on a sustainable environment and gardening.

How can we help them to know that part of what it means to be a person of faith is to take care of God's world?

The crux is developing with the children their faith and understanding about our loving God's creation and care of the Earth. Positive actions can then follow, guided by their faith. God glues all together...

Rev John Howell recently presented the idea that our Christian faith has a significant role to play in directing our behaviour to achieve a renewed and sustainable Earth. He noted that in the biblical beginning of creation, man had a responsibility of stewardship towards our land and animals. Hence, our faith (attitudes, beliefs, actions) should play a role in supporting our Earth.

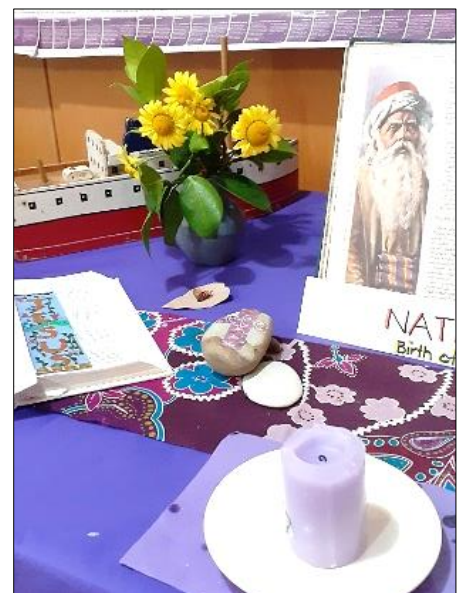
Also, our former Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, encouraged us to include all in our one nation, allowing us to work together. The same can happen on the sports field as well as in addressing environmental concerns. Power Hour has a three-fold approach to supporting our children's caring faith.

First, the children are nurtured by exploring their awesome natural world in their daily lives.

Second, children are learning to understand God's wisdom of care and love towards their environment and people.

Third, they are building confidence in themselves as responsible individuals with recognised skills, who can make positive differences to the Earth and to others - i.e., a sense of mission.

Here are some examples of Power Hour fostering our children to grow, with God's guiding "glue", to connect and care for our environment and society.



As most of our activities are indoors, we have some of God's beauty in plants on our worship and craft tables:

- Activities with nature, e.g., planting Easter spring bulbs; making floral bouquets for Father's Day.

- Use of natural objects, symbolically, when telling biblical stories, e.g., shells, stones, plants.

- Highlighting the respectful interplay of nature and human beings in many of the biblical stories, e.g., parables of the mustard seed, the ways of a good shepherd.

- Reading a psalm or passage from Isaiah which looks at how the Bible talks about God and creation.



- Prayers of praise and thanks for our environment.

- Highlighting Jesus' healing powers through his love of others and God.

- Highlighting biblical stories of how strong beliefs and faith in a loving God, repeatedly moves one to act firmly and responsibly, e.g., Esther negotiated with her husband-king to save her people; Jesus feeding 4000; Joshua builds a 12-stone monument to acknowledge the 12 tribes' return to the Promised Land.

- Hearing how other biblical persons overcome their challenges:

- Remembering doubtful Moses at the burning bush who was called by God to use his skills to rescue his people from Egypt.



- Remembering how Jesus overturned the tables of merchants and money lenders in the temple around Palm Sunday based on the priorities of what mattered most with God.
- The accuracy of David's stone throwing skills in taking out the feared, large and small.

- Discussions of necessary behaviours in children's social situations at home and at school which bring light and wellbeing to all (transferable skills).
- Feeling peace and awe when sharing outdoor discoveries, taking time to look at the beauty and detail, e.g., a feathery light leaf skeleton, the red wings of an insect.
- Prayers to God asking for guidance; and, lastly...
- Encouragement and acknowledgement of the children as capable individuals in their closing prayer:

Thank you God, that you know my name and call me to help others (environment). Amen

Susan Connell

From a cruise on the Danube...

"The Weltenburg abbey sits on a great bend in the Danube. It was established by a couple of Scottish monks in 617, adopted the Benedictine rule in the 8th century, and is believed to be the oldest monastery in Bavaria. It has a beautiful chapel, is a popular retreat centre, and like many Bavarian monasteries, brews beer as a means of support.

The abbey brewery was established in 1050 and has produced fine beer ever since, winning the world prize for dark beer in 2004, 2008 and 2012".



Reg Weeks

Join us for the 4th Wellington Peacenic

Trentham Memorial Park, Upper Hutt
Sunday 12 February 2023, 2pm–5pm



Trentham Memorial Park has toilets, a playground (bring the kids!), shade trees, and easy parking.

Peacenic began in Auckland in 2016. It grew out of a desire to replace the polarising bad-news stories that dominate the media with real experiences of hospitality and friendship in our own backyard. The simplest gift of sharing time and food is rewarding you.

in itself but goes beyond that to offer a glimpse of the world as it consider

could be. In our increasingly multi-religious, multi-ethnic community, we want to help build bridges across the divisions that have historically separated Muslims, Jews and Christians.



Trentham Memorial Park is only half an hour's drive from Wellington CBD (put '43 Brentwood Street' into Maps).

Bring food to share but be sensitive to other faiths' dietary requirements; ask if you are not sure. Please take rubbish away with

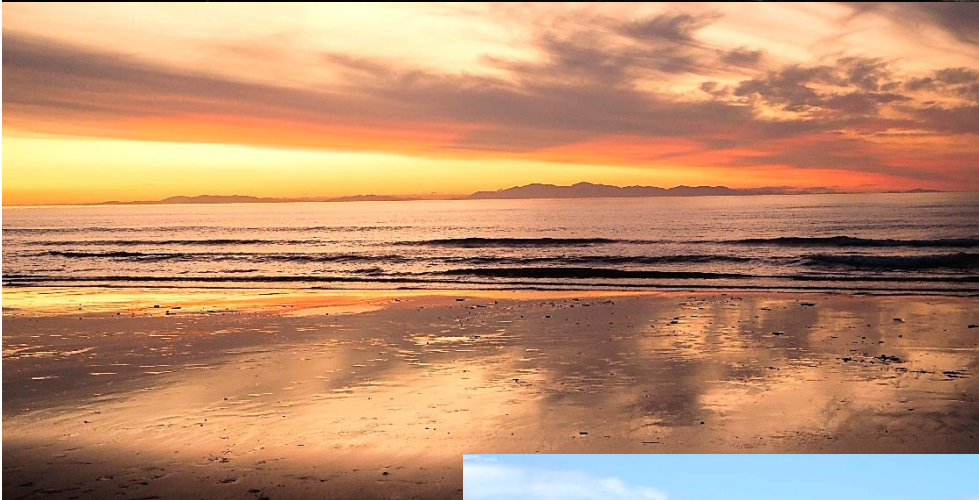
Invite friends of other faiths, car pooling...and enjoy yourself!



The
Wellington Abrahamic Council
Of Jews, Christians & Muslims

Event contact: David Blocksidge (021 054 8443)

Phil's photo – Only an hour away...



Summer arrives and it's time to recharge our little inner batteries with a holiday - - away if possible. So, where's a neat place to go...?

With the new Transmission Gully expressway, the little seaside village of Raumati is less than an hour away. A very easy drive, and quaint, clean and friendly, when you get there. Yummy eating places. A great beach. Romantic after-dinner walks along the beach as the sun sets.



Further away (but not very far) is the Ngā Manu Nature Reserve - well worth a visit.

Our alternative holiday venue was my brother's beach house in the Coromandel. A delightful location (except for the rain) but an 8½-hour drive each way (add a couple of hours for coffee/meal stops, en route, say 10 hours). No thanks. Raumati for me...

The Raumati Sands Resort (opposite the bowling club) is a delightful place, 80 m from the beach and a similar distance to the village. A heated pool and spa where one can spend quite a bit of time under and on top of the water. A neat place to stay.



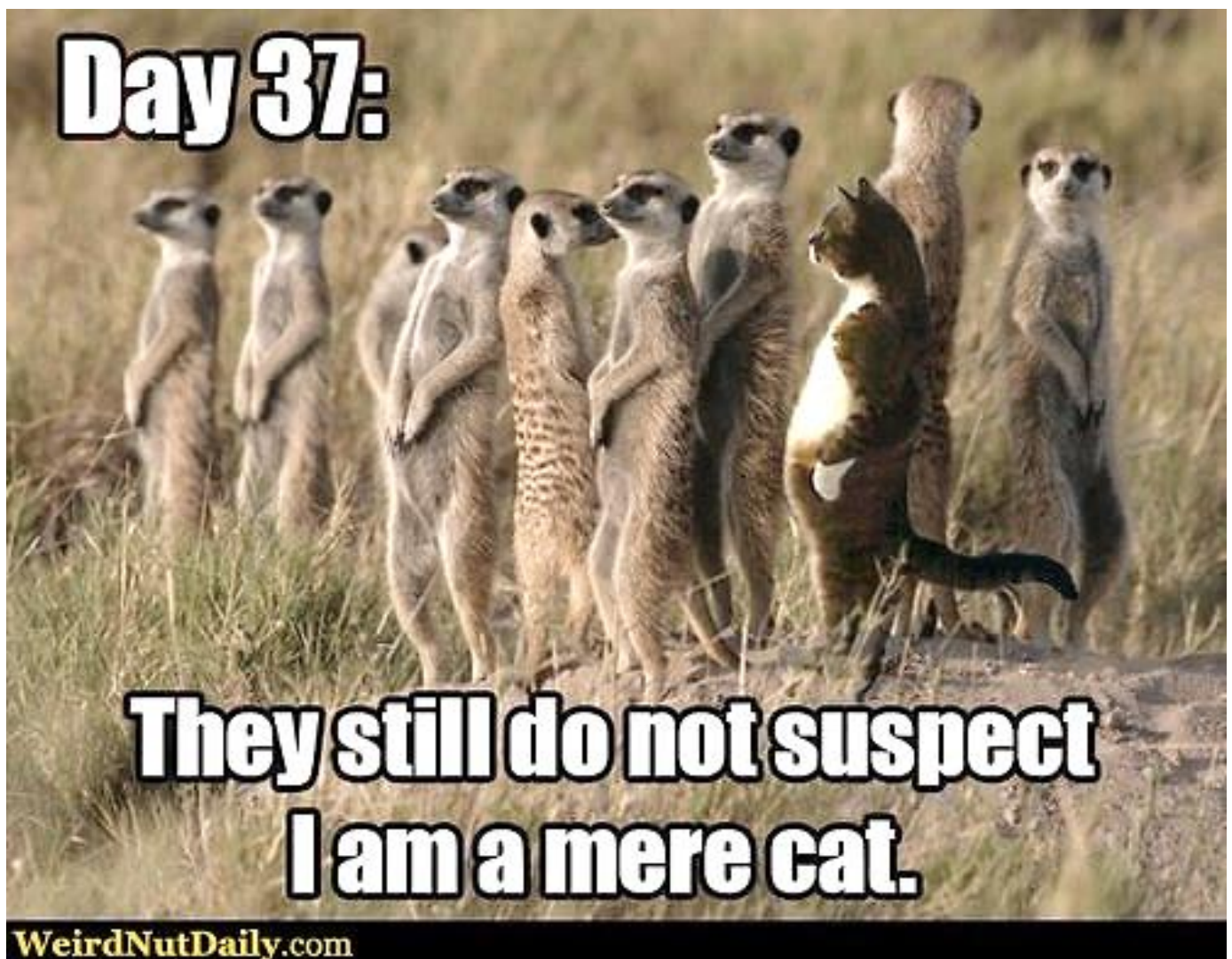
So, we had a delightful week away, our little inner batteries are now fully recharged.

I was especially impressed that the RNZAF welcomed us there with a flypast of their three retiring Orion aircraft. Sure, they know I'm an aviation nut, but this honour was unexpected...

If you've already had a happy holiday - well done. And if you're going on holiday soon - have a fantastic time. But do your bit for the climate and enjoy an **NZ** holiday. And even a **local NZ** holiday. It's so good here, people come from the other side of the world to visit us...



Phil Bengel





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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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 March 2023
is Sunday 26 February 2023**