



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

June 2025

1 June	Shared service with Anglicans (at St Ronan's)	9:30am
8 June	Informal worship service	9:30am
15 June	Lionel Nunns	9:30am
22 June	Informal worship	9:30am
6 July	Shared service with Anglicans (at San Antonio)	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

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Colin Dalziel 562 7238, Sandy Lang 562 8753

Community of the Spirit...

[At this time of year both Diane and I delight in the flowering of the many aloes along the waterfront. Each bush bursts into tongues of flame, right at the Season of Pentecost. I invited Diane to share both this year's photo taken on her morning walk and her reflection on what it means to be a Community of the Spirit. Reg]

A reflection on Romans 8:12-28 in the light of Pentecost

Let me paraphrase Paul... 'Who would deny it? All around us creation is groaning like a woman in labour. But this groaning isn't just going on around us; inwardly we are groaning too. Why?



'Because the Spirit of God dwelling in us has aroused us to see the disparity, the gap, the great dark chasm that exists between the good that God is constantly bringing to birth and the evil that results when God's purposes of love are opposed.

In faith we wait, believing one day love will win the day. Until then, we wait, and we groan together, as a community aroused by the Spirit, labouring and groaning for God's purposes of love to be fulfilled.'

And what about when we are so emotionally exhausted and disillusioned, we think we can't go on? Well again, Paul reminds us, we wait. But we do not wait alone in that empty agonising place. Like a midwife, God's Spirit is right there, helping us to stay the course. Even if or when we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. The Spirit of God will be right there praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs and our aching groans. That is our faith. For, as Paul says, the Spirit knows us far better than we know ourselves and keeps us present to God. That ongoing presence of the Spirit is precisely how we can be sure that God can work for good in all things.

Are you groaning inwardly, in despair at the cruelty and irrationality going on in the world? Have you ever thought it might be the spirit of God arousing that groaning?

I think Jesus knew what he was doing when he told the disciples to return to Jerusalem and wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

'Don't try this on your own; don't try to be a sign of God's kingdom on your own; don't try to be my body in this world on your own; you're going to need help.'

Knowing Jesus and his teaching will help us be a sign of God's reign. Sharing the bread and the wine will help us hang together. But the ongoing presence of God's Spirit is what will enable us to accomplish what we simply cannot do alone.

As we know, the purpose of the church is to be a sign amidst all the atrocities and excesses of 'Empire,' a sign of the breaking in of God's loving purposes, God's reign. And the purpose of the church is to be the Body of Christ in the world.

If that's what our purpose is, we're going to need help.

If recent history is anything to go by, mere human beings just can't bring about the salvation of the world in their own strength and rational intelligence. Humans, like Peter and Paul, are what we are - impulsive, angry, retributive, vengeful and unforgiving, lustful, self-seeking, even when we intend to be loving.

So, if those who gathered around Jesus are actually going to be different, they're going to need help, don't you think? They're going to need something to arouse in them the strength to bear faithful witness to Jesus' revelation of God's will; something to help them stay on Jesus' way of peace, and compassion, and mercy, and forgiveness.

They're going to need something more powerful than words, more powerful than laws, or this new movement gathered around Jesus is going to crumble.

They will have to recognise and acknowledge the Spirit of God dwelling in them as a people.

They will have to recognise and acknowledge that only the ongoing presence of God's Spirit can provide the strength and the hope they'd need to stay the course when the rest of the world is going mad.

Well, at Pentecost the Spirit of God is poured out on Jesus' followers in a way they can't ignore or deny, in a way that empowers them to communicate and bear witness in times of persecution and horror, a way that enables them to be a sign of God's kingdom when all they want to do is run away.

So, when we talk about what it means for us to be the church here at the ends of the earth, we must remember that one of God's purposes for the church is to be a Community of the Spirit. A community of people who trust the arousal of the Spirit within us, groaning for us to see and to remedy the great dark chasm that still exists between the good that God is constantly bringing to birth, and the evil that results when God's purposes of love are opposed or ignored.

Diane Gilliam-Weeks

Clerk's corner...

Record: Anne has taken over as Editor of the *Record*. I continue with layout and printing, Gill and Peter with stapling and packaging for delivery, and our regular band of pedestrians with door-to-door deliveries.

- Printed numbers rise and fall each month as people come and go but continue in the mid-80s (87 this month)

- + *e-Records* (to Wellington, Kapiti, Nelson, UK, S Africa).

- We continue to get (usually) 16 pages of good content. I often hear someone or other has appreciated a particular issue or a particular article. Our writers have different interests and styles, as do our readers. We'd be nowhere without our writers. And nothing would come of all their writing were it not for the aforementioned team of producers and distributors. All this is good...! 😊

- Recognising that each printed copy will be read by more than one person, our actual readership will be maybe 150 persons. A very significant church mag...!



Church meeting - 18 May 2025: Things have changed, are changing and will change. St Ronan's Parish Council has identified that we should be looking into the future for our congregation and buildings. We should be making prayerful and wise decisions today, which hopefully will not be seen as bad ones tomorrow. We should be making these decisions in an orderly way now (while there's time) not in a disorderly rush later (as we face with some future crisis we should have foreseen).

Issues – You'll be glad to hear we have *no* financial crises. But we *are* running short on energy. We are getting older. The business of managing a church (the congregation and the church properties) always was demanding but with our reducing energies the burden has become excessive. In particular, our church properties have become rather more a liability than an asset.

Meeting attendance – Twenty-two people attended our church meeting - a good turnout. Engagement was excellent with a good understanding shown of the issues and lots of suggestions and questions but no decisions. Next, we need to identify all the possible options, analyse them, eliminate the unworkable ones and generate a small number of workable ones that will see us move into the foreseeable future - or at least the guessable 10-year future.

We'll have a second church meeting on 20 July 2025. In the interim we should all think and talk and pray.

We'll also be consulting with various 'community stakeholders' – I identify these as (a) our 'user community'¹ (b) other Eastbourne faith groups² (c) a large number of what I'll call 'unattached' Christians³ and (d) the wider Eastbourne community⁴.

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Sandy Lang

Rood Screen – Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre...

Some of us with long memories might recall Cyclone Alfred. Cyclone Alfred made landfall in Queensland on 8 March – almost three months ago. People like me who have family there watched the weather updates with bated breath. And then, after it was all over, we looked in horror at the utter destruction of the beaches on the Gold Coast that many of us have visited and loved.

But after Alfred had passed over the heavily populated areas of Queensland, it headed inland to die – and nobody really cared much about it anymore.



While nobody was watching, a teeny, weeny little bit of Alfred managed to limp across Australia's Great Dividing Range. Over to places near the Simpson Desert. Places that see very few tourists, and even fewer rainclouds.

Bedourie, population 150, comes to mind as an example.

And (here's the exciting part) any rain that falls there cannot flow back over the mountains to Brisbane and the Coral Sea. It has to flow west and then south right across the middle of Australia towards Adelaide. I say 'towards' because it never actually gets there. The desert is an unforgiving dry sponge, and the sun is quick to evaporate anything left on the surface.

¹ Our premises are used (about 30 h /week) by various groups including •PumpDance, •Toy Library, •our Mainly Music and •St Alban's Pop-in-and-Play, monthly eucharist, monthly Take-a-Break.

² St Alban's, San Antonio, the Eastbourne 'Unity Community'.

³ People who identify as Christian but who are not currently associated with any of the formal faith groups.

⁴ Those who use our spaces from time to time – Eastbourne Retired Persons Association, Pre-schooler birthday parties, funerals, groups who can't use their regular space for some reason, political groups etc

In South Australia, there is a geographical feature called *Kati Thanda-Lake Eyre*. 'Lake' is a sick euphemism as it is really just a dry salt pan. It covers an area of 9,500 square kilometres and is below sea level. In fact, it is the lowest point in Australia.

And this is what it looks like - most of the time.



Very-rarely, when it does flood, the salt pans are transformed and the lake is reborn. Birdlife flocks to it from all corners of Australia, and the desert landscape fills with dreamy tones of pinks, oranges and greens.

The lake has filled to capacity only three times in the last 160 years, the last being in 1974 - although even relatively small amounts of water are spectacular.



As I write, water that has travelled half-way across Australia is starting to arrive in the lake and it looks like 2025 is going to be the fourth time it floods. And all of that life-giving water came down in raindrops. Lots and lots of them - together - but drops nevertheless.

Jesus told us to love our neighbours. Seven centuries earlier the prophet Micah told us that all that God wanted of us was that we be just, that we love and that we diligently practise kindness. (Micah 6:8)

Love and justice and kindness are often made up of seemingly small acts. Small acts that we might think go unnoticed. But they ARE noticed. Firstly, by Jesus and secondly by the recipients. And often those recipients are inspired to "do unto others".

The imminent transformation of Kati Thanda–Lake Eyre started as raindrops on a parched landscape. Imagine what your acts of kindness and love and justice could become if they link up with other people's acts of kindness and love and justice. Imagine if we could make our society bloom like Kati Thanda–Lake Eyre.

Go on. Give it a go!

John Harris

Climate hope, Christian hope...

What is this thing we call hope? At a simple level, hope is looking forward to something. At a far more complex and spiritual level, hope is a whole orientation of life... a sense of fundamental meaning and purpose, a holy longing for what might be beyond the here and now, a sense of being caught up in a flow of eternity and the destiny of the universe.

So, hope exists along a continuum between the specific and the universal.

There are other continuums too, the most obvious one being the continuum between hope and fear. The other continuum I would like to draw is between false hope and realistic hope. We might laugh at fears of alien invasion, but others might think the Christian hope of a new heaven and a new Earth sounds just as ungrounded in reality.

The question of what information we trust and what we discount is more critical now than ever before in human history as we face the massive threat of climate change. We all have a tough challenge of deciding for ourselves what are realistic fears and realistic hopes in a time of competing information and misinformation.



Applying Bible truth to climate politics is not entirely straight forward. We know the climate is changing. We see it in warmer days, and in extremes around the world. We hear about it from scientists who study and make predictions, some of which are deeply disturbing.

In the face of the dreadful predictions of a warmer world, what is realistic to hope for? How do we hold our fears and sustain courage? How we orient ourselves to the future shapes the decisions we make now.

I would like to present three quite different scenarios of hope for a climate-changed world.

The first is that the world will find ways to reduce carbon emissions and slow global warming. This will enable life to continue more-or-less as we know it. A couple of weeks ago I was privileged to interview James Renwick, New Zealand's leading climate communicator. I asked him about hope, and he replied:

I am sustained by the knowledge that we can fix this problem. We are the ones putting all this stuff in the air and causing climate change, and as soon as we choose to stop doing that, stop burning oil and coal, we will stop climate change. We have all the power. I am encouraged to keep talking about this because eventually we will see the action we need.

His is a practical message of hope – just do it! Just stop burning fossil fuels. Get it together, people!

Then there are plenty of people who have given up on James' practical vision of global climate action, and who now genuinely believe the flow-on effects of global warming will indeed be catastrophic. Many people now base their hope for the future not in political or economic climate action but in local communities going back to basics to survive. They are starting to imagine life without reliable electricity or global supply chains.

One faithful spiritual response to this massive challenge calls us to a renewed relationship with the Earth and to one another. This is scenario number two. The lead voice in this is environmental activist Joanna Macy from the United States. She calls us to "a great turning".

This recognises the inherent value of all life forms. It invites us into a holistic framework that moves us beyond a human-centric relationship to the more-than-human world and into a realm of profound inter-connectedness with all of life.

My third scenario for a hopeful future is founded, not in climate science, but in the Bible. Our scriptures point to an ultimate hope which is brought about not by human effort or change of consciousness, but by God alone. Built into our

tradition is the possibility of fulfilment of justice and glory. As God brought the universe into being in a massive explosion of power all those billennia ago, so God will create something entirely new with it all. This is the promise, that exists like a view out the window, that sheds light into our current crisis.

So, there are three very difference visions of future hope through the climate crisis. Hope is a noun, something you hope for. Hope is a verb, an action. What do you place your hope in?



I place my hope in the beauty and creativity of nature, the beauty and creativity of God, and the beauty and creativity of other people. There will always be love and family, hugs, intimacy and friendship. I commit myself to being a good friend, a good mother and a good wife, because these things are central to my hope.

And it helps to remind myself of the vital importance of local community and the centrality of church in that and so I place my hope in the local church. But most of all, I hope in God, I choose to place my trust, my heart, my life, into the hands of Jesus Christ, for he is the Saviour of the world. I believe it is a false hope to expect God to protect us from climate change. God has proved that he is not in the business of insulating people from the consequences of their choices. God is not in the insurance business. God is in the restoration and renovation and liberation business. People have a tendency to stuff things up, sometimes on a massive scale. As people face up to this, then God can bring healing and renewal.

I have suggested that the Christian vision of God bringing about a new heaven and a new earth, through the return of Christ, is a realistic and relevant vision of hope for our time. It sits alongside the other things we hope for and trust in, such as practical climate action, doing family well, and being local church, loving one another.

Creativity is also a source of hope. We need the power of poetry and art and music to balance out the science and keep us fully alive in times of trouble.

I end this reflection with a hymn by our wonderful poet musician **Colin Gibson**, written in 1987.

Out of such sun and air

*Out of such sun and air
what Christ may come,
shining with new and lovely light
on our dim and shrouded lives;
stirring our sleepiness with dreams,
visions of life beyond compare.
Out of this sun and air
come, Christ, however you will come.*

*Out of such cloud and mist,
what Christ may come,
blurring the clear and simple lines
of our settled scheme of things;
calling on faith and hope and trust,
daring to danger, trial and risk.
Out of this cloud and mist
come, Christ, however you will come.*

*Out of such sudden storm
what Christ may come,
sweeping across the startled sky
of our calm and peaceful ways;
driving with tempest winds of change,
testing with tumult and reform.
Out of this sudden storm
come, Christ, however you will come.*

Silvia Purdie

[This is a summary of her reflection at St Ronan's on 18 May, 2025. Silvia has also developed a website www.climatementalhealth.nz, an inter-disciplinary network addressing the hauora impacts of climate change.]



Tēnā koutou katoa

On Pentecost Sunday, 8 June, we read the Scriptures and reflect on the continuing story of our journey of faith with the Risen Christ and the Holy Spirit. We have the promise from Jesus that the Holy Spirit will teach us, lead us deeper into the truth of God, and remind us of the teachings that Jesus has already given us. We will experience the nudgings and the insights of the Holy Spirit in our living, and know the peace that Jesus offers us – a peace that gives wholeness and freedom from fear. There is much to celebrate!

At the time I was preparing to write this message, I spent three days at a women-in-ministry gathering at Te Maungarongo Marae – our Church's national marae in Ōhope. During our time together there was a workshop on marae tikanga and it was interesting to learn that every marae has its own mauri (life force, essence), and at Te Maungarongo the mauri is the Holy Spirit.

So, many people who come to this marae, talk of how special it is, of how they feel close to God in this space, how they feel a home-coming, a welcome, an integration, a deep connection. The Holy Spirit is at work and is known. It is also known there through the people of Te Aka Puahou who give such manaakitanga (hospitality), which builds whanaungatanga (relationship). In step with this we think of the relational nature of the Holy Spirit as guide, teacher, advocate, counsellor, comforter. All things come together to provide a holy space.

It feels like Te Maungarongo is similar to what the Celtic Christians call 'a thin place' where the boundary between the material world and the spiritual or divine is perceived to be particularly thin. Where it is more permeable. A sacred place. What a gift.

What do we feel the Spirit is saying to us, the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, in this season of Pentecost? Can we be attentive to the nudgings of the Holy Spirit, within and around us?

As we prepare for General Assembly in October, let us adopt a posture of listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us so that we can be all that God desires for us, individually and as a national Church. Discerning. Integrated. Energised. Engaged. Hopeful.

May the warmth and the promptings of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Right Rev Rose Luxford

Moderator Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Complete Jewish Bible - An English Version by David H Stern

This Jewish bible is "complete" because it includes not just the Old Testament "tanakh" but also the New Testament. Its purpose is to show the unity and integrity of the Bible as a Jewish document.

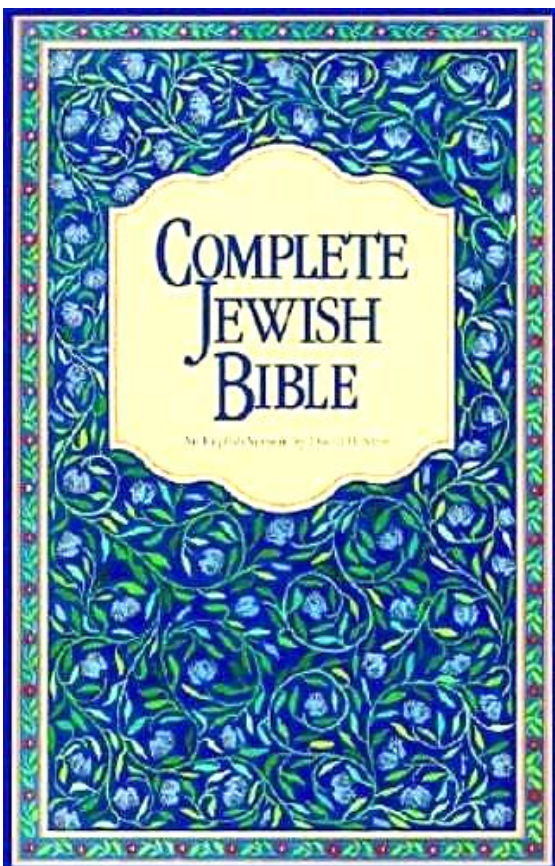
David H Stern, born in 1935, was raised in an established Jewish family in Los Angeles. He first made his mark by writing a book about surfing.

In 1972 he became convinced that Jesus (Yeshua) was the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament and joined the ranks of the 'Messianic Jews'.

He obtained a Master of Divinity degree at Fuller Theological Seminary and later became a lecturer there in 'Judaism and Christianity'.

In 1977 he began a long exercise to produce a version of the New Testament which emphasised its Jewish character, environment and heritage. He accompanied this with a commentary that explained the NT actions in a Jewish context.

David Stern died in Jerusalem on 8 October 2022 at age 86.



The CJB is very easy to read. The KJV (King James Version) was produced in 1611 in the Shakespearean English of the time. It still reads very well, but the attempts at modernising the text over the centuries have never really been able to shake off the literary weight of the KJV original.

The CJB is written in good contemporary English. It avoids the distractions of columns and separated verses. It flows, as any good narrative should. Those many areas which are poetry are printed as poetry, indented and set out in stanzas, able to be read and spoken as poetry. Where, in the NT, there is a quotation from the OT - and there are many - the passage is printed in bold with a footnote to give the source.

The language is contemporary English, but names of people and places are in traditional Hebrew (or occasionally Yiddish). This has the effect of relating it closely to modern Israel and today's world. For example, Jeremiah becomes Yirmeyahu, Hezekiah becomes Hiz-ki-yah and Isaiah becomes Yesha'yahu. Matthew becomes Mattityahu and James/Jacob becomes Ya'akov. Jesus becomes Yeshua, a form of Y'ho-shu-a (Joshua) meaning 'Y-H-V-H saves, delivers'.



The disciples become talmidim (students). This relates them to both the Talmud and the Taliban.

Lord' is rendered as Adonai, meaning 'My Foundation'. This is the pronunciation used when reading the tetragrammaton Y-H-V-H, the name of God, which cannot be uttered, thus doing away with the autocratic/aristocratic overtones of the Greco-Roman kyrios/dominus heritage.

Sample extract from the CJB, Luke 2:25-32

There was in Yerushalayim, a man named Shim'on. This man was a tzaddik, he was devout, he waited eagerly for God to comfort Isra'el, and the Ruach HaKodesh was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Ruach HaKodesh that he would not die before he had seen the Messiah of ADONAI. Prompted by the Spirit, he went into the Temple courts, and when the parents brought in the child Yeshua to do for him what Torah required, Shim'on took him in his arms, made a b'rakhah to God, and said,

*"Now, ADONAI, according to your word,
your servant is at peace as you let him go;
for I have seen with my own eyes your yeshu'ah,
which you prepared in the presence of all peoples –
a light that will bring revelation to the Goyim
and glory to your people Isra'el."*

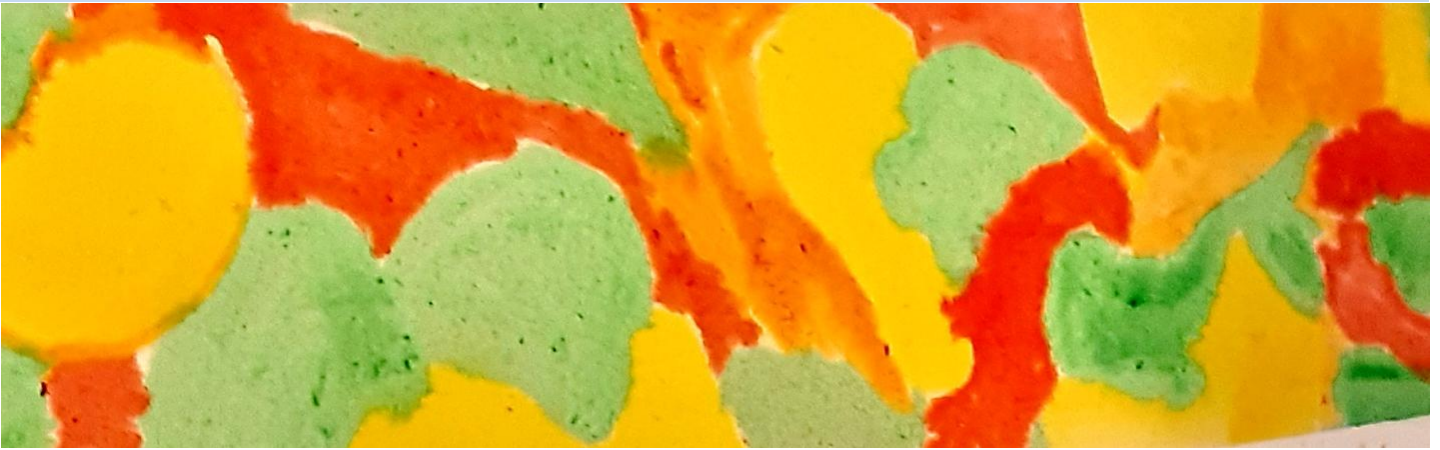
[Ruach: wind, breath, spirit; HaKodesh holy; cf Al Quds, the Arabic name for Jerusalem; b'rakhah: blessing; cf Barak Obama.; Goyim: non-jews.]

In gathering information for this piece, I came across the Kehila.org site. This describes itself as 'a faith-based Online Community Portal for friends of the Messianic/Christian Community (Kehila) in Israel'.

Every day we read of the misery and pain being inflicted on Jews and Palestinians in Israel and Gaza. Reading Kehila's news and articles presents such a gentle and mild description of life in these places that it is difficult to believe they co-exist in the same landscape.

Geoff Mann

Children's Power Hour – Jesus gives life...



Like a crocodile forging ahead, the ever compassionate, persistent Jesus was determined in his mission to ensure, repeatedly, the point that he, the Son of God, can meaningfully elevate a person's life. How to make the point, particularly to children, is the question.

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and life. The person who believes in me will live again, even though he dies." (John 11: 25)

That is a very puzzling answer for both children and adults! How can you live but also die at the same time? Once you are dead, you are dead, aren't you?

From a children's perspective in Power Hour, this conundrum is challenging and not easily understood. Children of this age are more literal, non-reflective of past and future, and lack a large set of life experiences. Hence, Power Hour's task was to present the puzzle, highlight the positive impact of having Jesus in one's life, as well as believe that it is so. Fuller understanding can only come with further maturation.

We began with simple examples of new life. You, the Power Hour children, are a wonderful creation of new life made by your Mums and Dads! Then, look at these life-giving blobby seed pods of the dead brown dahlia flower stems from my garden. And draw something that you need to live, but not just want, e.g., water, Mums and Dads.



Subsequently, to enhance the belief-needs-life imagery, Godly play/table puppeteering unfolded two dramatic stories about people who were ill and/or died but with the presence of Jesus, they found new life.



The first story happened in Capernaum where the leader of the synagogue, Jairus, fetched Jesus to his home to save his critically ill daughter from dying. (Mark 5) The second story happened in Bethany, just north of Jerusalem, where Jesus' good friend Lazarus had been entombed for four days. After Jesus commanded, "Lazarus! Come out!" he walked alive from his tomb. Jesus said to Lazarus' grieving sister, Martha, "I am the resurrection and life. The person who believes in me will live again, even though he dies. Do you believe this? (Martha) Yes, Lord!" (John 11). The children liked the whole thing and the reappearance from the tomb of Lazarus alive.

Lastly, the children wove together a lively banner entitled, "Jesus gives life". Yes, Jesus does make a difference in my life! I believe in Jesus!

Susan Connell



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 July 2025
is Sunday 28 June 2025**