



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

November 2021

7 November	Graeme Munro.....	9.30am
14 November	Diane Gilliam-Weeks.....	9.30am
21 November	Ross Scott.....	9.30am
28 November	Jenny Dawson (CWS).....	9.30am
5 December	Graeme Munro.....	9.30am

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Power Hour – Sundays 9.30am

Breakfast Prayer – Tuesdays 7.45am

Mainly Music – Thursdays 9.15-11.15am

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

Halloween

As I sit down to write this, there's a memory from last evening clear in my mind. A young father, with eagerness in his step, cornering our street into the teeth of a brisk Wellington southerly, a black faux cape streaming from his shoulders. His hands clasping those of his two young children, quickly stepping along in the waning evening sunlight, pursuing in great excitement their quest for the sweet bounty that all trick-or-treaters hope for.



Halloween, or more correctly 'All hallows even(ing)' is a tradition begun centuries ago by the church as an all-night vigil before the breaking of All Saints Day on 1 November. It was migrants from Scotland and Ireland that took Halloween and its many traditions to the United States in the early 19th century, and from there it has spread far and wide - like many things American.

According to Wikipedia, from at least the 18th century, in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands, imitating malignant spirits led to playing pranks. Wearing costumes and playing pranks at Halloween spread to England in the 20th century. Pranksters used hollowed-out turnips as lanterns, often carved with grotesque faces. They came to be called Jack-o-lanterns, now largely replaced by carved pumpkins. While Halloween originally had its beginnings as a Christian festival it has now become almost wholly a secular celebration.

On the other hand, All Saints Day keeps alive a rewarding tradition for all people whether religious or secular. Begun as a time to remember the important saints and martyrs and heroes of the church, it also included the remembrance of those family or friends who had died during the year.



While the former are sources of inspiration, recalling those who have so recently passed on can add a sense of pain, grief and loss that is at odds with the original purpose of the day. Many churches today hold special services, often close to Christmas, to celebrate the memory of those who will no longer be joining in the festivities of the year.

It occurs to me that, while the celebration of Halloween has become a delightful opportunity for children, aided and abetted by their parents, to dress up and gather in groups to patrol the streets in search of goodies, and services like Blue Sunday give opportunity to honour the recently deceased, All Saints Day gives those of us with more years of life and experience, a quiet

opportunity to name and reflect on the contributions of the many, many people important to us, who have influenced our own maturing and growth in grace.

It is only with the passing of the years that the initial shroud of grief dissolves and allows us to recognise the treasure that these good people, be they family, friends or important role models, have contributed to helping us grow into the people we now are.

May the first day of November become for you a day to recall and give thanks for all the saints who have blessed you by the touch of their lives upon yours.

Reg Weeks

Clerk's corner...

Church chat: The next Church Chat is this Sunday 7 November, after the service, over morning tea. Please feel free to make comments or suggestions you feel worth considering. This is your chance to say something and be heard by all.

We (the LMT) will also have something for you to think about...!

COVID: We continue at Alert Level 2. So...

- Please don't come if you have a cold.
- Please sanitise your hands on arrival.
- Please do wear a mask (even when singing). Your mask protects you from me but also me from you.
- Please don't touch one another.
- Please scan in the QR code. We also keep a full written listing of attendees in case someone forgets to scan in or can't.



Community Fridge: You may/may not know that individuals from our Eastbourne community come daily to see what's been left for them in the fridge for breakfast. Easy-eat food is in most demand by such people...

Gardens: As we come into spring, the gardens are beginning to respond to the new level of care and attention they are receiving.



Quite often on my periodic visits to St Ronan's during the week, I find (e.g., recently) a young mother and her toddler from outside Eastbourne, enjoying the quiet serenity of our little garden together. They were in Eastbourne to visit a grandparent. Strangers just pop in off the street... We keep the little gate open to invite entry - we close it only when a toddler is at large within.

Christian World Service: St Ronan's will again support Christian World Service during December, with the collection at the Christmas Day service going in its entirety to CWS (plus what's given in the CWS envelopes). We will start with this overseas mission focus on 28 November (1st Sunday in Advent) with a visit from CWS supporter Rev Jenny Dawson who will preach.

Painting: The painters have spruced up the tatty north side of the church. A nice job. The worst face because it is the most exposed to sun and weather, also the most public face. Thanks, Simon, for organising this...!

Michelle: You *Record* readers will likely not know till now that Michelle Bolger resigned from both the Parish Council and the Local Ministry Team from the time of the 2020/21 AGM.

What you also may not know (or have forgotten) is that Michelle •served on our parish council for a three-year term from 2008-11 and •again for a nearly 10-year term from 2012 to the present.

She has also •been a member of our local ministry team for just under four years, from its beginning in February 2018. You will now see her brilliant smile in the latest addition to the 'rogues gallery' of our past leaders in the church foyer - the past ministers from the year dot (thanks Malcolm Burdan) and now the local ministry team. The LMT performs the role of a minister.



For some years, •Michelle has also assisted when needed with editing and printing the St Ronan's *Record*. •She's had roles with church finances from the early days of the online accounting system. And •with producing the weekly PowerPoint data shows and •printed orders of service. •She's also designed, and implemented, and continues to maintain, our website at www.stronans.org.nz

Michelle has also been involved with •the Breakfast Club youth group and with •Sunday School/ Power Hour. •And she has usually had a significant hand in the popular Christmas Pageants.

A few months ago, Michelle and Warren bought an olive grove near Martinborough. They retain their home in Days Bay and now live between these two lovely places. In her spare time Michelle is an art student at *The Learning Connexion* in Taita. They both continue as members of St Ronan's, so we'll see them whenever they're in town...

So, Michelle, thank you for all your hard work and devotion. Sorry you are stepping down from the PC and the LMT where you've made more useful contributions than you've probably realised...! But we're delighted we'll be maintaining that connection with you both, every now and then on a Sunday morning.

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Sandy Lang

Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal 2021...

A big thank you to everyone who contributed to filling 'shoe boxes' with many lovely gifts for children.

The seven boxes were blessed at our service on 24 October by Rev Merv Aitken. They were then taken to Lane Park Church Upper Hutt, for delivery to the NZ processing Centre in Auckland.



I obtained barcode labels to track our own two shoe boxes and so will be able to advise the pathway and final destination, at a later date. Shoeboxes from NZ are usually sent to areas in and around the Pacific, to arrive by Christmas. Thanks to all contributors for this joyful children's outreach.

Colin Dalziel

November quiz...



The north side of the church is looking much smarter after its paint job.

A chocolate fish goes to whoever can supply the name for the yellow *Resene* paint used on the doors. Answers to Simon Shaw by 14 November.



No correspondence will be entered into...!

Simon Shaw

Clue - It's the surname of a Russian sportswoman who moved to the USA when she was 10

Rood screen – Your Pfizer shot...

Have you had your two Pfizer jabs? I thought you might appreciate this little story...

About 80 years ago, 60,000 Jews lived peacefully in Thessaloniki. Most worked in the port - to the point that the port of Thessaloniki was closed on Saturdays - the Shabbat - the day the Jewish religion forbids working.



On 6 April 1941, Hitler invaded Greece and, of the 60,000 Jews in Thessaloniki, around 50,000 were exterminated at the Birkenau concentration camp.

Among the few survivors was the Bourla family. Twenty years later, in 1961, they had a son whom they named Israel - Abraham. He grew up and studied veterinary medicine in Greece. He was a brilliant student and went on to obtain his doctorate in reproductive biotechnology at the veterinary school of Aristotle University in Salonika.

When he was 34, he decided to move to the United States, and he changed his first name from Abraham to Albert Bourla.

In America, Albert was integrated into the medical industry. He joined a pharmaceutical company and progressed quickly through the ranks until he was appointed CEO of Pfizer in 2019.

Throughout 2020, Albert directed all the efforts of the Pfizer company to find a vaccine against the new COVID19 virus which had just struck the world. He expended great financial and technological efforts to achieve this goal.

A year later, his work paid off and the World Health Organisation and the USA government authorised his company to produce the long-awaited vaccine.



It seems ironic that the development of this vaccine, which will save the lives of millions of people around the world - including of many Germans - was led by a Jew from Thessaloniki, son of Holocaust survivors, most of whose people had been exterminated by Nazi Germany.



And that is why Israel became the first country to receive the vaccine. In memory of his grandparents and his parents.

The story reminds me of the parable of the rose. It is a beautiful flower. Beautiful to behold and beautiful to smell. But if you choose to tear it apart and crush it underfoot – it simply rewards you with MORE perfume. Shouldn't we try to be a little more like Albert – or the rose...?

John Harris

Singing for social justice...

Early in October I attended a singing workshop, led by community choir leader Carol Shortis, called New Songs for Social Justice. This was held in the Garden Room at St Peter's Church on Willis Street.

It was the first time in several months that most of us had tried singing in person again. During levels 4, 3 and the early part of level 2, most choirs, if they continued at all, met by zoom - a very strange choir experience. You can hear yourself and the backing tracks, but you can't hear your fellow choir members because of delayed sound. If we all turned on our microphones and tried singing at the same time, all you would hear would be a ghastly cacophony of tuneless noise...!



At St Peter's, we were able to sing outside in the lovely garden behind the church – fortunately the weather was good - and inside with masks on. Altogether a much more satisfying experience than a zoom choir...!

The workshop shared the very latest in original songs written for community choirs in the United States, songs written in response to Black Lives Matter and other social-justice movements.

The first song we learnt was "Good Trouble". This term was used by the late Civil Rights leader and Georgia congressman John Lewis. He described how he was inspired by meeting Martin Luther King: "*And I got in the way, I got in trouble — good trouble, necessary trouble,*" John wrote of this period in American history.



The song, inspired by John Lewis' words and written by Elizabeth Melvin begins: "*Get up and make good trouble, speak up and make good trouble, stand up and make good trouble, rise up and make good trouble. Never ever be afraid to make some noise, to make some noise.*"

This song could easily be the theme song for that fearless fighter for climate justice, Greta Thunberg, who intends making lots of good noise and inspiring others to do the same before and during COP26 in Glasgow November 1-12.

Enter **Make Good Trouble** on YouTube and you will hear John Lewis speaking and the song based on his words. You'll soon find yourself singing along.

Before the workshop got underway, I looked up on the wall and read the following prayer. Its author is unknown.

Prayer for a pandemic

*May we who are merely inconvenienced
remember those whose lives are at stake.*

*May we who have no risk factors
remember those who are most vulnerable.*

*May we who have the luxury of working from home
respect and support those who must choose between
preserving their health or paying the rent.*

*May we who have flexibility to care for our children
when their schools close
remember those who have no options.*

*May we who are losing our investments
remember those who have no money to invest.*

*May we who settle in for a quarantine at home
remember those who have no home.*

*May we who have easy access to vaccinations
remember those still struggling to be vaccinated. [this stanza, my addition]*

*During this time, when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other
and those we love who are far away,
let us find ways to be the loving embrace of humanity to our neighbours.*

Be aware. Be accepting. Be supportive. Be kind.

Anne Manchester

The three Rs

When we were very young, we were taught the three Rs: **R**ead, **wR**ite and **aR**ithmetic.

We learned them well and then in later years we find that they became Rest, Relax and Recuperate. Still later we find that they have morphed into Rant, Rave and Ramble. Reuben Hardy recounted a story about a parishioner who remarked that when he was young he was reproached for not saying anything. Now that he was older, he had plenty he wanted to say, but no-one wanted to listen.

I sympathise with his problem. If I say or write something I can be pretty sure that it will be misheard, misunderstood, misconstrued - or all three. I find myself in a state of conflict daily. Be it with the telephone company because it refuses to accept my credit card, or a power company whose website is inordinately confusing, or a supplier who sends a quote with unreadable specifications. Mostly my rants and raves concern technology and its pernicious effects on our society and culture.

For some years it's been becoming clear that I am joining the ranks of the 50% of the senior population who have hearing challenges. "Dad, you need a hearing aid", chorus my daughters. But I retort, "I can hear everything I need to hear. I don't see why I should spend \$5,000+ on something I need for only five hours a week." The "five hours" refers to Sunday services, and the occasional other small group meetings I attend, where often I hear nothing at all. The church problem was easily solved by Sandy's taking a tap off the loudspeaker circuit. So, now I have my 'Ear-Buds' in the second back row, which ensure that I hear everything.

Why, I contended, could I not use my *iPhone* for hearing assistance? After all, all it is is a computer with a microphone and speaker. I discovered that many others had had the same idea, and numerous apps originated around the world, only to fizzle out after a year or so.



A few months ago, the family gave me a (now obsolete) *iPhone5* which has a feature called *Live listen*. Place the *iPhone* near to a source of sound, such as a restaurant table, and then wander off. All sounds and conversations from that restaurant table will be picked up by the *iPhone* and relayed to a Bluetooth receiver such as *AirPods*.



Recently, I took my new *iPhone/AirPod* combination to a meeting, placed the *iPhone* on the chairman's table and the Airpods in my ears and, for the first time, I heard everything he said. And everything said by others in the room.

I am still working out how to use this technique most effectively on a one-to-one conversation basis, where chat volume is quite faint.

I'll get there soon...! 😊

But, fundamentally, I feel fully justified in my contentions that:

- Hearing aids are grossly overpriced and represent a blatant exploitation of a captive and vulnerable market and,
- The so-called cellphones/smartphones (actually highly sophisticated microcomputers masquerading as telephones) which we are all now virtually compelled to carry, can be utilised very effectively for hearing assistance.

My rant about overpricing and exploitation is echoed in the USA, where apparently the government has been trying to make changes for four years. Soon, Congress will pass an Act to make hearing aids available OTC (over-the-counter) without the need for an audiologist or a medical prescription. This should lead to a massive reduction in the price of hearing aids. We can expect NZ to (slowly?) follow suite.



I have also come to the opinion that any gathering of a group of people should *as a matter of course* be amplified. The chances of there being one or more attendees with hearing challenges are quite high. There are dozens of very small/portable and inexpensive microphone/speaker combinations available. My *iPhone8/AirPod* combination cost about \$750. A small microphone/speaker setup would probably cost less than \$250.

Now I have got that rant/rave/ramble off my chest, perhaps (if the editor is amenable) I could have a regular column in the *Record* like *Rood Screen* or *Phil's Photo*. Mine would be entitled **RRR**, which will give me a forum to **R**ant, **R**ave and **R**amble about things about which most people prefer to keep silent.

Geoff Mann

Waiting for the Tide

Marking time watching the flow of life around me, one day merges with the next, with our COVID-limited horizons. So, what is the meaning of our existence? The temptation is to give in, to such negative thoughts. With some relief those negative thoughts have been broken for me. With the help of friends, I have been given a new outlook, a reason why I should, and can, keep going.



A recent expedition through our beautiful forest has reoriented my mind. The symmetry of tree ferns silhouetted against a clear blue sky. The play of light on leaves. The strength of tree forms. Colours and patterns backed by the patterns of sound from the chortling of tui, the twittering of piwakawaka, the chattering of little humans. Because they exist, I am alive.

Life is still worth being alive for, life is not to be given away easily. After all, the time when the tide will turn will come soon enough.

Jan Heine

Children's Power Hour – God's power to protect us

Growing strong: For children to have a healthy development and resilience, there is a need for a balance of both *busyness* and *stillness*.

Being still, according to Scripture Union, is an ideal time for a daily *debrief*. It is an easy tool for keeping an eye on children's developing perspectives, assumptions, beliefs and conclusions about life, God, others and themselves.

In Power Hour, we have used this tool to help the children grow strong. Each person is asked for: 1 good thing; 1 bad thing; 1 God thing. We just listen, not interrupting or brushing them aside. Likewise, gathering over a family meal, or bedtime without distracting devices are good times of stillness for them to debrief.

So, in our recent debrief the children thought:

- A **good** thing is: having some friends; Halloween; going to my friend's home before trick-n-treating.

- A **bad** thing is: people telling lies; a brother fighting when playing with him; killing someone.

- A **God** thing is: respecting God; being thankful; kind; caring; loving.

Indeed, I believe making this simple debriefing a habit, will help to grow resilience and strength in our children. We adults, too, can also benefit from this practice.

For your diary: Our *St Ronan's Family Nativity Pageant Service* is on 12 December. Please bring your friends and family! Our Power Hour children are making a film in November for this occasion.

Samaritans' purse Christmas shoebox mission:

This October, the Power Hour children took on a mission of caring for other children elsewhere - mainly in the Pacific region. They and their families put together a Christmas Shoe Box for a boy aged 5-9 years with items that are useful: in school, for hygiene, a toy and various accessories. Included with these gifts was a letter they wrote to "A Nice Boy" (see photo). Also, some of their weekly offerings were used for a donation to cover the associated costs of administration and shipping.



The children joined forces with the St Ronan's congregation in this mission and on 24 October their giftings were blessed in church by Rev Mervyn Aitkin.

Advent prepares us for Christ's coming: The first Sunday in Advent is 28 November. Advent is a time for "hanging of the green", such as boughs, wreaths and trees, helping to symbolise the new and everlasting life brought through Jesus Christ. It is a time of exciting waiting for something special. We are getting ready for the coming of the birth of Jesus Christ.

The **Advent wreath** is a symbol of the beginning of the Church year: an evergreen wreath with five candles: four around the wreath and one in the centre. The **circle** of the wreath reminds us of God Himself, His eternity and endless mercy, which has no beginning or end. The **green** of the wreath



speaks of the hope we have in God, the hope of newness, of renewal and of eternal life.

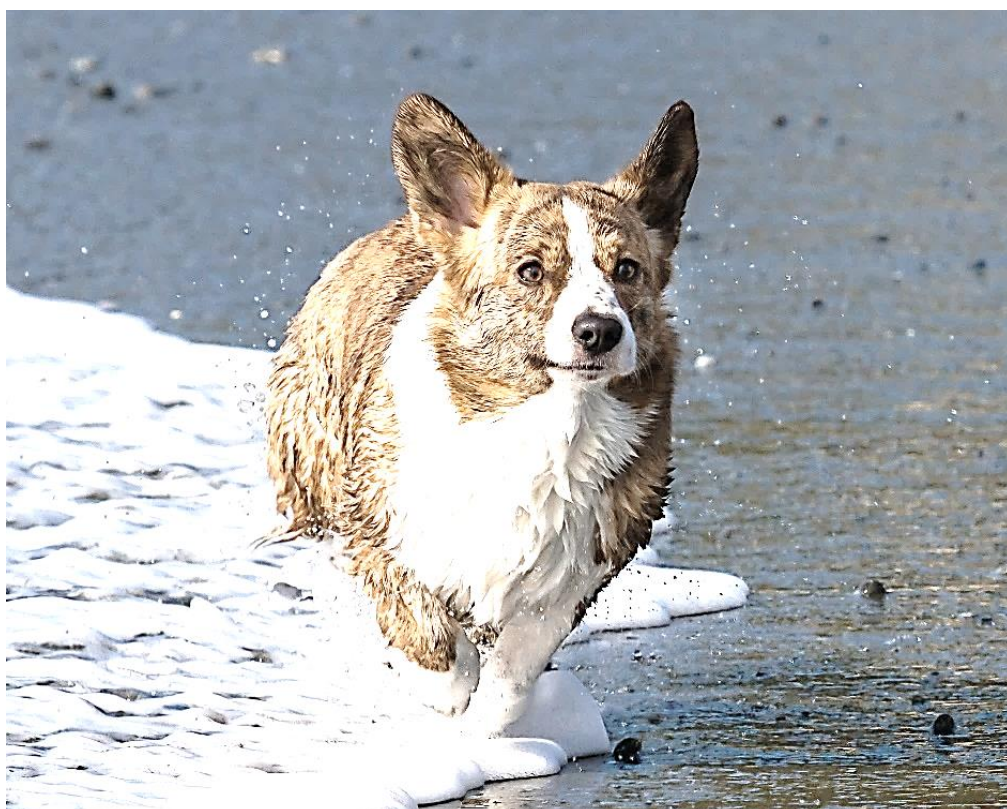
The *candles* symbolise the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His son. We are reminded that we are called to be lights to the world as we reflect the light of God's grace to others. The *four* outer candles represent the period of waiting during the four Sundays of Advent, which themselves represent the four centuries of waiting between the prophet Malachi and the birth of Christ. Now, during the four weeks prior to Christmas we successively light one of these candles to symbolize *Hope*, *Peace*, *Joy* and *Love* (three purple candles, one pink candle). The *centre* candle, the *Christ Candle*, is white and traditionally is lit on Christmas Day.

Blessings, Susan Connell

Phil's photo – Beach theatre...

Like *Thalia* and *Melpomene*. Our Eastbourne beaches are places of tranquillity and trial, family fun and solitude, relaxation and challenge.

One calm October day in Robinson Bay, 'Sian' (Welsh, Jane) came rushing towards me along the water's edge, full of the joys of sand and sea. Youth, agility and strength were on her side. And she had zero worries, as her vigilant valet Ren, was close at hand, plastic bag in pocket, just in case of need.



But you don't need calm weather to have a good time here. Last Saturday saw the Muritai Yacht Club out in winds of 25 knots, gusting 35 knots. This was a race day where merely to survive was to win...

Clearly, the dinghies, and even the rescue boat, were not the place for oversize boots and an expensive camera.



Instead, the refurbished Rona Bay Wharf provided a safe and secure grandstand from which to view the returning boats as their gallant crews used all their skill and strength to land their craft in a semi-dignified manner, as they came in through the breaking seas. Beach theatre at its best...!



Out on the water these men and women were cutthroat competitors, but all leant a hand as the fleet came ashore.

What a place to live...!

*Whether the weather be fine
Or whether the weather be not,
Whether the weather be cold
Or whether the weather be hot,
We'll weather the weather
Whatever the weather,
Whether we like it or not. Anon.*

Phil Bengé





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
December 2021/January 2022
is Sunday 28 November 2021**