



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

October 2022

2 October	Shared Communion Service St Ronan's/St Alban's.....	9.30am
9 October	Graeme Munro (<i>Communion</i>).....	9.30am
16 October	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
23 October	Lionel Nunns.....	9.30am
30 October	BYO Fellowship Lunch, with Doug Rogers.....	12 noon
6 November	Informal worship service.....	9.30am

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Power Hour – Sundays 9.30am
Breakfast Prayer – Tuesdays 7.45am
Mainly Music – Thursdays 9.15-11.15am

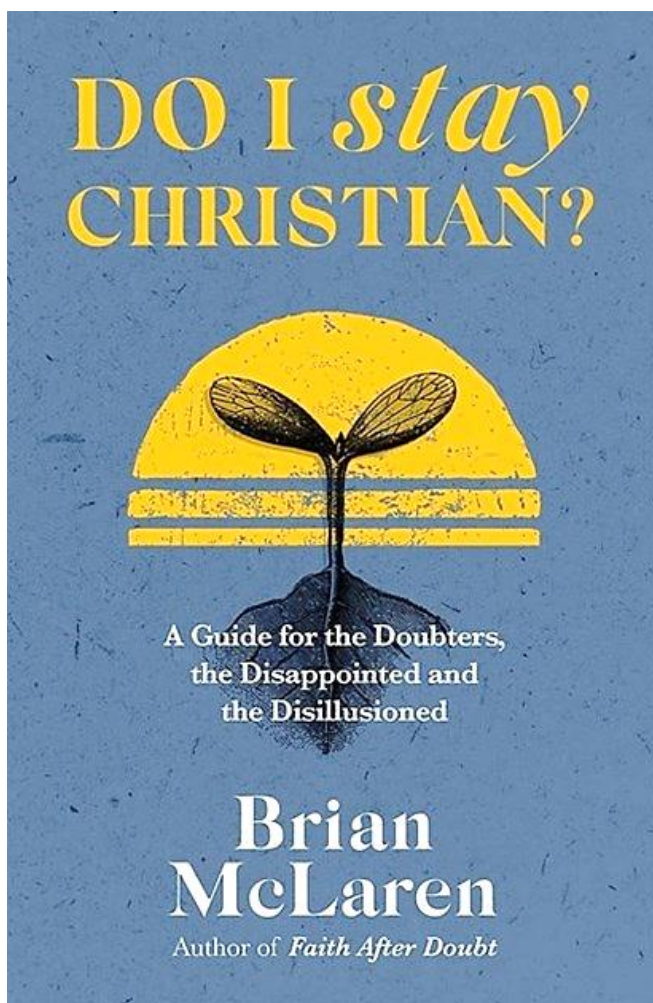
For pastoral care needs, please contact one of the Local Ministry Team
Rev Reg Weeks 027 491 5947, Simon Shaw 562 8772, Colin Dalziel 562 7238 or Sandy Lang 562 8753

A Guide to Doubting, Disappointed and Disillusioned Christians?

As part of our faith journey, Diane and I have had a practice for many years of reading a chapter daily from a whole succession of books on spirituality, theology, biblical analysis, psychology and contemporary Christian practice. We have been informed, excited, challenged and occasionally puzzled by quite a list of authors recommended to us from various sources. Recent ones include: Richard Rohr, Eugene Peterson, John Behr and David Bentley Hart. We are currently reading a book by Brian McLaren entitled '*Do I Stay Christian? A Guide for the Doubters, the Disappointed and the Disillusioned*'.



Written particularly in a USA context, though with similar echoes in many parts of the world, he addresses the impact of such troubling developments as Christian nationalism, book banning, conspiracy theories, Donald Trump portrayed as the 'Son of Man', along with the rise of white supremacy and the politics of division.



He notes that many thoughtful Christians are wrestling with whether to remain associated with what Christianity has become in the public mind, or to leave. He gives 10 chapters delving deeply into reasons to leave this type of expression of Christianity that is so far from the founder's teachings and intention, followed by another 10 chapters on very good reasons to remain.

With our continuing interest in the affairs of Diane's homeland, we have found it a penetrating analysis of the contemporary American church scene, not entirely unrelated to trends in New Zealand. In the 'reasons to stay' section of the book we came across the following quote which we would like to share as an indication of McLaren's perspective, and to encourage you to consider reading the book yourself.

"The process begins with hunter gatherers in a garden, communing with

a loving, creative presence in the cool of the day, naked and not ashamed, living a spirituality with no scripture, no temple, no clergy, no creed, no

codified beliefs, only an ethical imperative to live in a care-taking relationship with one's environment and fellow creatures, modelling the care of the creator. Early humans decide they don't want to live within these creaturely limits, and soon they develop various notions of violent gods that sanction and animate their violent societies. Faith in a god who loves all people begins to emerge slowly and fitfully, three steps forward and two steps back. In this ongoing conversation, Jesus appears, and he invites his contemporaries to imagine something bigger than God as currently understood.

What could be bigger than God, you ask? Jesus called it the kingdom of God, the idea that God and creation are part of one integrated reality that unites all things in one beloved community. In this beloved multi-ethnic, multi-species ecological community, God shares in our experience, in our joys, in our heartbreaks, in the suffering and death of every person, even every sparrow. Finding God with us in our suffering and death robs them of their sting and power to terrorise us. We feel that we are taken up into God's deathless life. God is no longer simply a singular holy You, as wonderful as that might be. God is a holy and unbounded We, a community or web of life in which we are all included and related."

Reg Weeks

Clerk's corner...

Shared Communion Service: Last Sunday, we enjoyed our second 'Shared Communion Service' with the people of St Alban's.

This time it was our turn to be hosts (a reciprocal affair) so, a Presbyterian-style communion service (led by our Rev Diane Gilliam Weeks), at our place (St Ronan's), at our time (9.30am) but with St Alban's providing the sermon (Rev Peter Stuart and Phyllis Mossman) and the bible reader (Carolyn Parker). Another very happy affair – see Anne's article later this issue...

The next Shared Communion Service with St Alban's people will be on 5 February 2023 at their place (Wellesley), at their time 10am etc...



Sunday Afternoon Chamber Concert: I've just had confirmed another concert. It will be at 4pm on Sunday 27 November at St Ronan's. *Trio Muritai* will perform for us again. Mark it in your diary now, full details shortly. This is going to be good...!

Trio Muritai is Rosemary Barnes (piano), Roger Brown (cello) and Rebecca Steel (flute)...



The Programme is:

Carl Maria von Weber
Joseph Haydn
Camille Saint-Saëns
Philippe Gaubert
Adolphe Adam

Trio in G
Trio in G minor
Softly awakes my heart
Pièce romantique
O Holy Night

Messy Minis: New at St Ronan's...!

- Calling all little kids / grandkids...
- Fortnightly...
- First session this Friday 7 October at 3pm...
- See [facebook](#) for details...

What is Messy Minis...? It's safe, supervised, creative, sensory and messy play for preschool children - age 6 months to 4 years.



Messy Minis sessions are jam-packed with a range of messy play and sensory activities that inspire exploration through play. A whole lot of fun. New educational experiences. The best part is there's no cleanup for you...!



Offering you some of the best sensory play around, *Messy Minis* uses a huge variety of textures to guarantee your little one will be able to explore and play happily - rainbow rice, play dough, chia slime - the list is endless...!

The arrival of *Messy Minis* at St Ronan's complements and extends the range of pre-school activities in support of Eastbourne's young families...

- A *Safe, Secure, Playground* in a charming garden environment (Anytime)
- A *Toy Library* (Mondays)
- A *Mainly Music Playgroup* (Thursdays)
- A *Pop-in-and-Play Playgroup* (Fridays) and
- A *Super Venue* for your pre-schooler's *Birthday Party* (Saturdays/Sundays)...!

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Sandy Lang

Rood - Ancient wisdom, modern folly...

Central Europe has suffered an extreme drought this year, with rainfall just 20% of normal in France, and blistering heat across many parts of the continent. There have been consequent water shortages, wildfires, and poor harvests. It is the worst drought since 2003. Climate experts are warning it's a sign of things to come...



You may have read recent reports of the 'Hunger Stones' appearing in many European rivers. For many centuries, these stones have been placed in the riverbed during droughts, to mark the lowest water levels reached. They were meant to serve as warnings to future generations that they

would face famine-related hardship if the water level sank this low again (Google [hunger stones](#)).

One famous Hunger Stone in the River Elbe in Děčín (Czech Republic) bears a warning carved into it in German, *Wenn du mich siehst, dann weine* "If you see me, then weep". The oldest legible date on this stone is 1616, although it is believed earlier dates have been wiped off by ships' anchors.

A delve into the history books shows that Hunger Stones have been marked in European rivers on 49 occasions (years) since 1115. If my abacus is working right, that is about once every 19 years. So, 2022, being 19 years after 2003, shouldn't have come as a total surprise. The ancients *did* warn us...

In 2011, we were horrified to watch the high-definition TV coverage of the tsunami caused by the magnitude 9.0 Tohoku earthquake off the coast of Japan. In this event 19,747 people lost their lives, 6,242 were injured and 2,556 people were reported as missing.

Residents of the village of Aneyoshi however, heeded the warnings of their ancestors (Google [Aneyoshi stones](#)). These villagers obeyed the wisdom inscribed on their local stone. It reads "Do not build any homes below this point" and "High dwellings are the peace and harmony of our descendants. Remember the calamity of the great tsunamis." When the 2011 tsunami

devastated Japan, the village of Aneyoshi was spared because it sat safely above the high-water mark.

This particular 'tsunami stone' dates back to the 1930s. After the village was devastated by a tsunami in 1896, it was rebuilt in the same place. But when another tsunami struck in 1933 the village was moved uphill. After that, a tsunami stone was erected and this is credited



with saving the town in 1960, and again in 2011...Tragically, there are many other such 'tsunami stones' dotted along the Japanese coast - now mostly overgrown, forgotten and ignored...

And closer to home, there may be quite a few Kiwis who, with the recent extreme weather, will be wishing they'd heeded Jesus' structural engineering advice - where to and not to build a house.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-27: *Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.*

There's a lot of wisdom - spiritual and temporal - in the bible. We can't say we haven't been warned...

Hunger stones are usually buried deep below the flowing river waters - well out of sight, and well out of mind. All too often, those spiritual truths are buried deep beneath the dusty covers of our bibles. Do you read yours regularly? Or only in times of spiritual drought?

John Harris

St Ronan's and St Alban's Shared Communion Service

Sunday worship on October 2 was another successful Shared Communion Service between the congregations of St Ronan's and St Alban's. It is always such a pleasure for us to join in worship, as we have so much in common and know each other pretty well by now. And to have around 60 people in our church for a Sunday service, instead of our normal 20 or fewer, surely helps with the quality and confidence of the singing.

The reflection, called *Temple and Altar*, was given by Rev Canon Peter Stuart and Phyllis Mossman from St Alban's, with the communion led by Rev Diane Gilliam-Weeks from St Ronan's.

Through the medium of art, Peter and Phyllis took us on a theological journey to understand how we humans seek, find and experience the Divine Presence. The earliest art shown in their PowerPoint presentation was of a 12th century high altar in Monreale Cathedral, Sicily. The most contemporary artwork was a painting by New Zealand artist Michael Smither depicting Christ driving the money changers from the temple.

"This wooden communion table here is but one example of myriads of altars of different faiths, past and present – including Christian altars," Phyllis said. She reminded us that the role of an altar is to be a focus of human offering to the Divine and the symbol of human encounter with the Divine.

Peter discussed the destruction of the two temples in Jerusalem, the first in 586 BC by the Babylonians as punishment for Israel's sins; the second by a Roman army a few decades after Jesus' death.

"Unlike Jesus, the Jerusalem Temple has not risen again," Peter said.

A 19th century painting by Gustave Doré, *The Triumph of Christianity*, shows that Christ's human nature now replaces the Jerusalem Temple as the place where the Divine dwells within Creation.



Convivial sharing after the service

However, while the Earth remains a world torn by sin and suffering, creation itself and its creator continue to suffer and cry out.

Peter and Phyllis concluded their reflection with some images depicting the hope of a united Heaven and Earth, with Christ at the centre, as envisaged in the Book of Revelation.

We certainly had a lot to think about as we shared a delicious morning tea together in the fellowship room after the service. St Alban's will host the next Shared Communion Service, now a quarterly event, on February 5, 2023, at Wellesley College Hall.

Anne Manchester

Les Molloy honoured by the late Queen

Last month, Les Molloy received his *Companion of the Queen's Service Order* for his lifetime commitment to protecting New Zealand's natural places and wilderness areas.

With the death of Queen Elizabeth II on September 8, Les's award was among the last of the *Queen's Birthday* and *Platinum Jubilee Honours*. Being invested at Government House a week after her passing and being photographed with his family beneath a large portrait of the Queen draped with a black sash across one corner, made him reflect on her life of service and constancy to a cause, he said.

According to his official citation, Dr Molloy led New Zealand's first wilderness conference in 1981. He drafted the first national wilderness policy and was instrumental in advocating for wilderness areas to be identified and gazetted. He pioneered the use of the Recreational Opportunities Spectrum for New Zealand's protected areas and was one of many actively advocating the end of logging of native timber on crown land.

He played a key role in the Olivine Wilderness Area of 83,000 hectares being added to the Mount Aspiring National Park. Among his governmental roles, he was Director of Advocacy for the Department of Conservation from 1987 to 1990 and served on a range of government advisory groups, including the National Parks and Reserves Authority, the New Zealand Geographic Board, the Independent Review Panel in 2000 on Indigenous Forests with Timberlands West Coast, the Nature Heritage Fund and the National Parks Centennial Commission.

For more than 20 years, Les travelled to many remote natural areas in Asia, Siberia and the Pacific, assessing them for addition to UNESCO's World Heritage List, bringing credit to New Zealand as a leader in natural heritage conservation initiatives. He is recognised as a foremost writer on natural history and landforms, publishing seven books since 1975.



"From an early age I realised how special the wild public areas of New Zealand were and how they needed to be protected for all of us to enjoy," said Les.

"Together with many other concerned outdoor recreation enthusiasts, we worked for many decades to oppose the destruction of our priceless natural heritage and instead ensure it would be conserved and remain in public hands, available for all of us to enjoy and cherish. We were certainly not popular with some of the governments of the day, but I hope the award is a recognition of how our 'conservator society' vision, largely ridiculed 50 years ago, is now the accepted norm among our young people."

With Governor General Dame Cindy Kiro being in the United Kingdom to attend the Queen's funeral service, Les received his award from the Administrator, Supreme Court judge Dame Susan Glazebrook – another Eastbourner of note.

Anne Manchester

A presentation on Shirley Erena Murray

As most people at St Ronan's know, I have been quietly working away for the past couple of years researching for a biography I intend writing about our much-loved hymn writer Shirley Erena Murray.

On October 16, I will be giving a presentation about my research to a group I belong to called **Ephesus**. I will be discussing why I got involved in the first place, my sources of information and some of the interesting discoveries I have been making along the way.

The presentation will be at Johnsonville Union Church from 5-7pm.



I am calling my presentation "Under Shirley's spell: researching the life and work of Shirley Erena Murray". Like most others who knew and worked with Shirley, I too am fast coming under her spell. I even dream about her these days!

My presentation will conclude with a study of two hymns, with musical accompaniment by Hymns on Sunday producer Robyn Jaquiere. So, there will be a chance to learn and sing two hymns that I doubt many people have heard of before.

If you would like to join me on October 16, please let me know on aemanch@gmail.com. An indication of numbers will help with decisions around which room at Johnsonville Union Church will best accommodate the session.

Anne Manchester



‘Earth as our Original Monastery’

“At the heart of matter is the heart of God,”
The deeper we move into the Mystery of any created thing,
the closer we come to the Divine Presence.

Teilhard de Chardin

This Springtime two day guided retreat online will develop themes from Christine Paintner’s book ‘Earth as our Original Monastery’. The daily themes will offer time to pause, to savour and to cultivate awe, wonder, and gratitude for the Divine Presence in Creation.

The retreat will be organized around two **Zoom** sessions each day, one each morning to set the theme of the day and one in the late afternoon to conclude the day’s reflections. A reflective handout will also be given for each day.

Facilitator: Lyndall Brown rsj

Dates: Tuesday 11th October and Tuesday 18th of October

Time: Morning Session 10.0 a.m. Afternoon Session 4.0 p.m.

Participants are free to Register for one day or both days.

Registrations to lyndallb19@gmail.com Phone 0211856750

Cost: Koha - Details for payment will be sent out after Registration.



Registrations close on Friday 7th of October

Operation Christmas Child: Samaritan's Purse



SHOEBOX APPEAL, OCTOBER 2022

For a number of years, members of St Ronan's have donated many shoeboxes, filled with gifts for children in and around the Pacific region.

SHOE BOXES NOW AVAILABLE AT ST RONAN'S

Gift suggestions are:

- Something to wear, to love, for school, to play with, for personal hygiene and something special.
- Choose for a boy or a girl, and
- Choose age group 2-4 yrs, 5-9 yrs or 10-14 yrs.

For more information call freephone 0800 726 274 or go to www.operationchristmaschild.org.nz

Please contact Colin Dalziel (04) 562 7238 for information leaflets and shoeboxes.

Suggestions for gifts to suit children of different ages, also prohibited items, are shown on the leaflet.

Note: To cover freight costs, a \$10 donation is required in an envelope with each box.

Financial donations to Samaritan's Purse can be made through their website (above), where you can also download a [coded label](#) to follow your Shoebox to its final destination.

Filled Shoeboxes should be brought to St Ronan's by Sunday 23 October. After a blessing during the church service, Shoeboxes will be delivered to the local Shoebox drop off point to start their journey to Auckland and then on to other countries.

Many thanks

Colin Dalziel

Children's Power Hour – Dramatic rescue, escape and praise...

We are thankful for St Ronan's *Informal Worship* Sundays because they give us another 15 min in *Power Hour* to explore God's empowerment...! Consequently, we were able to have more fun and drama the other Sunday, exploring Moses' heroic rescue of God's people through nine plagues, the Passover and the Great Escape – all the while keeping closely connected to following in God's way.

As it was Father's Day too, we had to rush to make our prayer for Dad and a floral bouquet before Dad returned. "Cover up quickly" our creations. "Don't look yet, Dad, please!" We called out as he entered. But such joy we had in giving Dad our surprises!



Blake and Mills gifting their crafted floral bouquet to Dad, Matt, on Father's Day

Envisaging Moses' 'Big Rescue', the *Power Hour* children acted out each plague sent on the Egyptians - such as scratching our arms during the gnats' plague. They felt the courage required to believe and persevere for the freedom the Israelites valued, even when the Pharaoh king kept saying, "No, you cannot leave."

The discipline to follow exactly God's guidance for the desired result during the Passover (the 10th plague) was also well dramatised. Be quick! Be ready to go! Do exactly as asked! With great urgency and exactness, the children 'killed' the lamb, painted the sides of the *Power Hour* door red, ate some lamb chop pieces at a make-shift table (tablecloth on floor), gobbled down some real matzos bread, got their shoes on and had walking sticks in hand.

Can you imagine doing all this?! Their fervour, intensity and excitement were high. Then, when the children heard, "Go!" as the Pharaoh had lost all patience, they sprinted off and out into the hall and as far away as possible to



The Passover Seder Plate with matched symbol and meaning. (Horseradish, Parsley, Elijah's Cup, Fruit and Honey, Salted Water, Egg, Rump Bone, Matzos Bread)

escape...! We had escaped and been rescued by Moses and God. But that wasn't all that day. Now God made a contingency that the Passover must be honoured each year thereafter. Hence, the *Seder* meal. In commemorating the Big Rescue and Big Escape the children astutely matched up the symbols on the *Seder Plate* with the meanings, dressed up for the meal, drank the traditional four cups of wine (grape juice) and ate more matzos.

Linked to our series on heroes and heroines and John Harris' recent message, the children are drawing a bigger and deeper picture of the value of keeping a close connection with God.

Being strong and courageous requires a resilience born out God's spirit of love in us. Such a great day!

A reminder: Power Hour resumes for Term 4 on 30 October (after the school holidays 2-16 October).

Susan Connell

Phil's photo – Nail polish, an NZ hardman and women's rugby...

Donna Miles (pictured, right) is an Iranian-born, Kiwi journalist who regularly writes a *DomPost* column. Very well educated, she writes with a style and a clarity that's easy for readers to connect with and to understand. Last Monday, Donna wrote about the problems women in Iran have with the 'Morality Police' and referred to the cruelty extended to women for the most minor of transgressions.



To give this greater emphasis, she wrote about the recent arrest and subsequent death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini (pictured, opposite) who failed to wear her hijab 'correctly'. Her death has resulted in huge protests, not only in Iran but also around the world.

As part of their enforcement, the Iranian Morality Police prey on fear. In her column, Donna describes how terrified she was when, as a young woman in Tehran, she was stopped for wearing nail polish. Though she was not arrested and was eventually let off after a long lecture, she describes how terrified and humiliated she was by that experience. And this has left a lasting impression with her.



A mate of mine who used to play rugby in his youth, recently told me of one game where, as they were getting changed, his team's 'hardman' took off his socks to reveal his bright-pink, nail-polished toenails. His teammates carefully said nothing but as they left the changing rooms to go onto the field, they smiled to one another as they saw his beautiful young daughter wearing open-toe sandals to show off her bright pink toenails.

Obviously, earlier in the day, father and daughter had had a fun time painting one another's toenails. Brilliant... We are so fortunate to live in a land where about anything goes...!



So why nail polish and women's rugby...? As you know, I photograph a lot of sports, and that includes women's rugby. These women are fun-loving but can also be extremely physical in their game. After reading Donna's column, I looked back over some of my photos and - golly gosh - there were these women playing their physical games and some

were wearing bright nail polish. Fabulous. Just about anything goes here in NZ. Aren't we fortunate...!

This month, as our Black Ferns take on the other World Cup contenders, let's give these women our support. And should any of them turn up with bright fingernails, know of a certainty they wear them with pride as they represent our nation.

Phil Bengie



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 November 2022
is Sunday 30 October 2022**