



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

October 2024

6 October	Shared service with Anglicans at San Antonio.....	9.30am
13 October	Informal worship service (What's the word).....	9.30am
20 October	Tertius Jacobs	9.30am
27 October	Informal worship service (Bring your own).....	9.30am
3 November	Shared service with Anglicans at St Ronan's.....	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
Rev Reg Weeks 027 491 5947, Wendy McCarter 027 255 6928, Simon Shaw 562 8772,
Colin Dalziel 562 7238, Sandy Lang 562 8753

Listening...



Throughout September the lectionary has been taking us through the letter of James. For some reason, Martin Luther regarded it as an "epistle of straw."

However, it is a very practical letter on how to live the Christian faith. In it, James has this to say: *"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."*



It brought to my mind an event I attended when training for industrial chaplaincy. One session was devoted to 'active listening', where through various exercises we were taught the difference between 'hearing' and 'attentive listening'. We learned that part of active listening was to be aware of facial expression, tone of voice and body language - all adding subtly to the message conveyed by the words spoken.

In one surprising exercise, working in pairs, one was invited to recall a painful memory and dwell on it for at least five minutes, in silence, while the other 'listened' attentively, and said nothing! Then the roles were reversed.

Strangely, all found the presence of a silent attentive listener warming and supportive, so we learned how important it was in a pastoral situation to be comfortable with silence, and not try to fill what feels like a void. We learned how to paraphrase and summarise what the person had said, using their own words, so they could judge whether we had heard correctly.

Again, I was reminded of some very helpful material in the Alpha Marriage Course, where couples work through what helps and hinders being effective in the art of communication.

When someone is speaking, our own expectations, prejudices, past experiences, values, beliefs and feelings will all colour what we hear and how we will receive it. Unhelpful habits, which we need to be aware of are, for example: jumping in and reassuring, giving advice, intellectualising or spiritualising, going off the subject and interrupting. These all have the effect of blocking the speaker from saying all they might wish to say.

Of course, there will be occasions when it may be helpful to share your own experience, but sparingly. In Twelve Step fellowships this is called 'sharing your experience, strength and hope'.

There is also a very effective 'handkerchief exercise' for difficult or uncomfortable issues, preferably before things are getting tense and feelings are rising. The first speaker holds the handkerchief (virtual or real) and says what they want to say on the issue, and how they feel about it, without interruption. The listener feeds back what they've heard, so that the speaker has a chance to ensure they've been heard accurately. The listener then asks, "What would you like to be done about it?" Only after that's been sorted, to the first speaker's satisfaction, does the listener get the handkerchief and the roles are reversed. This gives both a chance to speak and to listen, and to know they have been understood. The more important the issue, the more important this process.

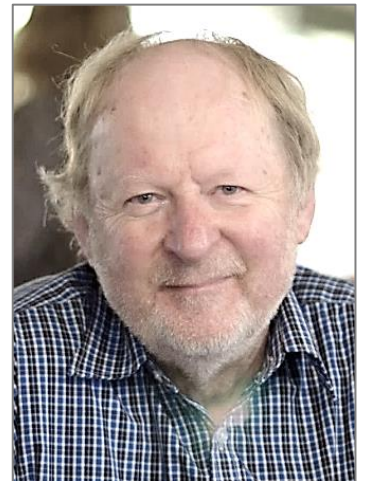
But back to James; in his advice he is just following the instructions of his teacher, who said on several occasions when teaching, "*Let anyone with ears to hear, listen!*"

Reg Weeks

Clerk's corner...

AGM: St Ronan's 100th Annual General Meeting on 15 September went smoothly – well, what did you expect...? Reading through our Annual Report, I judge we are doing pretty well for a small church – trying to maintain a right balance between the two great 'legs' of our faith – love God and love your neighbour (Matt 22:37-40).

LSM: The little extra bit of business at the AGM was that parish council proposed to the meeting that Wendy McCarter should join our *Local Shared Ministry* team. The church heartily supported this proposal. I have now written to Presbytery seeking their support and involvement in Commissioning Wendy – hopefully this will take place during a service before Christmas (November?). Meanwhile, it's reasonable Wendy should start off in the role. She attended her first *LSM* team meeting a few days later, on 19 September. Welcome Wendy...! 😊



Party Central: Many weekends, St Ronan's plays host to a pre-schooler birthday party. Preschoolers have a lot of these (each child has about one a year) and each party attracts a small multitude (15-20) of excited little guests.

Quite often I get an email along the lines of "*I am writing to enquire about booking your facilities for a 5th birthday party for my daughter.*" One such email went on to say "*...previously, my sister booked at St Ronan's for her daughter's birthday parties and it was such a lovely space...*"¹

¹ Wording taken from a recent email with identifying details removed.

But why do people like our 1960s St R's so much...? Well, the garden is attractive and colourful (thanks to Robyn), and there's a pre-schooler-proof gate to keep our little guests off the road. We keep the place clear of potentially hazardous clutter (the Min of Ed makes sure of that). There's some good pre-schooler play equipment on the lawn (climbing, castle, slides, swings etc). Toy Library kindly loans us a few 'ride-on' toys on party days and there's a good area of smooth, dry, asphalt for the kids to be put these through their paces. A large hall and a kitchen. Our Blue room is permanently set up for littlies. And the place is familiar to most of these small guests and their mums and dads through Mainly Music, Pop-in-and-Play and Toy Library. And you may have noticed our hall now has new, much brighter, LED lighting...!

ERPA: The *Eastbourne Retired Persons Association* is run by Rosemary and Keith Young. A cup of tea/coffee, a bickie and a talk, 4th Mondays each month, at 10am, at St Ronan's, in the Fellowship room. Annual sub are only \$10 and there's a \$2 koha each meeting.

On 21 October, Anne Manchester will give a talk '*Into the Roaring Forties and Furious Fifties - exploring the Sub Antarctic Islands*'. This is likely to be good – I know, I *must* say that...!

The ERPA group will close off its year on Monday 25 November 2024 at 11:45am with a pre-Christmas lunch at Tartines Café (each person orders off the menu and pays for our own food and drink). But Rosemary *does* need to know how many are coming to book the table, so please ring her on 562 7365 to confirm by 21 November. Friends welcome...

e: slang@xtra.co.nz **t:** 562 8752 **m:** 021 222 0383

Sandy Lang

"Physician, heal thyself..."

Glass has been around since 2,500 BCE. It's made by heating silica sand, soda ash and limestone to 1,700°C and then cooling it rapidly. It's a pretty sophisticated process and requires specialised equipment and know-how.

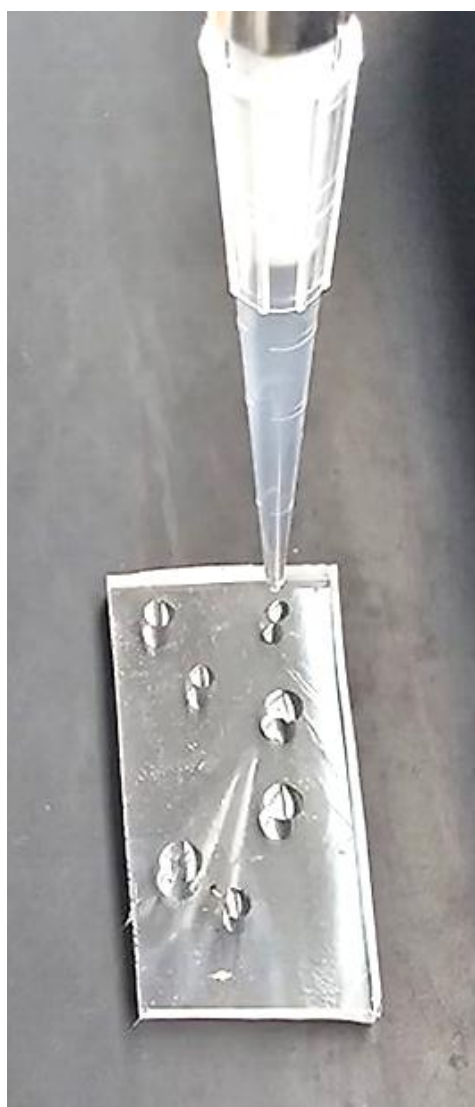
According to a recent edition of the journal *Nature*, Gal Finkelstein-Zuta, a PhD student at Tel Aviv's biomedicine and materials science school, was experimenting with peptides. She dropped some of the powder into water and it dissolved "like making Kool-Aid."



The next day, after the water had evaporated, she was surprised to discover a glass-like substance had formed spontaneously. Moreover, she has since found this 'peptide glass' is self-healing - able to repair its cracks. It is also adhesive

and can glue pieces of ordinary glass together and it is more transparent than ordinary glass, so it can transmit a wider range of light waves. And unlike ordinary glass, no heat or pressure are needed to make it, just peptides and room-temperature water.

The researchers have also discovered that by varying the amount of water, the peptide glass can be made to form in a curve, thus eliminating the grinding and polishing normally required to make lenses. Potential applications could be in satellites, remote sensing, communications and optics.



This new peptide glass is still in the early stages of development and is not ready yet for commercial use. However, it does at this stage have one minor drawback, it needs to be in lab-controlled conditions to maintain its shape. As Finkelstein-Zuta said in an interview, "You can't yet use a peptide glass to drink water because the peptide glass would melt in your hand".

But they're working on it. And more importantly, the whole team in the laboratory believes they are onto something big.

Glass that can heal itself makes one think of Luke 4:23 "Physician, heal thyself". In this case, Jesus was responding to people saying "But you're just a local lad. A good one maybe, but just a local. How can you possibly claim to be the Messiah?"

The question is, do we support and encourage people in our community who stick their heads above the parapet?

John Harris



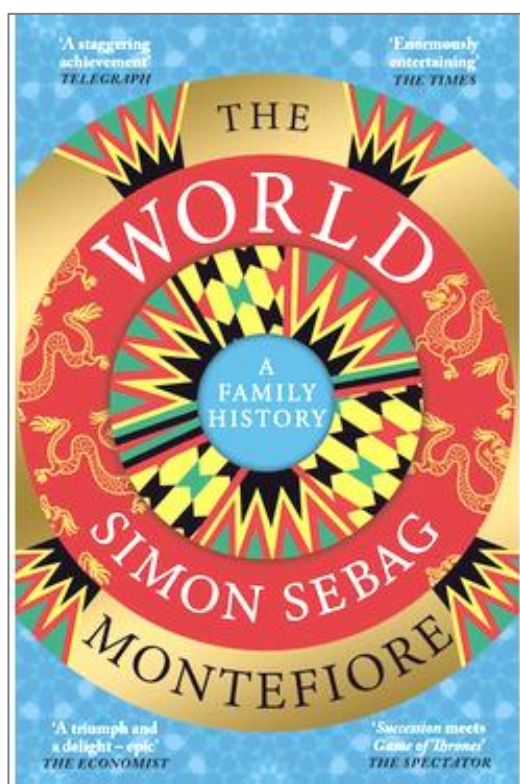
Simon Sebag Montefiore: The World – a Family History...

I am in the process of reading this book – it is large - 1260 pages of text – it tells the stories of the human race and of human

civilisations from prehistory to today. It tells them chronologically, such that we read not only of the contemporaneous Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, Hebrews and Romans but also the coeval Indians and Chinese. We read of the cultures of Africa, of the Incas and Maya, of the kingdoms of mediaeval Europe, China, Japan, India, Hawaii - of their conflicts and interrelationships.



It's hard going; there's a lot to take in and with such a wide canvas in so relatively few pages, it tends to go off the rails occasionally. Like all books these days, it has been produced in a rush. Writing of it began during the COVID lockdown; it has been poorly proofread; many names are similar and you lose track of who is related to whom, where, and in what generation. But it is undoubtedly a great achievement and earns the plaudits of Henry Kissinger and others printed on the back of the dust-jacket.



But there is no beauty and no morality. Man's history is one of extreme cruelty, vicious exploitation, systemic servitude, chronic disease, endemic suffering, depravity and mutual self-destruction. The basic rules are "Exploit or be exploited," "Enslave or be enslaved," "Kill or be killed". These rules seem to apply across all ages and all cultures. Today's world continues these traditions in Palestine, Ukraine, Burma, Africa, Xinjiang, and the Americas. We see them reflected in our modern South Pacific.

I became distracted by the author himself, who drops brief details of his own family's background into the narrative. When the Romans sacked Jerusalem in AD70 many Jews went to north Africa, and then to Spain and Portugal. In the 1400s they were expelled from Spain; some went to Greece/Turkey, and some went to eastern Europe and became known as the Ashkenazi. Those who remained in Morocco and Africa were known as the Sephardic Jews.

The Montefiore branch found its way from Iberia to Italy via Greece and took the name Montefiore, which means flower-mountain, as do the Ashkenazi Yiddish/German names Bloomberg, Blomberg, Blumberg. The Montefiores, like the Rothschilds, had business operations all over Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Sebags moved to Britain from Morocco in the 1800s. Both families became prominent in business and banking in London. A scion, Bishop Hugh (Sebag-)Montefiore (1920-2005), was the Anglican bishop of Birmingham.

In describing his book as a “family history” the author is implying that all humans are interrelated family – albeit a hugely dysfunctional one. The Jewish sub-family appears frequently, widely dispersed, seeming rarely to live peaceably with its neighbours, and subject to multiple bouts of expulsion and decimation.

I made, and was intrigued by, one small connection to St Ronan’s. A few years ago, when Michelle Shin was our pastor, she mentioned her grandfather, who had been a prominent leader/missionary of the Presbyterian Church in what is now North Korea.

“After the end of WW2 in the Far East, and Korea was liberated from the Japanese, Soviet troops occupied the northern half and Americans occupied the south. Planning a Communist client state, Stalin struggled to find vassals. Finally, Beria discovered a Korean-born Communist whose Christian parents had founded one of the first anti-Japanese groups, and who had fought during the 1930s in Mao’s armies before escaping to Russia. The 33-year-old Kim Song-ju was unknown in Korea, but he cleverly adopted as nom de guerre the name of a famous, possibly mythical, fighter: ‘Tiger’ Kim Il-sung. Kim embraced Stalinism mixed with Korean nationalism.” (pp 1083-4).

Do I commend this book? As I have noted, it is long, dense and hard going; in places it is messy, and needs considerable rewriting and reorganisation. Reading it requires time, patience and resilience but it fills in knowledge gaps, and strips off blinkers and prejudices.

What would St Paul say if he were to read it? I imagine him saying, “Yes, *that’s right, And the record of our so-called Christians (kings, emperors, popes, priests and common folk) is everywhere abysmal; But there is much more: We can be transformed by the renewing of our minds; For us there is Love: Love is patient and kind, not jealous, not boastful, Not proud, rude or selfish, not easily angered, And it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not gloat over other people’s sins But takes its delight in the truth. Love always bears up, always trusts, always hopes, always endures. Three things are unchanging: trust, hope, love; and the greatest of these is love.*”

Geoff Mann

Operation Christmas Child



Shoebox appeal – October 2024

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

National collection month - October 2024

Pickup: Empty shoeboxes are now available at St Ronan's

Gift suggestions: something to wear, to love, for school, to play with, personal hygiene or something special.

Choose:

Boy or girl...

Age group 2-4 years, 5-9 years or 10-14 years...



More information: Call 0800 726 274

or go to www.operationchristmaschild.org.nz

Contact: Colin Dalziel 562 7238 for information leaflets and shoe boxes.

Leaflets give suggestions for gifts to suit children of different ages. They also list prohibited items.

Freight: A cash donation of \$12.50 is required in an envelope with each box to cover freight. Donations can also be made through the Samaritan's Purse website (use the above link). You can also download coded labels and follow your box to its destination.

Deadline: Filled boxes should be brought to St Ronan's by **Sunday 20**

October 2024. After the boxes are blessed during the morning service, they will be delivered to the local Shoebox drop-off point to continue their journey to Auckland and then on to other countries.

Many thanks **Colin Dalziel**

Power Hour – Rocks! Rocks! Rocks!

Rocks are used in many ways in the Bible, e.g., Noah's boat landed on rocky Mt Ararat, Moses carved the Ten Commandments on stone, Joshua made a pile of 12 stones after crossing the River Jordan into the Promised Land, Peter 'the Rock', and Jesus' rock tomb.

So, in Power Hour we also used rocks. We marked a rock with the words, 'God said, *"I will always be with you."* and took the rock home and placed it where it could be seen often and remind us of God's promise that He will always be with us.

Using a rock came about from the reference to runaway Jacob, who had a dream of angels ascending and descending a ladder with a message from God. It was a message of promises of good things to come that assured and gave peace to Jacob, despite his feeling very much alone and frightened. (Remember - his brother Esau had threatened to murder him because Jacob had tricked him into giving away his birthright).

On awakening Jacob then stood his rock pillow upright and believed that "God had prevailed" at that place. The place was renamed Bethel. Jacob now knew that God was with him, even in that lonely rocky place while on the run. To this day, Bethel is still there and is located just north of Jerusalem, about the same distance as Eastbourne village is from Pt Howard.



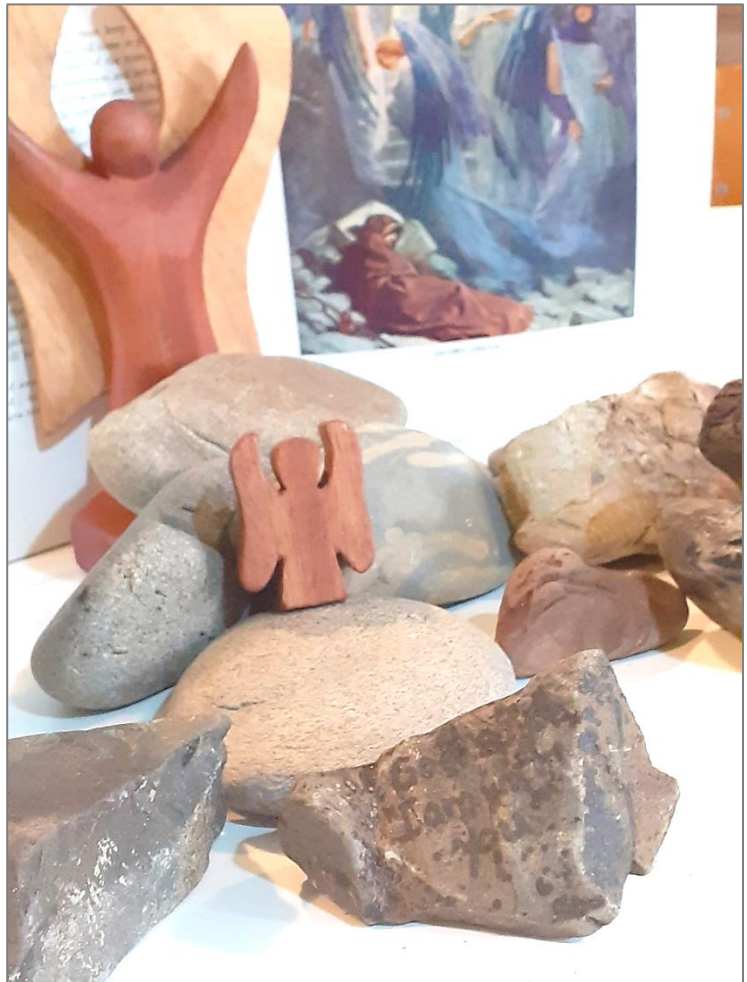
Bethel today...

While our children today may not be alone in quite the same way as Jacob was, they may feel lonely when confronted with things that are difficult or which just don't go away. They do experience the loneliness of broken friendships (short or long term) and difficult situations.

Furthermore, our children truly know what is right and good in their personal circumstances and feel concerned when it is hard to change situations to bring about peace.

We discussed how it was much easier to discuss our concerns when God was in the room with us. Only when the discussion/resolution felt right and good was there peace within us.

Our drawings were then augmented by shading in colour the presence of God all about. Thus, like Jacob, we were able to take a rock and mark on it that God was with us: wherever we are, whatever we are doing, however we are feeling, that God will never leave us. And this can bring peace.



Susan Connell

Term 4: from 20 October to 15 December (Christmas Nativity pageant)

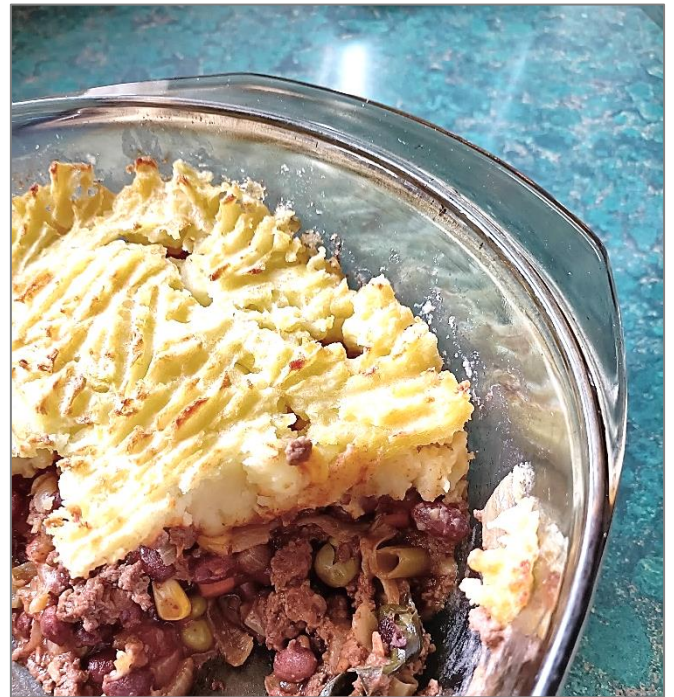
Sandy's shepherd's pie...

Origins: I got the idea of this recipe from a vegetarian friend, but what it really needed was some meat...

Serves: I make my shepherd's pie in a large (28x22 cm, oval), lidded casserole. It delivers 6 to 8 serves. Each serve a balanced meal. It lasts in the freezer forever or in the fridge for several days.

Great on a cold evening, after a hard day, when you need comfort food...

It's fast, just thaw/reheat a portion in the microwave. Beware it's dangerously morish...



Ingredients:

- 2 cans of Wattie's chilli beans. 1 'hot' and 1 'mild'²
- 500 g mince.
- 2 large brown onions.
- Lots of coloured veggies.
- Enough mashed potato to build a 3 cm layer over the top.

To do: This will take you about an hour and will use the whole stove - two fry pans, two saucepans and the oven.

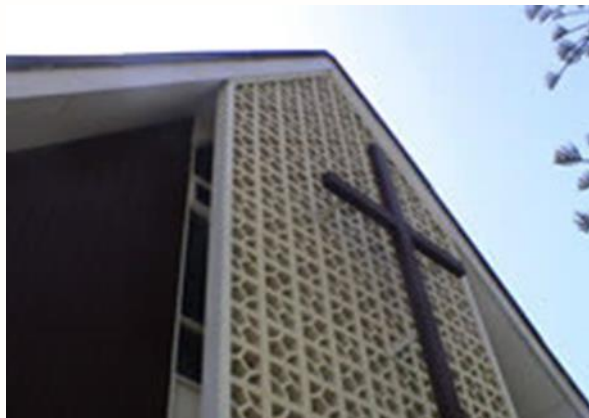
- Empty the two cans into the casserole and put in the oven at about 120°C.
- Dice the onions and fry gently (olive oil) until they start to brown. Mix them in with the beans.
- Fry the mince gently (olive oil) till it starts to brown. Mix it in with the beans and onions.
- Precook a good amount of diced veggies of different colours - orange, green, yellow. Mix it all in with the beans and onions and mince.
- Green leaf veggies (sprouts, cabbage etc) are best if you steam-fry them³ Enough of this fashion for half-raw greens.
- You know how to boil potatoes. Mash them with milk and butter. Spread over the mixture, groove with a fork, put under the grill till golden.



Sandy Lang

² For some reason 2 'mediums' are just not the same. Similarly other brands of chilli beans. Vary the hotness in steps by blending 'hot', 'medium' and 'mild' cans – i.e., max heat (2 'hot') down to min heat (2 'mild').

³ Lidded saucepan, dribble of water, knob of butter, gentle heat, boil dry, fry, stop before they char.



Our God calls us to worship and grow together and to show the love of Christ through serving our community.

Directory

St Ronan's Presbyterian Church,
234 Muritai Road, Eastbourne, Lower Hutt, 5013

Local Ministry Team

Rev Reg Weeks	027 491 5947	third.age@outlook.co.nz
Wendy McCarter	027 255 6928	13wmccarter@gmail.com
Sandy Lang	562 8753	slang@xtra.co.nz
Simon Shaw	562 8772	simonjshaw@xtra.co.nz
Colin Dalziel	562 7238	colinjdalziel@gmail.com

Parish Clerk	Sandy Lang
Hall Bookings	Sandy Lang

Contributions for the 'Record' are most welcome.
Please email them to lesmolloy7@gmail.com
Phone (04) 568 3377

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 2024
is Sunday 27 October 2024**