



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

September 2017

3 Sept	Worship with John Harris	9.30am
	Taizé by candlelight (last for the year)	6.30pm
10 Sept	Holy Communion with Rev Reg Weeks	9.30am
17 Sept	Worship with Rev Norman Wilkins	9.30am
24 Sept	Worship with Rev Lynn Russell	9.30am

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Power Hour – Sundays 9.30am; Bible Study – Sundays 11.15am
Breakfast Prayer - Tuesdays 7.30am
Mainly Music – Thursdays 9.30am

St Ronan's Pastoral Care

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

Visitors

There were three visitors in church on Sunday! Do you have any idea how important it is for a congregation to have visitors? Did you realise that by this time next year we will have lost three members of our church.

I don't know who they will be, but research tells us that every congregation will lose about 10% of their membership every year. People move away. People drop out. People die.

That's a fact of life for very volunteer organisation. Ask any service club in town.

And the only source of new members is from among those who visit. But of those visitors the same research tells us only 1 in 8 will actually choose to join us.

The truth of what I am saying is backed up by our own statistics. Twenty years ago we had a congregation averaging 70 people at worship. Now our average is around 30. So, although some new people have come in, we have been losing at least 2 members every single year.

Actually, that's pretty good going, but we still need at least 20 to 30 visitors every year just to stop the decline.

Occasionally an unheralded visitor will come looking for a new church, and programmes like Alpha have attracted some, but mostly people start attending a church because they've been personally invited to come along.

I think that as well as Sunday worship, St Ronan's has a remarkable range of activities for people to engage with, and a long tradition of service to the community. Just take as an example the community response to the biennial Winter Series Anne Manchester organises, or the Christmas shoe box appeal, or the Randwick Readers. We are a group of people with strong community values and an enviable record – a group well worth joining.

As I've shared before, a minister friend of mine coined the phrase 'Mature and Marvellous' to celebrate the fact that he serves an aging congregation of people, wise and experienced in the ways of the world, and in living out their faith. Yet all too often older congregations feel marginalised and to some extent ignored in the constant pressure to bring young families into the church. Yet the 60–75 age group is the fastest growing demographic in Eastborne.

The focus on young families is rooted in the long-held fallacy that families bring their children to church and they grow up in faith and service, to eventually take the place of their parents and other aging members of the congregation. So it should follow that if you have a strong Sunday School you will ensure a growing church. However, any older parent giving half a thought to their own family will probably see that things just don't work that way.

Now there's nothing wrong, in fact everything right, with providing resources and facilities for our children, and encouraging them to feel at home in our congregation, to learn about the the faith of their parents. That's what the



“Kids Friendly” program is all about. Nothing wrong in hoping and praying that they will grow up to have a lively faith and be active within the fellowship of Christ somewhere. That’s a very important goal for its own sake but not as the primary means of maintaining the size of the local congregation.

The key to maintaining the ability of St Ronan’s to continue its work and witness actually lies with those who already belong. We just need to become more invitational.

If there’s a preacher you like, invite a like-minded friend to come and listen next time that person is scheduled to lead worship. If you take your kids (or grandkids) to Mainly Music tell a friend how much fun it is and share a warm welcome to help out. And don’t be dis-appointed if nothing comes of it. Just stay open to that inner prompting to share what you find life-giving.

It’s one thing to invite someone to come with us to worship or other church activity but most of us find it difficult to get into any talk about matters of faith – where do you start?

Earlier I mentioned my friend, Jim Wallace, who coined the phrase ‘Mature and Marvellous’. When talking with Seniors, he’s aware that many, now in their late 50’s and early 60’s, attended Sunday School during the 1960s when Sunday Schools were at their strongest. So he likes to ask if they went to Sunday School or Bible Class when they were young. Then he asks “Did it do you any harm?” Most begin reminiscing about younger days. He then follows up with “So what happened to your faith?”

This he has found often leads to a productive discussion on living out the faith today. So what about taking a step of faith and beginning a conversation about the faith?

You may be surprised at what happens.

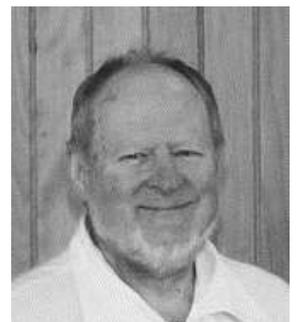
Reg Weeks

Parish News

Our condolences to Sandy who is with his family in the UK as his elder brother died a week or so ago. It’s been a big family memorial time with about 70 expected and great reunions. As his brother was a very social person something of a BIG party was most appropriate.

But it means that Clerks Corner is on hold this month.

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



Information in the Order of Service

If you would like to share any events or notices in the weekly order of service, email your information to Sandy by the Wednesday and he will pass it on to me for including in the printed document. Thanks, ***Michelle***

One result of our Winter Series



Our biennial *Eastbourne Winter Series* lectures were most successful, and summaries of the four topics addressed (freshwater standards, education and whether it is nurturing the right values among young people, the elimination of nuclear weapons and the struggle for peace, and how to protect and encourage high-quality, public-service media) have been produced as a Special St Ronan's edition by Anne Manchester.

Anne Manchester

Connecting with Randwick School children

Last month, inspired by the volunteer efforts of the Ronan Readers, I decided to approach the principal of Randwick School, Simonne Goodall, to see if she would be interested in my running a session on writing for children, including reading excerpts from my first efforts in this field, *Toughen up, Andrew!* I have given a number of presentations at schools on my book, a junior fiction novel aimed at readers between seven and 12 years old.

I was very impressed by the children who attended the session. They had been chosen across different age groups and because of their interest in reading and writing. Despite their varied cultural backgrounds, they seemed to connect to the story well. Their questions and engagement were really excellent – some of the best I have encountered. I felt privileged to be part, even for one hour, of such a positive school community.



By **Anne Manchester**

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD, SAMARITANS' PURSE SHOE BOX ***Sunday 29 October 2017***

Over the last few years St Ronan's Church has kindly donated many shoe boxes, filled with gifts for Children. Many thanks to all who contributed to this appeal last year, in which gift boxes were sent to countries in and around the pacific region.

St Ronan's Church, as last year, has registered with "Operation Christmas Child" as the **shoobox drop off point** for this area. Christian Radio Stations will be broadcasting advertisements for Shoobox Sunday and will be informing listeners of the names of churches who have registered to be drop of points. St Ronan's will stock the shoe boxes and information sheets.

Samaritan's Purse has changed the lives of children through Operation Christmas Child since 1993. Every year, generous people across the world lovingly pack shoe boxes with gifts – simple yet powerful messages of God's unconditional love.



And when a child opens a shoe box, they're opening more than a present lovingly prepared just for them, they're opening up their community to a world of life-changing opportunities.

**National collection month,
October 2017**

For more information go to New Zealand 0800 684300 Link www.samaritanspurse.org.nz

PLEASE CONTACT Colin Dalziel 562 7238

for information leaflets and shoe boxes. Suggestions for gifts to suit children of different ages, along with prohibited items, are shown on the leaflet, such as: something to wear, to love, for school, to play with, personal hygiene, and something special.

A donation of \$10 is required in an envelope with each box to cover freight costs.

Donations can also be made through the Samaritans Website where you can follow your box and be advised where it has gone.

Filled boxes should be brought to St Ronan's Church on or before

Sunday 29th October 2017

After morning Church Service they will be delivered to the local collection point and continue their journey from there.

Many thanks, Colin Dalziel 562 7238 Organiser
Reg Weeks 027 491 5947 Interim Moderator

Phil's Photo – is on holiday

Just at the moment I am on an island experiencing tropical temps. For example the late August Bank Holiday was this past Monday and had the highest bank holiday temperatures since 1965. The official temp was 29°C but I am sure it was in the low 30s where I was in Kent*.

So with his laptop having a hernia and not sending photos well, Phil's Photo is currently on holiday half a world away enjoying the English summer.

And may my new suntan last until December.



Phil Bengel

**Some Oasthouses in Kent, not at all like Upper Moutere's hop kilns*

A Tribute to Vivien Davitt

Vivien Davitt was born on 29 August 1933 in Glasgow, Scotland. Some time later, she met her husband Bill at a dance. He approached Vivien and said to her "Are ya dancin'?" and she replied, "Are ya asking?" and he said "I'm askin'" and she replied "Then I'm dancin'". They married and their Gwen was born some time later. They decided to immigrate to New Zealand, by which time Viv was pregnant with Jane.

Bill and Vivien moved to Eastbourne where they made their home in Oroua Street and participated in Eastbourne community activities. Viv was a member of the Eastbourne Women's Bowling Club and the Eastharbour Women's Club.

They attended St Ronans Church where Viv's strong Christian faith was nurtured for more than 40 years. Sadly Bill died very suddenly.

Vivien moved from Eastbourne to Petone and for many years would bus from Petone to Eastbourne to attend the Sunday services at St Ronan's. Vivien was also a member of Petone Probus and was able to keep in touch with many Eastbourne folk who also belonged to that group.

Sadly, after a short illness, Vivien passed away at the Te Omanga Hospice on 20 August 2017. She will be fondly remembered by the many friends she made over the years.



Rest in Peace Vivien, you will not be forgotten.

ST RONAN'S SPRINGTIME BAKE STALL (*Rain or Shine*)

Saturday 7 October

Rain or shine our St Ronan's Bake Stall has a wonderful history of selling out in three hours and with many happy customers! Last year we raised \$1000. Our Bake Stall this year is coming up soon on **SATURDAY 7 OCTOBER**.

We will fund raise for our Randwick School bicycle project and for Hutt Red Cross refugees.

Would you please be willing to make one or preferably two items of your favourite baking recipes?

Examples are shortbreads, cakes, muffins, preserves, slices, lemon curd, jam, gluten-free baking. All need to be fully wrapped in plastic wrap.

A name sheet asking for a bit of help to wo+man the stall for an hour maximum will be circulated closer to the time at Sunday Morning Tea. It is a very sociable time! We are looking forward to continue to making a difference to others, all thanks to our joint concern and efforts.



Susan Connell 568 5747



CWS Update on the CWS website gives a chance to read about their top concerns and find out that CWS has received \$160,000 matching funds from the government. Our

help is needed to reach their goal, but with grants from Methodist and Presbyterian Churches and the Quakers, CWS is on the way. The money will enable the Maridi Service Agency to assist women who have sought refuge from other parts of the country with new livelihoods, and the worst affected Unity State through the Act Alliance.

Earlier this month South Sudanese Churches reiterated calls for peace encouraging people to intervene to stop the fighting. National interests and the interests of the people in South Sudan must be put first, arms must be laid down and those within and around South Sudan who support violence must stop fanning the flames.

Watching and reading about far reaching floods in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and the USA, keep thinking about climate justice. People cut off from food and safety need our prayers and support. We cannot deal with climate change on an individual basis. This is why CWS has joined 13 other agencies in supporting the call for a cross-party plan for new legislation in the next parliament. This is our election issue. If you want to do something for flood victims, CWS has an on-line petition to the next parliament.

Rood Screen – Living water...

The other day I listened to an interview with one of the women who judge the baking every year at the AMP Show. It is always a delight to listen to an expert in their field and I was stunned to discover just how little I know about baking. I apply only the 'taste test' and apparently that is just one, tiny part of baking.

Anyhow, towards the end of the interview, she was invited to 'dish the dirt and relate some scandalous experience from her years as a judge. It seems that once upon a time there was a cake that was just too perfect. It ticked all the visual boxes for colour and perfection – but something was clearly wrong. To the experienced eye, the fruit appeared just an itchy-bitsy, teeny-weeny bit stripy. So the all-important 'taste test' was applied.



The house of cards came tumbling down. The baker had used methylated spirits instead of water. My mind boggles at quite what methylated spirits might do to a cake mixture but the substitution must have been effective. Well visually anyway. And the prize or prestige of winning must have been enough to make taking the risk seem worthwhile. But in the end it failed.

The story made me think of some people I know. Jesus said in John 7:38, "Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them".

Meths may make you look good on the outside but, when it comes to the 'taste test', it is only the Living Water that makes you a real Christian. Anything else is just a sham.

John Harris

Further Ramblings along the Camino of Jim & Jack

Jacob, *the heel*, grew up, travelled to the north where he found wives and wealth, and then decided to go back home. On the way, one night he wrestled with God. As a result of this tussle he was given a new name, *Israel*. *El* simply means god and *isr* means struggle. In modern Hebrew/Arabic it still means struggle, but has another meaning also: the close family (as opposed to the extended family). Thus "Israel" reads as the "close and immediate family of God".

When Moses talked with God in Midian, he asked Him who He was and what was His name. God gave two responses: "I am what I am" and "my name is YHWH". In modern Hebrew/Arabic this familiar gibberish appears as: "I am the eternal life force and presence" and "My name is 'I love you'". YHWH vowelised becomes "yehova", which in modern Hebrew is simply "I love you".

These quasi-domestic views of God fit in closely with the images we see in the New Testament: "God so *loved* the world that he gave his only begotten *son*." (Here, the emphasis is on the "begotten".) The term for "father" in the Lord's prayer is, we are told, much more akin to the familial "Daddy" or "Pa".

The Jews never have attempted to use the form YHWH. It was too holy. Only the high priest was allowed to utter it, in secret, in the holy-of-holies, once a year. Allegedly they forgot how to say it. It has been replaced by "Hashem", "the Name", the Name that cannot be spoken. Our English bibles use the form LORD, but the Jews for 2500 years have spoken it as "Adonai". Adonai is current in modern Hebrew as the "master". In our own culture too, our fathers are occasionally acknowledged as the master.

Perhaps the net result of this strange rambling, is to remind us that God is intimately omnipresent in our everyday existence, not away in his holy heavens, but watching over, guiding and supporting us as does any loving and masterly father.

Geoff Mann

Children's Power Hour

In Power Hour we have been having some fun with Psalms. Recently Gill Burke shared with us that the word Psalm is actually based on a Greek word (*psalmos*) and means a sacred song or poem sung to a harp (or lyre as played in Ur). Psalm 104 was our inspiration. This psalm echoes that the Bible teaches that when God created the world, he saw it was good. Our question was: "What would you say to God about his creation?" We live in this world that he created. It is an incredible and amazing world for us to live in and it is a reminder of how much he loves us and a reminder of all good things he has given us.



We in turn created our own psalm praising God for his creation. Each line of our psalm started with a letter from the word "creation".

This is our Power Hour psalm written by Sophia & Leo Cotsilinis:

POWER HOUR PSALM

Loving God you are:
Caring and loving, ingenious,
Resilient and respectful of our
Earth and animals
And
Time and time again
Irealise
Our
Needs are taken care of by you.

Blessings, **Susan Connell** 568 5747

The Pilgrim's Blessings

1-Blessed are you Pilgrim, if you discover that the Camino opens your eyes to what cannot be seen.

2-Blessed are you Pilgrim, if what concerns you most is not getting there but getting there with all the others.

3-Blessed are you Pilgrim, when you gaze out at the Camino and you see it filled with names and sunrises.

4-Blessed are you Pilgrim, because you have discovered that the real Camino begins when the walking ends.

5-Blessed are you Pilgrim, if your backpack is getting emptier but your heart is so full that it doesn't know where to keep more emotions.

6-Blessed are you Pilgrim, if you discover that taking one step back to help a fellow Pilgrim is worth more than one hundred steps forward without worrying about others.

7-Blessed are you Pilgrim, when words fail to express the gratitude you feel for every surprising moment on the Camino.

8-Blessed are you Pilgrim, if you seek truth and make your life a Camino in constant search of people who embody the Camino, truth and life.

9-Blessed are you Pilgrim, if you find yourself on the Camino and you present yourself with the gift of time without hurries so as not to neglect the image of your heart.

10-Blessed are you Pilgrim, if you discover that a great part of the Camino is silence, and a great part of silence is prayer; and prayer brings you closer to your Father who is waiting for you.



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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Hall Bookings Sandy Lang

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Contributions for the 'Record' are most welcome.
Please place them in the Church letterbox or email to
Helen.Withy@xtra.co.nz or janheine@xtra.co.nz

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not necessarily represent those of St Ronan's Church.

**The closing date for the October 2017 Record is
Sunday 24 September 2017**