



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

September 2022

4 September	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
11 September	John Harris; Dianne Gilliam-Weeks (<i>Communion</i>).....	9.30am
18 September	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
25 September	John Howell.....	9.30am
2 October	Shared service with St Alban's at St Ronan's.....	9.30am

In this issue

<i>Family Reflection</i>	2
<i>Clerk's Corner</i>	3
<i>Scriptures, Psalms, and Disciples</i>	4
<i>Presbytery Central Gathering</i>	5
<i>Singing our Theology</i>	6
<i>Faith Thinking Seminar</i>	7
<i>9/11 – the Day that Changed History</i>	8
<i>Also Sprach Zarathustra</i>	10
<i>Children's Power Hour – Building Strong Together</i>	11
<i>Phil's Photo</i>	14

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 family reflection...

According to my family lore, my great grandmother and her sister sailed into Port Nicholson direct from England in October 1868 – right into the aftermath of the Cape Farewell earthquake and its 100 aftershocks - many of which were felt strongly in Wellington.

They were horrified...! And determined to take passage back home as soon as they possibly could. However, the only available ship happened to be leaving from New Plymouth, requiring a long and arduous coach journey along the west coast. The first overnight break would be in Palmerston North with a stop to change horses at Hokio Beach near Levin.



One recent Saturday morning, I was reflecting on this journey as I guided my little 'hybrid' car, north, along the new motorway, near Raumati.

As her coach pulled in to change the horse at the little beach just up the road, I imagined her taking from her purse a little hand mirror just to check her bonnet before alighting to ask the driver when they might arrive at their destination. *"Ah, if the road's ok and the horse don't stumble my guess is we should be there afore nightfall"*, I imagined the gruff reply...

Just then, I glanced down at my cell phone screen - much the same size as her mirror - and noted that my speed (according to the GPS satellite) was 100 km/h, there were just 54 minutes to my destination in Palmerston North, and that I



Robert, Anne, and their only child, Annie

would arrive precisely at 10.05am. And a pleasant-sounding young woman whispered in my ear *"In 800 metres, at the fork, keep to the right."* A fork still well beyond my field of vision.

I thought about her world, in which plastic, the typewriter, the sewing machine and dynamite, had only recently been invented. Meanwhile, we have walked on the moon, can see into the farthest reaches of space, can create accurate visualisations of the infinitesimally small.

I paused to wonder what this rate of scientific discovery will bring to the world that my own great-grandsons will inhabit when they are eighty-five.

Let us hope and pray that, in the name of the anointed one, the eternal verities of faith, hope and love, of which Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians, will continue to guide humanity toward a just and ethical outcome to that creative endeavour.

Reg Weeks

Postscript: My great grandmother, Anne, got off the coach in Palmerston North because her sister was not well. She set up business as a seamstress and in time married a pioneer farmer named Robert Milson.

Clerk's corner...

Annual General Meeting: The date for the AGM is 25 September, in the church, immediately after the service with tea/coffee and bickie in hand...

Annual Report: So far, I've had 2 reports. About 18 reports still to come in. You have 10 days - the sooner the better - I can't process them all at once on deadline day. The timetable is:

Your report deadline	11 September
Annual Report distributed	18 September
AGM	25 September



As we move towards the AGM, I'm especially aware our church's administration systems are groaning under a rising level of reporting stringency, an increasing rate of change, all to be handled by a reducing human resource. The result is stress...

Financial reporting has recently become particularly onerous. The year-end material received from PCANZ this year contained two A4-size documents – the *Year End Pack Reviewers* (18 pages) and the *Year End Pack Parishes* (42 pages). Aaaggghh...!

It's at times like this we should be grateful we live in a place where high levels of professional skill are not uncommon. St Ronan's has three chartered accountants on the job: Peter Burke (treasurer), Lauren Delaney (accounts) and George Tuffin (audit). We are very well served. But take a thought for parishes in the lower decile and rural areas...

San Antonio Not much else happening – or at least not that’s relevant here... But there is the sad news that after 86 years of educating Eastbourne’s primary children, San Antonio School will close at the end of the year.

For a few years, I taught the San Antonio children ‘gardening’ - and a bit of general science and some campfire cooking...! A lovely little school. We feel for the children, their parents, their teachers, and the people of San Antonio church. Challenging times for them...

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Sandy Lang

Scriptures, Psalms and Disciples...

Answers to August’s quiz questions:

Phylacteries are worn to remind the Jewish men that wear them (and their families) of the Scriptures inside. These four passages from the Torah are summarised in a few words...

Exodus 13:2-10, **Commemorate**

The story of God bringing the Israelites out of Egypt, with seven days of yeast-free bread, then the festival day.

Exodus 13:11-16, **Consecrate**

The firstborn of all males, sons and livestock, to God (another reminder of the memorable Passover event).

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 **Commandment**

“Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart...”

Deuteronomy 11:13-21 **Commandments**

The blessings of obedience and the outcome of disobedience.

Each of these readings mentions binding these scriptures to the forehead and arm, and also writing them on door posts and gates.

However, the emphasis seems to be on teaching them to the next generation and keeping them on their hearts and lips wherever they are going and whatever they are doing - rather than actually wearing the verses!

The human temptation is to forget an Invisible God and pursue more visible things, despite God’s powerful deliverance of a previous generation being behind these scriptures.



I find it interesting that it seems to be the responsibility of the father of each family (or the whole family) to pass on the faith story to the coming generations, when in our society that job so often falls to female teachers/mothers (Sunday school teaching for example). But this is not a debate I want to get into...! Maybe more an encouragement for all of us to speak out and tell our faith stories to our children and grandchildren (if we have them). Or to write them down for them to read...

The answer to: 'Who was the named disciple of John the Baptist, who also became a disciple of Jesus?' is Andrew, brother of Simon Peter. In John 1:35-40, we learn he was the named one of the two disciples of John who followed Jesus.

The last question: 'Which Psalms do we commonly sing in worship?', has many answers.

The most popular - Psalm 23 - has many hymns inspired by it, including: 'The King of Love my Shepherd is' and 'The Lord's my Shepherd'.

Among the others are:

- Psalm 90 'O God our Help in Ages Past'
- Psalm 100 'All People that on Earth do Dwell'
- Psalm 103 'Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King...'
- Psalm 104 'O Worship the King, all Glorious Above'.

Many more modern songs are also based on the Psalms - space does not permit me to list them! But spoken or sung, the 150 Psalms continue to inspire worship, even to the last verse, of the last Psalm - Psalm 150:6

'Let everything that has breath praise the Lord'. Hallelujah...!

Gill Burke

Presbytery Central Gathering

Presbytery's latest 'Gathering' was held at St Alban's in Palmerston North on 13 August. Presbytery Central includes the 78 parishes located from Gisborne, across to New Plymouth, and down to Wellington.

Reg and Diane also attended the ministers' day on 12 August. As well as dealing with Presbytery business the Gathering provided a good opportunity to catch up in person, with people and groups that otherwise communicate only by email or Zoom.

This Gathering was particularly successful, principally thanks to the excellent keynote speaker, Dr Andrew Shepherd, lecturer in Theology and Public Issues at Otago University, based in Wellington. Andrew's theme was the importance of good theology and good ethics in nurturing creation.



Andrew quoted Wendell Berry... *The environmental crisis has happened because the human household of economy is in conflict at almost every point with the household of nature. We have built our household on the assumption that the natural household is simple and can be simply used. We have assumed increasingly over the last five hundred years that nature is merely a supply of 'raw materials', and that we may safely possess those materials merely by taking them.*

After lunch he led a stimulating workshop on a similar environmental theme.

At the AGM, Executive Secretary Peter MacKenzie noted in his report that over half of Presbytery's 78 congregations do not have a settled minister - and they are not looking for one. There simply are not enough people available to fill all the available roles. PCANZ's Book of Order and our many rules are based on a parish with a fulltime minister. Increasingly this is not the case, change is coming...!

Simon Shaw

Singing our Theology

Why? When? How? and What? do we sing, were the questions composer and musician Jonathan Berkahn asked at a Lower Hutt church music workshop late last month.

The workshop was held at St James Anglican Church, where Jonathan is choir director and organist. I was drawn to the event due to his additional role as the recently appointed manager of the NZ Hymnbook Trust. Since its inception in the late 1970s, the trust has published four major collections of contemporary New Zealand hymns – *Alleluia Aotearoa* in 1992, *Carol Our Christmas* in 1996, *Faith Forever Singing* in 2000 and *Hope is Our Song* in 2009. Hymns from these four books are sung widely throughout many - largely mainline - denominations, including at St Ronan's. They provide our staple hymn diet and an indigenous voice.

Jonathan believes "it matters hugely what we sing and what congregations are asked to sing. What is preached does not matter so much."

Hymns express the people's faith and theology, so the task of choosing hymns for worship is critically important.

For most of its history, the church has sung unaccompanied, as in chants and psalms. The organ as a featured and indispensable instrument came a bit later. Pipe organs, I learnt, were built in Greece in 200BC, and became a favoured



instrument of the Romans. It is somewhat disturbing to think of the tyrannical ruler, Emperor Nero, describing it as his favourite musical instrument and using it to accompany the persecution of Christians and other criminals in Roman amphitheatres!

Jonathan spoke of the efforts made by hymnbook trust contributors to find new metaphors for God, to avoid archaic language, to use inclusive language and to avoid gender bias. "We need to think through the implications of what we say and the words we use," he said. "I pay immense attention to this in my own choice of hymns and when writing hymns."

Jonathan is hoping to develop more online resources of NZ Hymnbook Trust material and to continue adding new material being written today. The hymnbooks can be purchased from Philip Garside Publishing Ltd (www.pgpl.co.nz), along with CD recordings of selected tracks and sets of MP3 music files.

Anne Manchester

'Faith Thinking' seminar...

The University of Otago Theology Programme has been partnering with local churches to run ¹*Faith Thinking* events since 2013. The format, involving faculty and other knowledgeable teachers connected with the Programme, offers five hours of engagement, usually over a Friday night and Saturday morning.

Faith Thinking events offer an introduction to a wide range of areas related to Christian faith: the Bible, theology, pastoral realities, church history, spirituality and mission, ethics. Over the last nine years, over 800 people have attended *Faith Thinking* events hosted in Dunedin, Invercargill, Timaru, Christchurch and Queenstown.

In September 2022 we are delighted to be running our first *Faith Thinking* event in Wellington – in partnership with St John's in the City Presbyterian Church.

¹Over the last couple of years, due to COVID realities, we have also introduced 1-hour evening *Faith Thinking* lectures hosted on Zoom. These have been very well attended. Anyone interested in being put onto an email list to receive information about these online lectures and other *Faith Thinking* events, please send your email address to: theology@otago.ac.nz

University of Otago Theology Programme 'Faith Thinking' Short Course

Living Faithfully in the Anthropocene: Theological Imagination and Ecological Practices for the Church

Surrounded and daily reminded of the 'ecological wounds' of our current reality, how might the Church live faithfully? This short Faith Thinking course explores how the Christian tradition might awaken our imagination and nourish new (ancient) ways of inhabiting the world – offering theologies and practices that respond to the ecological challenges we face.

Dr Andrew Shepherd – Lecturer in Theology and Public Issues.

Friday Sept 23rd (7.00pm -9.00pm)

Saturday Sept 24th (9.00am -12.30pm)

St John's in the City Presbyterian Church, 170 Willis Street, Wellington

Cost: \$20 per person

To register, go to: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/continuingeducation/index.html>

Contributed by Dianne Gilliam-Weeks

9/11 - The day that changed history...

The date was 11 September AD 9 when the unthinkable happened. The (seemingly) unstoppable expansion of the Roman Empire was stopped. It is therefore considered one of the most important events in European history.

The place was the Teutoburg Forest in Germany (about 150 km SW of Hanover) where Rome suffered its worst military defeat ever. Three crack legions of the Roman army were caught in an ambush and annihilated. The defeat brought an abrupt end to the triumphant period of expansion under Augustus and dissuaded the Romans from their ambition of conquering Germania. The Rhine became the border between the Roman Empire and the rest of Germania and Northern Europe.

Publius Quinctilius Varus was an Imperial Roman legate who had served as Emperor Augustus' representative in the province of Syria, where he had quelled ethnic disturbances. He was therefore considered the ideal person to bring Roman civilisation to the 'barbarous' tribes of Germany.

Arminius (pictured) was a prince of the Germanic Cherusci tribe who had become a 'soldier of fortune' in the Roman army. He spoke Latin, was familiar with Roman tactics and had been awarded the rank of knight in recognition of his valour. He had even been granted the honour of Roman citizenship.

In September of AD 9, Varus led an estimated 15,000 seasoned legionnaires (plus an unknown number of 'camp followers') from their summer quarters on the Weser River west, toward permanent bases near the Rhine. They were also planning to investigate reports of an uprising among local tribes.

Because of his local knowledge, Arminius was acting as guide. But instead of guiding them, he led them into a deadly trap. He knew that an important defence strategy used by Roman soldiers was the Testudo (tortoise) formation – where soldiers protected themselves and their supplies by overlapping their shields and forming an impenetrable shell. Arminius therefore ensured that the ambush took place on a path that was too narrow to use the testudo. The Romans were strung out over an estimated 12 km, and they were slaughtered, almost to a man, at what is known as the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest.



Interestingly, a rival chieftain, Segestes, had repeatedly warned Varus that Arminius was a traitor, but Varus ignored him. Varus believed that the Romans were invincible. It is hard to believe that as the path got narrower and



narrower and as his legions became more and more strung out, that he had no inkling that doing what he was doing was wrong. That it never crossed his mind to stop and reassess the situation. But instead of doing what he ought to have done, he just kept on blindly following Arminius.

Sometimes, our approach to sin is a bit like Varus' perception of risk. Somewhere, deep down inside, we know that what we are doing (or not doing)

is wrong. But we are so convinced of our invincibility that we ignore the signs and the warnings, and we just keep on doing it (or not doing it) anyway.

I rather like the lyrics of the song 'Burning Bridges' (Mike Curb Congregation, 1971)

Friends all tried to warn me, but I held my head up high.

All the time they warned me, but I only passed them by.

They all tried to tell me, but I guess I didn't care.

I turned my back and left them standing there.

James says it even better in James 4:17, and he also points to the consequences. *If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.*

John Harris

Also Sprach Zarathustra...!

When I awoke this morning, and as I glanced out at the weather, the words ¹*Also Sprach Zarathustra* hammered into my head. Why, at this time of day, my brain should start spouting ²Nietzsche (whom I have never read) - I could not understand...

"Thus spake Zoroaster", with its long vowels and short consonants, contains nothing of the bitter, seething, hissing venom of the original German. What do you expect? (my 'brain-prophet' continued) With wildfires, floods and droughts, I am judging your satanic mills and their products of unsated greed. Your populations spread like plagues across my green and pleasant lands, corrupting and poisoning all in their path...

You place your faith in the anointed Trumps, Putins, Friedmans and Murdochs - and in the technologies that feed them. As in ancient times, the kings of the north are preparing their chariots. For eighty years you have lived as unchallenged exploiters. Now you are harvesting the fruits of your labours.

All this is in line with the 'rants' of the Old Testament prophets. But. where are today's prophets? I don't see them in the churches, or in the mosques, or in the synagogues. The men of God are too busy robing themselves in the cloaks of the world that feeds them...

Maybe Paul was the last prophet. He was the one that screamed: *Be transformed. Renew your minds. So that you may understand the perfect will of God...! Romans 12:2*

Perhaps I'd better pull down from my bookshelf '*The Collected Works of Nietzsche*' and find out what it was he was raving about. And then I should research what it was that Zoroaster proclaimed...

Geoff Mann



¹*Zarathustra (Zoroaster) was a Persian preacher/philosopher/prophet who lived maybe 3,500 years ago. He founded a monotheistic religion, Zoroastrianism, which became the national religion of the various Persian empires and had a great influence on later Greek, Roman and Hebrew thought. Zoroastrianism lives on today in a few places in Iran and Central Asia, and among the Parsees of India.*



²*Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) was a German philosopher and writer whose ideas became a kind of pop philosophy with considerable influence on social and theological thinking. "Also sprach Zarathustra" (1883) is Nietzsche's most famous work.*

St Ronan's turns 120...!

Over Labour weekend in October 2023, St Ronan's will celebrate its 120th anniversary. How time flies...! It doesn't seem that long since we celebrated our centenary. We fondly remember Reg arriving from Wanaka with his sidecar. Next year, he won't have to travel so far.

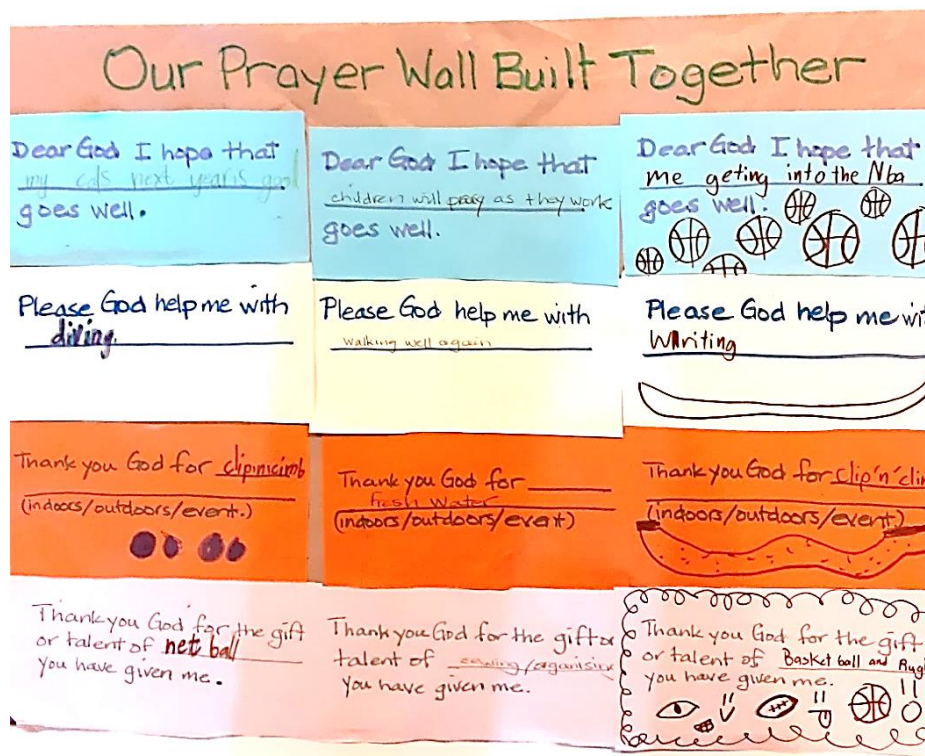
It's not too soon to mark this date and to start thinking how we can celebrate this impressive milestone. How should we best involve past and present parishioners, the community, local churches, Presbytery, in marking this occasion...?

Simon Shaw

Children's Power Hour – Building 'Strong' Together...

So far, in our discovering of heroes and heroines, they have all been RESCUERS of their people (Daniel, Ester, Nehemiah, and Zechariah). Not only did they serve others, but they also honoured God. Power Hour found they were not alone in their actions, for they kept 'dialling into God' on their rescue missions.

In exploring the case of exiled Nehemiah, he was a brave and compassionate 'wine servant' to the Persian King Artaxerxes but was allowed to return to 'bomb-shelled' Jerusalem to rebuild it.



Power Hour proudly built a strong wall of prayer together

only used their own talents to positively serve others but also, with God's guidance and 'team help', they were able to put in a strong effort to make their dreams come true.

Applying to themselves today, these 'rules of success' from yesteryear, Power Hour created a wall of prayers to achieve both positive outcomes for themselves and others, and to serve God in *good* ways.

To build our wall of prayers - like Nehemiah's walls of Jerusalem - we first prayed for help with areas that needed work - such as diving, writing, walking. Then, we prayed with hope for various concerns, such as that my 18-year-old cat's year goes well or getting into NBA. Next, we gave thanks for things like clip'n'climb activity and fresh water. Lastly, we thanked God for some of our own talents and gifts, such as netball, basketball, sewing and organising.

We felt quite proud and openly honest with God in building our strong wall. We also felt united as we made the wall together and that God was helping us. We can do things well, but we can do them even better with God's offered hand. Nothing is impossible with God...!

Susan Connell

How did Nehemiah rebuild Jerusalem's walls in 52 days? He used his own organisational skills, compassion for the people of God, and encouraged the local people/families to volunteer. It was also a coordinated team effort of family wall builders, guards to block discouraging outsiders and others who prayerfully encouraged all involved in reconstruction.

Thus, the Power Hour children realised that our heroes and heroines not



PCANZ NATIONAL LEADERS' CONFERENCE

For: All PCANZ Church Leaders, Elders, Children's Leaders, Youth Leaders, Ministers, Pastors, Chaplains and more...

When: From 2pm Thursday 17th to 2:30pm Saturday 19th November 2022

Where: St John's in the City, 170 Willis Street, Wellington

Cost: \$99 (register before 10th September) otherwise \$129

More information: See www.oneconference.org.nz

Anyone interested, is encouraged to attend this national conference

Parish Council has agreed to meet the registration cost

Connection – Worship – Being Upskilled – Inspiration & Encouragement

Phil's photo –Turning the sod...



The 'Eastern Bays shared path' will be set twixt beach and roadway. It will be sensibly wide, and it will stretch over a distance of more than 4 km, from Windy Point to Point Howard. But not through Days Bay (ever biked past a string of parked cars with drivers randomly opening their doors without looking...?)

This construction has been talked about for ages but after very much discussion and planning the build has at last commenced. The 'landmark' event was the recent (August 24) 'sod-turning' at the north end of Bishop Park.

Wellington was at its best on the day. It was warm (for August), and the wind slackened right off (to 80 km/h), and the rain held off (briefly).

As the 'Datsun Violets' sang in 1996...

You can't beat Wellington on a good day...
and their song continues...

You can't beat Wellington on a bad day either.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4xNdyVPDJQ>

The project was blessed by the local Iwi. Speeches made by the Minister of Transport Michael Wood, the Lower Hutt City Mayor Campbell Barry and some other dignitaries.



With the speeches over, strategically placed spades, (previously rammed into the turf) were levered out by said dignitaries (see leading photo) and the sods were duly turned. There then followed much jubilation from the assembled crowd. The cycle/walkway was happening at last. Yeah...!

It's called the '*Eastern Bays shared path*' or '*Tupua Horo Nuku*' which speaks colourfully of *Tupua Ngake*, who unleashed sufficient seismic power to breach a freshwater lake, to create the river Te Awa Kairangi, the harbour islands and the harbour entrance.

'Shared path' means pedestrians must give way to cyclists and cyclists must give way to pedestrians – a fairly new idea but one which works pretty well if each lot respects the other. Generally, they do...

There was acknowledgement that the project was joint funded between Government (75%) and Hutt City Council (25%), with input from local iwi.

In the photo (left page) you see the key people involved, hand in hand, celebrating their togetherness and their joy in achieving the start of this far-too-long-on-the-drawing-board project.



we can also expect the construction to (3) make our 'umbilical' road much less prone to periodic inundation and closure (high tides, southerly storms) and with (4) some forward-looking mitigation of anticipated sea-level rises. Special measures will also be taken to (5) preserve/improve beach-to-bush-to-beach access for ourselves, and also for our seabirds (including little blue penguins). So, all in all, a truly magnificent project...!

The shared path (see an HCC artist's impression here) will (1) greatly improve access to/from the Hutt Valley for Eastern Bays walkers and cyclists allowing (2) much safer travel around the nasty bits (like Windy Point and Lowry Bay). With all the planning and expert consultation,

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 October 2022
is Sunday 2 October 2022**