



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church  
Eastbourne

# Record

## September 2023

3 September	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
10 September	Reg Weeks.....	9.30am
17 September	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
24 September	Lionel Nunns.....	9.30am
1 October	Informal worship service.....	9.30am

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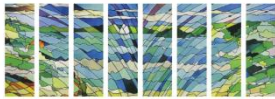
**Power Hour – Sundays 9.30am**  
**Breakfast Prayer – Tuesdays 8.00am**  
**Mainly Music – Thursdays 9.15-11.15am**

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

## Clerk's corner

**Annual General meeting:** Another year has rolled by and it's time to get ready for our AGM. The date for this year's AGM has been set for **Sunday 24 September**.

This will be St Ronan's 99<sup>th</sup> AGM covering the fiscal year 2022/23. I'm not sure how these AR numbers are calculated – I've just added a '1' each year to the title page since I became involved well over a decade ago. Anyway, it looks like this time next year we will be celebrating something...!



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church  
Eastbourne

98<sup>th</sup>

**Annual Report**

2021/2022

So, the Annual Report can be 'taken as read' (saves lots of time) it must be completed and distributed (email) a week ahead, by 17 September. To achieve this, all individual reports must be to me by **10 September**. This gives me 7 days to put them all together. If you have previously written an activity report, you will likely need to again. Early beats late...! As usual, we'll keep the AGM business very tight, restricting our business just to the formal stuff of the Annual Report.

As has been our practice for many years, all other matters we'll deal with at one of our 'Church Chats'. The last of these was on 28 May, so we should have another one fairly soon. But let's get the AGM done with first, eh...?!

There is one matter looming, to do with insurance. For this we will need a formal church meeting. But we'll deal with that a bit later...

**Diggers:** You will see we've made a mess of the church lawn. Two things are happening - both to do with storm water. No connection is available to a public stormwater system, so soak pits are the only option for roof water in our area.



With climate change comes an increased incidence of extreme weather. Also, since our soak pit was installed, about 60 years ago, HCC regulations have become more demanding. This requires we: (1) determine the capacity of our sandy soil to accept water (thus the lawn digging a few weeks ago). With this information, next (2) was needed a soak pit design, and then (3) a soak pit consent and then (4) a drainer contract. This multistep process takes time. Our new soak pit should be in place by the end of October.

Also just now, our northern neighbour is engaged in a similar exercise. Because their house is built about 40 cm from of our mutual boundary, this requires some digging be done from our lawn area. That's why the new mess just now. Hopefully their drainage work will be completed by mid-September.

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**Sandy Lang**



## **Rood screen – The bell mightier than the sword...**

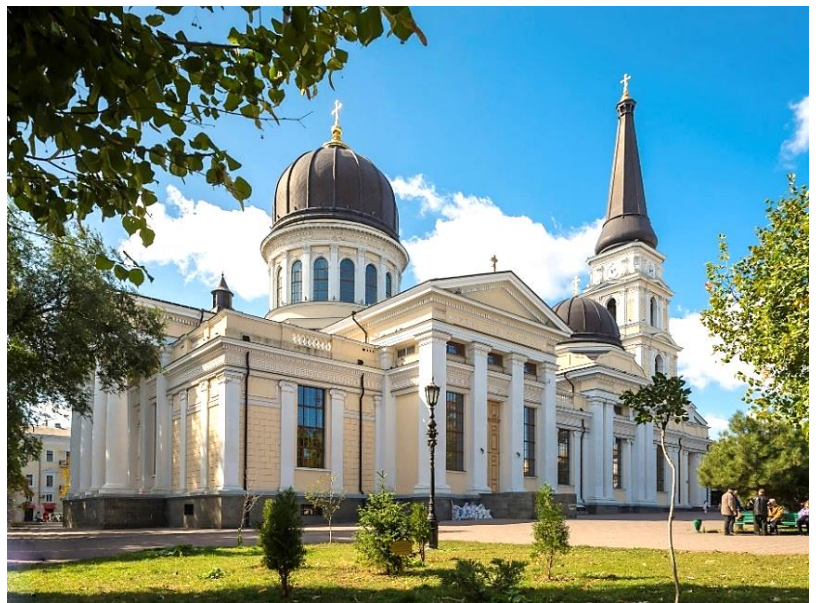
You'll no doubt have read of July's missile attack on the Spaso-Preobrazhensky Cathedral in Odesa, Ukraine.

But this cathedral was not the first on that site. Odesa was founded in 1794 and the foundation stone of the Church of St Nicholas the Wonderworker was laid on 14 November 1795. The grand opening took place on 25 May 1809.



The church was small and so did not get a bell tower until 1837, when the main bell was cast on the spot using the metal from 28 Turkish cannons: a trophy of the campaign of 1828-1829.

I am reminded of Isaiah 2:3-4 where we read... *Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."*



Can there be a more striking (pun intended) example of beating a sword into a ploughshare than turning those Turkish cannons of war into a bell, to summon God's people to worship?

Of course, the story doesn't end there. In 1932 the cathedral was closed as part of the Bolshevik campaign against religion and in 1936 the cathedral was totally destroyed and replaced with a Stalin Memorial. Nobody knows what happened to the original bell – although the cynic in me might assume Joel 3:10. You can look that one up...!

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Odessites set about reconstructing their most important religious monument and on 21 July 2010 the newly restored Spaso-Preobrazhensky Cathedral was consecrated. This new cathedral included a gift of 23 bells from Greece for the new belltower, the largest in Ukraine. Interestingly, one of the few parts of the cathedral that survived the July 2023 missile attack was this belltower (seen above, to the right).

I'm an incurable romantic and would like to think it wasn't just the Greek bells that survived, but that it was the spirit of the original bells. That the Almighty is reminding us peace WILL come again. One day.

**John Harris**

### ***Sandra Davies - a masterclass of courage, valour and stoicism...***

There was hardly a spare seat at St Ronan's as Sandra Davies' extended family, community and St Ronan's friends, work colleagues, even fellow yogis, gathered to remember and celebrate her life.

The service at the end of July was marked by beautiful music and heartfelt eulogies. Her husband Ren described her as a high achiever who'd had a brilliant career, "but undoubtedly her finest achievement was her almost mastery of the lousy hand she was dealt with regarding her health".

Sandra's life was a masterclass of courage, valour and stoicism, he said, as she managed with "gutsy bravery" her illness and disease progression. Despite the ravages of MS, overlaid with multiple other health challenges, "Sandra sparked intellectually until the end".



Sandra's early life, up until she met Ren, was recounted by her brother-in-law, Murray Turner. Ren described him as "my brother-in-arms", as each spent "nearly 50 years dealing with the idiosyncrasies of living and loving Dobson girls".

Sandra Jane Davies (née Dobson) was born in 1954 in England where her father Joe was studying to become a physician while her mother Margaret was nursing. When she was eight months old, the family returned to Christchurch where Joe became a dedicated family GP, working long hours. Sandra gained three sisters over the ensuing years - Joanne, Nicky and Rachel.

She attended St Margarets College from Year 7 where she excelled with all-round ability, even reportedly becoming the discus throwing champion and deputy head girl during her final year in 1972.

Enrolling at Canterbury University, she eventually met Ren who became "the love of her life". They met in a political science tutorial where "San basically took it over and truly cowed the lecturer," said Ren. "I was thunderstruck and smitten."

The following Saturday, Ren rang Sandra's home on the off chance she might be free to accompany him to a university wine club tasting. It turned out Sandra was about to depart for the same function. The only reason she was still at home was a delay in her nail varnish drying.

Despite a somewhat shaky start - Sandra admitted she had taken an instant dislike to Ren in the tutorial - their relationship blossomed.

By 1976, Sandra had completed her degree in Japanese and political science. They moved to Wellington, with Sandra first working at Trade and Industry. They acquired their first dog - dogs had always been a feature of Sandra's life. At about this time, Sandra was first diagnosed with MS. Soon after the diagnosis, in 1977, Ren and Sandra married.

Sandra's career included seven years at the Medical Association where she was Assistant General Secretary and where she became enmeshed in medico/political warfare which she loved; and seven years at Parliament, as director of the then new Select Committee office where she dealt with luminaries like Sir Robert Muldoon and Sir Geoff Palmer, both of whom she viewed "somewhat sceptically".

She also completed a master's in public policy with distinction and won the Prime Minister's Prize in Economics.

Four years working at the Ministry of Health followed before Ren and Sandra moved to Singapore. There Sandra spent six years running her own small consultancy doing political and marketing research around Southeast Asia. She also developed skills in Chinese brush painting, combining brush painting with traditional watercolour.

In 2000, Ren and Sandra returned to New Zealand. Sandra worked on several contracts, including three years with the Researched Medicines Industry Association.

She spent her last three years living at Riverleigh Residential Care in Lower Hutt, where she enjoyed the company of visiting family and friends, and maintained a keen interest in current affairs and politics.

Her final 24 hours were very peaceful and calm, and she died early on July 25. Her long struggle coping with her increasingly frail body was finally over.

***Anne Manchester***



## ***Presbytery Central Gathering***

Presbytery's second Gathering of the year was held on 19 August at the Pacific Island Presbyterian Church (PIPC) in Newtown. Numbers attending were lower than usual, possibly because Wellington required more travel for many, compared to the usual Palmerston North location.

The Gathering had a strong Pacifica theme with a particular emphasis on women's ministry. Dr Jean Mitaera spoke on the growing influence of Pacifica in politics and business. She reminded us that Samoa, Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and Tuvalu all have many more residents in New Zealand than in their home islands.

At the AGM Presbytery's Executive Secretary, Peter MacKenzie, talked to some of the challenges we face. The old model of ministry is no longer suitable for today's environment where half of our parishes do not have a full-time minister and there is not the capacity to offer interim moderators to every parish that requires one. What might a new model look like?

The cost of property ownership continues to increase and not all our buildings are fit for purpose. How can our property stock be used more effectively to support our mission aspirations?

Plenty of challenges to think about.

***Simon Shaw***

## ***Remembering Jolan Toth***

The funeral of Jolan (Yolanda) Toth took place in St Ronan's on 2 August. Jolan was a regular attendee at our Sunday services and passed away peacefully at home in her sleep in her 91<sup>st</sup> year.

Jolan was a well-known Eastbourne 'character', living here in a seaside cottage for the last 30 years of her long and eventful life.

Yet most of us knew little of Jolan's early life in rural pre- and post-WWII Hungary, until it was movingly recounted by her daughter Susan and son Gabor. With her fiancée, Louis, she had made a daring escape into Austria from soviet Hungary in 1956, at the height of the heroic, but eventually suppressed, Hungarian uprising.



Very soon they were married in Austria and eventually came to New Zealand as refugees in 1957.

Initially they lived in Riverton, Southland, where Jolan was able to apply her skills as a seamstress making men's shirts for the Southland Clothing Company, before they shifted to Wellington in 1962 and began raising a family.



**Jolan, daughter Susan, and Susan Connell stirring St Ronan's 2022 Christmas cake**

Gabor concluded his eulogy with this tribute to his mother Jolan:

*"She found friendship here in this church and with neighbours, various shop keepers, until a week ago. She achieved what I think we all eventually hope for; passing away peacefully in her sleep while having an afternoon nap, in her own bed, in her own home. It was three years to the day after my father died; perhaps he was calling her home? There aren't too many places in New Zealand that truly capture the essence of a European village, but Eastbourne is one of them. She was born in a village and she died in a village, something I know she was truly grateful for."*

**Les Molloy**

### **Prayer for the Gambia (and Aotearoa New Zealand)**

For Sunday 27 August, in our Prayers for Others, the World Council of Churches urged us to pray for the West African countries of Cape Verde, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau.

The leader of St Ronan's service that day, Gill Burke, used the following prayer from the Most Rev Michael J Cleary CSSp, Bishop of Banjul, The Gambia. Its plea for God's grace for the leaders of The Gambia, is universal. However, with our October 2023 election fast approaching, it is reproduced here so that we can all take it to heart and make it our prayer too [Ed.]

*Lord, grant our leaders the qualities of leadership they need to stride securely through our times, and on the hard-fought path of life give them a generous portion of the grace they need to lead us with a sincere heart and with wisdom.*



*May the difficult sacrifices we joyfully make for the development of our country reach up to you as a living plea to lavish kindness, faithfulness and power and keep watch over our land.*

*Lord, let us believe in your power to bring all people together and let no one deprive us of this song of unity.*

*Let us form the great image of the human person and community among us which fulfils your will.*

*We pray for peace and unity in our homeland, that we may be able to live as one family working for the betterment of our nation and her people.*

*We pray for all those who have to witness to their faith in situations where they are ridiculed, threatened and persecuted: that they may find in you, Lord, the courage they need.*

**Gill Burke**

### ***The magic of spring***

Winter is that magical time of the year when Autumn blends into Spring. It's been an exciting winter with its almost constant rain, its bitter southerlies and its frequent lugubrious grey clouds – interspersed with days of brilliant sunshine where the colours have sparkled in the air's icy clarity.



The trees have continued to grow, extending their bright green shoots, and the few early jonquils and daffodils have boldly and nobly withstood the tests that the elements subjected them to.





And now the inflorescences burst forth. The tulips are emerging, and the air is rich with scent of the crocuses. The camellias seem larger and brighter this year – has it been because of the plentiful rain?

A few fruit trees are in blossom and the magnolias are unfolding their magnificence.

To stroll through the Riddiford Gardens by the library is a joyful privilege, being greeted on all sides by mature trees in full glory, such as this rhododendron. Truly, the “magical time of the year”.

**Geoff Mann**

### **Power Hour – David’s Legacy**

David is unique. He is the only David in the Bible, and he left a legacy of many often-used psalms; songs of praise and expressions from the heart.

Significantly, these psalms show David’s strong connection with God throughout his life and demonstrate the steadfast guidance he gained to deliver his good leadership over 40 years (including the uniting of Israel and Judah). The X-factor to David’s greatness, though, is that he always kept God close to him.

Hence in Power Hour it seemed worthy to explore David’s connections to God through his psalms and link them to moments in his life. We enjoyed how the young athletic David could use his shepherding skills for the killing of the feared Goliath. We confirmed that when we are young, we too can be responsible and capable. Then, we lurched from pride and joy at David’s honour in King Saul’s court, to feeling afraid for innocent David when Saul became jealous of him, and he had to escape Saul’s continual vicious hunting.

Throughout this exploring of David’s early life, we referred to relevant psalms which connected David’s feelings of humbleness in God’s presence and thankfulness for God’s goodness. An example was when jealous Saul turned on innocent and lonely David, whose cry of anguish and song of praise is given in Psalm 59 “*My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*”

Then we compared our daily challenges, e.g., at school, to the situation where David could have killed Saul during his visit to a cave where David was hiding. Instead, he decided to spare Saul’s life. What would we do in such a situation? What helps us to make the right decisions? Subsequently, there was admiration of David’s bravery, strength and righteousness when, with God’s help, he decided instead to show Saul the cut off corner of his cloak rather than kill him.

Further, we wrote our own psalms (praise, asking for help, thanks) applicable to our personal situations. These generated feelings of relief, peace, and a

humble sense of the goodness of God and His nearness to us. Lastly, the children used their imagination to dramatise David's famous Psalm 23, which brings out the love, nearness, and goodness which God can offer to us.



wall ravine "darkness".

First, "*The Lord is my shepherd*"; we felt the shepherd's sense of care and peace when the sheep were herded with a crook towards the grass and water.

Second, "*He guides me in the right paths*"; safety and protection were felt when the sheep's hand was held when negotiating through a high



Third, "*You prepare a banquet for me,*" generous giving to be enjoyed was experienced (Wow, all for me!) when invited to eat at a table overflowing with food.

At the end, Power Hour really felt how wonderful and empowering God's nearness can be with honest talk. David's legacy of psalms also points us in the right direction - to the how and when we may interact with God: like a cellphone - always near and tapping in, day and night.

**Susan Connell**

TERM 3: 23 July–17 September



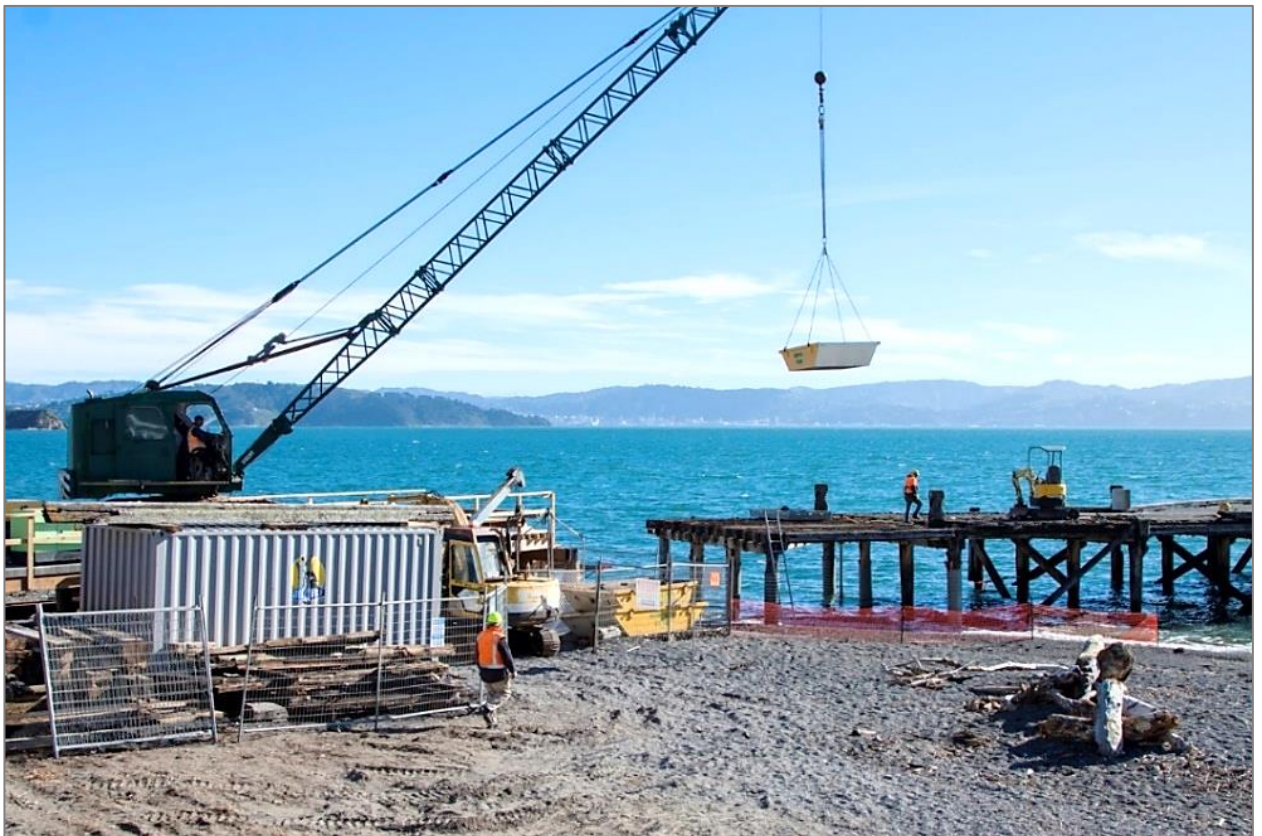
## ***Phil's photo – Fabulous Eastbourne – A retrospective look...***

I've taken a quite few photos over the years. A great activity whatever the time of day, the weather, the event, the location etc... It gets me out, and I love it...! Here's a random selection of old and new shots for you to enjoy as winter gives way to spring...



Remember this...? Some of them are no longer with us...

And this...?





Bet you thought these birds were black (they are, so Google **iridescence**)



Orca are not uncommon here in Wellington harbour...





Where the weather can be distinctly moody





The familiar, from a couple of unfamiliar lookouts...





Did you know, this is part of State Highway 1...



But this is not...



***Phil Bengé***





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

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## Directory

St Ronan's Presbyterian Church,  
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### Local Ministry Team

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Hall Bookings	Sandy Lang

Contributions for the 'Record' are most welcome.  
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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 July 2023  
is Sunday 2 July 2023**