



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

August 2024

4 August	Shared service with the Anglicans at San Antonio's.....	9.30am
11 August	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
18 August	Gill Burke.....	9.30am
25 August	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
1 September	Shared service with the Anglicans at St Ronan's	9.30am

In this issue

<i>Running the race</i>	2
<i>Clerk's corner</i>	4
<i>Rood screen – Neil Armstrong, Moon-walker and criminal</i>	5
<i>The 'Abuse in Care' report</i>	7
<i>Centring Prayer Group</i>	9
<i>Some property matters</i>	10
<i>Power Hour – Follow me</i>	11
<i>From UK to Ukraine</i>	12
<i>Peace is her song</i>	14

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 Sandy Lang 562 8753

Running the race...

We have a gold! Such a winning performance from the Black Ferns Sevens...!

It brought to mind Facebook's delightful habit of showing you a photo taken some time in the past, to remind you of what you were doing on that day. Well, that happened for me around the time when the last Olympics, delayed by COVID, should have taken place.



Entry tunnel

It was a timely reminder that in 2016, Diane and I visited Olympia, the site sacred to the Greeks, and we stood in what remains of the stadium where the earliest recorded Olympic games were held in 746 BC. Our guide was a Greek archaeologist who gave us fascinating details regarding these ancient forerunners to our modern Olympics, and the challenge they presented to those who wished to compete.

The four-year cycles actually continued in Olympia for over a thousand years until the spread of Christianity led to their demise by order of the Roman emperor, Theodosius, in 393 AD. The games drew competitors from countries all around the Mediterranean, where Greek was the common language. Wars were paused to give them safe passage.



The stadium

It was surely these games which Paul had in mind when, in several of his letters to the early churches, he made reference both to running and to boxing, particularly in his letter to the Greek speaking Christians in Corinth, only a couple of day's walk from Olympia: *Surely you know that in a race all the runners take part in it but only one wins the prize;Every athlete in training submits to strict discipline, in order to be crowned with a wreath that will not last: but we do it for one that will last for ever;that is why I am like a boxer who does not waste his punches* (1 Cor 9:24 ff, TEV).

Then, in his letter to those in Philippi: *I run straight toward the goal in order to win the prize* (Phil 3:14, TEV). And in his letter to Timothy: *I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, I have kept the faith* (2 Tim 4:7).

However, the phrase resonating in my mind, the one I was actually looking for, was that we *must run with 'resolution' the race that is set before us*. It is actually to be found in the letter to the Hebrews (possibly written by Barnabas or Apollo - see NIV Study Bible). *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.*

But this translation says *run with 'perseverance'*. Others I checked had 'determination' or 'patience' (12 translations) or 'endurance' (11 translations) and even one with 'patient endurance' (1 translation) but I couldn't find what had stuck in my mind - *run with 'resolution' the race that is set before you*. It was good old Mr Google who led me to the New English Bible published in 1970 - the year I was ordained. It contains that familiar phrase.

One of the interesting aspects of reading the bible in English, is that we often find a particular turn of phrase that for us carries a subtlety of meaning, which illuminates a passage in a way other versions don't always match. And that's important to remember because the underlying Greek often has various shades of meaning among which the translator must choose. And it's worth reading a variety of versions, even if one speaks more sweetly to our ear than others.

So, whether you prefer patience, or endurance, or resolution, the important message Paul wants to convey is that the race is more akin to a marathon (or a triathlon?) than a sprint. Then, as we continue to face the vicissitudes of life and the ongoing difficulties flowing from our need to combat rising costs, and the impact on weather of climate change, let us as the Today's English Version puts it, *keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends, from beginning to end* (Heb 12:2 TEV).

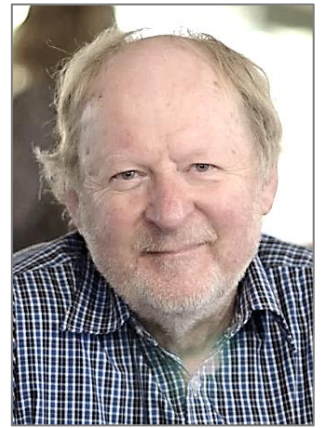
And let us also give due credit for the months of training and world class performances of those who made the team but didn't make the podium, either in the Olympics, or any other field of endeavour...

Reg Weeks

Clerk's corner...

AGM: At our Parish Council meeting a few days ago, we established a date for St Ronan's 100th Annual General Meeting. This will be on Sunday **15 September** 2024...

To achieve this timing, **I** must have the Annual report to you a week ahead - by Sunday 8th September, and to achieve this timing **you** must have your activity report(s) to me a week ahead - by Sunday 1 September.



If you've written an activity report before, you will need to write one again. So, I'm giving you a generous four weeks' notice to do this for me, please(!), pleas(?). That should be plenty of time...!

And did you notice? This will be St Ronan's 100th Annual Report. I wonder if we should mark this milestone with a little celebration. Not many of us will still be around for the 200th AGM and most of us likely missed the 1stAGM. What do you think...?

Good news, bad news, good news: Following on from last month's story of similar title, the folks at Hutt City Council relented on their 400+% hire rate rise for the two yoga groups that use the upstairs space in the library building (good news for yoga). And both groups decided to stay put (bad news for us).

But we, nevertheless, will still engage in some work to render our Fellowship room a less cluttered space (good news) and a more peaceable place with less sound transfer from the Hall when dancers are in session there (good news). Watch out and listen out for these changes...

Good news: Last month, I told you about the *Eastbourne Retired Persons Association*. Run by Rosemary Young, they organise a cup of tea and a talk at 10:00am, 4th Mondays each month, at St Ronan's, in the Fellowship room (or in the Hall if a huge number of people want to attend – depends on who the speaker is...!

In July, Les Molloy, got a good audience for his talk ***Travels in the Karakoram Mountains of Pakistan***. Coming up soon on 26 August, is me talking about ***The insides of an apple*** – you've eaten plenty of apples but here's some stuff you've likely never thought about. Then our Wendy McCarter on 23 September will tell us about ***The nations of Southern Africa***. Then our Anne Manchester on 21 October will tell us about ***The Sub-Antarctic Islands*** (some of you may have heard her recently, speaking on ***Antarctica***).

The ERPA group closes off its year in November with a nice lunch...

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

Sandy Lang

Rood screen – Neil Armstrong, Moon-walker and criminal...

On 20 July 1969 - 55 years ago - Neil Armstrong uttered the famous words "*One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.*" Some of us are old enough to remember that occasion and, as is so often the case with momentous events, we can also remember where we were and what we were doing at the time.

I happened to be in a British Overseas Airways Corporation (yup, it was still called BOAC back then) VC10 flying over Egypt on my way to Nairobi. I don't recall hearing Neil Armstrong's words then, but I do remember the captain announcing the moon landing over the intercom.



Of course, after their return to earth, there were tickertape parades in America (do you remember the tickertape produced by telex machines?). Later, there was a world tour with the three men greeted as heroes wherever they went. But one place they did NOT go, was Scotland. Seems surprising, given that Armstrong happens to be a Scottish name and Neil had strong Scottish ancestry. The most likely reason for this omission was time pressure.

BUT, had Neil Armstrong arrived in Edinburgh, the Scottish police would have been legally obliged to arrest him. And not only to arrest him but to hang him!



BUT why? Well, it all goes back to the 16th Century, when Scotland and England were two distinct countries, each with its own monarch. There weren't any formal cooperative policing agreements or extradition treaties between the two countries, so both the Scottish and English families living close to the border took full advantage of the fact. Stock theft (rustling) was common, as were pillaging and highway robbery. If the 'Law' turned up on one side of the border, it was a simple matter to quickly skip across to the other side - out of reach of the law's (not so) long arm. It seems the Armstrong clan had quite a reputation for participation in these activities.

Eventually, an exasperated King James 6th of Scotland issued an edict banishing the entire Armstrong clan as "thieves and rascals". He placed the

sentence of death for all time on any Armstrong should he or she ever return to Scotland.

As recently as 1969, this edict was discussed in the Scottish Parliament, in anticipation of a possible visit by the Apollo trio but it was decided the abolition of the death sentence in the United Kingdom (also in 1969) superseded the 16th century edict. But, surprisingly, they did not take the opportunity to repeal the old declaration so, to the best of my knowledge, it is still on the books today.



Scottish Parliament

Our Christian faith is sometimes a bit like that. I'm told there are 613 laws and rules in the Bible. In Matthew 5:17–19 Jesus said: *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*" So, technically, all 613 of these rules are still 'on the books' - including the one about stoning to death any blasphemers or adulterers.

But I am also very much aware that many of those laws were for a specific time, or place, or set of circumstances. For example, in Exodus 16:4-5 we read we mustn't collect more manna from the desert than we can eat in a day. But I've never collected any manna from the desert floor, let alone measured it...!

Far better to read Jesus' response to the Pharisees in Matthew 22:36 "*Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?*" Jesus replied: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*" This is the first and greatest commandment" and Jesus' follow up was "*And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'*"

Those two commandments cover pretty much everything and anything and are even future-proofed for any unforeseen eventuality. After all, if you love your neighbour as much as you do yourself, you're hardly going to do anything that might harm them, are you?

I believe, just as the Scottish Parliament concluded that the abolition of the death penalty in the UK superseded King James' ancient edict, these two laws of Jesus supersede all the others. But Jesus never said loving our neighbour would always be easy. We may need quite a lot of divine help to love some of our neighbours...!

John Harris

The 'Abuse in Care' report...

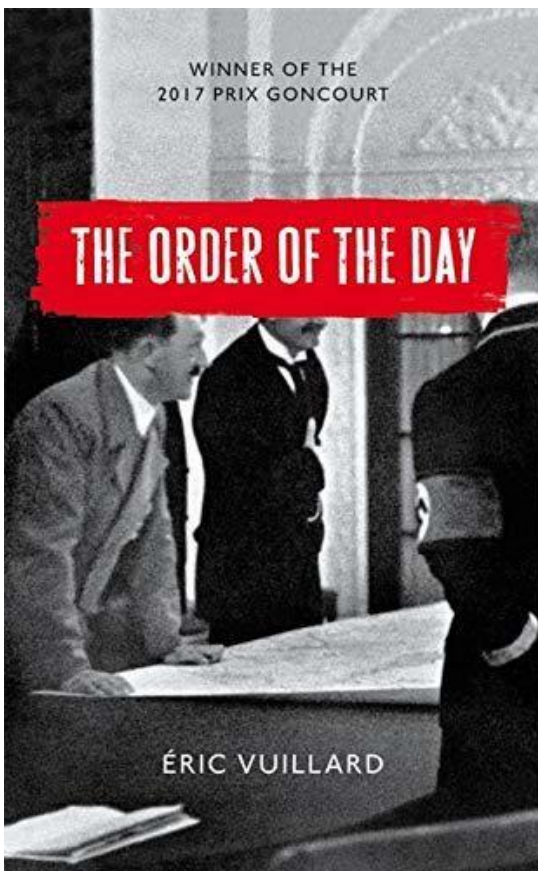
The big news of this past week has been the release of the report on *Abuse in Care* (state and faith). But should we really be surprised by its content...?

It is a record of a more recent manifestation of a feature of our culture which we would prefer to ignore. It mirrors:

- The treatment of some of our forebears, peasants in Scotland in the 19th century, when, in 'The Clearances', they were evicted from their homes;
- The treatment by the aristocracy of the Irish in the potato famines;
- The treatment by the Irish church, of unmarried mothers and their children;
- The treatment of the African slaves transported across the Atlantic;
- The treatment by government and church of the indigenous tribes of Australia and the Torres Strait; and
- The treatment of the native tribes of North and South America dispossessed of their lands. Similar accounts exist of the exploitation of the indigenous peoples of Africa by the French, Belgian and German colonists in 19th century; by Dutch, English and Danish East India companies in India and the 'East Indies'; and of the serfs of Russia and eastern Europe.

French writer, Éric Vuillard, has written three small books:

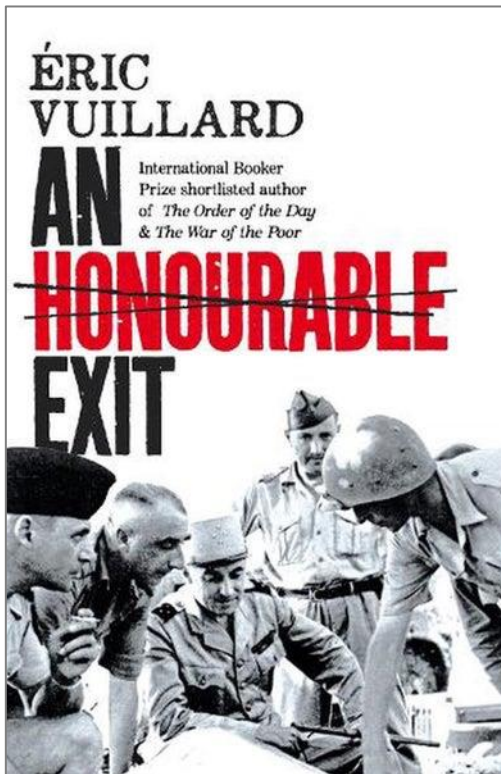
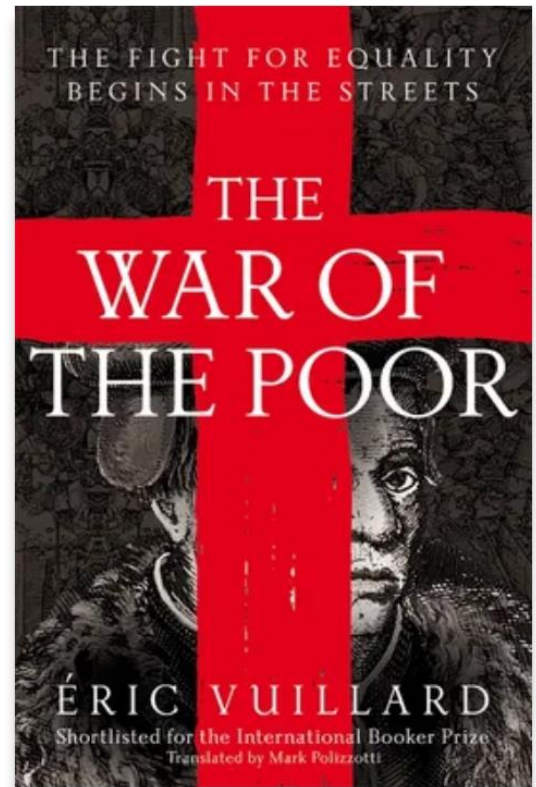
'The Order of the Day',
'The War of the Poor' and
'An Honourable Exit'.



In the first book, *The Order of the Day*, Vuillard documents the role of the leaders of German industry in the rise and support of Hitler and the Nazi party in the 1930s, in the Anschluss of Austria, and the weakness and pusillanimity of the French and British leaders of the time. Among those Germans were the (family) heads of BASF, Agfa, Bayer, Opel, Siemens, Allianz, Varta all of which continue today, most with substantial business in New Zealand¹.

¹ In 2018 German *Bayer* merged with American *Monsanto* to create a huge agribusiness; they manufacture the herbicide glyphosate.

In the second book, *The War of the Poor*, Vuillard recounts the impact of the translation of the Bible into the vernacular in England and Germany. Then, how its distribution via Gutenberg's printing throughout the continent led to the peasants rising up in protest at their exploitation by the Church and the aristocracy. These were massive movements by thousands of people, and they were violently suppressed with enormous loss of life.



In the third book, *An Honourable Exit*, Vuillard begins by relating how the French colony of Vietnam was initially created by the Michelin company as rubber plantations and how the native Vietnamese were indentured under appalling conditions to work them.

He then moves on to describe the few powerful families who controlled banking and commerce in France reacted to the closing stages of the war in Vietnam, the incompetence and stupidity of the army command, and the concern of all of them that there be an "honourable exit" (i.e., Let's get out of it as best we can, with our fortunes and reputations intact). The current conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza fit into the same mould...

So, the report on *Abuse in Care* is consistent with traditions which have been features of our culture for at least a thousand years. But I fear we have not learned. We continue to victimise those who are different, or impecunious and/or deprived, and who feel themselves frustrated and lost in a society whose leaders are primarily concerned with preserving their privilege, honour and wealth.

Our current PM speaks a traditional language of "entitlement" and retribution. The report on *Abuse in Care* will achieve nothing unless the society which commissioned and created it is fundamentally transformed. Unfortunately, as many wise people have noted, *Those that fail to learn from history, are doomed to repeat it.* Winston Churchill, 1948.

Geoff Mann

Centring Prayer Group...

*A joint initiative of St Ronan's & St Alban's
Starts August 11 and 25*

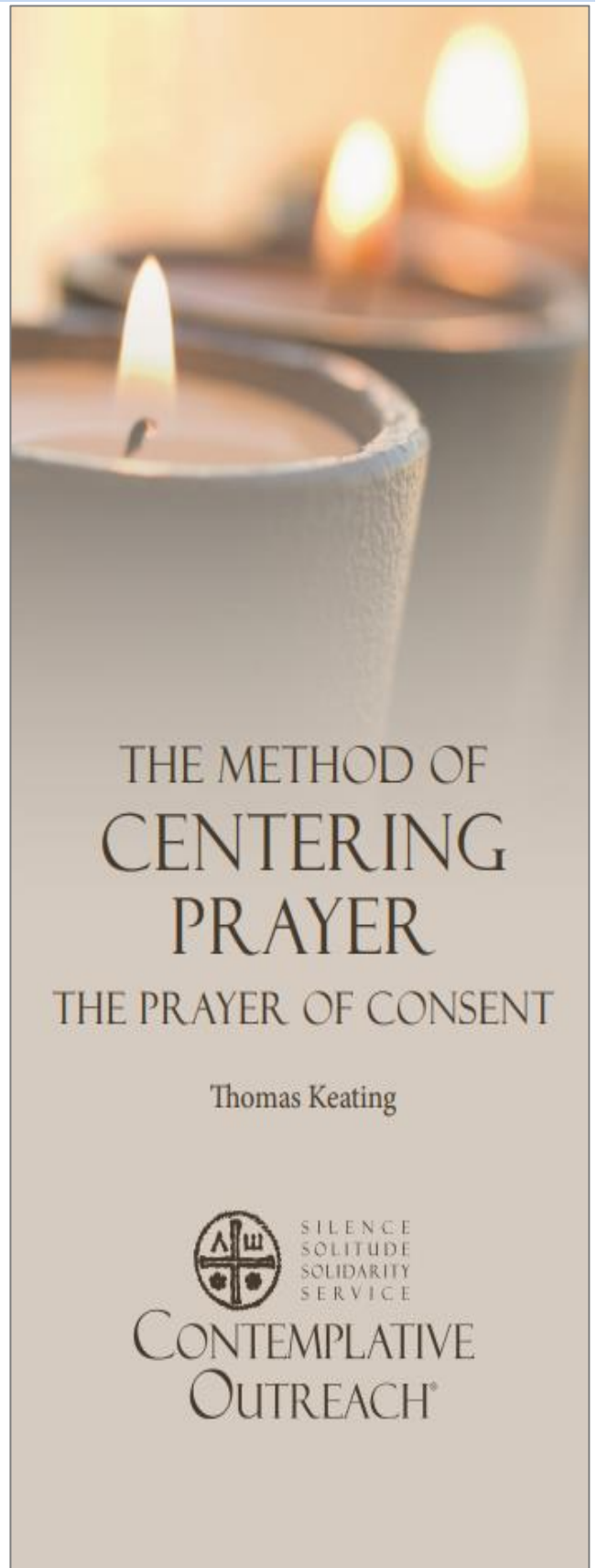
*4:30-5:30pm, 2nd & 4th Sundays
St Ronan's Fellowship Room*

We may think of prayer as thoughts or feelings expressed in words. But that's only one kind. Contemplative prayer in the Christian tradition is a pure gift from God. It's the opening of our mind and heart - our whole being - to God who is ultimately beyond thoughts, words and emotions.

Through grace we can open our awareness to God because we know by faith, God is within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than choosing, closer than consciousness itself. In the Gospel of John, Jesus' prayer at the last supper mentions this.

Centring Prayer is designed to facilitate the development of contemplative prayer by preparing us to receive this gift. Centring Prayer isn't meant to replace other kinds of prayer; rather it casts a new light and depth of meaning on the other ways we pray. It's a way to deepen our relationship with God and is a discipline that fosters that relationship. Centring prayer is a movement beyond conversation with Christ to achieve communion with him.

During the hour we meet at St Ronan's we will gather, receive teaching on Centring Prayer and we will practise it ourselves in the warmth of silence together. It will be good to see you there.



Diane Gilliam-Weeks

Some property matters

Earthquake Prone Buildings: In June the Church Property Trustees (CPT) advised that they will amend their current Earthquake Prone Buildings (EPB) policy. This change follows last year's General Assembly motion calling for the policy to align with that of the Building Amendment Act 2016.



What this means, is that earthquake prone church buildings (those that are assessed to have a seismic strength of less than 33% of the New Building Standard, NBS) will in future be required to be strengthened to at least 34% NBS rather than the CPT's current 68% NBS. Affected parishes have also been given a four-year extension to the date required for strengthening. The new policy puts the liability and responsibility for building safety onto parish councils (they've always had this duty).

This change of policy is similar to changes made by the Anglican church. It also occurs against a backdrop of the government's review of earthquake prone-ness within our building systems, which aims to achieve a good balance between safety and the costs to owners of EPBs. This more holistic approach to the risks posed by EPBs can only be welcomed.

What does this mean for St Ronan's? We do not have any earthquake-prone buildings, but the old CPT policy required us to strengthen our buildings to at least 68% NBS. Parish Council has debated the issue over several years and decided it was difficult to justify strengthening the church with its low level of occupancy (<1 h /week) and hence exposure to seismic risk. Our Hall and Education Block have higher levels of occupancy but being single storey, timber-framed buildings, they are unlikely to pose significant risk to users in an earthquake. The amended policy will be issued later this year, but the policy change takes effect immediately. Good news for St Ronan's...!

Insurance: Any homeowner who has received their latest home insurance premium demand will be only too aware of the huge increases in premiums that has occurred over the last few years. This has been driven by international reinsurers being hit with large claims for natural disaster events around the world. In addition, the Wellington region is regarded as of high seismic risk. Increasing premiums are putting a big financial burden on many parishes.

In response, CPT will no longer require parishes to insure their buildings for full replacement value and will permit 'non-mission-critical' buildings to be insured for demolition cover only. This acknowledges such buildings would not be rebuilt following a major disaster. The insurance renewals for St Ronan's for the coming year are still being completed - we can expect a premium increase.

Simon Shaw

Children's Power Hour – 'Follow Me'

Jesus repeatedly encouraged others to 'follow me' and said, *I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* (John 14:6)

Hence, our awesome children took up the mantle last term and enjoyed a dedicated series on *Being A Disciple of Jesus*. This past week, they concluded the series and received their prizes.

Their book prize is a riveting, fun way of telling about discipleship; written by Luke, a later 'disciple', and coupled with lots of learning activities. Luke, a medical doctor, was fascinated by how Jesus was so positively transformative and healing with others.



As well as doing really **AMAZING** stuff, Jesus said some absolutely *mind-blowing* things, too. He also chose **12** people to be his **SPECIAL** followers. They went **everywhere** with him and tried to learn as much as they **COULD** from him. But can you **WORK OUT** who is who using the information below? I've filled in a few names to get you started! Here they are:

Andrew has **2** thick black stripes on each shoulder.

James 2, Matthew and John don't have a beard. **X**

In the series, we explored some key stories which demonstrated how Jesus' disciples learnt to follow him. They applied Jesus' messages in various ways to our everyday living, e.g., trusting in Jesus, being friends to others, forgiving, staying connected to Jesus, caring and including others, choosing Jesus and keeping focused on Jesus.

Learning who were the first 12 disciples (apostles), presented a challenge when it came to pronouncing some names, e.g. Thaddaeus (Judas son of James) and Bartholomew.

Along with finding each name in the Bible, we found some names are mentioned infrequently, while others are more prominent. Also, the group of disciples is mentioned in at least three places (Matt 10:1-4, Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:12-15).

Overall, we learnt that the disciples were strongly united in their love for Jesus and dedicated to carrying his message to everyone.

Susan Connell

From UK to Ukraine (and hopefully back)...

Like most of us you'll have been watching the news coming out of Ukraine over the last couple of years with deep despair, and you have been wondering what you can do to help? Probably 'not a lot' you may say...

As some will know, I'm recently back from the UK and was struck by this bit of action from a young man I met there - more thoughtful than most. Some of you may be interested to read about it.

There's an ongoing need for transport on the frontlines, so one thing that can be done is to donate vehicles - specifically 4x4 utes. This type of

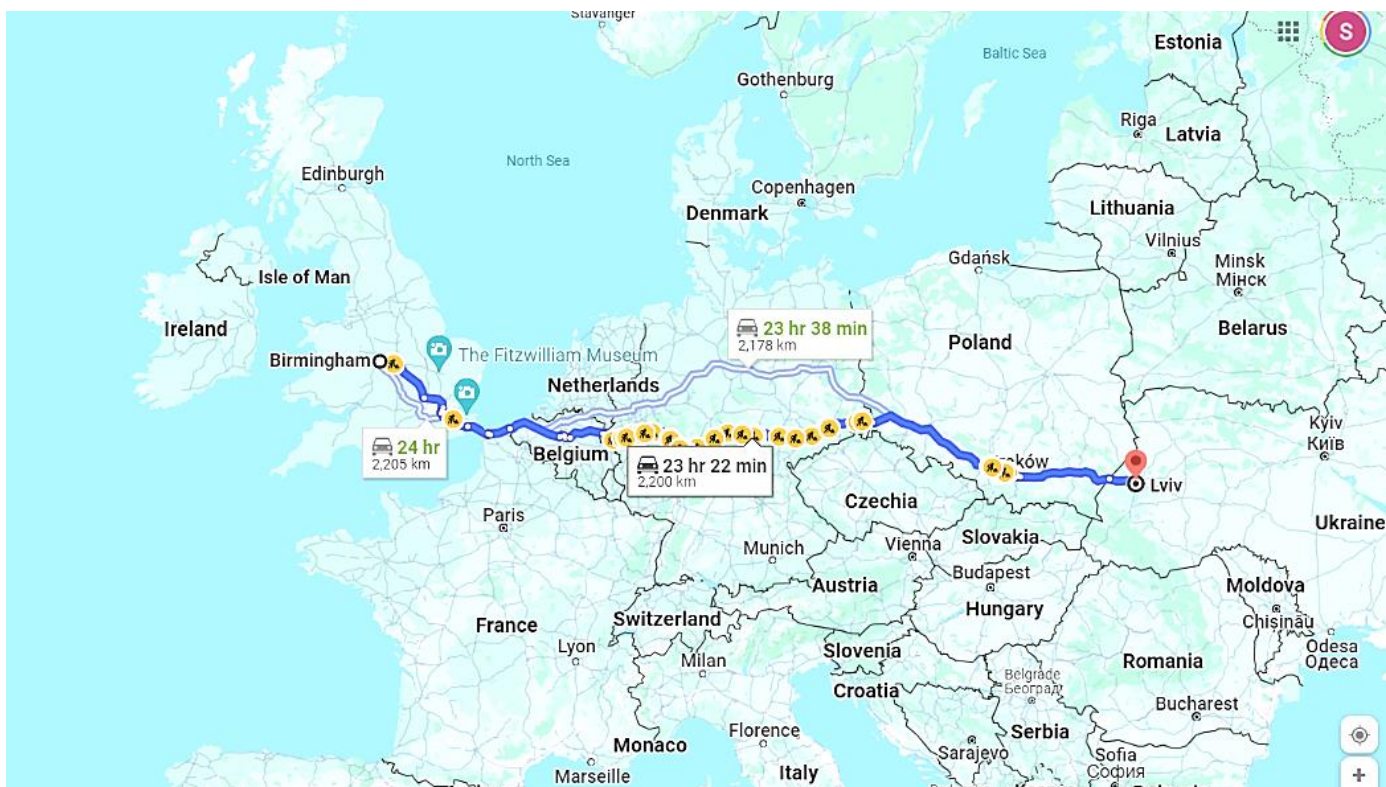
vehicle is particularly useful due to their versatility and off-road capability, meaning they can be used for delivering supplies as well as for moving people about, and they are ideal for working in areas where there isn't a paved road.

There are a number of organisations doing this work, one such is 'Car For Ukraine' www.car4ukraine.com who have so far supplied 442 (as I write) donated vehicles to those working on the frontlines to defend their freedom in the east of the country.

I met a young man in UK who had bought a much-used Mitsubishi L200. The one pictured above is a new one, the one he bought was 28 years old and very used, and very, very smelly (I had a ride in it). It was an ex-dairy-farm vehicle...! He'd been renovating it (and cleaning it) at his own cost and in his spare time.

Then he drove it to Lviv in western Ukraine (over 2,000 km, so over 24 hours of driving) along with some garage equipment for the Ukraine mechanics. He then got back home again by plane, and train, and bus etc.





Once there, the locals welded sections of steel plate to the lower doors and floor, and across the radiator grill, to provide some protection to crew and motor from mines/bullets, then they painted it a dull military-green (see left) and sent it off to the front.

Sure, a refurbished, somewhat-reinforced, 2006 Mitsu L200 ute is not as good as a brand new, British-army style 'Jeep' e.g., the NZ\$2,000,000

Foxhound (pictured right). But the ute cost only about **0.1%** as much and it's something any motivated and reasonably car-savvy Brit can achieve on his/her own.

Neither vehicle would survive a direct hit by a rocket. I suspect the weighty Foxhound would not do as well on very soft ground.



Sandy Lang

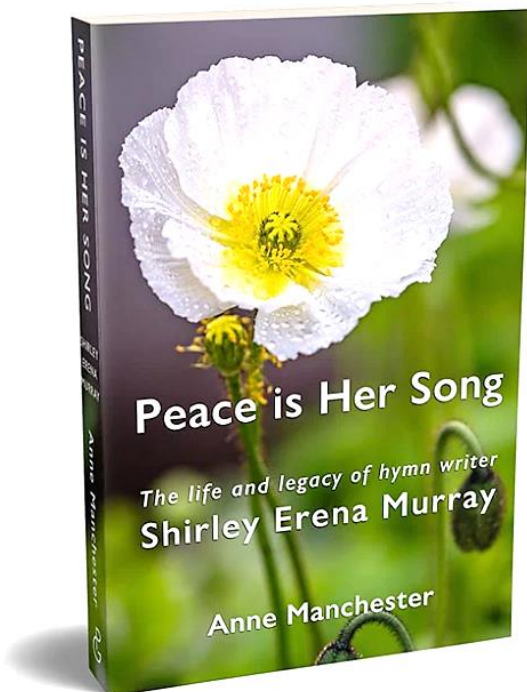
Peace is Her Song: The life and legacy of hymn writer Shirley Erena Murray...

New Zealand hymn writer Shirley Erena Murray wrote more than 400 hymns during a career spanning four decades. Not only is she arguably New Zealand's greatest hymn poet, her international reputation is equally significant, with her hymns appearing in more than 140 collections across denominations, countries and continents.



Peace was the theme dearest to Shirley's heart. She took a broad understanding of the word which, for her, included issues around social justice, human rights, inclusivity within church and society and ecology.

Using economical and contemporary language, Shirley moved the church away from a diet of hymns from past centuries and other countries to hymns that express a modern Aotearoa and southern hemisphere identity.



Shirley's life and contribution to the worldwide church are now told in a soon-to-be released biography, *Peace is Her Song: The life and legacy of hymn writer Shirley Erena Murray*. Written by journalist Anne Manchester, the book draws on rich sources of material, particularly Shirley's own words as recorded in several audio and video interviews, and published articles. Shirley's early writing efforts and influences are captured in her own account of growing up in a multi-generational household during the Depression and World War II in Invercargill.

The book covers Shirley's personal, intimate life story – her student years at the University of Otago, involvement in the Student Christian Movement, marriage to John Murray in Cambridge, England, motherhood, life in rural Taihape and work as a researcher for the Labour Party in the 1980s.

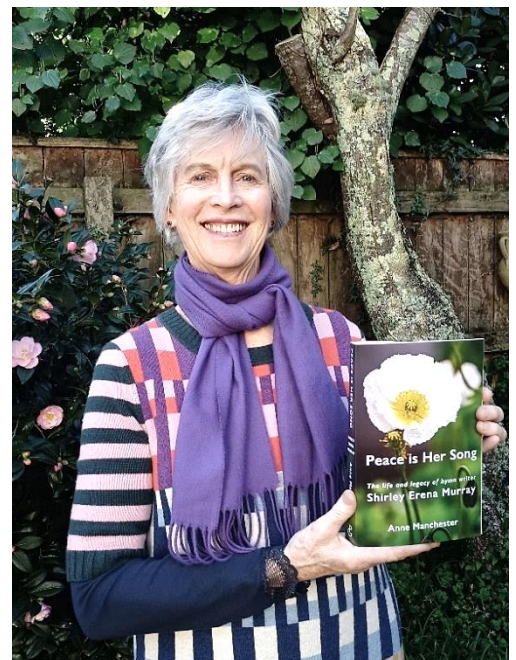
Her relationships with composers from New Zealand and around the world are also explored. As a hymn text writer, Shirley relied on others to write the music that best expressed the themes she sought to capture.

Peace is Her Song provides a rich social and political history of the church in Aotearoa New Zealand, documenting the gradual weakening of its influence over the last 80 years and the fading ecumenical dream, once strong in the 1960s and '70s. Major theological and political events like the so-called heresy trial of Presbyterian theologian Sir Lloyd Geering, the anti-nuclear movements of the 1980s and the 1981 Springbok Tour feature.

Shirley's husband, John Murray, minister at Wellington's St Andrew's on The Terrace from 1975 to 1993, is remembered for his progressive theology, outspoken views and leadership on many key issues facing church and society.

Anne has spent the past five years researching and writing the book. Her involvement began shortly after Shirley's funeral service in January 2020. This is where she overheard Methodist hymn writer Colin Gibson speaking to a group of friends about the need for such a biography. She credits Colin's ongoing mentorship and support, which continued until his death in late 2022, as key to her completing the book.

Anne was lucky enough to have known Shirley personally, having interviewed her in the late 1980s when working on the Presbyterian/Methodist newspaper *Crosslink*. "I have always loved singing her hymns because of their fresh language and imagery, contemporary relevance and challenge to humanity to create a more just and peaceful world. The institutional church has made decisions over the years that have disappointed me, but Shirley's words have always given me hope, and a reason to stay. Entering her life as intimately as I have done since her death in early 2020 has been a privilege and a great pleasure."



Peace is Her Song will be launched at a musical event on 7 September at St Andrew's on The Terrace, Wellington. The book is 338 pages, with both colour and black and white photo sections, and may be purchased from publisher Philip Garside at www.philipgarsidebooks.com and from selected independent bookshops. RRP \$50.

The shared service on September 1 will have a Shirley Murray theme and will a chance for members of St Ronan's and St Alban's to celebrate Shirley and the publication of this new biography. Books can be purchased after the service.

Anne Manchester



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
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 August 2024
is Sunday 28 July 2024**