



St Ronan's Presbyterian Church
Eastbourne

Record

March 2025

2 March	Shared Service at San Antonio (with Anglicans).....	9.30am
5 March	Combined Ash Wednesday Service at San Antonio..... (with Anglicans & Catholics)	7.00pm
9 March	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
16 March	Reg Weeks.....	9.30am
23 March	Informal worship service.....	9.30am
30 March	Fellowship Lunch (bring a plate to share).....	12 noon
6 April	Shared service at St Ronan's (with Anglicans).....	9.30am

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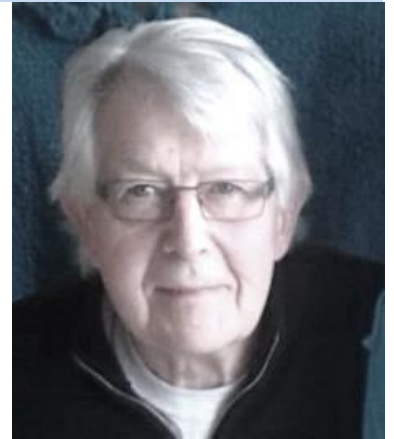
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Power Hour – Sundays 9:30am
Breakfast Prayer – Tuesdays 8:00am
Mainly Music – Thursdays 9:15-11:15am

For pastoral care needs, please contact one of the Local Shared Ministry team
Reg Weeks 027 491 5947, Wendy McCarter 027 255 6928, Simon Shaw 562 8772

Te motu iti...

I don't write much poetry, and this piece is more of a poetic reflection I penned years ago at the time of our sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) of New Zealand in 1990. But last year, I was reminded of what I had written when I took part in the hikoi to protest the Treaty Principles Bill. And, every day, as I look out of our lounge window to Mākaro Island, it seemed a good opportunity to update what I had written. So, I include it below...



The Treaty still waits "substance to give it flesh and bone" but few who are familiar with its history believe that the Act Party proposal is an adequate way to achieve that. A visit last year to the Treaty Grounds, and in particular to Te Kōngahu Museum of Waitangi, gave me a much deeper understanding of why there was a Treaty in the first place – and the significance of the fact that the northern Māori chiefs (who in the view of the British Crown were signing as representatives of an internationally recognised independent trading nation) signed only the Māori translation of the Treaty.

However, while reparation for the "bloody battle and deceit" of the Land Wars is still being made, that phrase has hit home to me with added force when faced with the current tragic escalation of death and disaster on the world scene, made worse by the continuing chaos engendered by the political turmoil in the United States. The outlook is bleak indeed, and on the 3rd anniversary of the war in Ukraine, it is all "confusion worse confounded" to quote John Milton.

On a personal note, immigrant and LGBTQ members of the Franciscan order to which I belong, are deeply concerned for their future, and as a St John chaplain I'm grateful that our Jerusalem Eye hospital service in Gaza, established in 1882 is still open, though operating under very difficult circumstances. There will be few who read this that are untouched by the troubles of the world.

And yet in all the darkness, the words of St John, in exile on the Aegean island of Patmos, bring a hope-filled vision of a new heaven and a new earth, a city, open and welcoming to all. Let us continue in that hope and pray for its fulfilment through the on-going efforts of faithful and committed Christians, symbolised in the logo of the World Council of Churches – a small boat on a rough sea.



Te motu iti

(the small island)

*There is an island there is no going to
But in a small boat - the way the saints went¹*

The island is Mākaro²

It is Nova Scotia, Iona, Patmos³

It is Sinai, place of refuge and challenge in the
desert ocean

In mind out of time the island is no place of rock and stone
or windswept beach

It is the birthing of a people - my people
a people of the faith once delivered to the saints

*Lord, you were our beginning, the faith that gave us birth.
We look to you, our ending,
our hope for heaven and earth⁴*

A wandering Aramean was my father - and he came to Sinai,
a rocky island in a sea of sand.

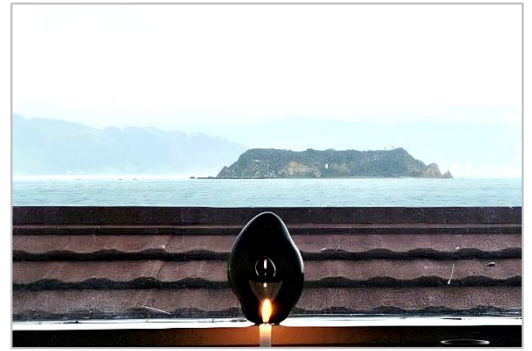
A wandering Scot was my father - and he came to Aotearoa,
as Kupe did before him.

And a new covenant was signed here⁵
a time and half a time ago

And generations are ploughed under in bloody battle and deceit
but te wairua⁶ still remains
waiting substance to give it flesh and bone

And the last vision is focused in the city, without a temple,
that John saw on Patmos
a new heaven and a new earth.

The future is seen in the past, my Māori whanau say.
So, if there is to be a going,
then maybe it should be in a small boat.⁷



Reg Weeks

¹ RS Thomas, Welsh poet and Anglican priest, 1913–2000.

² A small island in Wellington harbour. (photo Reg Weeks).

³ An island in the Aegean Sea where St John was exiled.

⁴ Colin Gibson.

⁵ Treaty of Waitangi, between Māori chiefs and representatives of the British Crown, signed 1840. It is important to note that in 1834 recognition of the northern tribes of New Zealand, as representing an independent trading nation, was given by King William IV; and a drawing of the flag, Te Kara, was circulated internationally with instructions to recognise it as the official flag of New Zealand. Te Kara remains a legal New Zealand flag.

⁶ te wairua = the spirit.

⁷ Google [about the world council of churches logo](#)

Clerk's corner...

Police checks: Got these at last. My grizzle of last month worked. A tiny miracle...! 😊

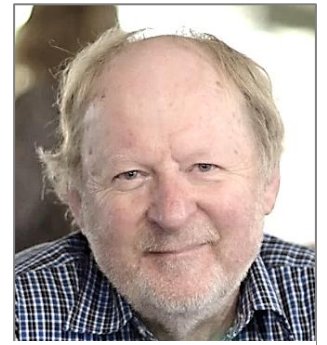
Two offices for lease: We're still seeking expressions of interest for these. Put the word out there...

Battery recycling:

New sign •Free, thanks to Harcourts...!

Why recycle batteries?

- 1) They contain harmful chemicals. If they go to landfill, these can leach into the soil and waterways.
- 2) They also contain useful metal elements that can be re-used. Also plastics and chemicals.
- 3) Recycling batteries saves resources, saves mining.



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Sandy Lang

Have faith...

A climber fell off a cliff, and as he tumbled down, he caught hold of a small branch wedged in the rock:

"Help, help" he shouted "Is there anybody up there?"

A majestic voice boomed out through the gorge:

"I will help you, my son, but first you must have faith in me!"

"Yes, yes, I trust you!" cried the man.

"Let go of the branch." boomed the voice.

There was a long pause.

And the man shouted up again,

"Is there anybody else up there I could talk to?"



Contributed by John Harris

Rood screen – California fires and the Torah...

During January, our news was full of stories about the devastating wildfires outside Los Angeles - stories of tragedies, as well as of heroism and good fortune.

The Pacific Palisades area is home to a number of Jewish communities and with them, synagogues and education centres. When the fire broke out on 7 January, staff realised that the flames, driven by high winds and dry vegetation, would likely reach them.



The fire in Topanga Canyon, Los Angeles (Jan 2025)



Rabbi Mendy Piekarski taking a Torah scroll to safety

Jewish law requires that top priority must be given to saving human life, so the children at the schools were immediately sent home. After ensuring the children were safe, the next priority was the protection of the Torah scrolls. In fact, protection of the Torah scrolls is considered so important that it is permissible to break the Sabbath to look after them!

Traditional Torah scrolls are fairly large items that are expensive and time-consuming to produce. They contain the Five Books of Moses written in Hebrew by a trained scribe. The parchment is made from a kosher animal and is specially treated. They are highly treasured and often have fascinating histories. In fact, several (in the Palisades area) were rescued from the Holocaust and one even from the Iranian revolution.

The Eighteenth-century Hasidic master the Baal Shem Tov taught that a Torah scroll represents “channels of divine blessing flowing into the world through the letters like a ladder, a bridge between heaven and earth, between spirituality and the material world”.

Jewish people through the generations have made great efforts to save Torah scrolls, especially during the turmoil in the Middle Ages and during the Holocaust. Jewish law states that even if only 85 letters remain in a damaged Torah scroll (out of over 300,000 it takes to write a complete Torah), a Torah

is still to be saved. Even if damaged beyond repair, it can still be “buried like a loved one”.



The Pasadena Jewish Temple & Center

And so it was that Scrolls were gathered up, wrapped in prayer shawls and taken to various places of safety.

It made me ask myself about my own relationship with my Bible. I realise that the many copies I have at home are mass printed, rather than handwritten, but do I treasure my Bibles as much as the Jews of San Francisco treasure their Torah? After all, each Bible I own has a story of how it came to me.

And do I see the words that it contains as the Baal Shem Tov did?

Would I give top priority to rescuing my Bible from a disaster as the Palisades Jews did?

How about you?



John Harris

Church going... (1954)

*Once I am sure there's nothing going on
I step inside, letting the door thud shut.
Another church: matting, seats, and stone,
And little books; sprawlings of flowers, cut
For Sunday, brownish now; some brass and stuff
Up at the holy end; the small neat organ;
And a tense, musty, unignorable silence,
Brewed God knows how long. Hatless, I take off
My cycle-clips in awkward reverence,*



*Move forward, run my hand around the font.
From where I stand, the roof looks almost new –
Cleaned, or restored? Someone would know: I don't.
Mounting the lectern, I peruse a few
Hectoring large-scale verses, and pronounce
'Here endeth' much more loudly than I'd meant.
The echoes snigger briefly. Back at the door
I sign the book, donate an Irish sixpence,
Reflect the place was not worth stopping for.*

*Yet stop I did: in fact I often do,
And always end much at a loss like this,
Wondering what to look for; wondering, too,
When churches fall completely out of use
What we shall turn them into, if we shall keep
A few cathedrals chronically on show,
Their parchment, plate and pyx in locked cases,
And let the rest rent-free to rain and sheep.
Shall we avoid them as unlucky places?*

*Or, after dark, will dubious women come
To make their children touch a particular stone;
Pick simples for a cancer; or on some
Advised night see walking a dead one?
Power of some sort or other will go on
In games, in riddles, seemingly at random;
But superstition, like belief, must die,
And what remains when disbelief has gone?
Grass, weedy pavement, brambles, buttress, sky,*

*A shape less recognisable each week,
A purpose more obscure. I wonder who
Will be the last, the very last, to seek
This place for what it was; one of the crew
That tap and jot and know what rood-lofts were?
Some ruin-bibber, randy for antique,
Or Christmas-addict, counting on a whiff
Of gown-and-bands and organ-pipes and myrrh?
Or will he be my representative,*

*Bored, uninformed, knowing the ghostly silt
Dispersed, yet tending to this cross of ground
Through suburb scrub because it held unspilt
So long and equably what since is found
Only in separation – marriage, and birth,
And death, and thoughts of these – for which was built
This special shell? For, though I've no idea
What this accoutred frowsty barn is worth,
It pleases me to stand in silence here;*

*A serious house on serious earth it is,
In whose blent air all our compulsions meet,
Are recognised, and robed as destinies.
And that much never can be obsolete,
Since someone will forever be surprising
A hunger in himself to be more serious,
And gravitating with it to this ground,
Which, he once heard, was proper to grow wise in,
If only that so many dead lie round.*

Philip Larkin (1922-1985)

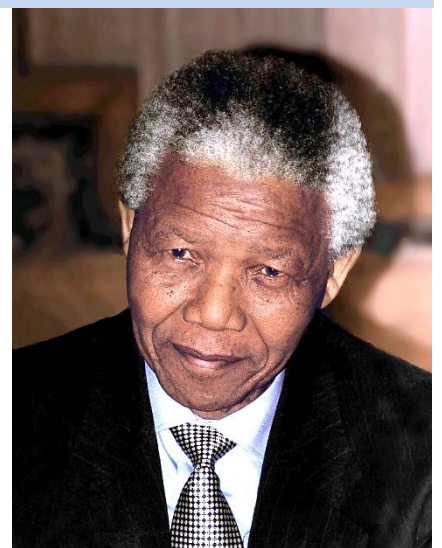
Listen to this poem read by Harol Pinter
Google [Larkin Pinter](#)

Contributed by **Sandy Lang**

African wisdom - from Wendy...

'One of our strongest weapons is dialogue...'

Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)



Power Hour: Images...

Jesus was a clever communicator. He explained many things using everyday images, bridging our understanding from the familiar to the unknown. People loved him because they got the message, and that message was Good News! The new meaning to life and faith was now making sense and it was a radical contrast to just following religious rules as interpreted by the Pharisees and other Jewish religious leaders.

Early on, Jesus used the common image of a shepherd tending sheep and goats, referencing it from the Psalms which were read out in the synagogue. Psalm 23, The Lord is My Shepherd, was one psalm which Jesus used. It had purity, clarity and spoke to the heart of Jesus and God.

Jesus said, *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep... This is what my Father commanded me to do.* (John 10:11, 18). Not only had Jesus come as the shepherd of Israel, he was also going to give his life for all people, everywhere.

The Power Hour children had learnt Psalm 23 previously but, now older, they delved deeper into the Psalm's three images - shepherd and sheep (1) in pasture near water; (2) in dark valleys; and (3) at a banquet.

First, the children had some good guessing fun. They were challenged to think of someone who looks after them and how they help them; then to mime that person for the others to guess; and then to write out their suggestions, e.g., doctor, dentist, teacher, daughter, brother, Mum, Dad, good friends...

After reading Psalm 23 together, we looked at the an image (below) of a shepherd with green pasture and water and decided that he was caring and happy. They also thought the scene was calm and that the shepherd was good and cared for his sheep.



They concluded that Jesus was like this good shepherd. Also, That New Zealand was blessed with many sheep and pastures!

Next, after reading about the images of 'dark valleys and mountains', they thought about What these dark valleys might represent in

their own lives. The children felt such places were unhappy and unsafe areas. So, they concluded that Jesus, as a good shepherd, would keep us safe and guide us away from unsuitable situations. He would want the best for us in a loving way.

The third image of a banquet, spoke to them of being happy and especially honoured if someone made them a special meal or threw a party for them.

In summary, the children considered that God gave them: care; safety; love; and respect.

Then the children took Jesus' and God's sense of love and care to the congregation and their families by serving biscuits which they had prepared (see photo above of Emma serving her biscuits to Allison).



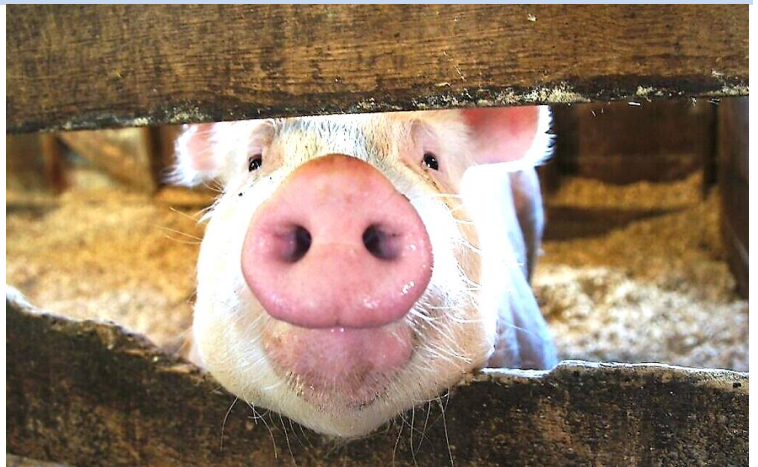
Susan Connell

Term 1: 16 Feb–6 Apr; **School holidays:** 12–27 Apr; **Term 2:** 4 May–22 Jun.

Rood screen – Kosher pork...

You may (or may not) have tasted plant based 'meats'. *Impossible Foods* is the trade name of a major manufacturer of these products (Google [impossiblefoods](https://www.impossiblefoods.com)).

In theory, plant-based chicken, beef and pork are the answer to many people's concerns about many environmental and moral issues.



As 'Impossible Pork' contains absolutely no actual pork (I have listed the actual ingredients below for your edification), it would seem it easily meets the requirements of a kosher food. So, in 2021 Impossible Foods applied to the Orthodox Union (the OU is body that grants kosher certification) for their seal of approval.

Their beef and their chicken had already been approved, so what could be more straightforward? But no. Certification was declined.

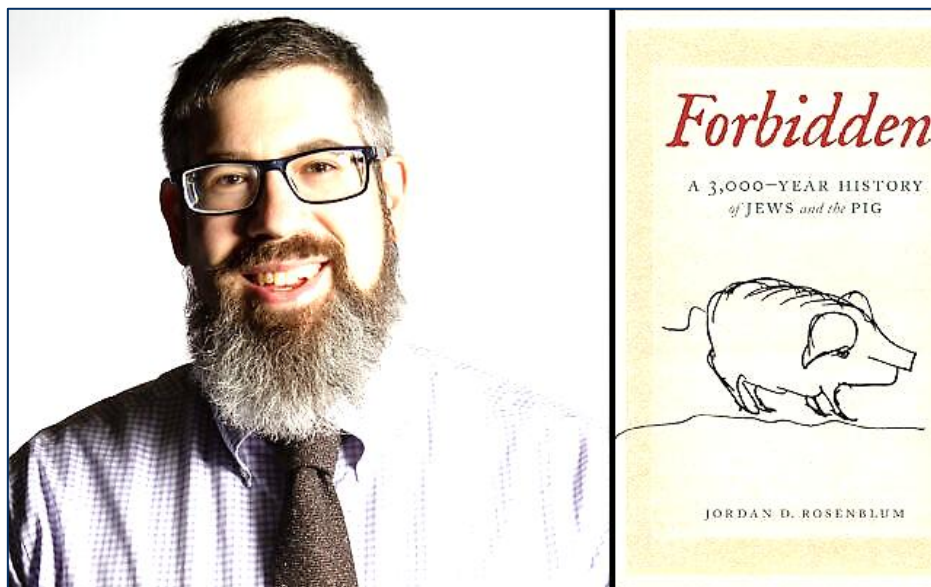
Rabbi Menachem Genack, the CEO of the Orthodox Union's kosher division, said: "*The Impossible Pork, we didn't give an 'OU' to it, not because it wasn't kosher per se. It may indeed be completely kosher in terms of its ingredients: If it's completely plant-derived, it's kosher. Just in terms of sensitivities to the consumer... it didn't get it.*"

The 'consumer' of course is the Jew, and those 'sensitivities' are the result of a history that has turned the pig, not just into the *ne plus ultra* of the taboo, or *treyf*, in Judaism, but the symbol of what Jews do and don't do. There are plenty of good jokes about rabbis and ham sandwiches, but hardly any about rabbis and oysters.

Jordan D Rosenblum explores this long and fraught history in his fascinating book, *Forbidden: A 3,000-Year History of Jews and the Pig*.

So, the rabbis at the Orthodox Union's kosher division realised that they were dealing with something far bigger than a plant-based food. Their ruling had to be an all-or-nothing one. And they chose 'nothing'.

Do you sometimes find yourself in a similar grey zone with sin? It isn't like it is REALLY sinful, is it? Nah, it'll be okay.



I am reminded of Revelations 3:16: So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.

The rabbis chose not to be lukewarm – and so should we. It's either right or it's wrong...

John Harris

Ingredients:

Water, soy protein concentrate, coconut oil, sunflower oil, methylcellulose, flavour enhancer (glutamic acid), cultured dextrose, hydroxypropyl distarch phosphate, dextrose, natural flavours, salt, soy leghemoglobin (genetically modified), tocopherol concentrate, soy protein isolate, vitamins and minerals (zinc gluconate, thiamine hydrochloride (vitamin B1), niacin, pyridoxine hydrochloride (vitamin B6), riboflavin (vitamin B2), vitamin B12.

More? Google [from snout to tail new book](#)



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 April 2025
is Sunday 30 March 2025**