

Opoho Signal

December 2020 - January 2021

via email

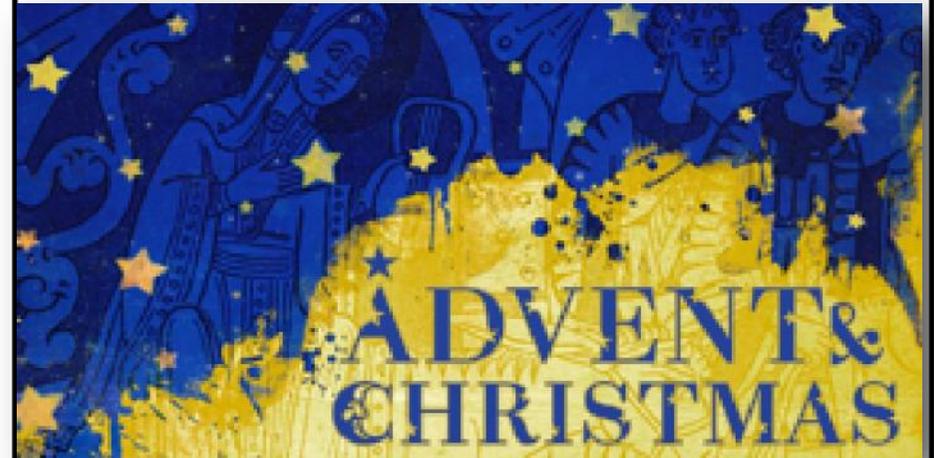
Opoho Signal

Newsletter of the Opoho Presbyterian Church

50 Signal Hill Road, Opoho, Dunedin 9010

website: www.opohochurch.org

Facebook: Opoho Presbyterian Church



December 2020 - January 2021

Interim Moderator: The Rev. Ed Masters

cell phone 027 637 9818

Acting Parish Clerk: Philip Somerville phone: 03 473 8862

email: psomer39@gmail.com

Worship Services at Opoho:

Every Sunday at 10 am

11.30 p.m. Thursday 24 December: Candlelit Christmas Eve Service

10 a.m. Friday 25 December: Worship for Christmas Day

Other services are listed in the Calendar on the back cover.

Editorial

Several years ago, I was traversing a steep tussocky mountain in Fiordland when I suddenly slipped. It was a dangerous situation, and immediately my survival instincts kicked in and I grabbed for something to arrest my fall. When we are faced with danger and find ourselves feeling vulnerable, we grasp for something to keep us safe.

Vulnerability tends to be something that we flee from. It can bring forth uncomfortable feelings like fear, disappointment, and shame. We try to avoid vulnerability and adopt habits and measures to remove weakness from our lives. Strength is preferred over

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vulnerability because it leads to security and safety. Strength is the more viable path than vulnerability.

Over the last ten months at Opoho I have heard the phrase “viable but vulnerable” on multiple occasions and I have wondered what it signifies about how we journey into the future as a church. “Viable but vulnerable” seems to be shorthand for talking about the strengths and weaknesses of the church, and the way in which the opportunities and challenges are confronted. Perhaps “viable” means the strengths of Opoho church – like the warm inclusive fellowship, the creative engagements and lively worship? Meanwhile “vulnerable” might refer to the threats facing the church like that of financial insecurity, aging membership, and fragile ministries? Obviously, the strengths are to be celebrated and the vulnerabilities worked on.

Throughout the long years of the people of God, we have flicked back and forward from being viable to being vulnerable. In the wilderness, vulnerable with hunger the people relied on God and were fed. In Jerusalem, with their mighty temple and their mighty king the people had a viable future. As they were carried into exile God’s people became vulnerable once again. In Rome, Constantine became a Christian and the vulnerable church flicked back to being viable.

As we have moved into a post-Christendom age the church has found itself in a new season of vulnerability. The years ahead for the church in New Zealand promise more challenges as we struggle to articulate the Gospel and strive for justice. The experiences of Opoho are repeated around the country. And our sense of vulnerability has been heightened by the challenges of 2020. A ministerial vacancy and a pesky pandemic can cause us to teeter, like a trumper on the edge of a mountain side, grasping at something the keep us from falling.

As we begin our Advent journey we are looking ahead to the movement from strength to vulnerability. *Philippians 2* reminds us that Jesus took a path of descent, and though being in the form of God did not see this as something to be exploited and instead made himself the least. Christmas celebrates the arrival of God – completely helpless and vulnerable as he cried in the arms of a powerless peasant woman.

God chooses to work in a way that is not viable. We see this pattern throughout the Scriptures. Rather than choose to work through the strong, God chose a slave nation to be the witness to God's purposes. Rather than speak through the storm or the earthquake, God chose to speak in the silence. Rather than confronting Rome with a legion of angels, Jesus chose to go to a cross and die. God does not do the viable – in love God works through the vulnerable.

Viable and vulnerable? Perhaps we are being given a choice: do we want to be a viable, strong, self-sufficient church or a vulnerable, trusting and faithful church?

Ed Masters



Parish Council News

Among the busiest people in the church these days are the members of the Property and Finance Committee.

We learned at last month's Council meeting, for example, that a sump at the back of the hall has been replaced, so it is hoped that flooding there will be eliminated. New heating for the church is a step closer but decisions are not quite confirmed. The Committee's work has been impressive.

Direct credit offerings have held up well in this difficult Covid year and in our 'vacancy'. This helps us achieve progress with essential maintenance. It also helps us try to build a surplus for when we have a new minister and could well be back in deficit. We have some reserves, and the fall in interest rates has reduced income from this source.

At the time of writing, the Community Advent Service and the Children's and Family Sunday late afternoon service had yet to take place. It has been great that people have stepped up so these special events could take place. Mary Somerville and Marian Weaver, in particular, have been key to that.

And by the time this report is read, we should have distributed

Christian World Service appeal envelopes. We are also endeavouring to continue our tradition of lighting Advent candles each Sunday morning during Advent. This is likely to take place during Community Time.

As mentioned elsewhere, we have services planned until the beginning of March. But we are also aware of lots of talent among the congregation, already expressed or hidden under bushels. New faces taking all or parts of services next year would be most interesting.

David Murray and Marian Weaver explained a plan for church music for the next while. David Murray is on the piano for the first Sunday of the month, singers and guitars on the second, Gaynor Haig on the third Sunday, and David and the Music Group for the last Sunday of the month. David is also doing any extra Sundays in a month.

We welcomed Mark Ranby to the November meeting as a new parish councillor. Great to have him on board. Interestingly, his father, Paul, would have chaired the church's Session (the Council precursor, along with the Deacons' Court) in 1974 when he was the 'supply' minister here for several months. Opoho was between ministers, and Paul took on this role after graduating from the Knox Theological Hall.

And here's another unusual occurrence. Five of the seven parish councillors at the November meeting were PKs, a slang expression for preachers' kids – the sons and daughters of ministers. I was one and the others were Mark, Hamish Spencer, David Murray, and Judy Rodda. The two others parish councillors present, and the two who were away, are not PKs.

Last month we included a piece about newly-elected parish councillor Julie Mander. We also asked Mark Ranby for a few words about himself. Here it is, with a final paragraph added by me.

Kia ora tatou.

I was born in Puturu where we lived for three years before my father, Paul, took up the call to minister to the people of the Alexandra, Clyde, Lauder Union Parish. I loved my time growing up in Alex with the unique environment providing plenty

of space and adventure for a boy who loved to move. Philippa, my older sister, and I enjoyed roaming around the manse’s large section and concocting all sorts of games. Apricots drying on polythene covered trestle tables and athletics at Molyneux Park on warm summer evenings are examples of the vivid threads of memory that make up my mauri or vital essence.

We then moved to Palmerston North when I was 10. My mother, Margaret, started teaching music at our local high school and when it was time for me to bike up the road to Freyberg High Mum was my form teacher. My athletics and rugby blossomed through high school and I was fortunate to win a couple of New Zealand Secondary Schools triple jump titles and make the New Zealand Secondary Schools rugby team in my 7th form year.

The following year rugby turned professional and I was able to secure a contract with Manawat , and so began a 12-year rugby career. I studied for a BA majoring in English through Massey while I plied my trade on the rugby field. It was wonderful to be able to combine this with my faith journey at the end of my rugby career, studying for a postgraduate diploma in Religious Studies and Theology at Cambridge University.

I met Sarah at the New Zealand Graduate School of Education in Christchurch. We lived in Christchurch for six years before moving to Dunedin at the end of 2016. We were blessed with the arrival of Thomas on 1 January 2015 and then Fergus on 6 May 2018. We love our life here in Dunedin and being a part of the Opoho Church community of faith. I look forward to being able to serve this community through the Parish Council.

That 12-year rugby career Mark mentioned wasn’t too bad. A midfield back, he played for the Hurricanes and the Chiefs in Super Rugby, in Japan, and in the annual Oxford versus Cambridge rugby match. He also played in one test for the All Blacks. He is at present the Rugby Club Manager for the New Zealand Rugby Players’ Association (helping with the welfare, careers, and interests of retired professional

rugby players). He was previously the Professional Development Manager for the Crusaders and then for the Highlanders.

Philip Somerville



Could you take a service or part of one?

While we are without a minister, it has been the responsibility of the Parish Council to find other people to lead our services. Over the past few months, Graeme Munro and Anne Thomson have been our most frequent preachers, and we have also enjoyed services taken by other visiting ministers and by members of our own congregation. Looking ahead, we have arrangements in place until the beginning of March. It is not yet clear when we will have a new minister appointed, so we need to be prepared with worship leaders for March and quite probably a few months beyond. Graeme and Anne are available to take at least one service each month, but there are still two or three Sundays each month to plan for.

It would be helpful to have expressions of interest from members of the congregation who would be willing to help with services, whether or not you have done so previously. You might be happy and confident to deal with a full service (prayers, choice of hymns, sermon or reflection) by yourself, or you might wish to collaborate with one or more others (e.g. one or two look after the ‘framework’ of the service while someone else provides a sermon or reflection); and it is not compulsory to follow our standard format of services in every detail.

If you are interested in helping with a service or services, please email Gregor Macaulay (gregor.macaulay@outlook.com), specifying which part or parts of a service you would be happy to take. Not all offers will necessarily be able to be accepted, depending on how many volunteer and for what, and also on the responses we receive from elsewhere (we will also be inviting a few visiting ministers to take services).



For the week leading up
to, and including, Sunday:

Opportunities for Service December 2020 - January 2021

	Morning Tea	Door Duty	Readers	Prayers	Music	Flowers	Hall Cleaning	Church Cleaning
6 December	Judy Rodda Kirk Hamilton	Abby Smith Hamish Spencer	Andrea Johnston Mark Ranby	--	David Murray	Shona Somerville	Michael Ovens	Shona and Philip Somerville
13 December	Abby Smith Hamish Spencer	Jane Bloore Gregor Macaulay	Maurice Andrew	—	David Murray	Shona Somerville	Michael Ovens	Shona and Philip Somerville
20 December	Bronwen Strang Shona Somerville	Marian Weaver John Somerville	TBA	Mark Ranby	David Murray Gaynor Haig	Jane Bloore	Bronwen Strang	Jane Bloore
24 December 11.30pm	—	TBA	TBA	—	David Murray	--	—	—
25 December Christmas Day	—	Mary and John Somerville	TBA	TBA	Mark Bevin	Jane Bloore	—	—
27 December	TBA	Michael Ovens Andrew Smith	Andrea Johnston	Mary Somerville	Music Group	Jane Bloore	Bronwen Strang	Jane Bloore
January								
3 January	Phillip and Shona Somerville	TBA	Daniel Larsen	—	David Murray	Jenny Roxborough	Andrew Smith	Benjamin Thew
10 January	Meegan and Pam Cloughley	Marian Weaver Jenny Bunce	Jenny Roxborough	John Roxborough	Singers and Guitars	Jenny Roxborough	Andrew Smith	Benjamin Thew
17 January	10.30 a.m. Hospital Chapel Service. No Service at Opoho.							
24 January	Jane Bloore Bronwen Strang	Benjamin Thew Mark Ranby	Hamish Spencer	Abby Smith	David Murray	Fiona Stirling	Meegan Cloughley	Fiona Stirling
31 January	Judy Rodda Kirk Hamilton	Phillip and Shona Somerville	Jenny Bunce	Benjamin Thew	Music Group	Fiona Stirling	Meegan Cloughley	Fiona Stirling
February								
7 February	Abby Smith Hamish Spencer	Jane Bloore Jenny Bunce	Shona Somerville	—	David Murray	Allison Mulder	Michael Ovens	Mulders

Prayers, Poems, and Psalms – an Opoho writers' group

For people who enjoy reading their work and/or listening to others, with a cuppa and a biscuit.

Coming in February.



Fellowship Group

Ten people contributed in many ways to a very social and sharing time at our November gathering.

We were interested to hear from Miriam about what goes on at Property and Finance Committee meetings, and our conversation then ranged across drains, heating, fair, and finances. In the course of the afternoon, several people talked about those who are no longer with us – it seemed appropriate that, soon after All Souls Day, we acknowledged members of that 'great cloud of witnesses' (*Heb 12: 1*) that surrounds us.

Evelyn collected more wool and dropped off a pile of Peggy squares. Wow! and thank you, Evelyn!

It just may be true that we come along almost as much for the delicious food (including take-home leftovers), as for the wonderful company. This month, we particularly enjoyed Tayla's special banana and walnut cake with yoghurt, and Chris's amazing asparagus and chicken rolls. The latter evoked much nostalgia, for a number of us... Some people may not know that Tayla is Miriam's granddaughter, and has definitely inherited her grandmother's baking skills.

We plan a final meeting for the year on Thursday 10 December with a Christmas theme, and to meet again in the Morrison Lounge in February next year. We are looking at arranging a picnic meeting for February. During January we will catch up by telephone.

All are always very welcome – and if you think a picnic meeting in February might be the time to begin coming along to Fellowship Group, make sure you let Miriam or Chris know that you are interested.

Andrea Johnston



Interfaith Matters

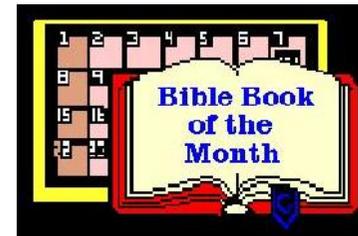


The Interfaith Harmony Dinner (pot-luck vegetarian) will be held at Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints on Tuesday 2 February. It is hoped that the speakers will include our own Simon Rae. Entertainment will be provided by various groups, including the Hindu Society children, a kapa haka group etc. This event is always a delightful evening, and will not be a late night. More details will be available closer to the time, but do put it on your calendar now.

Bronwen Strang



Bible Book of the Month



This month, on 3 December, we looked at *Hebrews*.

We take a break in January and resume on 4 February, at 129 Signal Hill Road at 7.30 p.m., with *James*.

Ideally people should have read the book beforehand, but it isn't essential. For more information please contact John Stenhouse at john.stenhouse@otago.ac.nz or Tui Bevin at 473 8677 or email mark.bevin@gmail.com

Tui Bevin



Christian World Service Christmas Gifts



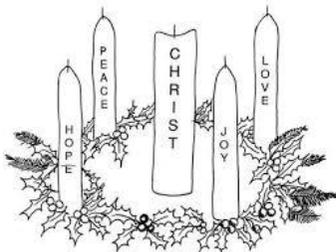
Give a gift with a promise of change.
 Better income, new skills and healthcare.
 Buy a meaningful gift. Go to www.gift.org.nz
 for details.

Presbyterian Support Food Bank



Christmas and the summer holiday period is always a busy time for the Food Bank, so please give thought to giving a few items – standard grocery items and/or special seasonal treats.

Tinned or dry goods only please – nothing frozen or perishable.



Don't Forget!

<i>December</i>	
Sunday 13 December	10 a.m.: Advent 3, a Family Service
Sunday 20 December	10 a.m.: Advent 4, Nine Lessons and Carols
Thursday 24 December	11.30 p.m.: Christmas Eve, Candlelit Service
Friday 25 December	10 a.m.: Christmas Day

Used Stamps are Useful!

With the Christmas season upon us, please remember to save any used postage stamps from cards, letters and parcels!

We deliver our collections of used stamps to Presbyterian Support. The stamps are then sold to philatelists, and the revenue is used for PCANZ Global Mission outreach.

Cut the stamps from envelopes and packages, leaving a 1 cm margin of paper around the stamps. Bring them to church, and put them in the box in the foyer. Thank you!

Remembering Vetia's annual message

Andrea Johnston

Opinions expressed in the *Opoho Signal* are those of individual authors, unless stated otherwise.

Deadline for next *Opoho Signal* - Wednesday 20 January 2020

Please send all material for the *Opoho Signal* to:

Gregor Macaulay, 88 Forfar Street, Mornington, Dunedin 9011

Email gregor.macaulay@outlook.com

Keeping in Touch

Do you know...

Opoho Church has a website, www.opohochurch.org

On the website you will find (among other things) links to recent sermons, downloadable copies of the Orders of Service for the two most recent Sundays, downloadable versions of the newsletter, and an on-line version of the Church Calendar.

The church also has a Facebook page (you don't need to belong to Facebook to see the page) www.facebook.com/OpohoChurch

Copies of the Parish Directory, with contact details of parishioners, are available on the back pew in the church.

This newsletter is emailed to all who have requested to receive it this way. If you are not already on the email list, and would like to be, please send an email to Andrea andrea.johnston@columba.co.nz

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| <b>Calendar for February 2021</b>                                    |                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The calendar for December 2020 and January 2021 is on the back page. |                                                                            |
| 4 February ~ Thursday                                                | 7.30 p.m.: Bible Book of the Month:<br><i>James</i> , 129 Signal Hill Road |
| 7 February ~ Sunday                                                  | 10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Graeme Munro, Communion                         |
| 14 February ~ Sunday                                                 | 10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Professor Paul Trebilco                         |
| 21 February ~ Sunday                                                 | 10 a.m.: Worship, preacher TBC                                             |
| 28 February ~ Sunday                                                 | 10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Anne Thomson                                    |

| <b>Lectionary readings, 24 January to 7 February<br/>in Year B, the Year of Mark</b> |                   |                |             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------|
| <b>Sunday 24 January - 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany</b>                             |                   |                |             |
| Jonah 3: 1-5, 10                                                                     | Ps 62: 5-12       | 1 Cor 7: 29-31 | Mk 1: 14-20 |
| <b>Sunday 31 January - 4th Sunday after the Epiphany</b>                             |                   |                |             |
| Deut 18: 15-20                                                                       | Ps 111            | 1 Cor 8: 1-13  | Mk 1: 21-28 |
| <b>Sunday 7 February - 5th Sunday after the Epiphany</b>                             |                   |                |             |
| Is 40: 21-31                                                                         | Ps 147: 1-11, 20c | 1 Cor 9: 16-23 | Mk 1: 29-39 |

| <b>Lectionary readings, 6 December 2020 to 17 January 2021<br/>in Year B, the Year of Mark</b> |                    |                    |                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Sunday 6 December - 2nd Sunday in Advent</b>                                                |                    |                    |                     |
| Is 40: 1-11                                                                                    | Ps 85: 1-2, 8-13   | 2 Peter 3: 8-15a   | Mk 1: 1-8           |
| <b>Sunday 13 December—3rd Sunday in Advent</b>                                                 |                    |                    |                     |
| Is 61: 1-4, 8-11                                                                               | Ps 126             | 1 Thess 5: 16-24   | Jn 1: 6-8, 19-28    |
| <b>Sunday 20 December - 3rd Sunday of Advent</b>                                               |                    |                    |                     |
| Is 61: 1-4, 8-11                                                                               | Ps 126             | 1 Thess 5: 16-24   | Jn 1: 6-8, 19-28    |
| <b>Sunday 20 December - 4th Sunday in Advent</b>                                               |                    |                    |                     |
| 2 Sam 7: 1-11, 16                                                                              | Ps 89: 1-4, 19-26  | Rom 16: 25-27      | Lk 1: 26-38         |
| <b>Thursday 24 December - Christmas Eve</b>                                                    |                    |                    |                     |
| Is 9: 2-7                                                                                      | Ps 96              | Titus 2: 11-14     | Lk 2: 1-14, (15-20) |
| <b>Friday 25 December - Christmas Dawn</b>                                                     |                    |                    |                     |
| Is 62: 6-12                                                                                    | Ps 97              | Titus 3: 4-7       | Lk 2: (1-7), 8-20   |
| <b>Friday 25 December - Christmas Day</b>                                                      |                    |                    |                     |
| Is 52: 7-10                                                                                    | Ps 98              | Heb 1: 1-4, (5-12) | Jn 1: 1-14          |
| <b>Sunday 27 December - 1st Sunday after Christmas</b>                                         |                    |                    |                     |
| Is 61: 10 - 62: 3                                                                              | Ps 148             | Gal 4: 4-7         | Lk 2: 22-40         |
| <b>Sunday 3 January - 2nd Sunday after Christmas</b>                                           |                    |                    |                     |
| Jer 31: 7-14                                                                                   | Ps 147: 12-20      | Eph 1: 3-14        | Jn 1: (1-9), 10-18  |
| <b>Monday 6 January - Epiphany</b>                                                             |                    |                    |                     |
| Is 60: 1-6                                                                                     | Ps 72: 1-7, 10-14  | Eph 3: 1-12        | Mt 2: 1-12          |
| <b>Sunday 10 January - 1st Sunday after the Epiphany</b>                                       |                    |                    |                     |
| Gen 1: 1-5                                                                                     | Ps 29              | Acts 19: 1-7       | Mk 1: 4-11          |
| <b>Sunday 17 January - 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany</b>                                       |                    |                    |                     |
| 1 Sam 3: 1-10, (11-20)                                                                         | Ps 139: 1-6, 13-18 | 1 Cor 6: 12-20     | Jn 1: 43-51         |

**Coming up @ Opoho Presbyterian Church in  
December 2020 and January 2021**

|                                                |                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 December ~ Wednesday                         | 7.30 p.m.: Ministry Settlement Board,<br>Morrison Lounge                                                   |
| 3 December ~ Thursday                          | 7.30 p.m.: Bible Book of the Month:<br><i>Hebrews</i> , 129 Signal Hill Road                               |
| 6 December ~ Sunday                            | 10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Graeme Munro,<br>Quarterly Communion<br>11.30 a.m.: Choir practice in church    |
| 10 December ~ Thursday                         | 2 p.m.: Fellowship Group, Morrison Lounge                                                                  |
| 13 December ~ Sunday                           | 10 a.m.: Worship, Mary Somerville<br>11.30 a.m.: Choir practice in church                                  |
| 17 December ~ Thursday                         | 7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, 50 Grey Street                                                                  |
| 20 December ~ Sunday                           | 9.15 a.m.: Choir practice in church<br>10 a.m.: Worship, Service of Lessons and<br>Carols, Gregor Macaulay |
| 24 December ~ Thursday                         | 11.30 p.m.: Christmas Eve service, the<br>Rev. Anne Thomson                                                |
| 25 December ~ Friday                           | 10 a.m.: Christmas Day service, the Rev.<br>Jordan Redding                                                 |
| 27 December ~ Sunday                           | 10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Anne Thomson                                                                    |
|                                                |                                                                                                            |
| 3 January ~ Sunday                             | 10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Graeme Munro,<br>Communion                                                      |
| 10 January ~ Sunday                            | 10 a.m.: Worship, Jane Bloore                                                                              |
| 17 January ~ Sunday                            | <b>No morning service at Opoho</b><br>10.30 a.m.: worship at Dunedin Hospital<br>Chapel                    |
| 24 January ~ Sunday                            | 10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Anne Thomson                                                                    |
| 31 January ~ Sunday                            | 10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Professor<br>Murray Rae                                                         |
| The calendar for the February 2021 is on P. 14 |                                                                                                            |

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*via email*