

Ōpoho Signal

The newsletter of Ōpoho Presbyterian Church

50 Signal Hill Road, Ōpoho, Dunedin 9010



September 2024

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

Editorial

One aspect of my job as a zoologist is that I need to identify animal species. Sometimes that is quite difficult: so-called “cryptic species” look identical to other species at first glance (and sometimes at second glance, too!).

But other times, what is needed is a trained eye. As with most things, experience makes the task easier.

Take, for example, the two “sparrows” that have been introduced to Aotearoa New Zealand. The House Sparrow is a true sparrow (by which I mean it is in one of the groups scientists call sparrows!). Technically, it is an Old World Sparrow, unrelated to the New World Sparrows.

Male House Sparrows are strikingly patterned, with a black chin and bib, a grey crown, and a broad chestnut stripe from the eye onto the bird’s back. Females are considerably duller overall, but both sexes are more-or-less uniformly pale underneath and, diagnostically, have a short strong beak.

The Hedge Sparrow is, however, not a sparrow. It is an accentor. (Yes, I know, that is hardly an explanation!) This species is also called the Dunnock, a name considered by the British Ornithologists’ Union to be “briefer, more accurate and of longer standing.” In fact, the word dunnock dates back to the 15th century.

The Dunnock really does look different, though, with a narrow, pointed bill and a more uniform dull grey-brown plumage. But from afar, the easiest way to tell these two sparrows apart is their song. Dunnocks sing a fast, wandering, high-pitched warble; House Sparrows cheap cheerfully.

It is important, as I often need to remind myself, to look beyond this species label. There is much more to an animal than just what species it is. Obviously, the bird’s sex is important. Male and female House Sparrows look rather different; male and female Dunnocks hardly differ at all.

There is also intriguing geographical variation, small plumage differences among populations from different places. Genetic investigation of such differences has often shown, however, that such differences are superficial.

Sparrows appear several times in the Bible. Never, however, is the species clearly identified. Both House Sparrows and Dunnocks occur in the Middle East (although Dunnocks do so only during the winter). And, to complicate matters, there are also other sparrows, such as the Dead Sea Sparrow, a real sparrow, closely related to the House Sparrow.

Biblical sparrows often take the role of something apparently insignificant. You can buy two for a penny (five on a good day). God values you more than a flock of sparrows, and yet God cares for each one of them, too.

So, clearly, sometimes the label is important. Which sparrow is skulking in the undergrowth of the garden might be a burning question for a young

birdwatcher. Or, if you are feeding the birds, the sort of food you offer will affect which sparrow (if any) you attract.

But in making a metaphor for something small, the label hardly matters. To me this reinforces just how labels have a role in our world, but they are by no means the heart of the matter. *Hamish Spencer*

Parish Council News

The Council met on 15 August.

Members had previously agreed, after email consultation, to set the Annual Meeting for Sunday 6 October after morning worship. The meeting considered the draft budget for consideration at the Annual Meeting and recommended that it be adopted in principle (that wording allows for flexibility if any unexpected expenditure should become necessary).

A revised Health and Safety Manual was approved for use (thank you in particular to John Roxborough for his work on that).

It was noted that a draft Environment Policy was nearing completion and that the Our Place Task Group was also working on a report for the Annual Meeting.

One of the agenda items at the Annual Meeting will be the election of Parish Council members and elders. Current Council members whose three-year terms are expiring will need to be re-elected (if they wish to stand). It is also possible to elect additional members of the Council. If you would like to nominate someone to be on the Council, please first get their agreement and then send this nomination to me (Gregor Macaulay). The Parish Council will be recommending to the Annual Meeting that current Council members Julie Mander and Mark Ranby be elected to be ordained and inducted as elders. The congregation may also nominate other members of the congregation to be elders, subject to their consent. Again, any nominations should be sent to me. Parish Councillors do not need to be elders, and not all elders need to be on the Council. Any nominations should be submitted by 15 September so they can be included in the printed agenda with the annual reports.

Gregor Macaulay on behalf of the Parish Council

Property and Finance Committee Update

What a gold medal team “rowing meeting” (the Committee met on 7 August) – thanks everyone for all the work that has gone on over the month. Here’s a list of meeting Olympic medal winners!

- Sanel – for agreeing to present the budget at the August Parish Council meeting.
- Michael – the building roof design plans you have drawn up are amazing.
- Benjamin – for documenting all your knowledge and expertise for church set-up.
- John – for revising the health and safety policy (longest outstanding overdue item on our minutes I might say).
- John / Benjamin – for your work in creating a hall sound system.
- Judy – for pulling together the 2025 draft budget and making it all so transparent.
- Miriam – for walking Tinks the dog and commandeering neighbourhood support for the Seed Exchange and tree pruning.
- Meegan – we missed you but tried out all the cups!
- Clare – we missed you too.

Rock on, I say...or should I say row on?

Miriam Vollweiler (Committee convener – or coxswain!)

The cox is the only person on a boat during a race who doesn't hold an oar. Although it may look as though they simply shout encouragement to the rest of the crew, a cox also has to steer the boat by guiding the boat's rudder, keep motivation as high as possible and also offer feedback after the race.



Donations to Ōpoho Presbyterian Church

Thank you to all those who participate in the life of our church and help make it possible to support its work. If you are not already an electronic donor through online banking and would like to donate in this way, the details are:

ANZ bank, Opoho Presbyterian Deacons' Court;
Account Number: 06 0909 0010868 000.

Please put your name and the word Donation in the data fields. It would be helpful if you could let our Treasurer, Judy Rodda, know, so that receipts for charitable donations can be sent to you. Her email is Judith L Rodda opoho_pcbusiness@gmail.com

As well as regular outgoings there are maintenance items on the building and grounds which we will be seeking to raise funds for over the next few years. If you are interested in supporting these, please be in touch.

We acknowledge that people's circumstances are personal, and that they vary over time and with things that happen in our lives. It is important to know that there will be times when it is appropriate to reduce your giving to the church, and you do not need to apologise for doing that.

The income and expenditure of the church is examined each month by the Property and Finance Committee and reported to the Parish Council. The church's financial year runs to the end of June and an annual budget is presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting. Thank you.

Property and Finance Committee

Opoho Presbyterian CHURCH FAIR



Saturday

19 October 2024

10 am to 1pm

Opoho Presbyterian Church
Corner of Signal Hill Rd and Farquharson St

All are welcome!
Come and shop for bargains
with your neighbours

**Please note that donations can be dropped off
at the church starting in October.**

Gone to Seed

Thanks to Roger Sinclair from Grandview Crescent who gave his time to install our Seed Exchange on the Signal Hill Road fence.



Gone to SEED



Supporting communities to sow, grow,
and share seeds

fb: **Gone to SEED**
gonetoseednz@gmail.com

Presbyterian Support Foodbank



You can bring goods (nothing frozen or perishable) to church on any Sunday or you can make a cash donation for the Foodbank via their website www.psootago.org.nz

Non-food items such as toiletries are also acceptable.

Operation Cover Up

Knitting continues for Mission Without Borders to provide woollen blankets and clothing to cold parts of the world where such goods are not readily available.



As usual we need knitters to make squares – there's lots of wool available.

Any queries please contact me at 027 473 6026 or weavermariane@gmail.com
Marian Weaver

Keeping in Touch at Opoho Church

Opoho Church has a website, www.opohochurch.org, where 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

This newsletter is emailed to all who have requested to receive it this way. If you wish to be added to (or deleted from) the email list, or **if you receive an emailed copy and don't need a physical copy as well**, please send an email to the editor, Gregor Macaulay, at gregor.macaulay@outlook.com

Interfaith Matters

You may remember in the August *Signal* I presented the thought provoking words that Colin Gibson had written for the National Interfaith Forum back in 2014. Then Gregor found the passage below in the *Dunedin Methodist Parish Bulletin* of 15 June 2014.

It is by Colin about his processes as he wrote the words for the song to cover widely different faith traditions, including Baha'i, Islam, Buddhism, Hare Krishna, Mormon, Brahma Kamari, and Christians of various denominations. He had years before prepared another song for the sharing of the 3 Abrahamic faiths. (I have taken the liberty of italicising the song words for the 2014 Forum.)

“When Greg [Hughson] suggested a further song, I found myself struggling to put into words a text that could be sung by an even broader range of faith communities. The first half of the eventual text came most easily, when I happened to see – in another context altogether – an image of two hands reaching out to touch fingers. It was Michelangelo’s painting on the roof of the Sistine Chapel of God creating Adam. That gave me:

‘Hold hands, people of faith, sister and brother, hands of the world reaching out, one to another. All of us seeking in our own way the One to whom we pray.’

Parallel lines, simple variations on that idea, quickly followed:

‘Share minds, people of faith, seek to discover. Minds of the world, reaching out, shall we uncover—all of us seeking in our own way—the Truth for which we pray. Speak souls, people of faith, one Soul of the world, binding us all each to the other to the other; all of us seeking in our own way your unity, this day.’

But the real challenge lay ahead. How to find agreed words or phrases referring to the divine, that Being all faiths recognize as the ultimate end of the human spiritual quest. I started bravely with ‘rose, wind and flame, Word, Life and Way, love’, but soon saw how heavily Christian such terms were. I tried to find other images truer to the genius of other faiths: I knew that the name of God was not to be spoken or written in some faiths, I had read that ‘Om’ is a mantra and mystical Sanskrit sound of Hindu origin. ‘Rose’ was replaced by the Lotus (or Padma), precious symbol for Indian faiths and Buddhists of the final purification of body, speech and mind leading to escape from this world into the infinite, for the lotus grows up from the mud (samsara), appearing cleanly above the muddy waters (purification) to finally produce a beautiful flower (enlightenment). Here is the chorus line in its final form: it will be sung in a growing multiplicity of voices, ending in a dense chord that will be left to die away into the silence.

‘Lotus, Light and Wind, spoken Word, unspoken Name, Life and Way, O sacred Sound, purest Love, our being’s Ground, Alpha, Omega, our end, ever-present, loving Friend.’

I hope that such a song may, in Rod's words, 'help Christians engage creatively with many other religious traditions.' Colin Gibson"

['Rod' is Rod Mitchell]

I find it fascinating to see the effort and true spirit he put into coming up with these beautiful words.

Bronwen Strang

Lectionary for September and October

Creation 1-29 September			
Sunday 1 September – Pentecost 15			
Song Sol 2: 8-13	Ps 45: 1-2, 6-9	James 1: 17-27	Mk 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23
Sunday 8 September – Pentecost 16			
Prov 22: 1-2, 8-9, 22-23	Ps 125	James 2: 1-10 (11-13), 14-17	Mk 7: 24-37
Sunday 15 September – Pentecost 17			
Prov 1: 20-33	Ps 19	James 3: 1-12	Mk 8: 27-38
Sunday 22 September – Pentecost 18			
Prov 31: 10-31	Ps 1	James 3: 13-4: 3, 7-8a	Mk 9: 30-37
Sunday 29 September – Pentecost 19			
Esther 7: 1-6, 9-10, 9: 20-22	Ps 124	James 5: 13-20	Mk 9: 38-50
Sunday 6 October – Pentecost 20			
Job 1: 1, 2: 1-10	Ps 26	Heb 1: 1-4, 2: 5-12	Mk 10: 2-16
Sunday 13 October – Pentecost 21			
Job 23: 1-9, 16-17	Ps 22: 1-15	Heb 4: 12-16	Mk 10: 17-31
Sunday 20 October – Pentecost 22			
Job 38: 1-7, (34-41)	Ps 104: 1-9, 24, 35c	Heb 5: 1-10	Mk 10: 35-45
Sunday 27 October – Pentecost 23			
Job 42: 1-6, 10-17	Ps 34: 1-8, (19-22)	Heb 7: 23-28	Mk 10: 46-52

Coming Events at Ōpoho Presbyterian Church September and October 2024

1 September ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, Quarterly Communion
8 September ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Anne Thomson
11 September ~ Wednesday	7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Morrison Lounge
12 September ~ Thursday	2 p.m.: Fellowship Group, Morrison Lounge
15 September ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind
19 September ~ Thursday	7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, Morrison Lounge
20 September ~ Friday	Material due for October <i>Ōpoho Signal</i>
22 September ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind
29 September ~ Sunday	Daylight saving begins – clocks go <i>forward</i> one hour 10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Greg Hughson
6 October ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, World Communion Sunday, followed by Annual Meeting
9 October ~ Wednesday	7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Morrison Lounge
10 October ~ Thursday	2 p.m.: Fellowship Group, Morrison Lounge
13 October ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Abby Smith
17 October ~ Thursday	7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, Morrison Lounge
19 October ~ Saturday	10 a.m.-1 p.m.: Church Fair
20 October ~ Sunday	Material due for November <i>Ōpoho Signal</i> 10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind followed by ‘last chance pickings’ from the Fair in the hall
27 October ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind
28 October ~ Monday	Labour Day – public holiday
29 October ~ Tuesday	7.30 p.m.: Christian Development Committee, Morrison Lounge

Deadline for next *Ōpoho Signal* – Friday 20 September

Please send all material for the next *Ōpoho Signal* to
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email gregor.macaulay@outlook.com