

Ōpoho Signal

The newsletter of Ōpoho Presbyterian Church

50 Signal Hill Road, Ōpoho, Dunedin 9010



April 2026

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

Editorial – Land in Aotearoa New Zealand

Do we take land, and the things on it, for granted? The Bible was written in a time when consideration of the use of land was not mentioned a great deal. The ratio of people to land was very low, and there was no need to cultivate areas that were already full of forests or shrubs. Cultivation tended to be close to water bodies, ditto settlements, because of the need for fresh water for human and stock consumption and irrigation.

As humans multiplied and headed for cities, the water and food had to be moved from where it was generated to the cities. We now have several billion people worldwide living in cities, and the demand for goods and services to be brought into those cities is unrelenting. The pressure on the land to produce the food for the city dwellers is increasing.

New Zealand is an exporter of food, and it often reaches heavily-populated areas such as Asia and the USA. Dairy products are a significant part of what is exported. Dairy farms were traditionally in flat areas in New Zealand with enough rainfall to sustain the grass for grazing (Southland, Waikato). In the last few decades, we have seen dairy farms being established in areas not usually associated with dairying, such as Central Otago and the Mackenzie Country. As those areas have low rainfall, very sophisticated irrigation systems must be installed.

At the same time, sheep and also beef cattle continue to roam huge areas of New Zealand. These include the hilly parts of New Zealand. Similarly, some remaining wetlands (swamps) that have not been drained and cultivated contain rare and endangered plants.

It is in the hilly and wetland parts of the land that have not been subject to intensive grazing that remnants of our indigenous vegetation and associated fauna remain.

In the past, District Councils have had District Plans that identified areas of significant vegetation and/or landscape, with rules about not developing those areas. Also, some vegetation types were protected irrespective of where they are. Waitaki spent almost five years working with land owners to identify remaining areas of indigenous vegetation and fauna, to put in its new District Plan. (The same process was undertaken for heritage sites and buildings, and places of significance for Māori). The new plan was put out for public submission and was in the process of heading for completion when the

Government required most of the new plan to be withdrawn, because a replacement for the Resource Management Act is pending. This has happened to all Councils in New Zealand that had District Plans or changes to them in process.

The Government's proposed Natural Environment Bill and Planning Bill will have significant implications for how indigenous biodiversity is protected, managed and restored.

New 'regulatory relief' frameworks could see councils having to compensate private landowners when applying indigenous biodiversity rules to their property, including Significant Natural Area overlays, urban tree protections and vegetation clearance rules.

Compensation includes land swaps and payments.

Environmental limits will have to be set for indigenous biodiversity, but only after balancing economic and social considerations. Regulators are then constrained in how they defend those limits.

A specific aim of no net loss of indigenous biodiversity is ambitiously proposed, but how strong will this direction be in practice when it has no priority in the shopping list of other system goals? How is no net loss even calculated?

How do we put a dollar value on a tussocky hillside, a population of skinks, a rare moth, a forest of indigenous trees?

This approach in the new bills is based on the notion of individual property rights, and the belief that one should be unrestrained in what you do on your land, as long as it doesn't affect anyone else at the time.

Land is eternal. We rely on it for so much. In comparison, human life is fleeting, yet in that fleeting time we can permanently destroy so much on the land, such that future generations will never know what used to be there. Although a legal title may in our name, we are caretakers of the land, while we are here. Must we destroy the remaining remnants of indigenous shrub and forest land and fauna in the interests of trade?

Marian Weaver

Parish Council News

The first substantive meeting of the Council for the year was held on 26 February (too late in the month to be reported in the March *Signal*). Much of the business was routine, but an important decision was made to accept quotations for dealing with the asbestos in the church, and the work should be completed in the coming weeks.

The matter of buying new or replacement hymnbooks was also considered. Since then, however, there have been two important developments. First, we have received a generous gift of copies of *With One Voice* from the Coastal Unity Parish (they are in the process of selling their Caversham church in Thorn Street to a Samoan Methodist congregation), together with some copies of the *New International Version Bible*. And second, just before going to press, it was reported that the hymnbooks and the copies of *The Good News Bible* from the church have not been contaminated with asbestos, or have been cleaned, and do not need to be disposed of after all.

It was also agreed to revive the custom of having potluck lunches from time to time (probably about quarterly) after morning worship, on dates to be determined by the Minister and Parish Clerk.

The latest Council meeting was on 26 March. The Council reviewed, and agreed to endorse, several proposals from the last General Assembly concerning procedural and administrative matters. There was also discussion about the parish's processes for meeting regulatory requirements and reporting information both to our own Annual Meetings and to the Charities Commission – a work in progress.

Gregor Macaulay on behalf of the Parish Council

Jam Palace

The Jam Palace is open every day in the Hall Lobby – you'll find jams, jellies, preserves, and chutneys. Just help yourself and follow the instructions for paying.



Property and Finance Committee Update

Our March meeting reviewed our asbestos clean-up plan which will be actioned in the next weeks. We look forward to notifying you when we are able to return to the church. Other business has focused on nuts and bolts activities. With so many groups using our building each week, we have set up a supplies order for paper towels and toilet paper and are sorting out the best storage location. All our user groups are letting us know they are enjoying the warm and welcoming space of our buildings. We have reviewed the condition of cups and mugs in the kitchen and replaced some with new ones. Making sure our bank signatories are current is under way. We have door locks and painting on our agenda and these will be actioned when we are back in the church building. We will then be focusing on our roof replacement plan. Thank you to Brian Cunningham for his painting of visibility lines on our steps – most recently on the wooden deck outside the Morrison Lounge.

- Please let us know if you have any ideas, issues, health and safety concerns – talk to anyone on our committee

Miriam, John, Benjamin, Meegan, Judy

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 outings 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

In the Garden



Thank you to Michael and Jason for gifting our garden (and helping to plant) a Nandina shrub, also known as Japanese or sacred bamboo. This is a hardy shrub that has beautiful foliage colour during autumn and others retain their bright colours year-round. Nandinas are multi-stemmed with small cream flowers and red berries.



Interfaith Matters

Ramadan is a sacred and deeply meaningful month observed by Muslims around the world. It is a time of fasting from dawn to sunset, prayer, compassion, gratitude, and self-discipline. More than abstaining from food and drink, Ramadan is a spiritual journey – a conscious pause to reconnect with faith, values, and the essence of humanity.

Ramadan reminds us to slow down in a fast-moving world. It teaches patience, humility, generosity, and empathy. In a world facing uncertainty, stress, and division, cultural and religious observances such as Ramadan are powerful anchors. They remind us that diversity is not a weakness, but a strength – a shared human tapestry where different beliefs coexist with mutual respect. Even amidst challenges, these traditions help communities remain grounded, compassionate, and united.

On the evening of Wednesday 5 March, at Mornington Methodist Church, people of different faiths came together for a Ramadan Friendship Evening. The evening was organised by the Pearl of the Islands Foundation Inc. (PIF), and the Dunedin Interfaith Council. PIF is a not-for-profit organisation established in 2006. It is dedicated to celebrating diversity and fostering social cohesion among cultures.

People were treated to an evening of dialogue, connection, cultural appreciation and a special musical performance. The guest speaker was the Rev. Dr. Professor Douglas Pratt (*pictured right*) from Cromwell. His theme was Dignity, Justice and Kindness. In his talk, he referred to the Golden Rule – "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31). There are variations of this rule across all religious traditions. Effectively everyone wants to live in peace. Effectively everyone wants to get on with their neighbour and not be afraid of warfare coming in, which sadly is not the case in the Middle East.



Mark Bevin gave a piano recital, playing *Arabesque No. 1* by French composer, Claude Debussy. The Arabesque in French means "in the Arabic style". The music was highly ornamental, lyrical, rippling, and evoked the complex decorative patterns of Islamic art.

Professor Pratt also spoke of hospitality being a way to live in harmony with our neighbours. Mornington Methodist Church did this very well by providing an enjoyable Turkish meal at 8.26 pm, the time on 5 March that the fast during Ramadan was broken at sunset, which is marked by the Islamic call to prayer.

A highlight of the evening was the Rev. Greg Hughson (*pictured at right*) being presented with a PIF Community Leadership Award by the PIF Executive Director, Mr Yalcin Solak. The award is in recognition of “outstanding efforts in fostering a deeper understanding of diverse faiths and cultures in our multi-faith society” (words inscribed on the trophy presented on the night).



Greg was instrumental in establishing the Dunedin Abrahamic Interfaith Group in 2001 and the Dunedin Interfaith Council in 2013. Places where people of different faiths can find peace and harmony. Greg also spent 20 years as an Ecumenical Chaplain at the University of Otago, providing pastoral support to staff and students. This award is well deserved.

Benjamin Thew

Operation Cover Up

Knitted woollen squares (20cmx20cm) are still needed to make blankets for to cold parts of the world where such goods are not readily available.

The Mission Without Borders coordinator has suggested using darker wool colours, as some of the blankets are used by homeless people, and light colours can get discoloured easily. Knitted wool garments for children older than five, teenagers, and adults also welcome (scarves, gloves, hats, jumpers). No baby or toddler garments thanks.



Marian Weaver

Prayer from 15 March Service

Good morning God,

We are in the season of Lent,

It feels like the Exodus,

We stop, we rest, we assemble the Tabernacle, we align the chairs in accordance to your cosmology.

When your presence moves on, we disassemble our church and walk into the desert of our week.

Who follows us in the week: the Ukuleles, the Yoga, the Tai Chi, the Kungfu – Careful as you go!

Lent comes in autumn for us, after a mediocre summer now is the season of settled weather,

At least some of the days!

The thistledown rides the winds; leaves are already changing colour and falling,

The lengthening season in autumn has its own discipleship and self-examination.

The ripening harvest brings its own reward, the nights are closing in earlier now,

The Christ turns his face to Jerusalem, the suffering and the cross.

Avert your eyes, the Christ is riding by – we hope to make it home, back into our own sanctuary.

Outside the control of our four walls we see the clash of empires.

The Bible has no word for Empire, only for Kingdom.

We recognise the Kingdom of God, or Heaven; and the kingdom of Caesar, of powerbrokers and traders in human flesh and coin.

We pray for citizens who have to choose between bad government or the complete collapse of government.

We pray for those who claim to be agents of freedom.

What are the limits on our tolerance of the intolerant and the violent?

Who lies outside our inclusion? Who will be turned away empty-handed?

We wait to see the reckoning for the rich and the powerful,

for those who see themselves as sorted in their own heart's reflection.

Let us make space for the small things of the world, the things that you love:

The children you would welcome in,

The sparrows and swifts and finches that fall from the heavens,

You would have us investigate their cases.

We are ready to go out again. It is a world you have created.

Let us clear the space for others again, and take up your cause.

Let us reason with you in justice and in argument. Let us make peace.

Andrew Smith

Lectionary for April 2026

Wednesday 1 April			
Is 50: 4-9a	Ps 70	Heb 12: 1-3	Jn 13: 21-32
Thursday 2 April – Maundy Thursday			
Ex 12: 1-4, (5-10), 11-14	Ps 116: 1-2, 12-19	1 Cor 11: 23-26	Jn 13: 1-17, 31b-35
Friday 3 April – Good Friday			
Is 52: 13- 53:12	Ps 22	Heb 10: 16-25 <i>or</i> Heb 4:14-16;5:7-9	Jn 18: 1-19:42
Saturday 4 April – Holy Saturday			
Job 14: 1-14 <i>or</i> Lam 3: 1-9, 19-24	Ps 31: 1-4, 15-16	1 Peter 4: 1-8	Mt 27: 57-66 <i>or</i> Jn 19: 38-42
Sunday 5 April – Easter Sunday Dawn			
Ex 14: 10-31; 15:20-21	Ps 114	Rom 6: 3-11	Mt 28: 1-10
Sunday 5 April – Easter Day			
Acts 10: 34-43 <i>or</i> Jer 31: 1-6	Ps 118: 1-2, 14-24	Col 3: 1-4 <i>or</i> Acts 10: 34-43	Jn 20: 1-18 <i>or</i> Mt 28: 1-10
Sunday 12 April – 2nd Sunday of Easter			
Acts 2: 14a, 22-32	Ps 16	1 Peter 1: 3-9	Jn 20: 19-31
Sunday 19 April – 3rd Sunday of Easter			
Acts 2: 14a, 36-41	Ps 116: 1-4, 12-19	1 Peter 1: 17-23	Lk 24: 13-35
Sunday 26 April – 4th Sunday of Easter			
Acts 2: 42-47	Ps 23	1 Peter 2: 19-25	Jn 10: 1-10

Deadline for next *Ōpoho Signal* – Monday 20 April

Please send all material for the next *Ōpoho Signal* to
Gregor Macaulay, 88 Forfar Street, Mornington, Dunedin 9011,
email gregor.macaulay@outlook.com

Lectionary for May 2026

Sunday 3 May – 5th Sunday of Easter			
Acts 7: 55-60	Ps 31: 1-5, 15-16	1 Peter 2: 2-10	Jn 14: 1-14
Sunday 10 May – 6th Sunday of Easter			
Acts 17: 22-31	Ps 66: 8-20	1 Peter 3: 13-22	Jn 14: 15-21
Thursday 14 May – Ascension			
Acts 1: 1-11	Ps 47 or Ps 93	Eph 1: 15-23	Lk 24: 44-53
Sunday 17 May – 7th Sunday of Easter/Ascension Sunday			
Acts 1: 6-14	Ps 68: 1-10, 32-35	1 Peter 4: 12-14; 5: 6-11	Jn 17: 1-11
Sunday 24 May – Pentecost			
Acts 2: 1-21 or Num 11:24-30	Ps 104: 24-34, 35b	1 Cor 12: 3b-13 <i>or</i> Acts 2: 1-21	Jn 20: 19-23 <i>or</i> Jn 7: 37-39
Sunday 31 May - Trinity Sunday			
Gen 1: 1-2:4a	Ps 8	2 Cor 13: 11-13	Mt 28: 16-20

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 Food Bank via their website www.psotago.org.nz (Note their new logo).



Coming Events: April and May 2026

3 April ~ Good Friday	10 a.m.: Good Friday service, the Rev. Clare Lind
5 April ~ Easter Sunday	Daylight saving ends – clocks go <i>back</i> one hour 10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, Communion
6 April ~ Easter Monday	Public holiday
8 April ~ Wednesday	7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Minister's Office
9 April ~ Thursday	2 p.m.: Fellowship Group, Morrison Lounge
12 April ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Jay Robinson; Sunday School
19 April ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind
20 April ~ Monday	Material due for May <i>Opoho Signal</i>
21 April ~ Monday	Easter Monday – public holiday
23 April ~ Thursday	7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, Morrison Lounge
25 April ~ Saturday	ANZAC Day
26 April ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind
27 April ~ Monday	Public holiday
3 May ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, Communion*
5 May ~ Tuesday	7.30 p.m.: Christian Development Committee, Morrison Lounge
10 May ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Benjamin Thew*
13 May ~ Wednesday	7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Minister's Office
14 May ~ Thursday	2 p.m.: Fellowship Group, Morrison Lounge
17 May ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Mary Somerville*
20 May ~ Wednesday	Material due for June <i>Opoho Signal</i>
24 May ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind*
28 May ~ Thursday	7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, Morrison Lounge
31 May ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Russell Thew*

* *Listening to the Word* – on the Sundays in May, after church and morning tea, Mark Ranby and Clare Lind will be leading another lectio divina using passages from Paul's letter to the Philippian church.