

Opoho Signal

The newsletter of Opoho Presbyterian Church

50 Signal Hill Road, Opoho, Dunedin 9010



October 2022

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

Editorial

Last year I visited a friend in Wellington. A local church had recently closed. My friend expressed her frustration that this had not been a community decision. My friend thought the church was a community asset and my friend was right to the extent that the premises had been a significant asset to the community.

I asked what the community did to support the church. During the conversation it became increasingly obvious that my friend thought that the church was rich. My friend had also formed the impression that church members profited from the closure of the church.

It struck me that members of the congregation were in the process of a difficult transition and were about to lose a spiritual home. The community had responded by attacking.

The particular story is complicated. It is always complicated when a church is dissolved. Many people do not understand how churches are owned and operated.

My friend's sentiments echoed those often expressed in Christchurch after the earthquake when discussing the Christ Church Cathedral. The story of the Christ Church Cathedral is a very different story involving a bespoke trust fund and specific legislation but this is also a story about a community feeling a special connection to a church. In this story, the risk of loss of a church building was evident in advance and many in the community wanted to help. Again, many in the community failed to appreciate the intricacies of "ownership" and the duties of custodians. This led to considerable tension.

A church is a lot of things. A physical church is God's house and a place of worship. It is home to a congregation. It is a sanctuary a refuge to any who would enter. A great church is often also a focal point of a community.

As congregations shrink, churches will "close". Communities will lose halls, meeting rooms, and gardens.

Continuing the burden of maintaining large buildings will not always be the best use of the resources in an area. Difficult decisions will be made between ministry, outreach, community support, and maintaining buildings.

If a church is not supported in a community then, sooner or later, there will need to be a discussion about the viability of buildings and long term maintenance costs.

Wider communities will not decide the fate of a church because they are not stakeholders. Wider communities may indirectly affect the fate of a church by way of support. I doubt that communities appreciate this point and when a community learns that a church will “close”, it will be too late.

As society becomes increasingly secular, I expect that there will be further debates as to the charitable status afforded to religious entities. If society does not benefit from churches, or if people are unaware of the ways they benefit, then this debate may be lost.

The time has come for Ōpoho Church to think carefully about long-term maintenance costs and aligning our maintenance strategy with our vision.

Julie Mander



SPRING WORKING BEE

Opoho Church Garden

Saturday 1 October 9 a.m. – 12 noon

You are invited to be part of a working bee to do a tidy-up of the garden and to tackle the spring growth.

The more people we have the better it will look.

Bring gardening tools and gloves.

Morning tea will be provided.

Any queries contact Benjamin Thew

021 049 4264 benthew3@gmail.com

Parish Council News

At its meeting on 15 September the Council considered the draft budget that will be submitted to the Annual Meeting on 16 October. A particular item in the budget is provision for feasibility studies to inform long-term planning about our buildings and grounds.

Some of the practicalities for the political meetings on 19 and 20 September were discussed.

With changes to rules concerning Covid-19, it has been decided to resume morning tea after services from 2 October.

Gregor Macaulay on behalf of the Parish Council

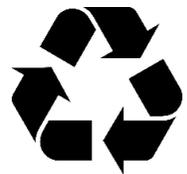
Property and Finance Committee Update

Our September meeting focused on budget preparation for forwarding to Parish Council for review. Dates have been sorted for our Spring grounds working bee (Saturday 1 October, 9 a.m.-12 noon) and for a building internal walkabout scheduled for our October meeting. This walkabout is where we get to take a close look at our internal spaces and identify areas for maintenance, repair and development. We are commencing a review of our photocopier use and thank Andrea for her oversight of this office equipment. Our church garage rental contract is being renewed with our neighbour tenants and we are looking at further investigation of drainage issues on the lawns. We welcomed Sanel, who has been checking us out over previous meetings, onto the committee. Let us know if you have any health, safety, security, maintenance, or development issues or thoughts – talk to anyone on the committee.

Miriam, John, Michael, Judy, Sanel, Brian, Benjamin

Recycling

In October we will have a recycling bin for tetra paks and similar beverage containers – large and small. It will be in the hall foyer. Please save your empty cartons and cut them up one long side and across one short end to clean them inside. You can leave the caps on. All cartons must be clean for recycling. A dirty one can contaminate a whole batch. Please also save plastic bottle caps such as milk and cream tops as they too can be recycled.



Marian Weaver



A happy day for Opoho Church and an important milestone for the Ovens family, with the baptism of Franklin late last month. If keenness to get hold of the order of service is any indication, he will be an enthusiastic churchgoer.

HM Queen Elizabeth II (1926-2022): In Memoriam



O God, from whom comes everything that is upright and true:
accept our thanks
for the gifts of heart and mind
that you bestowed on your servant Elizabeth,
and which she showed forth among us
in her words and deeds;
deal graciously, we pray,
with those who mourn,
especially the members of the Royal Family,
that casting every care on you,
they may know the consolation of your love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Anglican Church of Canada

Operation Cover Up

There has been a steady supply of peggy squares coming in, which is great. Two blankets sewn up so far and another ready to be sewn. There is some new wool in the bag at the back of the church so please get those needles clacking. If you are bored making



squares you can also make beanies, gloves, scarves and jerseys; everything needs to be wool or another warm fibre - no synthetic please. Contact me if you have any questions at 027 473 6026 or weavermariane@gamil.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 are not already on the email list, and would like to be, please send an email to the editor, Gregor Macaulay, at gregor.macaulay@outlook.com

We recognise that not everyone has access to email, but if you currently receive a physical copy of the *Signal* and could cope with just an email version, please ask to be added to the email list – we might save a few trees!

The Changing Shed – a review



Michael Metzger's "unplugged" rehearsal performance of his play *The Changing Shed* for the Opoho community on Saturday 10 September reminded me of the power of live theatre. With a box, some flowers, floor

tape, and a treadmill; he took the audience on a journey of growing up in Tapanui and finding his community. It was sad, funny, tense and beautiful and, with minimal props, I was there in the scene.

What for me was extra special was the support of Charlotte Goodyear, who grew up in Opoho, and her help with the advertising of this event and welcoming our local community. Charlotte's introduction of Michael, with Charlotte standing beside him as a confident trans woman, made me feel Michael's play has a particular resonance for us all.

60 people attended and \$310 was donated to the Lovelock Environment Group, which Michael chose to have supported. This group holds the lease to the Opoho Tennis Courts and maintains them for our community use. An article is in the September *Valley Voice*.

Thank you Opoho Church for providing rehearsal space to Michael and thank you Michael for sharing your performance with us.



Miriam Vollweiler

Reformation Sunday



Years ago, I asked a colleague ‘What is the point of ‘Reformation Sunday?’ His reply, ‘It is a time to ask, “is what we are teaching and preaching really the gospel – ‘good news?’” Over the years it has become increasingly clear to me that we are losing ground as a faith community because the message of the church no longer makes sense to many of our contemporaries. We have tried changing how we do things in many constructive ways and the contemporary church is very different from what I knew as a

child in the 1950s. But it has not been enough. People have grown out of the faith narrative offered in Sunday School and Bible Class and so have not had anything meaningful to pass on to their children.

The central issue is the narrative we present. People have responded to this situation in a variety of ways, from telling us what we cannot believe any more (which leaves a bare story that no longer excites faith and discipleship) to inventing new kinds of spirituality that drift off into a kind of formlessness that might inspire small groups but is too eccentric to last long.

One of the claims of Presbyterianism is that we are ‘Reformed and Reforming’. We belong to a tradition which has stood open to questioning, self-evaluation and change, but like many traditions this has become more of a memento than a motivator. Now the challenge is urgent. What are we presenting as ‘gospel’? Religion has always clung to the idea of an unchanging message but we see already in the New Testament signs of different approaches, different ways of presenting the Christian message. When I taught missiology, we looked at different ‘Redemptive Analogies’ – different ways of explaining the profound mystery of God’s ‘putting things right’ - by use of analogies (things more easily understood). So, in the New Testament we have analogies like adoption (of a child), redemption (of a slave or prisoner), justification (the pardoning of an accused). And the process has gone on. Every era of Christian history has developed its own analogies, and let go of some others, seeking ways of presenting the mystery of the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ in ways that make sense in their cultural context. Just one example; a long-isolated Papuan ethnic group traditionally resolved their deadly tribal clashes by the exchange of a ‘peace child’ – given by one

tribe to live with their enemies as a sign of reconciliation. When missionaries discovered this, they found a 'redemptive analogy' which opened a whole community to understanding, in their own way, the story of God's 'peace child'.

A challenge for our time is the embedded idea of a transactional blood sacrifice in which, it was taught, God the Father gave his only Son so that his death would appease the Father's anger at human sin. This *is* the gospel for many. We can understand this analogy in a context where traditions of sacrifice, Jewish and Roman, were influential, but the ideas on which it is based waned with time and would now be widely deplored. In our time the whole idea of sacrifice has been condemned as violent in its very nature (there is always a victim). The French social philosopher René Girard (who returned to Catholic faith mid-career) saw the death of Jesus as a radical commitment to non-violence and the inauguration of a Kingdom of Love which rejected all forms of violence, even those that might be regarded as valid. This is a challenging contemporary analogy that provides a different way of understanding and embracing the heart of what the gospel can mean for us in our bitter and angry world.

It is not the only one. I have often gone back to the early doctrine of recapitulation (*anakephalaisios*), taken from Greek rhetoric by the missionary bishop Irenaeus (d. 200 CE) to proclaim that in Christ all that is lacking in humankind is put back to what it should be, by God's own act for us. It is not transactional (a reward), it is not violent, and it is good news for all.

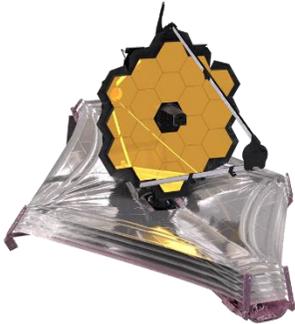
I know around us some are troubled by elements of what is understood to be Christian orthodoxy, and others are well along the track of exploring their own ways of understanding and expressing what we know by experience. In the journey of life, we can share our insights, support and encourage each other, and faithfully renew the way we understand and express our faith.

Simon Rae

Reformation Sunday falls on 30 October this year.

The customary local body election candidates' meetings held in the church on 18 and 19 September were lively and successful events. Thank you especially to the Man in the Hat Philip Somerville but also to everyone else who helped in various ways. There was an opportunity at the meetings for those attending to make donations for the Dunedin Night Shelter and a total of \$1,220.70 was collected. A proper report, with photographs, is planned for next month's *Signal*.

The James Webb Telescope 2



The James Webb telescope is a technical marvel. It can tell the physical make-up of a planet far away. It was looking for exo-planets, planets that can be seen to traverse their star. The planet in question was *wasp-39b* and the Webb Telescope was able to tell that its atmosphere contained a measurable amount of carbon dioxide.

Astronomers do not think that *wasp-39b* is capable of supporting life. There are two reasons: it is much too close to its sun and thus very hot, and there was a lack of methane in its atmosphere. It is thought that both methane and carbon dioxide must be present for there to be any question of life on a planet.

The Webb telescope will be looking at nearly a 100 of these planets in the coming months. And who knows what it will find?

Jane Anderson

Electric Cars in the USA



California has legislated that there will be no more petrol-driven cars on sale after 2035. This does not apply to secondhand cars. All new passenger and light vans sold in the state must be zero emitting (which in practice means electric-powered).

Where California goes, about 16 other states are likely to follow. If they all do, this is going to be a provision that covers a third of the US motor traders. Washington and Massachusetts have already said that they will follow California, even though California's emission standards are tougher than the federal ones are expected to be when they come out. Virginia passed a 2013 law aligning the state's emission standards with those of California. New York, Oregon, and Rhode Island are all definitely going to follow. Maryland and New Jersey are considering whether or not to instigate a ban on new petrol driven cars.

Now, electric cars are about 5.6% of those sold nationally but California's figures are higher (16%). Sceptics say that there will not be enough raw materials for batteries available for all the new electric cars. Also, they say that there is insufficient time allowed for all that needs to be organised. Chief amongst these, there is a fear that there will be insufficient charging stations for all these new cars.

You can see clearly that it is not all plain sailing! There are 60,222 electric and hybrid cars in New Zealand and clearly some problems are universal. God will provide.

Jane Anderson

Interfaith Matters

The Week of Prayer for World Peace is coming: 16-23 October. In Dunedin, on Wednesday 19 October, all are welcome at 7.30 p.m. to a special get-together at the Mornington Methodist Church, Whitby Street, to join in reflections from all faiths and pray for peace. We just go, appreciate what is said and join in the prayers.

This year the prayers reflect one theme – ongoing wars and their consequences. A leaflet with daily reflections has been prepared for worldwide distribution from the Week of Prayer for World Peace multi-faith committee based in Great Britain.

The eight days of reflections cover:

Refugees

Environmental crisis caused by wars

A prayer for our Earth

Poverty

Effects on children

Role of peacemakers in war

Humanitarian response

Uniting rather than dividing people



You can find the prayers in an attachment to the Parish Clerk's weekly message sent on 21 September or you can email me on bronwenstrang@gmail.com and I will send them back in response. You can choose a version of 2, 4, or 6 pages and receive different size print!

Bronwen Strang

Fellowship Group

We look forward to meeting at 2 p.m. on Thursday 13 October in the Morrison Lounge. All are welcome. Please wear your mask.

Twelve people enjoyed gathering on 8 September for a Spring get-together – notwithstanding the noticeable absence of spring weather that week. Christine was back from overseas, and Evelyn's son Stephen (visiting from Australia) also joined us.

In a quick round of introductions, we each talked about the places we had lived – which were many and varied. Miriam led a quick round of sharing some of our favourite things – also many and varied. Before we knew it, it was time for the delicious afternoon tea, provided once again by Chris and Miriam.

An important part of Fellowship Group meetings is our participation in the Fellowship of the Least Coin, as we bring our least coins along to each meeting.



Evelyn collects more wool, so she can keep producing more knitted squares.

Andrea Johnston



Lectionary for October and November

Sunday 2 October – 17th Sunday after Pentecost			
Lam 1: 1-6	Ps 37: 1-9 <i>or</i> Ps 137	2 Tim 1: 1-14	Lk 17: 5-10
Sunday 9 October – 18th Sunday after Pentecost			
Jer 29: 1, 4-7	Ps 66: 1-12	2 Tim 2: 8-15	Lk 17: 11-19
Sunday 16 October – 19th Sunday after Pentecost			
Jer 31: 27-34	Ps 119: 97-104	2 Tim 3: 14-4: 5	Lk 18: 1-8
Sunday 23 October – 20th Sunday after Pentecost			
Joel 2: 23-32	Ps 65	2 Tim 4: 6-8, 16-18	Lk 18: 9-14
Sunday 30 October – 21st Sunday after Pentecost			
Hab 1: 1-4, 2:1-4	Ps 119: 137-144	2 Thess 1: 1-4, 11-12	Lk 19: 1-10
Tuesday 1 November – All Saints			
Dan 7: 1-3, 15-18	Ps 149	Eph 1: 11-23	Lk 6: 20-31
Sunday 6 November – 22nd Sunday after Pentecost			
Haggai 1: 15b-2: 9	Ps 145: 1-5, 17-21 <i>or</i> Ps 98	2 Thess 2: 1-5, 13-17	Lk 20: 27-38
Sunday 13 November – 23rd Sunday after Pentecost			
Is 65: 17-25	Is 12	2 Thess 3: 6-13	Lk 21: 5-19
Sunday 20 November – Reign of Christ			
Jer 23: 1-6	Lk 1: 68-79	Col 1: 11-20	Lk 23: 33-43
Sunday 27 November – 1st Sunday of Advent			
Is 2: 1-5	Ps 122	Rom 13: 11-14	Mt 24: 36-44

Deadline for next *Opoho Signal* – Thursday 20 October

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

Coming Events at Opoho Presbyterian Church

1 October ~ Saturday	9 a.m.-12 noon: Working bee in church grounds
2 October ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, World Communion Sunday, followed by a barbecue lunch
9 October ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, John Roxborough
12 October ~ Wednesday	7 p.m.: Poems Prayers Psalms Prose – a friendly writing group, via Zoom 7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Morrison Lounge
13 October ~ Thursday	2 p.m.: Fellowship Group, Morrison Lounge 7.30 p.m.: Christian Development Committee, Morrison Lounge (or via Zoom if necessary)
16 October ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, followed by Annual Meeting
20 October ~ Thursday	7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, Morrison Lounge Material due for November <i>Opoho Signal</i>
23 October ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind
30 October ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Paul Ranby
6 November ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, Communion
9 November ~ Wednesday	7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Morrison Lounge
10 November ~ Thursday	2 p.m.: Fellowship Group, Morrison Lounge
13 November ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Anne Thomson
17 November ~ Thursday	7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, Morrison Lounge
20 November ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, John Roxborough and Gregor Macaulay Material due for December-January <i>Opoho Signal</i>
27 November ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind

Presbyterian Support Food Bank



To make a cash donation for the Food Bank, visit www.psotago.org.nz

Poems Prayers Psalms Prose – a friendly writing group



Writers from hither and yon
will be meeting on Wednesday
12 October by Zoom

Join:

<https://otago.zoom.us/j/92395184583?pwd=djdkNHYrUG96MUFJZXdlITZRvWVEyQT09>

Password: 403627

For more information, please contact Abby Smith:

027 606 3552, abigailmarionsmith@gmail.com

Abby's Jam Palace



A reminder that I am bringing jam for sale on the last Sunday of the month (30 October).

I don't currently need jars, but as fruit ripens in the gardens, think of me!

Thanks for your support!

Abby Smith