

Ōpoho Signal

The newsletter of Ōpoho Presbyterian Church

50 Signal Hill Road, Ōpoho, Dunedin 9010



December 2025 – January 2026

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

Editorial

There are a curious couple of verses in the Book of Exodus about the route of the Exodus.

When the king of Egypt let the people go, God did not take them by the road that goes up the coast to Philistia, although that was the shortest way. God thought, 'I do not want people to change their minds and return to Egypt when they see that they are going to have to fight.' Instead God led them in a roundabout way through the desert toward the Red Sea. Exodus 13:17-18

These are the days of fastest routes and efficiency, but I have been thinking about long ways round and the grace that lies in them. For the motley downtrodden communities of the Exodus, the long way round gave them time to recall that they had an older, deeper identity than Egypt's forced labour. They learned too in the subsistence existence of the wilderness to trust day to day to God. As the route stretched from the long way round to a forty-year wander, they made the transition to a free people.

Sometimes the long way round means we notice more, and we appreciate the journey's end when we might have just taken it for granted. Sometimes the long ways round are places of learning where wisdom is found. Sometimes they allow the big themes of life to emerge and our place within the big picture is discovered or rediscovered. Sometimes the long way round prepares us better for what lies ahead, than heading straight into it does.

In the long lead up to Christmas that is Advent, and in the preparations that many of you are making for holidaying during or afterward may you find the space to linger and make the journey less efficiently, and may you catch God's Christmas gift to you in that.

Clare Lind

Parish Council News

The Parish Council met on 20 November. The meeting was largely routine, receiving minutes and reports, but noted the useful work being done by the Property and Finance Committee (see their report below), by various people whose activities are coordinated by or reported to the Christian Development Committee, and on the skink project. The Council has just one further meeting scheduled for 2025 (on 18 December) and will hold a retreat on the morning of 31 January to consider plans for parish activities in 2026.

Gregor Macaulay on behalf of the Parish Council

Property and Finance Committee Update

Another busy meeting (on 12 November) with a further focus on earthquake strengthening requirements and engineering assessments. We have decided to create a separate meeting for the Roof project to allow dedicated planning.

The vestry and other door repairs are under way. Our piano has undergone its annual tuning from Adrain Mann, Alexander Piano Services (right), and we approved the South Island Organ Company to complete an assessment of maintenance and tuning requirements for our organ. Borer treatment is booked in for 22 January.

The Grant family has donated a garden seat for our grounds in memory of their mother Fay Grant – a seat that is perfect for sitting, having a cup of tea, and listening to the birds is their wish.

Our fire evacuation on 19 October (the day of the annual meeting) was completed in a record time of 1 minute 20 seconds and the congregation is to be applauded for their speedy but controlled exit.

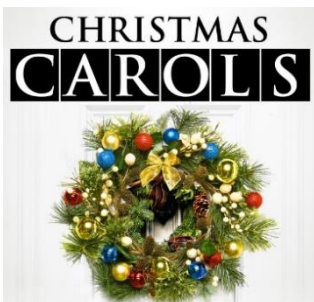
Our buildings are humming with activity – regular hall bookings cover much of the week and we have a range of one-off bookings: the Burns Reserve AGM, Scottish country dancing, and an 85th birthday afternoon in January. People are using our noticeboards to share information, people are bringing their recycling on route to classes and jam is being purchased.

Please let us know any safety, security concerns or ideas for improvement-talk with anyone on the committee.



Miriam, John, Michael, Benjamin, Meegan, Judy and Clare

Ready to get into the Spirit of Christmas?



Join us to SING YOUR HEART OUT – where we sing everybody's favourite carols.

Families, neighbours, friends, children and EVERYONE are welcome

Sunday 14 December, 2-3 p.m., at the church, 50 Signal Hill Road

Followed by afternoon tea and nibbles, and a Christmas gift ideas sales table.

We invite you to bring a koha for the Otago Community Hospice and a can for the foodbank.

An Update on Weekly Bookings at Opoho Church

Want to know what ongoing community classes are on and when? Come along and / or contact the relevant tutor.

Monday

- Yoga 10am. Cost \$10 per session (tutor, Fiona Mather, sweetfee77@gmail.com)
- Line dancing intermediate 5-6pm. Cost \$5 session (tutor, Cindy Lee, cindy.yl.admin@gmail.com)
- Line dancing beginners 6-7pm. Cost \$5 session

Tuesday

- Steady as You Go 1.30-2.30pm. Cost \$3 session (contact, Chris Young)

Wednesday

- Morrison Lounge, weaving group 9-3.30pm (no spaces available)
- Pilates beginners 4-5pm. Cost \$15 session casual (tutor, Carli Richter, bankspeninsulaphysio@gmail.com)
- Pilates.5-6pm. Cost \$15 session casual
- Ukelele group – Morrison Lounge, 6.30-8.45pm (contact, Mary Selcraig, mary.selcrag@icloud.com)

Thursday

- Kung Fu martial arts 5.45-6.45pm. (tutor, Marcus Simons, mjsimons@xtra.co.nz)
- Tai Chi 7-8.45pm. (tutor, Marcus Simons, mjsimons@xtra.co.nz)

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

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

Singers and Musicians of Ōpoho



We're going to learn the harmony for some carols during Advent.

Practices on 30 November and 7 December from 11:30 to 12.

Sing in the services on 7 and 14 December.

Do please put these dates in your diary and plan to join us in making a joyful noise. All voices welcome!

Ōpoho Writers Group

Tuesday 27 January, 7 p.m., Morrison Lounge
All writers and readers are welcome to join us.



Interfaith Matters

Recently some of us went to listen to Cole Martin, a very courageous and committed young man (he is a nephew of Selwyn and the late Natalie Yeoman who some years ago used to worship with us at Opoho), talk of his experiences in the West Bank. He had many shocking stories of illegal Israeli settler behaviour towards the rightful landowners, the Palestinians, and the complete disregard of the Israeli authorities to this – in fact worse – the encouragement of the settler behaviour by the authorities.

Resources he mentioned, useful to expand our knowledge in this regard, are those below. They can all be found by googling the name given. Worth our time.

Resources:

- Across the Divide (podcast)
- Christ in the Rubble (book)
- No Other Land (doco)
- Aotearoa Christians for Peace in Palestine
- 500 Meter Movie
- Amnesty International. 'Israeli Apartheid' course (online)
- Resistance Climbing (doco)
- Gaza Fights for Freedom (doco)
- Cole Martin himself (get in touch – google Cole Martin!)

Bronwen Strang

Our church neighbour Michael
planting out primroses gifted from his
garden





**Christian
World Service**
Celebrating 80 years

This Christmas
we are focusing
on helping our
global partners
to provide safe
water.

Give water Give life

"But let justice roll on like a river"

Amos 5:24

**Over 1.4 million people in developing countries, mainly children,
die each year from diseases caused by lack of safe water for
drinking, for hygiene, and/or for sanitation.**

World Health Organisation, 2024.

Photo: Christian World Service

DONATE NOW

www.cws.org.nz



Christian World Service Christmas appeal pamphlets (including envelopes) are enclosed with physical copies of this newsletter and are also available at the back of the church.

Fellowship Group

On 13 November the group discussed the history of our organ and looked at the elegant invitation card for an organ fund raising concert in 1959 where Dora Drake sang. While there were no memories of the concert, members knew of Dora Drake and the discussion evolved into a consensus decision was our organ was to be known as Dora! Our meeting has taken on a crop swap feel with John Roxborough bringing along impressive cabbages from his garden and Miriam bringing silver beet.



Mary Somerville shared her life story and we were entranced by the love story that brought her to Dunedin to marry John. Things we learnt about Mary was her love of cooking, Baxter their much-loved cairn terrier, her love of murder mysteries and horror stories, enjoyment of board games, and a lifelong fascination for red foxes. Mary has a tattoo of a red fox on her arm.



Afternoon tea was with our best china and a celebration of Mary's forthcoming birthday.

Miriam Vollweiler and Chris Young

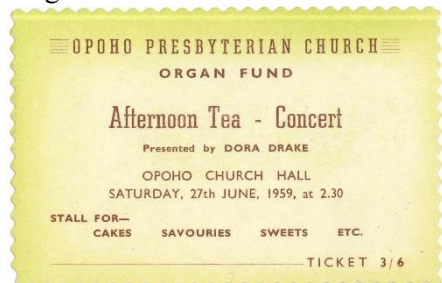
What do you know about our church organ?

Organising our annual piano tuning got some of us thinking about our organ. We have a Lindholm reed organ that must be at least 50 years old. David Murray thinks it came from the hospital chapel and tells us it was nearly disposed of at Opoho Church 25 years ago but he didn't support this. David tells us than he plays it on average for two individual hymns over the course of a month, but more often if the preachers are having a run on the 'oldies'. Our organ seems to particularly suit what Abby calls the 'ripsnorters'. We sent John Hargraves, from the South Island Organ Company, some photos and he tells us he has a similar organ made by the Lindholm company. Olof Lindholm was trained in Sweden and then set up his factory in 1894 in Borna in Saxony, eastern Germany, where his factory operated until 1972 and is now utilised as an organ museum.



John Hargraves tells us that Lindholm instruments are well made and reliable and as a rule do not need much in the way of regular tuning and repairs (*We are hoping this is true for Dora, our Opoho organ!*). Typically, providing they are not exposed to water or fire damage, excessive heat or cold, infestation by insects or rodents, they need only occasional cleaning and renewal of felt, leather, webbing, and rubber cloth parts and the replacement of any cracked reeds or springs. Sometimes borer will infest any sapwood timber present and elimination treatment will be needed. So, with this information we are looking at an assessment of its condition – I wonder what we will find.

Andrew Smith found this invitation to an organ concert at our church in 1959. We discussed this at Fellowship Group and Val and Marion both had heard of Dora Drake who was well-known as a concert singer and soloist. She lived in North East Valley and taught singing and Marion remembers a friend having lessons from her. Fellowship Group has christened our organ with the name “Dora”.



Miriam Vollweiler

Fay Grant

19 July 1931 (Kirkaldy) – 16 October 2025 (Dunedin)

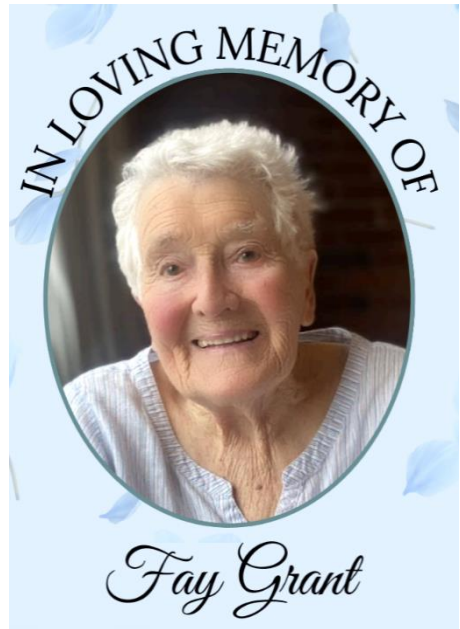
On Thursday 6 November we hosted the memorial service for Fay Grant, who died on 16 October. Fay had moved to Kurow to live with family around three years ago. It was good to be able to remember and honour her back in the church that she regarded as her church. Lovely too to have some of her family with us. There were a few attempts at her wonderful Scottish accent over the course of the afternoon. Our condolences to the Grant family.

This poem was read at the service.

A Scottish heart, a love so vast,
A great person, from first to last.
Their kindness shone, a beacon bright,
A guiding star, through darkest nights.

They stood for truth, embraced the weak,
Their love, a force, a river deep.
A life of honour, compassion and grace,
Our dear friend, forever embraced.

We'll celebrate the life they led,
A love unbroken, a path well trod,
My dear friend, forever near,
A Scottish legacy, in memory clear.



Presbyterian Support Foodbank



There is usually greater use of the Foodbank over the Christmas-New Year period. 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 Seasonal goodies are welcomed and non-food items such as toiletries are also acceptable.

Remembrance Sunday at Opoho, 9 November



Fellowship Group Christmas Lunch



An invitation is extended from the Fellowship Group to any members of the congregation to join them at 12.30 p.m. on Thursday 11 December for a Christmas lunch in the hall. We are again asking for a Koha of \$10 and promise a cracking Christmas dinner with all the trimmings. RSVP to Chris Young or Miriam Vollweiler for catering purposes; 027 473 7636.

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. A jar of jam is an excellent stocking-filler.

How many months till the Church Fair?



Not many!

We are planning to hold the now-legendary ŌPC Fair on Saturday 14 March.

You can help by letting Abby know what you might be happy to do on the day.

And of course we will be accepting donations closer to the time.

Make sure it’s in your diary!

Keeping in Touch at Ōpoho 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

Lectionary for December 2025 and January and February 2026

Sunday 7 December – 2nd Sunday of Advent			
Is 11: 1-10	Ps 72: 1-7, 18-19	Rom 15: 4-13	Mt 3: 1-12
Sunday 14 December – 3rd Sunday of Advent			
Is 35: 1-10	Ps 146: 5-10 <i>or</i> Lk 1: 46b-55	James 5: 7-10	Mt 11: 2-11
Sunday 21 December – 4th Sunday of Advent			
Is 7: 10-16	Ps 80: 1-7, 17-19	Rom 1: 1-7	Mt 1: 18-25
Wednesday 24 December – Christmas Eve			
Is 9: 2-7	Ps 96	Titus 2: 11-14	Lk 2: 1-14, (15-20)
Thursday 25 December – Christmas Dawn			
Is 62: 6-12	Ps 97	Titus 3: 4-7	Lk 2: (1-7), 8-20
Thursday 25 December – Christmas Day			
Is 52: 7-10	Ps 98	Heb 1: 1-4, (5-12)	Jn 1: 1-14
Sunday 28 December – 1st Sunday after Christmas			
Is 63: 7-9	Ps 148	Heb 2: 10-18	Mt 2: 13-23
Sunday 4 January – 2nd Sunday after Christmas			
Jer 31: 7-14 <i>or</i> Sirach 24:1-12	Ps 147:12-20 <i>or</i> Wis Sol 10:15-21	Eph 1: 3-14	Jn 1: (1-9), 10-18
Tuesday 6 January – Epiphany			
Is 60: 1-6	Ps 72: 1-7, 10-14	Eph 3: 1-12	Mt 2: 1-12
Sunday 11 January – 1st Sunday after the Epiphany (Baptism of Jesus)			
Is 42: 1-9	Ps 29	Acts 10: 34-43	Mt 3: 13-17
Sunday 18 January – 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany			
Is 49: 1-7	Ps 40: 1-11	1 Cor 1: 1-9	Jn 1: 29-42
Sunday 25 January – 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany			
Is 9: 1-4	Ps 27: 1, 4-9	1 Cor 1: 10-18	Mt 4: 12-23
Sunday 1 February – 4th Sunday after the Epiphany			
Micah 6: 1-8	Ps 15	1 Cor 1: 18-31	Mt 5: 1-12
Sunday 8 February – 5th Sunday after the Epiphany			
Is 58: 1-9a (9b-12)	Ps 112: 1-9 (10)	1 Cor 2: 1-12 (13-16)	Mt 5: 13-20

Sunday 15 February – Transfiguration			
Ex 24: 12-18	Ps 2 <i>or</i> Ps 99	2 Peter 1: 16-21	Mt 17: 1-9
Wednesday 18 February – Ash Wednesday			
Joel 2: 1-2 12-17 <i>or</i> Is 58: 1-12	Ps 51: 1-17	2 Cor 5: 20b-6: 10	Mt 6: 1-6, 16-21
Sunday 22 February – 1st Sunday in Lent			
Gen 2: 15-17 3: 1-7	Ps 32	Rom 5: 12-19	Mt 4: 1-11

Coming Events: December 2025

7 December ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, Quarterly Communion 11.30 a.m.: Advent choir practice in church
10 December ~ Wednesday	7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Morrison Lounge
11 December ~ Thursday	12.30 p.m.: Fellowship Community Christmas Lunch, in hall
14 December ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind – Lessons and Carols 2 p.m.: Sing Your Heart Out – community carol singing in church
18 December ~ Thursday	7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, 15 Gamma Street
21 December ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Julie Mander and children
24 December ~ Wednesday	11.30 p.m.: Christmas Eve service, the Rev. Clare Lind
25 December ~ Thursday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind – Christmas Day
28 December ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Benjamin Thew

Coming Events: January and February 2026

4 January ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Russell Thew, Communion
11 January ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Mary Somerville
18 January ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Abby Smith
20 January ~ Tuesday	Material due for February <i>Opoho Signal</i>
22 January ~ Thursday	Borer treatment of church, Morrison Lounge, and hall – no part of buildings to be entered from 9 p.m. Wednesday 21 January to 9 p.m. Friday 23 January
25 January ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind
27 January ~ Tuesday	7 p.m.: Writers' Group, Morrison Lounge
31 January ~ Saturday	9 a.m.-12 noon: Parish Council retreat, Morrison Lounge
1 February ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, Communion
6 February ~ Friday	Waitangi Day – public holiday
8 February ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Meegan Cloughley
10 February ~ Tuesday	7.30 p.m.: Christian Development Committee, Morrison Lounge
11 February ~ Wednesday	7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Morrison Lounge
12 February ~ Thursday	2 p.m.: Fellowship Group, Morrison Lounge
15 February ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind
20 February ~ Friday	Material due for March <i>Opoho Signal</i>
22 February ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, Harvest Thanksgiving
26 February ~ Thursday	7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, Morrison Lounge

Deadline for next *Opoho Signal* – Tuesday 20 January

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





*The Flight into Egypt, from *The Life of the Virgin* (1511)
by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528, German)*