

Ōpoho Signal

The newsletter of Ōpoho Presbyterian Church

50 Signal Hill Road, Ōpoho, Dunedin 9010



July 2023

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

Editorial

*Song of faith that sings forever
Through God's people, ages long,
Word that holds the world together
When our hearts take up the song,
Always, always somewhere sounding,
From the source we do not see,
Counterpoint to all despairing,
It is hope that sets the key.*

words Shirley Murray, music Colin Gibson FFS 57

It is hope that sets the key ... a bold claim amidst the discordant music of modern times. Daily we are bombarded with news of wars, catastrophic weather events (possibly due to climate change) which displace millions around the world, the pollution of our environment, the oppression of women and men in many countries for their race, religion or sex, and the knowledge that some of those set in power over us place greed and corruption over their duty to serve.

There can be a temptation to shrug helplessly, and say there is nothing I can do about what is happening ... *I'm* not a politician, or a scientist, or a leader with the resources to effect change. Perhaps not, but we can, as Shirley Murray says, let 'our hearts take up the song', each in our own way. When hands take up knitting needles to make peggy squares for blankets to provide warmth for those who have none, or congregations such as Opoho join Eco Church to work for the planet's health, or community gardens are established to provide food and companionship in needy neighbourhoods, then light begins to spear the darkness.

There will be many in the Opoho congregation who will remember the Nuclear Free Zones Campaign of the early 1980s which contributed strongly to the creation of a Nuclear Free New Zealand. St Andrew's in Palmerston North became part of the Nuclear Free Zones in Religious Communities, and was twinned with the Bethany United Church of Christ in Chicago. I was the contact person for the Bethany Church, and in 1987 during a visit to the United States to visit friends I, along with my husband Chris and my daughter Catriona, spent several wonderful days in Chicago, staying with the minister, meeting with the congregation, and sharing our joint hopes for a more peaceful world.

Through the Nuclear Weapon Free Campaign, ordinary citizens in New Zealand successfully used symbolic protest activity and political lobbying to achieve a

major milestone for peace and nuclear disarmament. The twinning of like-minded Christian congregations was an inspiration, and I am glad that I was able to be part of it.

Yet, more than three decades on the world seems to be in deeper peril than before.

How to practise hope then, in the face of despair at what we humans have done to ourselves, and our beautiful earth?

Trust in God's goodness, and do what we can.

*We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean.
But the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.*

Mother Teresa

Jane Bloore

Parish Council News

The Parish Council met on 15 June.

The Council noted that the Property and Finance Committee was wrestling with options for insuring our buildings and that any proposals for significant change in the future would need to be considered by the congregation at the Annual Meeting (set down for 15 October).

David Murray was appointed as an additional member of the Our Place Task Group – a report from its convener appears elsewhere in this issue.

And the Council noted that Covid and other winter illnesses were still about and decided to continue with our policy of encouraging people to wear masks at church services and of using alternate pews.

Gregor Macaulay on behalf of the Parish Council

Property and Finance Committee Update

Our June meeting had a grappling with insurance assessment requirements and forms that need to be sent in to Synod by the end of the month. Costs undoubtably will be increasing for the church insurance and we will be factoring this into budget planning. We are going ahead with replacement on the rotten external door in the children's room – replacing it with an aluminium door. Budget offerings are tracking slightly ahead of our projected budget.

Hall Bookings: A weaving group continues to use the Morrison Lounge on Wednesdays and are enjoying this space. The 'Steady as You Go' programme continues to meet on Tuesday at 1 p.m. The group now has two leaders from our community: Chris and Isla who have completed their tutor training. Cost for participants is \$3 per session.

Please make sure you check doors are locked if you are last leaving the hall, lounge, or church – we have had two recent instances of doors not locked securely. Let anyone on Property and Finance know if you have any security incidents or bright ideas – we welcome hearing from you

Miriam Vollweiler (Committee convener)

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

Poems Prayers Psalms & Prose – Ōpoho Writers' Group

Thursday 13 July, 7 p.m.

Marine Science tea room,
first floor, **310 Castle Street.**

Directions:

310 Castle Street is a square brick building (the old nurses' home) located almost on the corner of Frederick Street and the one-way

south, between Cumberland and Hayward Colleges. You can park in the spots between Cumberland and Marine Science. There is an entry on the south side of the building, facing Cumberland's front door. A large propellor is stuck to the wall next to it, so you can't miss it!



I will meet you there at 7 and let you in. Margaret, Andrew and I often run a car-pool from the northern end.

The tea room has cups, plates, tea, coffee-like powder, milk, sugar, and hot water. Maybe bring a small plate of something to share.

You can reach me on 027 606 3552 if there is any problem or question.

Abby Smith

Fellowship Group

Our monthly meeting in June celebrated a special birthday coming up over the month for Marion Rae – we have a lovely tradition of incorporating such events into our activities. We thank Fiona Stirling who joined us, sharing her journey on the development of Tumai. As usual, Chris created a sumptuous afternoon tea. Our July meeting has a winter theme – we will be planning for an August soup celebration of our favourite recipes.



Miriam Vollweiler and Chris Young

A Prayer



The Hospitality of Abraham and Sarah by Julia Stankova

On Sunday 18 June, there was one Bible reading – Genesis 18:1-15 – and Clare preached about the Hospitality of Abraham and Sarah (with illustrations chiefly by Julia Stankova, a contemporary Bulgarian icon artist – see <https://www.museumofrussianicons.org/hospitality-of-abraham/>). The following is Andrew Smith's prayer from the service.

Hello, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God, blessed Trinity,

Forgive us if we interrupted you.

Perhaps you are sitting down for tea, as the three strangers did, under the oak trees.

Do you remember the spreading branches and the green dappled light?

How wide is the table with you seated around?

Will you share it with us? Will you pass us a plate? Will you set a place at the table?

Welcome us into the hospitality of Abraham and Sarah.

Perhaps we have caught you in the ever-moving dance of being the Holy Trinity:

the perichoresis of being Father not the Son;

Son not the Spirit; Spirit not the Father.

You dance in all creation – will you not include us in the dance among your saints?

With the stars, the trees, the orcas and the things under the bed.

For the sake of ten righteous men you will preserve the world.

May you continue to find such righteous women and men in the world.

They may not know themselves.

May you continue to promise us hope. You promise us to hear the voices of our children in old age.

We may laugh, we may still hope that you will surprise us.

May we learn the art to create new things.

You have given us a soul, mind and spirit, do not let us operate as dull machines.

In a world longing for light and peace, you send us out to provide comfort for the mourning;

so give us words to say.

The world is full of violence and misinformation – we know one truth

that your love is surprising and we should expect to be surprised.

Enter into our world, and bring healing and hope.

We would like to see a righteous settlement for teachers, nurses, our hospital and our university.

The list just seems to get longer.

Bring an end to violent language, to actions done to hurt others, to wars that no one can win;

the smaller violence of families and micro-hostilities.

We would like a better world, where the storms and floods don't come,

the fields are not wastelands, and everyone is provided with enough.

Let us walk through the dark days in faith until you lead in the stars of the new year again.

We love the Lord, who hears our voice, and listens to our prayers.

The Lord listens to us, when we call on God.

The “Our Place Group”

The Parish Council and Property and Finance Committee have formed a new working group known as the *Our Place Group*.

I will be serving alongside Clare Lind, John Roxborough, Michael Ovens, and David Murray to create a report designed to assist the church to explore new opportunities to serve God and our community. It is intended that this report will also assist to allocate resources and facilitate long-term planning.

A full copy of the terms of reference for the Our Place Group appears below.

There is considerable energy and talent within our church. If you have any ideas to collaborate within the community we would be keen to hear from you.

Nāku noa, nā *Julie Mander*

Our Place

*The God we gather to worship
calls us to share the good news Jesus Christ brought us
and to help one another become part of what God is doing around us,
being actively involved in the life of our community
and nurturing each other in a fellowship of accepting love.*

Purposes

1. To provide a new tool to enable the Church to discern how it might continue to serve God.
2. To explore opportunities to:
 - a. grow within our community; and
 - b. utilise and engage available resources.
3. To facilitate long-term strategic planning and a coherent allocation of resources.

Objectives to achieve purposes

1. Providing a useful tool

- It is, for the purposes of the Our Place project, assumed that the Church has a shared belief in the desire to serve God in accordance with the calling above.

- Consider and detail available resources.
- Note any resources that are or may not be currently fully engaged.
- Note any resources that are limited in quantum or duration.

2. Explore opportunities for growth

- Detail any ideas to collaborate or partner with likeminded community groups on projects.
- Explore ways that the Church might host community events and engage with the wider community.
- Consider any funding or grants which might assist us to share the Christian faith and values in our community.
- Consider opportunities to raise funds to assist us in these objectives and to seek the support of the wider community.
- This should not usurp the work of spiritual leaders, the Parish Council, and the Christian Development Committee in establishing Christian development within the Church.

3. Facilitate planning

- Consider the costs and energy required to maintain various aspects of the Church. This needs to be done in sufficient detail to understand options to allocate energy, creativity, and finance.
- Provide an itemised account of the expected life span of building elements of the physical church.
- Note existing reports (e.g., engineering reports, electrical reports, etc.)
- Consider projected costs associated with maintaining the physical church.
- Outline expected costs associated with maintenance (e.g., the costs of a new roof) based on current estimates (noting that there may be an increase associated with inflation if works are deferred).
- Note any limitations or areas for improvement in physical building and any benefits that might be expected. This might include arranging Wi-Fi or decorating.
- Detail any assumptions.
- Detail any alternative ideas to fund ongoing costs (which may overlap to purposes 1 and 2).

Presbyterian Support Food Bank



Winter can be a tough time for some, with additional heating costs on top of normal household expenditure. 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. And non-food items such as toiletries are also acceptable.

Reflections from Indonesia

When I was ecumenical university chaplain in Bandung, West Java, in the 1970s I had the opportunity to lead a rather unstructured, international English language congregation, in what had once been the state church. This paragraph from a letter home was just a reflection – on the freedom that comes when we focus on fellowship and not structure, rules and property. The multi-ethnic congregation included visiting professors and ex-Sri Lankan tea growers, Indonesian students, and aid and development people. What do you think?

It seems to have been a very busy week – I had two services today, one in Indonesian and one in English. The English congregation is really quite interesting: I preached about Acts 2:44-47 – the church is a community of the Holy Spirit. It struck me and I talked a bit about the fact that here we have a congregation with no property and no organisation (we are part of a local Indonesian congregation but we let them do all the organising and make all the policy etc.) – so we have no fights and no one is interested in anyone's denomination, nationality or colour! Just like the church in Acts – just meeting in an open, friendly community of people from many different backgrounds – not an organistaion but a family. This is real church union. My ideas have changed a lot over the years – I think we should just forget about denominationalism and it will go away. The problem is the blessed buildings, trust funds etc. – we don't want anyone else getting their hands on them! We use a mixture of worship forms – Anglican and reformed and even make up our own to suit (communion in a circle and suchlike)) and the little congregation really does have a fellowship and mutual interest, although with everyone being busy we do not see as much of each other as we might. The nicest thing is that we also have Indonesians coming, so that it is not just an isolated little group of foreigners.

Simon Rae

Noted While Travelling

During our recent travels in the United Kingdom, we visited about 30 churches, chapels, and cathedrals (not counting ruins). We arrived at Easter so decorations for that season of the church year (and for the Coronation) were in place. I don't know how widespread the custom is, or when or where it arose (can any readers enlighten me?), but I noticed three Easter gardens – in the parish churches in Spalding and Grantham (Lincolnshire) and in Ripon Cathedral (Yorkshire).

An Easter garden (or Resurrection garden) is the Easter equivalent of a Nativity scene and consists of (at least) a model of Calvary (with three crosses) and the empty tomb. A quick Google search shows that such a garden can be a fairly simple affair in a tray or dish (e.g. at right), made as a children's activity in some churches. However, the ones I saw were on a much larger scale. In particular, the one at Ripon (below), just inside the main west door, was about three metres wide and included details such as 30 pieces of silver, a crown of thorns, three dice, and folded grave clothes.



Gregor Macaulay

Lectionary for July and August

Sunday 2 July – 5th Sunday after Pentecost			
Gen 22: 1-14	Ps 13	Rom 6: 12-23	Mt 10: 40-42
Sunday 9 July – 6th Sunday after Pentecost			
Gen 24: 34-38, 42-49, 58-67	Ps 45: 10-17 <i>or</i> Song Sol 2: 8-13	Rom 7: 15-25a	Mt 11: 16-19, 25-30
Sunday 16 July – 7th Sunday after Pentecost			
Gen 25: 19-34	Ps 119: 105-112	Rom 8: 1-11	Mt 13: 1-9, 18-23
Sunday 23 July – 8th Sunday after Pentecost			
Gen 28: 10-19a	Ps 139: 1-12, 23-24	Rom 8: 12-25	Mt 13: 24-30, 36-43
Sunday 30 July – 9th Sunday after Pentecost			
Gen 29: 15-28	Ps 105: 1-11, 45b <i>or</i> Ps 128	Rom 8: 26-39	Mt 13: 31-33, 44-52
Sunday 6 August – 10th Sunday after Pentecost			
Gen 32: 22-31	Ps 17: 1-7, 15	Rom 9: 1-5	Mt 14: 13-21
Sunday 13 August – 11th Sunday after Pentecost			
Gen 37: 1-4, 12-28	Ps 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b	Rom 10: 5-15	Mt 14: 22-33
Sunday 20 August – 12th Sunday after Pentecost			
Gen 45: 1-15	Ps 133	Rom 11: 1-2a, 29-32	Mt 15: (10-20), 21-28
Sunday 27 August – 13th Sunday after Pentecost			
Ex 1: 8-2: 10	Ps 124	Rom 12: 1-8	Mt 16: 13-20

Abby's Jam Palace



The Jam Palace will be open for business after church on 30 July.

Abby Smith abigailmarionsmith@gmail.com 027 606 3552

Operation Cover Up

This year's batch of blankets for Operation Cover Up (run by Mission Without Borders) was displayed during the service on 18 June.



The blankets have been made out of squares kindly knitted by people both within the congregation in and beyond. In the last year, nine blankets have been made, soon to be sent overseas with other knitted things from throughout New Zealand. Any donations for transport costs will be gratefully received.

Work on next year's blankets needs to start now as it is an activity that is ongoing, so please keep knitting those squares. Donations of wool gratefully accepted too. Contact me if you have any questions at 027 473 6026 or weavermariane@gmail.com

Marian Weaver

Coming Events at Ōpoho Presbyterian Church

2 July ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, Communion
9 July ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Anne Thomson
12 July ~ Wednesday	7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Morrison Lounge
13 July ~ Thursday	2 p.m.: Fellowship Group, Morrison Lounge 7 p.m.: Writing Group, Marine Science tea room, first floor, 310 Castle Street
14 July ~ Friday	Matariki – public holiday
16 July ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Russell Thew
20 July ~ Thursday	Material due for August <i>Opoho Signal</i> 7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, Morrison Lounge
23 July ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind
30 July ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Marian Weaver After church: Abby's Jam Palace
6 August ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, Communion
9 August ~ Wednesday	7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Morrison Lounge
10 August ~ Thursday	2 p.m.: Fellowship Group, Morrison Lounge
13 August ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Olivia Dawson
17 August ~ Thursday	7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, Morrison Lounge
20 August ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind Material due for September <i>Opoho Signal</i>
27 August ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind

Deadline for next *Ōpoho Signal* – Thursday 20 July

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