

# Ōpoho Signal

The newsletter of Ōpoho Presbyterian Church  
50 Signal Hill Road, Ōpoho, Dunedin 9010



*Image generated by Chat GPT using artificial intelligence with the following prompt: "an image to reflect to online sharing of the gospel using AI and social media".*

## July 2026

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# Editorial

## TikTok Jesus

Christian influencers – who are they, and should we be wary of their presence online? The helpful Google answer to this question states that:

*“they represent a modern frontier of evangelism and community, transforming social media into digital sanctuaries. They bridge the gap between organized religion and internet culture, providing millions with accessible theology and daily encouragement, while also raising complex questions about authenticity, digital authority, and the commercialization of faith.”*

All of that is true, and I spent some hours following up some of the concerns raised in the extract above. But what especially interested me in my exploration of online evangelism was how young people are using the internet to reach out to their own, particularly through the **TikTok Jesus Movement**. It has been described as a complex reflection of modern youth culture which utilises AI filters, internet humour, and global audio tracks, and by so doing young believers have successfully moved faith conversations onto one of the world's largest entertainment platforms.

While the movement does receive valid criticism regarding its depth and reliance on algorithmic tricks, its impact cannot be denied. It has democratized religious expression, allowing a global network of young creators to redefine what it looks like to practice and share faith in the digital age. So what does the movement do to grab the attention of its target audience?

**AI Hug Jesus:** Users employ specific video editing effects and AI generators to create visuals of themselves interacting or "receiving a hug" from Jesus, often set to uplifting worship audio.

**Tiny Jesus Drops:** Inspired by the viral "Tiny Jesus" movement, users buy or create mini figures of Jesus and hide them in unexpected places in public (like gas stations, stores, or church pews) as a fun, surprise reminder of faith.

**"Tough Jesus" & Religious Edits:** Modern interpretations and edits of biblical narratives that make historical stories feel relatable and tough, utilizing trending gospel audio and fast-paced montages.

Key country hubs of the movement include the United States and Canada, the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands and New Zealand.

It was great to discover how local and global ministries within the Presbyterian church here utilize the platform. The [Presbyterian Youth Ministries \(PYM\)](#) in

New Zealand supports local churches in equipping and discipling young people. Their platform features curated lists highlighting specific Christian TikTokers who use their influence to boldly share the gospel and the teachings of Jesus. In Dunedin, PYM supports local congregations with digital discipleship tools, smartphone video tips, and event information. Parishes can stay up to date with regional training events and youth leader gatherings through the Presbyterian Youth Ministry (PYM) portal.

The dizzying growth of internet technology can sometimes seem overwhelming. Disquiet about the effects of social media on young people are realistic and the New Zealand Coalition government is currently considering restricting the use of some platforms by minors (Under 16).

But in the meantime let's hope that the positive aspects of online participation for Christian teens can continue to be nourished for their safety, enjoyment and wellbeing.

*Jane Bloore*

## **Parish Council News**

The Parish Council met on Thursday, 25 June. The meeting was a good opportunity to review and explore objectives set at the Parish Council retreat earlier in the year and the Council considered further events for the year ahead.

The Council briefly discussed the governance matters raised in the Our Place report (including the need to formally address the questions set out in the Charities Act). Clare and Julie will report back to the Parish Council regarding these matters and the need to amend the Our Place Handbook to reflect changes adopted since the Handbook was drafted in 2024. Work continues to capture volunteer hours. Please advise us if we may have missed any volunteer work in our calculations so far.

The Parish Council is currently reviewing systems to report health and safety matters to ensure these are fit for purpose.

There is a new carbon calculator for use by Eco Churches and the Environment Committee is considering this.

A subcommittee has been appointed to assess the options for carpet in the sanctuary area. As discussed in the report by property and finance, works continue in relation to the need for a new roof.

*Julie Mander on behalf of the Parish Council*

## Property and Finance Committee Update

Another busy meeting with our annual borer treatment completed . Thanks to those who helped with removing items and setting up afterwards. Our drainage upgrade is progressing with the new pipe being installed.



We are in the process of renewing our church insurance which will be completed over the next month.

To share our workload as well as utilising others talents, we have asked for a small task group to manage the church carpet project and appreciate the time and energy they can give to this. Property and Finance has convened a second monthly meeting to focus on the roofing project and a number of activities underway- a preassessment of the roof for any asbestos along with an assessment from the structural engineer. These reports will be part of the information to detail the scope of the roof project.

You will notice a number of tradespeople coming into the building during the weeks ahead with scaffolding. Our regular groups using the facilities mean there is activity happening each day of the week and it is a delight to see families and children enjoying the gardens.

Please let us know if you have any ideas, issues or health and safety concerns-talk to anyone of the team.

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

## **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 [Judith L Rodda opoho pcbusiness@gmail.com](mailto:Judith.L.Rodda@opohopcbusiness@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*

## **Community Connections**

You may have noticed that we have some haiku from Opoho School up on our Signal Hill Rd noticeboard. The school is doing a conservation module which included a trip to the Orokonui Eco Sanctuary. Lucy Marr, one of the teachers, has had her class writing haiku and doing some artwork about their Orokonui visit. She has given us some of the poems and art prints to display. They make a lovely bright show on our noticeboard.

The children have also been learning a bit more about tracking tunnels and the school has asked to borrow our tunnels again. If you have one sitting around at home still gathering dust, knock the spiders out of it and bring it back to church, (preferably with the wire pins) and we will put it to use again.

*Clare Lind*



Ōpoho School Orokonui series

Ōpoho Presbyterian Church Haiku Project

**Takahe**  
Beaks ripping sage grass.  
Fiery beak, skinny legs.  
Sapphire bodies.

Kahu  
**Kate, 10**

*Francesca, 10.*

## **Interfaith Matters**

The monthly Interfaith meeting was held on the afternoon of Sunday 21 June at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Fenton Crescent in St Clair, beside Frances Hodgkins Retirement Village.

Prior to the meeting I stood in the church carpark looking at the overpowering vertical cliff face that runs behind the church and Frances Hodgkins. I was amazed at the work that the geotechnical engineers have done to stabilise it.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a church that traces its origins to a religion founded by Joseph Smith in the United States in 1830. The term Mormon was often used to refer to members of this church. It comes from the Book of Mormon, which was published by Smith in 1830. The use of the term is discouraged by the church. Now an international movement, the church is characterised by a unique understanding of the triune God, emphasis on family life, belief in continuing revelation, desire for order, respect for authority, and missionary work.

Having the Interfaith meeting at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was an opportunity for members to look at a newly refurbished building. The building had been closed for thirteen months for a seismic upgrade and extensive interior and exterior renovation. The building was rededicated on 16 May. The result of the renovation is a bright and spacious meeting place with technology and resources that will serve church members and the community alike.

The discussion topic for the Interfaith meeting was Poverty.

I reflected on Jesus who was born into a poor family. He was a refugee and an immigrant.

During Jesus' ministry, the poor, the outcast, the widow and the orphan were present. Jesus had a sense in which the poor needed to know that his message was for them, just as much as for anyone else. To care for the poor seems to be part of the very nature of God.

God often used the poor and uneducated for his purposes. Oppressed slaves became God's chosen people. The early church was made up of predominantly poor people. God utilised lepers, tax collectors, prostitutes, widows and other disadvantaged people to spread the Good News.

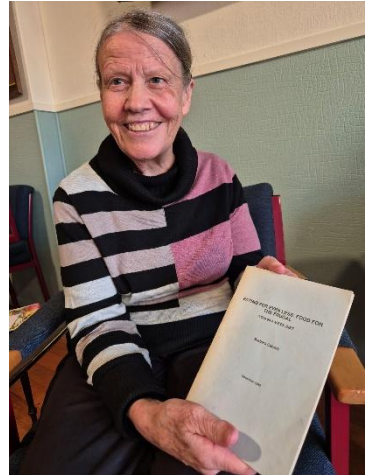
The Communion speaks of our equality before God, In Scripture this supper anticipates the heavenly banquet, when none shall be distinguishable by rank or

status. It remembers the one who ate with social outcasts and taught that, while in society people pull rank on one another, “it shall not be so among you”. “The last will be first and the first will be last”.

***Benjamin Thew***

## **Fellowship Report**

Our June meeting focused on thrift and we invited Jenny Bunce to share her mother recipe book “*Eating For Less: Food For the Frugal- a \$10.00 a week diet*”. Written by Jenny’s mother, Barbara Calvert in 1992, we learned of the motivation behind the development of this resource. Barbara, with her academic background in accounting, degrees in nutrition and commitment to health and welfare developed and trialed the recipes in this book.



We enjoyed sharing our memories and thrift tips- all setting the scene for the soup kitchen lunch next month.

As usual we had a sumptuous afternoon tea to celebrate thrift and Marion Rae’s forthcoming birthday.

***Chris Young and Miriam Vollweiler***

## **Jam Palace**

The Jam Palace is open every day in the Hall Lobby – it will be operating as normal this winter, even though Abby is away. Just spread it on your toast and send the money to her!



## Avian artwork



Tom Ranby has created a new Dove to represent Pentecost. The Dove is hanging at the front of the church and captures something of the splendour of a bird in flight. The consensus is that the Dove is best viewed on an angle.

More of the children's dove art can be seen in the entry to the Church.

This has been a very good month for avian artwork. Please feel welcome to submit further avian artwork to brighten the August issue of the Signal which will report on the annual bird count.

## Operation Cover Up - 2026

### Operation Coverup

Blankets and clothing knitted in 25/26 was taken to Fairfield where all the goods from Otago were sorted, and baled up by Taieri Wool & Skins. They are now in transit to Auckland where goods from all over the country will be sent in containers to eastern Europe.

### Operation Coverup Goods Donated 22 June 26 (Otago)

Large Blankets (Wool and Acrylic) 121

Small Blankets/Knee Rugs 29

Hats – separately 384

Scarves – separately 32

Mittens & gloves – separately 23

Slippers & socks 102

Jerseys 4-7 years 133

Jerseys 8-12 years 42

Jerseys 13+ years (includes adults) 7

Hat-scarf-gloves (or mittens) sets 113

Soft Toys 63

Hygiene Items 92

Donations for transport of goods \$514

A communication from a Charity there that distributes the goods said the following:

*"Thank you so much for the knitted blankets! We have placed them in our school's bomb shelter. During air raids the children have to go there and it is quite cold inside. Sometimes the alerts last for several hours, and the children must sit on cold chairs and benches. Now thanks to your generosity they can wrap themselves in warm blankets and feel cozy and comfortable. The blankets are beautiful and colourful, and the children love them very much. They know that our sponsors knitted them with care to help improve the lives and conditions of our people. We are sincerely grateful to you ....."*



Please note that any garments knitted must be for persons older than 4, and all knitting must be **wool** yarn. Acrylic only for edgings and fastenings.

Please keep knitting the squares - so the blankets for next year can begin. Wool at the back of the church.

*Marian Weaver*

## **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.psotago.org.nz](http://www.psotago.org.nz)

## Lectionary for July and August 2026

<b>Sunday 5 July – 6th Sunday after Pentecost</b>			
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
<b>Sunday 12 July – 7th Sunday after Pentecost</b>			
Gen 25: 19-34	Ps 119: 105-112	Rom 8: 1-11	Mt 13: 1-9, 18-23
<b>Sunday 19 July – 8th Sunday after Pentecost</b>			
Gen 28:10-19a	Ps 139:1-12, 23-24	Rom 8: 12-25	Mt 13:24-30,36-43
<b>Sunday 26 July – 9th Sunday after Pentecost</b>			
Gen 29: 15-28	Ps 105: 1-11, 45b <i>or</i> Ps 128	Rom 8: 26-39	Mt 13: 31-33, 44-52
<b>Sunday 2 August – 10th Sunday after Pentecost</b>			
Gen 32: 22-31	Ps 17: 1-7, 15	Rom 9: 1-5	Mt 14: 13-21
<b>Sunday 9 August – 11th Sunday after Pentecost</b>			
Gen 37: 1-4, 12-28	Ps 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b	Rom 10: 5-15	Mt 14: 22-33
<b>Sunday 16 August – 12th Sunday after Pentecost</b>			
Gen 45: 1-15	Ps 133	Rom 11: 1-2a, 29-32	Mt 15: (10-20), 21-28
<b>Sunday 23 August – 13th Sunday after Pentecost</b>			
Ex 1: 8-2: 10	Ps 124	Rom 12: 1-8	Mt 16: 13-20
<b>Sunday 30 August – 14th Sunday after Pentecost</b>			
Ex 3: 1-15	Ps 105; 1-6, 23-26, 45b	Rom 12: 9-21	Mt 16: 21-28

### Church Fair - Saturday 19 September, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

#### How can you help?

You can sort out some things to donate -  
(drop off after 7 September).

You can bake (a little closer to the time perhaps).

You can put up posters and distribute leaflets (in August).

You can tell all your friends.

You can volunteer to work at a stall, to set up, or to tidy up (email Abby at

[abigailmarionsmith@gmail.com](mailto:abigailmarionsmith@gmail.com)



## Coming Events: July and August 2026

5 July ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, Communion
8 July ~ Wednesday	7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Minister's Office
9 July ~ Thursday	12 noon: Fellowship Group soup kitchen lunch, Morrison Lounge and hall
10 July ~ Friday	Matariki – public holiday
12 July ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Mary Somerville
19 July ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Benjamin Thew
20 July ~ Monday	Material due for August <i>Opoho Signal</i>
23 July ~ Thursday	7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, Morrison Lounge
26 July ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind
2 August ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind, Communion
9 August ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Carol Grant
12 August ~ Wednesday	7.30 p.m.: Property and Finance Committee, Minister's Office
13 August ~ Thursday	2 p.m.: Fellowship Group, Morrison Lounge
16 August ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Clare Lind
18 August ~ Tuesday	7.30 p.m.: Christian Development Committee, Morrison Lounge
20 August ~ Thursday	Material due for September <i>Opoho Signal</i>
23 August ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, the Rev. Brendon McRae
27 August ~ Thursday	7.30 p.m.: Parish Council, Morrison Lounge
30 August ~ Sunday	10 a.m.: Worship, Jane Bloore

### Deadline for next *Opoho Signal* – Monday 20 July

Gregor Macaulay will be away until early August,  
so please send all material for the next *Opoho Signal* to:

Julie Mander at [juliemander@outlook.com](mailto:juliemander@outlook.com)

