

DECEMBER 2025/  
JANUARY 2026



# OCC NEWSLETTER

Monthly newsletter of Onewa Christian Community



## Inside:

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- Quiz Night fun
- Kids' Christmas Craft
- Dec & Jan service list
- Eco Wrapping
- Christmas Sudoku
- Activity dates

## Minister's Message

### Living and Growing Church: Learning to Sing New Songs

Our world is changing quickly. Not long ago, we often spoke of “East” and “West” as two different ways of seeing. Now another way of seeing is emerging –the perspective of Artificial Intelligence. None of these perspectives is better or worse, but they remind us that people do not all notice the same things.

A simple example may help. Imagine three objects: two cylinders—one plastic, one wood—and a wooden rectangular block. If we were to group two of them, which ones belong together?

Many Western thinkers tend to group the cylinders by shape. Many East Asian thinkers group the wooden objects by material. Each is simply organising the world according to what their culture has taught them to notice. [1]



[1] [EBS] DOCUPRIME East and West on YouTube (Educational Broadcasting System, South Korea. ebs.co.kr) BBC series, The Human Planet: How East and West think in profoundly different ways.

Written by David Robson

Languages and art show the same patterns. Western languages often highlight the individuality of objects; many Eastern languages emphasise oneness or relationship. Even poetry reveals this. Wordsworth, in *Daffodils*, writes:

***“A host of golden daffodils...***

***Ten thousand saw I at a glance.”***

He sees the flowers spread out before him, each one counted, each one bright. The beauty stands outside him for him to observe.

But in Seo Jung-ju’s[1] *Beside a Chrysanthemum*, the flower blooms within a web of connections:

***“For one chrysanthemum to bloom,  
the nightingale must have wept.”***

The flower’s life is not isolated; it is shaped by bird, thunder, frost, and even the poet’s sleepless night. Beauty is something held in relationship.

Now, into this long history of seeing, AI introduces a new kind of attention. It does not see through emotion or culture but through patterns drawn from countless examples. It is powerful, and often helpful, but also limited. It simplifies. It reduces. It keeps what can be measured and discards what cannot. If we rely only on AI’s way of noticing, we risk losing the depth and mystery of God’s abundant world—a world full of story, texture, silence, breath, and Spirit.

This is why the church must think carefully about how we form our children and young adults. The world they inherit will see reality through many lenses—Western, Eastern, and now digital. But the word of God cannot be confined to any one way of seeing. Jesus came not as an idea or a data pattern but as the Word made flesh, living among us in all our complexity and wonder.

So the question becomes: What new songs will we teach our children and young people so they can live faithfully in God’s world, no matter how the world sees them? Even when two people look at the same flower, they may sing different songs. Let us help the next generation learn to sing songs rooted in Jesus—songs of courage, compassion, and hope.

A living church does not cling only to old forms; it keeps the heart of the faith while finding new ways to share it. At Onewa Christian Community, this is our calling. By handing on the story of Jesus with creativity and love, we help our young people step into God’s future, carrying the eternal life that begins even now.

Shalom,

**Jin Sook Kim (Revd)**

[1] A renowned Korean poet. You can find the full poem on the next page and here: <https://jaypsong.blog/2012/02/04/beside-a-chrysanthemum-by-seo-jung-ju/>

## Beside a Chrysanthemum by Seo Jung-ju

Perhaps  
to make a Chrysanthemum bloom,  
the owl must have cried since spring.

Perhaps  
to make a Chrysanthemum bloom,  
the thunder must have cried in the dark clouds.

Oh, Chrysanthemum, looking like my elder sister,  
who stands in front of her mirror

after a long journey through the back alleys of her youth,  
her heart tightened by her longings and regrets.

Perhaps  
to make your yellow petals bloom  
the first frost must have fallen last night.  
I could not sleep.

### 국화 옆에서/ 서정주

한 송이의 국화꽃을 피우기 위해  
봄부터 소쩍새는  
그렇게 울었나 보다.

한 송이의 국화꽃을 피우기 위해  
천둥은 먹구름 속에서  
또 그렇게 울었나 보다.

그립고 아쉬움에 가슴 조이던  
머언 먼 젊음의 뒤편길에서  
인제는 돌아와 거울 앞에 선  
내 누님같이 생긴 꽃이여

노오란 내 꽃잎이 피려고  
간밤엔 무서리가 저리 내리고  
내게는 잠도 오지 않았나 보다.



## Quiz Night Fun

On Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November we held our annual Mad Hatter's Quiz Night at OCC. Everyone came dressed for the occasion in a fine selection of mad hats, including half a watermelon; a traditional Lesotho straw hat; a trio of turkeys and a deck of sailors. Our MC Greg Morgan did not disappoint, turning up in full Mad Hatter costume, complete with a fetching orange wig.

The 12 teams competed to win a wonderful hamper of goodies with three teams ending up in a tie at the end with 59.5 points each. The teams happily shared the goodies amongst themselves and then donated the rest to the food bank. Thanks all!

The winning teams on the night were The Fruit Salads (who also won best hats); Merry Quiz-mas and The Kids' Table.

A huge thank you to the amazing Barbara Wadams, Julia Wadams and Jenny Martin for the delicious platters you created for the tables. They were much enjoyed! Thanks too to the fast but diligent quiz markers: Jenny and Kimberly. We can't wait until next year!



# Christmas Craft Fun at OCC

Last Friday, we had a wonderful time with around 30 people joining us for the annual Kids' Christmas Craft Afternoon. Thank you to all the volunteers who came along to help with the crafts and in the kitchen and big thanks to Cathy for creating all the wonderful kits for the children to enjoy!



# OCC Christmas window



The office window at OCC will be dressed for Christmas at some stage during the first week of December. Come and see our beautiful knitted nativity set (crafted by Helene, Pauline F and Sarah) and the fantastic wooden nativity stable made by David Hansen.

## UNDERSTANDING & ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS



**JOIN US FOR A CONVERSATION THAT MATTERS.**

**Fri 5<sup>th</sup> Dec 10am-12 noon,  
172 Hinemoa St, Birkenhead**

**Housing isn't just shelter** - it's the foundation for health, dignity and a thriving economy. **OCC** have partnered with **Housing First Auckland** to explore how our community can make a real difference.

**What you'll discover:**

- Why housing strengthens our entire community
- Housing First - an evidence-backed and proven solution
- The voice of Lived Experience
- Key findings from recent local public research
- How you can be part of the solution

**REGISTER NOW: [HTTPS://EVENTS.HUMANITIX.COM/UNDERSTANDING-HOMELESSNESS](https://events.humanitix.com/understanding-homelessness)**



# Nativity Sudoku

T		V			N
	D			N	E
					V
		D	N		
	E				

**ADVENT**

	E				L
A		S			
B					
	B			A	
			T	S	

**STABLE**



**MANGER**

			E		
			N	R	M
		N			
G			A		
		R			
	M			E	

**JOSEPH**

H				O	
S		J			
	J			E	P
	E	O		J	

## A 'Day Away' with the Onewa Christian Community

As an Eco Church, we're always looking for ways to reconnect—with creation, with one another, and with God's renewing presence. So what could be more fitting than a full day set among the beauty and quiet of the Auckland Botanic Gardens?

At our recent community breakfast, the idea of a retreat sparked real enthusiasm. Since then, plans have been unfolding, and we are delighted to invite you to join us on Friday, 21 March for a refreshing and purposeful day together. Please add this date to your diary.

### **We Need Your Creativity to name the day!**

We're looking for a catchy, meaningful name for our day—something that reflects our eco identity, the spirit of renewal, and the natural setting of the gardens. Please share your ideas with Rev Jin Sook or Sarah.



### **Why This Day Matters**

Gardeners nurture their plots with intention—planting, pruning, and planning for each new season. As an Eco Church, we're called to do the same: to tend our community, nurture new growth, and ensure a vibrant, diverse future. Diversity strengthens a garden—and it strengthens OCC. Every voice matters. With your insight and presence, we can grow not into an old kauri forest threatened by dieback, but into a thriving, regenerating forest full of strong young saplings.

### **What to Expect**

Our programme (soon to be finalised) will include:

Thought-provoking discussions about our shared future

Engaging and enjoyable interactive sessions

Time to reflect, connect, and simply enjoy being together

Morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea in beautiful surroundings

### **The Practical Bits**

Arrival: 9:00–9:30am, with tea and coffee waiting

Programme starts: 9:30am

Finish: 4:00pm

Cost: \$20 per person (OCC is subsidising the day)

Transport: Carpooling will be arranged

**We truly hope you'll join us. This promises to be an inspiring, refreshing, and energising day for our whole community.**



# DECEMBER

## Church Service List

**Sunday 7 December**  
**9.30am 97 Onewa Rd**

Combined Service with  
New Apostolic Church

**Sunday 14 December**  
**9.30am 172 Hinemoa St**

All Ages Service

**Sunday 21 December**  
**9.30am 172 Hinemoa St**

Community Breakfast:  
Christmas themed

**Wed 24 December**  
**8pm Birkenhead**  
**Methodist Church**

Carols in the Car Park

**Thursday 25 December**  
**9.30am 172 Hinemoa St**

Christmas Day Service

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December**  
**9.30am 172 Hinemoa St**

Communion Service



[www.onewacc.org.nz](http://www.onewacc.org.nz)

Rachel Hurr found this interesting article by r/newzealand on Reddit

## For anyone thinking of checking out church....

Hey everyone

I wanted to share this because I know a lot of people (especially younger people) lately are curious about church or spirituality but haven't grown up around it. And honestly, there are some good churches out there... but unfortunately a lot of really toxic ones, and it can be hard to tell the difference when you're new.

After a lot of personal experiences (good and bad), here are some things I think are worth paying attention to:

### Signs of a healthy church community

- You feel safe to observe You're not pressured to join a group, volunteer, tithe, or pray out loud immediately.
- Leadership is transparent and accountable There's a clear leadership structure, finances are handled openly, and feedback is welcomed without defensiveness.
- Community over image People are kind to each other even when no one is watching. The "vibe" matches the messaging on stage.
- Your boundaries are respected You're treated as an individual - not just "a soul to win" or someone to fill a roster gap.
- You can ask questions Doubt, curiosity, and honest conversations are welcomed - not shut down or shamed.
- Diversity is genuinely embraced Not just on posters or Instagram. Different ages, backgrounds, and personalities are included and valued.
- Care extends beyond Sunday Members support each other in real life, not just when it's convenient or performative. If you decided to leave, people would still be friends with you and spend time with you, and not just because you go to the same church or have the same faith.
- Mental health (depression, anxiety, etc) is not treated as something to pray away, is not a sign of poor faith or demonic possession.
- Signs of a toxic church environment
- High pressure and love-bombing You walk in and immediately they want your contact info, invite you to 12 events, and call you "family" before learning your name.
- Charisma > character Leaders are idolised, can never be questioned, and "anointing" is used to shut down accountability.

- Fear-based teaching Heavy focus on guilt, shame, end times, demonic threats, or the idea that leaving the church = leaving God.
- Us vs. Them mentality Other churches or people outside the faith are seen as dangerous, less spiritual, or inferior.
- Constant fundraising + unclear money use If giving is preached more than compassion, pay attention. If there is always a mini sermon/talk about why you should give before they take up the offering/tithes = run. If there is a "Vision Offering", talk of "Kingdom Building", etc = be very wary.
- Boundary crossing disguised as care Leaders controlling who you date, where you spend time, or discouraging outside friendships.
- Volunteering expected, not chosen. Feeling obligated to serve constantly to be "worthy" or accepted.

### Tips if you're checking out a church for the first time

Take your time. Visit a few Sundays

Notice what community looks like outside the service

Ask yourself how you feel afterward: uplifted or drained?

Listen to your gut. If something feels off, you can leave

You don't owe any church your time or vulnerability just because you showed up once.

Final thought

- A good church isn't perfect but it should be a place of support, humility, and healthy growth. You deserve a community that encourages you to be yourself while exploring faith, not one that tries to mold you into their version of "acceptable."
- If this helps even one person feel more confident or safe while exploring, then I'm glad I shared it. If anyone else has anything else to add or questions to ask, etc feel free to.



# Eco Gift Wrapping ideas

If you want to do your bit to reduce waste this year, have a look at these Eco Gift Wrapping ideas for inspiration.



## Make the wrapping part of the gift

Wrap the gift in a festive tea towel or scarf



## Visit your local op shop

Use old dress making patterns for tissue paper to wrap a gift or make a paper flower; turn sheet music or magazines into gift wrap or gift bows; use old Christmas cards for gift tags and cut up festive table cloths to make gift bags or use it for fabric gift wrapping (Google Furoshiki for inspiration and instructions)

## Eco friendly gifts

Why not consider an experience gift for Christmas? Or shop second hand. There are many lovely things in op shops that are near new and could be recycled instead of adding more things to landfill. If these options don't appeal, shop local if you can. It all helps!



# Activity closing and starting dates

	Last session	First Session
Mainly Music	9 <sup>th</sup> Dec 10am	10 <sup>th</sup> Feb
Friendship Group	18 <sup>th</sup> Dec	12 <sup>th</sup> Feb
Scrabble	15 <sup>th</sup> Dec	19 <sup>th</sup> Jan
Eco Kids	2 <sup>nd</sup> Nov	1 <sup>st</sup> Feb
Embroidery group	12 <sup>th</sup> Dec	16 <sup>th</sup> Jan

SOLUTION  
*Nativity Sudoku*

T	A	V	E	D	N
D	N	E	V	T	A
V	D	A	T	N	E
E	T	N	D	A	V
A	V	D	N	E	T
N	E	T	A	V	D

ADVENT

T	E	A	S	B	L
L	S	B	E	T	A
A	L	S	B	E	T
B	T	E	A	L	S
S	B	T	L	A	E
E	A	L	T	S	B

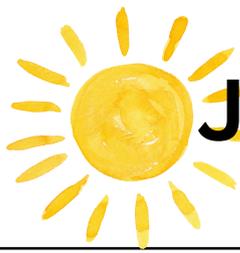
STABLE

MANGER

R	N	M	E	A	G
A	E	G	N	R	M
M	A	N	R	G	E
G	R	E	A	M	N
E	G	R	M	N	A
N	M	A	G	E	R

JOSEPH

H	P	E	J	O	S
S	O	J	P	H	E
E	H	P	O	S	J
O	J	S	H	E	P
J	S	H	E	P	O
P	E	O	S	J	H



# January services



4th January 2026	Service at OCC at 9.30 am
11th January 2026	OCC will join Birkenhead Methodist Church (Zion Hill) at 9.30 am
18th January 2026	OCC will join Birkenhead Methodist Church (Zion Hill) at 9.30 am
25th January 2026	Communion service at OCC

## Contact us

**Minister: Rev. Jin Sook Kim** [minister@onewacc.org.nz](mailto:minister@onewacc.org.nz) / Ph 021 0295 2589

**Community Engagement Lead: Sarah Thorne** [community@onewacc.org.nz](mailto:community@onewacc.org.nz)

Ph 021 0919 7097

**Admin: Pauline Soo** [admin@onewacc.org.nz](mailto:admin@onewacc.org.nz)

## Giving

**BNZ account**

**Account name: ONEWA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

**Account number: 02-0112-0168422-000**

## Christmas gift collection

We are collecting items for homeless people, to be gifted via the Salvation Army on 15th December. If you would like to contribute, please bring in any hygiene products such as deodorant, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, toilet paper, hand towels, face towels, wipes or tissues. There is a basket in the hall for these items or you can drop them to the office on Mondays or Fridays.

## Roster for the months – December 2025 and January 2026

### December Roster

Date	Elder	Door Duty	Prayer	Reading	Morning Tea
<b>7<sup>th</sup> December</b>		A combined service with the New Apostolic Church at 97 Onewa Road, 9.30am			
<b>14<sup>th</sup> December</b>	All Age Service at OCC, 172 Hinemoa St by Children's Ministry Team, Mainly Music and Friendship Group			Elizabeth Wong and Barbara Westra	
<b>21<sup>st</sup> December</b>		Community Breakfast			
<b>25<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Helene Muller	Garry Pash	Garry Pash	Andre Muller	No morning tea
<b>28<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Robin Baxter	J Collinge	Robin B	J Collinge	J Collinge and Robin B
<b>Serving Elders for Communion</b>		Jocelyn Collinge, Robin Baxter, Cathy Fraser and Rosemary Bold			

### January Roster

Date	Elder	Door Duty	Prayer	Reading	Morning Tea
<b>4<sup>th</sup> January</b>	M. Larsen	Mary Boyd	M. Larsen	Mary Boyd	Karen Davies & Linda Buckthought
<b>11<sup>th</sup> January</b>		A combined service with Birkenhead Methodist Church (Zion Hill)			
<b>18<sup>th</sup> January</b>		A combined service with Birkenhead Methodist Church (Zion Hill)			
<b>25<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Laurie Wesley	Nan Inkson	Laurie Wesley	Nan Inkson	Barbara Wesley and Dale Kerr
<b>Serving Elders for Communion</b>		Nan Inkson, Robin Baxter, Karen Davies			

# Cheese crackers

*If you've got a food processor, these crackers are a great easy and delicious go to for summer entertaining. Recipe credit: Sally's baking addiction*

## Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups grated cheese**
- 1 cup plain flour**
- 1 ½ tsp cornflour**
- ¼ tsp salt**
- 85g butter cut into pieces**
- 2 tbsp cold water**
- optional: sea salt for sprinkling**



## Method:

1. Process the dry ingredients together until combined. Add in the butter and process again until mixture resembles wet sand. Add water and process one more time until mixture comes together in large clumps.
2. Transfer dough to a lightly floured work surface. Divide in half and pat each into a 6-inch square. (No need to use a rolling pin, just pat with hands.) If the dough feels dry, moisten your fingers with cold water. Carefully wrap each square (a beeswax wrap is great) and refrigerate until firm, about 45 minutes.
3. Preheat oven to 180°C. Line 2 large baking sheets with baking paper.
4. Unwrap each dough square. Place each on a lightly floured work surface and roll out into a 22cm square. Doesn't need to be perfect! Using a pastry wheel, pizza cutter, or small sharp knife, trim dough into a neat 20cm square. Slice square into 8 strips, each 2.5cm wide, then make 8 perpendicular slices, each 2.5cm wide. Each 8-inch square will have 64 squares
5. Place squares on prepared baking sheet. Use a skewer or large toothpick to poke a hole through the centre of each. Lightly sprinkle with sea salt, if desired. Bake until golden brown around the edges, about 16-18 minutes, rotating the baking sheets halfway through baking. For crunchier crackers, bake for 20 minutes.
6. Remove from the oven and cool completely on the baking sheet before serving.