

APRIL 2026



OCC NEWSLETTER

Monthly newsletter of Onewa Christian Community



Minister's Message

Day Away and Spiritual Growth

On Saturday 21st March, we shared a wonderful Day Away at the Auckland Botanical Gardens. For many, it was a new place to explore, and it proved to be a fitting setting. The weather, the venue, the facilitation, the food, and especially the conversations all came together as a gift. More than that, it gave us space to step back and see the bigger picture of who we are becoming as a church and how we continue to grow as a faith community. Reflecting on spiritual growth in a garden felt especially appropriate – growth that is patient, grounded, and nurtured over time.

As we reflected, we were reminded that spirituality is understood differently across traditions. In the Jewish understanding, there is no sharp division between body and soul. Rather than seeing the body as something to escape, it is received as a sacred gift - a means through which we serve God in the ordinary rhythms of life. Spiritual growth, then, is not about withdrawing from the world, but about engaging it faithfully, allowing even our physical actions to become acts of holiness.

The story of the giraffe inviting the elephant into a house built only for giraffes gave us a vivid picture. Growth sometimes requires not just invitation, but transformation - a reshaping of the space so that life can truly flourish.

In this Lenten season, we see this most fully in Jesus Christ: God who took on human flesh in humility, not to reject the world, but to redeem it. In him, the divide between the human and the divine is not avoided, but bridged. This calls us beyond familiar ideas of strength and wisdom, inviting us instead into a life shaped by faith, humility, and love.

This is the kind of spiritual growth we are seeking as a community - not abstract or distant, but embodied, lived, and continually unfolding. As we look ahead, may we remain open to the ways God is shaping us, both as individuals and together as OCC, bearing fruit in ways that reflect Christ's life among us.

Rev Jin Sook Kim



Study Leave Pilgrimage

Rev. Jin Sook Kim will be on study leave from the afternoon of 5 April to 17 May. She will travel to Paris, then continue to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port to begin walking the Camino de Santiago.

Carrying only a small 25-litre backpack, she will walk simply and prayerfully, covering much of the 780 km Camino Francés. Along the way, she will reflect on discipleship through Luke 24:13–35, Psalm 84, and Hebrews 11—attending to the rhythm of journey and destination, and the gift of hospitality.

Please keep her in your prayers for safety, renewal, and insight. May the Lord go before her, walk beside her, and bring her home in peace.

This issue features the first in a series of stories about our congregation entitled **PEOPLE OF OCC**

Thank you to Laurie Wesley for agreeing to be interviewed for the first feature.

A Life of Faithful Service: Laurie Wesley

Laurie Wesley's life is a story of faith expressed through service, curiosity, and a willingness to step into the unknown. From a childhood in rural New Zealand to professional work overseas and many years of commitment within his church, his journey reflects both adventure and quiet dedication.



Born in Ōpunake and raised in Te Kūiti, Laurie grew up in the King Country as the second of five children. His childhood was filled with freedom - exploring bush and farmland, building huts, picking blackberries, and even attempting an ambitious treehouse between two towering Mataī trees. Although the treehouse was never completed, it remains a favourite memory. Church life also played an important role, shaped by his mother's service as an organist for fifty years in the Anglican Church and the influence of a respected minister in the Presbyterian Church.



*Barbara and Laurie in Jan
1959 just before Laurie left
to Sydney*

Laurie's working life began in an unexpected way. While hitchhiking in Australia during his university years, he discovered a volunteer graduate scheme for Indonesia. This opportunity proved life-changing.

Arriving in a newly independent country, he found himself working in soil mechanics and engineering, helping establish and run testing laboratories in Bandung after many Dutch specialists had left. With few English speakers around him, Laurie had to quickly learn both the Indonesian language and the technical aspects of his work - an experience that set the course for his career.

What began as a two-year placement became four, after he invited his future wife Barbara to join him in Indonesia. Following their return to New Zealand, Laurie worked for the Ministry of Works and was later sent to London to complete a one-year Master's degree at Imperial College.

Indonesia, however, continued to draw them back. Laurie and Barbara and their young family returned for another four years, contributing his engineering expertise during a time of significant national change. Two of their four children were born there, making Indonesia an important part of their family story.



Laurie with Ir Soelastri, the engineer in charge of the soils laboratory

Alongside his professional life, Laurie has been deeply committed to the church. Over many years he has served in a variety of roles, including about eight years as Session Clerk and a member. He took several services each year. He was especially happy to take services when St Phillips was also part of our parish and the minister had to take two services each Sunday. He is also well known for his practical service - maintaining the church grounds, mowing lawns (with a push mower), tending gardens, and organising community collections. Even challenges, such as a shoulder injury from carrying buckets to water plants, are remembered with characteristic humour.

For Laurie, serving the church is simply part of belonging. He finds purpose in contributing where needed and supporting the life of the congregation. Looking back, he is most grateful for his upbringing, his faith, and the many opportunities he has had to serve.

A surprising achievement is his completion of ten Ironman triathlons, many after the age of 60 - an example of the energy and perseverance that has marked his life.

Laurie's story is a reminder that faithful, steady service - both seen and unseen - helps build a strong and caring church community.

Flowering the Cross

On Easter Sunday, we will have our traditional Flowering of the Cross. We will be providing silk flowers but please feel free to bring fresh flowers from your garden if you would like to do so.



The flowering of the cross represents the transition from Good Friday to Easter, from meditation on Jesus' death to joyful celebration of his resurrection. The ceremony transforms a barren cross, a reminder of Jesus' death, into an Easter symbol. Covered with flowers, the cross serves not only as an emblem of Jesus' resurrection but also of the continuing presence of Christ among today's Christians.

Easter Fun!

Lots of fun was had at Friday's Easter Craft event which was organised by Cathy Fraser. Thanks to the wonderful volunteers who came along to help with the craft stations and in the kitchen. You are all 'good eggs'! There were lots of happy children!



FREE

Community Breakfast

All Welcome



Sunday 19th April, 9.30am

Speaker:

Tayyaba Khan on

“The leadership we need in
today’s times”

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Onewa Christian Community

172 Hinemoa Street,
Birkenhead

Tayyaba is the Founder and Trustee of the Khadija Leadership Network, New Zealand Peace Ambassador for the European Muslim League, and Director of Advocacy at the Office of the Health and Disability Commissioner. With over 15 years of experience in community development, she has worked extensively with migrant and refugee communities across The Occupied Territories of Palestine, Australia, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand.

Tayyaba is a passionate advocate for social justice and human rights, particularly within minority and faith-based communities. She is also a regular media commentator on Islamophobia and a facilitator of Peace Circles, encouraging women to become peacebuilders.

**Onewa
Christian
Community**

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Joy in nature!

Eco Kids ventured outside last weekend for a sunset spotlight walk in Cecil Eady Bush.

Eco kids will be back at 172 Hinemoa Street in May.



Onewa Youth

Onewa Youth meets at 172 Hinemoa Street on Tuesdays at 5pm during term time.

The group seeks to build connection and faith together in a safe, friendly and open environment. We have a wonderful youth leader, Angelina Lovison, who is leading the group each week alongside our other youth leaders, Edmund Sharrock and Ryan Wong. If you know a young person who might be keen to join the group, get in touch with Sarah on sarah@onewacc.org.nz





**COME & PLAY
A GAME OF**

S C R A B B L E

**MONDAYS, 10AM-12 NOON
172 HINEMOA ST, BIRKENHEAD**



KAIPĀTIKI
Repair cafés
REUSE ♥ REPAIR ♥ CONNECT

2026 Date	Location	Start Time	Finish Time
Saturday 14 February	Glenfield Community Centre, Glenfield	10:00am	1:00pm
Saturday 7 March	Birkdale Community House, Birkdale	10:00am	1:00pm
Saturday 11 April	Onewa Christian Community Hall, Birkenhead (*)	1:00pm	3:00pm
Saturday 2 May	Bayview Community Centre, Bayview	1:00pm	3:00pm
Saturday 6 June	Glenfield Community Centre, Glenfield	10:00am	1:00pm
Saturday 4 July	Birkdale Community House, Birkdale	10:00am	1:00pm
Saturday 1 August	Onewa Christian Community Hall, Birkenhead (*)	1:00pm	3:00pm
Saturday 5 September	Bayview Community Centre, Bayview	1:00pm	3:00pm
Saturday 3 October	Glenfield Community Centre, Glenfield	10:00am	1:00pm
Saturday 7 November	Beach Haven Community House, Beach Haven	10:00am	1:00pm
Saturday 5 December	Bayview Community Centre, Bayview	1:00pm	3:00pm

(*) run by Highbury House

Easter makes

Below are some fun ideas to make your Easter family get together's eggstra special

Easter Bunny napkins



These Easter table napkins are really easy to make and could be something the kids do.

To make them, fold your napkin into a triangle and roll it up into a tube, starting at the point of the triangle. Once you have the long tube, wrap it around your egg (hardboiled or chocolate) then tie a ribbon or piece of string around the middle to hold the egg in place. You could also add a tag to the string with a name or scripture verse on it

Make something beautiful to gift to friends.

These bookmarks are made using Washi tape, twine and cardstock.

Cut a cross shape out of your card stock then use washi tape to decorate it. Punch a hole in the top and tie a piece of twine or ribbon through. You can write a message on the back if you want to.

Cross bookmarks



Make an Osterieierbaum (an Easter Tree)

This tradition started in Germany and is now popular around the world. Collect an interesting branch or shrub, place it in a pot, weight it with stones and decorate it with eggs .

**Katie and Wezley will host this month
in Rev. Jin Sook's absence**

BIBLE TALK SUPPERS

**Meet on Every 4th Sunday
5pm at church**



April Roster

Date	Elder	Door Duty	Prayer	Reading	Morning Tea
Good Friday 3 rd April	Helene M	Nan Inkson	Helene M	Nan Inkson	n/a
Easter Sunday 5 th April	Robin B	Garry Pash	Robin B	Garry Pash	Lynn C /Barbara Westra
12 th April	Rosemary B	Cathy F	Rosemary B	Cathy F	Elizabeth W/Linda B
19 th April	Community Breakfast				
26 th April	Karen D	Rachel H	Karen D	Rachel H	Jocelyn C/Robin B
Serving elders: Jocelyn C, Nan Inkson, Karen Davies, Rosemary Bold					

Contact us

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Giving

BNZ account

Account name: ONEWA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Account number: 02-0112-0168422-000

