November 2026

OCC NEWSLETTER

Minister's Message



OCC's mainly music families celebrated the ministry's 25th birthday last Tuesday, 27 October. The church hall was full of young parents and toddlers, alongside our faithful helpers in their blue mainly music shirts. A fabulous two-tier chocolate cake, baked by Pauline and beautifully decorated with fresh strawberries, was the centrepiece, accompanied by food that children and parents enjoyed.

Twenty-five years is a long time. In human life, it is an age when we are often in our prime. For our mainly music leaders and helpers, those twenty-five years have probably brought a little more wisdom, a few more grey hairs, and many precious memories!

Reflecting on this milestone, I was reminded of a curious episode in Mark's Gospel:

When Jesus was arrested in Gethsemane, a young man who had been following him fled, leaving his linen cloth behind and running away naked (Mark 14:51–52). Biblical scholars have offered various interpretations of this brief and puzzling story. Some have suggested that the young man might even have been Mark himself, although we cannot know for sure.

Whatever his identity, the young man's response reveals something very human about following Jesus. When the situation became frightening and dangerous, he ran away. His courage failed him at the very moment when following Jesus became costly. It was hardly a glorious moment of discipleship.

Yet Mark chose to preserve this account in his Gospel. Perhaps this reminds us that the story of following Jesus is not always a story of courage, achievement and visible success. It is also a story of human vulnerability, fear and failure. I wonder whether there is something here for us as we celebrate twenty-five years of mainly music at OCC.

We sometimes hear the observation that families who have attended Mainly Music have not gone on to become members of our church, or that few have continued to attend church regularly. But we offer hospitality and sow seeds; we cannot control their growth, determine their timetable, or claim ownership of their eventual fruit.

And so, we continue to walk alongside these young families with prayerful hearts, infectious smiles, and, above all, the love of Jesus Christ. We love you, Mainly Music families, from head to toe! Praise the Lord!

Rev Jin Sook Kim



25 years of mainly music at OCC!
by Pauline Fish

On Tuesday 27 October our mainly music group celebrated its 25th birthday with a party for all children and their carers. The hall was bursting with enthusiastic laughter, excited children and adults catching up with each other. There was a fairy named Ruby who brought along her face painting kit and decorated the faces of those children who were keen to be adorned. There was a machine issuing forth bubbles which kept everyone engrossed. Playtime with our wide range of toys kept everyone amused for over an hour and of course there was a large selection of food for everyone. A large chocolate cake was cut by Rosemary, one of our longest serving helpers and then devoured by all. Our usual selection of music completed the morning and everyone went home with a goody bag and a balloon.

For over 25 years we have been providing a weekly programme for families in our community and getting to know the people who attend regularly. The feedback we receive is always positive and encouraging and this is what keeps us all returning every week. Over the 25 years there have been many helpers who willingly volunteer to help us keep the programme going. Some people work tirelessly in the kitchen to provide morning tea, others meet and greet at the front door, while others provide the programme in the hall. Behind the scenes there are always those who do the shopping, wash the towels and morning tea picnic blankets, put together the music, write newsletters, pray for us continually and support us. We have parents, grandparents and carers who join our team as volunteers long after their own children have gone off to school. In the beginning there were ladies in the church who made cushion covers, dolls clothes, knitted for new babies or baked goodies for morning tea.

Of course, we must also mention the people who have brought their children, grandchildren or children they care for, along each week. Without all these people there wouldn't any be mainly music sessions and we certainly wouldn't have survived this long. So thank you to anyone who has been part of our group both now and in the past in any capacity. Long may we continue to do God's work in this place.



mainly music
est. 1990

25 years of
mainly music at OCC party!























25 years of mainly music at OCC party!

People Of OCC: Dale Kerr

From growing up on a farm in Hawke's Bay to working in the fascinating world of genetics, and from family adventures in far-flung places to helping out at OCC, Dale has certainly had an interesting life! Sarah caught up with her to hear a bit about her childhood, career, family and faith, and discovered someone who values family, enjoys a good discussion and believes in getting stuck in and helping out.

Dale was born in Waipawa, in Central Hawke's Bay, and spent her first couple of years on the family farm at Ruataniwha, just a few miles away. When she was about two and a half, her father passed away and her mum moved the family into town, although they kept the farm and employed a manager. The youngest of six children, Dale grew up in a small country town while her older brothers and sisters had spent more of their childhood on the farm. One thing that was particularly important in the family was education. Her mum had trained as a teacher and had a degree in English and French and all six children went on to university. Losing her dad at such a young age had a lasting impact, particularly because it wasn't something the family talked about. There were few photographs, little information and very few answers to the questions the children had. "He just wasn't there," she explains.

As the youngest, she often felt that her older siblings knew what was going on while she was left trying to catch up. It helped shape her independent streak, and it wasn't until she went to university that she started asking her mum more questions about her dad – discovering at that point that her older sister didn't know much more than she did. Looking back, she thinks that things are better for children today, with families more willing to talk about difficult experiences. Being able to ask questions and talk about what has happened helps children feel included and understand their own family stories.

At school, Dale enjoyed science and maths, so studying biological sciences at Victoria University of Wellington seemed a natural choice. She studied subjects including botany, zoology, chemistry and maths, and in her final year genetics was introduced as a new course and she jumped at the chance to sign up. "I thought, 'That sounds good!'" she says.

She went on to complete an honours degree in genetics, and before long found herself working in a relatively new cytogenetics laboratory at Wellington Hospital. At that stage Dale was going to the local Baptist Church because she had been boarding at the Baptist Hostel for two years and was dating someone who attended the church.

“There was a lovely older man there who was the superintendent of Wellington Hospital – Caleb Tucker. And as you do when you’re about 20, you barrel up and and say ‘any jobs in genetics?’ and he was the sort of guy that listened and so I got a phone call with a job offer and I was just the third person in this new cytogenetics lab.”

Being one of the first staff in a lab that had just started, Dale was able to watch all the techniques and technology evolve. Eventually, as DNA technology arrived and expanded into new techniques and away from traditional cytogenetics lab work, she made the decision to move into genetic counselling, working with families affected by genetic conditions. She was one of the first people doing this work in Auckland and among the first few in New Zealand. Her experience in the laboratory gave her a good grounding in the science, while her years in the field helped her support families who were often anxious or uncertain about what a genetic diagnosis might mean for them. It's a career she thoroughly enjoyed, and one that allowed her to combine her interest in science with working alongside people.

Family has always been a big part of Dale’s life. She has three sons, and while they have a fantastic relationship, having three boys has also meant a fair share of worrying about what they might get up to next! Their adventures have included exploring caves in Thailand without a guide, only to have the torch on a phone fail. And then there was the son who decided to go mountaineering in the Himalayas just as the season was opening. She remembers receiving an email from him one Friday night explaining that someone had told them all about crampons, but the instructions weren't particularly clear, so he thought he'd work it out himself. Thankfully, she was reading the email after the event, and he had survived!

But there was one experience that was far more frightening than any of these. One Sunday morning, Dale heard a news report that a group of 10 aid workers in Afghanistan had been murdered. Her son was working there, and she immediately wondered whether it was his group. After a frantic phone call to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, she eventually discovered that her son had emailed to say it was indeed his group, although he hadn't been on that particular trip. There was enormous relief that he was safe, but the tragedy was devastating. Six of his close friends had been killed, and he helped with the memorial services and eulogies. One of the hardest things was packing up their belongings to send home to their families. “It was just cutting,” she recalls.

She later travelled to Kabul to visit him and make sure he was doing OK. He was deeply affected by what had happened, having lost so many good friends at once. Despite the terrible circumstances, Dale was grateful to have the opportunity to visit Kabul herself. It's not somewhere many people get the opportunity to visit.

These days, all three sons live in Australia, with two in Melbourne and one in Canberra. They keep in touch and visit each other regularly, and Dale tries to get across the ditch at least once a year. She used to visit more often during the school holidays to help look after the grandchildren. Now they're older, she doesn't need to do quite so much babysitting, although her visits are still very well organised! Her sons have been known to get out a spreadsheet and work out where she'd be staying each night. With three or four different beds over six days once, she reckoned she needeed a holiday when she got home!

Faith has been part of Dale's life since childhood. She grew up in a strongly Presbyterian family, with her mum playing an important role in the church. Her family's Presbyterian roots went back generations, with her great-grandfather coming from Scotland to New Zealand, where he helped establish a Presbyterian church in Oamaru. After her marriage broke up, Dale began attending St Aidan's as it was her local Presbyterian church. Being involved in church was something she had grown up with, and helping out was simply part of what you did. Her approach to faith, though, has always been a practical one. She's not someone who talks about dramatic spiritual experiences or having an overwhelming moment of being saved. Instead, her faith has grown through life, relationships, questions and discussion. Her mum was a particularly important influence. She was open-minded and encouraged her children to think for themselves. One of her favourite sayings was, "If your faith can't take an argument, then it isn't much of a faith."

That's an attitude Dale has carried with her throughout her life. She believes it's important to be able to ask questions, discuss difficult topics and listen to different points of view. This has also influenced her work. She remembers supporting a woman who was facing a difficult decision about a pregnancy. The woman was struggling with the expectations of family members whose religious views were quite rigid. Recognising how difficult the situation was, Dale asked her a simple question: "Is your God a loving God?" She hoped that thinking about faith through the lens of love might help the woman work through her decision.

For Dale, faith isn't about having all the answers or telling other people what to think. It's about making space for people to explore their beliefs and work things through for themselves. She found that same sense of freedom when she attended a series of talks about Christianity at St John's in Northcote, led by the Anglican minister. Sitting in the front row were several retired Presbyterian ministers from St Aidan's, and what the speaker had to say really resonated with her. "I remember saying to one of my friends, 'I'm allowed to think that way?!" Seeing those retired ministers listening and agreeing gave her confidence that she could ask questions and explore her faith without feeling she had to fit into a particular mould. And that sense of belonging is something she values enormously.

Over the years, Dale has helped out at OCC with practical jobs such as the Dinner Club and fundraising team. She sees volunteering as an important part of belonging to a community, and it's something her mum encouraged all her children to do. She remembers her mum telling them not to forget to do some voluntary work in their local community because it matters. Now that she has more time available, she continues to contribute where she can, although she admits she is beginning to think about making a few changes to how she spends her time. What keeps her involved is the value of the community itself. It's not just about getting jobs done; it's about the connections that grow when people come together and share the work.

She also belongs to a home study group of friends she has known for about thirty years. Originally started as a home group connected to a local Baptist church, it has continued to meet over the years, and the members have become like family. Their conversations cover just about everything, from cups of coffee to prayer and everything in between. They don't necessarily have to agree on every subject, but they are comfortable talking openly and listening to one another. It's another example of the kind of community Dale appreciates: one where people can be themselves, ask questions and share their thoughts without fear of judgement.

Looking back over her life, Dale is particularly grateful for her family and, above all, her mum. “She was just rock solid with us,” she says. Her mum provided stability and support, encouraged education and gave her children opportunities to find their own paths. Moving from a tiny country town to university in Wellington was a bit daunting at first, but it turned out to be a great foundation for the life that followed. She's also grateful for finding places where she has felt comfortable and accepted, and for having a career she genuinely loved.

And finally, what's something people at OCC might not know about her? She loves painting! Not paintings of landscapes or portraits, though. That's not her thing. She's talking about painting the house, the fences, the floors and just about anything else that needs a fresh coat. She's painted every ceiling in her house at least once, most of the walls two or three times, and all the door frames. She's painted the fences twice and even painted two floors (one purple - although, she laughs, nobody seems to notice)! There's something very satisfying about getting stuck into a job and seeing the results.

And perhaps that sums up Dale quite nicely. Whether she's working in science, supporting her family, helping out at church or tackling another painting project, she enjoys being useful and getting on with things. She's someone who values family, appreciates an open-minded community and believes that faith should leave room for questions, conversation and different ways of seeing the world. And at OCC, she's found a place where she can do just that - a place where she feels she belongs.

OCC will be a voting place venue on Saturday 7th November between 9am-7pm. If you have an EasyVote card, bring it with you, and vote close to home. It makes voting faster. Sarah is working as the Voting Place Manager for OCC so don't be surprised when you see here there!

For more information, including where you can vote ahead of election day - head to https://vote.nz/



AGM Reminder

Please remember our AGM will be on the 8th November (2nd Sunday) in Onewa Christian Community, after the service. The service on 8th November will be a celebration of 25 years of mainly music at Onewa Christian Community. Any apologies can be sent via sarah@onewacc.org.nz or 021 0919 7097 .





TICKETS

$25 PP
$5 Under 15s
$150/table of 6

WEAR A HAT, WIN A PRIZE

FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER, 7PM

172 Hinemoa Street, Birkenhead

Gather your team for our annual fundraiser* quiz night. Tickets include the quiz, snacks & juice. BYO drinks. The winning team gets a hamper of goodies.

TO BOOK:

email sarah@onewacc.org.nz to or phone 021 0919 7097

* 10% of proceeds go to De Paul House

Onewa Christian Community
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

FREE

Community Breakfast

All Welcome



Sunday 15th November, 9.30am

Onewa Christian Community

172 Hinemoa Street, Birkenhead

Speaker:

Add a subheading

Zel Ng

Forest and Bird

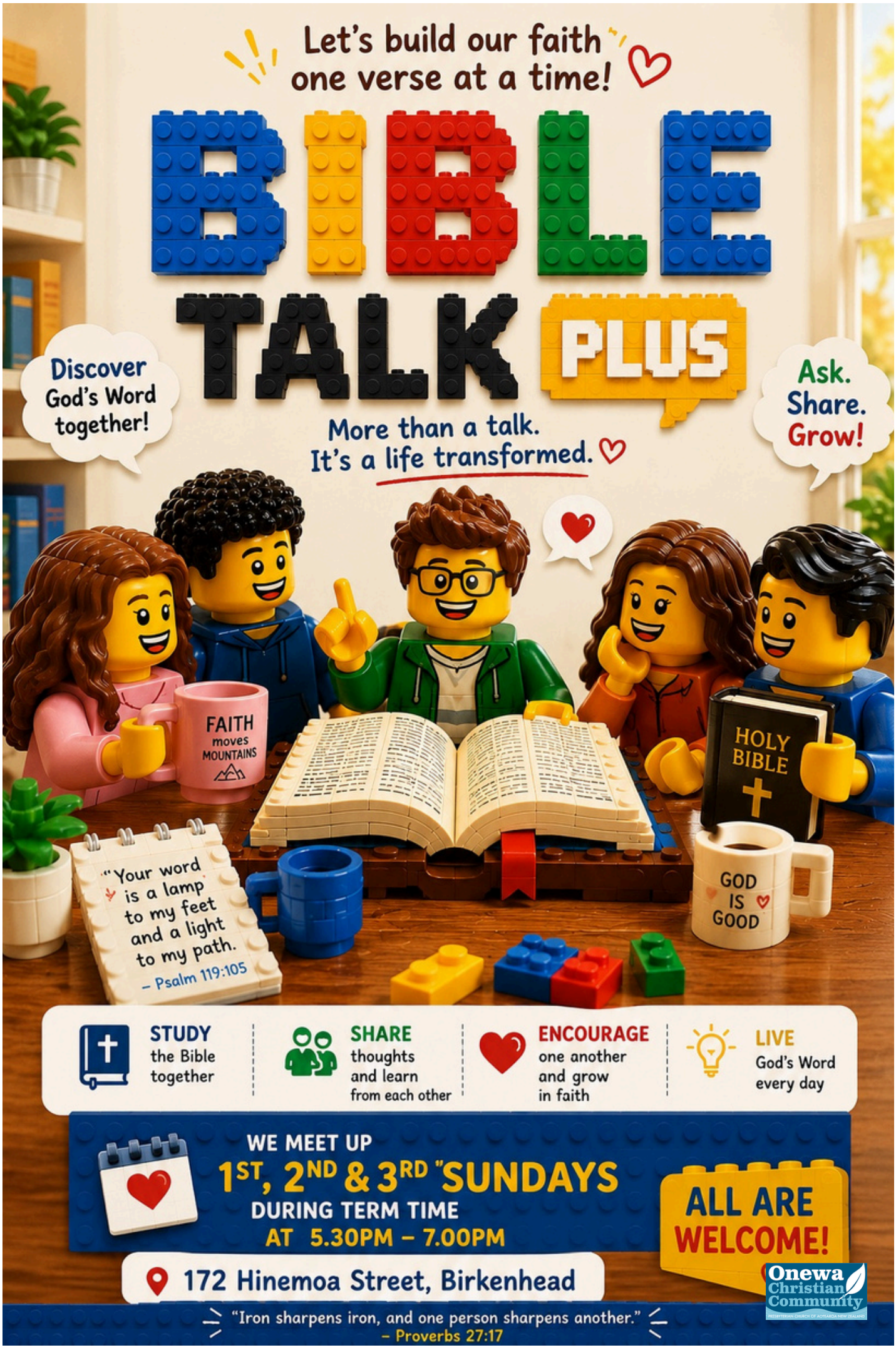
Onewa Christian Community

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND



OCC will hold a Sustainable Christmas Market on Sat 5th December. We are looking for handmade contributions for the OCC stall. This can be food or craft.

If you know of anyone who sells sustainable/eco friendly items, please let them know about this market.


Let's build our faith one verse at a time!
BIBLE TALK PLUS
Discover God's Word together!
Ask. Share. Grow!
More than a talk. It's a life transformed.
FAITH moves MOUNTAINS
HOLY BIBLE
"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." – Psalm 119:105
GOD IS GOOD
STUDY the Bible together
SHARE thoughts and learn from each other
ENCOURAGE one another and grow in faith
LIVE God's Word every day
WE MEET UP
1ST, 2ND & 3RD "SUNDAYS
DURING TERM TIME
AT 5.30PM – 7.00PM
ALL ARE WELCOME!
172 Hinemoa Street, Birkenhead
Onewa Christian Community
"Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens another."
– Proverbs 27:17

November Roster

Date	Elder	Door Duty	Prayer	Reading	Morning Tea
Sunday 1 Nov	R Hurr	No one	D Johnson	R Hurr	L Carter & L Buckthought
Sunday 8 Nov	H Muller	B Wadams	H Muller	B Wadams	E Wong & J Collinge
Sunday 15 Nov	**Community Breakfast**				
Sunday 22 Nov (Communion)	J Collinge	R Baxter	J Collinge	R Baxter	J Collinge & R Baxter
Sunday 29 Nov (At OCC)	N Inkson	K Sholley	N Inkson	K Sholley	P Fish, R Thornton
Serving elders for Communion 22 Nov: J Collinge, B Wadams, R Baxter & N Inkson					

Contact us

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Admin: Pauline Soo admin@onewacc.org.nz

Giving

BNZ account
Account name: ONEWA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
Account number: 02-0112-0168422-000

