

Spring 2026

SEASONS OF GRACE

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
OF THE ALEXANDRA CLYDE LAUDER UNION PARISH



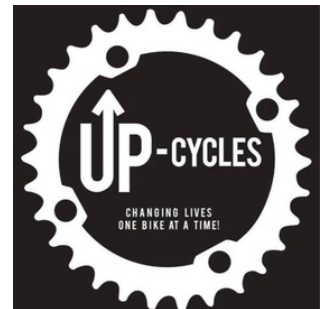
Alexandra Clyde Lauder
UNION PARISH

Caring for Creation: Grace in the Choices We Make

Caring for creation can feel impossibly large: about climate change, energy security, waste, biodiversity loss and changing weather patterns. It is easy to wonder what difference one household, one church, or one small community can make. Yet Christian faith has always understood grace as something that takes flesh in ordinary life. Caring for creation begins there: not with perfection, but with paying attention and choosing differently when we can.

Recently when I needed a bike - so I could keep up with my boys - instead of buying a new one, I went to the charity “Upcycles” at the old Wastebusters and got a second-hand one. I realised my bike was only one small part of a much bigger story. On the day I visited, volunteers were rescuing bikes from the Cromwell dump, repairing them, swapping parts and finding new homes for machines that might otherwise have been discarded. Human stories of reuse in action.

A young man on probation needing transport to community service received a bike and helmet. Bikes were prepared for junior doctors staying in hospital accommodation. Another became transport for someone getting to work along Dunstan Road. A three-year-old received his first bike. And a full-suspension Trek was painstakingly restored for a young person in Roxburgh who simply didn’t have the means to buy one.



Creation care at its best, and the benefit goes much further than reducing waste. Skills are shared, people are connected, transport becomes accessible, money is saved, and community grows. Environmental care and social good meet each other.

As the 2026 election approaches, energy has become a significant issue. On one hand, the Government is progressing plans for an LNG import facility as backup for periods when renewable generation is constrained. On the other, this is becoming something of a solar election, National, Labour, and the Greens each making proposals to up solar development. And just this week, news of 500 schools selected for a government \$30 million Solar on Schools programme. A number around Central Otago have made the list. Whatever our politics, it is encouraging to see distributed renewable energy moving closer to the centre of our national conversation.

Here in Alexandra, our Parish Council is exploring a similar possibility: working with Alexandra Community House on a solar installation designed to benefit both organisations. That excites me because it asks a deeply Christian question: how can the resources entrusted to us serve not only ourselves, but our neighbours?

Andrew Howley

**Alexandra Clyde Lauder**
UNION PARISH

MISSION
To follow Jesus, joining with people in responding to God’s Spirit in our communities.

VISION
A vibrant faith community where generations and cultures grow together, constantly being renewed and engaging our district.

**Alexandra Clyde Lauder**
UNION PARISH

SIGNPOSTS
Engage district
Speak out
Lead effectively
Renew worship
Focus physical and financial resource

My Journey in a Garden

My garden has always been a very special place for me.

Even as a child I loved to go and look especially at Nana Dillon's garden. It just filled me with joy looking at all the colours in the flower garden, the fruit trees in the fruit square, and the vegetable garden. Walking down the long path to first of all hear Cocky the cockatoo squawking, then to look at the chickens, and finally opening the gate at the end of the path to meet my cousin and go on a picnic with her. What wonderful times these were.

When I started gardening it was very lack lustre. But I soon learned that soil was one of the most important parts of gardening. If you have the foundation right, most plants will grow.

I married into a gardening family, and it seemed if you couldn't talk gardening you didn't contribute to the conversation at all. I wasn't as knowledgeable as they were, but as time went by I was quite satisfied with how my garden turned out. It was mine and my style. Gardening is certainly a personal thing. that is what makes it so interesting.

Sometimes I found it hard to be excited about it, when I had let it get beyond easy care. At other times it was a time of joy, a place for me to gather my thoughts and find a special peace as I worked around my plants. Always in awe of the produce or beauty that came from constant love and attention. Even admiring the little creatures that dwell amongst the plants.

A ladybug drew my attention one day and as it flew away, I thought, what a wonderful world we live in.

It is a bit like life, when we find everything is going well there is a certain peace about it, but when the chips are down, we have to dig a little deeper and find an inner strength to carry on.

When you think about your journey in your garden it is quite like the cycle of life, you plant the seed, nurture the plant until it either produces or blooms and then miraculously the cycle begins again. Just like life.

Our journey with our Christ is quite like this, we start by being nurtured by parents, continue this journey through different learnings, either by study, people's different influences, or our need to have a base for life that holds us fast through all the different facets, good and bad. And then we are called home to be with our Lord. This is the time for the next generation to look back and give thanks and continue the journey.

Praise be to God.



Valerie Anderson

Celebrating the Arts in Central Otago

This is my reflection on belonging to the Central Otago community where we have chosen to live, and the Central Otago Art Society [COAS], that is bringing art into mine and others lives.

My personal art journey: I work in many mediums - but botanical art is my passion along with printing and fibre. 'Rewirement' has led me from Dunedin to Clyde, where I have met and connected with other artists and by joining COAS both as a member and committee member.

What does Central Otago Arts Society do?

It is a vibrant, creative community that develops, and encourages a love of art in all forms. Since its beginnings, COAS has been committed to providing opportunities for artists/art lovers to connect, learn, and share in the joy of creativity:

- Welcomes members – all skill levels, as well as those who simply appreciate art.
- Offers membership benefits: reduced fees for exhibiting/participating in workshops.
- Access to the newsletter.
- Operates a website that gives up-to-date information.
- Runs two exhibitions a year – Blossom Festival Exhibition and Easter Cash and Carry.
- Offers workshops/special events throughout the year - open to everyone.
- Have instigated a generous annual scholarship to an emerging artist.



COAS gives back

The Central Otago Emerging Artist Scholarship is our annual initiative to support an emerging artist in the visual arts. Each year a \$5000 scholarship is open to an artist with strong connections to Central Otago and who are in the early stages of their artistic journey, irrespective of age or medium. This is now open for applications. Details:

coas.org.nz/emerging-artist-scholarship (also see last year's winner Caitlin Shea)
or contact Katie Robinson on 021445666
email CentralOtagoArtSociety@gmail.com



Art and community go hand-in-hand towards building connections across organisations, raising awareness and discussion, bringing people together to enrich the cultural life of our region and by creating art works that can be appreciated by generations to come.

Blossom Festival Exhibition: Wednesday 23 September – Friday 2 October

Environment Stewardship

in our neighbourhood

Environmental stewardship at Moutere involves a simple belief: if you care for the land, it will care for you. This ethos involves significant sacrifice, in time and income.

Grazing commenced at Moutere in 1858, and the descendants of those sheep still graze the hills in summer and the downs in winter. In spring, the hill is seeded (not grazed), allowing biodiversity to thrive. Moutere is home to a large area of Halls Totara and Mānuka and the stock rate is set on the advice of a botanist.

Rabbits have been a constant battle. In 1906, 80,000 rabbits were culled and Moutere employed 14 men to keep them under control. In 1954, the use of 1080 to cull rabbits then allowed new pastures to be sown, including lucerne on the down country (which was only resown last year after over 70 years!). We still employ a rabbitier, with cull numbers now as low as 12 per month.

Campbells Creek is home to the last known population of the Central Otago roundhead galaxiid in the Chatto creek catchment, Central Otago roundheadgalaxias: Non-migratory galaxiids. Their protection involves employing a freshwater ecologist to remove trout from the creeks year after year. Each trout that is removed is cut open and will often have a galaxiid in its stomach.

Each generation has also had to survive extreme temperatures, from hoar frost every winter to a drought every summer. These extreme temperatures contribute to the production of some of the best Merino wool in the world, which has thermoregulating qualities. We are also fortunate that irrigation provides resilience against both extremes, resilience for both for the land (allowing areas to be spelled) and also the stock (growing better quality feed).

Walking the hills at Moutere and watching the light flicker, you see that sacrifice and privilege are two sides of the same coin, and continuing on the stewardship legacy may allow your children to walk the same hills with your grandchildren one day.

Harriet Jopp



Children in Church

Our Parish welcomes people of all ages to participate in activities and our time together each Sunday provides a chance for different generations to learn from each other. Living Water is this year's Seasons of Creation theme: the activities on these pages are for **people of all ages** to learn together at home.

What if water could speak?

It sounds like the beginning of a children's game, yet beneath the simplicity of the question lies something deeply urgent. Water has stood at the centre of nearly every decisive moment in the biblical story. How many can you name?

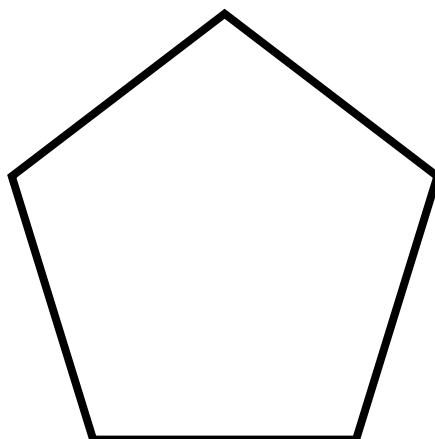
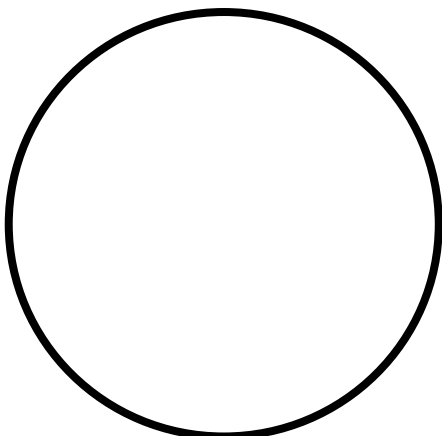
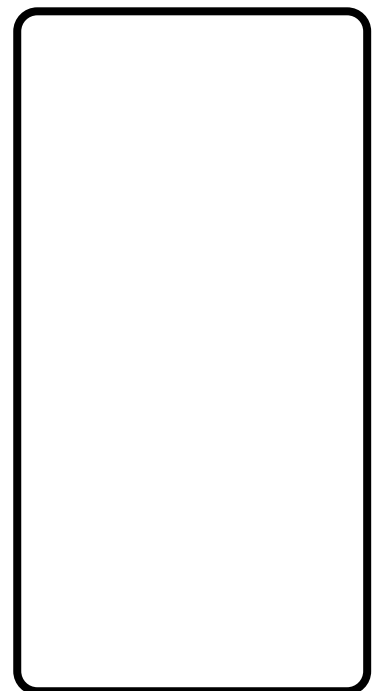
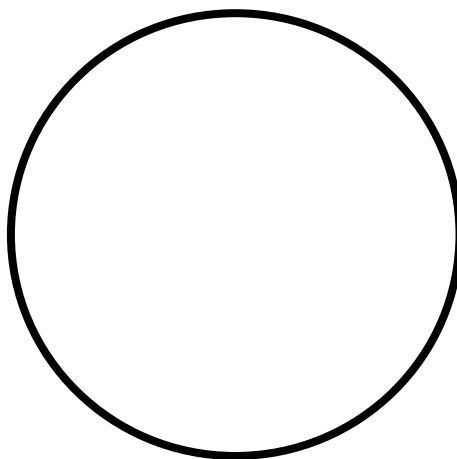
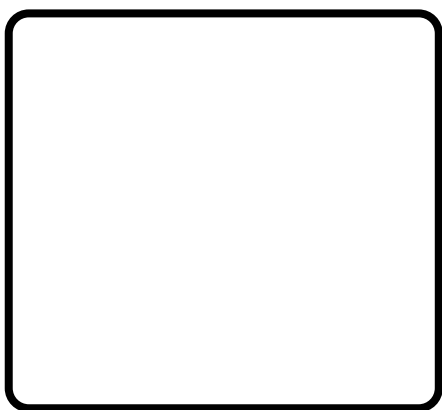
2: okay; 4: good; 6: very good; 8: excellent

Water is speaking urgently today: where children, mainly girls, wake before dawn to collect water before going to school; in polluted rivers burdened by industrial waste; in lands cracked by drought; in melting glaciers disappearing silently while the world debates economics and politics.

What is water in your neighbourhood saying?

As the mighty Mata-Au rolls through and the Manuherekia winds down the valley, what story do you hear them telling?

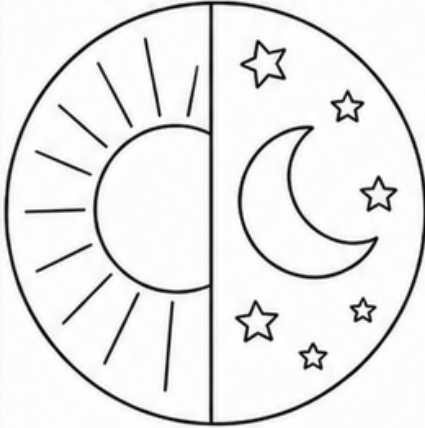
Draw or write what you hear in the shapes below....



7 Days of Creation

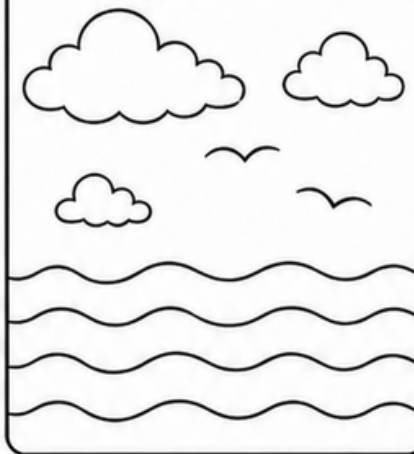
Day 1

Light and Darkness



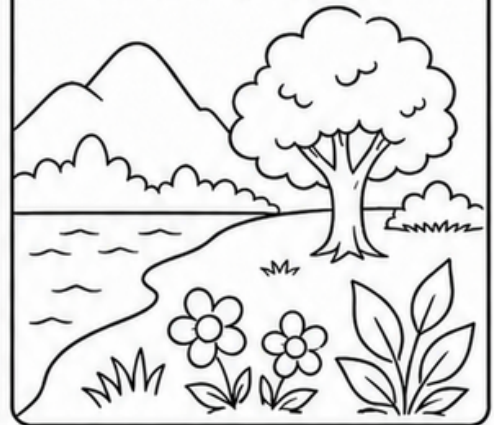
Day 2

Sky and Waters



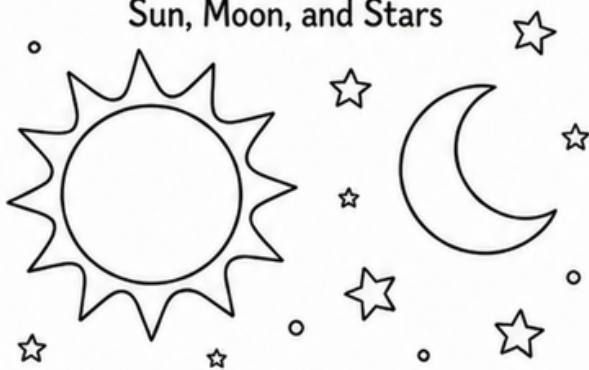
Day 3

Land, Sea,
Grass, Trees, and Plants



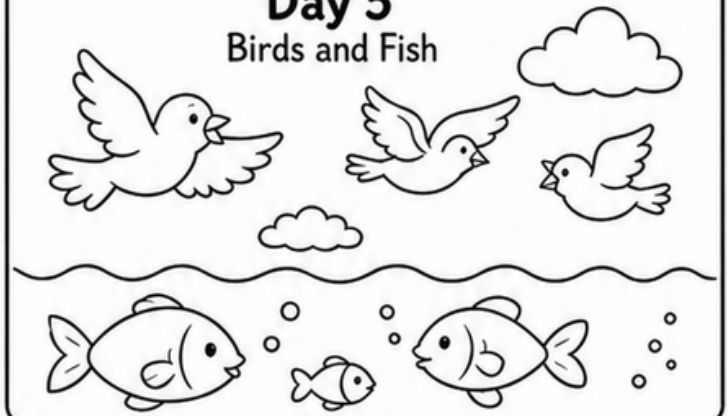
Day 4

Sun, Moon, and Stars



Day 5

Birds and Fish



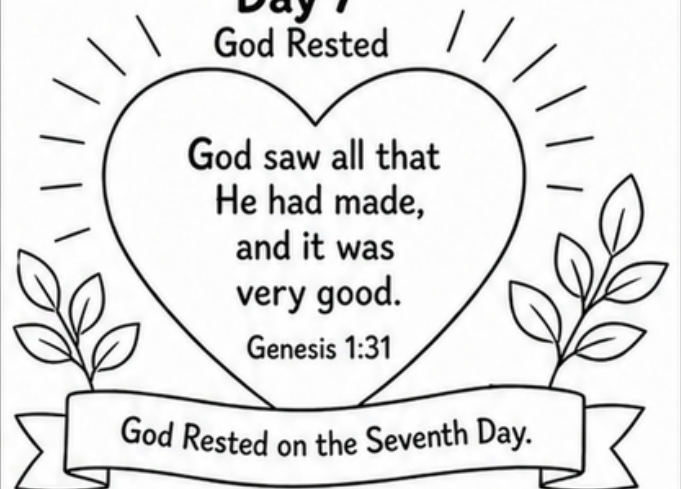
Day 6

Animals and People



Day 7

God Rested



Colouring In is not just for kids,
feel free to share photos of your completed work with us online
email to comms@alexchurch.org.nz

Rural Churches Gather in Romania



Closing Service and Commissioning in Neppendorf Evangelical (Lutheran) Church, sharing Communion from the High Altar.

Late July 2026, in Sibiu, Romania, the first thing was the HEAT. But I won't talk about that... Much more interesting is the experience of rural church people, 30 face-to-face and up to 15 online, gathering from around the world.

It was the first truly “hybrid” conference, and it worked. Proof is in the new Leadership Group, with representation from every region, Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania, and including online participants, from Ghana and Madagascar.

Roots, Faith and Identity: People and Communities Living on the Land: We met in a land where peoples - plural - are deeply rooted locally. The Transylvanian region is a place of many languages and ancestries - Old Saxon, Roma, Hungarian, German, Romanian. Te reo Māori was completely at home, in fact requested as part of the opening formalities, for the way we greet the Creator and the land, the ancestors, and the living - the different local iwi/peoples and those of us visiting.

Church Embedded in the Land: Communist rule proved a minor blip. Through that time, even party leaders secretly arranged for the children to be baptised in their family's faith - Orthodox if Romanian heritage, Lutheran if German, Protestant if Hungarian, and Catholic continuing since the Reformation. Faith is connected to identity. Churches from early in the second millennium provided a fortress retreat, used each time invaders ranged across Europe. They held a seed store and their walled grounds had room for livestock as well as all the villagers.

Rural churches Networking: This faith family enjoyed a major boost in Sibiu. Energy as if a new IRCA were born, old hands and newcomers equally part of the conference process, greater diversity across the world, learning equally from one another, and knowing we can keep connected even as countries get more anxious with their borders and visas harder to achieve. Of the 33 we supported through the visa process, only seven were successful. The reflection below comes from one who did get a visa, Pastor Vincent Imai from a remote part of Western Kenya.

Robyn McPhail

My first time to attend an IRCA conference, within the two days I felt part and parcel of the global family serving Christ in diverse areas. I had a first hand experience of how people in their own culture and land can tap the God given resources at their disposal to improve their own livelihood and share the love of Christ with others by building meaningful relationships. It was particularly a life changing experience for me to interact with a pastor who rears buffalos and uses the buffalo milk to manufacture cheese, thereby increasing his income without depending on the congregation to meet his needs.

Spiritual Practices

1. Practise Attention

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it. Psalm 24:1. We often move through the natural world without really seeing it. Christian spirituality invites us to recognise creation as God's creation: not simply scenery, resources or property, but a community of creatures in which God's generosity and creativity are visible.

How to practise it:

Once a week, spend twenty minutes outside without distractions or tasks accomplish. Walk slowly or sit in one place. Notice five things: something growing, something moving, something you hear, something that has changed since last there, and something you normally overlook.

What does this reveal to me about God? What is flourishing here? What is struggling? What might loving this place require of me? Finish simply: "Creator God, thank you for this place. Teach me to see it as you see it."

2. Practise Gratitude and Lament

Christian prayer has room for both delight and grief. Creation care therefore needs both gratitude for the beauty of the world and honesty about what is being damaged.

How to practise it:

At the end of each day, or weekly, spend five minutes reviewing your life with creation.

Ask yourself four questions:

· *Where did I encounter the goodness of creation?*

Give thanks for something specific: sunlight, food, birdsong, water, a landscape, an animal, a garden.

· *Where did I see creation suffering?*

Name something honestly: waste, polluted water, drought, habitat loss, unnecessary consumption or the effects of climate change.

· *Where did my choices contribute to either flourishing or harm?*

Do this without guilt or self-congratulation. Simply notice.

· *What one response is God inviting me to make?*

Finish with prayer for the wounded places and creatures you have noticed.

3. Practise Belonging to Place — Pray for and Learn Your Local Whenua

Scripture is much more earthy than Christianity has presented it. Biblical stories happen beside particular rivers, mountains, fields, gardens and seas.

How to practise it:

Learn the ecological story of the place where you live. Find out the Māori and English names of your local river, streams and significant landscape features. Learn which plants and birds belong naturally there. Discover what the ecosystem was like before extensive human modification. Notice what has disappeared and what is returning.

Adopt one place for prayer:

For what is flourishing here. For what has been damaged. For the people who care for this place. For wisdom about your own responsibility toward it. With this, we begin to move from saying "this is the environment" to saying "this is the place of which I am part."

Meet Your Parish Councillor

Name: Robert Simon Checketts, my Mum and Dad deciding Simon was my given name

Role on Parish Council: Health and Safety, Buildings and property.

How long have you been part of the parish? Since 2024 when Wendy and I moved to Alexandra. We'd attended church at Hedgehope and at Browns Presbyterian church, and I became an elder there, prior to the parish joining up with Central Southland in Winton.

Tell us a little about yourself: My mother Shirley was the religious leader of our household of eight. I can remember trucking up to St David's in Newfield when I was 7 or 8, always 10 minutes late and having to sit in the front pews with everybody watching. When I left high school I took an apprenticeship in the family Engineering business as a blacksmith which I continued for 46 years. During that time I met Wendy and we had three boys. Horse riding was a big part of our lives, all boys attending pony club and the whole family going hunting through the winter months. Indoor Bowls was a fun pastime for Wendy and me once the Boys left home. Playing for Hedgehope and Central Southland zone fluking a few minor Southland placings and a third place in South Island triples.

What do you value most about our church community?

The time of "Pass the Peace". Catch up and a personal greeting to each other.

What encouraged you to serve on Parish Council? A feeling of helping out.

What is one hope you have for our parish? To be a more outward focused parish.

A favourite Bible verse, hymn, prayer, or piece of Christian wisdom:

10 Commandments: if we all tried our best to live by these, the world would be a better place.

When I'm not at church, you might find me...

We came to Alexandra to retire, fish, play golf, read books, and generally slow down. Duckshooting has also been a passion of mine and Winton church goes and Elders still catch up start of May for another season in Drummond.

Something that always makes me smile:

A child opening Christmas or birthday presents



Upcoming Special Events



Join us for **CHURCH AT THE RIVER**

Combined service - all welcome

Alexandra, Clyde, Lauder Union Parish & Alexandra Salvation Army

SUNDAY 11TH OCTOBER, 10.30AM

Poplar Grove Picnic Area
Alexandra Bridge

We encourage you to walk, bike or car pool there!



Alexandra Clyde Lauder Union Parish

Fair & Community Day

In association with **Alexandra Community House**

Free morning teas • Bouncy castles • Kids' entertainment



7th November

10am-1pm

The Village Green,
12 Centennial Ave, Alexandra

All welcome



Alexandra Clyde
Lauder Union
Parish



Alexandra
Community
House

News from Parish Council

Parish Council held its monthly meeting on Wednesday 19 August.

- Annual general meeting is set for 18th October 2026, following worship, reports due 27th September.
- Nominations for Parish Council are sought, please talk to Rev Andrew if you wish to serve or to nominate someone
- We recently farewelled and thanked Peter Griffieon for his service to the council and the church.
- A combined Fair and Community Day is to be held on the 7th November at St Enoch's, your help with this is sought. This will also include Alexandra Community House.
- Parish Council and the Alexandra Community Trust board have begun meeting and looking towards serving the community together and strengthening our relationship.
- Parish Council is progressing a proposal to install solar power for the benefit of both Alexandra Community House and the parish. More information to come prior to AGM.

Parish Council: Linda Armstrong, Steve Battrick, Simon Checketts, Mavis Duncanson, Sue Melville, and Rev Andrew Howley (moderator).

Secretary: Helen Williamson

Reading this and want to receive it at your place?

Email comms@alexchurch.org.nz or visit:

alexchurch.org.nz/parish-magazine-signup/

Upcoming Worship

Sunday 6 Sept	Monthly Communion - Season of Creation 1 Rev Dale Peach - Methodist Superintendent South Island	10am St Enoch's Alexandra
Sunday 13 Sept	Season of Creation 2 Land Sunday International Rural Churches in Romania Rev Dr Robyn McPhail	10am St Enoch's Alexandra
Sunday 20 Sept	Season of Creation 3 Wilderness Sunday	10am St Enoch's Alexandra
Sunday 27 Sept	Season of Creation 4 Blossom Festival	10am St Enoch's Alexandra
Sunday 4 Oct	Monthly Communion - World Communion Sunday	10am St Enoch's Alexandra
Sunday 11 Oct	Church at the river Picnic Morning Tea to follow - with the Alexandra Salvation Army	10:30am Poplar Grove
Sunday 18 Oct	Pentecost 21 - Industrial Sunday & AGM	10am St Enoch's Alexandra
Sunday 25 Oct	Pentecost 22 - Reformation Sunday Rev Barry Kelk - Member Southern Presbytery Council	10am St Enoch's Alexandra
Sunday 1 Nov	Monthly Communion - All Saints Morning Tea at Tin Goose courtesy Elections	10am St Enoch's Alexandra
Sunday 8 Nov	Pentecost 24 - Remembering Parihaka	10am St Enoch's Alexandra
Sunday 15 Nov	Pentecost 25	10am St Enoch's Alexandra
Sunday 22 Nov	Reign of Christ	10am St Enoch's Alexandra
Sunday 29 Nov	Advent 1 - 5th Sunday Shared Worship with Dunstan Anglican Parish	10am St Enoch's Alexandra

Contact Details

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