

KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

KNOX LIFE

September 2015



Offering our Present - in faith, using what we have -

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Visit us on the internet at www.knoxchurch.co.nz



Today I awake and God is before me.
At night, as I dreamt, God summoned the day;
For God never sleeps but patterns the morning
with slithers of gold or glory in grey.
Today I arise and Christ is beside me.
He walked through the dark to scatter new light,
Yes, Christ is alive, and beckons his people
to hope and to heal, resist and invite.
Today I affirm the Spirit within me
at worship and work, in struggle and rest.
The Spirit inspires all life which is changing
from fearing to faith, from broken to blest.
Today I enjoy the Trinity round me,
above and beneath, before and behind;
The Maker, the Son, the Spirit together
they called me to life and call me their friend.

John Bell

All within the Care and Call of God

Our Past

Where we've been; what we've done; blessings remembered.

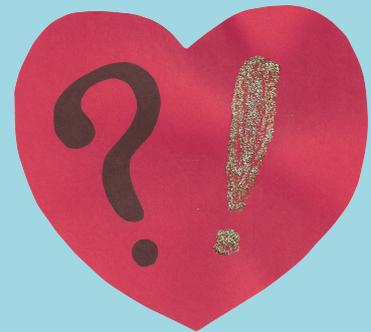


Our Future

Where we're going; who we are called to be; things hoped for; faith.

Our present

Where we are now; what we have at our disposal; how we use our resources faithfully; walking with Christ today.



Assembling the Present

The larger story of the Christian Faith spans thousands of years and reaches almost every corner of the globe. It is a story of people hearing the voice of the One in whose image they are made, then responding with a “yes”, then embarking on a process of discovery, self-giving, growth and blessing. Although no one dares to plot the detail of every next chapter (surprises are regular delightful gifts along the way of faith), common visions of the destination include images of the world at peace, the whole creation reconciled, humanity knowing fully - as by God it has been fully known.

Within that larger story, we find the story of Knox Church. So far, our chapter has lasted 135 years. It has featured principled people, bold visions, prophetic voices, brave witness in trying times, caring community, and the consistent voicing of praise.

Our Past

Our recent past has tested us. Losing our home to the quakes, parting with a good number of our community as they moved to less-shaky places, spending a season without a minister, all required a bravery of spirit. Those who stayed and rebuilt showed resolve, determination and commitment. The experience has left us aware of our capacity to survive, mindful of God’s sustaining Spirit, and quite tired.

Our Future

We dare not plot the detail of every next chapter, but we believe that the vision of a world at peace, the whole creation reconciled, and all humanity arriving at understanding, is a useful compass. Also useful is a continuing reflection on how Jesus called (and calls) those around him to “negotiate the kingdom” within their given stretch of time. Over the next twelve months we are going to give close attention, through a mission discernment process, to what kind of a church we are called to be. Among other things, we will consider:

- what we value in our mission statement
- what we see in our neighbourhood, our city, our country, our world (where are our principal gospel responsibilities?)
- what our special contribution to the wider / global Church might be (how we are different from other churches)
- who our strategic partners in mission might be (both within and beyond the Church)
- what mission projects in other places have excited us – and why (are they exciting because they have connections with our gifting or vision?)
- what we individuals need from one another in order to grow in faith and discipleship

- how committed we are to the principles of progressive Christianity
- what resources we need to move towards embodying the vision we are discerning

Our Present

Between our past and our future is the present – where we are now. As we embark on discerning the future, **and deal with the responsibilities of the present**, what do we have at our disposal? What are our resources? How are we to use them? For the next five Sundays, we are doing an audit of who we are, how we are gifted, and how we are called to be faithful stewards of what we have.

- 20 September: Release Knox Life: Offering our Present
 Morning Service: Past, Present and Future
 After morning tea: Brief gathering of interested people in the Committee Room for a Short Introduction to “Use of time”
- 27 September: Morning Service: The Christian Use of Time
 After morning tea in the Committee Room:
 Reflections on “Use of Time”
 Introduction to “Use of Talent”
- 4 October: Morning Service: The Christian Use of Talent
 After morning tea in the Committee Room:
 Reflections on “Use of Talent”
 Introduction to “Use of Treasure”
- 11 October: Morning Service: The Christian Use of Treasure
 After morning tea in the Committee Room:
 Brief reflection on “Use of Treasure”
 Summarising of our “Use of . . .” insights
- 18 October: Morning Service: Offering our Present
 featuring a reflection on our use of time, talent and treasure,
 and an opportunity to dedicate ourselves for the future of our church

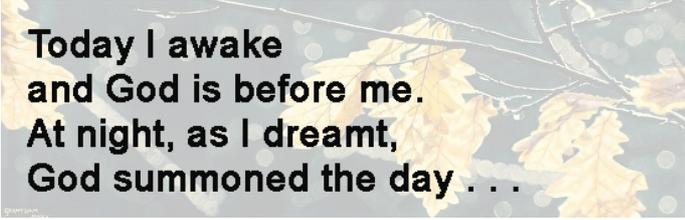
This Knox Life contains material that may stimulate your thinking and tap your heart on its shoulder as we audit our present. It includes material that will feature in the Post morning tea introductions and reflections on Time, Talent, and Treasure.

I commend this material to you, and invite you to join us in this important audit.

Arohanui,

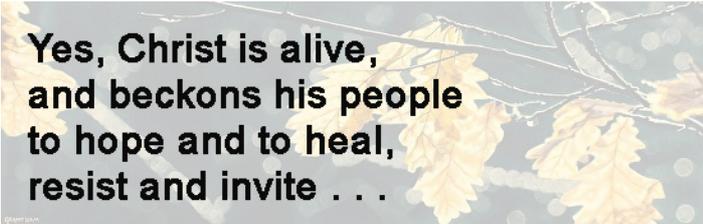
Matthew.

Why the focus on Time, Talent and Treasure?



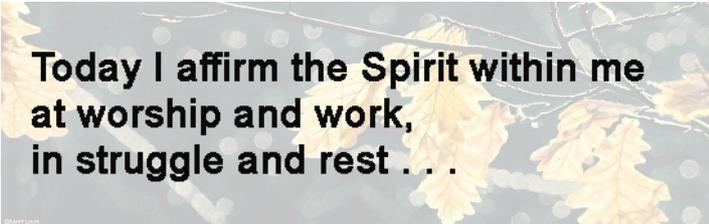
**Today I awake
and God is before me.
At night, as I dreamt,
God summoned the day . . .**

Each day that we open our eyes, we've been given another day – an allocation of **time**. Every human being possesses the gift of time. Some of that time is likely already, through our current responsibilities and physical necessities, to be committed to certain tasks. Some of it, however, presents us with the challenge of choice – how we are going to use the discretionary time we have. Some people are time-poor; others are time-rich. To rich and poor alike, proper stewardship is an issue. No one wants to look back on life and see a story of wasted time. We want to audit our community's gift of time because, to a great extent, our progress into the future depends on how we choose to give our time.



**Yes, Christ is alive,
and beckons his people
to hope and to heal,
resist and invite . . .**

The people of Christ are beckoned “to hope and to heal, resist and invite”. We're called to be co-workers in the work of Christ. Each person is gifted (and needs to be nurtured) for that co-working. While few people deny that everyone possesses time, many deny that they are gifted. A significant part of helping the church into its future is helping its members realise that their ordinary capacities (as well as their more extraordinary ones) are real and important. We want to audit our talents because as we do, we will discern what kind of a church we can be.



**Today I affirm the Spirit within me
at worship and work,
in struggle and rest . . .**

We affirm the Spirit within us, not just at worship, but also at work. In the best of all possible worlds, work would provide us with creative satisfaction and enjoyment. In less than perfect worlds, work provides us with income. If we are fortunate, some of that income falls into the category of “disposability”. As with

available time, so disposable income presents us with choices. We make our choices within the reality that the Church (as we know it at Knox) needs money to survive. “Treasure” encompasses not just money, but also possessions, personal connections, anything precious that can facilitate the life and mission of the Church. We want to audit these things because:

- we have current financial commitments, and
- any mission expansion we develop is most likely going to require material resourcing.

The Sunday Morning Discussions

Following the morning services on Sundays 20 & 27 September, and 4 & 11 October, we will have a discussion group in the Committee Room to reflect on the theme of the day and prepare for the following week’s theme. Although our discussions will be home-grown, the following study notes (borrowed from the Church of Scotland) might provide some useful background thoughts and possible questions for the discussions.



The Christian Giving of Time



Time is a fundamental part of God’s creation (Genesis 1: 14-19) and should be recognised as a very important gift from God. The stewardship of TIME is often neglected by the Church as it often concentrates its attention on money and talent.

In considering the Christian giving of time, members are encouraged to reflect on the way they use their time – all of it.

Time for God

Why are corporate worship and private devotions essential ingredients for a healthy human life? In what ways does time for God differ from time for the Church? Should time for God be regarded as time spent in activity or time when we stop doing, stop being busy?

Time for Family and Friends

In what ways does time spent with friends and family enrich human life? How important is time for friends and family when we prioritise our use of time?

Time for Work

What are the benefits from spending time working? In what ways is the balance of life upset when there is no opportunity to work or when time for work encroaches on time for other things?

Time for Rest and Recreation

How does time for rest and recreation differ from time for family and friends? What was Jesus saying when he emphasised the second great commandment, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself”?

Time for the Church

In what ways do we give time for the work of the Church? Does the Church make the best use of the time we give? In what ways could the Church make better use of our gift of time?

Practical Exercise

Keep a TIME DIARY for one week – to show how much time is used on eating, sleeping, and work or education. The time that is left is the time when we make choices about what we do.

- What choices did you make this week?
- Does our use of time lead to a balanced life?
- What different choices could we make?



The Christian Giving of Talent



The story of the birth of twins, Esau and Jacob, to Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 25: 19-28) reminds us that each person is unique, with his/her own physical characteristics, strengths and weaknesses. This theme is developed by Paul in his New Testament letters (Romans 12: 3-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 1-31) when he refers to Christians as different parts of the body of Christ and encourages them to use their particular gifts for the glory of God.

The Christian giving of TALENT is concerned with members identifying their particular gifts, skills, strengths – knowing what they can do well (and what they cannot do well) and recognising that everyone has some gift. This process will reveal the POOL OF ABILITY which is available in the congregation.

Questions:

1. Do the current members and adherents have the skills and strength necessary for all the traditional roles in the congregation?
2. In what ways can the pattern of congregational life be changed to make best use of the available skills and strengths, and minimise the need for skills and strengths which are not readily available?
3. What skills and strengths are surplus to the congregation's requirements, but could be used in a neighbouring congregation or potential partner organisation?



The Christian Giving of Treasure



For some people, stewardship is solely concerned with MONEY. For others, a broad view of stewardship can be a way of ignoring MONEY for as long as possible. MONEY is an important aspect of any consideration of Christian stewardship and Christian giving.

There are many references in the First Testament to the way in which the people of Israel and Judah should use their MONEY AND POSSESSIONS (e.g. Deuteronomy 26: 1-15; 2 Samuel 12: 1-6; Ezekiel 18: 5-9).

In the gospels we read of many occasions when Jesus spoke of MONEY AND POSSESSIONS (e.g. Luke 12: 13-21; 18: 18-25; 21: 1-4). Some of the most practical comments in Paul's letters are concerned with MONEY (1 Corinthians 16: 1-4; 2 Corinthians 8: 1-15). Encouraging a financial offering to God is a theme which runs through the whole Bible, and has been an essential part of Christian discipleship throughout the history of the Church.

It is also important that we remember that Christians are accountable to God for what they do with all their MONEY – not just the amount they give as an offering for the work of the Church. The various Biblical models for giving – first fruits, tithes, sharing, sacrifice, made in the image of a giving God – are worth exploring.

Practical Exercise

During the week, consider your own personal budget – all that you have and how it is spent.

- What proportion is given to charity (including the Church)?
- How does my charitable giving relate to what I spend on myself?
- What would my Church offering buy if I did not give it to God for the work of the Church?

When Time, Talent and Treasure Come Together - Some Recent New Ventures -

The Book Group

Avid reader, Len Pierce, put down a book he had just finished reading and, finding himself full of interesting thoughts, felt it would be good to be able to share some of them with others. Len has a well-developed capacity not just to read, but to summarise books (content, style, experience, associated ideas) in a way that is accessible and enlightening. Len found time to gather his thoughts, book the committee room, and thus was born the Knox Book Group. Money wasn't really an issue, since he'd bought the book already. The committee room came free of charge. Heating costs for our smallest meeting room were absorbed by Knox. Since the book group met immediately after morning tea, there wasn't even a cost involved in tea or coffee. Sometimes there have been minimal photocopying costs. For several months since, other members of the Book Group have opened up their reading for the group and good discussions have ensued. Beyond their actual book reading time, presenters spend a few hours assembling their thoughts. Members of the group spend one hour a week enjoying what is presented. A fine confluence of time, talent and treasure has enriched life at Knox.

The Movie Group

One day, at the Book Group, someone mentioned a particular book had been turned into a movie, and that the movie, unlike many other movies based on books, was a very successful conversion. Some people expressed an interest in watching the movie in question. Thus came into being the Knox Movie Group. Coming from someone's already existing private collection of DVDs, the DVD came at no cost. Knox already possessed a DVD player and large screen television. Tea and coffee came from the kitchen, and heating costs were absorbed. Time-wise, it's a very non-demanding activity. Once a movie is

chosen, there is practically no preparation time involved. Those attending the group spend about two hours a month meeting then watching the movie. Being a very new group, the Movie Group is experimenting with time slots, looking for the best time for everyone who is interested - and wondering if BYO takeaways would be a good complementary activity. A simple confluence of time, talent and treasure has enriched life at Knox.

The Sunday Morning Children's Programme

Near the end of 2014, with the opening of the new Church looming, Liz Whitehead predicted the arrival at morning services of some children and emphasised the importance of being ready to receive them. The old Sunday School room was cleaned out (some generous people paying for a Rug-Doctor machine to clean the carpet and soft furnishings). Craft materials were donated for the room, and a clean up of the children's corner in Church was done. When Liz went on leave, Abby Bills-Strange took on responsibility for organising the roster of talented, generous-hearted teachers (Abby, Ruby, Anthony, Tessa, Louise, Bronwyn). The teaching material comes from a public website, so on-going financial costs are minimal. The big cost for this project is the preparation time given by the teachers – to whom we are enormously grateful. The presence of the children in the Knox community is wonderful. A committed confluence of time, talent and treasure has enriched life at Knox.

The Social Justice Seminars

In 2014, Knox entered conversation with Ecu-Action, an ecumenical network of socially concerned Christian thinkers and activists, to explore the possibility of holding some pre-election seminars - with the view of raising voter awareness of some significant social issues (economic inequality, child poverty, the punitive society). The result was a stimulating series of public forums. Advertising posters and banners were provided by a generous donor. The Knox Trust provided airfares for guest speakers travelling from other cities. A lot of the organisational oomph and "inside approaching" of speakers was provided by Ecu-Action. They have significant networking skills, and it was good for Knox to be able to access them. A further series of community-facing seminars is to begin this month. A collaborative confluence of time, talent and treasure has enriched life at Knox.

The Knox Singers' "Schubert and More" Concert

At a Worship Committee meeting early this year, Daniel Cooper (Knox Organist) floated the idea of holding a concert at Knox. The committee members thought the idea was good but ambitious. They also wondered how a concert could be possible given that there was no budget available for such a venture. Daniel was given all moral encouragement but told the concert would have to be self-funding. Late last month a very large audience enjoyed a brilliant presentation

by the Knox Singers, guest soloists, an organist and a specially commissioned youth chamber orchestra. The programme included pieces orchestrated by Daniel for the occasion. The Singers have sprung forth from the experience feeling exhilarated and strengthened as a group. Their talent, Daniel's talent, the talent of the guests, has flourished, and a new talent of "event budgeting" has been identified in Daniel! The takings from the concert have paid the guest musicians, covered the larger heating costs for the high-ceilinged church, and created a financial base for the next concert. The amount of time invested in this project was huge (learning music, attending extra rehearsals). It would seem that people are generous with their time if the project connects well with the creative use of their talents. A creative confluence of time, talent and treasure has enriched life at Knox.

Worshipping with our Neighbours

Making the Knox Centre available as a home for two displaced congregations (St Luke's Anglican, and Durham Street Methodist) has given us the opportunity to get to know our ecumenical neighbours well. Friendships are developing. So far our getting to know one another well has centred mainly around our gathering together for Sunday morning tea and sharing occasional services of worship. As yet undiscovered are the possibilities that might arise when talents possessed by our guests and talents possessed by us combine – particularly talents that in each community are currently lying fallow. Perhaps an ecumenical confluence of time, talent and treasure might present the city with a witness to the effectiveness of Christian unity.

The Gift of Music

The satisfaction of using a talent well



What do you like best about Knox? In the survey after the earthquakes, 'Music' was the second highest item voted important about Knox. And ever since Knox Church was founded, there has been a strong tradition of music at Knox.

I am writing this on the 4th of September 2015, five years since the first earthquake changed our lives for ever. What does this have to do with the gift of music? Well, for the Knox Singers, it has been the driving force of the last five years. On that first day, 4th September 2010, because we were due to sing the next day, I texted Francine: "Do you know if church is still on tomorrow?" The reply was "God says no. Nobody is allowed near Knox."

. . . cont'd

And so we met at St Andrew's at Rangī Ruru. As we left that first combined service, the Knox Singers vowed we would sing as soon as we met again as a church. And we did. From the 19th September 2010 until we returned to the new church on 21st December 2014, we sang twice every month. Our gifted roster of pianists accompanied us and gave spirit-lifting moments. Do you remember the year when Richard Oswin played his way through Mendelssohn's piano repertoire?

Who gained the most from our singing? We did! We thoroughly appreciated the kind words and occasional spontaneous clapping, but we would have sung even if there was no one there. The gift of music enriches the musician as much as the listener!



Now, going forward in the new church, our numbers and strength are growing under the fine leadership of Daniel Cooper. Can you sing and read music? Then you too could consider sharing your gift with the Knox Singers. If you would like to join, please contact any of the Singers or email Bronwyn at bronwynwiltshire@gmail.com or Daniel at daniel.organist@gmail.com.

Paying our way at Knox

Our offerings of money are crucial to meeting the everyday financial needs of Knox Church. At this time we are asking you to carefully consider how you may contribute to keeping Knox going - and growing.

Could you move from dropping a casual donation into the offering bag on a Sunday to joining our regular giving system? That would mean you would receive donation statements and could then apply for a rebate of 1/3 from the IRD each year - while still helping Knox.

For those who are already giving regularly, how long is it since you thought about the amount you donate? I know that I've just given the same amount for years. But costs for Knox have not stood still all those years, unfortunately. Could you make even a small increase?

Could you commit to a direct payment arrangement with your bank? That method allows the Knox Treasurer to have some certainty about monthly income.

HOW OUR REGULAR GIVING SYSTEM WORKS

1. All donors receive a quarterly statement from the Knox “Envelope Secretary”. At the end of the financial year you can send your annual statement to the IRD for your 1/3 rebate.
2. Direct payment through your bank.
Most people use this system now. It is easy to set up and then carries on automatically - and it helps Knox by coming in regularly. The Treasurer can have some certainty about how much basic income will be available to pay Matthew, Diane, the cleaner, the electricity etc. Just contact the Envelope Secretary to obtain the Knox bank account number, then see your own bank.
3. Envelope system.
Some people prefer the traditional method of putting cash or a cheque into a labelled envelope and handing it in during the Sunday service. That is fine. Envelopes are provided, along with your statement, each quarter throughout the year.
4. Internet banking.
This is fine, too. You need to make sure that your name appears on Knox’s bank statement so that your donation can be identified and recorded for your statement - and please notify the Envelope Secretary. No name = no refund!
5. Live now - give later.
We all know it can be hard to spare much for Knox if one is on a small income. Maybe you could consider including a bequest to Knox in your will? Past bequests have been a wonderful help to Knox and to our outreach into the community. A bequest may be left for specified purposes, but it is probably more helpful to leave future use unspecified as no-one knows what Knox’s needs may be years ahead.

For further information please contact the “Envelope Secretary”:
Janet Wilson (phone 338 7203); <janetwilson@clear.net.nz>

Our current financial situation

Do you know how much it costs to run Knox – stipend and wages, electricity, insurance, maintenance, equipment, office expenses, etc.?

Did you know that just to heat the church for on Sunday service costs \$75 - \$90?

Here are the basic facts of our income and expenses:

For the 2014/15 financial year:

Average weekly expenses:	\$4886
Average weekly income:	\$3918
	(offering = \$1399, income from property and interest = \$2519)

Yes, that means an average loss of \$968 every week of the year.

Over the next year we hope to increase income from church facilities hire but we also expect to earn less in interest

We need to be able to fund the running of our church and carry out our mission in the wider community. We ask you to prayerfully consider your own contribution to Knox – what time, what skills and passions, what financial support you can offer.

What about the Knox Trust?

Many Knox people know there is something called the Knox Trust and may be wondering why we are asking for additional financial support when the Knox Trust must have lots of money tucked away.

THE FACTS

The Knox Trust is a totally separate entity from Knox Church and is administered by an independent trustee at Trustees Executors. Knox Church has absolutely no control over the funds held by the Knox Trust. The Knox Trust was set up many years ago by some individual members of Knox and is for the benefit of Knox Church but we cannot draw upon it at will . . .

. . . The Knox Council can apply to the Knox Trust for funds for specific planned projects and you probably realise that the rebuild of our church would not have been possible without huge support from the Knox Trust. But Knox members must take responsibility for the ongoing ordinary life and mission of Knox Church.

The church is actually us and we create its life with our minds, hearts and souls.



We thank you, God, for all your gifts: for life in your wonderful world; for space and time to enjoy your gift of life; for talents that bring us a sense of fulfilment. We thank you, God, for coming as Jesus: to show us how much you love us; to raise us with Christ to new life with you. We thank you, God, for your Holy Spirit: your presence to guide us day by day; your power to support us day by day; your assurance of your continuing love.

Response

For those receiving Knox Life electronically, the “response” insert (a form you can use to indicate your response to the material contained here) is on the Knox website <www.knoxchurch.co.nz/knoxlife.html>. It is a Word document, rather than a PDF, so that you can fill it in and email it to the office <office@knoxchurch.co.nz>. Alternatively, you could print it out, fill it in by hand, and put it in the offering bag on a Sunday morning between now and 18 October.



JUDITH

The Knox Church Council wants publically to express its thanks to Judith Challies for the great work she did as the editor of Knox Life. Judith took on the role last year and produced some very engaging publications for our community. Wrestling with the great Leviathan of on-going contributor reluctance, Judith's Sunday morning pleas for editorial material ensured that great material always featured in Knox Life. Her own interviews with Knox people always revealed important things and helped us become familiar with new organists, pastoral visitors, and so on. Judith's editorship is another heartening example of someone giving generously of time and talent. We are grateful to Judith, and wish her every blessing for her post-editorial life.

