

KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

KNOX LIFE

December 2015



Journey towards Christmas

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Journey towards Christmas: displacement & peace

Whatever confusing feelings Mary and Joseph were managing in relation to their unexpected pregnancy, political requirements (in the form of a Roman census) put them on a necessary road away from their established home in Nazareth towards unfamiliar Bethlehem. At a time where it made good sense to stay close to home, Mary and Joseph were forced to travel. When they arrived at their destination, no one had room for them. They were not welcomed. As the story goes, when the census was concluded and a return home would have been the natural thing to do, they ended up fleeing to Egypt because Nazareth had in the meantime become too dangerous a place to raise a family. Mary, Joseph and Jesus were displaced people. One could debate whether their proper designation should be “migrant” (values neutral, emphasis on the physical reality of their movement), “asylum seeker” (emphasis on their own declared need of safety), or “refugee” (people governmentally acknowledged as having a need for resettlement). Whatever their technical status, they were certainly frightened people, displaced by politics and violence. It was from this fear, injustice and political complexity that Mary and Joseph were called to be parents (guardians) for the Prince of Peace.

We approach this Christmas following a year where we have seen streams of refugees stretching across Europe. We have seen many demonstrations of hatred, selfish politics and violence – both overseas and at home. Are we, nevertheless, like Mary and Joseph, called to be welcomers of the displaced and guardians (nurturers, encouragers, protectors) of God’s gift of peace?

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace . . .”

Matthew.

In this edition of Knox Life:

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Five Christmas Images



Kurt Reuber, Germany, *The Stalingrad Madonna*, sketch on paper, Christmas 1942

1. The Stalingrad Madonna

“The Stalingrad Madonna depicts for us Mother Russia with child, proclaiming light, life and love in the midst of darkness, death and hatred. A German military surgeon created her on the back of an army map, deep in a bunker, as the fiercest battle of the Second World War raged above in Stalingrad. It was Christmas 1942. Kurt Reuber was an artist, a priest and a doctor. A year after painting the Madonna, he died in a Russian prison camp. The paper icon of the Russian mother protecting her child survived. She symbolizes the untold suffering of millions of Russian women. Today she lives on as a spiritual link between the once devastated cities of Stalingrad (now Volgograd), Berlin and Coventry. She

has pride of place in three homes: West Berlin’s central church, a Russian archbishop’s home and Coventry Cathedral’s millennium chapel.”

Paul Oestreicher, from “Christ For All People”, ed. Ron O’Grady, Pace Publishing, 2001.



2. The Annunciation

Texan sculptor, John Collier, was commissioned in 2000 to paint an Annunciation scene for St Gabriel’s Catholic Church in McKinney, Texas. Noting that the long observed convention for renaissance paintings was to dress the characters in renaissance costumes (that is in the contemporary clothing of the time), Collier decided to dress his Mary in Twenty-first Century clothes. Noting also that much renaissance clothing masked Mary’s youth, Collier decided to emphasise Mary’s youth by

presenting her as a school girl. As Mary listens to the angel, she exudes no confidence; she is being called to a daunting task. In an interview Collier made mention of the very small dove perched on the roof of the neighbouring house – a symbol of the Holy Spirit, waiting for Mary to say “yes”. (Or if she says “no”, then maybe the bird will just fly away. The bird is facing away from Mary.)

Although the painting is very successful in presenting Mary as young, vulnerable and hesitant - all consistent with the Biblical narrative - it was not easily received by St Gabriel’s Church. Commissioned for display within the sanctuary, it spent its first few years hidden in an out-of-the-way corner of the church foyer. Perhaps when made aware of Mary’s youth and vulnerability, we too are perplexed, frightened and unsure of what sort of greeting this might be. (Luke 1:29-30)



3. Into the Light, *Juanita Madden*

I am captured by Simeon’s words from Luke 2: “That which you have been preparing in the shadows has come into the light.”

The light of the world, our salvation, in Jesus has been hidden within the quiet and dark of Mary’s womb. Ripples of the wonderment of Mary’s pregnancy push away from her body out into the shadows.

Mary almost falls into the light, but at the same time steps into it. There is a figure, who could be Joseph, with a supportive hand on her shoulder, or could be symbolic of people following her steps “with Christ” – into the light.

Watercolour seemed to be the best medium to convey some of the ethereal qualities of light, whilst giving a light and delicate impression of Mary in humility as she steps forward in obedience to God.



4. The Carved Crib

*From Jesus: Beyond 2000,
Mark Link*

Sister Mary Coleman, a Maryknoll nun, spent a good part of World War II in a Japanese prison camp in the Philippines. The prisoners set up a prayer room. One of the Filipinos carved a wooden crucifix and it was hung on the wall. It proved to be a great aid to prayer. When Christmas came, several prisoners carved crib figures for the prayer room. A guard who had watched the prisoners meditate before the crucifix now watched them do so with equal fervour before the baby Jesus. One day he pointed to the crib and then to the crucifix. He asked, "Same person?" Sister Coleman said softly "same person." Then he said with deep feeling, "I'm sorry."

O Christmas Sun!

What holy task is thine!

To fold a world in the embrace of God.

5. Santa Poem

Michael Leunig

Santa, Santa in your sleigh,
Come and take my toys away
While I'm sleeping in my cot
Visit me and take the lot.

Santa, Santa set me free,
Clean an open space for me;
Me and all the girls and boys
Buried under heaps of toys.

Santa, Santa with your sack,
Come and take some plastic back;
Take it back and in its place,
Leave a little breathing space.

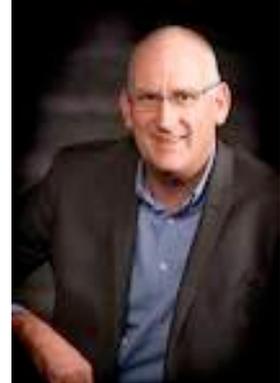


Leunig

An Advent prayer letter from our Moderator, Rt Rev. Andrew Norton

Break your heart open in love for the world

Movement of peoples, acts of terrorism, the clashing of political powers, religious extremism, hope and despair. They are the stories and images in our daily news. They are also a part of the first Christmas story. Today we struggle to make sense of our world. What is happening to us? How can we respond to events of global violence and terrorism?



In considering these challenges the Christmas narrative has significant relevance. It is into this kind of world suffering that God breaks in with the cry of a baby; the hope of the world. It is in our particular hopes, fears and brokenness God comes near.

Notice what is happening in your own heart; is it numb? Unable to feel? Gripped with fear or moved with compassion? Is this where you might find the advent (coming) of God?

Start close-in with your own fear and brokenness. Weep your own tears and for those whose name you know, only then you will have a heart broken open to weep for the world. Ask God to come near.

May God break our hearts open in love for the world. This is the beginning of prayer.

Lovers' Lament

(A prayer for Paris and the cities of the world affected by acts of violence)

*city of lovers
where the cello bow
acquiesced to the cadence
of assassins' fire
a city weeps
blood spilled
bodies broken
conceived in terror*

*we hold your silence
our hands cup your tears
our families host an empty chair
for the ones you have lost
we light a vigil candle
a sign of hope
a prayer for a world
in darkness
may fear be destroyed
wine poured
bread broken
conceived in love*

- Andrew Norton

Prayer is giving attention; it moves to words (spoken and unspoken) and is then embodied in both ritual and action:

- Light a candle each evening as a prayer for the coming light into a world of darkness. Place it next to your TV and read the text John 1:1-9.
- Host an empty chair at your dinner table to remember families who have lost family due to violence and terrorism.
- Dip a face cloth in water and ring it out as others catch the drips in their cupped hands to remember the tears of God for a broken world.
- Open your home to a stranger (likely a neighbor who is different from you) and eat together. Practise hospitality.
- Read part of the Christmas story (Luke 1 – 2:20, Matthew 1:18 – 2:23) and have a conversation about how similar the context is to the world today.
- Break bread and drink from a cup, giving thanks for life.
- Have a conversation about the forces of love and fear. Will love or fear win?

Arohanui,
Rt Rev. Andrew Norton,
Moderator Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.





Christian World Service Christmas Appeal

Each year, Knox supports the Christmas Appeal of the Christian World Service. This year's theme is "Help Rebuild Lives". To let you know about the five projects the appeal supports, CWS has provided project descriptions, three of which we present here. Appeal envelopes were handed out at the morning service on the first Sunday in Advent (29 November), but extra envelopes are available on the gallery table.

Project 1 Restoring Hope for Gaza's Traumatized Children

Last year's war in Gaza left Tarek deeply troubled. Months went by, and his family became more concerned. Hiding behind a smile, he could only talk about the damage to the family home – cracks in the walls and the kitchen ceiling that had collapsed. Otherwise he was silent. If anyone tried to touch him, he pushed them away.



Finally his worried mother took him to the local medical clinic run by DSPR Gaza (Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees) for help. At the clinic the pair were warmly greeted and joined others waiting for assessment. Diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Tarek began treatment with Budour, the clinic's psychologist. After the second session, she said he was calmer and could sit on a chair. "God willing, I believe he will get better," she said.



At last five year old Tarek is beginning to draw happy pictures. He has learnt skills to deal with the anxiety and fear that took over his life. Your gifts have helped Budour and the trained medical staff in DSPR Gaza's three clinics to be a lifeline to their communities.

While over 3,500 children were injured in the war, it is the psychological suffering that is perhaps the hardest to deal with in a land where violence is common. One study said nine out of ten children report regularly feeling afraid. Bedwetting, night terrors and anxiety are common. Without specialist help, children invent their own reasons for the bombing and feelings of insecurity that may escalate their uncertainty and fear. Like the rest of Gaza's residents they worry about the next war.

Shija'ia, the neighbourhood in which Tarek's family lives, was heavily bombed in the 51 day war. The medical clinic was damaged as were surrounding streets. Volunteers made hasty repairs so the clinic could reopen during the 24 hour ceasefires. Staff and volunteers despite their own hardships were determined to help the mothers and children who they knew needed care. Medical services were offered free to large numbers of people suffering from upper respiratory infections, gastroenteritis, diarrhoea, vomiting and skin diseases caused by the lack of water and sanitation.

Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees

DSPR grew out of work begun in 1948 to support Palestinians forced to flee their homes in the newly created state of Israel. Part of the Middle East Council of Churches, it has worked tirelessly to provide practical assistance to the refugees. Integral to their work is advocacy for Palestinians and work towards a just peace. One of their fundamental concerns is the right of return for refugees. They are part of Kairos Palestine, a Christian call to creative resistance to end the Israeli occupation and seek justice for Palestinian people. CWS began funding their work with gifts from the 1949 Christmas Appeal, making it our oldest partner.

DSPR:

- Runs three primary health clinics for mothers and children in poor and overpopulated areas of Gaza (Shija'ia, Darraj and Rafah), and one each in Jordan's Madaba and Jerash camps for Syrian and Palestinian refugees (for a population of over 100,000 people) and dental clinics as well as health education programmes. The Rafah clinic serves a remote population where medical services are practically non-existent.
- Offers trauma counselling and psychological support programmes in Gaza – last year helping more than 10,000 individuals.
- Improves water transmission systems, wells and rainwater cisterns including on the West Bank where Israel controls 85% of water resources.
- Provides vocational training programmes for Palestinian young people and recreational activities in Gaza, Jordan, and Lebanon. In Gaza it offers five programmes: secretarial studies with English language, advanced

dressmaking, and general electrical skill training as well as carpentry and furniture making, and metal and aluminium training for disadvantaged boys aged 14-16 years.

- Runs a nursery and kindergarten in Lebanon as well as after school tutoring, English course, literacy classes, art and music classes, sports opportunities and summer camps in Lebanon.
- Provides interest free loans for university and college fees as well as business and housing loans.
- Provides agricultural training and helps families establish gardens and food selling businesses, with a particular focus on vulnerable families living close to the separation barrier and illegally built Israeli settlements in the Northwest of the West Bank.
- Runs training programmes in human rights, on gender issues, youth and children's empowerment, youth leadership and interfaith understanding.
- Provides essential emergency food and non-food supplies to families needing help in Gaza and seeking refuge from Syria.

Project 2

Nicaragua

At 15 years, Giselle is determined to help. Drugs, alcohol and unemployment are a fact of life in her rural village in Nicaragua. She worried about her brother and other young people sinking further into depression and despair. When CEPAD offered her and two others training as a Peaceful Community Mentor, she leapt at the chance. There is no other help in her community and with training from CEPAD she will be able to confront some of the violence, mediate conflicts and build self-esteem among her peers.



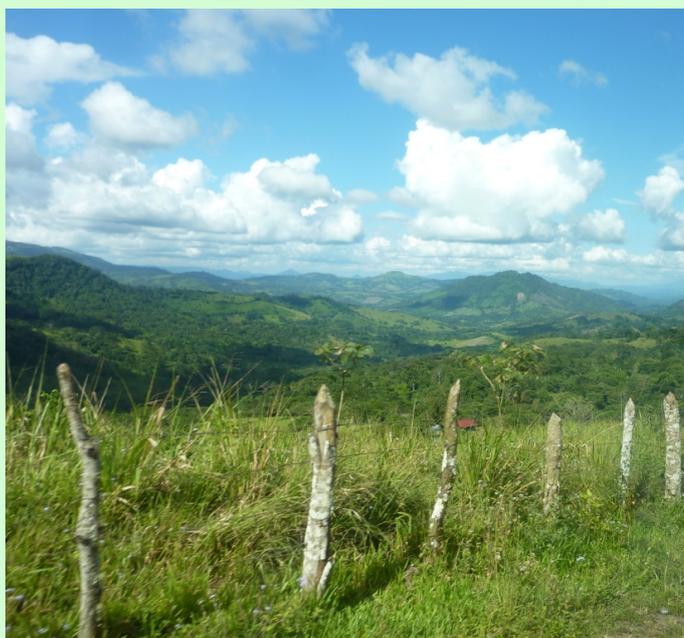
Background on Nicaragua

Life is not easy for people living in a country regularly hit by weather disasters, earthquakes and increasingly climate change. However, after decades of conflict and political upheaval, Nicaragua is making progress despite its position as the second poorest nation in the Western hemisphere.

Life expectancy and school attendance continue to improve with the help of government investment in education and measures to improve health.

The Ministry of Education projects all Nicaraguans will have attended at least ninth grade this year. The Ministry of Health reported 10% fewer cases of diarrhoea in 2014 than 2013 (linked to availability of safe water) and 8% fewer cases of malaria for example.

Nicaragua ranks 132 out of 187 countries on the UNDP's Human Development Index with 19.8% of people living in multidimensional poverty and a further 14.8% very near to it. Multidimensional poverty takes into account education, health and living standards. The total population is 6,014 million with 80% of poor people living in rural areas. In recent years, droughts have destroyed crops making life that much harder for small farmers. Last year the economy



grew by 4.7% with inflation at 6.0%. Nicaraguans make up 12 percent of Costa Rica's workforce. According to the World Bank remittances make up 9.7% of the country's Gross Domestic Product.

Compared with its neighbours, Nicaragua has a low homicide rate – 8.7 per 100,000 people while in Honduras it was 92 per 100,000 (the highest murder rate in the world). The story is not so positive for girls and women. Violence against women is high. According to UNICEF 81.8% of 6,069 victims of sexual violence were under 18, of which 87.5% were girls. Nicaragua also has the highest early pregnancy rate in the region – 23.3% adolescents under 18 are already mothers or pregnant.

La Ceiba is located in the hilly central region of Nueva Guinea, part of the South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region. It was settled under a scheme offering free land to Nicaraguans (but no infrastructure) in the 1970s. Access is often by foot and some do not have a source of water in their communities. The homes are very humble without adequate roofing to collect rainwater when it comes. Severe drought has made life even more precarious.

About 50 families live in the village which relies on agriculture, primarily corn, beans, pineapple and yucca. They grow enough to survive but not much more. Every year a few dozen people head south to Costa Rica in search of work on the orange or banana plantations, or as maids, security guards or other low paid work. Hungry at home, the promise of even a small wage as an illegal worker is the best on offer.

CEPAD

CEPAD (*Consejo de Iglesias Evangelicas Pro-Alianza Denominacional* or Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua) was formed in the aftermath of the 1972 Nicaraguan Earthquake when churches came together “to help people with food, housing and everything else” according to Dr Gustavo Parajon, its founder. In the first five years it moved from emergency to development work, playing a critical role in peacebuilding during times of conflict and political upheaval. It has worked with over 4,000 communities in every part of the country.

In 2014 it finished work on a five year plan to improve the livelihoods of people living in 43 communities. Now with trained local Community Development Committees, these communities have improved infrastructure and livelihoods. Community Agricultural promoters were trained to support local farmers in conservation farming. Trained peace promoters work in local teams to provide psychosocial support in their communities as well as organise soccer leagues and campaign against family violence.

In 2015 it has begun work in new communities. CEPAD will:

- establish Community Development Committees in 42 new communities and train 252 leaders to improve life and livelihoods over the next five years.
- work with 336 small farmers who own between 0.7 – 3.5 hectares of land to boost production using conservation farming techniques and share their training with their communities.
- Train 126 Peace Mentors (including Giselle, Lea and Marcos) to provide psychosocial care, especially for young people and women.
- Establish six training centres so 126 women can learn handcrafts, jewellery making and cooking skills so they can earn income for their families.
- Support 70 women to establish small businesses and improve food production in home gardens through a Community Bank scheme,
- Set up 35 women with small animals and better home gardens to improve

family nutrition and self-esteem in Nueva Guinea where there are few resources.

- Support incoming refugees (for example fleeing violence in neighbouring countries like El Salvador) to resettle under the auspices of the UNHCR and promote international obligations to refugees.
- Develop The Cepana Farm as a learning centre for Nicaraguan farmers and a rural tourist site.
- Promote the care and consumption of good quality water through all its work including through Radio CEPAD.
- Provides training and support for disaster preparedness as well as supporting survivors of national disasters.

Project 4 Vanuatu



At 18 Allick is hard at work replanting the family garden after Cyclone Pam on Tongoa Island in Vanuatu. He knows how important it is to get the new seeds in the ground to feed everybody. Allick is collecting materials to build a new home strong enough to withstand future cyclones and collect the rain water they need to survive. Preparing for disasters is now central to the work of ACT Alliance, Action by Churches Together. CWS is making sure partners are

prepared. Your gifts after disasters and conflict make sure communities get the food, water and medical care they need.

Background on Vanuatu

Vanuatu is facing weather that is slower in coming but potentially as devastating in impact as Cyclone Pam. El Nino is bringing drought to parts of the country and the government warns it will get worse. Already some recovery efforts have been undone by the drought. Crops have failed and water sources have dried up on Tanna Island where 32,000 people live. The loss of trees means any rain quickly evaporates on affected islands. Many people are living on rice, noodles and tinned fish distributed by the government but without root crops and vegetables they are not getting what they need. Malnutrition is more prevalent and without water for washing hands, diarrhoea is increasing. One infant has died and schools have been closed early.

According to one report Vanuatu is the country most at risk of natural disaster in the world. Disaster preparedness has become increasingly important as the people prepare for the inevitable.

With three-quarters of the 258,900 population living in rural areas, agriculture and tourism are critical to the local economy. Scattered across 80 islands, infrastructure is difficult.

Poverty has fallen to 13% in Vanuatu. Increasing numbers of ni-Vanuatu are coming to New Zealand on seasonal work schemes to provide much needed income. With limited education and employment opportunities, such jobs are becoming increasingly important.

Responding to Emergencies

In March 2015, CWS launched the Vanuatu Cyclone Appeal as part of the first ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) appeal in the Pacific. Act for Peace (our Australian counterparts) working with the Vanuatu Christian Council led the local response. Throughout the relief phase, both organisations worked closely with the government's National Disaster Management Office.



Background material for two other projects (business development for women in South India and water supply in Uganda) can be found online at:

<http://christmasappeal.org.nz/for-churches/>



In the service of the Prince of Peace

The Nobel Peace Prize is one of five prizes created by Swedish industrialist, inventor, and armaments manufacturer Alfred Nobel. Since 1901, it has been awarded annually to those who have "done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses".



Listed among those who famously “never won the the prize, but should have” are Mahatma Gandhi, Eleanor Roosevelt, U Thant, Václav Havel, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Fazle Hasan Abed, Sari Nusseibeh, and Corazon Aquino.

The norm is for one person to receive the prize, but sometimes it is awarded to a group, recognising that peace is often won through concession and compromise between parties. Sometimes the prize is awarded to an organization.

1990	Mikhail Gorbachev, Soviet Union	for his leading role in the peace process which today characterizes important parts of the international community
1991	Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma	for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights
1993	Nelson Mandela, Frederik Willem de Klerk	for their work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime, and for laying the foundations for a new democratic South Africa
1994	Yasser Arafat, Palestine Yitzhak Rabin, Israel Shimon Peres, Israel	to honour a political act which called for great courage on both sides, and which has opened up opportunities for a new development towards fraternity in the Middle East.
1998	John Hume, David Trimble	for their efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Northern Ireland
1999	Médecins Sans Frontières, Switzerland	in recognition of the organization's pioneering humanitarian work on several continents
2013	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons	for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons
2014	Kailash Satharhi, India, Malala Yousafzai, Pakistan	for their struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education

The Musical Year in Review

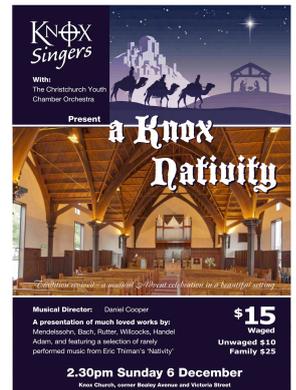


What a year it has been! With the concerts flying by, and the rehearsals stacking up, the Knox Singers and Christchurch Youth Chamber Orchestra (CYCO) have gotten off to a great start with their 2015 concert season!

The orchestra and choir were highly praised by city 'musos' and audience alike at their first concert in late August of this year, "Schubert & more @ Knox", featuring Schubert's mass in G major with Soprano Elizabeth Emeleus, Tenor David O'Beirne, and Bass (from our choir!) Graeme Downie.

Building on that very successful first concert, we have just had our Christmas event: "A Knox Nativity", a sequence of well known works from composers throughout the ages telling the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. This concert featured well known Christmas works by composers such as Handel, Rutter, and Willcocks.

Financially, the music programme is self sustained, so the taking from door sales go directly to any guest soloists, special players, equipment hire, heating/cooling costs. We have a good small nest egg now that we use to support future concerts buy purchasing orchestral arrangements/parts of various choir anthems, as well as new anthems! And various other things to help us make better music for you!



Next year we look forward to presenting to you another two concerts, as well as a afternoon of Hymns and music dedicated to the eve of Reformation Day (Sunday 30th October, 2:30pm).

On the 28th of August at 2:30pm, the Knox Singers and CYCO will present "Symphonic Strife". This Concert will include the Zoltan Kodaly: Missa Brevis, a work written while Kodaly was in hiding under a church in Budapest in the middle of WWII. As well as a composition of mine "22.11.2011 : 2151, The Earthquake Mass", a work commemorating 5 years since the February 22 earthquake. And on Sunday the 4th of September at 2:30pm, we will present another variation on our already popular "A Knox Nativity".

All in all a wonderful musical year, and many more exciting ventures to come in the future!

Warm Christmas greetings,

Your Musical Director

Daniel



Gardener of the Year



Congratulations to Helen Coker who has been named NZ Gardener's "2016 Gardener of the Year". Helen and Brian moved out to a brand new section in West Melton when their old home was found to be unsuitable for Brian's wheelchair. Establishing the new garden was hard work, but a real labour of love. Much of the garden is new, but there are many established plants that Helen and Brian brought with them from their previous garden in Christchurch. Helen spends about two or three days a week in the garden – there is always work to be done. Brian is fully involved too, in charge of the vege garden and propagating seedlings in the hothouse.

As a "thank you" to all those who voted in the "Gardner of the Year" competition, Helen and Brian are opening the garden (211 Halkett Road, West Melton) to the public from 1:00pm – 4:00pm on Sunday 20 December. Entry is by donation, with all proceeds going towards the Canterbury Charity Hospital.



"And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Adi Holzer, *Garten Eden*, 2012

Reflections of a Giraffe Feeder

Matthew Jack

On Mondays, as part of my volunteer work at Orana Wildlife Park, I preside at the public giraffe feeding. My first duty is to talk about the three Rothschild giraffes at Orana, how their relatives are faring in the wild (not well), and how to be safe around giraffes. Following the speech I supervise members of the public as they hand feed the giraffes from a special platform. My regular contact with giraffes has caused me to reflect theologically on the experience. Herewith, five short reflections of a Giraffe Feeder.



(1) The conservation message:

In my talk I mention that there are probably only a couple of hundred Rothschild giraffes left in central Africa, with a mere 450 in captivity. I mention how the decline in numbers is not just due to natural predators (lions, leopards and hyenas) but also due to the hunting practices of human beings. Orana's breeding programme has produced over 20 young giraffes over the year. Orana is proud to contribute to the preservation of beautiful but increasingly rare animals. (Preserving what is being lost.)

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the church was a community that preserved precious but endangered things ("community" in an age of fragmentation, "grace" in an age of entitlement, "peace" in an age of fear)

(2) Coming face to face with strangeness – and becoming fond over time:



What a strange creature a giraffe is: long neck, ossicones sticking out of its head, big long blue tongue, ridiculously long eyelashes. But here I am face to face with one. And after some face to face time, I find

myself using her name, feeling like we are having a conversation, feeling fond of her. She's no longer a curiosity, an example of giraffe-ness. She's become an individual.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the church were an environment in which we came face to face with genuine differences (culture, orientation, age,

experience, wealth) and became people to one another – real people, not stereotypes or categories – but people of whom we have become fond. **“Behold I no longer call you servants; instead I call you friends”.**

(3) Freedom:

On one occasion the giraffes decided not to come across to the platform for the public feeding. They have plenty of space in their enclosure, and sometimes they claim that space. But generally they will come together to be fed.



Wouldn't it be wonderful if the church were an environment where people have space in which to be free, to find God in the solitude, but who also regularly come together to be fed. “One bread, one body, freedom to live, the spirit / soul being fed”.

(4) Growing:

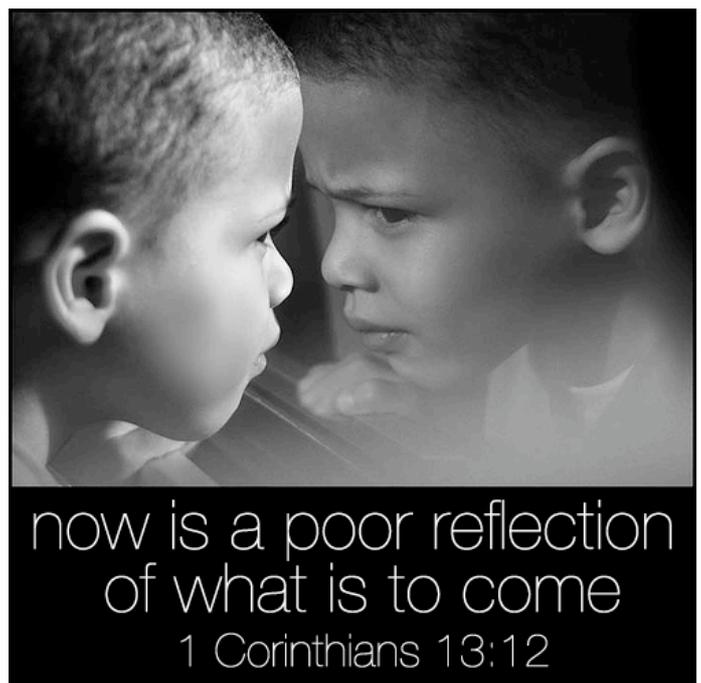
My giraffe speeches are becoming better – less stilted, more interactive and useful. I'm feeling less nervous, more helpful to the Park, more confident with the curly questions that come from the public. I'm enjoying becoming more competent.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the church were a community in which our talents could grow through service, and give us the sense of making a satisfying contribution. “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

(5) Future Encounters:

I didn't know it, but Orana has been organising for another giraffe to arrive at the park, increasing the family to four. On the Monday after I write these reflections, I will meet her. Out of the blue will come a new “face to face” encounter. Quite exciting!

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the church were an environment where the encounters of tomorrow were things to which we look forward. No fear, anticipation, looking forward to the new “face to face”. “Now we see in a mirror, dimly; then we will see face to face.”



now is a poor reflection
of what is to come
1 Corinthians 13:12

KNOX CHURCH COUNCIL. REPORT
NOVEMBER 2015

The Church council met on Wednesday 18th November.

Matthew constituted the meeting with reflections on the reactions of the French people to the killings in Paris and with prayer.

The Council decided to pursue with a legal letter the dilapidation report from the manager of the adjacent building, Knox Plaza. This report should have been given to us but Knox council has now decided to obtain it legally.

The position of Office Manager is being advertised.

The Business Plan was discussed. Money has been granted by Knox Trust to cover the cost. Names of people we could approach were suggested and this is being pursued.

The issue of improved reporting to the congregation was discussed and the oral report (as I am giving now) will be supplemented with a written one in Knox Life..

A summary Finance report for the 3 months ending on 30 September was given. Points to note include a legacy \$42,000 from Miss Mary Chisholm; that income was slightly better than budget for the quarter due to another car park leasing to Duncan Cotterill and to an increase in church hires.

The assembly assessment budget has exceeded that budgeted for by \$400 per month. This means our overall projected budget deficit of \$60,000 becomes \$64,800.

Bronwyn Wiltshire gave a full report of the events held and booked in the Knox Complex over the coming months. The highlight is our own Knox Singers Christmas concert on Sunday 6th December. Future bookings in 2016 include weddings, the Big Sing, conferences and our regular hirers.

Our Presbytery elder told us of the creation of the Alpine Mission fund which will provide resourcing across the Presbytery and also of funds to be used in key administrative functions within the Presbytery.

We were reminded to return our Stewardship forms and to encourage others to do the same.

It was a long meeting with much to discuss and decisions to make, and because of this some matters are being held over until the next meeting.

Liz Baxendine

REBUILD UPDATE

- The deficit for the Rebuild of the Church & Organ is currently sitting at \$506,092.
- We have allowed for \$10,000 due to be paid to Higgs , 12 months after completion for minor defects & the defects liability period on the services trades.
- Funding for the Church & Organ project has come from:

Insurance Settlement	2,604,911
Knox Trust	2,000,000
Total donations	327,302
Heritage Grant	300,000
Interest Earned	210,279
I Probert bequest	37,591
Lane Neave	30,000
Grant to purchase chairs	20,000
TOTAL	\$5,530,083
COSTS	\$6,036,175
STILL TO BE FUNDRAISED	\$ 506,092

- As we had approval to use \$600,000 from the sale of the Manse in Normans Road, this has all been drawn to ensure bills were paid on time. The difference between the deficit & the Manse fund means \$93,908 has been held in Trust for future property use.
- More details can be provided on request.

Charlotte Bryden
Knox Treasurer

Financial Report Summary: AGM Nov 8 2015

There have been big changes and challenges here at Knox, namely:

- The re-opening of the church
- Rental of some of our car parks
- Hire of the church
- Changing hires and use of the Knox Centre
- Hosting other congregations
- The sale of the Normans Rd manse –which if you have looked at the capital gain in the accounts makes things look healthy. We have an overall surplus of \$1 million.
- Becoming a charity in our own right rather than as part of the whole church
- The Financial Reporting Act necessitating changes in financial reporting
- Decreased earnings from interest

Charlotte Bryden our treasurer has efficiently as ever managed all these changes for us. In terms of the necessary reporting changes, Charlotte has moved to using Xero and produces bi-monthly accounts and a report. The PCANZ held countrywide road shows to introduce and provide support for parishes in registering as charities and guidelines for reporting based on the congregations level of expenses. Reporting has now been standardised. Our parish is lucky to have accountants to manage this for us.

For a considerable number of years Knox has operated at a loss. We budgeted an \$80000 loss for the last financial year but are pleased to report that it was \$30000 less than anticipated. With the opening of the church the Council has now focussed on moving forward as a congregation, starting with a stewardship programme to look at our congregation, currently looking at our Mission Plan and looking ahead to a business plan to take us forward.

So what we have been doing over the last financial year and beyond?

Firstly: the use of our facilities – St Luke's has continued to use the chapel and from February Durham St Methodist has used the hall as their worship space. Matthew worked tirelessly to draw up a memorandum of understanding to ensure we are all happy with our arrangement. The other parishes make a donation to cover the costs of their use of our facilities.

Car parks have been leased to our neighbours at market rates. This has given us much needed income.

Our long-term leasee upstairs in Knox Centre left and the area was vacant for some time. We had a number of concerns regarding the building needing to be upgraded to meet new building code which delayed decision-making.

Church hire has been steadily increasing and we have been monitoring costs and related issues associated with this. We had the manager from The Aurora Centre visit us and present us with how to run such a facility, cost structures and all the hidden costs. We have since changed our hire documentation and pricing in line with this. We have doubled our charges.

Recently Bronwyn Wiltshire has been hired to coordinate facility hire as this was needed to be managed. She has put in many hours reorganising on our behalf. While we have restructured our costs for church hire we are currently looking at the Knox Centre rates. We are having to balance long-term community use and the wider support of the community with the need to make the Centre pay for itself.

Upstairs we now have leased a room to Fostering Kids NZ and hope that this will expand next year. Thanks to Graeme Downie and Graeme Swinney for this. We have had input from real estate agents for this rental and also for management of the townhouse. Rental has been increased for the townhouse to reflect demand. Calder Botting is now managing the townhouse for us.

At the beginning of the year the Council committed to, with funding from the Knox Trust, undertaking an independent business plan. Members of the congregation have reinforced the need for this and Council will consider who can undertake this for us. This must be entirely independent. Like the stewardship program and mission planning this will be a congregational wide exercise so expect some tricky questions next year.

I would like to thank you all for your support and special thanks to the finance committee and our treasurer Charlotte Bryden.

Trudy Heney

Time, Talent and Treasure

Many of you will have attended at least some of the recent Sunday services which encouraged the congregation to consider how we might give some of our time, talents and “treasure” to support our Knox church community and mission. Three discussion groups held after the services were also well attended.

Thank you to all who found time to return the response sheets. It is helpful to know which areas of church life members are especially interested in being part of in some way. Please feel free to return the questionnaire at any time, online if you wish, or you may just like to contact Matthew or me if you are able to offer help in some particular area.

Several people have responded positively to the invitation to consider financial support. I do encourage you all to bear in mind the cost of running an organisation such as Knox. You will notice in this issue of Knox Life that we have included some information about current finances. We aim to include a financial report in each edition of this magazine from now on, in order to keep everyone up-to-date.

Janet Wilson
Council clerk

Christmas and New Year at Knox

Services:

Christmas Eve: 11.15pm

Christmas Day: 10 am

Sunday 27 December: 10am

Sunday 3 January 2016: 10am communion service taken by Rev Bob Fendall

Sunday 10 January 2016: 10am service taken by Judith Challies

Pastoral care:

Matthew will be away from 28 December till 12 January. If you require pastoral care during this time please contact the council clerk (Janet Wilson, 338 7203) or the acting council clerk (Jean Brouwer, 355 6534).

The council clerk, Janet Wilson, will be away from 23 December till 31 December. During this time Jean Brouwer will be acting council clerk.

Knox office:

The Knox office will be closed from Christmas Day till 11 January 2016.