

KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

KNOX LIFE

February 2017



Writing our Next Chapter - a mission discernment programme for Knox -

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The New Chapter



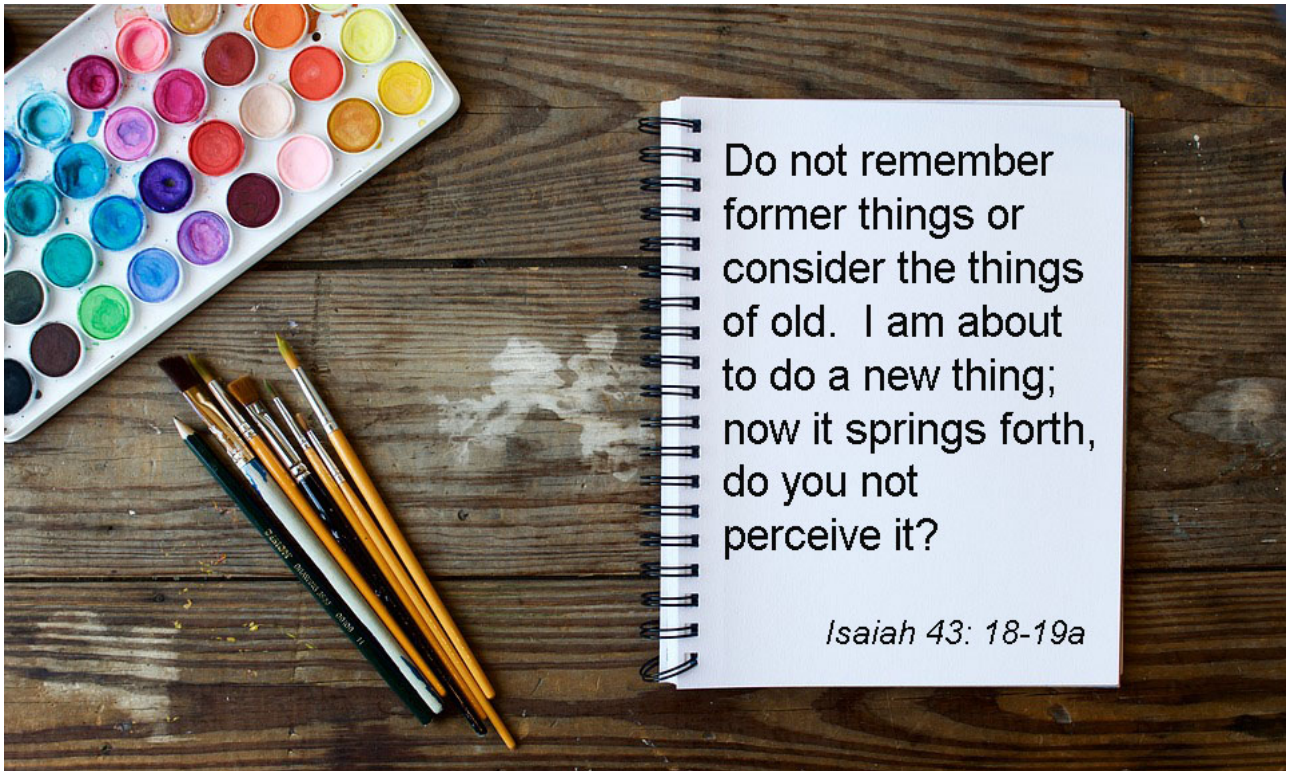
A lot of what we used to call “life as normal” was put on hold for Knox near the start of 2011. By necessity we went into a crisis mode of congregational life and ministry. It was time to gather closely, to care for one another intently, and to set simple goals for making sure our remnant community didn’t die under the rubble of post-traumatic stress. Although Knox did a really good job of projecting hope to the city, and a sense of “we’re all in this together”, a number of our established engagements with the wider

community ceased. This cessation wasn’t peculiar to Knox; all around the area, community groups were going into recess while people attended to “matters at home”. Looking back on this time, historians will, I’m sure, note that “attending to matters at home” was an entirely proper, in fact quite responsible, “survival” phase of our recovery.

The next stage of our life was focussed around rebuilding our physical home. The result is wonderful! The process occupied (and indeed made weary) many of our most committed and hardworking people. Although the principles of “usefulness for the wider community” pervaded a lot of the conceptual planning of the restored building, the process of building kept us focussed on “nuts and bolts” and our own situation. Community engagement continued to feel like it was in a state of semi-suspension. Looking back on the rebuild, and our subsequent time of settling in, generous spirited historians will forgive us for “taking a bit of a rest”. I’m of the view that, initially anyway, we *did* need a Sabbath rest from our work.

Now we need to get on with the next chapter. We need to minimise the amount of energy we give to the past. We need to make a mind-set transition from “nuts and bolts” to “big picture” operating. We need to turn from our own survival to a new engagement with the world around us.

Knox is a good church; God calls us to be more than that.



Onward from a Salutary Lesson!

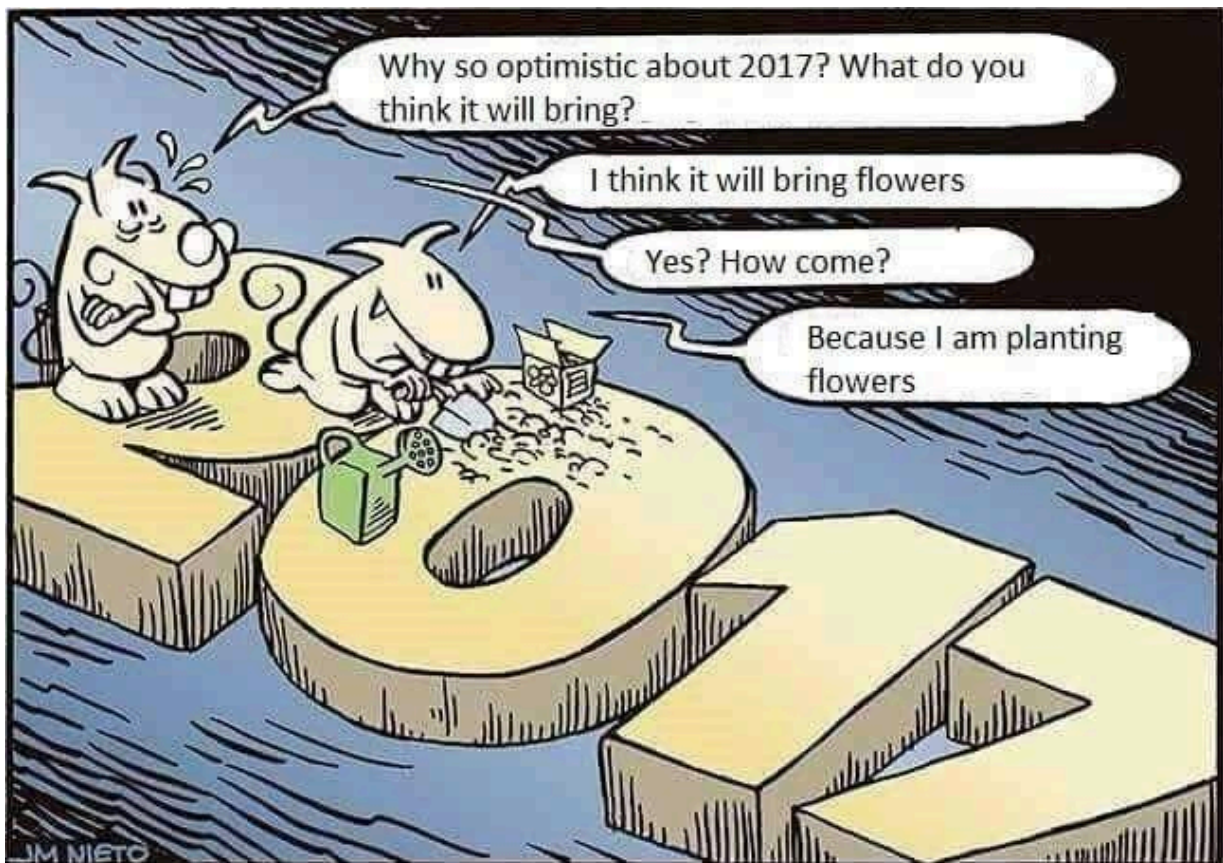
Once upon a time there was a slightly spiritually dissatisfied parish community. The people had a great location in the middle of town, a big building with lots of empty spaces and more than a few junk-filled places. They had a wee bit of money and a feeling that they ought to be doing more than they were with what they had. They sent their minister away for a time of retreat, asking him to come up with some ideas.

The minister returned from his retreat with a long list of ideas. Some of the ideas had grown from his thinking about the empty spaces in the building. Some came from research into what other empty-building communities had done in other cities. Some of the ideas came from his own reflecting on what he found interesting and well-equipped for. When he shared his many ideas with the community, the community thanked him, filed his list of ideas and, in the main, ignored it all.



over . . .

Whatever a community ends up adopting has to be home-grown among its own people. It has to *fit*. The private interests of the minister are not important. What other communities have done in other places is not important. Empty spaces cannot set the agenda. If something is to be worthwhile, it needs to come out of the application of a whole community's faith, imagination, integrity and corporate strengths. It is not for Knox Council to write Knox's next chapter. It is not for the small group of usual enthusiasts. It is not for consultants to dictate from afar. It is for as many as have energy, from the whole Knox community, particularly that new generation of people now worshipping here who have more Knox-time ahead of them (you) than Knox-time behind them (you). A time of mission discernment for the next chapter has come, and Knox needs many good people to participate.



A “Discernment” Process

*I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not **perceive** it?*

Isaiah 43: 19a

When church communities get together to think about mission, there are three classic “holes” they often fall into.

1

They let **guilt** drive their conversation. Here’s an example. If they’re feeling guilty about the poor, they come up with lots of ideas about helping the poor – even though they may not have any experience with the poor, any natural aptitude for relating to the poor, any connection with social support services, or any actual interest in the dynamics of poverty. Although they feel sincerely guilty about their lack of engagement with the poor, they’re not actually the right community to do front line poverty relief. Guilt pulls them into work for which they are not designed.



2

They let **fear** drive their conversation. Here’s an example. Noting that their numbers and finances have fallen, they fear that they may not exist in twenty years time unless they invest in rich young families with lots of children. A mission to rich young families might be fine if the church people have a sincere interest in, and access to, rich young families. But if the rich young families are really just numbers to add to the statistics, or fodder to fend away fear, then there is insufficient love in the tank to drive the engine. Life will never come out of fear. Perhaps excitement is a better driver than fear.



over . . .

3

They let ***fashion*** drive their conversation. Here's an example. *“Churches A, B and C down the road developed a programme for X. Everyone is doing X, so we should just cut and paste our neighbours’ X programmes onto our church here.”* In the academic world, cutting and pasting is called “plagiarism”. It’s considered a crime. In everyday life, while not a crime, it tends to be derivative, not-quite-fitting and actually often surplus to requirement. It tends to lack authentic “heart”.



Working out of guilt and fear, or stealing other people’s good ideas, is no substitute for discovering what God may have hidden in our own personalities, connections, interests and corporate character. The outworking of our faith has to come from honest reflecting first on who we are, how we’re motivated, what we have, and what excites us. (“Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”)

That’s why our mission development, initially anyway, is called “discernment” rather than “planning”. The first few of our five discernment sessions begin very generally, exploring what kind of people we are individually and together, what kind of a church ethos we have, and where our interests lie. As we move through subsequent sessions, our general discoveries are shaped into more precise guidelines for exploring general mission subject areas. Then we move more deeply into the subject areas, articulating particular projects for Knox.



By the end of the sessions, we should be able to describe:

Our character and values

- *Who our God is, and how that motivates us*
- *What kind of a church we are – what our special flavour is*
- *What key things from our mission statement we're going to focus on*

Our mission principles

- *What our bottom lines are in mission – what we will and won't do*
- *What kind of a world we want to build*
- *Which of our talents and skills we really like using – where we get our deepest satisfaction*

Our mission focus

- *Whether we're most interested in our neighbourhood, our city, our country, or our world – or maybe something else*
- *What kind of "positive differences" we want to make in each or any of those areas*
- *How we're going to keep our focus clear*

We'll use these insights to prioritise various mission projects that have emerged from the discernment process.



**WHAT
COMES
NEXT?**

The Forums

Forum One

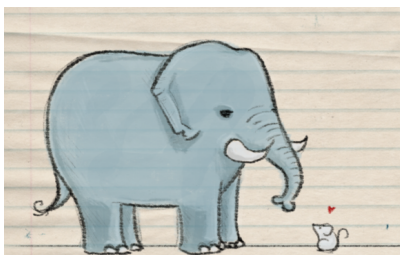


THE BEGINNING

26 March, 11:30am – 12:30pm, soup break, then 12:50pm – 1:50pm

- How we're going to work together,
- Where we came from, what we did well,
- Our changing world,
- Our passions c.f. the world's needs,
- Where we find joy,
- Closing Reflection: Looking at Jesus

Forum Two



BIG & LITTLE THINGS

30 April, 11:30am – 12:30pm, soup break, then 12:50pm – 1:50pm

- God in the ordinary stuff of our lives,
- Big themes from the biggest story,
- Our bottom lines and big drivers,
- Closing Reflection: Looking at "the Father / Creator"

Forum Three

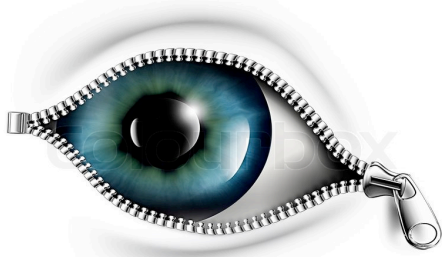


THE WORK OF THE GARDENER

28 May, 11:30am – 12:30pm, soup break, then 12:50pm – 1:50pm

- The garden
- Current garden features at Knox
- Favourite Flowers (our mission statement)
- Dreaming up the perfect garden
- Reflection: Looking at the Spirit
- Getting ready for next time (learning how to look at things)

Forum Four



WITH OPENED EYES

25 June, 11:30am – 12:30pm, soup break, then 12:50pm – 1:50pm

- Having explored various parts of the city, we share what we have seen, thought, learned and become interested in.
- We share our chosen news stories from around the city, the country and the world.
- We work out where our focus is falling.
- Closing Reflection: Looking at Saints and Stirrers

Forum Five



WHEAT FROM CHAFF

30 July, 11:30am – 12:30pm, soup break, then 12:50pm – 1:50pm

Near the end, we should have a number of projects emerging (interesting, appropriate, life-giving). Keeping in mind our character and values, our mission bottom lines and major drivers, where our focus is falling, and what brings us joy, we'll sift and sort our options. We'll set goals for whatever we decide we need to do next. Then we'll get on with our brand new "next chapter".

In all likelihood, trust levels and creative output will increase among those who see the discernment process right through from the first to the fifth forum and who bond through the work we share; but we can benefit also from contributions made by those who can only attend occasionally. We recognise that many of our good people are "pressed for time"; we hope only that people will recognise the importance of this process to Knox and offer what they can.



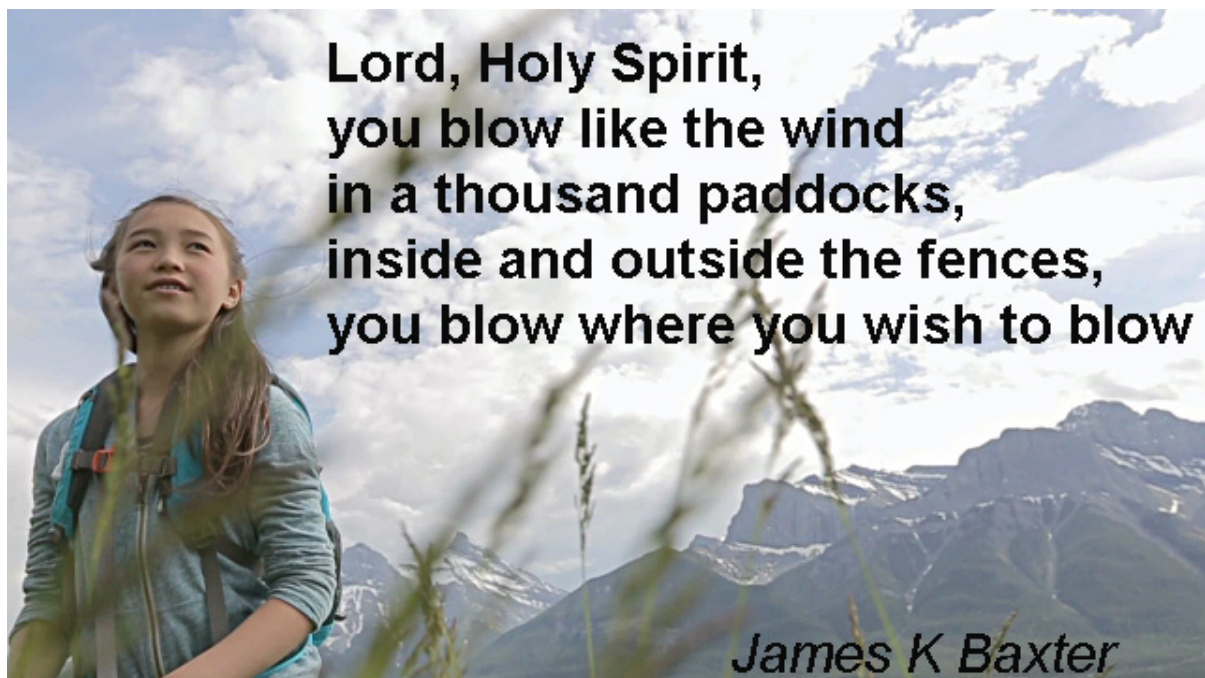
A Job for All Sorts

Spirit-catchers, Engineers, Doers of the Word, and Lovers



Using the metaphor of the body being composed of many different parts, the Apostle Paul noted that Christian communities are made up of many different sorts of people – with many different skills. [1 Corinthians 12] He noted that the “body” worked best when people of diverse skills worked to their natural strengths and in a coordinated way. There is no “one kind of person” to whom this mission programme is solely directed. No one should fear that they have nothing to bring. Nor should anyone fear being burdened with undue responsibility. To the contrary, people involved in these sorts of processes often report a sense of satisfaction, personal growth, and deepened community with those around them. Outward-facing work often produces inward strength and benefit.

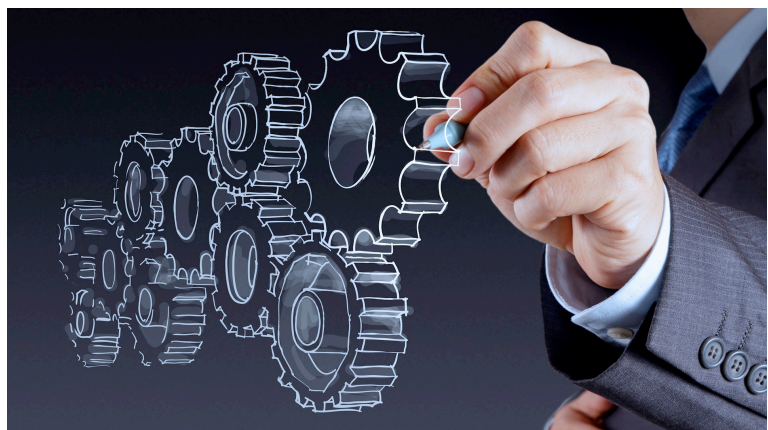
The Spirit Catchers



At the first stages, we need the dreamers and visionaries – the “ideas people” – the intuitive ones with open eyes who make interesting connections, who have imagination, who can read the signs of the times, who notice the “Wind blowing in the paddock”.

The Engineers

At the next stages, we need the systems and logistics people – people whose quantity-surveying eyes can see what resources are needed for our good ideas to find concrete form – practical people who understand how to build the “machine” for



doing the work we want to do. If seeding funds are required, these people may know where to find them and how to make persuasive applications.

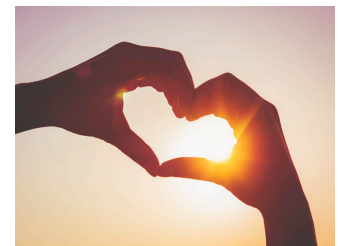
The Doers



It's hard to say much about the specific skills required of those for the implementation stage, since we don't yet know what the mission project will be; but it's safe to say that these people will be what the book of James calls "doers of the Word" – people whose deployment of their skills in active service gives them joy and brings them closer to the other workers around them – people of the next chapter.

In all things, love

What do the Spirit Catchers, the Engineers and the Doers have in common? Love of God and people, and love of their church. But – it's likely to be good if the engineers get to hear the dreamers dreaming, and if the doers get to listen to the engineers. You, might not feel naturally equipped for any particular stage of the process, but please participate! Your time of contribution will come!



Sunday Morning Updates

We will launch the Mission Discernment Programme at our morning service on 19 March. It's important that the process begins with the prayers and encouragement of the whole congregation. We'll be sharing news from each of the forums during morning services between now and August.

Forum 1 – Sunday 23 April
Forum 3 – Sunday 18 June
Forum 5 – Sunday 20 August

Forum 2 – Sunday 21 May
Forum 4 – Sunday 23 July

We'll post forum updates on the news page of the website.

Upcoming Events

**Wednesday,
1 March**

7:00pm - Ash Wednesday – a service conducted by “St Luke’s in the City” in the Knox Centre Chapel

Knox people warmly welcome.



**Sunday,
5 March**

10:00am – Morning Service - our six week Lenten journey to Good Friday begins with Holy Communion

**Sunday,
19 March**

10:00am – Morning Service – The Launch of our Mission Discernment Process.

We offer our discerning hearts and minds as we begin the major process of seeking direction for the next stage of our life



**Sunday,
26 March**

10:00am – Morning Service

11:30am - Mission Discernment Forum 1 – “The Beginning”

7:00pm – Knox Café
Sue Spigel speaking on environment and art

**Sunday,
2 April**

A Communion Service

**Sunday,
9 April**

Palm Sunday - a combined service with Durham Street Methodist Church including a dramatic procession



**Thursday
13 April**

7:30pm – the Service of the Shadows – a combined service with Durham Street Methodist Church for Tenebrae

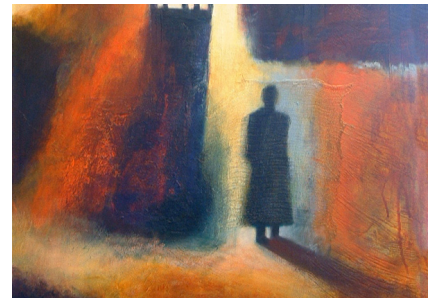


Friday 14 April 10:00am – A Solemn Service for Good Friday

**Sunday
16 April**

8:30am – 9:00am – an Easter breakfast in the Knox Centre Lounge

10:00am – a festive service for Easter Day



**Sunday
23 April**

10:00am – morning service during which we hear news from the first mission discernment forum.

**Sunday
30 April**

10:00am – morning service
11:30am – Mission Discernment Forum 2 – “Big and Little Things”

**Sunday
7 May**

10:00am – Communion service



**Sunday
21 May**

Evening Service – Durham Street Methodist Church hosts a Wesley Day service at Knox

**Sunday
4 June**

10:00am – Combined service for Pentecost



John Murray



Knox was saddened to hear of the death of one of its former ministers, the Very Reverend John Murray. John died in a hospice in Kapiti on Friday, 17 February, 2017.

John was born in November 1929, and attended St Clair School, followed by Kings High School, then undertook MA studies at Otago University. He attended the Theological Hall as a special student in 1952. John travelled overseas for further study at King's College in the United Kingdom and graduated with an MA from Canterbury in 1954. He married Shirley in July of the same year in Cambridge, England. John then studied at Bossey Ecumenical Institute, Switzerland before returning to New Zealand where he accepted a call, and was ordained at, St David's Taihape in June 1956.

John resigned from this role on 31 January 1962 and was appointed as ecumenical chaplain to Victoria University and Wellington Teachers' College from 1 February 1962. During these years John was actively involved in protests against the Vietnam war.

John accepted a call to Knox Church, Christchurch in November 1967. During his ministry here he co-founded CARE (Citizens for Racial Equality) Christchurch, and was involved in leading protests against apartheid sport. He worked with HART (Halt all Racial Tours) and was involved with the NZ Race Relations Council.

John was called to St Andrew's on the Terrace, Wellington in February 1975 and served there until his retirement in 1993. St Andrew's became a centre for social action and political debate. John co-founded "Boycott" to stop the All Blacks tour of South Africa in 1985. He served as the convener of the Presbyterian Public Questions Committee. John also played an important part as a co-founder and later as chairperson of Te Kakano o te Aroha Marae Trust, Moera, Lower Hutt, in 1988.

John was installed as Moderator of the PCANZ in 1990.

He helped found the St Andrew's Music Trust and the St Andrew's Trust for Religion and Society. John was the founder and chairperson of the NZ Hymnbook Trust, promoting and publishing New Zealand hymns and songs for all churches. In addition, he was manager and the chief editor of "Alleluia Aotearoa", the first book of NZ hymns for all churches in

Aotearoa, published in 1993. John believed the church needed to speak into the social and political issues of the day – both within Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond. Not only to speak – but to act.

John was active in social engagement and the list of his passionate commitments is long and includes being a member with Amnesty International for many years; he was also actively engaged in the fight to save historic buildings and sites including the Bolton Street Cemetery and 22 The Terrace in Wellington; and was a strong supporter of the 1985 homosexual law reform bill. John also served as chairperson of the national co-ordinating World Court Project committee to outlaw nuclear weapons at the International Court of Justice.

John was granted minister emeritus status by the Wellington Presbytery in July 1993, retired from active ministry and moved to Raumati (Kapiti Coast).

In retirement he remained active in many spheres including serving as president of Frederic Wallis House, an ecumenical retreat centre in Lower Hutt; as the national co-convenor of Abolition 2000, the NZ movement to eliminate all nuclear weapons; and as a world church peace monitor for the first post-apartheid democratic election in South Africa in 1994.

He was involved in publishing "Songs of Praise from Aotearoa", the first video of NZ hymns in 1999 and published "Faith Forever Singing", 80 new NZ Hymns, in 2000.

John was awarded the ONZM (Officer of the NZ Order of Merit) for service to the community in 2000. He was a founding trustee of "Dignity New Zealand Trust" for law change on end-of-life decisions (voluntary euthanasia).

He was appointed as a member of the Race Relations Sector Advisory Group of the New Zealand Human Rights Commission in 2003.

John worked for causes close to his heart in his local community, actively working towards initiating local Kapiti Coast civic/community celebrations of Waitangi Day, and was part of an inter-iwi group promoting better race relations between different local ethnic groups.

Knox sends love to Shirley and the family. We acknowledge deep gratitude for the fine ministry, always engaged with the present, that John exercised here at Knox and beyond.