

KNØX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

# KNOX LIFE

## November 2017

**Knox Church Complex**

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**Visit us on the internet at [www.knoxchurch.co.nz](http://www.knoxchurch.co.nz)**

**On Facebook search: Knox Church Christchurch**

# Trees



“Big Tree”, by Ros, a quilt displayed at Knox during October’s exhibition.

## Trees du jour

The Christchurch City Council is preparing its “Christchurch and Banks Peninsular Tree and Urban Forest Plan”, and so is keen to hear from residents about how important we think trees are. An online survey can be found at: <https://www.ccc.govt.nz/news-and-events/newsline/show/2172>

Giving background for the survey, Council affirms that trees have aesthetic, environmental, economic, social and cultural significance. They provide shelter, shade, soil stabilisation, oxygen, homes for animals. Council notes

also that a lot of the first trees planted by settlers in our city were exotics, planted to remind people of the “home” they’d left far behind. There was a kind of “comfort and connection” element to trees.

At the same time as the City Council is thinking about trees, our newly formed government is also talking about them. They propose to plant one billion over the next ten years. Some will be part of the forestry industry. Some will be about carbon credit off-sets. Some will just look lovely. Trees seem suddenly to have become de rigueur and politically popular. Some people dream of the Red Zone becoming a large native forest.

## **Two Childhood trees**

As a child, I used to climb a big, not old, Silver Dollar tree in our back garden. Mum and Dad had planted it early on in their breaking in of the garden. Almost immediately they felt they’d made a mistake. It was going to be huge; it was going to suck all the life out of the soil around it, so nothing else much would grow in that part of the garden. They hated it. I loved it. I knew every hand and foot-hold for climbing up quickly. I knew where all the best forks were for sitting and thinking (a child needs to sit in a tree and think). I knew just how fast to walk along the horizontal branches (no hands) so that maximum balance was achieved. The tree split one night during a wind storm. Dad seized the opportunity to put the tree out of its misery. I felt sad. (A shoot grew, then died.)

A second childhood tree was one I planted as part of an Arbour Day programme at primary school. Elected by the members of my class to be our “class planter”, I planted a little rimu tree on a small sloping bank above the staff car park. I watered it most days and kept an eye on its progress. The tree long since has dwarfed me. It’s huge now. I sometimes visit it when up in Auckland. Although it’s estimated that some rimu trees live for a thousand years, a much more usual life span is 550 - 650 years. The tree I planted will most certainly long outlive me. Trees remind us of longer time-frames. They give perspective. Christchurch’s longest living trees, kahikatea, are in Riccarton Bush. They’re about 600 years old. Once they were plentiful here.

## **A Problem tree**

Because I have lived in houses that are owned by others, and thus am sometimes reluctantly moved on (change of job, a landlord’s new plan for the property), I have tended to plant trees in pots, rather than in the ground. This means they’re portable. One particular kowhai tree did very well in its pot, growing so large that it kept blowing over every time it was windy. Transferring it into a larger pot for stability’s sake, I gave it strict instructions

not to use the larger pot as an excuse to grow bigger. It is a beautiful tree, but disobedient. Initially driven home from the garden centre in the back seat of my Corolla, I have no idea what kind of open-backed truck I would need now if I ever were to have to move it. Some trees are just not designed to be vagrant. Most trees are about “place”.

## **First Testament trees**

The most famous tree in the Hebrew scriptures is probably the one at the centre of the Garden of Eden: beautiful, tempting, heavy with arbitrarily prohibited fruit. Something flourishes right at the centre of our world, growing a harvest of things that will reveal our lack of moral strength. I'm not sure I'd want such a tree in my garden - but the garden's not of my design. A tree as a warning to be strong. Other First Testament trees are simpler: the cedars of Lebanon, emblems of strong, dignified people, blessed by God; Psalm One's trees growing near streams of water, metaphors for spiritually sustained people whose delight is in God; Jeremiah's similar tree [Jeremiah 17:8] - the person who fears no drought, and carries on bearing fruit. These are happier trees. Trees as signs of sustenance and blessing.

## **New Testament trees**

Jesus' attitude to trees seems to be mixed. Although on one occasion he was pretty quick to curse a fig tree [Matt 21:18-19], he also told a story about nurturing an under-performing one [Luke 13:6-9]. A tree as a sign of mercy. He described the kingdom of heaven as a big shady tree in and under which all the animals found shelter and shade. And describing his people as branches on a vine, he reminded us that we are living creatures - needing connection, and when disconnected from one another, withering and dying. (Is this something like our finding a place within God's family tree?) And of course, as another tree-shaped shadow in the narrative, there's Paul's odd description of Jesus' crucifixion as a “hanging on the tree”.

## **Follow up**

How about planting a tree? Touching a tree? Hugging a tree? Next time you walk past a big tree, how about noticing more than just its trunk? Look up! How about taking a photo of a tree, and sharing it with someone? How about writing a poem about a tree? How about making lunch, and eating it under the shade of a tree? How about sheltering, and giving thanks?

Arohanui,

Matthew.

# Some poems and songs

I think that I shall never see  
a poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest  
against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

a tree that looks at God all day,  
and lifts her leafy arms to pray;

a tree that may in summer wear  
a nest of robins in her hair;

upon whose bosom snow has lain;  
who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,  
but only God can make a tree.

Joyce Kilmer (1886-1918)

-ooOoo-

I talk to the trees  
But they don't listen to me  
I talk to the stars  
But they never hear me  
The breeze hasn't time  
To stop and hear what I say  
I talk to them all in vain  
But suddenly my words  
Reach someone else's ear  
At someone else's heart strings too

I tell you my dreams  
And while you're listening to me  
I suddenly see them come true . . .

Frederick Loewe (1901-1988)



# Coming services and events

Sunday 3 December 10am:	Communion service, first Sunday in Advent
Sunday 10 December 10am:	Service
Sunday 17 December 10am:	Service
Sunday 24 December 10am:	Lessons and carols service
11.15pm:	Christmas Eve service
Monday 25 December 10am:	Christmas Day service
Sunday 31 December 10am:	Combined service with Durham Street congregation in Knox church

## 2018

Sunday 7 January 10am:	Communion service combined with Durham Street in Knox Church
Sunday 14 January 10am:	Combined service with Durham Street in Knox Church
Sunday 21 January 10am:	Combined service with Durham Street in Knox Church
Sunday 28 January 10am:	Service

## Other Events

Sunday 3 December noon:	Parish lunch in the lounge - bring finger food to share
Monday 4 December 7.30pm:	Fireside Group Christmas meeting in the lounge

**Then: Holidays!**



Chamberlain's ford

# Planning a RE-BIRTHDAY gift

In his centennial history of Knox, Fergus Murray writes:

*“information about these earliest years is tantalisingly scant. There is no mention for example of when the church was opened or of any special service connected with the opening . . .”*

So if Knox was looking for a date to celebrate its birthday, the date of our re-opening might serve as a good one. 1<sup>st</sup> February 2015 stands as our “re-birthday”.

Council decided recently that it would be good to mark our re-birthday each year with an annual appeal and simple celebration. More detail will be published in February, but for now:

- ◆ We’re setting up a special “re-birthday gift fund” through which we’ll be able to fund things that would be “nice to have” but for which there’s no existing funding. Examples of such items include a manual changer for the organ, pull-down projector screens for the Hall and Lounge, microphone upgrades for the church
- ◆ We plan to run a funding / giving programme during each February
- ◆ We’ll have a simple celebration near the end of each February to give thanks and wish ourselves a happy re-birthday.
- ◆ We’re hoping that over time, the small and simple start we have made might grow into something robust enough to fund bigger birthday gifts.

Matthew

## Soup recipe booklets

After the recent Forums where delicious soups were served it was decided to put the recipes into a booklet and sell them for \$5.

**Jane (in the office) made a great job of creating the booklet and \$270 was raised. If you missed out and would like a booklet let the office know and a copy will be printed for you.**

# City Mission cooking team

For some time now a small team of Knox people has been helping at the Men's Night Shelter at the Christchurch City Mission by cooking a meal for the residents. Once a month a group of three people spend about three hours during the afternoon preparing a hearty and nutritious evening meal for up to 30 men, using food donated to the Mission. The task is not too onerous and you need only to be reasonably competent in a kitchen. Anyone who has prepared food at home can help.

If we can increase the number of people involved we could consider offering to do this more often. You would need to be available from about 2.30 – 5.30 pm on a weekday afternoon. Our current cooking day is the second Monday of each month but we may be able to negotiate a different day.

**If you would like more information please contact Doug Shaw (phone 942 9280) or Jean Brouwer (355 6534).**

## The road to Damascus

This was the title of a quilt exhibition displayed in Knox Church over two weeks in conjunction with the National Quilting Symposium held in Christchurch in early October.

The quilts in the exhibition were created by veteran stitchers using recycled and naturally dyed fabrics to make quilts that were hand stitched using simple methods and tools with an eye for sustainability. These beautiful quilts along with their stories showed contemplative, meaningful, meditative stitching coming out of the heart.

Alongside the exhibition there was a sales table of work by the quilters, the proceeds of which were generously donated to the Knox Rebuild. A silent auction was held for one of the quilts which was made using doilies contributed by members of Knox Church in Nova Scotia. Half of the proceeds of that silent auction is on its way to Knox Church Nova Scotia and half has been donated to Knox Christchurch. In all \$3174.70 was raised for our Knox Rebuild.

Our thanks to Sue Spigel for the idea and to her band of stitchers for supporting her. We are very grateful for their generosity and we loved the wonderful exhibition.

Jennifer McKinnon



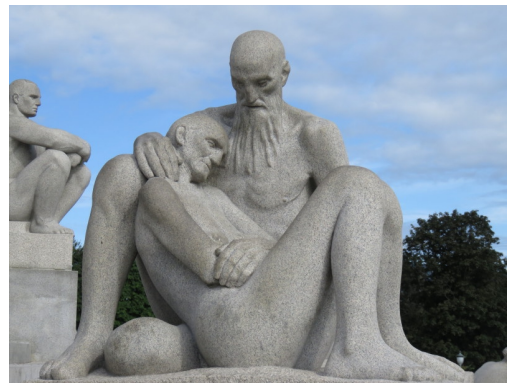
# Two encounters

Unexpected encounters on your travels can be occasions of the Spirit. Bee and I found that on our recent trip overseas.



In Oslo on our bus tour we were introduced to the Vigeland Sculpture Park. It was breathtaking. Gustav Vigeland planned it as a celebration of Norway's independence from Sweden in 1905. It consists of 212 sculptures, comprising a total of 760 human figures, some in bronze, some in granite. It is all set in a large park which Vigeland himself planned as the setting for his work. It opened in 1947. The park takes you on a journey through human life and living. The figures are all naked so that they are timeless and always in the viewer's present time. Our guide at the Park aptly called it "A Cathedral of Communication".

Here we meet ourselves face to face in life sized replicas in all our moods



from birth to death. It cannot but enlarge your love for humanity, vulnerable, fragile and exuberant in its variety. By the time Bee and I had walked slowly through the beautiful park, we were in tears; it was so moving.

The other encounter was with some red ceramic poppies.



They had been part of a major art installation Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red at the Tower of London between 17 July and 11 November 2014. Each poppy represented a British military fatality during World War I. After that, the poppies were sold off, except for two sections, “Wave” and “Weeping Window”, which have been on display since in various parts of the British Isles.



We unexpectedly met “Weeping Window” in Cardiff where it poured like a cascade of blood from an upper window of the Welsh Assembly on Cardiff Bay. A few days later we were in Plymouth and met “Wave” at the Cenotaph on the Hoe.

Both were poignant reminders of the cost of war. When will we ever learn?

Ken & Bee



# Recent Church Council meetings' notes

A wonderful group of handmade quilts was recently on display in the church for a couple of week. This was enjoyed by many Knox people and visitors. Proceeds from the sales table and from a silent auction were very kindly donated to Knox. We thank Sue Spigel and her group for their very generous gift, which amounted to \$3,174.70.

Other recent donations came from the Soup Recipe booklet (\$270) and the Heritage Week Open Day (\$52).

Our Knox budget which was initially slightly in credit, has been tipped into deficit by a number of increased expenses beyond our control. The national office of the PCANZ had initially indicated a large decrease in the payments required from parishes, but actually our assessment decreased only a little. That meant an extra \$6000 for which we had not budgeted. We have been able to get a reduction of about \$900 on that amount. The national office has apologised for the lack of clarity in its earlier communications.

Another unexpected cost has been insurance premiums. These have increased steeply - about \$10,000 more than last year. The premium for the church building alone has risen from \$15,447 last year to \$20,633 this year.

Council is planning to hold a special appeal in February next year to help with these extra costs. We have decided to do this each year around the anniversary of the reopening of our new church, with a different focus each year. This was one of the fundraising suggestions given to us in Murray Compton's business plan.

The Knox Centre has been busy with a number of groups hiring one or more of the rooms. A check on the electrical wiring has been done as requested by the PCANZ, which has been concerned by recent fires in several church buildings around the country. Our wiring passed the checks. The hall and the lounge will soon be fitted with pull-down screens for AV displays. These will be easier to use and will show images more clearly. A new microphone set has been installed in the church as required to meet the new spectrum frequency requirements. Some leaks in the chapel roof have been fixed. We have changed our power supplier and hope to achieve savings of about \$2000 over the year.

A working bee has been held to tidy the carpark gardens and this was well attended. Some alterations will be made in the carpark area in coming months as PSUSI moves out and its building are demolished. A new building

will be constructed in a slightly different position. We can expect trucks and workmen around for some time to come.

Daniel Cooper's annual review has been held and council recorded appreciation of his work and skills as Director of Music at Knox.

As we have done for the last eight years, we will be redirecting our weekly food gifts to Pillars for three weeks in November. Christmas gifts will also be gratefully received. Pillars is a group which works to support the families of prisoners. Its office is in Springfield Road.

After Christmas we will be combining with the Durham Street Methodist congregation for services in the church. December 31 and January 7 will be organised by Durham Street and January 14 and 21 will be organised by Knox. On January 28 we will return to our separate services. This works well, with Matthew taking a holiday after Christmas.

## **November Knox Council report**

Matthew constituted the meeting with a reading from Colossians 2. An injunction to love and peace. Matthew referenced recent world and public events that might not be so loving and peaceful. Peacefulness was one of the Knox attributes that were identified this year during the mission discernment and we will be hearing more about peace next year.

After various routine and formal items we came to the correspondence and this time we received a letter from Graeme Swinney tendering his resignation from the Council. There was some discussion about how we should receive this and how to respond. The normal accept with regret (a cliché) was challenged and acclamation was one of the words mentioned. Eventually we settled on that "we accept Graeme's resignation and express our gratitude for his contribution to the council and the finance committee." Thank you Graeme I know that this has been on your mind for some time.

Another letter was one from the national church. A survey on the role and protocols surrounding the moderator. After a number of years of being entirely focussed on our own affairs at Knox it was good to spend time recognising and discussing things about the national body and having an opportunity given to making a choice on how we think its functioning can be improved.

It was also a chance to think about how to make the life of the moderator and the parish he or she might come from have an easier time of it. We know of

this from experience not so long ago when Bruce Hansen our minister at the time, was moderator.

We agreed that the role of the Moderator could best be described in NZ terms as one of a Kaumatua (as long as this also includes women). An alternative was as Mission leader and this has been the stance for a few years but we thought that the parish is actually better placed for this.

We thought that to ensure a broad base of participation that the term should be for 2 years and with no further term at a later stage. This would formalise what has been the de-facto standard.

It has been the practice for a new Moderator to start with chairing an assembly. This is a daunting and difficult thing. The survey asked if it might not be better for the moderator to start straight AFTER an assembly and we agreed.

Various reports were received as usual and during the report from the Finance Committee there was a discussion about how we should handle the upcoming special appeal in February. We will make this an annual one and more details will be in Knox Life.

Contrary to routine but not unusually, the December meeting will be a week earlier and will be with elders emeritus.

John Brouwer

## **Alpine presbytery newsletter items**

### **Moderator Designate for General Assembly 2018**

Following the withdrawal for health reasons of Moderator Designate Very Rev Andrew Norton, a process of nominations and then voting for a new Moderator Designate has been undertaken.

Very Rev Bruce Hansen and Very Rev Ray Coster, co-conveners PCANZ General Assembly Commission, have announced the election of Rev Taimoanaifakofo (Fakafo) Kaio for bringing to General Assembly 2018 (GA 18) for election as Moderator for 2018 - 2020.

Rev Kaio was born in the Tokelau Islands in 1958 but grew up and was educated in Auckland. He moved to Porirua and worked at Ford Motors, then

as a Corrections officer. From 1992-94 he attended Knox Theological College. In 1994 he commenced ministry at St Margaret's, Belmont, North Shore, until 2005 when he moved to Onehunga Cooperating parish where he currently remains. He has served as moderator of the North Shore Presbytery and was moderator of the new Northern Presbytery from its inception in 2011, until 2012. He has represented the PCANZ on numerous global groups.

## **Call for prayer for young people**

Mike Dodge of Canterbury Youth Services writes:

*"All of us who are working with young people are very concerned at the alarming increase of suicides across the region this month. In my 36 years of youth work I have never seen anything like this before. We strongly feel the need to call "the whole church" to prayer together over this (PUSH - Pray Until Something Happens).*

*- - We're asking that you would pray against this dark cloud of anxiety, depression, despair, self-harm and suicide - especially among the young people of our region. Pray for hope instead of hopelessness, light instead of darkness, love, power and a sound mind instead of fear so that we would see a change in the mental health and well-being of our young people."*

## **Weekly newsletter**

A weekly newsletter from Presbytery is emailed out to all who wish to receive it. if you would like to keep up with what's happening in our churches you can email the presbytery office and ask to go on the newsletter email list.

**<[office@alpinepresbytery.org](mailto:office@alpinepresbytery.org)>**