

KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

KNOX LIFE

November 2018



Even spring nesting birds get our plastic

Knox Church Complex

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

On Facebook search: Knox Church Christchurch

COMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

Saturday 1 December: Seniors' Christmas party in the Knox lounge at 2pm.

December Services' theme is Peace.

Sunday 2 December: Advent 1
Sunday 9 December: Advent 2
Sunday 16 December: Advent 3
Sunday 23 December: Advent 4 Nine lessons & carols (with orchestra)
Monday 24 December: Christmas Eve service
Tuesday 25 December: Christmas Day service

Holiday Period

Sunday 30 December, 6 January, 13 January:
Joint services with Durham Street Methodist congregation (Matthew on holiday)

Sunday 20 and 27 January: Joint services led by Matthew

Sunday lunches

Approximately once in every couple of months there is the opportunity to enjoy a casual Sunday lunch with a group of Knox people. The last event's venue was the Secret Garden café (at Oderings nurseries) in Barrington on Sunday the November 18. The setting was nice and spacious and it was possible to have a conversation without having to raise your voice.

The previous two events before that, were attended by approximately 20 people who enjoyed this time together and getting to know a bit more about each other.

Janneke Nuysink



Eating together is good.



Matthew speaks with visiting Americans.

DELIGHTS FROM OUT OF NOWHERE

Some months ago, out of the blue, I received an email from a retired minister of the Presbyterian Church USA. He told me that he ran a travel group of Presbyterians, past-Presbyterians, never-been-Presbyterians and others. Helping the group explore interesting and different corners of the planet, Dudley (the minister) researched and prepared itineraries, and the group went on journeys most years. (I think that is the group's usual travelling frequency.) This particular trip, a kind of down-under jaunt, was passing through the city of Christchurch. Looking for interesting places to visit and people of goodwill with whom to speak, Dudley had come across our website. He thought that, if I could refrain for a short while making provocative comments about current leadership style in the USA, his people might enjoy meeting me – and any others from Knox who might like to be involved. Dudley was particularly interested in hearing about Knox's experience of rebuilding after a natural disaster.

Deciding to keep the meeting relatively unscripted, to allow for our visitors to change the agenda if mine bored them, I assembled just a few thoughts. I knew they'd want to hear about the building, but I also felt that church buildings serve the life and mission of a community. I didn't want a building story to obscure that, and felt that I needed to say something about who we are here, and why we, only one church among many in the city, bothered to carry on existing.

I ended up giving our visitors a very potted history of our origins, our evolving into a politically concerned and socially progressive community. I explained that our special character in this respect, was quite rare within our city and within our denomination. Commitment to inclusive theology and the dignity of all people were matters lying close to the heart of why we rebuilt.

As I mentioned things like Vietnam protest, support for the ordination of women, campaigns against nuclear testing in the Pacific, support for homosexual law reform, provision of civil union ceremonies, I was expecting some wriggling in the seats.

As no wriggling ensued, rather as instead some emotionally intelligent questions came forth, the provocateur in me wondered whether maybe I'd better talk about Trump. I didn't.

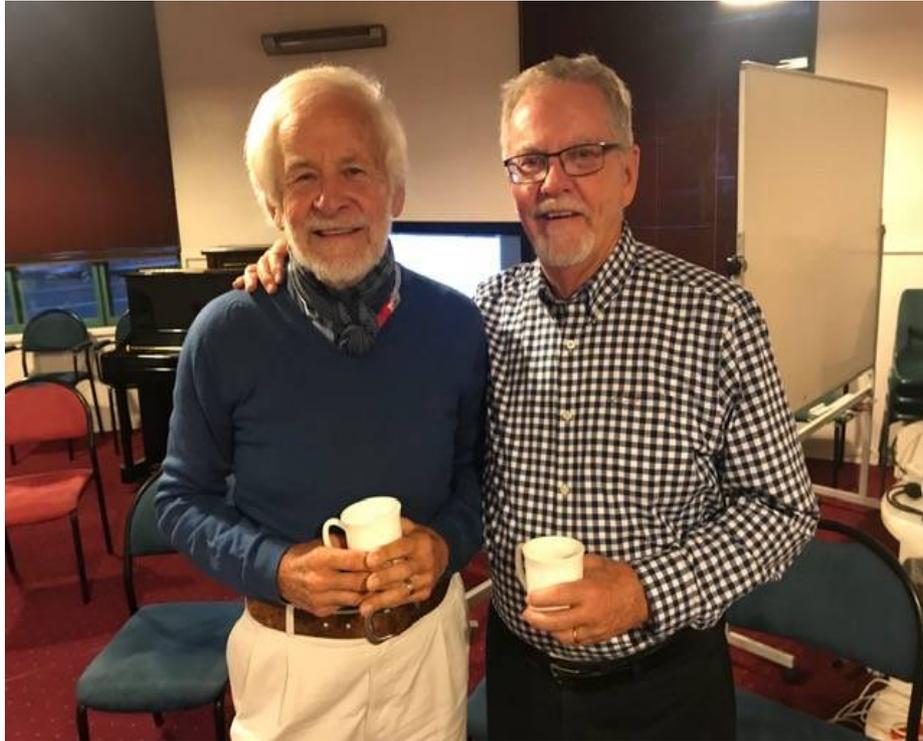
We finished with a cup of tea. Over the cup of tea one visitor welled up with tears as he reflected on the organ pipe gouges on our communion table. He wondered if I had ever thought of reflecting on them when preaching on Thomas needing to put his hands into the wounds of Jesus. I told the visitor that I hadn't thought of that but now had a new insight for the first Sunday after Easter next year. Another visitor told me, in light of our judgment of social justice as important, of his experiences as a minister in Mississippi in the 1960s. His church had offered support and sanctuary to African Americans who were enrolling to attend educational institutions previously barred from them. This minister received regular midnight phone calls, calling him a "nigger lover" and threatening his home and family. In the neighbourhood inclusive churches were being fired bombed. In the presence of these visitors I felt humbled.

They had come out of nowhere and reminded me of the importance of religious courage and principle. When Dudley first contacted me about a Sunday evening meeting, I was annoyed that my dinner would have to be eaten early or late. Providence had a different kind of food for me to receive. I am grateful.

A delightful aside: Len Pierce was among the Knox people who came along to meet the visitors. He wasn't expecting to be reunited with an old friend from his exchange and postgraduate days in the States in the early 1970s – but that's what happened. The world is sometimes small and good meetings occur.

Delights from out of nowhere!

Arohanui, Mathew.



Len and long time US friend.

Mission

Being circulated with this edition of Knox Life is the latest mission document. It speaks for itself, and I commend it to you. Knox Council has approved it for circulation and endorsed the timetable described in it. Reflect on it over the summer and come to the congregational meeting after worship on Sunday 3 February 2019.

MUSINGS ON NORTH KOREA

The General Assembly of the PCANZ, at its recent meeting in Christchurch, expressed support for all efforts around the world to bring peace on the Korean Peninsula.

North Korea (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) gets almost entirely negative publicity but I recently spent a week there and found it a pleasant and interesting place to visit. I joined with about 2000 other foreigners attending celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the DPRK - people from 36 countries ranging from Australia, Canada, the UK and Greece through to Egypt, Luxembourg, Russia, Morocco, Pakistan, the Philippines and more. I was one of a group of six from NZ led by my brother, Peter, who first visited the DPRK in 1997 to work on a UN agricultural aid project. He has visited again another seven times and has become something of an

expert on the country and the turmoil of world politics associated with it. Currently he is the secretary of the NZ - DPRK Society which was founded originally by Rev Don Borrie and Wolfgang Rosenberg. The Society works away quietly, people to people, building relationships and encouraging practical aid efforts to help development in areas such as agriculture and education, as well as advocating for peace on the Korean Peninsula.



Korean apartments, Pyongyang.

As we travelled by bus around the capital city of Pyongyang and out into the countryside I was impressed by the attractiveness and neatness of the place. Food crops are grown on every inch of available land, even down the banks of irrigation ditches. Pumpkin plants scramble over roof tops. Much of North Korea is mountainous, so arable land is limited and very precious. Only occasional animals are seen, mainly goats grazing and oxen hauling farm carts. Pyongyang itself is a lovely city with a river, wide streets edged with trees, well-cared-for parks, and tall pastel coloured apartment blocks. Rural towns and villages tend to have more traditional single storey housing but new apartment blocks are beginning to appear there too. However, unsealed roads and tracks are the norm in the country areas and much farm work is still done by hand. Bicycles, including electric ones, are often used, but only small numbers of cars and trucks are to be seen, even in Pyongyang. The lack of traffic and the total absence of commercial signage engender an atmosphere of peace and calm.

The 70th anniversary celebration events were stunning, especially the “mass games”. In a huge stadium seating 150,000 people we were treated to an amazing, fast-paced display of interpretive dance and gymnastics with rapidly changing lighting effects, music and fireworks. I marvelled at the logistics

involved in training and organising thousands of children and young adults to put on such a complex show. It was like a two hour Olympic Games opening, plus, plus, plus!

Equally stunning was the “torch parade” held at night in the vast Kim Il Sung Square. We gazed spellbound as hundreds and hundreds of secondary school and uni students dashed about in the darkness, each holding aloft two flaming torches. Together they shaped and reshaped, in flames, a complicated series of patterns and words. An OSH inspector’s nightmare, but an hour of sheer magic for us.

After the end of all the official events many visitors departed and the locals began to relax a little. The lift attendants at our hotel had time to try out a few English words on us and our ever-present guides were noticeably more at ease, chatting more freely and showing us photos of their children on their cellphones. The NZ and Australian contingent were booked in for a few extra days and one afternoon we travelled about an hour out of Pyongyang to visit a co-operative farm which has been designated the NZ- Australia Friendship Farm. Peter had visited there before and was greeted with delighted hugs and smiles from the woman farm manager, who spoke no English but happily showed us around and later gave us a taste of some of the farm’s produce - cucumbers, apples, kumara. Our group presented a donation of money to help pay for the cement required for a new kindergarten building there.



Rural Korea - fish farm.

There are about 3000 co-operative farms in the DPRK and each is really a little village, with its own kindergarten, primary and secondary school, and

small hospital. The farms have a well-educated and well organised work force and have considerable control over what and how much they provide to the state. Any excess stays with themselves. They can also keep pigs, hens and rabbits for their own use, to eat or sell or swap with another village. There is some careful development of private enterprise going on in a number of ways in DPRK and it seems likely that eventually they will combine capitalism and communism, as China and Vietnam have done. Tourism is beginning too, mainly with Chinese visitors, but an Englishman runs tours for Westerners and a Kiwi guy has recently been allowed to take hiking trips into the mountainous northern area. Independent travellers are not allowed however, and actually with all signage in Korean and very few people speaking English, a guide and interpreter is essential anyway.

The DPRK is very much still a developing country, but everyone gets free education and free healthcare, no one is homeless and no one is unemployed. The state provides for all basic needs - and there is no income tax! Peter has noticed, through the years, many signs of improving living standards. From the destruction of the Korean War, and despite being shut out of the normal world systems of finance, co-operation and trade, a strong self-reliant nation has been developed. The official state philosophy is based on “Juche” which means something like “we’ll do it ourselves”. They are a proud people who value education highly and work very hard. Undoubtedly their form of government does not fit our idea of democracy and there are currently many restrictions imposed on the people. However that can also be said of many countries around the world. We sometimes forget how privileged we are to live in New Zealand.



Dance class in rural Korean school.

The people of North Korea long for a formal peace agreement to end the state of war they have lived under since 1953, but they are determined to hold onto their independence and to resist foreigners who would like to engineer regime change. It should be noted that they have themselves have experienced the horror of atomic bombs, with maybe 100,000 Koreans being incinerated at Nagasaki, where they were being used as slave labour by the Japanese. For 65 years the USA has refused to allow a peace settlement to be signed. President Bush declared them to be part of the “axis of evil” along with Iran and Iraq and later Libya, Syria and Cuba, and North Korea is very aware of what has happened to most of those countries. Small wonder that the DPRK people have been determined to make sure that they can defend themselves and have a strong hand to play as they negotiate for an official end to the war, plus recognition that their state has a right to exist, and its reunification in some sort of federation with South Korea.

Janet Wilson



Traditional Korean dress

November: the Month of Remembrance

[Excerpts from “An Armistice Day Remembrance” by John Collins.]

As the sun sets in the western sky on this month of remembrance, each of us in our own way will remember and honour those who served their country in time of world-wide conflict. Some paid the ultimate sacrifice in distant lands under atrocious conditions, as these words express it:

Boots stomp through mud to slog up a steep hill.
Soldiers faces are ever grim.
Poppies with graceful poise are trampled by feet.
Guns fire in a canon.
Bullets dance.
People abandon the earth.
The souls of many take a starlit staircase from the trenches into heaven.
One shell-shocked soldier longs for home,
yet all he sees are skulls wearing lemon-squeezers.
His mind is troubled and his matted hair is white as the snow
that blanketed the dead in their eternal slumber.
A row boat answers his call to a farflung birthplace.
He wakes in his bed crying out for his friends but hears no reply.
They are lost in a hallucination of terrors from a distant land.

Here in New Zealand and in Australia each ANZAC Day we remember those troops of both countries who landed on the shores of Gallipoli. But Gallipoli was only part of this war. There were other fronts: Palestine, France, Belgium, and Holland, where troops from all around the world were fighting for peace in the battles of Tannenberg, Marne, Ypres, The Somme, Passchendaele, Verdun, and many others.

In 2015, a dedication of a memorial to the 148 Victoria Cross winners from Australia and New Zealand in that war and since included these words:

In early times (as now) the warriors trained for war.
And in such times of strife, midst cannon fire and bloody gore,
one in the trench looked up (half fed, half dead) and thanked God.
There are things worth fighting for:
for freedom, health, and life,
for mateship and a loving wife.
We may not share this soldier's fate,
but we come upon this date
to remember with pride
and give thanks for peace as our call.

On this day we have paid tribute to the many heroes of conflicts world-wide that

the service personnel of our country have taken part in. Whether it was for conflict, peace duties or emergency operations, they have represented us with great honour and distinction. They will be remembered as heroes.

*When you go home tell them of us and say:
for your tomorrow we gave our today.*



NOTES FROM KNOX COUNCIL

The Mission discernment process involving both council and congregation has resulted in a decision that Peace will be a central focus at Knox for the next five years. Matthew is drafting a formal Mission Plan, and discussion early next year will settle on specific projects and time schedules.

A number of special services have taken place over the last few months - Spring service, blessing of the animals, celebration of Sue Spigel's gift of her quilted triptych. All have been well attended and appreciated. In September we held another afternoon communion service especially for folk who find it difficult to attend the weekly services and it is intended to hold 3 or 4 of these special services again next year as they are greatly appreciated and enjoyed. On 28 October Council members held an informal coffee and dessert evening to welcome new people at Knox.

Council has engaged Aurecon to produce revised plans and costings for strengthening the Knox Centre building, which is required by the PCANZ.

The revised report from Aurecon engineers has actually upgraded the earthquake rating of much of the building to 100%, but the weak area above one end of the hall is still rated below 33% New Building Standard, so strengthening must be done. As soon as we have received a rough estimate of costs the congregation will be asked to approve the concept plan, after which we will apply to Presbytery for approval and then to the Church Property Trustees, who are the legal owners of all church buildings.

Council is pleased with the interest shown by visitors in the TV screen in the old foyer area. Matthew renews the repeating programme each week, with information on services and events, plus some stimulating clips relating to current issues. Also in the foyer for about 6 weeks we have hosted a display of information about conscientious objectors from Canterbury in World War 1 and Margaret Lovell-Smith spoke on this topic at a very interesting Knox Cafe evening.

The Property committee drew attention to the fact that our wonderful cleaner, Leanne, has worked faithfully and efficiently at Knox for ten years now. Few people ever see her, as she arrives very early in the morning, but we all see the high standard of care she maintains. Council has made a small gift to Leanne to show our appreciation of her service to us.

A former elder at Knox, Ted Pryor, died recently after years of poor health. Several Knox members attended Ted's funeral and condolences were sent to Marilyn and the family.

We also acknowledge with sadness the recent death of Liz McEwan who served as an elder at Knox for 24 years and was our treasurer for 14 years.

As we go to press we note the death of Bill Kennedy, another Knox elder of long standing.

Letters of thanks have been received by the council from Marilyn Pryor and Don McEwan, thanking Knox for letters of condolence sent to their families on the deaths of Ted Pryor and Liz McEwan .

On a happier note we sent congratulations to Kathleen Plowman who reached 100 years of age in November.

In brief....

PILLARS families were delighted with the goods Knox members gathered for them.

Jennifer McKinnon has been reappointed Presbytery Elder for 2019

and will attend the next Presbytery meeting in Greymouth, in February.

The Quantity Surveyor is working on a revised plan to strengthen the Knox Centre, with the revised cost structure out early next year.

The annual Ecumenical Advent Carol service is being hosted by “All Souls”, the newly rebuilt Anglican church in Merivale.

In December Knox will have a letterbox drop about our Christmas services.

NOTES FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, PCANZ

The biennial General Assembly of the PCANZ was held in Christchurch at the beginning of October. Here are some of the decisions made.

Moderators

The Moderator of the General Assembly for 2018-2020 was installed. He is Rev Fakaofu Kaio of Auckland. The Moderator-Designate is Rev Hamish Galloway of Christchurch. He will be Moderator from 2020-2022.

Pacific Islands Synod

The Pacific Islands Synod will change its name to Pacific Presbytery.

Social Voice Task Group

All presbyteries are encouraged to identify and support opportunities to network with other groups on social issues. The Moderator has been asked to form close working relationships with other organisations with a voice on social issues, with the possibility of joint or complementary statements on issues of the day.

Code of Ethics

A workgroup will be established to look at ways for church ministers, employees and volunteers to have regular engagement with the church's Code of Ethics through things like discussion, training, education, orientation and induction processes, website profile, contracts and supervision.

Care for Creation

Our role as stewards of God's creation was acknowledged and a list of achievable and measurable actions will be sent to all church councils, schools and social service agencies connected to the PCANZ. Progress on

implementation of the actions should be included in annual reports and in parish reviews.

Euthanasia

General Assembly declared it does not support provision for euthanasia and assisted suicide as proposed in the End of Life Choice Bill. It urged Parliament to respect the dignity and value of all human lives, to stringently protect society's most vulnerable, and not to pass the End of Life Choice Bill. It also called for a significant increase in spending for palliative, hospice, mental health, disability and elderly services.

The Doctrine Core Group's report on euthanasia is referred to councils and congregations for study and General Assembly urges presbyteries and church councils to renew ministry to the aged and vulnerable and to consider ways to financially support palliative, hospice, mental health, disability and elderly care.

Korean Peninsula

General Assembly expressed its support for all steps made around the world towards peace on the Korean Peninsula, especially those steps made by North and South Korea. A prayer for peace will be formulated and distributed to all congregations.

Te Reo

A Te Reo Commissioner will be appointed to promote and extend use of Te Reo Maori within the church, especially by facilitating the provision of liturgical material.

Diversity in Leadership

Assembly declined to uphold a proposal which asked for the book "Changing our Minds" by Prof David Gushee to be made available to all parishes to encourage discussion between congregations with differing opinions on diversity in church leadership.

Westminster Confession

Assembly approved that several statements in the Westminster Confession of Faith be seen in their historical context, not in the light of today's better respect and stronger relationships between PCANZ and the Catholic Church.

For more details on these and other decisions and for images from Assembly go to www.presbyterian.org.nz