

KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

KNOX LIFE

March 2019



A path from the Peace Bell. Botanic Gardens.

Knox Church Complex

28 Bealey Avenue, Christchurch 8013

ph. (03) 379 2456, fax (03) 379 2466, office@knoxchurch.co.nz

Office hours: Mon-Fri 9.00 am-12 noon

Minister: Rev. Dr. Matthew Jack

(03) 357 0111, minister@knoxchurch.co.nz

Pastoral Assistant: Jan Harland, 027 356 0215

Knox Council Clerk: Janet Wilson, (03) 338 7203

Church Office Administrator: Jane Ellis, (03) 379 2456

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

On Facebook search: Knox Church Christchurch

A note about the publication of this Knox Life issue.

The material for this edition of Knox Life was gathered before 15 March, the day of the terrorist attacks on two mosques in Christchurch.

Knox grieves what has happened in our city, and has responded in many ways. On the day after the shootings, we opened the church for those who sought a place of gathering and peace. People came. Matthew was a signatory to a letter sent from the Inner-City Ministers' Association to the Muslim community of Christchurch. Our service on 17 March was given over completely to reflecting on the massacre, and praying for those most directly affected. During that service members of the congregation wrote messages of support which have been sent to the Al Noor Mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre. Our Parish Council Clerk sent a message of support to Maysoon Samara, who had visited Knox for a Knox Café during which she spoke about "being Muslim in Christchurch". Matthew will offer a prayer at the multi-faith event at the Peace Bell in the Botanic Garden on 24 March.

We deplore the violence perpetrated, and commit ourselves to be a people of peace.

The order of service and sermon for the 17th, the Inner-City ministers' letter, along with the letters sent to the two mosques, are available on our website.

Arohanui,

Matthew.

Community questions and Christian contribution

I watched the television news tonight. I heard various contrary claims being made about three issues.

ISSUE ONE



Mark Taylor went from Aotearoa New Zealand to Indonesia, and from there to Syria, to join ISIS. Arriving in Syria he made some kind of proclamation by burning his passport. He made and circulated a video inciting New Zealanders to stab or shoot police officers and soldiers on ANZAC Day. When taken into Syrian custody and asked by a journalist about his regrets, he said he regretted never having been financially able to buy a female slave.

His relatives say:

- ◆ he has diminished cognitive capacities and is just confused
- ◆ he is of no great danger

The prime minister says:

- ◆ given that he has no dual citizenship, the Geneva convention requires us to consider him our responsibility
- ◆ advice was given clearly that no diplomatic connections existed in Syria, so no NZ national going there ought to expect repatriation
- ◆ no Kiwi life ought to be risked in any effort to rescue him from Syria

A speaker for the opposition says:

- ◆ “We don’t want him back”.

We have a parable about a prodigal son.

What are we to do?

ISSUE TWO



Notice has been given that secondary school students plan to absent themselves from their classes on 15 March in order to protest against political inertia in the face of climate change. Some politicians say that participation in democracy, and airing environmental concern, is something that ought to be encouraged. Other politicians have said “their little protest is not going to help the world one little bit”, “I think this begins to look a bit like a prank if it’s happening within school hours”, “attending school is compulsory in this country”. I wonder to which constituency these politicians are appealing.

When asked how he feels about having “truancy” entered on his school record, Tony Huang, of Onslow College in Wellington, says “it’s not ideal, but I also don’t want to have to deal with the overwhelming repercussions of climate change”.

Joshua said to Israel “choose this day whom you will serve”. Jesus said “you cannot serve two masters”.

Do we record Tony as a truant?

What are we to do?

ISSUE THREE



In an “Act of God” in January, great quantities of soil and rock fell down onto a Cape Kidnappers beach walk. Two tourists were injured seriously. Hastings District Council, fearful of opening the beach again, thus making themselves vulnerable to legal action should anyone else be injured, have closed the beach walk. A local tourism operator, whose business depends on the walk being open so he can access a popular gannet colony, argues that his business is about to collapse. Speaking of his financial situation, Colin says “it’s pretty tough”.

We have a parable about a Samaritan taking care of an injured neighbour. In this case, is the neighbour the injured tourist, or the injured business operator?

What are we to do?

-ooOoo-

I sometimes yearn for simplicity. I sometimes wish that consensus was easy to find. The reality is that we have a shared responsibility for human affairs and public space. The responsible life will always call us into debate, courage of speech, acceptance of when we lose. It’s always going to be a contest of ideas - seeking hearts and minds.

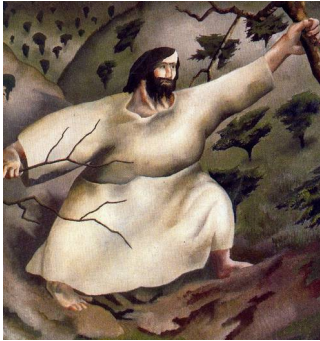
For the church I pray principled, humble, respectful but convicted participation in the matters of our day. May the wisdom and way of Jesus be found. I wonder what Knox might contribute.

Arohanui, Matthew.

Lent 2019: “Wilderness Stories”

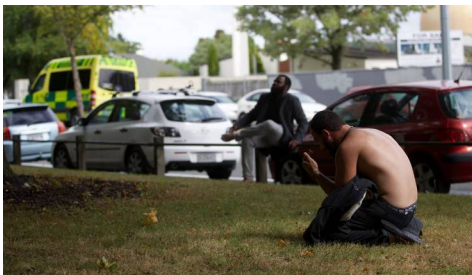
Within the great narrative arc of the Bible, it’s interesting to see how many new beginnings or significant faith moments are set in the context of wilderness. A number of these wilderness moments appear in the Bible lessons for this Lent so we’re calling Lent 2019 “Wilderness Stories”.

All services are at 10:00am, with the exception of Tenebrae, which is at 7:30pm.



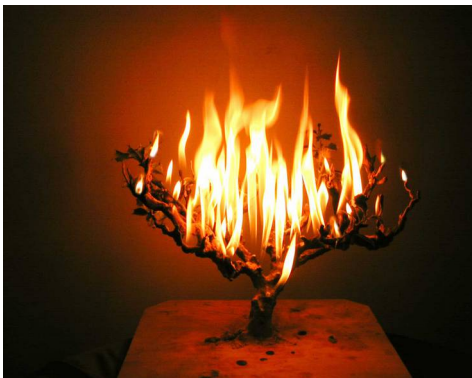
Sunday 10 March - Lent 1

Jesus, being tested in the wilderness, finds clarity and strength by drawing on his understanding of how God feeds and cares for the people.



Sunday 17 March

We broke from our Lenten schedule to reflect on the Christchurch mosque shootings of 15 March.



Sunday 24 March - Lent 3

In his “nowhere place”, Moses sees a burning bush and is called into what will become a life-long (but life-giving) struggle with people and the mysterious, insistent “I am”.



Sunday 31 March - Lent 4

On the verge of entering their own place, the people of Israel say goodbye to manna - the fading food by which God has fed them over the wilderness years. As wilderness provision passes away, there is a new light on the horizon.



Sunday 7 April - Lent 5

Prior to his re-entering the wilderness we hoped he might have been spared, Jesus gathers in a friendly place to rest.

Arguments from the spirit of wilderness intrude.



Sunday 14 April - Palm Sunday

At a combined service with Durham Street Methodist Church, we follow Jesus as his triumphal entry into Jerusalem triggers his costly Passion.



Thursday 18 April - Tenebrae

“Shelter”. On the night on which he is betrayed, the Lord of the Wilderness assures his “close ones” of shelter in a love that will never die. We break bread together, then gradually darken the church as the Shadow Passages are read.



Friday 19 April - Good Friday

“Death in the Wilderness” - a solemn service in which we revisit some of our Lenten wilderness reflections, and mourn a death in the ultimate wilderness of betrayal and misunderstanding.



Sunday 21 April - Easter Day

“A Flood of Life” - the darkness is flooded with light; the tomb is flooded with life; the wilderness bursts into colour, wonder and worship. We break bread with the risen Christ.

COMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

Sunday 14 April - Palm Sunday service
Thursday 18 April - Tenebrae service (7.30pm)
Friday 19 April - Good Friday service
Sunday 21 April - Easter Breakfast at Knox, Easter Day service
Sunday 23 June - Presbyterian Support opening of new building
Sunday 30 June - Knox Re-birthday Appeal service

Lenten Spiritual Growth Programme

Sunday 10 March 5-7pm
Sunday 17 March 7-9pm
Sunday 24 March 5-7pm
Sunday 31 March 5-7pm

Morning tea in the church on second and fourth Sundays most months.

Knox Cafe

Sunday 5 May 7-9pm - talk on North Korea

Sunday lunches at Oderings Cafe Stourbridge St off Barrington Street

Sunday 17 March noon.
Sunday 19 May noon

Faith, Film and Fiction - Book and Film Group

Sunday 17 March 5pm - Film
Sunday 31 March 11.15am - book
Sunday 14 April 4pm - Film
Sunday 28 April 11.15am - book
Sunday 12 May 4pm - Film
Sunday 26 May 11.15am - book
Sunday 16 June 4pm - Film
Sunday 30 June 11.15am - book

FAITH, FILM AND FICTION:

Knox Book and Film Group

This group was started by Len Pierce at the end of 2015 with the plan to present and share one book and one film each month. It has developed into a steady group of 'regulars'. On the last Sunday of each month, one person presents a book they have found interesting, and usually on the middle Sunday of the following month we watch a film which is related in some way to the theme of the book. The book group meets in the committee room after church, and the film is screened in the lounge at 4pm in the winter and 5pm during daylight saving.

We have covered a very wide range of books, films and themes over the last three years: slavery and racism, World Wars 1 and 2, Luther and the Reformation, Sri Lanka and Ramayana, cartoon analysis, New Zealand short stories, literature and history, and many other topics. In our discussions, we try to include a spiritual aspect associated with our faith.

This year Durham Street members have asked to join our film screenings, as their film group is in recess. They are most welcome.

The upcoming book and film are mentioned in the Order of Service. If you would like a list of the dates, and to be included in the email group, please contact Bronwyn Wiltshire at bronwynwiltshire@gmail.com.

Bronwyn Wiltshire

Knox Singers

The Knox Singers have flourished since we performed at the official reopening and dedication of the restored Knox Church in February 2015. That same year we presented our debut public concert featuring Schubert's *Mass in G*. We also continue to present an ever-widening range of choral music at Sunday services.

Since the hugely successful concert of 2015, the Knox Singers have gone on to present three concerts each year, recently including a number of concerts at venues outside Christchurch. We have visited Knox Church, Cheviot, where we performed Vivaldi's *Gloria* with a chamber orchestra, and St Bartholomew's Anglican Church in Kaiapoi.

Even though we are a non-auditioned choir, our Musical Director, Daniel Cooper, continues to throw challenges at us. In 2018 we presented the New Zealand premiere of the *Salve Regina* by renowned Estonian composer, Arvo Pärt, and in 2019 our concert repertoire will include ground-breaking

performances and New Zealand premieres of music by revolutionary 20th century American composer, John Cage.

The first of these concerts is on 30th June at 7:30pm in the church. This programme comprises the heavenly *Miserere Mei Deus* by Gregorio Allegri and a collection of vocal works by John Cage. Although these two composers lived 300 years apart, their music is remarkably connected - harmonically, texturally, and philosophically. We also plan to take this programme to Cheviot.

On 23rd & 24th November the Knox Singers are presenting the *Messiah* in a style that is authentic to the Baroque spirit and Handel's own productions of this work. We will be accompanied by an orchestra of professionals and talented students. We have applied for funding assistance from Creative Communities, and we would also appreciate any suggestions for other ways to cover the expenses.

This production will undoubtedly excite the musical world of Christchurch, leaving concert goers exclaiming, "Oh! So that is how the *Messiah* is meant to sound."

Please note the dates in your diaries, and for further updates, visit the Knox Singers Facebook page.

Bronwyn Wiltshire

Knox Sunday Lunch

Last year's Sunday lunches were well attended and much appreciated by all participants, so it has been decided to continue with this social event.

The venue of choice is currently the Secret Garden Café at Oderings nurseries in Barrington.

The venue is nice and spacious, in garden surroundings and it is possible to have a conversation and actually hear what is being said by the person sitting beside you, or, with some effort, even the person who is sitting across the table from you!

There usually is a good variety of cabinet food, sweet as well as savoury, also some gluten-free items are on offer. A menu is available for those who may prefer a full meal.

Just for a change, we are looking for an alternative venue, but it is proving a bit of a challenge to find a similar, conversation-friendly one. Your suggestions are welcome, bearing in mind that the venue would need to be

able to accommodate about 20 people for a Sunday lunch.

Attending this event is a great opportunity to learn a bit more about our friends/family at Knox, so do consider coming along some time.

Janneke Nuysink

Book Review

Recently I re-read a book which I had borrowed from a university acquaintance and read some years ago. It is about self-affirmation and it has lots of good examples in it. The book is *Talking to Yourself*, by Pamela E. Butler. My copy is the revised edition published by Harper Collins Publishers, New York. 1991.

This paperback edition has short chapters and is very readable. The author has attracted many comments by other prominent people. For example – “*Talking to Yourself* shows you how to become aware of your on-going inner dialogue – the conversations that we all have with ourselves that can make our lives constricted and painful, or expansive and joyous. This is a no-nonsense book with a wealth of important, practical applications.” *Martin L Rossman MD*

“*Talking to Yourself* is a clearly written, popular version of a theoretical approach that explains the effects of ‘voices’ that hurt people and seriously limit their lives.” *Robert W Firestone Ph.D*

Or again “Dr Butler’s book is a major contribution to the field of being human.” *Ruth McClendon*

Or again “Butler’s methods for transforming inner voices from negative to positive are simple, elegant and profoundly effective. If you are ready to exchange your relentless internal critic for a patient, encouraging guide, then read this book” *Kay Leigh Hagan*

We all should ignore and reverse the negative and seek out the joyous, free and lovely in life. Life is too short to miss out on months or years of self reproach and missing out on the good days of our lives. Life has so much to offer us. It is never too late to make a start. We have so much to be thankful for.

Chris F Seaton

Greetings from Stephen Best

I have been a member of the congregation at Knox Church since mid 2017, a newer member. 2017 was a big year of change for me with retiring after nursing for 42 years. That was my profession after quite a few previous jobs, including working in my father's business on and off from my early teenage years. I also downsized from my beautiful rebuilt family home to a small unit opposite QEII park.

I was originally from Australia, arriving in New Zealand in 1973 and living in Wellington, Queenstown and Gisborne, and finally Christchurch from 1979. I also changed churches in 2017. I had become disillusioned with my previous church and had lost interest there. I felt a definite leading to Knox Church, and when I started here Knox was so right for me. I felt comfortable and at home in the friendly atmosphere.

I like and enjoy many aspects of Knox Church and appreciate the inclusive and caring acceptance in the church, the structures of the services and the teaching and sharing and living out our Christian faith together. Rev Matthew is such a precious asset. With his friendly cheerful personality and his topical very engaging sermons he challenges and gives us food for thought. His knowledge and sharing of theology is impressive.

Our multi-skilled musical director, organist Daniel, is another incredible asset - just a very pleasant inspiring young man to have around. The choir are such a talented group and a joy to listen to. Knox Church seems to run like clockwork thanks to the very committed and efficient team who organize behind the scenes. Those who compile the volunteer rosters must have a very challenging job at times, but there seem to be many volunteers available to help out. There are many talented folk in the congregation including retired ministers available if needed.

There are also a number of different interest groups one can belong to. The Newcomers Supper certainly touched and inspired me.

I am impressed with the different themes introduced at the church such as the environment and climate change and generosity to those less fortunate, and the latest theme of peace encouraged by Matthew.

I appreciate that church members are genuine and down to earth natural people.

That's all from me – thanks to you all.

Arohanui

Stephen

BUS STOP THEOLOGY

[Part 1]

There is a bus stop across the road. “So what” you might say, “There are hundreds of bus stops in Christchurch.” But, for us it is rather special. No longer driving a car it is, apart from a taxi, or the car of friends or family, our point of departure and arrival as we go shopping, visiting or whatever. So it is more than a place where you catch the bus or disembark coming home. A bus stop is a place where you ask yourself [or others] a variety of questions such as; “Will the bus get here before the rain begins? Will the seat I prefer be already taken? How much longer can I travel on the bus and walk the distances required when I get to my destination?” These are quite serious questions which occur at a bus stop. They go beyond everyday questions such as “what shall I wear today or ; what is for dinner tonight?”

The questions fall into the category which philosophers call existential. This comes from the post-war period when this thinking was in vogue. With the decline of traditional cultural values people were asking serious questions of themselves such as: “What about my future? Who am I? Can I continue to live in the manner of the present?” Not quite bus stop questions but similar, in the sense that they give rise to a concern for human well-being.

The playwright, Samuel Beckett, wrote a post-war play entitled “Waiting for Godot” in which he asked the sort of questions which could take place at a bus stop.. In the play two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon have received news that good things are coming their way in the person of “Godot.” [Godot being a kind of Father Christmas bringing goodies to the needy.] The two tramps are full of expectation and talk excitedly of Godot’s arrival. But Godot never comes, and the play concludes leaving the tramps hanging in the air.

Bus stop theology is more hopeful - Thank goodness. The bus does come and that for which we wait may be relied on. A fact which gives us hope and confidence in other respects.

Waiting for the bus one day I could not help overhearing a conversation between two elderly women. A asked B, “How is your old moggy. She did not look too bright last time I called?” “Bad news” replied B, “She had to be put down the other day – cancer of the stomach.” [A] “Sorry to hear that.” [B] “They are going to put me down if I don’t get to my doctor!” [A] “You’ll be alright. Just do what the doctor tells you. Look! The bus is coming, cheer up.”

Our waiting is not without hope. A small encouragement and some fuel for

our expectations. Better than the void.

Godot may not come in the shape of our longings, but still there is hope, there is a future which negates all feelings of despair. The bus stop is a symbol of hope – hope realised.

“This shall be a sign for you.” [Luke 2:12]

Kim Bathgate

CHURCH COUNCIL NOTES

Planning and cost estimates have been completed for the proposed strengthening of the Knox Centre building. Council decided at its February meeting to approach the congregation for approval to undertake this project and a congregational meeting will be held on Sunday 24 March to discuss and decide on this matter. Incidentally, in the course of the engineering and architectural investigations a drone was flown over the roof of the Knox Centre. The property committee was able to look at the images and check on the state of the gutters, which are mostly clear of debris fortunately.

Heritage NZ has given public notification of its intention to designate the new Knox Church a Category Two Heritage Building. Our pre-earthquake church was Category Two. The Church Property Trustees put in a submission to Heritage NZ objecting to the designation and citing the new modern exterior. The CPT's objections relate to their concerns that Heritage Listings may limit the Church's ability to decide on any future changes to buildings, although Category Two does not have actual legal implications for any future changes.

John Brouwer has requested that care be taken with internal self-closing doors. All doors which are allowed to be held open are fitted with devices to hold them open. Please open the door fully, then let it come back slowly until it holds open by itself.

Last year we instituted an annual Re-birthday Appeal and donations totalling \$5150.40 were received. Council has decided that those gifts should be set aside in an Organ Fund to help towards replacing the 100 year old blower when it breaks down entirely and can no longer be repaired. Timing of the Re-birthday Appeal has been changed from February to June, marking the completion of the stained glass window as the finishing touch to our rebuilt church. This year's gifts will be directed towards the urgent and expensive strengthening of the Knox Centre.

The Financial Report for the six months ending 31 December show an operating deficit of \$18,811 compared to a budgeted deficit of \$35,653. Two car

parks are vacant at present and PSUSI is still paying for the car parks which cannot be used during their rebuilding work.

The Alpine Presbytery met in Greymouth over the weekend of 15-17 February. Jennifer McKinnon, Knox's Presbytery Elder, attended the gathering. Featured speakers were Jordan Redding and Ray Coster. The Moderator of the General Assembly, Rt Rev Fakaofu Kaio also spoke and recommended that we remember two guiding words - "relevance" and "intentional".

Matthew will take a winter break from 10 - 17 July, with the July church council meeting being held a week later than usual as a consequence.

Christian World Service sent thanks for the \$507 given to the Christmas Appeal at our Christmas Day service.

Janet Wilson. Council clerk



Mosaic of some of the pavers surrounding Peace Bell, Botanic Gardens.