

KNOX LIFE

November 2019



Strolling off to church on a Spring Sunday morning.

Knox Church Complex

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

On Facebook search: Knox Church Christchurch.



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Getting ready for a responsible response

I heard on the news recently that Rose Renton, dubbed the nation's "Green fairy", has decided no longer to advocate publicly for the legalising of medicinal cannabis. Rose came to public attention in 2015 when the then Associate Minister of Health, Peter Dunne, granted her nineteen-year-old son, Alex, the special right to receive cannabinoid oil as part of his treatment for "status epilepticus", a kind of prolonged epileptic seizure.

Although the oil seemed to relieve some of Alex's symptoms, thus motivating his mother to supply the illegal product to others dealing with pain, sadly he died of the condition. Because she had been open about supplying an illegal substance, Rose was taken to court for prosecution. The court found that she **had** been supplying drugs, but discharged her without conviction. Announcing her retirement from lobbying, she said she could no longer "carry the burden of those who are suffering".

Also related to the issue of suffering is the "End of Life" bill, being processed by parliament at the moment. With David Seymour at the far end of supporting the bill, and Maggie Barry at the far end of resisting it, debate has been intense. It seems likely that the decision will be directed, via a

referendum, for the public to decide.

So, next year we will be called to make decisions about two pieces of legislation (cannabis and euthanasia), each piece a response to human suffering (although the cannabis question extends beyond medicinal use to recreational use as well). I'm inclined to agree with political commentators who say that a simple "yes / no" referendum doesn't necessarily provide the right mechanism for a nuanced way forward to be found. Nevertheless, it seems that this will be how we deal with the issue. Given this, it may be important for us to reflect on these matters.

I wonder what you, currently, are thinking, and what your neighbours are thinking. Have you had conversations with them about this? What kind of referendum questions would move to you to vote "yes" or "no"? What are the major principles by which you might make a decision?

If you think that we should have Knox community discussions about these things next year (after Easter), do let me know. We'll all be given a vote, and need to enter the process responsibly.

Arohanui,

Matthew.

A Documentary

In late September, I received an email from Harry Poland, a journalism student at Christchurch's NZ School of Broadcasting. As an assignment, he'd been given the task of making a documentary video (or series of videos) on a social issues theme of his own choice. Working with fellow student, Elizabeth Thomson, he came upon the idea of exploring why the number of young people participating regularly in the institutional church was falling.

The first theory the students wanted to explore was that young people are turned off by misogyny. The second theory, and the one they wanted to discuss with me, was that young people reject homophobia - homophobia often being manifest in church communities. Harry and Elizabeth wanted to talk to me, because they had heard that Knox was "rainbow friendly".

I was pleased that our friendliness was perceived in the wider community, and I agreed to the interview. It was a long interview, and I was pleased with how it went. I was, of course, a little nervous about how the material might be edited, and how we would end up being presented. I don't think, now that I've seen the finished product (a short 14 minute work), that I should have been

concerned. The result is genuine, respectful and helpful, I think.

If you are interested in seeing all four episodes, you can find them at:

https://metronews.co.nz/home/CustomSearchForm?Search=my+god&action_doCustomSearch=search

If you simply want to watch the episode featuring Knox, the Rainbow Promise, a more direct link is through Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iayBSKoUeBs&feature=emb_logo

Matthew Jack

Dame Phyllis Guthardt

We note with pleasure that Dame Phyllis has celebrated the 60th anniversary of her ordination as a Presbyterian in the Methodist Church of NZ. There is a fine article on her in the latest *Touchstone*, November 2019, p. 4.

We send our warmest congratulations and best wishes to her and remember with gratitude her time as Minister of Knox from 1976 - 1984.



Services and Events

Sun 15 Dec 10am. Combined service with Durham Street congregation
Sun 22 Dec 10am. Nine Lessons and Carols with St Marks
Tues 24 Dec 11.15pm Christmas Eve service
Wed 25 Dec 10am. Christmas Day service
Sun 29 Dec 10am. Matthew leading worship
Sun 5 Jan 10am. Glenn Livingstone
Sun 12 Jan 10am. Glenn Livingstone

Sun 8 Dec 8 - 5pm Ecumenical carol service at Christchurch North
Methodist Church

Sat 30 Nov 2pm Seniors' Christmas party

Mon 2 Dec 7.30pm Fireside Group final meeting for the year .

Advance notice

Saturday 29 February 2020, in the afternoon, we are planning for Knox to visit Brian and Helen Coker's garden at West Melton. We last visited this garden when it was very new and Helen had just been awarded "Gardener of the Year". It is now more mature and a pleasure to visit . So keep this date free – more information in the new year .

Sunday Lunches

Going out to a café once a month, enjoying Sunday lunch (or just a coffee or tea) and having a relaxed chat with our Knox friends, is by now a well-established event. It is good to get to know each other a bit better!

It is pleasing to say that numbers have been increasing, which made the Opawa Café (the chosen option after the Oderings Secret Garden Café closed its doors), seem a little bit cramped. Due to the limited space, there was little opportunity to mix and mingle.

For that reason, we searched for somewhere reasonably spacious and preferably a bit closer to Knox. The Ris'tretto Café, in Barbadoes St was nice and close and offers some mouth-watering dishes. However, whether there was enough space for 24 people was debatable. Not everybody was convinced, and so, when the Oderings café reopened its doors (under new management), it was decided to give the new caterers a chance.

Our first visit to the Oderings Kowhai Café, on the 20th of October, was a moderately positive experience: plenty of space, good acoustics and the unique garden surroundings are hard to beat! The cabinet food on offer seemed a bit sparse but, as far as we can tell, no one went home hungry. There were, however, some comments about the slow service and the food

being cold and/or dry and flavourless...hopefully our feedback was received in the spirit it was given and Knox's November visit will prove to be a more positive one for everyone.

Janneke Nuysink

Bus trips

After enjoying a bus trip together (by public transport, free for those of us lucky enough to be in possession of a gold card) to Rangiora in March, another one was planned for November 2nd. This time, the plan was to visit Pegasus Town and have a coffee or lunch at the café and, if the weather was nice, to go for a walk around the lake.

A group of eight people showed up on the day and we had a relaxing, pleasant ride taking us through Christchurch, Kaiapoi and Woodend, arriving in Pegasus Town at about 10:45. A short walk took us to the Flat White Café where we enjoyed our cuppa and cake or a yummy sandwich. Four members of the group did not want to go for an extensive walk but were keen to view the (manmade) lake. After admiring the lake and its surroundings, they found their way back to the bus stop, to wait for the bus that would take them back home. The remaining four of us strolled along the path around the lake, marvelling at the mansions that are built on its shores. Back at the start of our walk, we found a nice picnic table by the playground where we had a rest and enjoyed a bit of bird and people watching. Then it was time to catch the bus that conveniently dropped us back at Knox by 2pm. A lovely trip!

Janneke Nuysink

City Mission Cooking team

For three years now Knox has provided a team of people to cook dinner at the Men's Night shelter of the Christchurch City Mission. This is in the new City Mission building in Hereford Street.

Currently our commitment is just once a month on the third Monday of each month. We usually have 3 or 4 people working from 2.30 – 5.00pm to cook a hearty nutritious meal for 25 – 30 people. The food is provided by the City Mission – much of it has been donated.

Would you like to join the cooking team? Once we know who is willing to help a roster will be drawn up. This year most people have been rostered on 3 or 4 times in the year.

If you would like more information, please contact Douglas Shaw (phone 9429380) or Jean Brouwer (phone 3556534)

BUS STOP THEOLOGY - Part 2

SEEN AND HEARD AS I WAIT

If, in the words of a philosopher, “God is the one whose periphery is everywhere and whose centre is nowhere,” then there are no limits to theological perceptions and discussions [theology – the wisdom or the knowledge of God].

Within this broad perspective, therefore, we apprehend God and the presence of God. And so, within this spectrum we have bus stops – not just places where we jump on and off a bus, but a place where people chat, or where they reflect on what has been, or on what may lie ahead. ‘Waiting’, as we saw earlier takes up a large part of bus stop time (especially if the bus is late).

Two large themes within bus stop theology are ‘Sight and Sound’. Whether placed within the city or on its outskirts, the bus stop is awash with sights on which to focus the eye. The endless procession of humanity passing by – pedestrians, or on cycles, scooters, motorbikes, in cars, taxis, trucks. And yes, of course, the bus. If we are waiting within the CBD, we have some of the fine, new buildings to look at, or old ones – many adorned with colourful street art. Or we people watch, checking out clothing, footwear, or are startled by the variety of tattoos, covering, it seems, every bit of the wearer’s skin.

On the other hand, if we are waiting in suburbia we may have a glimpse over a neighbour’s fence at a garden, or a view of the Port Hills, or study the tree shading the bus stop – reminders of the beauty of God’s world.

Accompanying the many sights from the bus stop is usually a cacophony of sound. Occasionally there may be silence at a bus stop, but virtually every minute it is enveloped in sound. Firstly, the constant sounds of the city and suburbia, a ceaseless roar of motors, road works, people laughing, talking, sometimes children crying, the sounds of construction, and yes, the bus, when that behemoth pulls up at our stop. There is no silent approach, it announces its arrival with a roar of its big diesel motor and it takes off in similar fashion. You just cannot catnap at the bus stop if the bus is due. Behind and beyond the guttural roar of the big red there are many other sounds. Beyond the CBD is the sound of industry, and within the city itself the noises of construction, hammering, power tools, an occasional siren, the soft call of pigeons from the roof tops. Above the human voice and the noise of traffic and industry there is a jet coming in to land – a constant hum of sound enclosing the bus stop. People! Leaving, arriving, waiting for their bus. Once on the bus itself, conversations, quips from the driver, repartee from the

passengers. Behind me the topics are diverse – the weather, the garden, the game, little Mary's health.

Above all it is the sound of the human voice which gives most meaning to the One to whom we should listen. For if God speaks through the human voice, God spoke through Jesus and we may hear God's voice, even at a bus stop, or in a bus.

In his book, *I and Thou*, philosopher Martin Buber writes that in our conversations we should listen to people not as objects but as fellow humans with something to say. Human words from human voices convey what may sound mere trivial thoughts and concerns, but behind the spoken word may well reside feelings which arise from deep human need. A word, a gesture is often more help than some visible, audible message. Every voice is more than just a sound. It could be a cry from the heart.

Listen, then, to voices from the bus stop. They may not belong to us, but the fact that they arise from a human gathering means that they, too, belong to a human community of which we are part and cannot neglect or ignore. Bus stop theology embraces both sight and sound. To see the sights and to hear the sounds reminds us of all the places where people gather and where the human condition is apparent; and where God's presence is manifested in a number of ways.

Kim Bathgate

Embrace, Not Exclusion



Someone hung a banner on a building just down Victoria Street from Knox a few days after the tragic killing of 51 people in two local mosques. The banner

said it all: “This is your home and you should have been safe here”. It was a sentiment echoed around the city and up and down the country. It was never more elegantly expressed than by two gestures of our Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in hugging a grieving Muslim woman and wearing a headscarf. The sense of a profound betrayal of our values was deeply felt.

This was reflected in a display at the Christchurch Art Gallery in September. Many of the art works developed themes of unity and the many-stranded nature of our society and the enrichment our diversity brings. The Christian call to break down the walls that divide us – to build bridges not walls – taps into a rich vein of sympathy and compassion for people in their suffering.



Exploring those images at the Art Gallery offered a poignant reminder of our nation's grief at what happened in our own backyard in March. It also reinforced a sense that there are other challenges ahead that will demand all our resources and willingness to work together

But nothing in that can be taken for granted. There are other currents swirling around, and some dark voices that remind us that embrace of the other and building bridges got Jesus crucified. The pull of tribal defensiveness remains and can easily be invoked with invitations to those who don't like our rules to take a plane home. Our life and the life of our community and our planet depends on embrace not exclusion.



Ken Booth

Donald Borrie Memorial Scholarship Fund

Over a period of more than forty years, until his death in 2016, Rev Don Borrie, a well-known Presbyterian minister, was responsible for much of the people-to-people contact that has taken place between citizens of NZ and citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). Don Borrie's reputation as a tireless worker for peace and justice lives on amongst his friends, both here and in the DPRK, and in March 2019, at St Andrews-on-the-Terrace Presbyterian Church in Wellington, a Memorial Fund in his honour was launched.

The Donald Borrie Memorial Fund has been set up by the NZ-DPRK Society which Don founded, back in 1972, along with Wolfgang Rosenberg. The society aims to increase understanding between the people and governments of NZ and the DPRK, and advocates for a peaceful, non-military solution to the division of the Korean Peninsula. Currently the Chair of the Society is Dr Tim Beal, recently retired from Victoria University, Wellington. The Secretary is Peter Wilson. Rev Stuart Vogel and Rev Richard Lawrence are both on the steering committee of the Memorial Fund.



Funds are raised for specific projects. Since its inception in March the Donald Borrie Memorial Fund has provided a \$1000 water pump for irrigation

on the NZ Friendship Farm in Phyongwon County in North Korea. This has helped to increase production of much needed food crops on the farm.

The Memorial Fund is now working to bring three scholars from Pyongyang to Auckland to do a NZQA approved course in teaching English as a Second Language - a similar venture some years ago proved very helpful in guiding the teaching of English in North Korea. \$25,000 is needed to bring three teachers from Pyongyang to New Zealand for 6 weeks of tuition at the North Shore Language School and more than half of this amount has been secured already.



If anyone is interested in supporting the Donald Borrie Memorial Fund, donations can be made online to: Donald Borrie Memorial Fund, account number 12-3089-0004430-00 or by cheque to P O Box 82008, Highland Park, Auckland 2143. Receipts will be sent, although the Memorial Fund does not qualify for IRD refunds. Donors will be given reports on the projects funded. Email address for further information: borriefund@gmail.com

Janet Wilson

A Wedding Anniversary Surprise

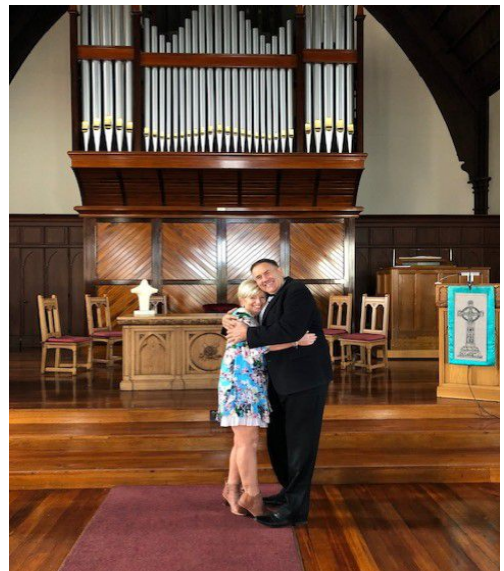
One day in August this year I had a visit to my office from a lovely man wishing to surprise his wife on their 22nd wedding anniversary the following day. They had married at Knox Church in 1997, a second marriage for them both.



I felt quite blessed to be able to assist him in the special day he wanted to create for them both.

They arrived the following morning. His wife unsure of what was happening. Especially as Di and I were in the office grinning from ear to ear, in on the secret!

I led them through to the church, whereupon he walked his wife down the



aisle again. In front of the Sanctuary he asked her if she would remain married to him. Of course she replied “Yes” and thought he’d done very well!!

After this they went to a winery for lunch to further celebrate their special day. They were more than happy to chat with us and share their photos for the Knox Life.

Jane Ellis: Knox Office Administrator

Strengthening Project Update

CCC Building Consent has been granted (at a cost of over \$16,000!) and Presbytery approval has been given for the Knox Centre strengthening project. All documents have been sent to the Church Property Trustees for final approval. Our Aurecon Project Manager has received Expressions of Interest from several suitable firms and has consulted with us on a draft contract. The next step is to ask the interested firms to submit proposals for the project. Of course nothing can be finalised until the CPT gives assent. The contract when eventually awarded must be approved and signed by the CPT.

The construction zone has been closed off and Presbytery is being kept informed of our progress.

Meanwhile the Knox Trust has agreed to supply \$790,000 for the project. Together with the \$250,000 we have agreed to provide from our own funds this covers the estimated cost of \$1,040,000. We hope that construction will begin early in the new year.

Janet Wilson, Knox Council Clerk

CHURCH COUNCIL NOTES

The Knox Church Council has been delighted to welcome four new members - Janneke Nuysink (an elder at Knox years ago before she moved to live in Auckland), Helen Cannan, Naomi Suresh, and Rochelle Howley. We are very grateful for the commitment of these new council members and for their willingness to serve the Knox community.

A former Knox Session Clerk, Jack Donald, had his 100th birthday earlier this year and we sent him a congratulatory note. He was pleased to receive it and replied with his thanks.

Sadly, in recent months we have farewelled two former elders of Knox: Barbara Ansell and Nerolei Chisholm. Barbara in particular was a very long-serving elder and worked constantly to support and assist with many activities at Knox. We are very grateful for the contribution made to the Knox community by both these elders. We will miss them.

Work towards the Knox Centre strengthening project is continuing and the construction zone has now been closed off. As a result the St Luke's Anglican congregation has moved elsewhere and the Durham Street congregation will be meeting in the Knox lounge until they move into their new church at Christmas.

The two upstairs rooms occupied by the Tangata Atumotu Trust, (a Pacifica health and well-being group), have been repainted and a recent Knox working bee has cleaned up the stairs leading to their rooms. TAT personnel will be joining us at our service on Sunday 24 November.

Following our Mission Plan, volunteers have opened the church to the public for a couple of hours every Monday to Thursday. This trial has been evaluated and those volunteers who take part have decided it is worth continuing, with some minor changes. The church was also opened to the public on one Sunday afternoon during the annual Heritage Festival and a number of visitors called in to see it.

Also in our Mission Plan was a visit to the annual interfaith Peace Bell event in the Botanic Gardens. Unfortunately this year it coincided with Heritage open day, but a small group of Knox people did attend the peace gathering, where Matthew was among speakers from a number of faiths who offered prayers for peace.

Our annual Re-birthday Appeal, now being held in mid-winter, raised \$8,250 this year - a welcome contribution towards the cost of the strengthening project. The generosity of donors is greatly appreciated.

Janet Wilson, Knox Council Clerk