

KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

KNOX LIFE

August 2020



Lockdown 5 o'clock rush hour, Papanui Rd

Knox Church Complex

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

On Facebook search: Knox Church Christchurch.

Tree climbing and living things.



Although I grew up in Auckland, and all my Aotearoa family were located in Auckland, I did know that my grandmother (maternal) had been born in Christchurch (1908). There was one wonderful photo in our family album of her, as a girl, sitting in a tree somewhere in Christchurch. When I came to Christchurch, one of the wee items on my list was "try to work out where Mama's tree was, and where the photo was taken". Buoyed on by another tree story (see the Owairoa Primary School newsletter attached later), I decided after a delay of six and a half years, to get on with my Christchurch tree enquiry.

I took the photo, along with the names of my great grandparents, to our wonderful central library, Turanga. The librarian was captivated by the photo, noting that most photos of children from that time (c. 1915) were either studio based, or quite contrived and formal at home. This photo had not only a child in a tree - but a girl! Girls did not climb trees in those days.

The electoral rolls of that time indicated that my great grandparents had a

number of properties during the likely time that the photo was taken. (Apparently, they bought properties, did them up, sold and bought again - until they sold their last Christchurch house, and moved to Auckland.) Because there was no date on the photo, it was impossible to tell at which of their properties the photo was taken. Also, street numbering systems have changed since then, and it seems I may never work out where Mama's tree was. I know the general area of her neighbourhood. Actually, the main point of discovery is that my grandmother's parents, in taking of a photo of her climbing a tree, were quite socially progressive. I like that.

I circulated the old photo to friends, one of whom suggested that I also should have my photo taken half-way up a tree. I submit the result.



Some other friends, who don't want to climb trees, have however, sent me photos of themselves hugging various trees in their neighbourhoods. Trees

have loomed large in my thinking lately.

Obviously, thinking about community in terms of a plant isn't new. Quite well worn, in terms of describing Christian community, is Jesus' metaphor of the vine and branches. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

I have, however, recently begun to let the "living thing" metaphor inform my thinking about the experience of belonging at Knox, and conducting a ministry here. I'm slowly moving away from thinking of ministry as a list of things that I do, more towards thinking of being part of a living thing. Living things grow. Living things die. Living things need food and care. Living things have seasons. No one living thing is just like any other living thing - they all have different shapes. Living things breathe, and every single living thing deserves respect simply for being what it is.

You are a living thing, and you are part of a living thing. Will you water the tree, or climb the tree? Will you admire the shape and colour of the tree? Will you buy a tree and give it to others for planting?

There is no tree quite the same as the one growing here at Knox.

Arohanui, *Matthew*

Various tree references or thoughts

The kingdom of God is like a seed, that grows into a tree and gives shelter to the animals

"I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree"
(Hmm; since when were poems things to be seen?)

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was part of the story of humanity getting it wrong

In the vision of John the Divine, the tree of life is said to be growing at the heart of the new creation

Jesus is said to have cursed an unproductive fig tree, yet he told a parable about an unproductive tree being given a second chance

In our back garden, we had a silver dollar tree, which my father disliked. He said it sucked all the life out of the soil. We enjoyed climbing it, and didn't much care for how much life it sucked from the soil. After a storm, during which half of it fell down, Dad seized the opportunity to chop down the rest. Within a year, the whole bottom half of our garden blossomed into life. The falling of the old tree which we loved, gave life to many new trees. "Unless a seed falls into the ground and dies . . ."

A shoot shall come forth, out from the stump of Jess

“Trees indeed have hearts.”

— Henry David Thoreau

Last week I received this email from a past student Matthew Jack

Kia Ora Alan,

I'm Matthew Jack. In 1974, when I was in what then was called Standard Four, I was appointed to plant an Arbour Day tree for my class group (Room 2, Teacher Dave Douché). It was a Rimu tree, planted on the wee slope rising up from the car park to the neighbours on Nelson Street. I watered the tree each day for the rest of the year, and have visited it pretty much each time I've been back in Howick, since leaving in 1986. The tree seemed to prosper, and I enjoyed knowing that I had planted something, for my classmates, that would survive us all by several hundred years. Last week I visited the tree. It seems to me to be pretty much close to death. Clearly, something has happened to it that it hasn't enjoyed - maybe the extension of the car park onto its slope.

Anyway, I went to a local garden centre today, bought a new Rimu tree, and would be more than happy for you to find a good place for it to be planted at Owairoa. If you have a student called Matthew, perhaps he could be invited to plant it. I'd be happy to hear how things go with the tree.

*Arohanui,
Matthew.*

Thank you to Matthew Jack's generosity, the new Rimu tree has been duly planted with the help of our four current Matthews in the school, Matthew Thompson, Matthew Yu, Matthew Monakhov and Matthew Wang. Let's hope that with their care and attention that the new Rimu tree stands tall for many years to come.



The original Rimu tree



The new Rimu tree

After lockdown I was not happy with people who got too close.

Coming Services

Next Sunday School day - 16th August

Creation Series

Spring flowers Sunday – 13th September

Animal Sunday – 20th September

Other services

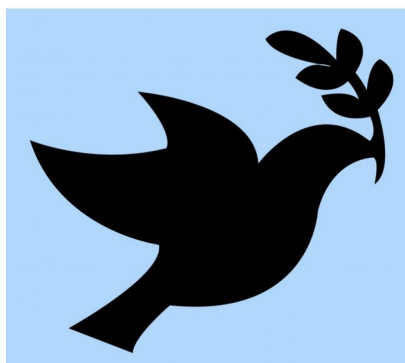
Visit from Tangata atu motu - 18th October

Visit from Presbyterian Support - 25 October

All Saints Day - 1st November

Parihaka Sunday - 8th November

Jane, Daniel and Matthew met before going into lockdown - office to operate from Jane's home, Daniel to record music. Saying goodbye was hard - these people meant a lot.



At the recent mission discernment meeting, it was decided:

- to recommence the Covid-closed Open Church project
- to continue our practice of attending the annual multi-faith prayer event at the Peace Bell in the Botanic Gardens
- to make available pamphlets containing the Peace Sermons of 2018 and the lockdown sermons of 2020
- to explore the Iona rule and occasional peace services
- to circulate a pastoral email (like those circulated weekly during lockdown) one a month in months when there is no Knox Life publication

During the lockdown the neighbourhood became very quiet. It felt like everyone had gone. Native birds started singing.

COMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

Sunday 13 September:	Spring service (flowers)
Sunday 20 September:	Blessing the Animals service
Sunday 11 October:	AGM following the service
Sunday 18 October:	Tangata Atū Motu (Pacific Islanders Health Group) join our service
Sunday 25 October:	Presbyterian Support staff join our service
Sunday 8 November:	Parihaka commemoration
Sunday 29 November:	Advent 1 service. 5pm: Ecumenical service

Afternoon communion services:

2pm Wednesday 9 September
2pm Wednesday 2 December

Children's Sunday School:

16 August,
20 September (Animals service),
18 October,
1 November,
6 December

Book discussion group: 30 August 11.15 am,
27 September 11.15 am,
25 October 11.15am,
29 November 11.15 am

Film group: 13 September 4pm,
11 October 4pm,
8 November 4pm

Sunday lunches: third Sunday of each month, 12 noon at Kowhai Cafe, Oderings Garden Centre, Barrington

Fundraising lunch: Sunday 4 October at Knox.

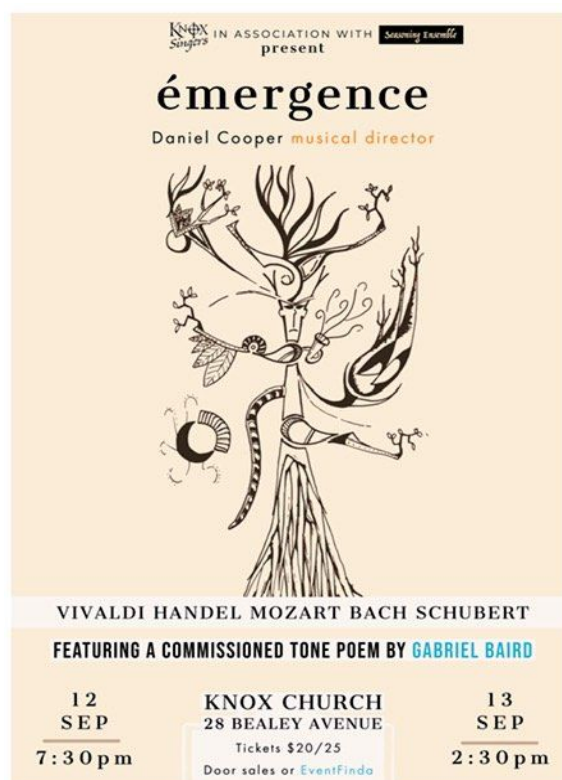
During the lockdown my driver's licence and warrant of fitness expired - I did not care!

Concerts

Sunday 6th September, 2:00pm, Isaac Theatre Royal (145 Gloucester Street). **Catch the Rising Stars - presented by the Dame Malvina Major Foundation.** A talented line-up of artists, many of whom are recipients of funding from the DMMF and until recently either studying or enjoying successful careers internationally are now back in Christchurch awaiting the end of lockdown. Tickets from ticketek box office

Saturday 12th September 7:30pm AND Sunday 13th September 2:30pm. **The Knox Singers present: émergence.**

CANCELLED due to covid19



Sunday 18 October 2:30pm, **(Instead of Aug 23 due to covid19)** Isaac Theatre Royal (145 Gloucester Street). **Liedertafel presents "Choirs for the Isaac Theatre Royal.** A fundraising concert for the Isaac Theatre Royal presented by the men of the Christchurch Liedertafel. Tickets from Ticketek box office.

I read a few library books online for the first time. I also made use of the library's link to the Kanopy site which offers wonderful films from all around the world. It's all free using your library card and its PIN.

Lock down musings.

#give nothing to racism

i am the mangrove
anchored to the coast
breathing in the wind

you are the hurricane
stilled by circumstance
your throat constricted

what was i doing
watching the trees grow
while you
were not allowed
to breathe

no lives matter
until all lives matter
breath should not be a privilege

Karin Bathgate

You asked for my hands that you might use them for your purpose,
I gave them for a moment, then withdrew them for the work was hard.

You asked for my mouth to speak out against injustice.
I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.

You asked for my life that you may work through me.
I gave a small part that I might not get too involved.

Lord, forgive my calculated efforts to serve you only when it is convenient for me to do so, only in those places where it is safe to do so, and only in those who make it easy to do so.

Lord, forgive me, renew me, heal me, nurture me, empower me, send me out as an instrument of your peace that I might take seriously the meaning of servant-leadership.

Author unknown

Contributed by Barbara Howley

CULTIVATE CHRISTCHURCH

Did you know that not far from Knox Church, at 156 Peterborough Street, is a wonderfully productive urban farm, growing a range of beautiful vegetables for sale to the public? Perhaps you have driven along Peterborough Street

and noticed the sandwich board sign advertising vegetables for sale, but did you know that Cultivate Christchurch is also helping to grow healthy and capable young people, through their internship and training programmes? They run free programmes for 16-25 year olds, developing their personal and work skills and supporting their search for jobs.

This is a great local community enterprise. The young people work on the farm, developing gardening skills and work experience, while also supplying vegetables for sale to cafes and to the general public. As well as gate sales, Cultivate Christchurch has an online ordering system and can arrange for delivery if you wish. There is also a subscription service which delivers you a regular weekly bag of currently available vegetables.

Check out their website: cultivate.org.nz for details of ordering systems and of the work with young people. And maybe take a walk down Peterborough Street to have a look at the farm one day.

Janet Wilson

Lent Interrupted

It seems a long while since we met in our Lenten Study based on the Canticle of St. Francis of Assisi seeking inspiration from our faith heritage to face the challenge of the environmental crisis. Then the challenge just got tougher as Covid-19 arrived. The study got lost in lockdown.

Rather than let it go, I wondered if the people who started would like to finish with a couple of sessions in the coming "Season of Creation" (end of September). Before lockdown we had viewed St. Francis as setting his song in the cosmological scope.

Thou burning sun with golden beam,
Thou silver moon with softer gleam.

We began with the new universe story about the discoveries of modern science which say the universe we inhabit is not static but 'emerging', self-organising out of events of violence, explosion, convergence, communion. We are made of the same matter as the stars.

We shared conversation about our experiences of the natural world, special places, people and influences from our faith heritage.

To go forward some themes from my reflections on St. Francis include: compassion vs. competition (people of tender heart); Francis and how to live 'joyful lives'; his idea of a 'living blessing' (earth unfolding blessing day by day); also how death can be taken into life (kind and gentle death waiting to hush our latest breath). What has Covid shown us about the values that drive

our lives? What needs to change within us to enable us to live in the community of all beings?

I would like to hear from any who are interested in this conversation. I need to find the most convenient time (11.15am – 12 midday; 5 – 6.30pm? Weekly, fortnightly etc).

Len Pierce.

Making Connections

At a practical level, surviving the lock-down was not hard. We happened to have enough food in store and we got helpful suggestions from neighbours about where to get some veges delivered to our door and how to get a weekly delivery of fish. Both those suggestions point to another aspect of the lock-down: the thoughtfulness of neighbours over the fence that strengthened our connections to the local community and their care for us.

Being over 70, we were supposed to stay home. That didn't stop us popping out to the local dairy for the occasional item. That too illustrated something about community. Passing another person out and about, there was a careful keeping of distance, but also a clear need for a greeting and acknowledgement - much more than had been usual. We actually need each other.

Our sense of community was further fostered by the steps taken by Knox to keep in touch. The phone tree meant that someone rang to see how we were. Just as important was the weekly Newsletter put together by Matthew. It was interesting to learn that he did not have to beg or even ask for material - it just flowed in. We all needed to hear stories of how people were coping. We no doubt read each other's stories with relish.

The Sunday services brought another touch of genius. Some churches experimented with Zoom - with mixed results: somewhere between monologues and everyone talking over each other. Matthew decided to do it on YouTube. The variety of settings all made connections with the world around us. The contributions from Daniel and the Knox Singers and others were wonderfully appropriate (not forgetting Mila the cat!).

As ever, Matthew turned our attention to the present situation and how we might respond. And the Knox community was not absent. We may not have been able to see the familiar faces, but there were touches of the normal - the cross, the candle, the occasional glimpses of the interior of the church. That we joined in from the privacy of our home did not diminish the sense of being surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses.

Ken Booth

Meetings by remote - had to learn how to use the technology. Had to set it up well before hand. Now back to normal - so I've been away lots. More efficient to use technology, but I prefer to meet face to face.

My Lockdown Experiences

I was wary about lockdown especially doing it alone/solo. However, I decided to have a positive and productive time and handled it very well over all. I got into household chores with a vengeance and my unit was the cleanest ever. I had the time to downsize my hoard of sentimental possessions and I achieved a lot there. I focussed on getting my garden into order, which was satisfying.

My walks were the high-light of my day. I had the choice of QEII Park or the red zone parkland or beside the river. I felt calm and close to nature and found watching the birdlife of particular interest. As I walked people acknowledged my presence with a friendly wave and a smile. I looked out for teddy bears too!

Communicating was important to me so I was on the phone and internet a lot more than normal, at times getting to know people more than I had before. When I realised that the postal service was functioning, I started writing.

Although I was over 70, I decided to do my own shopping My first supermarket shopping experience was being number 40 in the queue snaking around the car park. The novelty of being near other people was a pleasure to me.

During the lockdown I was forced to learn more technical skills, not without stress. As bills still kept arriving, I felt forced to learn internet banking. and tackled the IRD with MyIR. I learned Zoom to communicate with my men's group friends and refreshed my Skype skills.

I was most grateful to Matthew and Daniel in particular for the YouTube church services. They did a marvellous job. I also appreciated the input of singers such as Francine and Jeni, and Matthew Harris. Guest readers and the rising star, Mila added to the enjoyment as I sat down in front of the computer about the normal time I would have been in church.

I was intrigued by the new meanings which came in with the Pandemic. Bubbles reminded me of the new language and meanings at the time of the earthquakes. I found it a big contrast going into level 3 with so much more traffic on the roads, and more people around.

I took the opportunity to travel and have an enjoyable mini-holiday. I drove

down to Oamaru and Waimate to explore. I found those two towns still more closed down than we were in Christchurch. Going in and out of different shops and cafés I have never sanitised my hands or written down my details so often in my life!

Being very social most of the time and someone who is more tactile and loves hugs I am enjoying the new normal and being back in church, cafés and malls. Already the lockdown period seems surreal. It is now past history and hopefully will stay that way.

Stephen Best.

On Reading the Bible

I was rung up recently on a blind call by someone. He began by asking me how I was doing. They all do that. What he really wanted was to persuade me to read a passage from Isaiah about the dire things predicted for the world and for those who fail to get the message and do the right thing. It was an attempted bit of random salesmanship for a view of the Bible that I do not share.

That approach stands in marked contrast to the way the Bible is handled at Knox. There we are treated to a way of engaging with Scripture that opens up the connections between the tensions and insights in the text and the tensions and dilemmas we face in our living. It's an approach I find much more congenial and helpful.

So, how should we read the Bible? How do we even begin to understand the text? I have not long finished reading a wonderful guide to these questions in *A History of the Bible*, by John Barton (Allen Lane: 2019; hardback, paperback and e-book). Barton was a professor at Oxford University and has drawn on his deep knowledge of the subject to produce this very large and deeply enlightening introduction to the Bible. It is also very readable.

Barton shows the complicated history of how the Bible came together, and the variety of ways in which the Bible has been read down through the ages. I was particularly interested in the way he again and again contrasted the ways in which Jewish people and Christian people might read the same text, but see quite different things in it. As he kept reminding us, the Bible is not a book but a collection of books with the variety that brings.

This is a book that will enrich our understanding of how our Christian faith grew and of the fundamental texts that underlie it.

Ken Booth

During the lockdown I sowed flower seeds into pots to be ready with flowers that are liked by Monarch butterflies.

A glimpse of what life would be like without cars. Sustainable?

COUNCIL REPORT

During the lockdown period the church council met via email, which was reasonably satisfactory as only routine matters were on the agenda. However, when we met in person in June we all appreciated being able to hold a normal meeting once again, with detailed discussion if necessary.

Matthew was thanked for his wonderful video services and for his interesting and encouraging weekly pastoral letters during the lockdown. The musical contributions from Daniel and the Singers were also commended. We were indeed fortunate to have our worship and our community so well provided for.

Throughout the lockdown period, instructions and guidance were provided by both the Alpine Presbytery and the PCANZ. Jean Brouwer, our designated Health and Safety Officer, produced a COVID Safety plan and sent it to Presbytery, as required before we could reopen. With carpark rentals and also our hires income reduced for several months we were pleased to accept an offer from the PCANZ, for churches to apply for a waiver of the Assembly Assessment fee for the months of May and June. At a charge to Knox of \$1500 per month the saving is very worthwhile. We were also able to obtain the government's wage subsidies for our paid workers during lockdown.

Our Annual Appeal has been raising funds to install LED lights in the hall. These will be much more efficient and durable than the current lights. So far \$4640 has been donated which is a wonderful response. An application was made to the Alpine Presbytery Mission Fund, to cover the cost of installing motorised blackout blinds on the north facing windows in the hall. As that request has been granted, we plan to install the blinds while the Brosnan access platform is in place, if possible.

Interest on the Cunningham Bequest has been given this year to St George's Iona parish, to help them with their work in the community. Rev Sheena Dickson sent grateful thanks for the \$1500 gift.

John and Dame Ann Hercus offered some time ago to donate considerable funds in support of musical ventures at Knox, but with some of Daniel's plans for this year being thwarted by the Covid emergency, the Hercuses have been happy to redirect some funding to upgrading the organ. Accordingly, a

new blower is to come from Germany and some upgrading of the pipes has been arranged. We are extremely grateful to John and Ann for their amazing generosity.

You may remember that earlier in the year, before coronavirus was greatly in our minds, we had a visit from David and Linda Brown from San Francisco. After their time with Knox, David and Linda moved up to Wellington to visit several Presbyterian churches there, but their stay was cut short by the imminent arrival of lockdown. David and Linda just managed to get a flight back home before lockdown. They would love to return to New Zealand some time in the future.

When the lockdown arrived our Knox Centre strengthening project had not actually begun. That turned out to be a good thing, as we were spared various complications and extra expenses which would have arisen if the work had been started, then stopped for weeks. Brosnan took site possession on 11 May and things are now progressing steadily. Most of the provisional costs have been finalised, with some coming in at less than the provisional estimate, but others being over estimate. In addition several unforeseen issues have arisen. Asbestos testing of a number of sites, both expected and unexpected has fortunately mostly proved negative, as removal is very costly. A defective area of the roof and guttering has been noted and this source of leaks must be repaired.

Renovating an older building always reveals undiscovered issues, as we found with the church rebuild.

The hall floor has to be lifted to enable the strengthening work to take place and we have chosen to reinstate it using chipboard, along with the carpet strips, which will actually be cheaper than putting back all the individual floor boards. The boards, which were rimu, have been sold off with the proceeds being used towards the cost of the new flooring. Our Project Manager at Au-recon is doing a very good job for us and is very conscious of saving us money wherever that is possible. The Project Manager has commented that John Brouwer's technical ability and detailed knowledge of the intricacies of the Knox Centre has been very helpful as Brosnan has been investigating the structure of the building. It is hoped that the work will be completed by Christmas.

Trudy Heney has resigned from our Finance Committee as from 30 June. Trudy has been the Committee Convener for a number of years and I wish to express our gratitude for all her work for us. We fully understand her need to focus on other commitments now. Thank you for all you have done over the years, Trudy. You did a great job.

Matthew took a week of leave in July and in his absence a service in support of the annual Presbyterian and Methodist Women's Project was held. This year the Project is supporting the St John's Health Shuttle in NZ and the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees overseas. A total of \$422 was donated by the congregation to these organisations.

Our phone and IT services have been upgraded and a clean-up in the car park area has been held. Most of our car parks continue to be rented out, but hiring of our buildings has been greatly reduced this year, because of Covid19 and also, of course, the major construction work in the Knox Centre.

The Knox Church AGM will be held on Sunday 11 October.

Janet Wilson, Knox Council Clerk

There was a rush on supermarkets - some shelves were bare - toilet paper, wine, flour. Local dairy was better. Even found some flour!

We live in a cul de sac - strong sense of community. Buzz in the street as children came out on bikes etc. People talked to others from a distance during the lockdown.

Tried making Wonder Scones with cream and lemonade - big disappointment!



Looking from winter to spring in Little Hagley Park