

KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

KNOX LIFE

September 2024



Sister Wendy Beckett (1930-2018) was a Carmelite nun from England. She came to prominence as an art historian who produced videos in which she critiqued various artworks. Some of her reflections were of a spiritual nature, and some were secular. Whether sacred or secular, her observations always caused me to see things in paintings that were enriching. Recently, I've found myself writing very short reflections on some of the photos that I have rotating as wallpaper on my computer. None of my reflections have what you might call a "point" or a "message". They're basically just invitations to explore what has fallen into the camera's lens. One day I might put them into a little booklet. We'll see - but for now, here are a couple.

Please don't become too excited that I end each reflection with a prayer to my God and a word to my lover. This is simply a rhetorical device!

The Usual Suspects



One of these people is growing into life. He speaks with a voice, most probably, that has yet to fall an octave. With his hands in his pockets, no one's going to pinch anything he might be carrying. He's looking up towards the ceiling. Is he expecting to find angels up there (like the one on his shirt)? In all likelihood, when all the others have "seen out their days on earth", he'll inherit the world we're making. What will he do with it?

One of these people looks happy to be serving God. I wonder how good he is at chairing parish meetings. Does he facilitate things such that everyone "has their say" - does he not notice when particular others are speaking too much? Does he ever wonder about the audacity of saying "I believe in God"?

One of these people has a brief case. I wonder what's in it. Some sandwiches for lunch (made by whom?) or a report that will recommend redundancies for some and promotions for others? Maybe there's nothing in the briefcase and he's carrying it about simply to give the impression that he's busy. We sometimes feel like we need to present ourselves to the world as rather too busy.

One of these people is expecting it to rain - it falls on the just and the unjust alike, you know. It's important for your umbrella to match your dress.

One of these people seems to have made some bad life decisions. You can see it in the dark circles under his eyes - not to mention the chains around his wrists. You can tell things about people if you learn to see them closely.

One of these people is holding her hands in front of her. Is that a posture of someone who feels a bit awkward? Is her left leg turned inwards a little? Or am I seeing something that's not there?

To my lover: Do I see you, my love; and do you see me? I hope so.

To my God: "Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hid, who done it?"

On the rock



Hugh is walking along in the sunshine. He's wearing a hat to keep the sun off his thinning hair. It seems that it's cold, since he's wearing a puffer jacket. Flowers are out on the plants around him - so it's not as cold as it could be. The shadows are interesting. Hugh's likeness is captured in profile on the rock. The flowers are casting a shadow where he stands. Also casting a shadow is the person taking the photo - so we know that Hugh isn't alone. Come to mention his not being alone, there's this odd creature on top of the rock, looking down on Hugh. While Hugh is in a hat and puffer jacket, the creature is hardly dressed at all (bare feet and singlet). Is the creature not quite of Hugh's world? Why is it watching him? What does it want, and what's it planning to do next? Will Hugh be found one day as a wee pile of dry bones in a valley of dry bones? Or will Hugh's one-time wife receive a letter from him (address withheld and no date stamp) saying that he's happy and well in the company of a strange creature who's made him complete?

To my lover: Darling, I hope that nothing strange ever pounces on you from above.

To my God: Shadows come and go, dear God, and we don't know what will happen next. Thank you, though, in the meantime, for the flowers.

Arohanui,

Matthew.

Church Council Notes

In June we were privileged to have local artist Peter Majendie display several of his works in the church for two weeks. Matthew used these works as starting points for the services on the two Sundays of the exhibition and people were most appreciative of the efforts of Peter and Joyce in bringing us such creativity. The photo shows an image created by Pete using tea leaves and coffee grounds from the previous Sunday's morning tea.



Matthew has held another Moana Va services for Pasifika rainbow people and noted that family or friends sometimes come too. The services are held quarterly.

The church council sent comments to the national PCANZ office regarding the Theology of Ordination document which churches were invited to consider. Members of the Public Questions group watched two videos on Te Tiriti, which Matthew obtained from Common Grace Aotearoa, a movement of Christians seeking to transform unjust structures for the common good. The Shalom group continued to meet regularly to discuss and learn about a variety of interesting issues.

More Majendie art works, each featuring a cross



The Property Committee drew attention to the fact that our Knox buildings have battery-powered emergency track LED lights which switch on in case of a power failure. These are regularly checked. We were also informed that the roof of the Knox townhouse has recently been cleaned and sprayed against moss.

In August the congregation approved the budget for 2024-2025 and the Knox AGM is held on 22 September.

Janet Wilson

COMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

Coming services: 10am on Sunday mornings

Sundays in September

The season of creation: Exploring the senses through which we engage with the created order.

Sunday 20 October Animal service

Sundays in December

Advent theme: God with us

Sunday 1 December Advent 1- God with us at the table
Sunday 8 December Advent 2 - God with us whoever we are
Sunday 15 December Advent 3 - God with us in the fullness of time
Sunday 22 December Advent 4 - Nine lessons and carols
Tuesday 24 December Christmas Eve service at 11.15pm
Wednesday 25 December Christmas Day service at 10am

Other events:

Sunday 22 September at 11am: Knox Church Annual General Meeting

Saturday 19 October: Open Afternoon in the church for the Heritage Festival. Jeremy and the Knox Singers will be holding a practice session and afterwards Jeremy will play the organ for a while. Free to all.

Sunday 20 October at 5pm: Book launch of "Peace Is Her Song. The life and legacy of hymn writer Shirley Elena Murray" by Anne Manchester. A musical celebration in the hall, with copies of the book available for purchase. (\$50.00 EFTPOS available)

Bible Study Group

Every Wednesday from 10-11am in the Chapel. All welcome.

Shalom Group

Second and fourth Sunday of the month at 11.30am in the Committee Room. Informal presentations and discussions on a variety of topics. All welcome.

Film Group

First Sunday of the month at 5pm in the lounge. Come early to enjoy a hot drink and a chat beforehand.

Shared lunch in the lounge

Second Sunday in the month after morning tea. Bring a small plate of food to share if you can but you are welcome to come without it too. Last lunch for the year is in October.

Café lunch together

Third Sunday in the month at noon in the Black and White Cafe in Merrin Street, Avonhead. Names on the list at church or email jannekenyuysink@gmail.com by the preceding Wednesday.



Common Grace

On the afternoon of Sunday 8 September, a couple of Knox people went to a "what we're doing" session hosted by Common Grace. We first came across Common Grace when we became aware of two very good videos it had produced about Te Tiriti (Belonging in this Land). We watched the videos at Knox (and Matthew later published the video links in the August Pastoral Newsletter).

Common Grace is an inter-denominational organisation that advocates on social issues. It was founded by those who believed Christian faith had something prophetic to offer which secular organisations couldn't offer. They are unapologetically faith-based. Being aware that they couldn't advocate on every worthy matter that came to their attention, they decided to focus on three general areas:

1. Climate change
2. Economic justice
3. The honouring of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Within its selective brief, Common Grace has had real victories (small-ish but significant) in each of its three areas. You can read about them on their website: <https://www.commongrace.nz/>

It might be that Common Grace would be a helpful friend to Knox's Public Questions Group, maybe offering helpful advice in producing submissions or making comments. Also, it might keep us informed about various petitions that Knox people might like to support.

Matthew

Impressions from around the world: Part 1-The Nitty Gritty (by Bronwyn W)

My husband Richard and I were away for 3½ months this year (1 March – 18 June) travelling around Europe and the USA. We had wonderful catchups with ten family members and nine friends, as well as visiting a selection of tourist spots. Rather than describing anywhere in detail, I thought it might be fun to share some of the highlights.

Our itinerary: Christchurch to Sydney, via Dubai to Italy, through Switzerland to the south of France, Portugal, west and north of France, Germany, via Brussels to England and Scotland, via Iceland to New York and Washington DC, then directly from New York to Auckland, then finally back to Christchurch.

Means of transport: Train, bus, tram, underground, car, plane, ferry, boat, suspension railway (Wuppertal), funicular cable car (Lausanne, Switzerland and Nazaré, Portugal), tuktuk (Lisbon), driverless air train (JFK New York), taxi (Paris – never again!), elevated train (New York), high wire walk (New York), open air hop-on, hop-off bus (Münster, Hamburg, London – on a wet day when there was a train strike, Stratford, Edinburgh). We ourselves did not travel by bike but everyone in Münster did... everywhere!! And throughout our whole trip we noticed barely a crash helmet in sight!! We also experienced many creative interpretations of pedestrian crossings... Fortunately, we had no unpleasant encounters with vehicles (despite the over-energetic driving styles of some folks)!

Trams: are the most efficient means of transport everywhere we went. Except in Iceland, we were able to pay by tapping our credit cards. If only a certain Minister for EQ had allowed light rail to be reinstated in Christchurch when we had the opportunity...

Best trains: Italy (the fast train Freccia Rossa even gave us a lunch box and bottle of water!) and France.

Worst trains: Germany!! At one place the train was overfull and we waited for an hour while they asked people (only in German), who could travel to their destination by bus instead, to leave! Our train was 1½ hours late reaching outer Brussels, so they put on a special train for the passengers like us who had to go to central city stations, because our train had to set off for the next stage of its journey!! There was a limited range of “reasons” for train delays (“a person on the line, work on the tracks, late arrival of another train, an animal on the track...”). The Germans themselves are very embarrassed by it all and Deutsche Bahn is now making a huge effort to modernise the tracks.



Favourite train station: Carlisle, England, on the border with Scotland. A beautiful old Victorian station with arched iron roof. They have created a wee oasis for the multitude of passengers changing trains here: a generous sitting area complete with white picket fence, fake grass and park benches AND, for each travel direction, a bookcase with books for sale at £1.30 (about \$3) each. I bought two, read them in Dumfries, then returned them on the trip back! A sign said they had made about £1000 over the previous two months!!

Most fun transport:

1. Tuk tuk in Lisbon, Portugal: We were politely waiting in the huge queue for the hop-on hop-off sightseeing tram, when an enterprising man approached us to go on his tuktuk. I had read about these in *The Press* and they sounded good. We negotiated a considerably lower price than he originally suggested and it was highly worthwhile. Off we zipped and had an hour to see the sights of Lisbon from atop two mountains, with excellent information. Unlike the tram, our driver could drop us at a moment's walk from the sights and was waiting for us when we were ready to leave. By coincidence our enterprising and informative driver was called Ricardo!!



2. Taxi in Paris: We had one hour to change stations from the Gare St Lazare to then Gare de l'Est (the two closest stations of any in Paris) but rather than trying to manage our bags on the Métro, we thought we could luxuriate in a taxi. Wrong!! It was the most hair-raising trip of our lives!! And we just made it to the station in time to race from the taxi to the platform and onto the train. Next time we will use the Métro!!



3. The Schwebelbahn suspension railway in Wuppertal, Germany: Opened in 1901 to transport workers easily above the river, to the train station for their commute to work in the industrial Ruhr district. It was destroyed during World War II but was reconstructed and reopened in 1946 and has been upgraded since. In 1950 Tuffi the elephant was being transported on the train as advertising for a circus. However, he got spooked, broke out of the wooden carriage and fell into the river, unharmed. Since then, he has become, with the train, a symbol for the city.

4. Rail Mail, London: The underground railway was used to sort and transport mail in 20 minutes from one side of London to the other. It closed in 2003 just before Amazon and online ordering became widespread – a decision they now regret. In 2017 Mail Rail reopened as The British Postal Museum with rides for the public on the remaining stretch of rail. We travelled on the original mail coaches, adapted for humans. The tunnel walls and stops are now decorated with photos and information about their previous life.



Hotels: We were able to stay in a lovely variety from large to small, with interesting variations on bathrooms – and interesting ways the rooms in older hotels had been converted to contain ensuite (one was so narrow that you had to slide carefully past the toilet to reach the shower!). Sadly, several of the hotels we had visited on previous trips had closed due to the effects of Covid.

Favourite hotels:



1. *Giulietta e Romeo*, Verona, Italy: We stayed here unexpectedly because the European trains were on strike for one day (8th March which was International Women's Day – a coincidence??). A small hotel in the old part of Verona, but it had the most extensive gluten free breakfast of anywhere we stayed, and a huge table full of cakes!! On that day all the ladies in town were given bunches of yellow mimosa.

2. *Hotel Littéraire Gustave Flaubert*, Rouen, France: I spent two years of my life studying the works of Gustave Flaubert for my MA so this was the easiest hotel to choose!! All the floors and rooms were Flaubert themed (including books and manuscripts of *Madame Bovary* and the rest) – although we didn't manage to visit his house - next time...

3. *The Bell Inn*, Moreton-in-Marsh, Cotswolds, England: This gem had been a favourite of Tolkien whose brother lived in Moreton and there were old photos of him drinking at the bar. Also, wonderful freshly cooked GF breakfasts, good English beer and very friendly, homely people.

Laundrettes: The necessity of on the go travel! A great way to meet people.

1. Salerno, Italy (self-serve): a man in a very strange, worn uniform (like a hotel bellman?) asked me if I could sponsor him to come to New Zealand because he had an Italian ID card (though not Italian by birth). When I said no, he said "Okay" and left.

2. Münster, Germany: the laundrette lady is obviously a caring and important member of the community. A needy young man came in, very excited to tell her that he had just bought something she had advised him about. She encouraged him and he left, happy.

3. Avignon, France: a young man entered, settled down in a corner behind the dryers and took out a glass pipe and a white powder. Not laundry powder! He did his business, shouting to himself, then left without a word. Richard held his breath while transferring our washing into the dryer.

4. Edinburgh, Scotland: Sunday morning is high season at the laundrette. The lady and her helper managed the crowd, jostling for use of the machines amid lively conversation. This was about four houses away from a church. We peeked inside and noted that the congregation had fewer people than the laundrette.

Pete and Joyce Majendie – Art at Knox

What a privilege it was for us that Joyce and Pete Majendie, once again, displayed in Knox some of their art works for our enjoyment and contemplation. Thank you both very sincerely for sharing examples of what is clearly a very comfortable working relationship, a true bonding of love, diverse talents and creativity. I personally find their works sensitive, emotive and mystical.

The reproduction of Gauguin's Chair, which shows the left-hand side full of light and colour, contrasting starkly with the black and white right-hand side. When the intervening "dark" space is removed the two halves meet and become the perfect whole. Pete explains that the two-dimensional black and white half as being Good Friday, whereas the three-dimensional left half of the work depicts the Resurrection in its glory, promise and colour. The 18-carat thread which runs horizontally across the entire work, represents God - ever constant, ever true - who lives between Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday.



Oh, that liminal space - I love the concepts it represents! We are but "stick figures" on a yellowing page, wandering in no-man's land somewhere between light and dark. We need both dimensions to complete our "picture", to bathe in the glow of the gas lamp on the wall - the Light that shines in the darkness. We should leave what we know and move towards that which we don't know; we should want to feel something before we think about it; every action has a "feeling"; what we are seeing is what we are feeling.

The Wave - what drama! Shouldn't Jesus be facing the other way so he can see what's coming? This wonderful driftwood sculpture speaks of trust and optimism, looking ahead in faith. The wee cross in the shadow of the wave is made of coal, while Jesus is a tiny matchstick figure - an imminent fire that is going to burn forever, that a wave (no matter how big) is not going to put out.

Cross Man - I agree with Matthew, when looking at this very emotive sculpture in different lights, there are two "stories". One, a cross made of nails and the other, a man upon the cross. For me, this work is very reminiscent of the Archibald Baxter (conscientious objector) memorial, a stack of schist discs representing a figure of a man who is pushed to his physical and mental limits, bearing the title "We will bend but not be broken". So often we push our Heavenly Father to the limits of His endurance; his patience bends but it doesn't break.





Tea/Coffee Tree - unnoticed by many during the service Pete created a beautiful image of a tree (above and below ground) on the floor of the church (see photo in "Council Notes"). The "picture" showed that what we see is often only a proportion of the whole - there's so much more happening underground (and/or out of sight). What is going on underground? The earth is sustaining what is above ground; below ground one tree feeds/nurtures its neighbours, giving support when another is perhaps lacking the ability to fully support itself, depicting our ability to support, nurture and comfort others in their time of need.

To illustrate the ephemerality of life, volunteers were invited to roll up the canvas, potentially destroying the beautiful picture of life and love. Very reluctantly, two people eventually rolled the picture away, leaving behind a void and a sense of grief - we crave permanence.

Pour la art, l'amour, la paix, que Dieu soit beni.

June

Music Report - August 2024

It's coming up two years since I started playing the organ at Knox, taking over from Daniel Cooper around October 2022. I am thoroughly enjoying leading the musical worship on Sunday mornings and it's been an absolute delight to liaise with Matthew, the Worship Committee and, of course, the brilliant Knox Singers. Whilst my busy performing and teaching schedule means that concerts are on a hiatus, their dedication to the fortnightly rehearsals and services are welcomed warmly by the congregation and I'm very grateful for their enthusiasm and hard work.

Since starting, I have recruited eight new members, some on a casual basis, and in total we are up to a good, healthy 24 choristers when at full capacity. I remember fondly having Bob Fendall in our ranks, before his passing last year.

The Knox Singers have risen admirably to the standards I have expected of them and to some of the challenging repertoire thrown at them! Highlights of the last two years have included the two Nine Lessons and Carols services where we were joined by cellist Tomas Hurnik and also the addition of kazoos! It was also a great pleasure to premiere a piece by the very talented young Christchurch composer, James Burt, on Palm Sunday this year. James also played the saxophone at the Nine Lessons and Carols service last year. We were joined by a number of guest singers on the Sunday following the coronation of King Charles III, where we sang Zadok the Priest. Thomas Eves also played the trumpet for the ANZAC Service this year, which was a very moving occasion.





Most recently, Barry Brinson (now a full-time member of the congregation – hurray!) helped to organise and arrange music for a Jazz Communion Service, the first of its kind at Knox, but certainly not the last.

On Sundays where the choir has a break (usually 2nd and 4th), it's been wonderful to invite singers and instrumentalists to enhance the worship. Amanda Atlas, Nicola Holt and Sarah-Jane Rennie have treated us to some high calibre soprano repertoire and I've also appreciated the help of deputising organists Nicholas Sutcliffe, Sea-am Thompson and Russell Kent. Sarah McCracken played the violin sensitively for our Good Friday service this year, as I decided to have a choral-free Holy Week.

A very special service, Matariki, we were very fortunate to have the wonderful Deborah Wai Kapohe sing and demonstrate some Maori instruments. She has joined us for the last two years, and I am very pleased that she has agreed to come again next year!

A special thanks to Bronwyn Wiltshire (Choir Coordinator) and Francine Bills for their help with the library, and general organisational skills. Thank you both!

I am always keen to hear from any potential members of the Knox Singers – it's a lot of fun, sometimes challenging, but very social! Please email me or approach me after a Sunday morning service to express your interest!

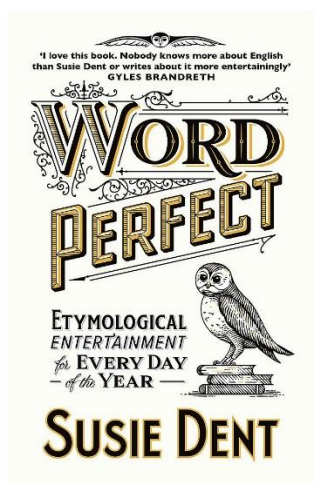
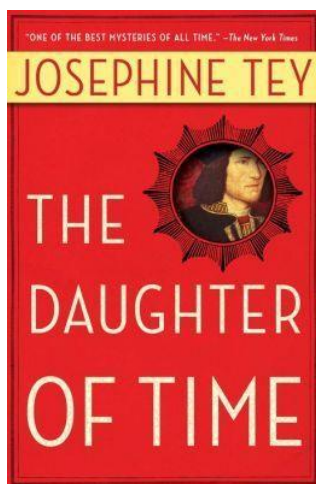
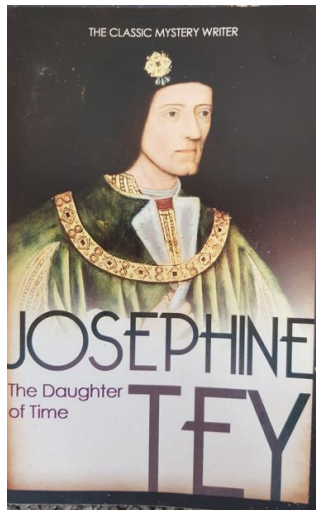
Jeremy





FAITH, FILM AND FICTION...

Movies and Books



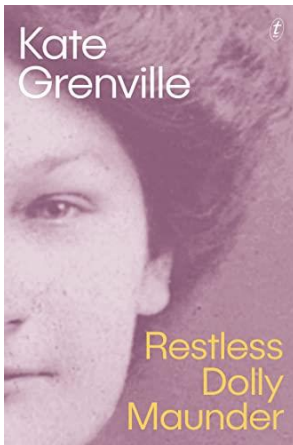
Did you see the recent film **The Lost King** which portrays the search for the body of the English King Richard III, finally uncovered in 2016 under a carpark in Leicester? You might be familiar with Shakespeare's play **Richard the Third** which portrays an evil hunchback who killed the young Princes in the Tower of London. Well, the rehabilitation of this misrepresented last Plantagenet king of England first came into public awareness with **The Daughter of Time** written by the Scottish crime writer Elizabeth Mackintosh (1896-1952) under her pseudonym Josephine Tey. First published in 1951, this is the fifth book in a series starring Inspector Alan Grant. He is recuperating after a broken leg, and investigates Richard III as a way of passing time. He becomes aware that Shakespeare had to portray the king as evil, because his patron Queen Elizabeth I was the granddaughter of Henry VII, the first Tudor king who gained the throne by killing Richard in the battle of Bosworth Field (1485). Richard is now rightfully interred in Leicester Cathedral. And the novel by Josephine Tey was voted the greatest mystery novel of all time by the Crime Writers' Association in 1990.

PS. The title comes from the saying "Truth is the daughter of time". Such a shame that it has taken so long!!

PPS. I have the DVD of the 2022 film and am happy to lend it to you. It is definitely worth viewing.

Word Perfect by Susie Dent (2020) truly gives us "etymological entertainment every day": a new expression or word for every day of the year. Not just single words but also familiar and unfamiliar expressions are explained and their history humourously outlined. An online version is available but personally I prefer having a book so beautifully set out to while away a brief informative and entertaining moment!

Our NZ book this time is **Birnam Wood** (2023), the latest book from Booker Prizewinner Eleanor Catton. The novel is set in the town of Thorndike, the Korowai Pass, and Korowai National Park – all very familiar to us as they are a combination of the South Island high country. This book is hard to describe (“a propulsive literary thriller” according to the blurb) and even harder to put down. A large abandoned farm, a guerilla gardening collective and an enigmatic American billionaire meet in a clash of trust, ideals and ideologies... Eleanor was born in Canada, grew up in Christchurch and now lives in Cambridge, England. A truly great writer, this novel grips the reader from start to finish.



Kate Grenville is one of Australia’s foremost writers. You may have read **The Secret River** or watched the TV series, which was based on the story of her convict ancestor. Now she has written a book about her grandmother, whom she remembers as “aloof, thin, frowning, cranky”. **Restless Molly Maunder** (2023) presents Molly, a woman who moved house and home fourteen times in her search for challenge and fulfilment. She represents the generation which paved the way for the women of today. As Kate Grenville explains: “These women are our foremothers. Their stories are our history. Those most silent, mostly unrecorded women are where we come from. ...if you were

born clever and energetic, but female, you had to endure a life of injustice and frustration.” This book is available from the Canterbury Public Library.

Spoiler Alert: Our October film is **The Englishman who went up a hill but came down a mountain**. Based on the hilarious and touching novel by Christopher Monger (published 1995) the film stars a young Hugh Grant and a magnificent cast. The book and film are set in a remote village in 1917 Wales, and the countryside is as much a feature as the idiosyncratic characters.

P.S. Are you a fan of books by Cathy Kelly? If yes, then you must read her very latest book, **Sisterhood** (2024). It is available from the Canterbury Public Library in the New Books section - \$3 for one week – but I can guarantee that you will have it finished long before the week is up!! I agree with the reviewer who claims it is her best book so far, “written with maturity and great compassion”.



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