

# KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

# KNOX LIFE

December 2024



*Kia ora,*

*From the many reflections I've written on photos, I've chosen this one for this edition of Knox Life, since Christmas is just around the corner. At Christmas we remember that "the Word was made flesh". This reflection comes at the "made of flesh" theme from the other direction - from the testimony of one who is made of stone.*

*May your Advent and Christmas be full of the joy and peace of Christ.*

*Arohanui,*

*Matthew.*

## **Although I'm made of stone**



Indeed, I'm made of stone. Stone does not move. It does not breathe or bleed. It's heavy. If I dropped on you, you'd be crushed and soon would die. Being stone, I endure longer than flesh does. The fleshly people who made me have

been and gone, a mere "flash in the pan". Some Bible writer said "the flowers fade, the grass withers". I am made of stone; for what it's worth, I endure.

Although I'm made of stone, I have personality. Yes, I know what you're likely to think from your distance: "they all look the same", you say, "those stone people". But look closer! Fourth from the right, I have a wonderful pot belly. No one else has one of those. That's "put paid" to your lazy view that we're all the same.

What else? Although I'm made of stone, I belong to a community. The Statue of Liberty? She stands by herself. Michelangelo's David? He has a room to himself. John Balance in Moutoa Gardens in Whanganui? All by himself, several times he lost his head! I **never** stand alone. I'm stone in collective community.

What else? Although I'm made of stone, I have the capacity to make the world wonder. "Who made him" they ask. Where is the artist? Why is the land empty? How did he get there? Neither breathing nor moving, neither bleeding nor growing, still I sow seeds of mystery. Don't dismiss me, though I'm made of stone!

**To my lover:** While I would love for you to live forever, I'm glad you're not made of stone. Flesh and blood are just fine with me.

**To my God:** Thank you for all that makes us move, breathe, and grow pot bellies.

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# Church Council Notes

The year is rapidly drawing to a close and the final church council meeting for 2024 will be held on 11 December. As is our custom we have invited retired members of council to join us following the meeting, to share a light supper followed by a brief communion service. This year we will also be inviting three prospective new members of the church council to join us.

The Knox AGM was held on 22 September and annual reports of the council and various committees were presented to the congregation. The annual financial performance review was also presented and both written and financial reports were approved by the congregation.

The property committee is working towards cleaning and repainting the exterior of the Knox Centre building. This will involve water-blasting, replacing some window putty and filling cracks in the plaster before the painting is done. The pigeon problem has reduced somewhat, thanks to a variety of measures taken by the property team.

The Public Questions group has been very concerned about the Treaty Principles Bill now before Parliament. The group worked on a submission expressing our concerns and this was approved by the church council. It has now been submitted to the Treaty Principles committee of Parliament and copies have been made available to the congregation.

In October a book launch was held at Knox. Anne Manchester has written "Peace is her Song" - the life and legacy of Shirley Erena Murray. Shirley Murray was a member of Knox when her husband, John, was our minister from 1967- 1975 and she went on to become a hymn writer known all around the world. It was very appropriate that the book launch took place at Knox and that some of Shirley's hymns were sung at the event.

In recognition of the wide range of his musical work with Knox we have given the designation "Director of Music" to our organist, Jeremy Woodside. Our services are enhanced every week by the wonderful organ music, the Knox Singers and some most talented guest soloists.

An informal social gathering was held in November to enable the council to welcome the people who have begun attending Knox during the year. We are pleased to have them in the Knox Church community and hope they will feel at home with us.

Knox Church is ending the year in good heart.

Janet Wilson  
Knox Church Council Clerk

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## **Thank you for the privilege**

Linda and Norman have been the Knox parish visitors for a year now. The time has flown by. It has been our privilege to be welcomed into your homes. What an amazing group of people you all are; so many stories, so much sharing, laughter and some tears. We want to say thank you for having us.

We are very much aware that there will be people reading this who will be thinking "Well, they never came to see me." We're so sorry if that's the case. It's not intentional. We always ask before we come and there's no reason why it can't be the other way around. So, please, if you would like a visit, give us a ring and we'll happily come.

Linda: 027 249 9741 and Norman: 022 066 7626





## **Holiday Season 2024/25**


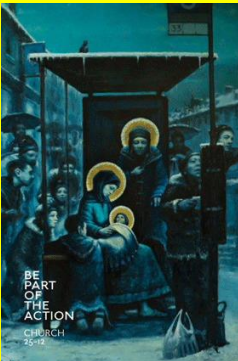
The office at Knox will be closed from Thursday 19 December until Monday 6 January 2025. Services continue through January at 10am each Sunday.

Bible Study and Knox Singers are taking a break in January.

# COMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

## Advent and Christmas 2024 - "God with Us"

<p>1 Dec</p>	<p>God with us at the table</p> 	<p><b>ADVENT 1</b> Following a reflection on a birthday dinner and what it means to express hospitality at a table where food is shared, we celebrate communion. We sing "O come, O come Emmanuel" and "Come thou long expected Jesus. 1 Thessalonian 3: 9-13.</p>
<p>8 Dec</p>	<p>With us whoever we are</p> 	<p><b>ADVENT 2</b> Prompted by a recent piece of writing by Rev. Emeritus Prof Maurice Andrew, we celebrate the inclusiveness of the expression "God with us". Included in our hymns are "There's a wideness in God's mercy" and the brand new "Human voices sing to God".</p>
<p>15 Dec</p>	<p>With us in the fullness of time</p> 	<p><b>ADVENT 3</b> The Advent candle lit today is the candle of "patient creativity". Watching all of the nativity characters move into "narrative place", we reflect on God's timing. We sing "Of our God's own heart begotten" and "The angel Gabriel".</p>
<p>22 Dec</p>	<p>Nine Lessons and Carols</p> 	<p><b>ADVENT 4</b> God with us in the singing of the ancient story. We sing some favourite carols and enjoy hearing some brand new originals written especially for the occasion.</p>

 <p>God ponders how to be "with us" A candlelight service 11:15pm. Christmas Eve</p>	 <p>God with us (bus stop) A simple service for Christmas Day 10:00am</p>
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# Lifelong Learning

My husband and I used to try to have a walk at Scarborough once a week. There are conveniently placed seats all along the walkway on which we could rest. We rewarded our efforts with a cheese scone and a hot chocolate at the cafe. Seeing the sea became part of our wellbeing routine. It was important to us.

On one of these walks, the tide was in and there were lots of waves being held up by the offshore wind. Many years ago, I taught seventh form physics at a country high school. For some reason the syllabus was right up to date with the current research on the nature of light. Did light travel as waves or particles? This involved lots of experiments with wave baths, slinkies and prisms. I was particularly fascinated by reflection, interference and resonance.

At the beach, the waves were crashing into the rock barrier and reflecting back at an angle to the incoming waves. This resulted in a lightning flash of a wave that darted across the water hurling spray into the air as the waves briefly crossed paths and resonated - peaked at the crossing point as the height of the two waves combined. I could have watched for hours but as the tide receded the show was over - a momentary wonder and we were there to see it. I should point out that John, my husband, didn't necessarily share my appreciation for such things!

Why on earth am I talking about waves? I just wished to illustrate how our education can continue to inform and enrich our enjoyment in our present day lives.

Happy learning!

Lesley Hunt

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# Davina takes on Goliath (and wins)

Aka Susan takes on ACC (and wins)

I decided to share this story about *my life* as the title of this magazine is *Knox Life*.

On 9 November 2015 I had a total right hip replacement. This was due to the level of arthritis affecting it and was covered by my private health insurance. After the operation, as soon as I was able to stand, I knew my leg had been lengthened. However, the treating surgeon denied this stating; "it would just take time." I saw him four times and each time I received the same response, plus, that it was an "apparent" (not real) leg length difference (LLD) as opposed to a "true" LLD.

Over the next six years I suffered pain on the right side of my spine just below my waist. In my attempt to find out why I had this pain and was noticeably limping, I sought and paid for several therapeutic modalities including, Physiotherapists (3), Osteopaths (2), Podiatrists (3), Occupational Therapist and a Muscular Skeletal Specialist. In spite of pain and discomfort I continued to work as a statutory social worker/co-ordinator.

It was only in April 2021 when I had a shoulder replacement with an empathetic surgeon, that I asked my GP to lodge a treatment claim with ACC. This was the beginning of a three and a half year journey representing myself. Initially the claim was denied, with ACC stating the LLD was in the "5-10mm margin of acceptable error." However, ACC covered me for a treatment injury I never knew I had which turned out to be a "lateral offset" but was not the LLD issue. I then went through a mediation process and lost that too.

At this stage I was working closely with a local Podiatrist and an Orthotist to determine the LLD. I worked out it was about 17mm (I'm short!) and a CT scan came up with the same measurement. The ACC Clinical Advisory Panel (seven male surgeons) disputed all evidence I produced from various health professionals – they did not quantify the LLD.



Determined to get to the bottom of my injury I lodged an appeal with the District Court - a process that lasted approximately 17 months. This was an extremely stressful period which consumed much of my waking (and broken sleep) time due to the amount of research undertaken. I quite enjoyed the court time. I was on a roll, knew I was winning but the session ran out of time. I then had a strategic advantage to go home and have the time to write a considered "Right of Reply" document. Plus, the judge directed ACC to pay for me to re-measured by a surgeon of my choice.

Finally on 6 August this year the judge released her reserved judgment and "allowed the appeal" meaning I won, with ACC acknowledging the LLD treatment injury.

The stress of the appeal process was compounded when, on my birthday in August 2023, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and had major surgery in November 2023. I am sure that the cancer grew at an expedient rate due to my stress levels. There were some light-hearted moments. Being quite fit I wanted to do some form of exercise in hospital but was told off by a charge nurse for walking too fast up and down the ward and my walker was taken off me! I was back at Pilates classes two weeks later.

Tracey Neal, a social justice reporter from The Herald, contacted me as she found the Court outcome interesting – google her article: "**Woman left with one leg shorter after hip surgery, takes on ACC by herself and wins.**" Or google **Susan Peake NZ** and the article will pop up. As the judgment is a public record, she has named some key players. I'm not legally trained but happy to talk with anyone wanting information and/or assistance when dealing with ACC.

Susan Peake

Email: [susanpeake10@gmail.com](mailto:susanpeake10@gmail.com)

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# Meditation – a contemplative practice

Are you interested in being part of a meditation group based at Knox? Meditation is a practice in which an individual or a group of people train their minds to focus on a particular word (mantra), phrase or simply their breathing. The purpose of this regular practice is to increase one's attention and awareness and achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm and stable state. For many, regular meditative practice (twice a day for 20-25 minutes is recommended) is a form of prayer which encourages a closer relationship with God.



Rowan Williams, a previous Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, has spoken of the growing significance of contemplative practice which enables many who have “drifted away from the regular practice of sacramental faith” to reconnect with the deep roots of the tradition and reawaken to its transformative dimension.

The proposed contemplative Christianity focus within Knox could be based on the practice of the World Council of Christian Meditators <WCCM.org>. This international organisation encourages dialogue among all Christian traditions concerning the contemplative renewal of Christianity and what this means for the church in their relationship with each other, and their collective witness to the relevance of Christian life to our contemporary crisis. The World Community of Christian Meditators states the following about meditation; “It is a prayer of the ‘present moment’, where God is. It allows us a rest from the busyness of our minds. It involves our whole being, mind, body and spirit. The fruits of meditation will enrich our lives as our faithful practice gradually brings us wholeness and great peace.”

## How could this contemplative practice evolve at Knox?

We could meet at a regular time (once a fortnight?) in the Chapel at Knox. It takes about 45 minutes if you include a reading and discussion time. We arrange ourselves in a circle. We then open with a prayer. We can choose to start with a meditation first or listen to a short presentation e.g. a reading or a poem that inspires our meditative practice. In the actual meditative practice, we choose an upright posture that helps us in our meditation (usually with our eyes closed) for about 20-25 minutes (whatever the group decides on) repeating our chosen mantra or inspiring phrase silently or just concentrating on our breathing. Having a slow breath in and out during

meditation is important, because it helps to calm our nervous system down and encourages it to switch from the “sympathetic” response i.e. the fight, flight, freeze response to the “parasympathetic” i.e. a calm, relaxed response.

During meditation when your mind wanders off (as minds do), the practice is to gently shepherd it back, without criticising yourself. The act of realising that your mind has wandered and bringing it back is central to the practice of meditation. You may eventually become calm, or you may not. If you become calm, this may also be short lived. Dominating thoughts or emotions may also arise. Here it is important to simply observe that this is happening without reacting to it; i.e. “hold it in your mental space” without trying to change or analyse it. Then return to your mantra, phrase or breathing. These occurrences may happen a number of times through your meditation. This is a common experience for all meditators, even for those with several years of meditative practice.

After the 20-25 minutes is up, signaled by a chime, we gently turn our minds back to where we are and open our eyes. If we meditate first, we then can have a short time to share a reading and any reflections on the initial passage or on our meditation experience.

A variety of resources can be used (e.g. the World Community of Christian Meditators, Father Richard Rohr, Spiritual leader’s writings and poetry) to inspire and teach about meditation and support our meditation practice. The meditation time can be led by different participants, depending on people’s availability. We then close with a short prayer and leave – hopefully feeling calmer and refreshed and more focused for what is ahead. This practice on a regular basis is a great way to still the inner voice, cultivate a peaceful mind and help us face our day with equanimity.

### **Interested?**



If you have any questions about meditative practices and/or would be interested in creating a group at Knox – please let me know and what your preferred time would be.

**Bobbi Laing**

Cell phone: 021 028 45454

# Impressions from around the world - Part 2

The items mentioned are in chronological order of our itinerary.

**Churches:** We visited or saw about 48, although some were not open on the day, varying from tiny parish churches (such as near the train station in Salerno, Italy) to the unimaginable Duomo in Milan. Some were old favourites for us such as Cologne Cathedral and some were modern rebuilds as in Rouen and Coventry. **Favourites:**

## 1. The Last Supper, Milan:



In the Refectory of the monastery Santa Maria Delle Grazie in Milan. Our friends had booked our visit here. When I visited in 1974, viewing was not possible as restoration was underway. Finally, the familiar painting is revealed in its glory, but photographs are not allowed.

2. The **Frauenkirche** in Dresden, Germany (where we attended a service for Peace) and **Coventry Cathedral**, England: who became sister churches after suffering mutual firebombing in World War II. The Frauenkirche was rebuilt with help from the West after the reunification of Germany. The gold cross on the top of the Frauenkirche was donated by a British ex-airman who had been involved in the bombing raids in February 1945, and the cross inside the church was made from twisted remains of the old Coventry Cathedral, destroyed in the Blitz in 1940. In both cities the blackened parts of the buildings have been left uncleaned as a reminder and warning of the horrors of war.



Dresden Coventry



3. **Église Sainte Jeanne d'Arc**, Rouen, France: At the heart of old Rouen (founded by the Romans, and the capital of Normandy since 911) is the market square with a grass patch upon which is a sign marking the spot where Joan of Arc (Sainte Jeanne) was burnt at the stake in 1431. She inspired the French forces who eventually won the Hundred Years War (1337-1452) between England and France. This war is alive and well and living in France – probably because they won and the English lost. Not surprisingly it is barely mentioned in England!

Rouen, known as “the town with a hundred bell towers” was heavily bombed in World War II and much of the city, including the cathedral, the Great Clock and many medieval half-timbered houses, have been lovingly restored. However, the church of Sainte Jeanne was constructed after World War II to replace the former St. Vincent’s church. Opened in 1979, this spectacular modern church in the round contains the stained glass windows (1520-1530) from the ancient St Vincent’s church. A highly successful mix of new and old.



4. **St. Julian’s Church**, Norwich, England: This tiny stone church dates back to about 900AD. It was destroyed in 1942, then restored and rededicated in 1953, with attached visitors’ centre and nearby residential study houses. Everything was beautifully kept and so tiny for such an influential person. When we were there, the church members were preparing for a special service because the Bishop was coming and we were privileged to hear the organist practising (barefoot!).



5. **St. Michael's Church**, Dumfries, Scotland: This has a handsome mausoleum where Robert Burns is buried. The churchyard was fascinating, with many surnames familiar to us at Knox: Laing, McGiven, Annan, even Bushby (our own street in Christchurch!). Nearby was the Burns House Museum, with a variety of interesting household items and copies of manuscripts on display. Down the road, the tiny four-storey Mill House was also a fabulous wee museum.

6. **Tiny village churches in Norfolk**: Some even no longer had a village! The most moving were at Wrampingham (where the Rectory had been owned and written about by Bill Bryson in his book *At Home*) and the tiny St. Peter's church in Swannington where many generations of the family of Richard's sister-in-law were buried. This church is in the process of restoration and is next to what was an airfield in World War II, with an Australian Squadron. The taxiway was still intact.



## Museums and Art Galleries:

Everywhere! And superbly curated! For us, some were revisits of old favourites, such as the Uffizi in Florence and the National Gallery in London and some were first time tasters to revisit later, such as the Met in New York. Every museum, without exception, had well-written and informative explanations and displays, with the hair-raising experience of seeing the Real Thing on display... And of course, enticing merchandise for sale...

## Most unusual museums:

1. **Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt:** This is an area of the city which was built in the Art Nouveau (Art Deco) style. Houses, a church, a garden to explore, and a museum with the most wonderful collection of paintings and household items such as crockery and cutlery.

2. **Erich Kästner Museum, Dresden:** Did you ever read *Emil and the Detectives* as a child? My brother and I and our friends loved it as kids. This museum had an excellent video to cover his life, then small drawers of activities for the visitor to do. The house itself had been his home, and only the top had been destroyed in the World War II firebombing. We visited by chance, as it turned out to be opposite the laundrette we had just used.

3. **Charles Dickens Museum, London:** In Dickens' house in the West End, set up with items and displays from the family life. It reminded us of Katherine Mansfield's House in Wellington, but on a much grander scale. The comparison was fascinating – how the early grand New Zealand homes were modelled on the much larger English ones – but of course built in wood not stone, with two storeys not three or four and no cellar!

4. **National Air and Space Museum, Washington D.C:** One of the extensive Smithsonian Museums. We saw the original moon landing craft, the original planes of the Wright Brothers and other pioneers (but sadly no mention of Richard Pearse of Timaru).

5. **Metropolitan Museum (The Met), New York:** We had time only for a taste of the treasures on display, so we focused on *Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion*, a sensory exhibition of old and new clothing grouped by themes (birds, shells, etc) and complete with appropriate sounds and scents! And of course, we had to visit the Arms and Armour galleries with the grandson in mind – so many suits of armour on display!

There is still just so much to share that I will have to write **Part 3** for the first Knox Life of 2025!

Bronwyn



Knox Organ circa 1905

## The Organ

When I first thought about writing a "wee piece" about our beautiful pipe organ I had no idea of the wonderful, far-reaching (often colourful) history which lay behind it.

In July 1880 it was proposed that £2.10 be spent on repairing the harmonium which was in a "bad state." Mr Bowman offered to pay two month's hire for "any instrument the Committee might agree on." However, Mr Jenkins offered to sell to the Committee the organ at present used by the Merivale Episcopalian Church (which became known as the "American Organ") for the sum of £100 or for £110 "properly erected."

The harmonium remained "for sale", the congregation's opinion was sought as to purchasing it but the Committee agreed to hire it for three to six months. By May 1883 the Committee was unanimously in favour of procuring an organ from Messrs Milner and Thomson at £120 or 3 years' credit @ 8%, provided no charge was made for the use of the American Organ and also to purchase a small harmonium for the Sunday School at "not exceeding £7."

With the planned opening in 1902 of a permanent church on the Bealey Avenue site known as the North Belt, a committee was appointed in February 1901 to procure a suitable organ. A sub-committee was empowered in September 1901 to make an offer of £250 or "up to £275 if necessary" for the



organ in the Durham Street Wesleyan Church. But in December 1901 the Committee offered £300 for a "very suitable" organ belonging to Mrs Bain of Riccarton.

Then there was the riveting debate relating to the salary to be paid to the organist, which included by turn, his resignation, withdrawal of the resignation and his reinstatement. The offer of £25 per year was agreed upon by Mr Johnston as at 1 April 1884, but the argument resumed in March 1885, again in 1903...

By 1904 problems of a different nature had arisen. In May it was recommended that Mr Johnston dismiss the two boys who blew the organ because of "suspected misbehaviour". Then in December, Mr Johnston was required (by the Committee) to have the organ boy sit with the male choir members because he fell asleep behind the curtain and "thus lost the benefit of the service, besides disturbing the order of the Church."

On 6th September 1904 a letter to the Editor of the Lyttelton Times claimed "Knox Church has had a new and beautiful-toned organ erected, but the music in this church is I think, without exception, the worst I have ever heard... Time and expression are evidently looked upon as of little account, and the voices of the choir and congregation are drowned by the organ being played too loud, frequently with all the stops out ..."

In response, several letters of rebuttal were received by the Editor, including such delightful statements as; "As a member of the choir, and therefore in a position to see, I can inform ... that never yet have I seen all the stops drawn at once during the playing of a hymn, and very seldom even in a loud postlude." "It is only a few months since the choir and Sabbath school teachers presented the organist with a silver-mounted baton as a mark of appreciation after twenty years' service to the church." "Should our friend feel inspired to rush into print again I should deem it a personal favour if he would use "Tone Deaf" as his nom de plume."

Poor Mr Johnston - a deputation was appointed to wait on him with a view to "toning down the music" and then in October 1904 Mr Johnston assured the Committee that he would do his best to "tone down his playing in order to help the congregation in singing."

In December 1909 Mr Johnston requested the installation of a Water Motor for blowing the organ, but it wasn't until June 1911 (after correspondence referencing the "poor class of music" was received), that the matter of repairs was actually debated. By December 1912 a sub-committee was empowered to contract out the work at £300. Correspondence in April 1915 indicated

that the water motor was not "as specified" - the engine should be noiseless...

The Secretary was requested to see the organist regarding conserving water used by the organ engine in the way of shutting off the water (if possible) after each hymn. Mr Musgrove undertook to place poison for killing mice in the organ...

But wait, there's more. 😊

June

## **Treaty Principles - Diversity and the Future**

It took me a while to decide what I found most objectionable about the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill, which ACT has sponsored as far as the Justice select committee at Parliament.

I'm used to a story that people value many things about the democracy/capitalism/rule-of-law package, but an important one is economic growth. I'm also used to a story that capitalism and permissionless innovation work well when people can look at what each other is doing and find ways to implement it in new contexts.

In some personal development context that I went through, it was called market research.

Moving sideways, the core assumption of the Bill is that people are treated too differently. That's not quite the same thing as saying that there's too much diversity but afterwards I anticipate either less diversity or more people with failing lives.

Borrowing good ideas only works when there are new ideas to borrow. Reducing diversity reduces the supply of ideas. From where I'm looking, that looks like a loss of value in the future. That strikes me as a strange success-case for the political party that most approves of capitalism.

If this line of reasoning makes sense to you and you feel called to write it into a comprehensible submission to the bill, please feel free to find me on a Sunday morning.

James Cone

## A link to an unsung hero

Some years ago, my mother gave me a small Chinese jewellery box – it was made of wood with a white jade inlay on the top, and brass corners and lock. The lining inside is bright pink silk. When my granddaughter Beatrix was quite young, she took a fancy to this little box and I promised that one day it would be hers. When Bea turned ten at the beginning of November, it was time for the box to be passed on to her.



Why, you might ask, am I writing about this for Knox Life? The answer is that the original owner of the jewellery box had a strong link with Knox. Before the earthquakes caused so much damage to our church buildings, her photograph was displayed in the Knox Church gallery.

Frances Ogilvie was Knox's "own missionary" for 40 years - 1920-1959. She was ordained at Knox by Rev Dr Robert Erwin at a service of dedication for mission work in August 1920. Frances forsook a secure and highly promising career as a teacher in New Zealand to work with the Canton Villages Mission in China. The mission was based at Kong Ch'uen, just north of Canton (now Guangzhou).



At that time China was a land of widespread poverty, disease, superstition and social injustice, of concubines, bound feet, warlords and bandits.

She became a fluent speaker of Cantonese and as village evangelist and school principal, Frances soon became totally absorbed in her work despite the increasing risks involved. To begin with there was civil war, then when the Japanese invaded, Frances – with only three quarters of an hour to ready herself – led a group of young women over the hills to Kowloon, Hong Kong, where she volunteered for work at the La Salle Emergency Hospital.

There she was finally captured by the Japanese, spending the rest of the war, almost four years, inside Hong Kong's Stanley Civilian Internment Camp. Frances spoke very little of her time there. "That's all over now" she would say. "Let's think about the future."

After the war, she returned to Canton and Kong Ch'uen. Here she continued her work in education and evangelism. The political situation remained unsettled until October 1949 when the communists brought in a new orderly government. Initially they allowed the Christian mission groups to continue their work but by mid-1950 it became apparent that their time in China was limited. After 30 years in China, Frances and most of her colleagues left for Hong Kong early in 1951.

Following a trip back to New Zealand, Frances worked for a brief time at the Chinese School in Suva, Fiji before returning to Hong Kong as principal of the Women's Christian Training Centre. She and her students did valuable work with the many refugees who flooded Hong Kong as they escaped communist China. Later, she was to undertake a variety of tasks for the NZ church in the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and NZ.

Despite all the hardships she endured Frances frequently referred to herself as "such a fortunate woman."

During her retirement in New Zealand, Frances enjoyed visits from her many friends. I remember visiting her at her modest flat in Karori, Wellington. My parents, who had worked with her for a brief time at Kong Ch'uen stayed connected with her whenever they could. At some stage the little jewellery box was given to my mother.

Throughout her long life, Frances Ogilvie steadfastly refused to make any sort of fuss over the adventures and dangers she had experienced. It was not until after she died in 1993, in her 99<sup>th</sup> year, that her nephew Gordon Ogilvie undertook, at the request of the Presbyterian Church's Council of Mission and Knox Church, Christchurch, to write a book about her life. The title "Little Feet in a Big Room" was also the title of a talk she had given at a children's service at Knox. There is a copy of this book in the Knox library.

Jean Brouwer

# Climate change and faith

*These notes are based on a presentation given to the Shalom group during the Season of Creation, in September 2024. This theme will be developed in 2025.*

Climate change is a symptom of ecological destruction caused by human beings. Most of this has occurred within the lifetime of many of us. It goes alongside loss of biodiversity and other planetary problems.

## **Some terminology, to avoid confusion:**

**Global warming:** heating of the atmosphere and oceans, largely due to human activity, especially burning of coal, oil and gas

**Climate change:** sustained changes in the global climate caused by global warming

**1.5 degrees:** a rise in surface atmospheric temperature above pre-industrial levels, considered to be a relatively safe threshold

**Paris agreement:** in 2015 almost all 200 countries agreed to reduce the mean atmospheric surface temperature below 1.5° if possible

**Decarbonisation:** reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases including methane and nitrous oxide

## **Does climate change matter?**

The authoritative Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states:

*“Human-induced global warming of 1.2 degrees C has spurred changes to the Earth’s climate that are **unprecedented in recent human history**. Climate impacts on people and ecosystems are more widespread and severe than expected, and **future risks will escalate rapidly** with every fraction of a degree of warming.”*

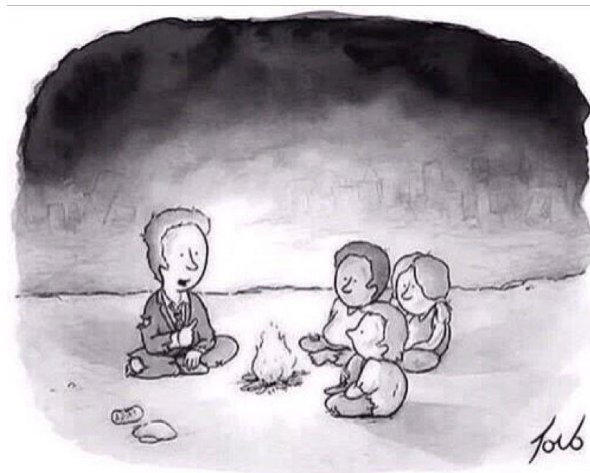
Climate change is an **existential** issue because it threatens to make this planet uninhabitable for humans and many plant and animal species.

*Climate change is already the single biggest threat to the peoples of the Pacific, of which NZ is part. We are not on track to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. We need to scale up urgent action this decade. Simon Watts at CoP29*

Climate change is an **ethical** issue because the poorest individuals and sectors of society, and the next generation, will suffer first and worst from sea level rise, freak weather, flooding and wildfires, food and water insecurity, conflict and mass migration.

Climate change is an **environmental** issue. Along with loss of biodiversity, climate change is the most serious challenge facing our Earth today. We need to support *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship).

Climate change is an **economic** issue because we need a healthy environment to support a healthy economy.



*"Yes, the planet got destroyed. But for a beautiful moment in time we created a lot of value for shareholders."*

### **Why the church?**

- We meet regularly and care for each other, so we can work collectively as well as virtually
- Like other faiths, we have spiritual values which transcend materialism, consumerism and self aggrandisement
- We have “change technologies” including music, prayer and liturgy, discussion, meditation and contemplation
- Climate change affects poorer people and societies first and worst: *social justice*
- We care about our children’s and grandchildren’s future: *intergenerational justice for our mokopuna*

### **So what can we do?**

**Education:** we can become better informed, talk about it, use prayer and music with environmental themes, join NGOs.

**Advocacy:** we can make submissions to government and local bodies. Many NGOs are making submissions and they all contribute. 'Common Grace' is a Christian organisation that can help. <https://www.commongrace.nz/>

**Action:** we can "repent" (acknowledge and change destructive behaviours), encourage and support sustainable living patterns, counter consumerism and live more simply: food and waste, energy, transport. A Rocha can help. <https://arocha.org.nz/>

Thinking about the ecological catastrophe can lead to despair, which is counterproductive. The counter to despair is personal action and it is much more effective when it is collective.

*"No matter the level of warming, it's never too late for things to get better; never too late for emissions to be reduced; never too late for the worst effects to be lessened; never too late to build a better future. To keep trying is to decide not to be motivated by fear and to focus instead on the love and care we feel for the things we strive to protect." Climate Club, December 2024*

*"The last couple of months in local and global politics have been a stark reminder of our need for advent hope in the face of the climate crisis. A few weeks ago COP29 (the annual UN climate conference of global leaders) ended with little progress on global climate action. The NZ government's Fast Track Approval Projects list reveals a number of harmful coal and seabed mining projects which will sidestep consultation and consent processes. In the meantime, the window to reach the 1.5C target of the Paris Agreement grows ever narrower. The path towards climate justice is far from straight, but we know that does not mean the journey is not worth taking." Cathy Bi-Riley (Auckland Anglican Diocese), December 2024*

*"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." Jane Goodall*

Richard Milne  
December 2024



Ken Shields with Annabel Frost (National Practice Manager at Pillars)

## Bringing the Magic of Christmas with Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou

Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou is a charity established in Christchurch over 35 years ago that supports tamariki and whānau of people in prison or serving



a community-based sentence. Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou provides a social work service, youth mentoring service, as well as Family Pathway Centres in prisons. Children impacted by the incarceration of a loved one, often face challenges such as economic hardship, social isolation, and stigma.

Without intervention, these obstacles make these children 10 times more likely to end up in prison themselves.

Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou supports the tamariki and whānau of people in prison to create positive futures. For many tamariki, this support often begins with a powerful gesture: being seen, heard and valued.

For tamariki and rangatahi, receiving a Christmas gift is about far more than the present itself. These gifts symbolise connection and a reminder that they are supported by a community walking alongside them.

As one of Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou social worker shared:

*“Christmas is always an expensive time of the year. Parents want to give their children the traditional Christmas experience - festive trees, heartwarming meals, and excitement around presents. But for many of the whānau we serve, this dream is out of reach.”*

### **Where Your Gifts Go**

One mum, supported by Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou last year, shared her heartfelt gratitude:

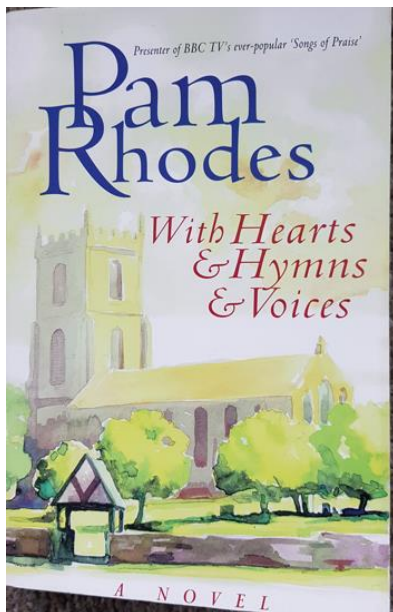
*“Thank you so very much for the generous gifts and kai! I was blown away and am so very grateful. This will help so much over the tricky Christmas season. It’s been a hard year for my son with his \*\*\* away right before he starts school and his life changing so much. Your support in helping us manage this transition means the world.”*

In the coming weeks, your Christmas gifts along with kai packs will make their way into the hands of tamariki and rangatahi supported by Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou. These thoughtful gifts will help families focus on what truly matters this season—strengthening bonds, creating joy, and building memories.

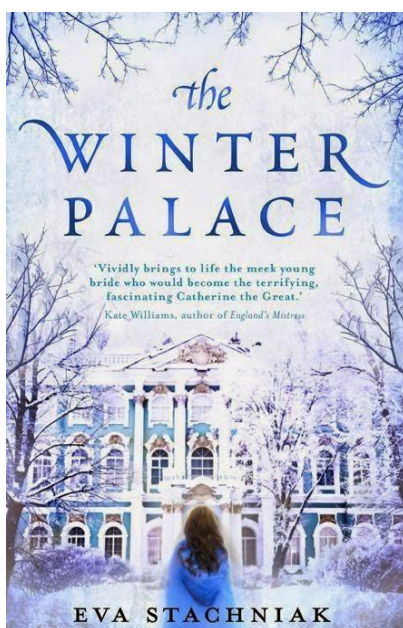
Thanks to your generosity, tamariki will feel the magic of Christmas, experiencing the joy of unwrapping a gift chosen just for them and knowing that someone in the community is walking with them on their journey towards a positive future. Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou is so thankful for your support.

# FAITH, FILM AND FICTION...

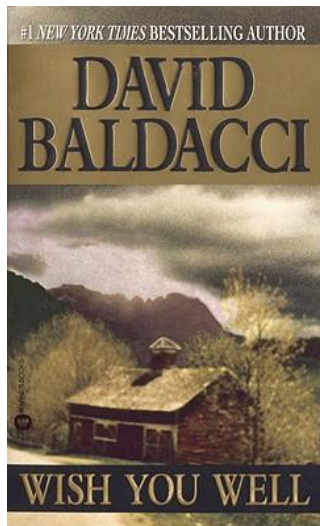
## Book Reviews



You may have seen the BBC series “Songs of Praise”. Pam Rhodes is the presenter. She is also a writer and **With Hearts & Hymns & Voices** (1996) was her first novel. Set in a small village in Suffolk, the book gives a fascinating background to the TV series, with very realistic quirky villagers coping with the recording of a special programme for Palm Sunday, and with all the television team including the important technicians. Since then, Pam has written several books. You can find an interview with her on Google.



You have heard of Catherine the Great, but do you know her story? **The Winter Palace** by Eva Stachniak (2011) places a young orphaned Polish girl, Vavara, to be trained as the Empress’s spy. Through her character’s experiences the author brings to life the story of Catherine’s ruthless rise to power. The novel is thoroughly researched and beautifully written. You can’t put it down. And have you noticed that Putin has begun to compare himself with the Tsars? Here is the story behind all the glorious buildings and lifestyle.



You are probably familiar with the gripping thrillers written by David Baldacci. The book **Wish You Well** (2000) is a bit different. It is set in the 1940s when the Cardinal family is ready to move from New York to California. However, a car crash kills the father and leaves the mother in a coma. The two children Lou and Oz survive and are sent to live with their grandmother in the remote mountains of Virginia. But the life of the people there is threatened by the discovery of natural gas and conflict between the mining company and the families develops. This is a book written with heart and you won't be able to put it down.

**A final message** for those who enjoy well-researched historical fiction by women who are writing about what they know. Look for these writers – there might even be some of their books on the Knox Book Table!

**Kate Thompson:** especially **The Little Wartime Library** (2022) about a library established during the Blitz in an unfinished underground station. Her latest book **The Wartime Book Club** (2024) is set in Jersey during and after the German Occupation. Both books finish with about 60 pages of photos, articles and references to the source material the author has used.

**Dinah Jefferies:** grew up in Malaya then moved to England as a child after Independence. She has written many popular books, but my special favourites are **The Separation** (2013) which brings the jungle to life and **The Tea Planter's Wife** (2015). She has won many awards for her historical novels.

**Fiona McIntosh:** is Australian but was born in England. She also writes about what she knows! For example, **The Orphans** (2022) one of her stand-alone books set in Australia from 1935 to the 1950's is about a woman who is keen to be the first female undertaker in Australia. Her book gives great insight into the life of those formative years.

**Belinda Alexandra:** is the daughter of a Russian mother and an Australian father. Her first novel, **White Gardenia** (2002) is based on her mother's experiences as a White Russian, moving from Shanghai to Australia. She has written many books since then, set in places where she has spent time and done extensive research. Her latest, **The Masterpiece** (2024), is set in World War II Paris.

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