

KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

KNOX LIFE

March 2026



Persistent? Stubborn? Bloody-minded? Faithful?

Luke 18: 1-8 presents what we call the "Parable of the Persistent Widow". A judge who cares neither for God nor people is repeatedly approached by a widow seeking relief from her "adversary". Though he has no sympathy for the woman's cause, he is so sick of her bothering him, that he grants her request. Not enjoying the idea that God should be compared with someone who doesn't care, I hoped that Jesus would include a phrase similar to; "If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" [Luke 11:13]. Alas, no such qualification is made - but Jesus does encourage his disciples never to "give up" pursuing what they believe is just. He encourages his people to be persistent in prayer, and maybe also in action. I have three stories . . .

(1/3) The Battle with Mercer, otherwise known as "Goliath"

When I turned 60, an Australian superannuation company informed me that since I had reached "the age of preservation", I qualified for up to 10% of my investment to be released to me annually as a Transition to Retirement pension. The company then presented me with two years' worth of ridiculous reasons why, while I qualified for the pension, they could not give it to me. I now am 62 and a half years old - and very well acquainted with the endless ways that Goliath companies block people's proper entitlements. I am happy to report that last month Goliath paid me my first pension payment. I'm using it to put solar panels on my roof - to make retirement more affordable. As I refused to "give up", I think a major driver of my refusal was a sense of injustice. Was I informed by the Parable of the Persistent Widow? Or was I just angry in a secular way? Justice was a major theme in the witness of the prophets.

(2/3) The Grass-grub Incident

When I moved into my house and started caring for the garden, there was a large bare patch in the lawn - suspected to be the result of hungry grass grubs eating the grass from beneath. Expecting an immediate improvement, I



dusted the lawn with some grass grub poison. No improvement was evident. I re-read the poison label and saw that a quarterly dosing was required. So, three months later, I put another dose down. Had I done some online research, I

would also have discovered that grass grub has a two year life cycle, and any treatment programme needed to last for two years. I am happy to report that this month, when I went to dose the lawn, I found no grass grub damage. This pleasant outcome has, indeed, occurred about two years since I began the treatment. The lawn looks great, and I am happy and proud. Meanwhile, the grass grubs of wider Papanui are telling stories of how a sustained murderous campaign was directed at their community for two whole years. Destruction, they will note, has its own persistence. Under "persistent" attack, how long has Ukraine being crying out "how long?"

(3/3) The Sloth-like Doctorate

When I was 28, and graduated with a Master's degree, I decided that a PhD would be next. I found a supervisor and started looking for a topic. The fact that I had no topic at the beginning of the process might have been a sign that "*having* a PhD" was higher in my mind than exploring something about which I was interested. After about 18 months of flailing about, I gave up, consigning the doctorate to that little file of slightly sorrowful "never happened". I got on with other things. Having found an area of genuine interest and two supervisors in that field, I completed my thesis in 2004, when I was 41 years old. When does "never happened" become "unfinished business"? And when does "unfinished business" become "current priority"? Are there seasons for which we must wait? As we wait, should we be seen as having given up? Or are we discerning the way?



Why did Jesus tell the parable?

Jesus lived within a protracted occupation of his land. The Romans wouldn't go away. He received on-going resistance from Pharisees - they wouldn't go away. His efforts to enlighten his disciples met persistent misunderstanding. He knew that progress requires persistence. During Lent, under the theme of "Jesus and the Stones", we will explore the resistance applied against Jesus. On Good Friday, as the stone is rolled across the door of his tomb, we'll be tempted to think that "resistance is futile", and persistence is wasted energy. On Easter Day, as the stone is found to have been removed, we'll ponder God's persistence for justice, righteousness, peace and life. These win.

I wonder what things are requiring you (as you read this) to persist. I wonder also how Easter will speak to your persistence.

Arohanui, Matthew

Church Council Notes

The Knox Council met for the first time in 2026 on 18 February.

It was pleasing to see strong support for our Christmas services – on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. At a very busy time of the year, it is good to stop and reflect on the real meaning of Christmas. The atmosphere at these services is enhanced by additional lighting and a Christmas tree.

Matthew and the Worship Committee are working hard to plan services for the year. We are grateful to Matthew for his creative and thought-provoking liturgies, reflections and prayers. Thanks also to the many people who are willing to help with welcoming, reading the scriptures, leading prayers and serving morning tea and communion.

We continue to be grateful to our Music Director, Jeremy, and the Knox Singers who share their considerable talents with us.

Thanks to a generous donation from an anonymous donor the Music Nurturing Fund is again supporting two young members of the Knox Singers.

The Finance Committee reports noted that there has been a substantial increase in revenue from offerings, property income and interest on our investments. Thanks were expressed to those who are now using direct debits as their way of supporting the parish. The budgeted deficit for the year appears likely to be much reduced.

The Property Committee reported that the painting of the Knox Centre has been completed. It was noted that some parts had been waiting since 1963!

The Council discussed concerns around the closure of the Stanmore Road NZ Post Shop. Te Whare Roimata, the group to which we give our weekly donations of food and household goods, has developed this shop into a community hub for connection and support for people in the area, especially those who are marginalised. A letter has been written in support of the retention of this post shop.

Jean Brouwer
Knox Church Council Clerk

COMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

LENT AND HOLY WEEK, 2026 SIX STORIES OF JESUS AND THE STONES

Lent 1 - 22 February
High rocks and stumbling blocks



Psalm 40 speaks of God providing a high rock upon which the person of faith can see into the distance clearly. Rock solid. 1 Corinthians 1:20-25 speaks about how the great rock of God became a stumbling block. Jesus becomes the stone that the builders rejected. Lent will be a season of stumbling in the company of the rising one.

Lent 2 - 1 March
White-washed tomb stones



Frustrated by the incessant opposition of the Pharisees, who pose holiness in public, but reject his ministry of freedom and life, Jesus calls them "white washed tombs" - outwardly clean but inwardly dead. We explore themes of hypocrisy, and receive communion as those called to inner truth and renewal.

Lent 3 - 8 March
Two stoning stories



In the first stoning story, Jesus confronts a crowd of those who are keen to stone a woman to death, since she has been found in sin. Jesus asks the one without sin to cast the first stone. In the second story, Jesus himself is the target for a crowd with stones in their hands. Somehow he walks right through it. We wonder about the freedom of Jesus to undo the stone-holding hands. We take a few stones in our possession home to release.

Lent 4 - 15 March
Sinking stones rising



In Luke 17: 1-2, we find Jesus saying that it were better for those who harm the "little ones" to tie a millstone around their necks and be thrown into the sea. We consider our various stones of drowning weight. In Matthew 14: 22-33, we find Peter sinking in the sea, only to be raised up and helped. Jesus rescues the sinking one. Is he the one to remove the millstone from the human neck?

Lent 5 - 22 March
You are the rock, but also not



In Matthew 16: 13-20, as the disciple Simon declares Jesus to be the Christ, Jesus responds by calling him "Peter", which means "rock". Peter the rock then immediately expresses a great error in his understanding of Jesus. We explore our life as those in possession of great spiritual truth but also grave error. In 1 Peter 2: 1-5, we are called to allow ourselves to become living stones in God's new temple. How can we gift our imperfect faith for God's temple?

Palm Sunday - 29 March
If people are silent, the stones will sing



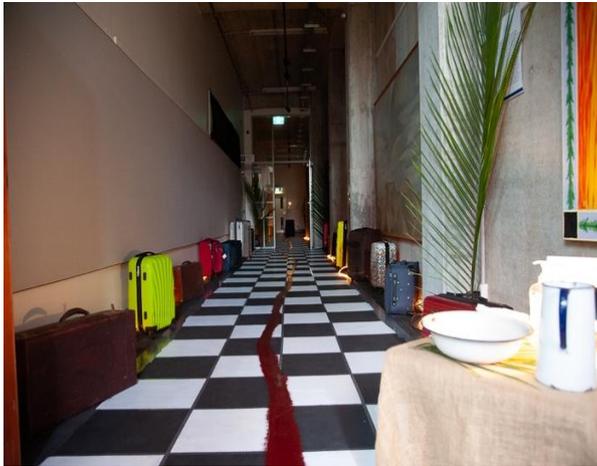
As he enters Jerusalem, where he will be condemned by the crowds and the authorities, some tell his supporters to be quiet. Jesus' response is to say that should his supporters be silent, the stones on the ground will take up the song of praise.

A line in our closing hymn, Lift high the cross, goes "if we are silent, even stones cry out."

When humanity loses its voice, could the rest of creation insist on praising God?

Holy Week

Tuesday 31 March - Thursday 2 April



The Lenten Way Te Ara Tapu

An Installation Artwork for Holy Week
Pete Majendie

In the Knox Centre Chapel

Open for viewing
Tuesday 31 March - Thursday 2 April,
9:00am - 12 noon.

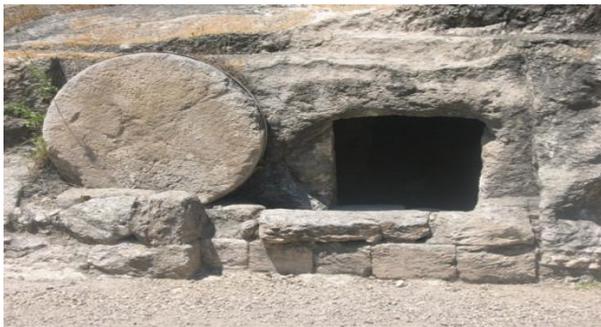
The artist will be present on Tuesday
and Wednesday, 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Tenebrae Service

Thursday 2 April, 7:00pm
(also in the chapel)

Good Friday - 3 April

Roll the stone across the door



A sombre reflection on death and dying. The huge stone (which mourners fear they won't be able to remove) becomes a symbol for all that has sought to block Jesus' work of love and grace. On Good Friday, as a line is drawn under Jesus's life, the weight of the stone seems to be the greatest power in Creation.

EASTER, 2026

Easter Day - 5 April

The power that rolled the stone away



The service begins with a reflection and Matthew's telling of the Resurrection (where a considerable question is "how will the women access the tomb, given the large stone placed across its door?") Reflecting on Paul's famous claim of faith that "nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord" [Romans 8: 35-39], we rejoice in the rolling aside of one or two legendary stones. We can't do the rolling ourselves, but we rejoice that the God of Easter does.

A Dog's Tale

G'day, my name's Maurice, Mo for short. I've never really liked my name, but worse still - if I'd been born a girl, I might have been called Isabel or Jasmine - perish the thought! I could also have been unlucky like Snow over at the Peacock's place. Who would call a coal black dog, Snow? I guess Maurice isn't so bad after all.

It's a great life out here in the country - the sounds, the smells, always something happening. The other day a car slowed, then stopped, just down by the gate. The driver climbed out and tripped, nearly fell flat on her face. No wonder - the spikes on her feet were higher than a tomcat's armpit! She walked around the car, kicked a tyre, put her hand to her head and yelled. Oh, could she yell! Riper than a stockman with a cross-eyed herd. Old Jim's missus was weeding the centre rose bed the other day. Must have been more than she could handle because when she came to stand up, she was cast - seized up tighter than Jim's old Fergie.

Was that a rabbit? Never used to be a rabbit that got past me - must have blinked! Once upon a time I could spot a stag on the hill over behind the Peacock's place, no problem. Now I'm lucky if I can spot the school bus as it comes around the bend before the gate.

I'm not so sharp off the mark these days. Seems only yesterday when I could easily race young Jim on his old Indian, down to the bottom paddock to bring in the cows. I guess the pesky ache in my right hip has something to do with that! But I still have my uses. I babysat Flo's latest litter the other day. Such a precious time - a bonny bunch of pups, but those wee teeth were giving my ears jip! I gave young Jim a hand yesterday, doing some fencing out the back. Well, I kept an eye on the staples and strainers - thirsty work that! I really needed a quick top up in the trough. Noticed an increase in the white around my muzzle. Where did that come from? No point in fretting. Waste of energy - fretting.

There are a couple of spots where I can doze and dream and be clear of busy boots, but handy enough to smell when it's smoko. Up here on the porch is great for keeping track of things. And under the old macrocarpa at the bottom of the front paddock, it's easy to tell the time of day unless the milk tanker is late again. The new rural mail chap doesn't hold a candle to old Mick. Always knew where you were with old Mick. There goes that flashy red car again - kicking up a real spray of dust and grit as usual.

There are some nice smells coming from the kitchen - Tux are ok, but...

Mo



Pillars
Ka Pou Whakahou

“Kia ora,

Firstly, we want to send a huge thank you for your continued support of our Christmas kaupapa this year! We cannot tell you how much it means to the families we support!

Thank you for such a huge part of this kaupapa, for caring in such a meaningful way, and for choosing to walk alongside whānau.

Wishing you and the Knox Church community a beautiful holiday season. Abby and the Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou team.”

Abby Cox

Positive futures happen when we walk together.

Every child in Aotearoa deserves to stride into the future with confidence. All tamariki deserve to grow up knowing their potential is limitless, no matter their circumstances.

But right now, an estimated 20,000 tamariki with a parent in prison are serving an invisible sentence of their own, one marked by stigma, isolation, and uncertainty. Without targeted support, tamariki by impacted whānau incarceration are ten times more likely to end up in prison themselves.

This is a systemic failure. Our justice system acts like a powerful current, pulling tamariki and whānau toward a single outcome: intergenerational cycles of harm and offending.

Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou supports the tamariki and whānau of people in prison to create positive futures for themselves. We walk alongside whānau, providing wraparound social work and mentoring programmes.

What Christmas means at Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou

"Thank you S (social worker) and Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou for all your support this Christmas.

I am raising my four younger siblings after both our parents went to prison. Things have been very stressful this year, so this Christmas will be an important time for me and my siblings to come together and celebrate in our own way.

Without having my own waka, it is tough to go out and do the shopping that everyone else gets to do for Christmas. It was so incredibly helpful to have Pillars support; the amazing Christmas kai and gifts dropped off to us so we could have things to put under our Christmas tree. Many thanks once again."

- Rangatahi (young person) supported by Pillars

Our Vision:

That all tamariki and whānau with people serving a sentence have the opportunity and support to choose a better future.

This is our vision in action. From the hardest days to the moments of hope and strength, your generosity makes every step possible.

Thank you, the community at Knox Church for joining us and helping to create a positive future for every *child* in Aotearoa.

Watch our story here: <https://www.pillars.org.nz/towards-positive-futures>



Knox gifts to Pillars – Christmas 2025

January 2026 - Decluttering Exercise (Susan Peake)

In 1989, in Invercargill, my mother died quite suddenly and my father some 20 months later. I was faced with the daunting task of cleaning out a house full of household items. I remember working my way through a very large drawer of newspaper clippings and recipes in my mother's immaculate handwriting.

Finally in January this year I decided to tackle the nine photograph albums I "inherited". I checked with my older Perth based brother who told me to "chuck them". Reminding myself of the contents of the "Swedish Death Cleaning" TV programme, I methodically (quickly) glanced at every photo, culling reasonably ruthlessly and putting them into relevant envelopes based on decades. Now I have more space in the garage cupboards!

As I have no family, I am happy with what I have now, knowing that if I get run over by a big teal bus, my friends won't have to trawl through so much stuff! Subsequently I found the below information and have provided a precis, hoping it may be of use to others in similar situations.

Matt Paxton is a professional cleaner and de-clutterer based in the US and the author of “Keep the Memories, Lose the Stuff” 2022. The book provides a compassionate, practical guide to navigating the emotional landmines that stand between us and a clutter-free life, especially when dealing with family heirlooms and the homes of ageing parents/relatives.

His core message is simple: you can honour the past without being buried by the physical evidence of it. He provides a gentle, step-by-step roadmap for making what he calls “The Edit” focusing not on rules, but on ritual, memory preservation and mindful decision making. It’s a truly liberating read for anyone paralysed by sentimental clutter.

Here are ten lessons and insights on memory and decluttering:

1. **The Emotional Overload is Real:** Paxton validates that decluttering sentimental items is mentally and emotionally taxing because each object represents a person, a time or a lost opportunity. Acknowledging this pain is the first step.
2. **The 80/20 Rule of Stuff:** He observes that roughly 80% of our emotional burden comes from 20% of our stuff, particularly the items we store out of guilt, obligation or fear. Focus your energy on those items first.
3. **Memories Don't Live in Objects:** A central and freeing truth: Memories reside in your brain and heart, not in physical items. Keeping a dusty box of things you never look at doesn't honour the memory; living a good life does.
4. **The Power of the Ritual:** He encourages the creation of a "Ritual" before letting go of an item. This might involve taking a photo, writing down the object's story, wearing it one last time, or saying a grateful goodbye. This ritual satisfies the emotional need to honour the item's history.
5. **The "Legacy List" Method:** Paxton advocates for creating a "Legacy List" - identifying the three things you want people to remember about a loved one and only keeping objects that directly support those three ideas.
6. **The "Three-Box" System:** He uses a well-recognised and effective, guilt-free system for sorting: Keep, Donate/Sell, and Trash. Crucially, he also advocates for a temporary “Holding Zone” for those truly difficult items, giving you permission to revisit them later.
7. **Addressing Guilt and Obligation:** Paxton confronts the "Guilt Items" head-on - the gifts you never wanted or the expensive tools you never used. He stresses that keeping an item out of guilt dishonours both you and the giver, as it becomes a source of stress.

8. The "Best of" Approach: Instead of keeping every ticket stub, photo, or piece of art, he advises choosing the "best of" - the single, most representative item that encapsulates the memory and letting the rest go.
9. The Shift to Experience over Heirloom: He encourages families to prioritise experiential legacies (travelling together, documenting stories, teaching skills) over physical heirlooms, recognising that shared time is the most valuable inheritance.
10. It's a Process, Not an Event: Decluttering, especially the sentimental kind, is not a one-time event but a continual, kind process that requires pausing, reflecting, and being gentle with yourself when emotions arise.

"Keep the Memories, Lose the Stuff" is a guide that treats decluttering as a spiritual and emotional journey. Paxton's blend of hard-won wisdom and genuine kindness makes this essential reading, particularly for those facing the difficult task of downsizing a home or settling a family estate. He gives you not just permission, but a powerful rationale to shed the physical burdens of the past so you can fully live in the present.

BOOK: <https://amzn.to/3Xe6jD5>

NB. I learnt some interesting facts about some of my relatives - my paternal grandfather ([12 Mays Road, Christchurch](#)) was documented as being the best rugby referee for 50 years in New Zealand and then went on to referee NZ cricket.

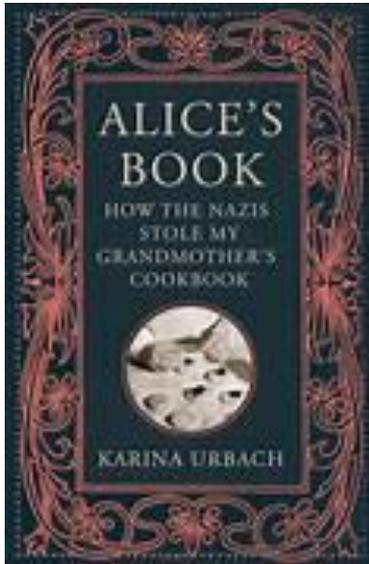
Common phrases popularised by the King James Version of the Bible

A man after his own heart	I Samuel I 3:14
All things to all men	I Corinthians 9:22
Apple of his eye	Zechariah 2:8
At his wits' end	Psalms 107:27
Broken heart	Psalms 34: 18

Coat of many colours	Genesis 37:3
Drop in the bucket	Isaiah 40: 15
East of Eden	Genesis 4: 16
Eat drink and be merrv	Ecclesiastes 8: 15
Ends of the earth	Psalms 61:2
Fell flat on his face	Numbers 22:31
From time to time	Ezekiel 4:10
In the twinkling of an eye	I Corinthians 15:52
Know for a certainty	Joshua 23:13
Labour of love	I Thessalonians 1:3
Lamb to the slaughter	Jeremiah 11:19
Pour out your heart	Psalms 62:8
Powers that be	Romans 13: 1
Salt of the earth	Matthew 5: 13
Scales fell from his eyes	Acts 9:18
See eye to eye	Isaiah 52:8
Set your teeth on edge	Jeremiah 31:30
Sign of the times	Matthew 16:3
Skin of my teeth	Job 19:20
Stand in awe	Psalms 4:4
Still small voice	I Kings 19:12

Book Reviews (Bronwyn W)

Alice's Book: How the Nazis stole my Grandmother's Cookbook by Karina Urbach (2022)



In 1930s Vienna, every home owned and used a recipe book *Cooking the Viennese Way*, written by Alice Urbach. Alice and her family were Jewish, and in 1938 she fled to England for safety. Alice stayed in England during the Second World War, looking after Jewish refugee children. After the war she emigrated to the USA.

In 1940 the same cookbook was reprinted under a different name! Her granddaughter, an experienced historian in Germany, researched what had happened. This riveting book tells the story.

In recent years there have been many books -fiction and non-fiction- based on the experiences of the authors' grandmothers, often having taken a generation or two to be revealed. These books show the positive influence of books and libraries which enabled women to get through the World Wars – and the battles at home for their contributions to be recognised. As one author says: *"Books can save lives, even in wartime."* The dedication of the first book on the following list speaks for all: *"For the women who quietly weaved their magic during the Second World War in Britain"*.

In **A Girls' Guide to Winning the War** by Annie Lyons (2024) two women from very different backgrounds are employed by the Ministry of Information to write suitable pamphlets for women.

In **The Little Penguin Bookshop** by Joanna Toyne (2024) a young woman sets up a bookstall at her local train station.

In **The Paris Library** by Janet Skeslien Charles (2021) a young American woman works in the American Library in Paris. The library still exists, and the author has herself worked there.

In **The Little French Village of Book Lovers** by Nina George (2019/ 2023) helps set up and run a mobile library through the small mountain towns of Nyons.

Knox Church values the support of all who are involved in our community's life. Knox Church is a charity. All charitable donations are eligible for a tax rebate of 33%. Bank account - 03 1705 0029641 00. Put your name in the reference field and email your contact details to the office. For further information or options contact: office@knoxchurch.co.nz ph: 379 2456.



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