



# KNØX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

## Pastoral Letter during the first week of Level 2

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19 May, 2020

Kia Ora Knox Community,

**UPDATE ON ALERT LEVELS:** Last week, following the Prime minister's announcement that we were moving into Level 2, I met with those who are employed by Knox to work at the church and Knox Centre. Also present were Janet Wilson, our Council Clerk, and Jean Brouwer, our Health and Safety Officer. We gathered to talk about how, within the new containment requirements, could conduct our business. From our front-line experiences of how the buildings work for various activities, we put together some recommendations for the Church Council to consider at its next e-meeting on Wednesday night. Council has the ultimate responsibility for providing its employees and volunteers with a safe operational space. It also is the body responsible for meeting government containment requirements. When Council has considered our thinking, and has come to a decision, we'll send out an email to you all. Whatever decisions are made concerning small groups, external hires, and the operation of the office, large public gatherings cannot be held during Level 2 - so please don't expect us to announce the recommencement of our regular Sunday service schedule too soon.

**LAST WEEK'S HEALTH STATISTICS:** Thankfully, no deaths occurred last week from Covid-19, and the number of new cases remained low. Against this happy news, there was the concerning news that Canterbury's latest case was of a young child. We need to remember that all people, regardless of age, are vulnerable, and we need to continue operating carefully - keeping proper physical distance, and keeping a record of "where we have been", so that our contacts can be traced if we become unwell. Pretty much the only place I've been going is to the supermarket, so I'm keeping my receipts, as a record of where I've been. When I've been to other places, I write those places (and times) on the bottom of my supermarket receipts. This keeps a simple, but effective, record of where I've been and when. There are also, I believe, mobile phone apps that can trace your movements and record them.

**ONLINE SERVICES OF WORSHIP:** We're continuing to post our Sunday services online. For the links to past services, go to the notices / services page of our website - <http://www.knoxchurch.co.nz/oos.html>

For last Sunday's service, here is the link: <https://youtu.be/dvZ82ah1d7Q>

When this Sunday's service (24 May) is ready, Jane will send a link to you, and we'll post the order of service and sermon on the website.

**RESPONSES TO LAST SUNDAY'S SERMON:** A number of people have responded to last Sunday's sermon, saying that they, also, are feeling a bit anxious, after a time of protracted isolation, about re-entering the world. And so, I repost here a transcript of a Seven Sharp interview with Dr Michelle Dickinson that I quietly included at the end of last week's order of service.

### ***Are you feeling a bit nervous about going out?***

*On "Seven Sharp", on 12 May, Dr Michelle Dickinson, a Science Educator from Auckland, was interviewed about the move from Level 3 to Level 2. When asked about those who may be feeling a bit fearful about moving into Level 2, and who may feel inclined to stay in primary bubbles, Michelle said "O, please stay in your bubble; don't feel pressured to have to go outside. One of the things I've been talking about on social media is, just because level two is coming, it doesn't mean that you have to go out and see everybody. There has to be a real transition stage. I've had lots of people invite me over for dinner . . . and I've said "no" to pretty much everybody, because I'm not ready yet. I just want to take my time. So, don't feel pressured to go out, if you don't want to. Remember this is still a level, Level 2; it's about "playing it safe". So just get used to your new normal. Transition slowly; don't go out to all the parties quite yet, and just take your time, if you want to."*

And, by the way, reticence is not universally experienced. Some of our community are feeling none at all, but are so very keen for us to get together as soon as we can. We'll do what we can, as soon as we can, within what is allowed and deemed responsible.

**FROM THE CANTERBURY INTER-FAITH ORGANIZATION:** The Canterbury Inter-faith Organization organised a day of prayer (14 May) in response to the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic, and invited Knox to be part of that. Prayers from Knox were augmented with prayers from other Christian communities, Buddhist, Hindu, Bahai and Muslim communities. The prayers were wrapped up in a video, which you can watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uebxqsmJU1I>

**PETE MAJENDIE: HOW I BROKE MY BUBBLE AND MET GOD:** Pete, creator of the 185 Chairs, one-time speaker at a Knox Café, fine man, and friend, wrote this

piece about the breaking of his bubble. Presented here with the permission of the author, it's a moving reflection on a true event:

### How I broke my bubble and met God

He's running on the road. What is it with runners, is the footpath not good enough?

I've stopped the car, he could run in front of it. Sure enough he does. I should toot the horn but it's the way he looks at me. I don't want to frighten him.

He tilts his head and stares, he comes to the driver's side. I buzz down the window as he arrives. "Run on the foot path." Still the same tilt of the head. He is lower than me not saying a word, staring with stunningly beautiful brown eyes, so close I can see my reflection.

I am looking into the eyes of God.

He is off, running down the middle of a side street.

Flick on the hazard lights, leave the car in the middle of the road, I'm off running.

I've got questions. He is running like a divine Forrest Gump. I had no idea God could run so fast. Jesus never ran anywhere, it's not in the Book.

Blessed are those that run, for they shall piss off those that don't.

He is through the trees and reached Brougham Street. I burst out onto the footpath, heaving. I have run my fastest 50 metres in 50 years.

It is a 4 lane arterial route – no running here. Maybe I will see a Red Sea parting of the traffic.

I kneel down. Reaching out I touch him. He pulls away.

We sit on the footpath watching the traffic.

A woman swoops him up, "Sanjay, Sanjay. Oh Sanjay."

She is on the phone; people arrive running. Tears wash away the fear.

Smiles, handshakes, hugs, laughter.

Sanjay is about 2 years old, less than a metre tall. He is in the arms of his father who is crying. "Sanjay it is dangerous. The traffic is dangerous. You could be hurt Sanjay. You could be killed. Do you understand? Sanjay, do you?"

The tilt of the head, the silence, the wonderful staring eyes remain the same.

"Thank you for being with him. He loves cars and running. He just loves to run."

Walking back to the car I think, 'Well life isn't getting any easier for God, and he is still not saying anything'.



**THE LOCK-DOWN MINISTRY OF ANIMALS:** For this week's silly "animal contribution", check out Andrew Cotter's Zoom conference re. employment reviews for Olive and Mabel. Olive and Mabel will be fine. They are loved. Bear in mind, though, that many people, during Covid time, are being "eased out of" their employment - sometimes not fairly.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFVHaus\\_pjI&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3jYav8ASrxkr\\_wBEG2DahYhbmy2DnQ7yv6WBrnqsK-tCdy8Kdpyb2yNPc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nFVHaus_pjI&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3jYav8ASrxkr_wBEG2DahYhbmy2DnQ7yv6WBrnqsK-tCdy8Kdpyb2yNPc)

**RIGHTS, GRACE, AND SELF-EMPTYING - THREE LINKS:** Sometimes it's interesting to put things next to other things, and see what kinds of themes emerge from the contrasts and parallels. (1). A church leader from Auckland breaks virus confinement conditions in the name of defending his human rights. (2) A Franciscan priest reflects on how the concept of grace places question marks over any inclination to say "I deserve . . ." (3). In Philippians 2, and other passages, Jesus is described as giving up what was rightfully his, for the sake of others. Explore the links, and see what you think!

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/121536840/coronavirus-drivein-service-for-aucklands-destiny-church-at-alert-level-2>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1ax1ojDe04>

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/nrs/philippians/2.html>

**LESSON IN FRUGALITY?** Jim Mora, Radio New Zealand, interviewed Professor Emrys Westacott, who has been reflecting on whether the virus has prepared us to pursue a simpler way of life.

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/sunday/audio/2018746811/professor-emrys-westacott-the-wisdom-of-frugality>

**SOME PHOTOS SUPPLIED BY KNOX PEOPLE - VARIOUS SOURCES:**



**THE KNOX CENTRE STRENGTHENING PROJECT:** Yesterday I went to Knox and saw that the people from Brosnan Construction had erected a large plywood screen across the South end of the old foyer, to barricade off the construction site from regular (but for now suspended) Knox space. It's good to see this progress - not so good to hear the loud noises associated with construction. But, over the years we've been used to loud construction noises at Knox. And we have the added advantage of not working much at the moment in the Knox Centre.



**TWO QUOTES - ONE ABOUT NOW, AND ONE ABOUT LATER:**

If these hours be dark, at least do not let us sit deedless,  
like fools and fine gentlemen,  
thinking the common toil not good enough for us, and beaten by the muddle;  
but rather let us work like good servants, trying by some dim candlelight  
to set our workshop ready against tomorrow's light.

*William Morris*

**When All This is Over**

I hope when all this is over that we are changed.  
That when the world starts returning to normal, we don't.

I hope we remember the times we appreciated being out in nature,  
where we sought escapism in rolling fields and vast woods  
and we found solace in the peace and calmness of the world on our doorsteps.

I hope we remember that we baked soft chewy cookies,  
towering cakes and buttery pastries because it brought us joy

and we ate them without feeling guilt and shame.

I hope we remember that we don't have to be switched on all the time,  
that avoiding the news and social media is good for the mind  
and that a day in pyjamas watching Netflix is not a wasted day  
but is an elixir for the soul.

I hope we remember the precious hours spent as a family  
laughing, crying and just talking and being together  
with the people you live with but often take for granted.

I hope we remember that we often felt like giving in but we carried on.  
We pushed ourselves and made each day the best we could.

I hope we remember that although we stood 6 feet apart from others  
a smile and a hello could make someone's day.

I hope when all this is over we don't return to normal  
that we are changed.

*by Lauren (published on her lifestyle blog, Lauren Loves)*

Arohanui,

Matthew.

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