

KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice



Peace

the 2020 review

Agenda

1. Make a decision about the Open Church Project
2. Make a decision about attendance at the Inter-Faith Peace Bell event
3. Call for any thoughts that may have arisen from our Lockdown debrief meeting
4. Within the spirit of incremental adoption, choose one or two projects for the next 12 months

Open Church

In February, I presented the following document. There was widespread agreement with the suggestions made as to refinements to the project. Then there was Covid, and the project was suspended. We need to make a decision about whether to recommence the project – and if so, in what form. Perhaps in the form described in February?

State of the Open Church - February 2020

Early in November 2019, we reviewed the Open Church visitor numbers for the first eight weeks of the project. The numbers were as follows:

	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays
Noon - 1pm:	2	7	6	2 just
1:00pm - 2:00pm	2	11	7	2 + 3 just
TOTALS	4	28	13	4

It was noted that the busier days were Tuesday and Wednesday, and the busier hour was 1:00pm to 2:00pm.

Open Church continued up until Christmas, when we closed for the summer break. From 11 November until Christmas, the numbers were as follows:

	Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays
Noon - 1pm:	9	5	6	0
1:00pm - 2:00pm	8	10	2	0
TOTALS	17	15	8	0

Monday became the busiest day; Tuesday slumped, but remained significantly busier than Wednesday. Visitor numbers question whether Thursday is worth running.

We adopted the four day coverage at the beginning of the trial, simply because we had sufficient volunteers to cover those days. A few volunteers are supporting other ventures in 2020, and some have expressed genuine interest in continuing. Others have suggested that they would prefer not to have a regular rostered day, but be available instead, on a casual basis, to fill in for others. (Jane has a short list of such people.)

In light of all this, I have a few suggestions:

1. That we no longer open the church on Thursday.

2. That all volunteers let me know whether they wish to continue the project this year, and if so, which days (Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday) they are available – or whether they would prefer to be on call.
3. That we get a permanent sandwich board – but not include details on it of the open hours.
4. That volunteers continue the practice of letting Jane know when they are not able to come at their rostered time.

Matthew Jack.
4 February 2020.

The Peace Bell Event

Last October, a smallish group of Knox people walked to the Peace Bell in the Botanic Gardens to join an Inter-Faith gathering for prayers for peace. My recollection is that the event was quite long, and most of us were pretty keen to leave once the formalities concluded. It might be that the main value of such events is time spent afterwards in conversation with people of other faiths. It seems to me that the organising team is getting better at time management. For instance, the producer of the video prayers to mark the anniversary of the mosque shootings asked for a time limit to be applied. Most faith groups took that request seriously.

Do we want to continue attending the event? It is scheduled this year for 11 October

The Lockdown Experience

Given the many claims that the lockdown was something of a learning experience, we gathered last month (5 July 2020) to talk about what we had experienced and learned. We did this in case any of our lessons might have given us ideas about mission projects.

Here, in red, are the notes taken at that meeting. Then, in blue, are some ideas one person sent me after the meeting.

We need to take a little time to sift this material.

Present: Matthew plus 20 people.
Mission document was available.
Review of what we have done and where do we go from here.
2 August – we will look at list again.

Lockdown – unplanned. Some people enjoyed it and others did not. Feeling that we do not want to go back to “old normal”. We have learned something from the experience – may influence where we go from here.

Matthew: Mother turned 90 on 23 March – Matthew had booked to go to Auckland and brother had planned to go from Fiji. All cancelled. Sister visited. Brother not happy as they may have put mother at risk. Conflict in family! Jane, Daniel and Matthew met before going into lockdown – office to operate from Jane’s home, Daniel to record music. Saying goodbye was hard – these people meant a lot.

Driver’s licence expired as did warrant of fitness – Matthew did not care!

Rejigging of what was important.

Knox had to rethink about how to support STGI.

Matthew had to learn how to use some computer technology – good skills learned.

Daniel helpful.

Matthew took home things from sanctuary – familiar and helped people to feel connected.

Neighbourhood became very quiet. Felt like everyone had gone. Native birds started singing.

Fascinating to see teddies in windows. Comforting.

Going to supermarket – talking a lot to people- important.

Every fortnight ministers’ group usually meet – replaced by zoom during lockdown every week.

Grateful to be locked down in comfortable house. Aware that some people were locked down with violent people.

After lockdown not happy with people who got too close. Level 3 and 2 - Person employed to manage queue at supermarket and to keep people happy. Lots of talking.

When travelled to beach – felt naughty!

Ross Clapp funeral – not advertised. Hugged someone – even before allowed to do that.

Aware that we are part of global situation – also that we are an island nation.

Joyce/ Barbara Live in a cul de sac – strong sense of community. Buzz in street as children came out on bikes etc. People talked to others from a distance.

Jennifer learned to accept help even though she did not think it was needed.

Len – appreciated phone calls from John- who he did not know beforehand. We were deprived of face to face contact. When out for walk people made eye contact. Similar to after the mosque event.

Jim Glimpse of what life would be like without cars. Sustainable?

Meetings remote – had to learn how to use the technology. Had to set it up well

before hand. Now back to normal – so has been away lots. More efficient to use technology but we prefer to meet face to face.

No structure to day – easy to forget meetings

Employers can use lockdown as an excuse to sack people. Has happened to lots of people. When in lockdown you can't go and talk to lawyers etc. Kind person offered to help financially.

Not everyone qualifies for jobseeker benefit.

People overseas – very costly to get home. Some can't afford it.

Barbara – became closer to her sister.

Orana Park – gorilla enclosure is heated. Expensive to run park and no income over lockdown.

John S -Aware of garden/birds - and their behaviour. Time to stop and look at things. Can teach us a lot.

Naomi – at supermarket – people were respectful.

Ken - Rush on supermarkets – some shelves were bare. – toilet paper, wine, flour. Local dairy was better.

People over 70 to stay home (old??)– next door neighbours offered to do shopping.

Very fortunate to live in NZ – opportunities to get out. Good govt. Wage subsidies.

Some countries have very strict rules – others few rules. Situation continues in many countries.

Businesses hit by Covid – and roadworks. Makes a very difficult time for some businesses.

All asked to send thoughts to Matthew. Ideas to inform the next meeting.

I have been wondering whether showing films with a variety of peace themes might be a worthwhile new venture. Sharing a discussion and maybe a coffee afterwards could be helpful in developing a sense of community too - something that lockdown made us realise is important for wellbeing.

With the enthusiastic reception of your lockdown services I would like us to explore the possibility of them being distributed more widely as podcasts - but I know nothing of the tech side of that! A booklet of your lockdown sermons might be another possibility.

Also I have been wondering whether the goals of encouraging both peace and community (and also following up the Black Lives Matter movement) could be helped by connecting with Maori and Pacific groups in some way - St Paul's Trinity Pacific? Te Rehua marae? Maori language? Canterbury history from a Maori perspective?

Then, with a renewed appreciation of what is important in our lives, I am wondering whether an occasional Iona type service might appeal to some people - am I right in thinking that such a service would be more informal and would stress our connection to the natural world? I'm very vague about that!

Previously identified Preferred Projects

Cut and pasted, below, from the Mission plan's adoption section, are the projects we'd already prioritised as higher on our list. We need to make a decision about selecting one or two for adoption this year.

In 2019,

the first two projects, chosen by the mission group, will come from the following:

Peace bell	7 votes	The Canterbury Interfaith Organization meets annually at the Peace Bell in the Christchurch Botanic Gardens for prayers for peace, offered from various religious traditions. Following thorough conversations about its input to the occasions, Knox pledges to attend Peace Bell gatherings in good numbers from 2019-2024 with clear signage, explanations of why we stand for peace, and brings appropriate prayers to fit into the occasion.
Open church	4 votes	Have one afternoon a week / fortnight / month, when we are open and quiet, peace candles ("open day" experience) - be clear that this is about offering peace.
Peace concert	4 votes	To organize with our music team a peace concert, featuring a "peace work"- with all appropriate advertising being done such that the event is clearly presented as a ministry to peace.
Sermon booklet	4 votes	That a booklet of peace themed sermons be produced for free and broad circulation.

Each year in June, we will review the two projects we have adopted. In the light of our "work of God" criteria, we will determine whether to continue, discontinue or modify them. We will then choose one or two projects from the list (that may have been augmented in the Spirit by then).

In 2020,

any left over ideas from 2019 will be reconsidered alongside options from the next bracket of project ideas, two projects being chosen

Iona Peace liturgy	2 votes	Have an Iona Peace liturgy / communion once a week / fortnight / month - explore connections with the Iona spiritual rule of prayer and action
Cunningham bequest	2 votes	Focus Knox's annual Cunningham Bequest donation on peace, and make press releases about it
Interfaith workshop and road show	2 votes	Hold an Inter-faith workshop where two / three / four faith traditions talk about the place of peace in their tradition, their contribution to world peace, various practices for gaining inner peace - maybe turn it into something that could be offered to schools that are not interested in Bible in Schools but open to faith-collaborative / comparative ventures for good purpose
Talk to Peace Organizations	2 votes	Talk to Peace organizations and see what grows. (Green Peace? Amnesty International? NZ Defense Force [around the corner - or Rev. Chris Purdie]?)
Secondary schools' peace speech comp	2 votes	Secondary Schools peace speech competition / collaboration - speeches about what our school has done to resist bullying / facilitate reconciliation.

In 2021,

any left over ideas from 2019/2020 will be reconsidered alongside options from the next bracket of project ideas, two projects being chosen

Hero of peace lecture	1 vote	Annual? Hero of peace lecture - with particular emphasis on more secular candidates - e.g. Ghandi? Talk on the most recent laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize.
Art competition / bequest	1 vote	Hold art competition (visual arts / hymns / poems / short stories) on peace theme
Peace and reconciliation theme and forum	1 vote	Maybe have some peace theme each year (for particular focus at a public forum): peace between treaty partners, peace between nations, peace between generations, peace between haves and have-nots, peace between victim and perpetrator, peace between liberal and conservative, industry and environment . . .
Neighbourhood declaration of peace	1 vote	Challenge our neighbours to talk to us about peace in the city - encourage the production of some "commitment to peace in the neighbourhood" to which church and non-church could commit. We are a neighbourhood committed to peace for our world. What are the essentials of peacemaking to which people of faith/s or no-faith could agree

Peace maker in residence	1 vote	We had ideas about an artist or theologian in residence. How about a peacemaker in residence? Or sponsoring a post grad student at Otago Peace and Conflict Department?
Talk to Durham Street	1 vote	Durham Street will leave us soon - do they want to be our neighbours in this on-going journey?
Offer an office upstairs to a partner	1 vote	Offer one of the empty upstairs rooms as the peace office - invite people to apply for twelve month occupation of it - after conversation with applicants re. what they would use it for.
Ask each sub-committee to re-frame for peace	1 vote	Ask each sub-committee of Knox Council (and Council itself) to issue a brief statement of how their commitment to peace informs its work. Perhaps a statement from the "Prayers for others" people, door team people, Singers, about their commitment to work for peace.

In 2022,

any left over ideas from 2019 - 2021 will be reconsidered alongside options from the next bracket of project ideas, two projects being chosen

Peace Awards	0 votes	Have annual peace award - simple press release or full-blown event (is this something we should do in association with Presbytery? Sign of wider solidarity, connection, shared concern?)
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