



KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

Pastoral Newsletter (not during lockdown)

22 December, 2020

Kia Ora Knox community

As mentioned before, there was some desire expressed following lockdown for a monthly pastoral email to be sent out during months when there was no Knox Life magazine circulated. Behold the December version!

SERMON PRACTICE

Also missed since lockdown were the Youtube services we had produced when unable to hold physical gatherings in the church. While understanding that it was impossible (time-wise) to produce a full online service as well as a physical Sunday gathering, a number of people asked what kind of video experience might be manageable. My usual weekly pattern of service preparation involves writing a sermon on Thursday, and having a read-through sometime before Sunday. As an experiment, I tried recording my “read-through” and posted it on Youtube. The recording is pretty basic – no church props or music. It’s simply “Matthew practicing his sermon” at home. Probably, now that we’re gathering physically, the videos are mainly for the benefit of people beyond Otautahi / Christchurch, but, of course, they can be watched by anyone!

There are a couple online now:

Sunday 6 December – <https://youtu.be/AuvJZDooZm8>

Sunday 13 December – <https://youtu.be/Bmmj2wdTcSg>

A few more have been uploaded, and have links that will activate at the same time as the sermon is preached at our physical gatherings:

Christmas Eve, 11:15pm – <https://youtu.be/IRSVyPPnau8>

Christmas Day, 10:30am – <https://youtu.be/J2j5lbnq0Tc>

Sunday 27 December, 10:30am - <https://youtu.be/XeCZoVuJD3A>

FOLLOW-UP ON THE RIMU TREE

In the August edition of Knox Life, I wrote about how I had donated a new rimu tree to my old primary school, to replace the one I planted in 1974, that tree having been killed by the extension of a car park. That article (http://www.knoxchurch.co.nz/data/knoxlife/202008240000_KL_2020_aug2_pdf.pdf) explained that my challenge to the school, to find a pupil called “Matthew” to plant the new tree, had been met by the school finding four Matthews, who planted the tree together. A few months later, I visited the school to see the tree and meet the Matthews. Here’s a photo!



REFLECTION ON A CURIOUS BUT LOVELY THING TODAY

In the book of Jonah, there are two or three references to God appointing things. God appoints a large fish; God appoints a little tree; God appoints a worm to eat the tree. These random things just come out of nowhere, and end up contributing to the development of the story. I've always enjoyed the idea of a God who has

ideas and moves things absurdly along. Here's a wee reflection on something that happened to me today at Memorial Park cemetery.

Having lowered Mary's coffin into the earth and said the final words of blessing, I withdrew from the family, and stood in the shade of a stand of trees - while they took their time to say "goodbye". While there, under the trees, a man dressed up as a sailor and carrying a rose in his hand turned up, told me that his name was Joseph and that he wanted to be a religious brother. In slow and laboured speech, he told me that God loves the world and is sad when we are sad. I asked him about his flower, and he said he was going to give it away. I asked him "who to?" He looked around, saw my little group of mourners, and said "them". "Off you go", I said, and off he went. I watched from my distance. So it was that I saw how, on the day of her burial, Mary received a flower from a complete stranger called Joseph. I liked that! A God-appointed moment.

**Submitted by a member of the Wednesday Bible Study Group,
following a service where we reflected on Anna and Simeon,
two elderly people in the first bits of the story of Jesus**

Beatitudes for friends of the aged

Blessed are they who understand
my faltering step and palsied hand.
Blessed are they who know my ears today
must strain to catch the things they say.
Blessed are they who seem to know
my eyes are dim and my wits are slow.
Blessed are they who looked away
when coffee was spilt today.
Blessed are they with cheery smile
that stopped to chat for a little while.
Blessed are they who never say
"you've told that story twice today".
Blessed are they who know the ways
to bring back memories of yesterdays.
Blessed are they who make it known
I'm loved, respected and not alone.

Author unknown

Prayer and Perseverance: a silly anecdote

A CNN journalist heard about a very old Jewish man who had been going to the Western Wall to pray, twice a day, every day, for a long, long time. So she went to check it out. She went to the Western Wall and there he was, walking slowly up to the holy site.

She watched him pray and after about 45 minutes, when he turned to leave, using a cane and moving very slowly, she approached him for an interview.

"Pardon me, sir, I'm Rebecca Smith from CNN. What's your name?"

"Morris Feinberg," he replied.

"Sir, how long have you been coming to the Western Wall and praying?"

"For about 60 years."

"60 years! That's amazing! What do you pray for?"

"I pray for peace between the Christians, Jews and the Muslims."

"I pray for all the wars and all the hatred to stop."

"I pray for all our children to grow up safely as responsible adults and to love their fellow men."

"I pray that politicians tell us the truth and put the interests of the people ahead of their own interests."

"How do you feel after doing this for 60 years?"

"Like I'm talking to a wall"



BIG CHORDS, LONG NOTES AND GOSPEL VIBE

If you like the above, you might enjoy this performance by the Pride of Auckland Chorus, conducted by Brian Lee.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OB6loxWpEM0>

SOME MUSIC DESK CHANGES

Congratulations to our Daniel, who's been offered a place in a doctoral programme at the University of Canterbury. We're thrilled that this new commitment won't dislodge Daniel from our organ desk - and that he'll carry on playing for our services. However, noting that he needs to free up some time for this serious programme of study, we've restructured things, so he can spend less time developing the Knox Singers. We're really thrilled to announce that a new

"Director of Knox Singers" appointment has been made. In February, we'll be joined by Gabriel Baird.

Gabriel is a student at the University of Canterbury where he studies piano, bassoon, and composition. His bassoon playing has taken him to play with the CSO, and in 2018 he received his LTCL for piano with distinction. Gabriel has had experience working with a large variety of orchestras, choirs, and other ensembles as a performer, manager, and conductor.

Gabriel's main focus will be on the Saturday evening rehearsals of the Singers, so we may not see lots of him on a Sunday morning, but we will certainly see the results of his work!



THE NEXT PASTORAL NEWSLETTER

There won't be a newsletter in January. In February, we'll either have a newsletter or 2021's first Knox Life.

Arohanui,
Matthew

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