



KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

Pastoral Letter during the second week of the second lockdown

30 August, 2021

Kia Ora Knox Community,

UPDATE ON ALERT LEVELS: On Friday, the Prime Minister announced that all of Aotearoa New Zealand south of Auckland will be going out of Level Four and into Level Three at 11:59pm on Tuesday night. That news will have welcomed by many. In terms of physical gatherings at Knox, it makes very little practical difference, in that church gatherings are capped at a maximum of ten people for urgent things like funerals. Regular services are not permitted, so we'll carry on our online services for the moment. Also, since Level Three encourages us to work from home if we can, we'll continue doing just that - running the Knox office from home. If you need to contact the office, just use the phone or email.

THE LATEST ONLINE SERVICE: The You-tube statistics show that the regular congregation of Knox was joined at worship by quite a number of other people - our online extended whanau! It's good to know that we're helping people beyond ourselves. The link for yesterday's service, in case you missed it, is: <https://youtu.be/TrpzDclNrnM>

As part of yesterday's service, we trialed a half-hour ZOOM meeting for morning tea. About thirteen of us (from ten bubbles) signed into the meeting. As expected, we had a few technical issues with some people's cameras not cooperating and a couple of patchy connections. And, of course, we had some moments of everyone speaking all at once and moments of no one saying anything at all. But it was a delightful gathering! It was really nice to see human beings without face masks - and strangely comforting to see the familiar faces of friends. We've decided to do it again next week. I'll send out the morning tea link with the service link on Friday.

To come to virtual morning tea, you'll need to install ZOOM software onto your device. It's free. As with any software, it takes a while to work out how to use it well, but it's a useful application to have.

THE PHOTO ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE ORDER OF SERVICE:

The photo on the front page of yesterday's order of service came from the Australian movie "The Castle". The movie's storyline follows the fortunes of a "classically bogan" Australian family as they try to resist the local government confiscation of their home for the extension of an airport. The family's somewhat disheveled lawyer, quite out of his depth against the big lawyers from the "top" who make pertinent legal points about the situation, ends up telling the judge that his case is based simply on "the vibe". The confiscation just seems wrong. It's a matter not so much of law, but of "heart". So, that's why, as the theme of the service evolved, and a Jesus clashed with the religious legalists of his time, my mind went to that image.



WHAT A FRIEND HAS WRITTEN: One of the people joining us for online worship on 22 August was Rev. Margaret Garland, of Ōtepoti Dunedin. Margaret graced our pulpit a few years ago when, as the then minister of Ōpoho, she collaborated with us over our combined Climate change services and seminars. Our online service prompted Margaret to send me a blessing she wrote while looking over Dunedin from the height of Signal Hill. I, myself, during my times in Dunedin sometimes went up Signal Hill to find a sense of perspective. It's a great place for perspective, with the whole city lying open to view.



Otepoti, Dunedin Blessing

*Blessed be peace of this city – in household, in workplace, in self
Blessed be the anger of this city – against selfishness, against stupidity, against exploitation
Blessed be the kindness of this city – to neighbour, to stranger, to needy
Blessed be the voice of this city – for justice, for hope, for valuing*

*Blessed be the generosity of this city – of thought, of word, of deed
Blessed be the laughter of this city – for joy, for celebration, for silliness
Blessed be the creativity of this city – to sing, to dance, to craft
Blessed be the rivers of this city – to gurgle, to sit by, to restore
Blessed be the high places of this city – to climb, to uplift, to cloak
Blessed be this city, for each and all*

Margaret Garland

NOTE: Signal Hill Lookout is the source of a number of writings. This was on the 4th day of lockdown (level 4) August 2021. Looking down on the city and imagining the many difficult moments of tiredness, frustration, anger happening in houses, businesses, services exacerbated by this lockdown I prayed for peace to be known in the city. Being sick of the laziness of thought that runs with conspiracy and denial and falsehood, I prayed for wisdom and truth.

WHAT ANOTHER FRIEND HAS WRITTEN: Megan Waddington is our neighbour; she is the community liaison person for Presbyterian Support, Upper South Island. Support's building is in Bealey Avenue, next door to Knox, and she pops in for morning tea sometimes. Wanting to keep us aware of resources available for the locked-down community, she sent me this:

Hi Rev Matthew,

I'm just checking in to see how you and the members of Knox are faring at the moment....I hope everyone is as well as can be. Do you think anyone needs any wellbeing resources for children? I can forward on a few things we have from the social workers and counsellors as there are some practical things in there which are helpful. I've attached some from NZ Institute of Wellbeing and Resilience for adults which I've been looking at too 😊

Take care and God bless

Ngā mihi

Megan Waddington

Community Relations Advisor

I've popped the NZ Institute of Well Being resource for adults onto the notices page of our website, <http://www.knoxchurch.co.nz/news.html>, but if you'd like any of Megan's resources for children, just let me know, and I'll ask her to forward them to you.

WHAT ANOTHER FRIEND HAS DONE: While I got my first Covid jab courtesy of inclusion under the whanau umbrella of Presbyterian Support, last week the vaccination programme for PSUSI was indefinitely postponed. The vaccinators, apparently, were just rushed off their feet and had to make a strategic readjustment. Happily, the lovely people at Tangata Atumotu (also a neighbour of Knox) managed to squeeze me into ***their*** programme. So, I'm happy to announce that I'm fully vaccinated, so should be safer to be around when soon we are able to physically gather again.



THE KNOX CHURCH COVID SLIGHT CONFUSION PRIZE: This week's most outstanding piece of "what day is it today" was done by someone who expressed concern that the You-tube service link wasn't working. It wasn't working because

the person was trying to attend the service 24 hours early! Without many of the usual diary markers giving shape to our lives, it's really easy to get confused about what day it is.

THE "PRETTY IN PINK" RHODODENDRON OUTSIDE MY HOUSE: I mentioned last week that I expected the recently pot-liberated rhododendron outside the front of my house to become most wonderfully lovely in the next week or so. It has indeed followed up the early blooms with quite a few more. It's nice to see a happily transplanted plant doing well. (By the way, a friend who's seen this photo tells me she thinks this plant is an azalea, not a rhododendron - and she may be right!). Knox has a number of gardeners who, no doubt, could put me right!



SANANDA MAITREYA USED TO BE CALLED TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY, but changed his name to flag his having started a new life with new values, spirituality and goals. In an interview, he was asked about his experience of racism.

Do you understand why many people hate you because of your colour?

Well, first of all, I don't operate on the assumption that this exists, because for the most part I've not really had much experience of abject hatred because I'm black. However, I remember a few years ago, if someone had come up to me and said "you negro bastard" or whatever, it would have really hurt me. If I'm honest, if someone said that to me now, it wouldn't tend to hurt me as much as it would provoke in me a sense of



compassion for them, because what that would show me is that there was something in them that was either so troubling or so problematic or so limiting, that they are suffering on some level, far greater than I am . . . Even on the cross, man (again I'm not religious), [Jesus] said, you know, "forgive them, for they don't really know what they're doing".

Obviously, being black, I've had to think about these things in a way that perhaps the average white person hasn't - because it behoves the chicken to know the way of the fox. Obviously, because his life depends on understanding the way of the fox. The fox doesn't need to understand the chicken; all he needs to do is to feel hungry, and to know that if he corners him, he can eat him.

You know, my grandmother used to say that black people knew white people the way that white people didn't know themselves, because they didn't have to - whereas black people had to know white people - their survival depended on it.



A PASTORAL LETTER FROM THE PCANZ MODERATOR:



Greetings in the precious name of Jesus Christ our Lord and our saviour.

Once more we find ourselves facing the storm of Covid-19 only this time we are shaken further by the Delta variant that is far more transmissible than any before.

Please do not feel helpless in the face of this immense problem and the trouble it brings to us individually, as a Church, community and country. Lean on your faith and each other. Together we will overcome.

"I will exult and rejoice in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction." Psalm 31:7.

Take care of yourself and your family. We need more than ever to stay in our bubbles and follow the requirements to stay home if we are not essential workers. To our wonderful essential workers we say thank you for the risk you take in service to us all.

Daily at 1pm we have heard sad news of an increasing number who have the Delta variant, and of thousands of close contacts waiting anxiously to see if they have the virus. Join me in keeping all those affected, and their worried family and friends, in our prayers. Let us not downplay the seriousness, this variant can and does kill, but we can be hopeful and trust that in the coming weeks it will be contained.

In these distressing times there are things we can do to lighten the load. If your church has suspended Sunday service due to lockdown and has not gone online, please consider how you can reach out to your congregation safely and bring them comfort that they are known by God and always connected with their church community.

"Keep going, do not be tired of doing good." 1 Peter 3:13.

We know that some supermarkets are overwhelmed and that some people cannot access groceries, medicine or get to doctor appointments. Can I ask you to please do what many of you are already – reach out to your congregations and your communities by phone, text, email, social media and make sure everyone can get what they need. Do not put yourself at risk or break lockdown rules but help put people in touch with those who can assist in your community. Let people know that although they are isolated for a time they are not alone, never alone. You are thinking of them, we are all praying for them.

Jesus said, "I will be with you always, even to the end of the age". Matthew 28:20.

For those of us in Auckland, we know we may face more lockdown in the weeks ahead. It may be hard emotionally and financially. Be strong, we will help protect the country by our sacrifice. We will come through this together as a community. Remember that you are seen by God, you are appreciated, valued and loved. Take refuge in God.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13.

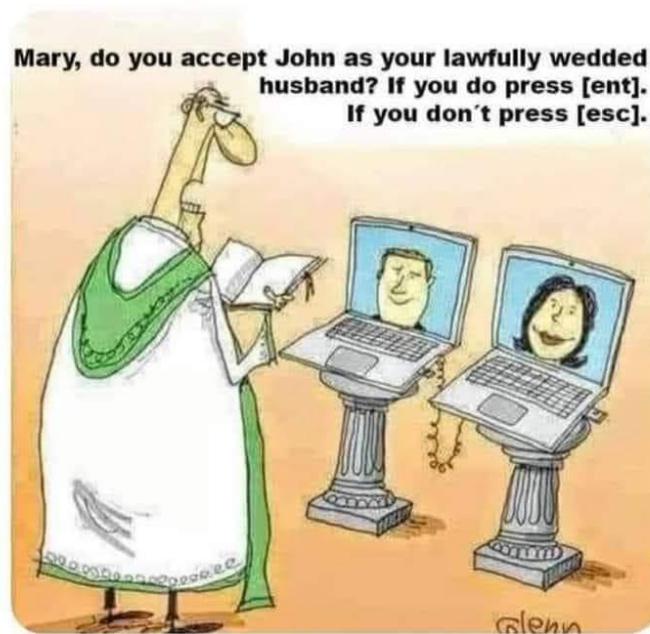
Blessings
Fakaofu

Right Rev Fakaofu Kaio
Moderator
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See the Alert Level 4 laws and rules that aim to keep us safe [here](#) and in many [languages here](#).

Editorial note from MJ. Apart from being the national Moderator, Fakaofu is the minister at the Onehunga Uniting Parish, Auckland. He presided at the funeral of my father, who died two years ago, yesterday. Obviously, being in Auckland, he's ministering in a place where Covid issues are a bit more frightening than they are here. Let's spare a thought for the people of Auckland and Northland.

Weddings in 2021 will soon be like....



Arohanui,

Matthew.

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