



KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

Pastoral Letter during the third week of the second lockdown

6 September, 2021

Kia Ora Knox Community,

UPDATE ON ALERT LEVELS: Since it's not clear how long our part of the country will stay at Level Three, before hopefully moving down to Level Two, our current plan is to continue not meeting physically, but doing things online. A number of people have asked me "how long do you think we'll be at Level Three?" and I've replied "I don't know!" This is a matter beyond *our* control, and prompts me to recall the serenity prayer, written in 1951 by American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971):

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

The office continues, for now, to operate remotely - but carry on ringing and emailing. Jane and Lynda will be happy to help you.

BEFORE WE WENT INTO LOCKDOWN, I saw the daffodils outside Knox almost being ready. While I was in Level Four, they just got on with growing. On an essential visit to Knox a few days ago (Level Three), I took a photo.



THE LATEST ONLINE SERVICE: The link for yesterday's service, in case you missed it, is: <https://youtu.be/mWDGDoxerbo>

Last week I spent a delightful time talking with Rev. Hugh Perry about how to record and post services. While I'm away on study leave (from 13 September), Hugh will be taking the services at Knox - either on site or online. Hugh doesn't have the software that I have for producing online services, but he's really well placed to provide us with online services through another way. No matter how the services are produced, they'll still be posted online, with the office sending you a link, so you can participate. And they'll be sent with a whole lot of love. Obviously, we hope to be back offline and onsite sooner, rather than later. Thank you, Hugh!

And obviously, if last Sunday's service hadn't been created and released before the events at Lynn mall's Countdown had happened, the prayers for others would have addressed those events. See the "prayer for peace" later on in this newsletter.

A LINK TO THE "NATIONAL TREASURES" VIDEO: In Sunday's sermon, I made reference to a documentary called "National Treasures", during which Oscar Kightley interviewed Welby Ings about steps that he had taken during the time of Dawn Raids to protect some of his students. Oscar's interview was in the first episode. You can watch the whole episode online. It's on TVNZ On Demand. To access TVNZ On Demand material you need to register as a watcher, which is free. So register, then search for "National Treasures", and select episode 1. The second Oscar interview (with the boy from Myanmar) comes from an episode of Intrepid Journeys I've not been able to find online. My access to the programme is via an old recording I made ages ago and copied onto a DVD. I don't think it's publicly available now - which is a shame.



A FUN VIDEO: Someone sent me a link to a video that might appeal to fans of musical theatre. <https://youtu.be/DwlnT3Wxrl>

ON A BAD DAY, SOME LIGHT AND ENTERTAINING NEWS: On Friday, I tried to ring my Auckland-based mother, but her phone didn't work. A cyber attack had knocked out various fibre devices. She's locked down in a pandemic. And also, down the road from my first parish, a terrorist stabbed six people and traumatized so many more. Friday wasn't a good day. On Friday, ABBA announced that they had got together again to produce a few new songs. Apparently, they're organizing for their images to be computer manipulated to make them look 1970s young. I don't know what I think about that. I think I'd prefer to see them looking real. But, never mind! On a really bad Friday, the news that ABBA are singing again, was lovely news to receive.



THE JURY HAS DELIVERED ON THE IDENTITY OF MY "PRETTY IN PINK" RHODODENDRON: The clear and expert finding is that my rhododendron is actually an azalea. It was noted by a number of experts that "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" - which is true!



A PRAYER FOR AUCKLAND: God of love, we, your people in Ōtautahi Christchurch, who know full well what it means to have a terrorist atrocity occur in the neighbourhood, grieve deeply with the people of Auckland - especially those who were stabbed in the New Lynn supermercado, and their loved ones. Bless them as they deal with pandemic, cyber-attack and terrorism all in one day. Help all people keep their heads, be calm, and give of their best for their city, our country, and the world. And bless our parliament, as it works to advance appropriate legislative change to deal with situations such as led to this sad event. Amen.

INTERCULTURAL CHURCH: The Alpine Presbytery organized a ZOOM meeting so that people could be prompted to think about how the PCANZ could more faithfully be an intercultural church. The ZOOM meeting was recorded, and now is available. It's not a slick production, but some of the discussion may be of interest to you.

Here's the link: <https://youtu.be/swkkQBemUls>

FROM THE CHRISTIAN WORLD SERVICE: Dear Knox Presbyterian Parish. Last week I said I would write to you about Afghanistan, so here I am. Recent events have made the existing situation much worse and the need for humanitarian aid more vital. The Afghan people are facing a food crisis that could easily tip to being catastrophic.

In a statement [released](#) yesterday, Ramiz Alkabarov a United Nations humanitarian official said half Afghanistan's population (18 million) depended on emergency aid to meet their basic needs before the upheaval. Now the situation is looking much worse. We can help some of these families get through this difficult time. Every donation to our [Afghanistan Emergency Appeal](#) will help more families meet their most urgent needs.

Please [donate today](#) so families can get the help they need now.



Harry Biggs speaks about his Covid-19 vaccination experience

I met Harry in 2013, when he arrived in Dunedin to live at Knox College, to study science at Otago University. He's now living in Tasmania. He recently posted on facebook, and has given me permission to share his post in the Knox Lockdown Newsletter. As you'll see, he's had a complicated experience through his vaccination, but still is convinced (as a scientist) that vaccination is what we all need to do. I think that Harry is 26 years old - and yes, he does claim to be related to Ronnie Biggs of the great train robbery of 1963. He's a delightful person.

I wasn't sure about writing this, but I think it's important. As I've had pretty bad pneumonia this year, I was eligible to receive a Pfizer vaccination earlier than people in my demographic in Australia. I obviously signed up for it, and received my two doses 3 weeks apart with their expected side effects (soreness at injection point, fever after second dose). I also was one of 40/1,000,000 that developed Pericarditis as a side effect of the vaccine a few days later. I had chest pains and palpitations and when I rang my GP I was told to go to the emergency room. Apart [from] the pain and pretty funky feeling heartbeat, my energy levels were fine and I walked home. I took Ibuprofen for the next week three times per day. I was back in the emergency room a few days later as I had incredible lethargy and couldn't walk across a room, which turned out to be viral instead of heart related. It's been a week since then and I've had a follow up with my GP who says that I have recovered fully, and I'm off painkillers. My symptoms for the duration of my pericarditis were chest pains that worsened when I was lying down, and heart palpitations.

I'm writing this to encourage people to get vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as you are able. None of the symptoms I've described above come close to what other people have described as both acute and long term symptoms of COVID, which can be genuinely life threatening. I had one of the worst possible reactions to the COVID vaccine and I have recovered fully, and whilst uncomfortable, still managed to even do work.

*Please protect our friends and family, protect yourself, protect others. Get
***** vaccinated.*

SANANDA MAITREYA USED TO BE CALLED TERRENCE 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 reputation for having been vain.

While I believe myself to be a very vain person, I don't believe that I'm vain in a way that I have to constantly be in the public eye, or constantly be getting attention. You know I'm the type of person, I feel that if I'm at someone else's party, and it's a party for them, and it's their moment, for example, I'm more than willing to play a supporting role or to basically stay very quiet in the background. I don't think I'm the type of person that tries to wrestle other

people's moments away from them. And then, when it's my time again, then I take the centre of my particular stage, and when it's not my time, I go away again, because there are other things that I like to do



A wee word of thanks from St George's Iona

As you most probably know, each week Knox takes a food offering and sends it off to St George's Iona, who run a food bank in East Christchurch. At the moment, while we're unable to send food presented at our physically gathered services at Knox (since we're only meeting virtually at the moment), we've been encouraging people to send Countdown or Pak n Save food vouchers to support the work of the foodbank. Recently, Jean Brouwer, who keeps in good contact with Rev. Sheena Dickson, the minister there, received this email:

Kia ora Jean,

If you are having a virtual morning tea tomorrow, please can you pass on my thanks for the Countdown vouchers. We are very grateful for them as we are still helping out (contactless) those struggling with food/electricity insecurity. This lockdown is presenting new issues for us: essential workers are being targeted for abuse and disrespect. I find it quite disturbing on many levels. All they are doing is asking people to follow Level 3 rules!!

Nga mihi nui
Sheena 😊

A poem by local poet, Mikaere Greenslade

yet
we are not yet
finished you and i
just part way there
we wander this shore of
sand and promises
sometimes ripped by storm
the path lost
driftwood tossed and we too
tumbled and shaped by
waves and angry air
until we shine
more softly





A Father's Day Litany

from Loch Raven
United Methodist Church,
Baltimore

Leader: For fathers everywhere, who have given us life and love, that we may show them respect and love.

People: Holy God, hear this prayer for our fathers.

Leader: For fathers who have lost a child through death, that their faith may give them hope, and their family and friends support and console them.

People: Holy God, hear this prayer for our fathers that mourn.

Leader: For men who may or may not have children of their own, but act like a father to someone in need of advice, support, nurturing, and love.

People: Holy God, hear this prayer for our father figures.

Leader: For step-fathers who have assumed that role with love and joy, who have loved the children of another as their own, and created a new family.

People: Holy God, hear this prayer for step-fathers.

Leader: For adoptive fathers, who have heard the call of God to lovingly step forward for those that need their care.

People: Holy God, hear this prayer for adoptive fathers.

Leader: For fathers who have been unable to be a source of strength, who have not responded to the needs of their children, and have not sustained their families.

People: Holy God, have mercy on absentee fathers.

Leader: For fathers who struggle with temptation, violence, or addiction. For those who do harm, and for those whom they have harmed.

People: Holy God, have mercy on fathers that struggle.

Leader: For new fathers, full of hope. For long-time fathers, full of wisdom. For the fathers yet to be, and fathers soon to be.

People: Holy God, hear our prayer for the fathers of your Church.

Leader: For those that have shaped our lives without claim of family or kinship. For those who have taught us, guided us, shaped us and molded us into servants of Christ our Lord.

People: Holy God, hear our prayer for the fathers of our faith. Amen.

A VIRTUAL JIGSAW: Because I'm a graduate of Otago University, I get Alumni emails, and this latest one came with a virtual jigsaw designed to stop me going totally potty during lockdown. I hate jigsaws. On family holidays each summer, we had a jigsaw that most of us contributed to over the week / fortnight. I contributed less than other members of our family. I acknowledge that some people enjoy jigsaws, so here's the link. <https://www.jigsawexplorer.com/online-jigsaw-puzzle-player.html?url=aHR0cHM6Ly9saXZILnN0YXRpY2ZsaWNrci5jb20vNjU1MzUvNTUwMDA2ODY3MDBfYjdlZTVhMDgwYV9rX2QuanBn>

THE ARTS CENTRE, TE MATATIKI TOI ORA, was planning to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Ernest Rutherford with a series of events, including a walking tour around the Arts Centre, led by an actor presenting the young Ernest Rutherford (Rutherford having studied at Canterbury University). The walking tour has been indefinitely postponed, but hopefully will happen sometime soon. I have a ticket. Playing the young Rutherford is William Burns, an enterprising local actor.



Arohanui,

Matthew.

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