



KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

Community Newsletter

7 May, 2024

Kia ora Knox Community,

As is the custom now, in some of the months when we don't have a "Knox Life", I send out a community newsletter.

Moana Vā

Moana Vā is a local group, established to support Pasifika Rainbow people and their aiga (families and friends). The group's steering committee heard story after story of disappointment among rainbow Pasifika people at how the churches within which they had grown up failed to hold them in fellowship once they had "come out". There is a common belief that generally conservative faith communities (theologically and socially) really struggle to cope with diversity in sexual orientation, so can't offer a safe spiritual space. A number of Moana Vā people simply really miss going to church. Knox came to Moana Vā's attention as a church community that, while not being steeped in Pasifika culture or practice, might offer some help. Knox Council encouraged me to meet with Moana Vā, and offer "safe space" help. In the afternoon of Sunday 28 April, I held a simple and reasonably traditional service at Knox for those invited by Moana Vā. It was a very good occasion, followed by a facilitated discussion about what might happen next.



PUBLIC QUESTIONS GROUP

The Knox Church Public Questions Group met on 5 May to choose one local issue and one national issue to address this year. It was a spirited meeting, and once Knox Council engages with what the Group has identified, we'll share news and get on with our work.

When we sing



It is the voice of the Church that is heard in singing together. It is not you that sings, it is the Church that is singing, and you, as a member of the Church, may share in its song. Thus all singing together that is right must serve to widen our spiritual horizon, make us see our little company as a member of the great Christian Church on earth, and help us willingly and gladly

to join our singing, be it feeble or good, to the song of the Church."

from LIFE TOGETHER by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

When we dance

I sometimes forget
that I was created for Joy.
My mind is too busy.
My Heart is too heavy
for me to remember
that I have been
called to dance
the Sacred dance of life.
I was created to smile
To Love
To be lifted up
And to lift others up.
O' Sacred One
Untangle my feet
from all that trap
Free my soul.
That we might
Dance
and that our dancing
might be infectious



Buying an Envelope

Kurt Vonnegut tells his wife he's going out to buy an envelope:

"Oh, she says, well, you're not a poor man. You know, why don't you go online and buy a hundred envelopes and put them in the closet? And so I pretend not to hear her. And go out to get an envelope because I'm going to have a hell of a good time in the process of buying one envelope.



I meet a lot of people. And see some great looking babies. And a fire engine goes by. And I give them the thumbs up. And I'll ask a woman what kind of dog that is. And, and I don't know. The moral of the story is - we're here on Earth to fart around.

And, of course, the computers will do us out of that. And what the computer people don't realize, or they don't care, is we're dancing animals. You know, we love to move around. And it's like we're not supposed to dance at all anymore."

Let's all get up and move around a bit right now... or at least dance.

A Hindu boy combines religious reverence with Rubik's Cube prowess - who'd have thought it?

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/792913879347294>

19 May is the Day of Pentecost - why not wear something red to church?

On the Day of Pentecost, we remember how flames of the Spirit appeared among the people gathered in Jerusalem for their regular observance of a Jewish festival. As the flame appeared, each person present heard the gospel spoken in their own tongue. It's considered that this was the day of the "giving of the Spirit" that constituted the birth of the Church. We'll reflect on all of that on the Day of Pentecost. For now, though, we invite you to wear something red to church on 19 May. If there's a lot of red "around", then it will add to the Pentecost theme.



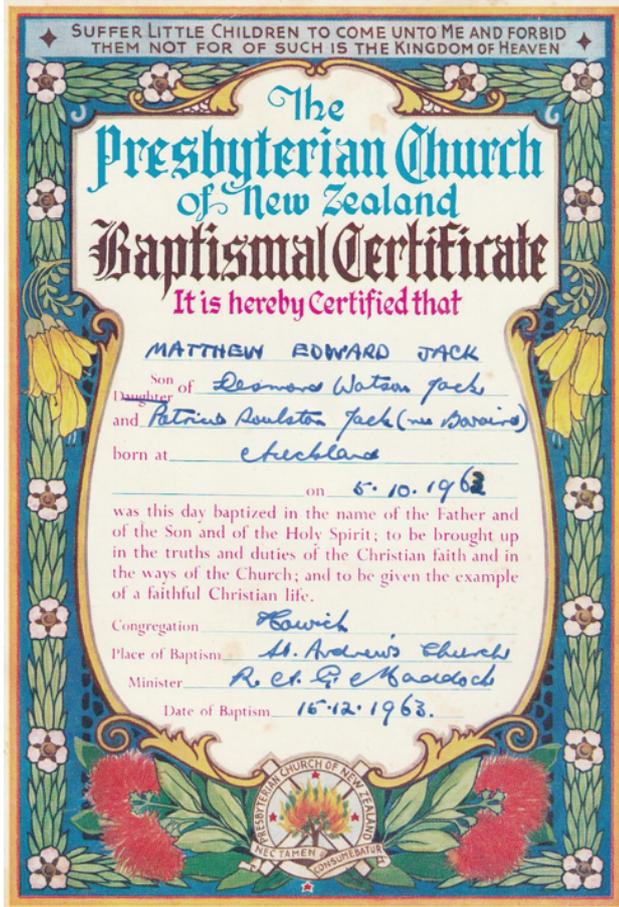
Baptised into the vine

In a recent sermon (http://www.knoxchurch.co.nz/data/sermons/202404280000_Sermon_Archive_482.pdf), I spoke about my baptism, which happened when I was only three months old, and then about my experience as a baptiser of people. I remembered the first occasion that I baptised a baby (terrifying) in my first parish, Iona Church, Blockhouse Bay, Auckland, and how frightening it was for someone completely unacquainted with babies. I spoke about a few awkward baptismal experiences and some good ones. I then explored the story of Philip baptising the Ethiopian eunuch, suggesting that this signalled for the church a call to be miraculously broad in its welcoming of people. The old Faith had plenty of reasons why the Ethiopian shouldn't be received, but in the new Faith, Philip just welcomes him.

After the service, a number of people spoke to me of their being baptised (received into the body of Christ). They spoke also of how they had been nurtured in faith. One person showed me a certificate of baptism that he keeps in his wallet. In the olden days, when we were issued with communion cards, I used to keep mine in my wallet. It was a silent witness to those who might have picked me up from under the wheels of the bus that had run me over, that I was a Christian person.



*This is a photo of some of the carving on the Knox communion table,
"I am the vine, you are the branches"*



Matthew's certificate



Matthew baptises Archie at Knox



the baptism of Rebecca Mary at St George's, Takapuna

Cat Pictures

Back home after a morning walk..



Sanctuary Installations

We are so fortunate to have Rochelle Howley decorating the sanctuary for our special services. Thank you, Rochelle, for your amazing, creative work! Here we have photos of her Palm Sunday and Good Friday installations, and of the amazing flower cross she organised to come together during the second hymn on Easter Day.



Pink Shirt Day

Pink Shirt Day began in Canada in 2007 when two students took a stand against homophobic bullying, after a new Year 10 student was harassed and threatened for wearing pink. These students bought dozens of pink shirts and distributed them to their classmates to wear the next day. The word got out online, and hundreds of students showed up in pink, some from head-to-toe, to stand together against bullying. It has been celebrated in Aotearoa New Zealand since 2009.



Pink Shirt Day is about working together to stop bullying by celebrating diversity and promoting kindness and inclusiveness. *It's about creating a community where all people feel safe, valued and respected, regardless of gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion or cultural background.*

You could do two things to support Pink Shirt Day.

- 1. You could wear a pink shirt or pink item of clothing on Friday 17 May - and be ready to engage with any enquirer about why you are wearing it.*
- 2. Pink Shirt Day is funded by your donations. By donating to Pink Shirt Day, you're supporting the MHFNZ (Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand) to reduce bullying; through raising awareness about bullying prevention, funding education workshops, and supplying thousands of free resources that promote inclusive workplaces, schools, and communities.*

A couple of nice Salad Dressings

When Ganesh Raj and Michael van de Elzen went to visit Vincent and Jacob, to help them spend less on groceries and eat better, they gave them a couple of wee salad dressing recipes to pimp their lunch-time salads. Here they are. Shake them, taste them.



Citrus Dressing

Dijon mustard
soy sauce
sesame oil
honey
juice of one orange
juice of one lemon

Yoghurt Dressing

Coriander seeds - roasted and crushed
yoghurt
mint leaves
fennel tips
lemon juice
salt and pepper

Treaty Matters

Jolyon White, the Director of Anglican Advocacy here in Ōtautahi Christchurch, recently sent out a set of links for those who would like to think about te tiriti o Waitangi, the Treaty of Waitangi. Possibly he did this because the government soon is to consider drafting a Treaty Principles Bill, inviting the public to make submissions.

There are four links:

Dr Michael Stevens (works with and for various Ngāi Tahu institutions, including the Archive Team at Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu) delivers his Waitangi Day address at Te Rau Aroha Marae. He argues that while the treaty is understood mainly to be relevant at a national and legal level, a true understanding of the treaty would have it understood as something giving shape to life at the local level. He speaks about the tension between the Wakefield and Buxton "visions of empire", and how each contributed to how the treaty was formed and observed. Speaking of Cantabrian treaty non-observances, he refers to "Kemp's purchase". What do we know of that?

He quotes Cicero: "to be ignorant of what occurred before you were born, is to remain always a child". Noting that the land and the treaty belong not to the past, but to living generations, he notes that living generations (if they are not to be childish) need to be well versed in history. Possibly criticising some of the public discourse around treaty matters, he also quotes Heraclitus: "dogs bark at what they do not understand."



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



Ned Fletcher (a director of the law firm Kayes Fletcher Walker, which is the Office of the Manukau Crown Solicitor), is the author of the recently-published The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi, which examines the meaning of the English text to the people who had a hand in drafting it. The meaning of the English text requires consideration not only of the text itself but also of the context in which it was drawn up. The context supports the conclusion that, rather than being at odds, the English and Māori texts of the Treaty reconcile. British intervention in New Zealand in 1840 was to establish government over British

settlers, for the protection of Māori. British settlement was to be promoted only to the extent that Māori protection was not compromised. Assimilation of Māori into settler society was not the goal. Māori tribal government and custom were to be maintained under British sovereignty.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUD-OrNLI7w>

Jen Margaret reflects on how she might raise her daughter to be a responsible Pākeha contributor in an environment where the Treaty is beginning to be understood.

<https://e-tangata.co.nz/reflections/becoming-really-pakeha/>

From the New Zealand Herald, Seven Episodes in the Series: Beyond White Guilt: Pākehā and colonisation.

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/kahu/beyond-white-guilt-pakeha-and-colonisation-episode-1-cooks-legacy/S3QCBMFXSOR2ORMJWUOCNGTEGU/>

Learning Music



I wonder how students of theology might compare . . . not that most children study theology in the same way as they study music.

Cambridge University studies claim religion may have helped during Covid



Two studies were carried out in the UK and US. **Religious people may have coped better during the coronavirus pandemic than those without a spiritual faith, researchers have claimed.**

Cambridge University-led studies found the increase in feeling miserable was 29% lower for people who described themselves as belonging to a religion. Prof Shaun Larcom said the pandemic was an opportunity "to measure whether religion was important... in a crisis". He said religion may help "people cope with adversity".

Two studies were carried out - one across February and March 2021, which involved 5,178 people across the United States. The second collected data from 3,884 people in the UK during the first two national lockdowns, and compared with data prior to the pandemic. The researchers also analysed the data by "religiosity" - the extent of an individual's commitment to religious beliefs, and how central it was to their life.



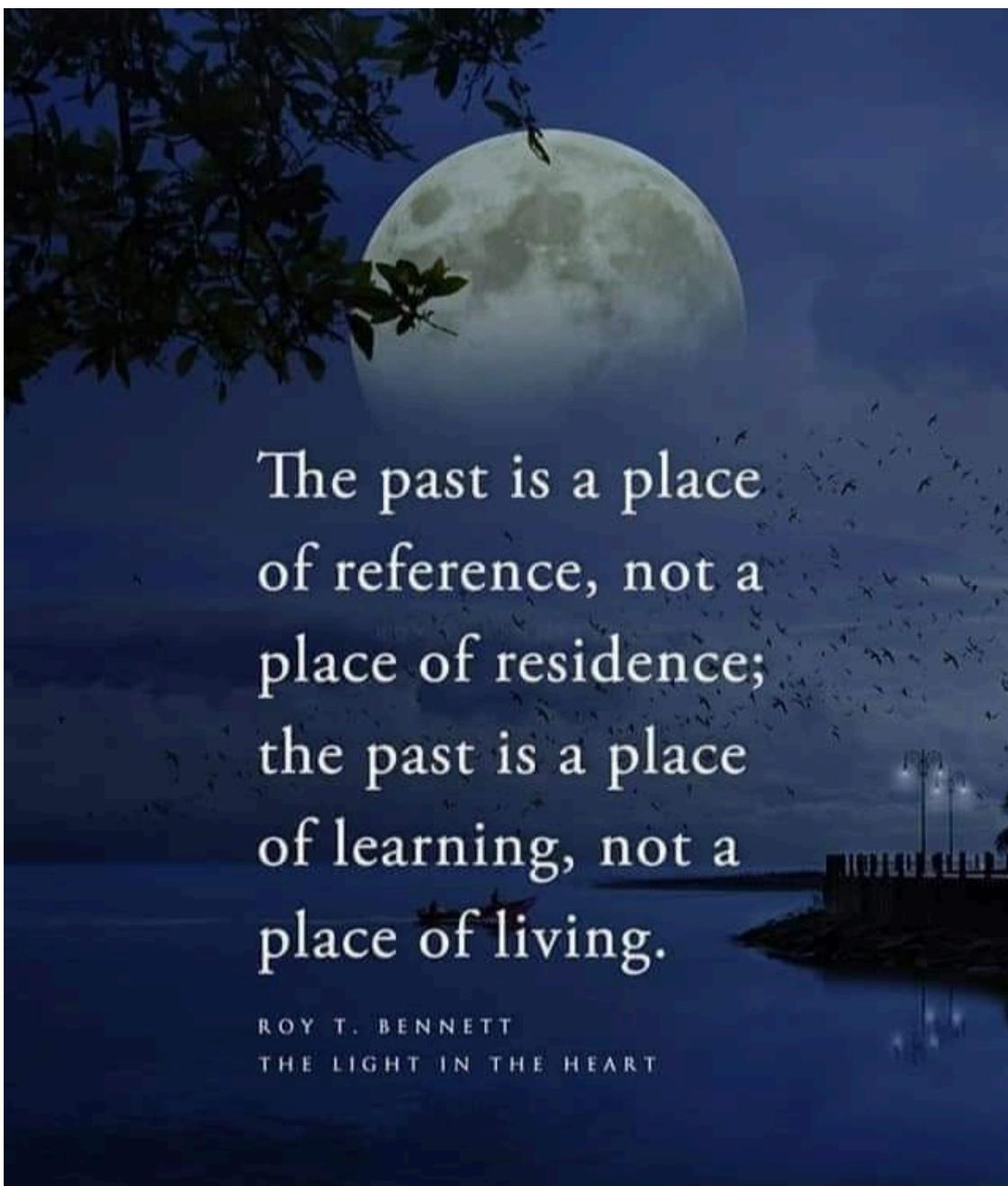
Those for whom religion made "some or a great difference" in their lives experienced about half the increase in unhappiness seen in those for whom religion made "little or no difference".

"The study suggests that it was not just being religious, but the intensity of religiosity that was important when coping with a crisis," said Prof Larcom.

University of Cambridge economists said the studies showed that religion "may act as a bulwark against increased distress and reduced wellbeing during times of crisis, such as a global public health emergency". Prof Larcom added: "These studies show a relationship between religion and lower levels of distress during a global crisis. It may be that religious faith builds resilience, and helps people cope with adversity by providing hope, consolation and meaning in tumultuous times."

The findings follow recently published Cambridge-led research which suggested that worsening mental health after experiencing Covid infection - either personally or in those close to you - was also ameliorated by religious belief.

The Past



The Non-remembered Years

I have few memories of being four — a fact I find disconcerting now that I'm the father of a four-year-old. My son and I have great times together; lately, we've been building Lego versions of familiar places (the coffee shop, the bathroom) and perfecting the "flipperoo," a move in which I hold his hands while he somersaults backward from my shoulders to the ground. But how much of our joyous life will he remember? What I recall from when I was four are the red-painted nails of a mean babysitter; the brushed-silver stereo in my parents' apartment; a particular orange-carpeted hallway; some houseplants in the sun; and a glimpse of my father's face, perhaps smuggled into memory from a photograph. These disconnected images don't knit together into a picture of a life. They also fail to illuminate any inner reality. I have no memories of my own feelings, thoughts, or personality; I'm told that I was a cheerful, talkative child given to long dinner-table speeches, but don't remember being so. My son, who is happy and voluble, is so much fun to be around that I sometimes mourn, on his behalf, his future inability to remember himself.

Juan Bernabeu

Material for Knox Life

If you have any material you think might go well into the next edition of Knox Life, just send it to the office. The deadline for contributions will be advertised through the Sunday notices for a few weeks before the deadline.

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