



KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

Pastoral Newsletter

17 October, 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.

The Season of Creation

This year, we dedicated September (as the Season of Creation) to exploring the senses by which we perceive ourselves and the created order. Traditionally, it was accepted that there were five senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. On the last Sunday of September, we explored something widely accepted now as the sixth sense, the Vestibular Sense. It's an awareness of how we are positioned in space. The mere mention of there being more



than five senses caused one Knox person to recall a list of twelve senses held by the Rudolf Steiner movement to operate in human perception. Beginning with the established five, here's the list of twelve:

1. Touch
2. Taste
3. Smell
4. Sight
5. Hearing
6. Life sense - arising when we are ill, to let us know that something is wrong

7. Self-movement - the awareness of our muscles and joints as we move through space (I think this is the main part of the Vestibular Sense)
8. Balance - how we relate to space as we stand or move (another part of the vestibular sense)
9. Sense of temperature
10. Thought - or the sense of concept
11. Sense of speech - language - closely related to social understanding
12. Ego - the sense of ego helps us develop a strong sense of who we are, and to sense the integrity of another person

When first seeing this list, I wondered whether some of the suggested senses weren't thoughts or feelings, rather than perceptual senses, but then I wondered how we form thoughts or "get" feelings. An example is "ego - sensing the integrity of another person". I initially wondered whether this isn't simply what we call "intuition". But on what basis do we intuit? What are we picking up, and how are we picking up whatever it is upon which we base our trust or distrust of the other person? I suspect that our perception of the world around us involves many more capacities than we yet have to classify.

Also, re. the Season of Creation

In the "Sense of Sight" service, I related the experience of an avid reader who, now suffering Macular Degeneration, no longer could read. I spoke about how reading had taken her (in mind and spirit) to many different places, and how "not reading" now made her feel trapped in a "small place". After each service during the Season of Creation, I had good conversations with people about whatever sense we'd considered that day. Many of the conversations were about experiences of loss of whichever sense on which we'd focussed. People talked about loss of taste and smell (related to Covid), loss of hearing (loneliness in conversation and frustrations with the technical aspects of hearing aids), loss of sight. Two people spoke to me about their work with multiple-disabled children and adults for whom the vestibular sense (so basic we don't really think about it) was a real challenge. What has come to the front of my consideration is how common disability is. The government's Office for Disability Issues (Te Tari Mō Ngā Take Hauātanga) says that 1.1 million New Zealanders (**24%** of us) are dealing with some kind of "impairment".

I'm not sure whether I'm among the 24%. Given that I'm not driving at the moment (having lost my drivers licence after an unexplained medical event), maybe I am. Regardless, it's worth noting that so many people are having to transcend a compromise of one or more of the senses.

I have enjoyed this year's Season of Creation. It's been good to put the lectionary (cycle of regular Bible readings) to one side for a while, and worship around an extended theme. I also really enjoy when services of worship prompt people to share their thoughts. Knox is a good place for these sorts of things.

I wonder what we'll explore in next year's Season of Creation.

Goods and services that please

Following an ad hoc remediation of a wee spill of liquid onto the carpet in my sitting room at a Friday afternoon "drinks and nibbles" (water and towels), a mucky patch of carpet presisted. I glared at it for a while, but that achieved nothing. Going to the local (dumb and stupid) supermarket, I found various carpet cleaning products on the shelf. Avoiding the familiar one (that cost quite a lot), I chose a cheap and nasty cleaning product. It worked so well! The mucky patch is no more. And other parts of the carpet now are fresh and clean. It hasn't changed my life, but it's wonderful when a product actually works.

Equally so, I recently had occasion to go to my dentist with a sore tooth. The tooth had already been assessed by an on-call emergency dentist a day or two before (when my dentist had been absent from his practice to attend a "conference"). I had doubts about the "full steam ahead" treatment programme suggested by the on-call dentist, and shared them with my dentist. He listened to my concerns, agreed that they



were not baseless, and helped me agree to a gentler approach to my dental issue. We'll see how the gentler approach goes - but for now it's lovely to find someone recommending a "less expensive" option for treatment. When you know that they're not just after money, but are more motivated to find the best result, it's wonderfully helpful. It helps you trust people.

Some online lectures from Otago

Otago University continues to hold public lectures in different places, including at the Medical School here in Ōtautahi. Two recent lectures have been made available on Youtube - so I post the links here.



The first is "**Women's health in mid-life: Happiness and hormones**"

Are you on the menopause rollercoaster? Hear from some of New Zealand's leading experts as they delve into the latest HRT treatments, how to deal with mood swings and the demands of 'rushing women's syndrome'. You'll also hear the latest international thinking on women's gynaecological cancers, and the struggles and hope for the many women dealing with prolapse and urinary

incontinence. Our speakers: Dr Anna Fenton, Dr Briony Simcock, Dr Kate Eggleston, Dr Giovanni Losco

The link is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xK8qBy0ngaQ>

The second is "**Men's health in mid-life: Myths and truths**"

Am I a heart attack waiting to happen? Why do I keep putting off that GP visit? Hear our leading clinical researchers bust the myths about prostate checks, vasectomy and the male mid-life 'crisis'. You'll learn the latest truths about heart health risks, preventing common cancers, snoring, sleep apnoea and how to boost brain health. Our speakers: Associate Professor Katie Douglas, Professor Mark Richards, Dr Ben Hudson, Dr Michael Hlavac

The link is: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSgPEBp5G_Q

Tony Fernando

Tony recently wrote a book called "Life hacks from the Buddha", and has been interviewed about it by various journalists on Te Reo Irrangi o Aotearoa and TVNZ. The better interviews have been on radio, where there's been more time to talk at helpful length.

I first met Tony in the late 1990s / early 2000s, when he both were tenors in an Auckland-based chamber choir. This was a time when Tony was coming-out of his family's conservative Philippino form of Catholicism. The family faith just wasn't working for Tony, so we had a number of conversations about how Christian Faith worked for me. I think Tony was grateful for my willingness to engage. I most recently saw him at the funeral of another choir member. It was good to see him.

I've been pleased to discover that Tony's search for "a faith that fits" has led him to what seems like a very happy outcome. And it seems that people are appreciating his book.

A good interview (conducted by Mihinarangi Forbes and Colin Peacock) can be found at: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/528685/dr-tony-fernando-being-compassionate-requires-a-backbone>



Short Kiwi documentaries

For the tenth year now, NZ On Air, Te Māngi Pāho and the New Zealand Film Commission have supported the production of a number of short (about ten minutes each), locally-made documentaries. Basically a mentoring programme, "Loading Docs" matches new documentary makers with industry professionals, giving them an opportunity to grow skills not just in story development, production and editing (creating the actual film), but also in fund-raising, marketing and audience engagement. Many of the 200 film-makers assisted so far have gone on to significant national and international success. Free to view, this year's set of documentaries can be found at:

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/programmes/loading-docs-2024>

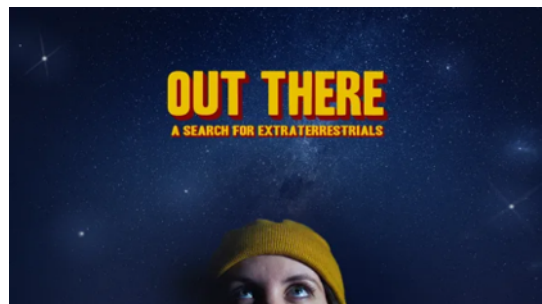
Three of the documentaries I've watched so far have been:

"**Hifi Ulu**" refers to the Niuean custom of boys growing their hair until they reach the age of nine or ten. It's a welcoming of a child into early adulthood. The documentary follows the hair-cutting preparations of nine-year-old Luka whose family is part of the Niuean community in Auckland.



What I found interesting about the documentary was not even so much Luka's approach to a cultural family event, as much as it was his father's reflections on how maybe (given that he'd not had the opportunity to undergo Hifi Ulu when **he** was young) he was living through his son, and whether, if so, that was fair. It's a study of culture reclamation after generational loss.

"**Out There**" is presented as an exploration of the line between skepticism and gullibility, but to me it feels like a gentle presentation of the comfort provided by shared belief. It follows a group of people who like to go out to remote hillsides at night to spot UFOs and aliens. Each member of the group knows that the wider community is laughing at them, but affirms the strength of belonging to a group which shares their beliefs.

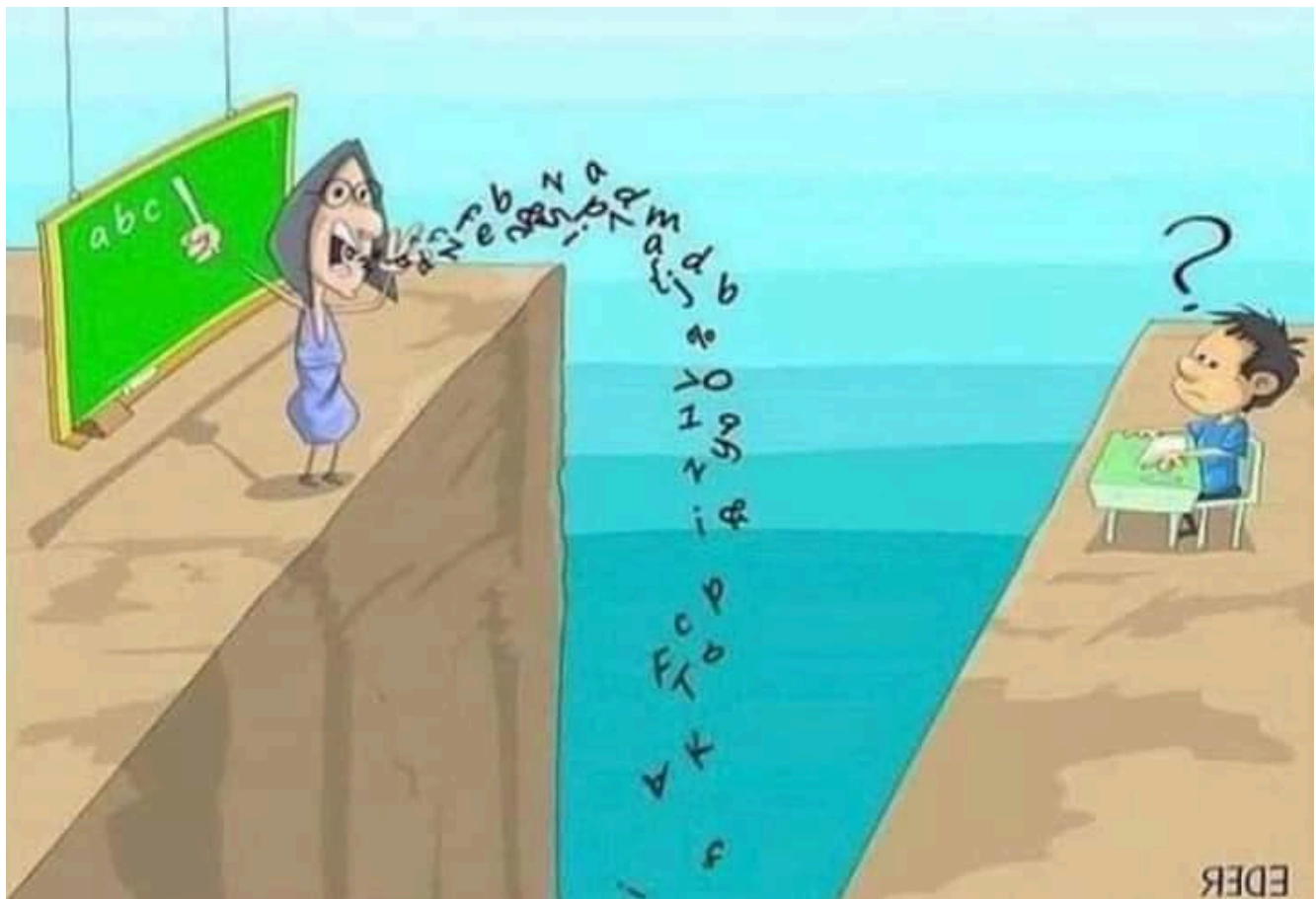


"Here the Wild Things Are" follows Kiwi participants in the global City Nature Challenge, a volunteer-driven census/survey of what creatures are living in our cities. People go out into their gardens and parks, taking photos of very living thing they see - including insects, birds, mammals. The idea is to take an annual snapshot that, over years, will give an indication of how nature is "doing" in our cities. A lively sense of competition between Christchurch and Wellington (to spot the most species) eventually is won by . . .



A missing cross

After a morning service a while back, I took off my vestments for morning tea, and, once finished, carried all my bits a pieces upstairs to my study. The alb, stole and girdle all got hung in the wardrobe (a place for everything and everything in its place). The following Sunday, when I got dressed for church, I couldn't find the small silver Iona cross that I usually wear. It seems that somewhere between the church and my wardrobe I had dropped it. It's never been found. If you find it, I'd love to be reunited with it. It was a gift to me from George and Bernice Stewart (good people from St Stephen's, Sydney). I'm fairly sure it's not worth much - simply sentimental value!



Marnie Barrell

Local hymn-writer, Marnie Barrell spoke at the recent launch of Anne Manchester's book about Shirley Murray (Peace is her Song) at Knox. I can't remember where this article came from, but it provides an encouragement to the reader to "get writing"!

Christchurch-based Anglican Marnie Barrell received an MNZM this January that recognises her 40 years of dedication to church music, music education and hymn-writing in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Marnie, who today is a lay preacher and musician at St Mark's Opawa in Christchurch, a professional piano teacher and hymnwriter, began writing hymns in the 1980s. To date Marnie has 30 published hymns, mostly within the NZ Hymnbook Trust's six well-known volumes that include Alleluia Aotearoa and Carol our Christmas, as well as being published on US hymnary site Oremus and in a number of other international hymnaries.



Marnie Barrell's hymns use contemporary words to grapple with spiritual themes and mark the seasons of the Christian year, often using traditional hymn tunes, which endears them to worship leaders across denominations. But whether it's music old or new, Marnie looks for refreshing new ways to express our relationship with the divine.

"I still love all the traditional hymns, or say the ancient texts like the Lenten Prose, which link us to a living tradition. But I have this gulf in my mind between their words and the words we might actually use ourselves when we approach God from our hearts."

"I want hymns to have rich allusions, to be true to scriptural imagery, and reasonably theologically mainstream and thoughtful, but in a way that resonates with what we believe and care about now. I look for new metaphors to extend our imagination about the faith."

While many of Marnie's hymns arise from her theological reflections on Christian experience, she has also composed hymns on commission for schools, faith-based NGOs, churches and events.

One of Marnie's nominators for the MNZM was Rev Heather Robinson, a Canadian Anglican priest in the Diocese of British Columbia who cherishes the modernity of Marnie's songs, which she says avoid the pitfalls of older hymns' frequently sexist or racist tones. But even better, Marnie's words affirm what she has come to know herself.

“Marnie’s hymns speak to the current struggle of the modern Christian, and I found that some of the verses she penned could have been written about my own journey. This was especially true of the 2017 hymn she wrote in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the ordination of women in New Zealand, ‘Praise God for Faithful Women’.”

Also backing Marnie’s nomination, former Dean of Christchurch Rev Lawrence Kimberley highlighted how during the time Marnie was hymn-writing in Auckland, she brought her own experiences of the heights and depths of being human into her work.

“She knows what it is to be a mother. She experienced life threatening illness and had gone through the journey of treatment and recovery. I have no doubt that this has contributed to the depth of poetry we find in her hymns; but what is even more profound is that they are so uplifting, even when they were written when Marnie was experiencing the toughness of life.”

Although a keen hymn singer since her childhood, Marnie had never thought to write new hymns. Then one day in the 1980s she met hymn-writer Shirley Murray.

“She asked me if I’d ever thought about writing a hymn. But honestly it never occurred to me that real people wrote hymns, I must have thought they just fell out of heaven.”

Marnie’s fascination with the words and meanings of hymns was nurtured in childhood by her mother Pat Barrell, an enquiring Christian who took great interest in the words of hymns she played on the harmonium at their tiny South Canterbury Anglican Church in Pareora.

During her teens, Marnie’s musical side was nurtured by well-known Timaru personality and piano teacher Rita Minehan, whose eccentric and enthusiastic approach set the course for Marnie’s lifetime love of music, and a full set of higher diplomas to go with it.

Marnie’s church music education had a shot in the arm for three years when she and her former husband John took part in his family’s Open Brethren church, where she experienced Christianity with an intensity she hadn’t known before – and Christians who sang their songs like the world was about to end.

“They cared about it with every fibre of their being, it absolutely mattered if you were saved or not.”

“So that’s where I learnt all the Protestant hymns: the Wesleys, the Methodist hymns, a huge range, and all sung full-throatedly.”

Later when the Brethren Church had lost its appeal, Marnie moved to St Mary's Anglican Church in Addington, where she discovered more new things: high Anglican liturgy, Taize prayer and her first taste of progressive theology.

"I was a bit shocked at first, but this new theology was also spicy and exciting. It was a shift from the deeply earnest head stuff and the assumed view of scripture I had been hearing."

When Marnie and John and their young daughter Genevieve moved to Auckland in 1992, she took the chance to study theology at St John's College, which gave her a wealth of new insights for hymn-writing.

Today Marnie aims for her hymns to occupy an orthodox yet progressive theological position, and to open with a coherent point that develops theologically before ending on a note of hope.

On the day she spoke with Taonga, her three favourite hymns were as follows. A Lenten hymn, 'We do not hope to ease our mind' - for its message to Western Christians living in privilege, which comes from 'Alleluia Aotearoa' published by the NZ Hymnbook Trust (147). Verse one reads:

*We do not hope to ease our minds
by simple answers, shifted blame,
while Christ is homeless, hungry, poor,
and we are rich who bear his name.
As long as justice is a dream
and human dignity denied,
we stand with Christ; disturb us still
till every need is satisfied.*

Her second hymn choice second was a 'positive, cheery and hearty hymn looking forward to universal salvation', for use in ordinary time, 'Great and deep the Spirit's purpose,' (Alleluia Aotearoa 55).

Then Marnie's selection was a hymn to Mary the mother of God that celebrates her thoughtful and costly choice to say yes to God's call – "on which all of heaven and earth depends" – 'Hail Mary full of grace' (Alleluia Aotearoa 58).


Since the NZ Hymnbook Trust first published new Aotearoa New Zealand hymns in 1993, New Zealand hymnwriters have built a great reputation as fresh, interesting voices in the world of Christian music, with a considerable body of hymns sung and appreciated all over the world. The Hymnbook Trust is now looking for contributions from new generations of poets and musicians who want to give glory to God and uplift worship through writing hymns and waiata. If you write waiata, hymns or songs and would like to submit work for consideration in a new Aotearoa-wide compilation, please make contact with Marnie Barrell on: marnienzht@gmail.com

Advent and Christmas 2024 - "God with Us"

<p>1 Dec</p>	<p>God with us at the table</p> 	<p>ADVENT 1 Following a reflection on a birthday dinner and what it means to express hospitality at a table where food is shared, we celebrate communion. We sing "O come, O come Emmanuel" and "Come thou long expected Jesus". 1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13.</p>
<p>8 Dec</p>	<p>With us whoever we are</p> 	<p>ADVENT 2 Prompted by a recent piece of writing by Rev. Emeritus Prof. Maurice Andrew, we celebrate the inclusiveness of the expression "God with us". Included in our hymns are "There's a wideness in God's mercy" and the brand new "Human voices sing to God".</p>
<p>15 Dec</p>	<p>With us in the fulness of time</p> 	<p>ADVENT 3 The Advent candle lit today is the candle of "patient creativity". Watching all of the nativity characters move into "narrative place", we reflect on God's timing. We sing "Of our God's own heart begotten" and "The angel Gabriel".</p>
<p>22 Dec</p>	<p>Nine Lessons and Carols</p> 	<p>ADVENT 4 God with us in the singing of the ancient story. We sing some favourite carols and enjoy hearing some brand new originals written especially for the occasion.</p>



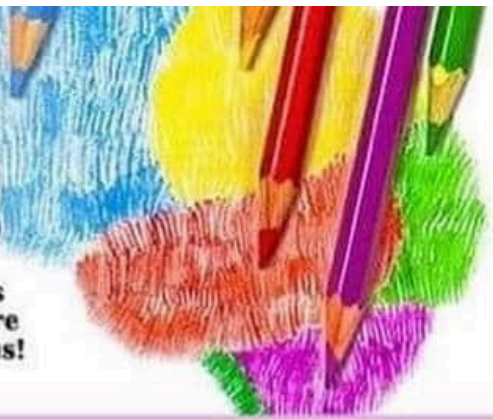
God ponders how to be "with us"
 A candlelight service
 11:15pm. Christmas Eve



God with us (bus stop)
 A simple service
 for Christmas Day
 10:00am

The Ultimate Cheatsheet for Critical Thinking

Want to exercise critical thinking skills? Ask these questions whenever you discover or discuss new information. These are broad and versatile questions that have limitless applications!



Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... benefits from this? ... is this harmful to? ... makes decisions about this? ... is most directly affected? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... have you also heard discuss this? ... would be the best person to consult? ... will be the key people in this? ... deserves recognition for this?
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... are the strengths/weaknesses? ... is another perspective? ... is another alternative? ... would be a counter-argument? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... is the best/worst case scenario? ... is most/least important? ... can we do to make a positive change? ... is getting in the way of our action?
Where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... would we see this in the real world? ... are there similar concepts/situations? ... is there the most need for this? ... in the world would this be a problem? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... can we get more information? ... do we go for help with this? ... will this idea take us? ... are the areas for improvement?
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... is this acceptable/unacceptable? ... would this benefit our society? ... would this cause a problem? ... is the best time to take action? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... will we know we've succeeded? ... has this played a part in our history? ... can we expect this to change? ... should we ask for help with this?
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... is this a problem/challenge? ... is it relevant to me/others? ... is this the best/worst scenario? ... are people influenced by this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... should people know about this? ... has it been this way for so long? ... have we allowed this to happen? ... is there a need for this today?
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... is this similar to _____? ... does this disrupt things? ... do we know the truth about this? ... will we approach this safely? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... does this benefit us/others? ... does this harm us/others? ... do we see this in the future? ... can we change this for our good?

If you feel useless today,
remember somebody is
working as a lifeguard at the
olympics:



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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