



# KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

## Pastoral Newsletter

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**1 February, 2025**

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.

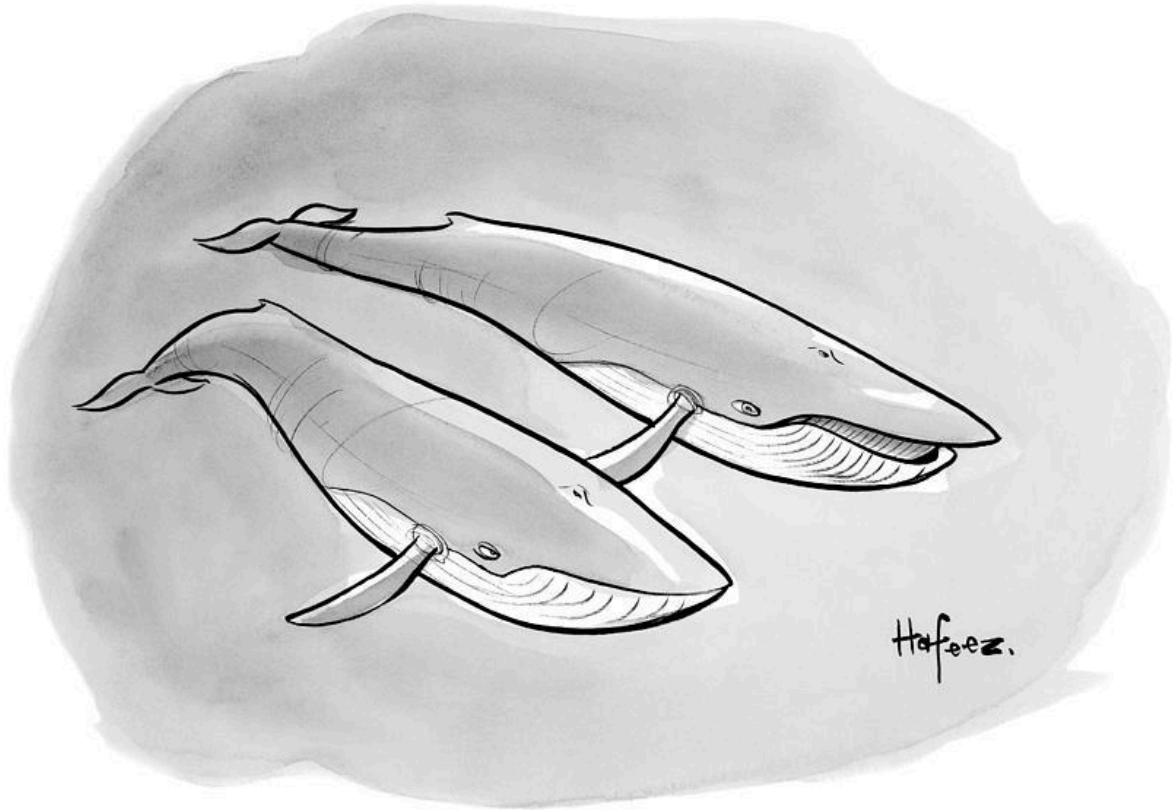
### **Driving again**

For the order of service on Sunday 15 December 2024, I wrote a short article called "Fallen churches, broken cars and suspended licenses - thank you to the drivers", in which I thanked those who had driven me around the parish while I had no driver license. I wrote it because my license had been reinstated after 14 months of not driving and I'd just bought a "new" car.

When I sat the medical tests for "fitness to drive", the doctor gave care to do the physical tests: blood pressure, eyesight, hearing, motor coordination, and so on. She also spent significant time asking me questions about confidence. How would I feel about driving after so long not driving? I told her that I didn't expect to be nervous behind the wheel, since during my forties I'd spent a period of 30 months not driving (time in China and then not owning a vehicle in Dunedin), and returned to driving easily. She reminded me that I was no longer in my forties! Part of the process has been opening myself to observations from experts that I am older.

Despite being so old, I have found my return to driving relatively easy. I did, mind you, end up returning to driving in the weeks leading up to Christmas, when traffic tends to go completely "mad". The roads were busy; some people seemed to be in a rush, and others were choosing to do foolish things on the road. I kept calm, and operated my new vehicle in an orderly way that's not obstructing others. It feels good to be driving again - life is simpler (but more expensive, of course).

And by the way, I know that we all ought to be using public transport more (even though Simeon Brown is making it more expensive to do so), so I will try, at least once a week, still to catch the bus to Knox.



*“My New Year’s resolution is to lose thirty-eight thousand pounds.”*

<p><b>REALITY</b></p>	<p><b>EQUALITY</b></p>	<p><b>EQUITY</b></p>	<p><b>JUSTICE</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">@ClinPsychDavid</p> <p><b>INCLUSION</b></p>
<p>One gets <b>more than</b> is needed, while the other gets <b>less than</b> is needed. Thus, a huge disparity is created.</p>	<p>The assumption is that <b>everyone benefits from the same supports</b>. This is considered to be equal treatment.</p>	<p><b>Everyone gets the support they need</b>, which produces equity.</p>	<p>All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because <b>the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed</b>. The systemic barrier has been removed.</p>	<p>Everyone is <b>INCLUDED</b> in the game. <b>No one</b> is left on the outside; we <u>didn't</u> only remove the barriers keeping people out, we made sure they were valued &amp; involved.</p>

## Thoughts from people on the street

Te Reo Irirangi o Aotearoa, Radio New Zealand, did a series of street interviews across the country (including in Ōtautahi Christchurch). They asked open questions:

1. what are you struggling with at the moment?
2. what is your fear?
3. what do you dream about?
4. what are you most looking forward to?
5. what brings you joy?

They're a good series of questions, answered honestly by people who haven't had time to refine their answers. I wonder what we would offer as answers. Here are the links:

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/531853/we-asked-what-are-you-struggling-most-with-at-the-moment-what-s-your-story>

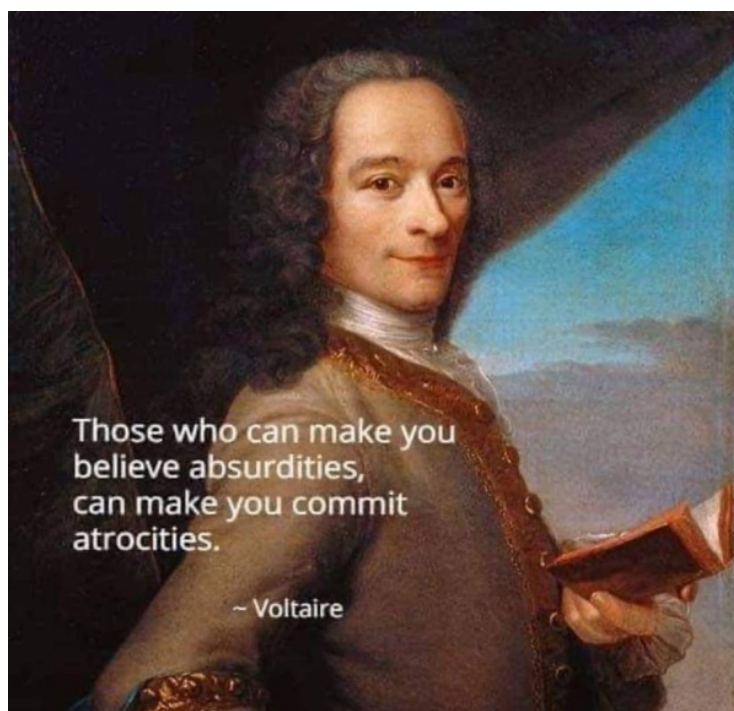
<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/533239/we-asked-what-s-your-fear-what-s-your-story>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/534081/we-asked-what-do-you-dream-about-what-s-your-story>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/531173/we-asked-what-are-you-most-looking-forward-to-what-s-your-story>

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/532444/we-asked-what-brings-you-joy-what-s-your-story>

## Something Voltaire said



# A Late Summer Season of Caring



## Sunday 2 February Caring for our home

This is the Sunday closest to the date (ten years ago) on which we formally opened the rebuilt church. During the service we'll recall how it felt to be "home again", and how wider plans for our city have proceeded since "quakes" time.



## Sunday 9 February Caring for our country

On the Sunday closest to Waitangi Day, we look at caring for the country we are building together.



## Sunday 16 February Caring for one another

We attend to the joyful matter of commissioning three new members for our Church Council: Jo Fox, Paul Westropp and Murray Win. On Council they will contribute to managing the life of a community of care.



## Sunday 23 February Caring for the planet - 1 The Living Thing

Acknowledging that creation is a living thing, we explore what living things need to flourish - nourishment, rest, love. After the service, Dr Richard Milne, Independent Health Economist, will conduct an interactive session exploring, among other things, the nine planetary boundaries.



## Sunday 2 March Caring for the planet - 2 The Connected Thing

An understanding of the connectedness of creation moves us to consider our global responsibilities. After the service, we hear more from Richard Milne.

# Lent 2025

## Slavery - Longing for Freedom

9 March - 10:00am

### Lent 1 - Slave to Egypt



We explore the experiences of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. In Exodus 3:1-10, Moses is called to advocate for his people's freedom. In Matthew 20: 20-28, Jesus is described as living his life as a "ransom for many", a ransom being a price paid for the freedom of another. Is this a Lenten vision of an Easter freedom?

16 March - 10:00am

### Lent 2

#### Slave to the hardened heart



In the next chapter of the Egyptian story, Moses finds his liberation efforts frustrated by the Pharaoh's "hardness of heart", Exodus 7:1-7. What is hardness of heart, who suffers when leaders have it, and how can it be defeated? We also look at Paul's agonized characterization of a heart and mind at war, Romans 7:14-25.

23 March - 10:00am

### Lent 3 - Communion

#### Slave to the Father of Lies



In an argument with the Pharisees, who insist that, being children of Abraham, they are free, Jesus disagrees. He tells them that they are in fact enslaved children of the "Father of Lies" - John 8:31-44. We look at the power of the lie, and how truth sets free.

30 March - 10:00am

### Lent 4 - A Slave's Tale



We look at the letter of freed slave Jourdain Anderson to his one-time Master, responding to the latter's invitation to return to "service". Jourdain outlines some of what he's enjoying about his new freedom. We look at Paul's famous request to Philemon to give freedom to his run-away slave, Onesimus - Philemon 1-22. For Paul, the life of Christ is the beginning of the end of slavery.

6 April - 10:00am

## Lent 5

### The Manifesto - flags of dawn



When Jesus announces the beginning of his ministry in Nazareth, [Luke 4:16-21](#), he calls upon the concept of the "year of the Lord's favour", which in Jewish thought involved the returning of land to its traditional owners and the setting free of all who had been sold into servitude. While these practices were seldom observed in Israel's life, Jesus seemed confident that his "way" would do better. Was he right?

13 April - 10:00am

## Lent 6 - Palm Sunday

### The Conquering Victor?



After reading the Palm Narrative ([Luke 19: 28-40](#)), we do our annual Palm Procession along a short stretch of Bealey Ave.

Noting that Jesus' triumphal entry to Jerusalem lacked many of the muscle-flexes that people might have expected of a conquering victor, we explore Jesus' alternative approach to winning freedom. [Luke 9: 18-21](#).

17 April - 7:30pm

## Maundy Thursday - Tenebrae

### Slave Food

Communion



[Exodus 12: 1-14](#) - The Hebrew slaves in Egypt are called to prepare a special meal for the night before their racing to freedom.

Years later, Jesus commemorates that meal with his disciples, who also have known a kind of captivity. But what will follow the meal? What will the cost be for Jesus?

We end the service with the Litany of the Shadows, during which the light in the church is extinguished.

18 April - 10:00am

## Good Friday

### Thirty Pieces of Silver



If Jesus' ministry was about smashing the structures of slavery, then being sold for thirty pieces of silver is a tragic outcome. On Good Friday, slavery appears to have won.

We read the full Passion Narrative from John's gospel. Music includes excerpts from Pergolesi's Stabat Mater.

## Easter Day 2025

# Freedom - there he goes!

20 April - 10:00am

### Easter Day Communion



The service begins with the reading of Matthew's version of the Resurrection story. In 1 Peter 3: 18-22, the first thing that the risen Jesus does is preach freedom to his companions in the realm of the dead. His first impulse is to share freedom with his fellow sufferers. We hear Maya Angelou's poem "Still I rise" and sing some wonderful Easter hymns.



Be kinder than necessary because everyone is fighting their war or battle and suffering losses. Live simply, love generously, care deeply for the needs of your neighbour, speak softly... And leave the rest to the Lord. It is not faith, nor dogmatics, nor mysticism, nor ascetism, nor fasting, nor long prayers, but love that makes one a true Christian.

Everything becomes pointless without this fundamental thing - love for our neighbour.

St. Luke (Voyno-Yasenetsky)

**A barber who works with children with hair loss**

<https://www.facebook.com/SharingIsCaringNewsner/videos/1139240857297267>

## Wayne's sermon for Christ the King

Each week I send my sermon to Rev. Wayne Toeafoa, the minister of St Columba Presbyterian Church in Havelock North. Wayne and I first met when his parish was next to my first parish in 1993. Each time I send Wayne a sermon, he responds by sending me one of his (generally on the same text and theme). I thought his sermon on Sunday 24 November worth circulating, so here it is.

*Today is the Reign of Christ Sunday. A feast day that was originally instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925. Pope Pius, like many Christian leaders at the time, was concerned about the rise of secularism and various political philosophies sweeping through Europe and Asia. He called upon all Christian denominations to affirm the sovereignty of Christ.*

*Some more cynical commentators believe the institution of the Sunday of Christ the King was part of a pact with Hitler and Mussolini whereby the Catholic Church were allowed to affirm the primacy of Christ, as long as they remained silent about fascism and Nazism.*

*I choose to believe the more positive version of the story. That the Pope's intentions were much more honourable, even though I am aware that Church leaders and the Popes are always having to make the voice of the Church known, in the context of competing political forces, be they fascist, or communist, or secular atheism.*

*Nothing much has changed. Christians in every era are challenged to affirm our loyalty to Christ above competing political loyalties.*

*Even in so-called secular Russia, the Orthodox Church is still a powerful presence. In one survey, (Arena Shreda, 2012) 47.3 percent of the Russian population still identify as Christian – mostly Russian Orthodox. A testimony to the strength of long-held religious beliefs and deep religious impulses. Legislation and persecution have failed to erase Christianity from Russia. When we talk about religious power and secular power we are talking about two different understandings of power.*

*In our reading from the gospel today, Pontius Pilate understood only political and military power. That was his business. He was a soldier and a governor, a political appointee representing Ceasar.*

*When Pilate asked the question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Pilate may have had in mind charging Jesus with sedition and treason and dealing quickly with him.*

*Jesus replied to Pilate that his kingdom was 'not of this world'. By that, Jesus didn't mean that his kingdom/reign was an ethereal power that would have no impact on the world. Nor was Jesus talking about the Kingdom of Heaven in the afterlife.*



*When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he prayed, 'May your kingdom come, and may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven'.*

*Jesus made the distinction between the status quo and a 'desired' world under the reign of God. The reign of God had the potential to transform the world as it is, or was, in Jesus' time. That has certainly happened, in those societies whose roots are shaped by Christianity.*

*Every time we pray the Lord's prayer, we are praying for the world to be transformed into a more perfect place where love and justice prevail over hatred and evil. We are praying that the reign of God will prevail over inordinate earthly powers.*

*In his book, 'The Heart of Christianity' the late Marcus Borg proposed that the two most important dynamics at the heart of Christianity are, 'personal transformation' and the 'transformation of the world' or political transformation.*

*In our personal transformations, we are living out Jesus' words to Nicodemus. We are being 'born again'. And it is not our doing, it is the work of the spirit transforming us into the people of God. We are being born again, 'of the spirit'.*

*The public or political transformation is also the work of the spirit. As we (Christians) and other people of goodwill, are moved to strive to make the world a better place, the world is slowly being transformed. Just think of the huge changes that have happened since the time of Christ.*

*Think of the social and political climate created by the commandment/ethic to love God and love our neighbour. Even if that ethic hasn't been followed faithfully. It has provided us with a moral compass.*

*Some people, including me, struggle with the word, 'King' when applied to Jesus.*

*Even Pilate struggled to see how the pathetic figure of Jesus in chains, could be a threat to Ceasar.*

*Our concepts of king are shaped by images of earthly kings. Kings normally live lives of privilege where they are out of touch with ordinary people. In the past, the earthly kings once enjoyed a power and authority that was easily abused at the expense of their subjects. E.g Henry VIII and his unfortunate wives. Even the most popular Jewish King, David, abused his subjects and his power. E.g. Uriah the Hittite who he had murdered.*

*The three most popular monarchs in British history were not in fact kings, but queens. The two Elizabeths and Queen Victoria.*

*The most popular ruler in Samoan history (1500s) was also a woman called Salamasina. Popular because she managed to unite the four districts of old Samoa. Her reign was also notably a peaceful reign.*

*I, and hundreds of other Samoans, can claim descent from Queen Salamasina. But even with my 'tiny' claim to royal lineage, I have trouble with the concept of 'king' when applied to Jesus. He did not act or look like a traditional ruler, or king. Or like a Samoan Paramount Chief.*

*In fact, after his interview with Pilate, the Roman guards took Jesus into the courtyard. And in mockery, they placed a crown of thorns on his head. Put a reed in his hand in lieu of a sceptre and draped him in a purple robe – the colour of royalty. He was mocked as a king who had no kingly trappings and no kingly authority. A parody of a king.*

*In his lifetime, Jesus modelled a different kind of kingship. He healed the broken, forgave the sins of the unacceptable. Embraced the outcasts, washed the feet of his disciples and up ended the tables of the corrupt money changers at the temple. He said that he had come to serve and not to be served. He shared stories and parables about the kingdom that was 'not of this world'. A kingdom that was 'on its way', and 'still to come' with the Holy Spirit acting as a kind of mid-wife – birthing new believers and birthing the new world out of body of the old world.*

*When you look at the history of the Christian Church it is easy to criticize all the horrible things that have happened in name of the Church. Just recently, we have seen the Report on Child Abuse in Government and in Faith Institutions. The Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby has just resigned because many in the Anglican Church tolerated child abuse by a powerful friend of the Archbishop.*

*It's easy to criticize 'the church' for its colonization policies, its cruelty towards women. Its mind-control over vulnerable people. Its closed-mindedness. The Inquisition. (is a good target for non-Christians) The Crusades and any number of 'un-Christlike' disasters. The church has got a lot to live down. And a lot to apologize for.*

*But that is not all that the church has done. On the personal level the church has transformed millions of lives for the better. Perhaps your life is one of those lives, transformed for the better.*

*I'm obviously biased, but I can't imagine life without my Christian Faith. It has given me the spiritual strength I have need throughout my life. It has given me a moral compass and an irrepressible sense of the hope in the goodness of God. In daily life, my faith gives me a general perspective on life which includes reverencing God and caring about my neighbour. Even the neighbours I may not like.*

*On the political level, Christianity has transformed many societies for the better. E.g. In Aotearoa NZ and in the Pacific Islands like Samoa, Christianity gave warring Chiefs a peaceful way out of the cycle of war and revenge.*

*The first hospitals and universities in the West and in Aotearoa, were founded by the Christian Churches. The Presbyterian Church in Otago established the first University in NZ.*

*Also on the political level, the Churches in Aotearoa NZ including the Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican Churches, have pledged ourselves to honour the Treaty of Waitangi – even in this current environment where a minority of powerful, monied people want to erase the Treaty and render it worthless as a living document.*

*At least three Anglican bishops, and many other church leaders, marched in the recent Hiko to oppose the Bill calling for the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi to be reviewed. An issue that will simply create more racial division and works in favour of the minority party that proposed the bill.*

*About five decades of discussions, scholarship, jurisprudence and goodwill threatens to be undone, by a party that has no real understanding of the Treaty. Nor do its members care about issues which directly affect the most vulnerable people in our society.*

*Personal transformation and political transformation, two dynamics that lie in the heart of Christianity.*

*On this Sunday of Christ the King, we have another opportunity to make our own person pledges to follow Christ.*

*I'm going to finish by praying a modern version of John Wesley's Covenant Prayer – a prayer which Methodists pray at the beginning of every year:*

### **PRAYER**

*I am no longer my own, but yours.*

*Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will.*

*Put me to doing, put me to suffering.*

*Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you,*

*Praised for you or criticized for you.*

*Let me be full, let me be empty.*

*Let me have all things, let me have nothing.*

*I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service.*

*And now, O wonderful and holy God,*

*Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,*

*you are mine, and I am yours.*

*So be it.*

*And the covenant which I have made on earth,*

*Let it also be made in heaven. Amen.*

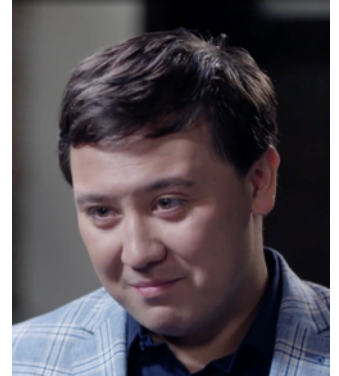
## Dame Tariana Turia



On Sunday 19 January, the service featured some interview clips, reflections and readings inspired by the death of Dame Tariana Turia on 3 January. The interview clips came from an interview that Morgan Godfrey conducted in 2019. The full interview can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jrk-9ImLWdE> While

my editing of the full interview into selected clips for liturgy was masterful (!), the full interview, with its moments of quiet between the interviewer are interesting. Sometimes, it's clear that Tariana isn't going to comment further, so



Morgan moves on. Sometimes, Tariana's "mmm" reveals an unarticulated mood behind what she's just said. It's worth a look.

## 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.

*Arohanui, Matthew.*

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