



KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

Pastoral Newsletter

2 April, 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.

Sanctuary crosses



Many of us are familiar with the sandstone cross (left) that often sits on the communion table at Knox. Commissioned from artist Stewart Eggleston, it was financed in the early 1990s by Alan and Ena Lane, John & Edna Pawsey, & Rev. Elizabeth Campbell. Some people say that the cross gives the sense of a figure with open arms, leaning slightly forward as if to embrace. It's more or a

"risen figure" than a "reminder of death". This is indeed what the artist intended.

Also sometimes appearing on the table is the plain wooden cross (right), made by the late Jack Durrer, a member at Knox. Jack did lots of woodworking and carpentry. I use his cross mainly during Lent, since Lent is a time of simplicity. It's also a time when the "carrying of the wooden cross" is an apt motif.

In recent times a third cross (centre) has appeared. For many years, along with many books, it sat in the study of Rev. Kim Bathgate. While unable to tell me anything about who made it and when, Kim's family were very keen for it to be given to Knox. They are aware that it's only one of three crosses we use.

Interestingly, for a long time many Presbyterian communities saw crosses as things that had no place in worship spaces. Even though crosses were different from crucifixes, they were considered "unreformed" and not appropriate for the assembly room. (This same movement of thought tended to have two aisles in the room, rather than one - to avoid giving the impression of a Catholic



space. The movement also tended to avoid stained glass in windows). The photo above shows Knox's nice clear windows, but also a major concession to the inclusion of a cross. The large suspended cross (provided by the family of Tony Wallace) was removed during the refurbishment programme of the late 1980s.

Intellectual property, originality and Artificial Intelligence

Preparing for the service for Sunday 2 March, themed around "caring for the planet", I came across what I thought was a very good litany of repentance for our degradation of the earth. I found it in an order of service from St Matthew's in the City (a progressive Anglican church in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland). I scoured the order of service for authorship details, found nothing, so (after a bit of editing down) decided to cut and paste it into our order of service, and source the authorship later. Then I got busy with other things. Shortly after the service, people kept congratulating me on my brilliant litany! I felt embarrassed, confessed my act of theft, and went back to the task of finding the author.

At Knox, we've long been careful about crediting the authors of the hymns we sing, and our office keeps a record of the works we need to declare to the organisation to which we pay a copyright administration fee. We do our best to fulfil all righteousness in this respect. An email sent to the vicar of St Matthew's, seeking authorial detail for the litany, so far remains unanswered (long time now). I won't nag!

Concerning original material, in recent times, I have seen a television advertisement for a phone that uses Artificial Intelligence to help a bumbling, inarticulate idiot produce impressive documents at work. This advertisement moves me to note that the sermons we hear at Knox are produced by me without any artificial intelligence input. The prayers we say together are written by a human, and said by humans. I think, as a kind of "proud to be human" protest, I'll start including a "no artificial intelligence" disclaimer in our orders of service!

Remaining services in Lent - Season of Slavery

6 April - 10:00am

Lent 5 - Communion 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.

Material hardship

We sometimes hear politicians, sociologists, economists and journalists talking about material hardship in our country. In case you've ever wondered what criteria are used to judge whether a household is in material hardship, here are seventeen metrics widely used in Aotearoa New Zealand:

Able to provide a meal with meat, fish or chicken	No
Have good shoes	No
Have suitable clothes	No
Able to give gifts	No
Have home contents insurance	No
Buy fresh fruit or vegetables	No
Have to buy cheaper meat or less meat	Yes
Put up with feeling cold	Yes
Put off doctor's visits	Yes
Put off dentist's visits	Yes
Cut back on local trips	Yes
Delay replacing / repairing appliances	Yes
Cannot pay utilities bills	Yes
Cannot pay for a car	Yes
Have to borrow to meet costs	Yes
Limited buying of clothes and shoes	Yes
Afford unexpected \$500 expense	No

According to **Tatauranga Aotearoa, Statistics New Zealand**, a household is experiencing material hardship if it is going without six or more of 17 essential consumption items due to cost, and *severe* material hardship if it is going without nine or more items.

Following the Te Atatu Public Library Invasion

On Saturday 15 February, a noisy group of protestors in black t-shirts stormed the Te Atatu Public Library to stop a rainbow story time event for children. Investigations revealed that the invading group was part of the activity of the Destiny Church. Children present at the event were reported as having been frightened. Shortly after the event, the Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand released this statement.

A Message of Solidarity from the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

The Methodist Church of New Zealand stands in unwavering solidarity with our LGBTQ+ whānau, in response to recent attacks from Destiny Church and others who seek to harm and marginalise.

We acknowledge the deep pain, frustration, and exhaustion of those who must constantly defend their own existence. Faith-based discrimination has caused profound harm, and we grieve the misuse of Christian language and symbols to spread exclusion and division. Without hesitation, we affirm that all people are made in the image of God and are inherently worthy of dignity, love, and belonging.

As Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa, our commitment to bicultural partnership, justice, and grace calls us to be a Church that truly welcomes and affirms all people. Silence is not an option when our whānau are under attack. We call on churches, faith communities, and people of goodwill to reject hate and stand openly in support of LGBTQ+ communities.

We are grateful for the leadership of those within our Church and across Aotearoa who are organising expressions of support. We encourage individuals and congregations within our Connexion to take meaningful action—whether through public statements, community engagement, or pastoral care—to ensure that our LGBTQ+ whānau know they are not alone.

The Gospel calls us to love one another as Christ has loved us. Love does not tolerate harm. Love does not stand by in silence. Love acts.

We choose love.

Ngā manaakitanga

Te Aroha Rountree | President of The Methodist Church of New Zealand.

On Sunday 9 March, Knox hosted an afternoon service for Moana Vā, a rainbow support organisation for Pasifika people. We've done this every four months for about 18 months now. The services are appreciated by Pasifika people who don't feel welcome anymore in the churches in which they grew up. We offer a safe space. Destiny Church turned up to protest outside Knox; the Police provided support to keep worshippers feeling safe. Some people stayed away. So sad!

A Litany of Repentance **for our Environmental Degradation:**

On the first day of creation,
you split the darkness and created light.

**ON THE FIRST DAY OF DESTRUCTION,
WE SPLIT THE ATOM, AND EXPLODED NUCLEAR DEVICES.**

On the second day of creation,
you created the sky
filled with clouds, stars and fresh air.

**ON THE SECOND DAY OF DESTRUCTION,
WE BEGAN BURNING FOSSIL FUELS,
PUMPING FUMES INTO THE SKY.**

On the third day of creation,
you gathered together the waters, revealing the earth,
forests, streams and seeds for new life.

**ON THE THIRD DAY OF DESTRUCTION,
WE BEGAN TO STRIP THE LAND, CREATING, BARREN PLAINS.**

On the fourth day of creation,
you created the Sun and the moon
and differentiated the day, the night and the seasons.

**ON THE FOURTH DAY OF DESTRUCTION,
WE THREW AEROSOLS UP INTO THE SKY,
RIPPING APART THE PROTECTIVE OZONE ABOVE.**

On the fifth day of creation,
you called the sea and air to bring forth life of many kinds
for the wonder and delight of all.

**ON THE FIFTH DAY OF DESTRUCTION,
WE CREATED DDT, KILLING THE FISH OF THE SEAS
AND DESTROYING UNBORN BIRDS OF THE AIR.**

On the sixth day of creation,
you watched as creatures of the land emerged,
crawling, leaping and playing games of life.

**ON THE SIXTH DAY OF DESTRUCTION,
WE LOOKED AWAY AS MULTITUDES OF SPECIES DISAPPEARED.**

On the seventh day of creation,
you gave creation the blessing of rest
to celebrate and sustain all life.

**ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF DESTRUCTION,
WE CREATED THE RELENTLESS DRIVE FOR PROGRESS.**

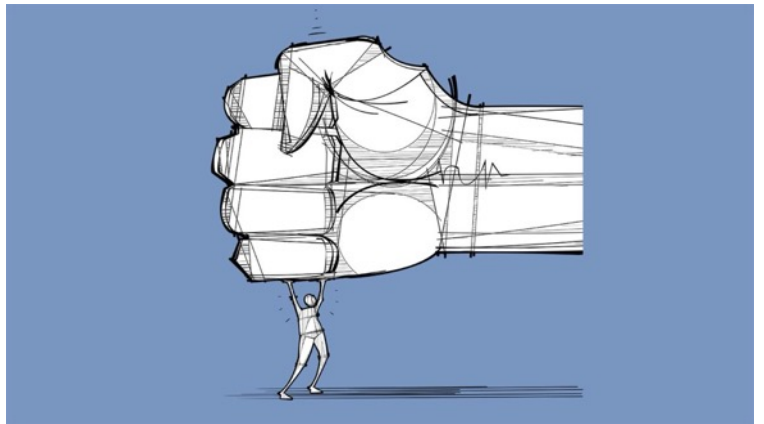
Silence

God, our Creator, we acknowledge our crimes against creation,
and we pray the courage in Christ to work with the earth
to bring healing and peace.

**MAY GRACE FLOW LIKE A RIVER,
MERCY LIKE A NEVER-ENDING STREAM,
FOR YOUR MERCY'S SAKE.
AMEN.**

What is the value of a protest? (Wendell Berry)

"Much protest is naïve; it expects quick, visible improvement and despairs and gives up when such improvement does not come. Protesters who hold out longer have perhaps understood that success is not the proper goal. If protest depended on success, there would be little protest of any durability or significance. History simply affords too little evidence that anyone's individual protest is of any use. Protest that endures, I think, is moved by a hope far more modest than that of public success: namely, the hope of preserving qualities in one's own heart and spirit that would be destroyed by acquiescence."



A bit scared to watch the news?

A Prayer Before Reading the News, written by Rabbi Irwin Keller in early 2016

My God, the soul you have placed in me is pure and vulnerable. I am afraid that looking at today's news will be painful. Encircle me in a robe of light so that I can witness the wounds of the world without being wounded myself. Let me learn what I need to know in order to be of my greatest use, without being overwhelmed by despair. I feel your protective light now as I open myself to the world's suffering and the world's joys. Amen.

Waka Toa Ora



From the Healthy Christchurch website, Waka Toa Ora

If you've been experiencing difficult thoughts and feelings about news events recently, you're not alone in that.

Hearing about these negative news events could lead to feelings of powerlessness, sadness, anger, fear or instability. You might feel worry for people you love, yourself, or topics you care about, such as climate change.

However you feel, know that your feelings are valid and true for you. It's important to look after your own mental health and wellbeing during this time. The Mental Health Foundation has put together some tips to help...

Practice radical acceptance

What occurs in the world is largely out of your control. There are actions you can take, such as engaging in advocacy, but the weight of these world events are not yours to shoulder alone.

[Learn more about the skill of radical acceptance.](#)

Create digital boundaries

It's okay to consume the news, but try not to let it consume you. Leave online conversations if they become unkind or unproductive, and try to limit your news sources to ones that you trust.

Connect with your community

Feeling connected to the people around us can make us feel safe, and provide us with a sense of belonging. A lot of what we see in the news centres around disharmony and disconnection, but we can combat these narratives by making our own communities stronger, together. You might organise a neighbourhood potluck or volunteer with a local charity.

Take positive action

Taking actions that reflect our beliefs can be affirming, and help us regain a sense of control and mastery. How you choose to take action could look different depending on the cause you care about, and the capacity you have available. You could write a submission on a bill during a consultation phase, attend a protest, or join an advocacy group.

Continue looking after your wellbeing

We all have mental health and wellbeing, and we all need to look after it. It can help to start by talking about how you're feeling with someone you trust. It also helps make time for fun – like engaging in hobbies – and ensuring you're sleeping well.

Holding on to hope can be hard if we are experiencing feelings of powerlessness. But we're never powerless, even if we can't fix the problems in the world that we're worrying about – we can make a positive difference in the lives of our whānau, friends and community. We can make it through hard times, together.

Tim Groser speaks about what might help the international situation

Tim Groser, a former New Zealand ambassador to the United States, offers ideas about what power "bold political statements from the outside" **don't** have in the White House. His suggestion is that the power for change in America depends on people in America. I would say that, if that is true, then perhaps we ought to be keeping the people of America in our prayers. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/thedetail/545110/the-art-of-tiptoeing-around-donald-trump>



Rachel Hunter interviews Tame Iti

I must say that I had low expectations of this interview, but was pleasantly surprised. Somewhat calmer than he was in his fire-brand youth, but still equally committed to what drove him from the start, he speaks about the evolution of many things. He describes some of



what he did (shooting the flag, etc) as "theatre". He speaks about his use of a ladder to speak to the Minister of Treaty Settlements. He speaks about the slow process by which he decided to put moko on his face. View the interview here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e68XX_GnR4c

Socks and Sandals

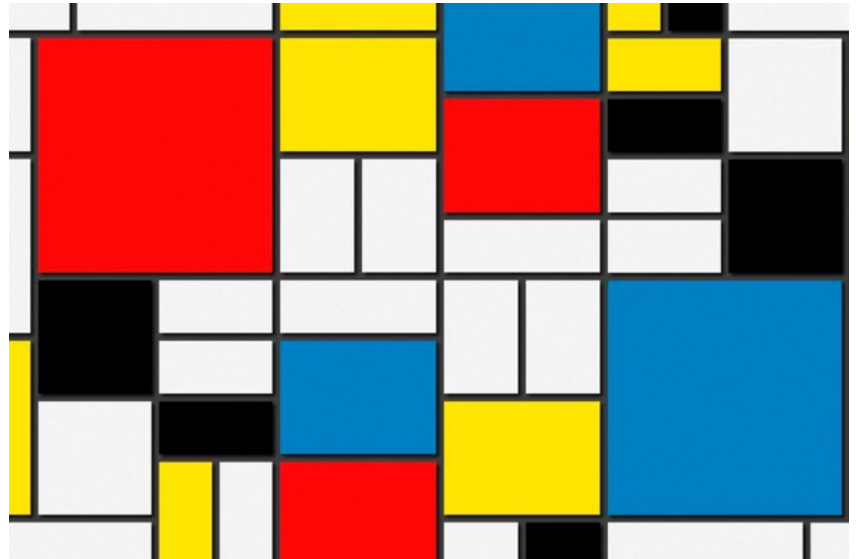
I like this photo of my father. Letting slip his "Northern Irish" origins by his wearing of sandals with socks (which I note Kiwi young people now are replicating with their flip-flops and Birkenstocks), he sits in a folding chair, under a beach umbrella, in a place pretty much as possibly physically distant from where he was born. He made a good move from there to here. Where is our home, actually? And what makes it so?



New Socks for the Minister

While black socks would have done the trick, as a little treat to myself I bought two new pairs of socks with artworks on them.

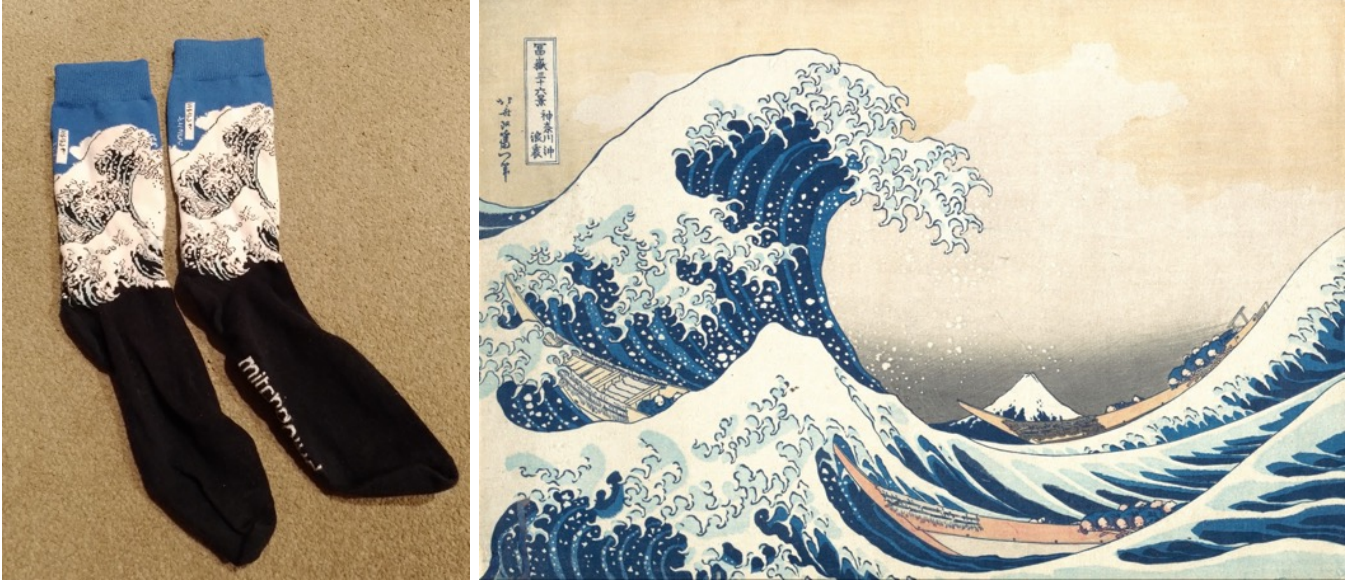
Piet Mondrian's Composition with Red, Blue and Yellow (1930)



Born in 1872, the Dutch Mondrian is considered one of the Twentieth Century's most significant abstract painters. As with many abstract artists, his earliest works were figurative-representational. His abstract style grew out of a desire to develop a universal aesthetic (as if realism wasn't somehow universal). By 1930, when he painted "Composition", he only used straight dark lines and block coloured areas. In 1914, he is quoted as having said: "Art is higher than reality, and has no direct relation to reality. To approach the spiritual in art, one will make as little use as possible of reality, because reality is opposed to the spiritual."

In this sense, Mondrian and I have a disagreement. As a person of Christian faith, affirming the significance of incarnation, I'm inclined to believe that physical reality and "things of the spirit" quite famously have found a productive harmony. When reality and spirit meet, Christ emerges, changing the lives of those who notice. I don't like Mondrian's repudiation of the significance of reality. I **do**, however, like his straight lines and high contrasts. Therefore, I enjoy wearing these socks.

Hokusai's Great Wave off Kanagawa (1831)



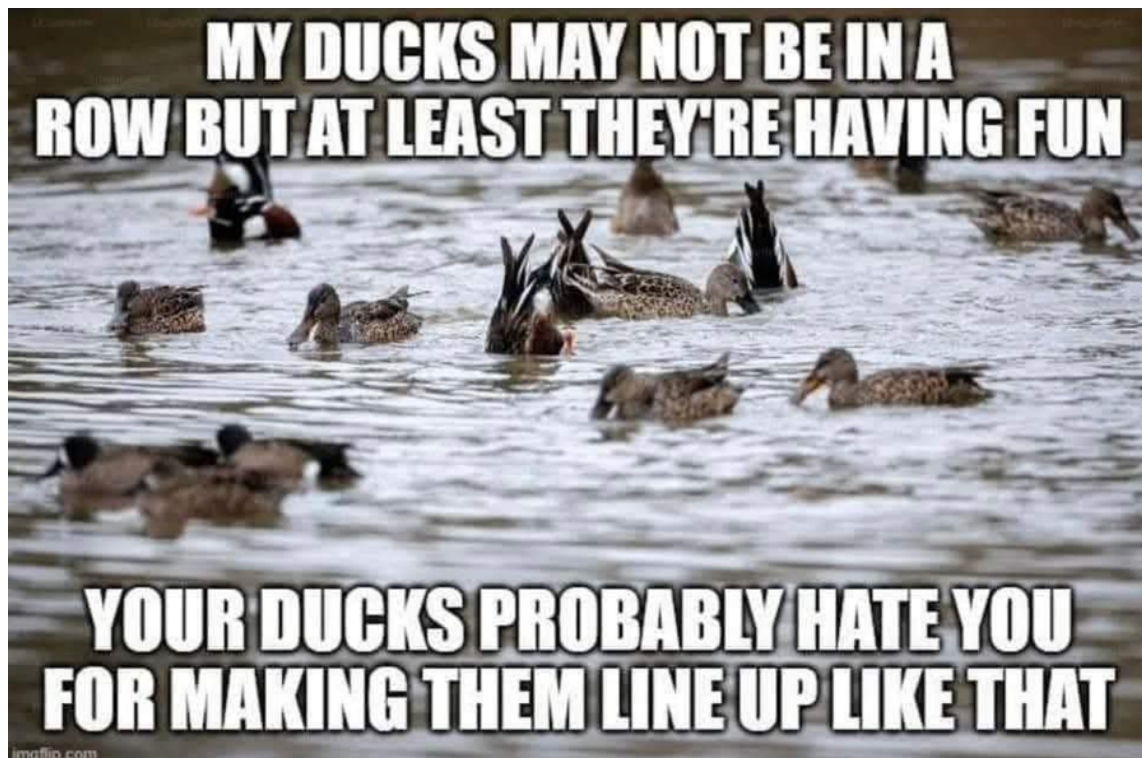
What I find interesting about this work is that while it's named after the wave (which is the largest object in frame), the work is actually part of a series called "Thirty-six Views of Mount Fujiama". Indeed, way behind the wave, very much in the background, is a tiny view of Mount Fuji. Sometimes the connections between even famous figures and the main theme are slightly remote. How large does the figure of Christ loom in the presence of those who consider themselves to be the embodiment of his presence in the world? Perhaps a wee "Christ" in the background is sufficient? Hokusai spoke about his evolution as an artist. He said:

"From the age of six, I had a passion for copying the form of things and since the age of fifty I have published many drawings, yet of all I drew by my seventieth year there is nothing worth taking into account. At seventy-three years I partly understood the structure of animals, birds, insects and fishes, and the life of grasses and plants. And so, at eighty-six I shall progress further; at ninety I shall even further penetrate their secret meaning, and by one hundred I shall perhaps truly have reached the level of the marvelous and divine. When I am one hundred and ten, each dot, each line will possess a life of its own."

We'll never know how his art might have developed through those last stages (90, 100 and 110), since he died at the age of 89. But he left us with good thoughts about how the passage of time can make us better artists, rather than worse.

Until I had researched the work for this sock article, I had never noticed that there were three boats under the crest of the wave. Maybe it's a work not just about Mount Fuji, but also about humanity sailing into that which might overwhelm.

CHEEKY QUESTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY - is it cheap and nasty, or literacy educative, to put arts of works onto socks, t-shirts, underwear, shopping bags? Should the minister wear socks bearing images by someone who doesn't affirm incarnation? Is it OK that the wave becomes more famous than the mountain?



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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