



KNØX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

Order of Service 28 November 2021



ADVENT 1
IN THE SEASON OF LETTERS:
A LETTER TO THE DISTANCED ONES

WELCOME TO KNOX

Knox Church is a congregation within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. We aim to create Christian community in which people of all ages, sexual orientations, cultural backgrounds and socio-economic situations are included as equally valued participants in our congregational life. We cherish our diversity, offering a safe place of belonging to any who wish to explore their beliefs in an atmosphere promoting discussion, the development of healthy relationships and spiritual growth. We strive to be open to dialogue and shared experiences with people of other faiths. We enjoy worshipping the God made known in Jesus, endeavouring to do so in ways that are relevant to our daily lives, respect the integrity of creation, and make a positive difference to our wider world.

A loop system for hearing aids operates at Knox.

Toilets are available through the door on the lectern side of the sanctuary.

Please don't leave any items unattended around the church;
they may cause alarm.

We take care to use inclusive language in our services. References to God in traditional prayers and hymns may sometimes be gender-specific. As we pray and sing together, you're invited to adapt the words we've chosen.

Pre-service Music - the organ music before the service is an extended improvisation on the hymn tunes featured in the service.

The Call to Worship:

We light a candle in the name of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

**JESUS, IN WHOSE NAME SO MANY COMMUNITIES HAVE GATHERED;
JESUS, BY WHOSE SPIRIT THE PEOPLE CAME TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER;
JESUS, BY WHOSE BIRTH WE HOPE TO BE RENEWED.**

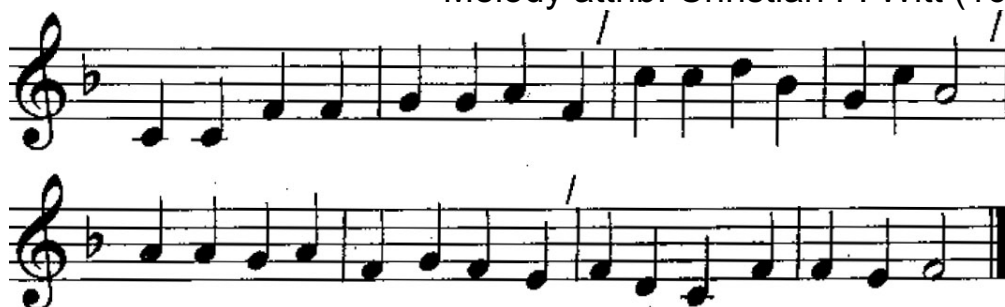
Kia noho a Ihowa ki a koutou. God be with you.

MA IHOWA KOE E MANAAKI. GOD BLESS YOU.

Hymn:

Stuttgart

Melody attrib. Christian F. Witt (1660-1716)



1. Come, O long-expected Jesus,
born to set all people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
grant us your true liberty.
2. Israel's strength and consolation,
hope to all the earth impart;
dear desire of every nation,
enter every longing heart.
3. Born all people to deliver,
born a child, you came to reign!
Born to rule on earth for ever,
come, be known to us again.
4. By your own eternal Spirit
come to claim us as your own;
by your all-sufficient merit
let us share your cross and crown.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Prayer of Approach

Could there be, O God,
a Christ shaped hole
in our existence?

A longing,
an expectation,
left where the Bethlehem baby
once did play and cry?

COME, O LONG-EXPECTED JESUS.

Could there be, O God,
within our souls
some remnant
of a friendship,
a being together,
which somehow, in worship, we feel?

COME, O LONG-EXPECTED JESUS.

Could it be, O God,
that we are "shadow",
incomplete,
so long as Christmas has not happened again?

COME, O LONG-EXPECTED JESUS.

We dare to believe, O God,
that you befriended us
through the birth and life
and risen mystery of Jesus.
Beginning this season
of attending in spirit
to his birth,
to his being one-with-us in our humanity,
we offer our praise,
saying
COME, O LONG-EXPECTED JESUS.

Silence

We offer also our acknowledgement
that, in our incompleteness,
we have got on with life without him.
We have lived
as if he never had lived.
We have served brokenness,
rather than sought peace and unity.
We have given others cause
to feel lonely and isolated.
We retreat to our little corners of the world,
separated from one another
and from you.

And so we say

Lord have mercy.
CHRIST HAVE MERCY.
Lord have mercy.

Assurance and Response

. . . In the name of Christ, I say to you:
You are forgiven and you are free.
THANKS BE TO GOD.

Prayer of Supplication:

Your servant Paul, O God,
declared his fondness
for the wee community
he'd founded in Thessalonica.

In doing so,
he demonstrated
the deep love you have
for all humanity.

**ENABLE US,
IN OUR PLACE AND TIME,
TO MANIFEST YOUR LOVE
AND TO LIVE A LIFE OF CLOSENESS
AND SOLIDARITY.**

We pray this in the name of Jesus,
using the words he has inspired us to use:

**OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN
HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME,
YOUR KINGDOM COME,
YOUR WILL BE DONE,
ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN.
GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD.
FORGIVE US OUR SINS
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST US.
SAVE US FROM THE TIME OF TRIAL
AND DELIVER US FROM EVIL.
FOR THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY ARE YOURS
NOW AND FOR EVER. AMEN.**

The Passing of the Peace

Kia tau tonu te rangimarie o te Ariki ki a koutou.
The peace of Christ be with you all.

**A KI A KOE ANO HOKI;
AND ALSO WITH YOU.**

*In a suitably physically remote way,
we exchange a sign of peace with one another.*

*Our next Sunday School day will happen once we're out of Alert Level Two,
and will operate in way consistent with whatever constraints are recommended.*

The Bible Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 3: 9-13

In this is the Word of God
THANKS BE TO GOD.

[Bishop Kenneth Carter](#), of the United Methodist Church, Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church, writes:

In my own tradition, United Methodism, there is a hymn of reunion that is sung by the clergy at the beginning of our annual conferences. It was written by Charles Wesley and is entitled, "And Are We Yet Alive?" It has been sung in these gatherings by Methodists since the 1780s. It begins by naming the power of reunion.

So, this hymn is something of an historical artefact, but also an illustration of the Christian community's desire to sing the theme of "reunion".

Hymn:

Franconia

William Henry Havergal (1793-1870)



1. And are we yet alive,
and see each other's face?
Glory and praise to Jesus give
for His redeeming grace.
2. Preserved by power divine
to full salvation here,
again in Jesus' praise we join,
and in his sight appear.
3. What troubles have we seen,
what conflicts have we passed,
fightings without, and fears within,
since we assembled last.
4. But out of all the Lord
hath brought us by his love;
and still he doth his help afford,
and hides our life above.
5. Then let us make our boast
of his redeeming power,
which saves us to the uttermost,
till we can sin no more.
6. Let us take up the cross
till we the crown obtain;

and gladly reckon all things loss,
so we may Jesus gain.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Sermon:

We pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face

Generally, sermons are posted on our website shortly after the service at: <http://www.knoxchurch.co.nz/sermons.html>

Hard copies of the sermons are available before and after the service – ask the person at the door.

The Advent Wreath

Within our season of letters,
today's candle is the candle of reunion.

Paul, who expressed a deep desire to see again those in Thessalonica, whom he had nurtured and loved, and who possibly felt that his life was marked by people who were missing, also wrote a strong affirmation that nothing in this life can separate us from the love of God.

He wrote:

"Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Deeply aware of the missing people in our lives
and of the relationships that need either to be mended
or to be released to God,
we await the coming of the Christmas Christ,
who will be, for us,
our reunion with the One in whom we live, move and have our being.

The candle is lit.

In hope, we await the birth of Christ.

AMEN. COME, LORD JESUS.

Music for Reflection: Improvisation
Daniel Cooper (b. 1997)

Prayers for Others and Ourselves

*To the minister's words, "We pray most earnestly",
you are invited to respond **"THAT WE MAY SEE YOU FACE TO FACE"**.*

The Offering and Dedication

We stand for the dedication of the Offering

Giving thanks that our last few offerings
have given support to PILLARS,
and so to the families of those in and out of prison,
now we give thanks for the work of St George's / Iona food bank.

**WE ARE GRATEFUL
THAT WE HAVE THE CAPACITY
TO PASS ON OUR BLESSINGS
TO THOSE WHO HAVE NEED.**

We dedicate the offering we make just now,
**IN THE NAME AND SPIRIT OF JESUS,
AMEN.**

Notices

Hymn:

Veni Emmanuel from Fifteenth Century French Processional



1. O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Christ of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to you,
O Israel!
2. O come, O Wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and nigh,
to us the path of knowledge show,
and help us in that way to go.
Rejoice . . .
3. O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer
our spirits by your advent here;
love stir within the womb of night,
and death's own shadows put to flight.
Rejoice . . .
4. O come, Desire of Nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind;
make envy, strife and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice . . .

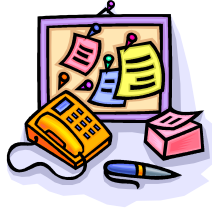
*Based on antiphons from Advent Vespers,
trans. John Mason Neale (1818-1866) and others, alt.*

Benediction

Postlude: Toccata, from Suite Gothique
Léon Boëllmann (1862-1897)

During the current Covid containment level, we are not having our usual post-service morning tea. Should you wish to linger in the church for company and conversation, please do - just remember to maintain suitable physical distancing.

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NOTICES

This Week: 28 November – 4 December 2021

Sunday 10.00am Morning Worship
Wednesday 10.00am Bible Study

Next Week: 5 December – 11 December 2021

Sunday 10.00am Morning Worship
Wednesday 10.00am Bible Study

PILLARS - Grateful thanks for the wonderful donations given to PILLARS over the last 3 weeks – 7 banana boxes of goodies were delivered to PILLARS this week. PILLARS has been in touch to thank everyone for their support. They truly appreciate the gifts received.

Packing Christmas Baking - We will be packing the Christmas baking on Saturday morning December 4 at **9am**. All hands welcome.

Christmas Baking Orders - Christmas baking orders can be picked up at the conclusion of the packing on Saturday. Remaining orders will be placed in the Gallery Area to be picked up on Sunday December 5.

St Georges Iona - We will resume collecting for St Georges Iona – Christmas goodies as well as the essentials will be greatly appreciated.

BOOKS ABOUT THE ROYAL FAMILY - Please check out the display of Win Johnston's wonderful books about the Royal Family. Have a good browse and take any book/s which appeal. Feel free to make a donation in the box provided.

SENIORS END OF YEAR PARTY - We know how well appreciated the End of Year Seniors function is. It is one of Knox's highlights! Unfortunately, due to uncertainty over the government's requirements for gatherings during Covid times – we feel it is better to postpone until such time as we can hold the event safely.

KNOX LIFE - The next issue of Knox Life is planned for early December. Please send your thoughts, poems, articles, photos etc to the office by Monday 29 November. We need your contributions!

Saturday 4 December 7.30 - The City Choir will present choruses from **The Messiah**. Due to covid regulations, there will be NO DOOR SALES. You can buy tickets from Eventfinda at [Messiah Choruses - Christchurch - Eventfinda](#). All audience members must present their Vaccine Passport before entering the venue.



Knox church values the support of all who are involved in our community's life. Knox Church is a charity. All charitable donations are eligible for a tax rebate of 33%. Bank account - 03 1705 0029641 00. Put your name in the reference field and email your contact details to the office or donations secretary. For further information or options contact: office@knoxchurch.co.nz Ph 3792456 or Janet Wilson, Donations Secretary janmwil507@gmail.com Ph 338 7203.



Christian World Service Christmas Appeal

A story from Netani Rika of the Pacific Conference of Churches:

As the Covid-19 pandemic stretched its tentacles towards the Pacific last year, it became obvious that small economies would be deeply affected. Job losses loomed. Hunger – especially among the young, elderly, those with disabilities and women – was a real threat.

At the Pacific Conference of Churches, staff hastily bought seeds and found root crop cuttings to plant the Food Bank on land in the Central Business District of Fiji's capital, Suva.

While government and international agencies discussed the medical crisis, PCC staff planted tomatoes, cabbages, *kumala* (sweet potato), beans and cassava. The food garden – clearly visible from the main government and United Nations offices – yielded meals for children in squatter settlements just as Covid-19 hit Fiji. From this Food Bank, children were fed at least one square meal a day, allowing them to attend school with dignity.

Seeds were sent to Tonga and Vanuatu where similar initiatives helped the vulnerable members of society.

That food garden planted a seed in the hearts and minds of PCC staff and the secretariat has purchased 50 acres of land at Lawaki – two hours from Suva – to continue the Food Bank concept.

Launched on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, the farm will be completely off the grid, using solar energy and water from a nearby creek. It will be free of chemicals, generating fertiliser from the 24 cattle on the farm and other organic material.

The initiative is called *Lomana Na Vulagi* (Love the Stranger), and will provide food for those in need, revenue for PCC and an on-site eco-school for young Pacific people.

Local communities have been approached and will be involved in all aspects of the farm with opportunities for learning and employment.

Central to the farm's ethos is the involvement of women, young people and people with disabilities along with using time-tested traditional agriculture and land management methods.

West Papuan independence



You are invited to two events to mark the 60th anniversary of West Papuan independence on Wednesday, 1 December:

12 noon at the Bridge of Remembrance, Cashel Street. **Traditional Flagraising.** Keynote speaker: Louisa Wall MP.

And a Time of Prayer:

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

*As Dean of the Christchurch Transitional Cathedral, it is a privilege to invite you to the Transitional Cathedral for a service of **traditional Evensong** to mark the 60th anniversary of the birth of West Papua to be held on Wednesday 1 December at 5:30pm.*

This is a significant and important day for West Papuans. Benny Wenda, Chairperson of the United Liberation Movement of West Papua, has called for everyone to celebrate this day with peaceful prayer meetings. West Papuans are engaged in a long struggle for independence and liberation from Indonesian rule. This is an opportunity to stand in solidarity with the people of this nation and to show support for their struggle.

Dean Lawrence Kimberley

Both events have been jointly organised by West Papua Action Canterbury of which CWS is a member. Contact Brian Turner for more information: 021 129 4305



Advent in a time of Covid

As I prepare this message, the Scripture that resonates with me is Isaiah 9:2,

*'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death,
a light has dawned.'*

We approach this Christmas season under the long and dark shadow of COVID and an intense focus on the growing threat of climate change. And, Pope Francis, reminds us that these dark clouds, these shadows of death, are but the tip of the iceberg. The following quote is from his book *"Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future"* - surely a great title for an Advent series this year:

"The Covid crisis may seem special because it affects most of humankind. But it is only special in how visible it is. There are a thousand other crises that are just as dire but are just far enough from some of us that we can act as if they don't exist. Think, for example, of the wars scattered across different parts of the world; of the production and trade in weapons; of the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing poverty, hunger, and lack of opportunity; of climate change. These tragedies may seem distant from us, as part of the daily news that, sadly, fails to move us to change our agendas and priorities. But like the Covid crisis, they affect the whole of humanity."

In terms of the Isaiah passage, what is it that lights the pathway to a better future? We Christians believe that light comes to us in the Christ child. And we light the four-fold wreath of love, peace, joy and hope to remind us of this.

This year the lighting of these candles is particularly loaded with meaning and relevance for us.

As we light the love candle, we ask ourselves hard questions about what does Jesus-like love mean at this time? What does it mean to die to self and follow Christ in this situation? Do we care for our neighbours with agape-like self-giving and sacrificial love?

As we light the peace candle, we ask ourselves searching questions about how we maintain unity and a welcoming posture to all when there are deep divisions in society and our churches between the vast majority of vaccinated and the small minority of unvaccinated. May we avoid the labelling, demonising and summary dismissal of those we disagree with and instead find creative ways to live together in peace. In this, I am reminded of a passage similar to the one in Isaiah where Zechariah talks of his son John the Baptist in terms of:

*'Shining light on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.'* (Luke 1: 79)

As we light the joy candle, we ask ourselves where is the joy in times of such weeping and anxiety? This is a difficult one indeed! There are superficial answers, for example, the joy some have found in the slowing down and appreciating of beauty and relationship-building that has come from the lockdowns. But there is also the deeper resilient joy in the Lord, regardless of circumstance, that is so profoundly modelled for us in the writings of Paul.

And perhaps lighting the hope candle is the most powerful and significant of all. We light it with the conviction that not only is there a God, but the birth of Jesus speaks of a God who cares to the point of sacrificial engagement with our broken human condition. As we recall the powerful biblical theme of remembering, we remember that again and again, when all seems darkness and loss, God did not abandon us, and we can confidently say with John ...

'In Jesus was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.' (John 1: 4-5)

Right Rev Hamish Galloway

Moderator Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

moderator@presbyterian.org.nz



The Bible reading for next week will be:

- Philippians 1: 3-11

Knox Directory

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Office hours:
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Visit our website
www.knoxchurch.co.nz



website

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Director of the Knox Singers:
Gabriel Baird,
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Pastoral Assistant: Jan Harland
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Keeping in Touch

Please help us get acquainted with you by filling in this form
and putting it in the offering bag.

Name:

Contact details