



KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

Order of Service

14 December, 2025



TOWARDS THE NEW WORLD

ADVENT 3

THE FLOURISHING

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 city side of the sanctuary.

The sermon and prayers in this service were written by Matthew with no styling assistance by Artificial Intelligence.

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.

When we pray the Lord's Prayer, you are welcome to use the language that is most natural to you.

The Call to Worship:

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

JESUS, WHOSE LIFE ALREADY SEEPS INTO OUR LIFE;

JESUS, WHOSE SPIRIT PRESSES IN ON OUR TIMES;

JESUS, FOR WHOSE COMING EAGERLY WE WAIT.

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

MA IHOWA KOE E MANAAKI. GOD BLESS YOU.

Hymn:

Kingsfold

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)



1. When out of poverty is born
a dream that will not die,
a landless, weary folk find strength
to stand with heads held high,
it's then we learn from those who wait
to greet the promised day:
'The Lord is coming; don't lose heart,
be blest: prepare the way!'
2. When people wander far from God,
forget to share their bread,
they find their wealth an empty thing,
their spirits are not fed.
For only just and tender love
the hungry soul will stay.
And so God's prophets echo still:
'be blest: prepare the way!'
3. When God took flesh and came to earth,
the world turned upside down,
and in the strength of woman's faith
the Word of Life was born.
She knew that God would raise the low,
it pleased her to obey.
Rejoice with Mary in the call:
'be blest: prepare the way!'

Kathryn Galloway (b. 1952)

Prayer of Approach

"Be blessed; prepare the way."

Is this a gift from the God of confidence,
whose blessing flows
like some balm seeping to every corner,
soothing whatever was dry and dying?

BE BLESSED; PREPARE THE WAY.

"Be blessed; prepare the way."

Is this a call from the God of challenge?
One who calls ordinary people to do extraordinary things,
who fills our dreams with hope and anxiety
at all the things we know we need to do,
but fear we cannot do?

BE BLESSED; PREPARE THE WAY.

"Be blessed; prepare the way."
Is this an assurance from the God
who already is strengthening the hand,
straightening the knee,
fortifying the heart?
Is it a word from One who wants us to know
that that for which we wait
already, in grace, is given?
BE BLESSED; PREPARE THE WAY.

We people of God,
hear the blessing.
We hear the call,
and we keep a prayerful silence.

Silence

The prophet Isaiah will speak of human weakness:
of weak hands, feeble knees,
and fainting hearts.
He shall speak of blindness, deafness,
and so many things that challenge our life,
causing us to be less than we could be.
And maybe, this will cause us to 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.

The Theme Prayer:

As we journey still, O God,
towards the idea of the world made new,
Isaiah speaks to us again
through images of wilderness flourishing into life.
And Jesus sends news to a man of dying hope
that people are coming to life -
as if the kingdom already is upon us.

**ENABLE US, O GOD,
TO BE FED BY THESE ORACLES OF ENCOURAGEMENT,**

**THAT WE MIGHT FIND STRENGTH AND LIVELINESS
TO MOVE WITH THE SPIRIT'S TIDE,
AND HASTEN THE COMING OF THE NEW WORLD.**

We pray this in the name of Jesus,
who taught us to pray, together saying,

**E TO MATOU MATUA I TE RANGI,
KIA TAPU TOU INGOA.
KIA TAE MAI TOU RANGATIRATANGA.
KIA MEATIA TAU E PAI AI
KI RUNGA KI TE WHENUA
KIA RITE ANO KI TO TE RANGI.
HOMAI KI A MATOU AIANEI
HE TARO MA MATOU MO TENEI RA.
MURUA A MATOU HARA,
ME MATOU HOKI E MURU NEI
I O TE HUNGA E HARA ANA KI A MATOU.
AUA HOKI MATOU E KAWEA KIA WHAKAWAIA;
ENGARI WHAKAORANGIA MATOU I TE KINO:
NOU HOKI TE RANGATIRATANGA,
TE KAHA, ME TE KORORIA,
AKE AKE AKE.
AMINE.**

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.**

We exchange a sign of peace with one another.

The Advent Wreath

Looking towards God's new world, we ask in faith: "will God renew the earth?"

We remain seated to sing

Hymn:

Salisbury Street

Colin Gibson (1933-2022)



Bring in your new world, child of the sun,
God's shining Presence, bright in your essence,
Christmas begun;
bring to our sad world light and delight,
singing and laughter, hope as our shelter,
stars to our night.

Shirley Erena Murray (1931-2020)

The Candle of Flourishing

Recognizing many of the ways that human life has been shut down, the weak hands and feeble knees, the fearful hearts, blindness and deafness, we feel we may have become a people of wilderness and lack of life. Isaiah presents us with the vision of burning sand becoming a pool of water, and of a flower opening.

Lighting this candle, we affirm the singing and laughter, hope as our shelter, the abundant life promised by Jesus; and we look to the flourishing of creation through his "coming again".

The candle is lit

Bring in your new world, O God,
FOR WE WAIT IN HOPE.

The First Lesson:

Isaiah 35: 1-7

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

Reflection:

Creatures of a dry and desert land

Sermons are posted on the sermon page of our website. Hard copies are available before and after the service – ask the person at the door. A video of this sermon being practised is available from 10:00am today: https://youtu.be/kEmllkf6_xl

The Gospel Lesson: Matthew 11: 2-6

This is the gospel of Christ.

PRAISE TO CHRIST, THE WORD.

Music for Reflection: O Sapientia, from O Antiphon Preludes
Nico Muhly (b. 1981)

Reflection: Tell John about what we see

Hymn:

God of the poor

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Beauty for brokenness,
hope for despair,
God, in the suffering,
this is our prayer.
Bread for the children,
justice, joy, peace,
sunrise to sunset,
your reign increase. | 2. Shelter for fragile lives,
cures for their ills,
work for the craftsmen,
trade for their skills;
land for the dispossessed,
rights for the weak;
voices to plead the cause
of those who can't speak. |
|--|--|

*God of the poor,
friend of the weak,
give us compassion we pray;
melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain.
Come change our love
from a spark to a flame.*

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3. Refuge from cruel wars,
havens from fear,
cities for sanctuary,
freedoms to share,
peace to the killing-fields,
scorched earth to green;
Christ for the bitterness,
his cross for the pain. | 4. Rest for the ravaged earth,
oceans and streams,
plundered and poisoned,
our future, our dreams.
God, end our madness,
carelessness, greed;
make us content with
the things that we need.
<i>God of the poor . . .</i> |
|---|--|

5. Lighten our darkness,
breathe on this flame
until your justice burns
brightly again;
until the nations
learn of your ways,
seek your salvation
and bring you their praise.

*God of the poor,
friend of the weak,
give us compassion we pray;
melt our cold hearts,
let tears fall like rain.
Come change our love
from a spark to a flame.*

Graham Kendrick (b.1950)

Prayers for Others and Ourselves

led by Murray Winn

The Offering and Dedication

We stand for the dedication of the Offering

The hand is weak;

WE OFFER OUR CAPACITY TO STRENGTHEN.

The heart is fearful;

WE OFFER OUR ENCOURAGEMENT.

The stomach is empty;

WE OFFER THIS FOOD.

Bless all that is offered,

**FOR WE PRAY IT WILL GO TO RIGHT PLACES,
ACHIEVING GOOD THINGS,
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST,
AMEN.**

Notices

Hymn:

Christ, be our light

Bernadette Farrell (b. 1957)



1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Chorus:

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your Church
gathered today.

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us,
make us your living voice.

Chorus

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Chorus

4. Longing for shelter people are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

Chorus

5. Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

Chorus

Bernadette Farrell (b. 1957)

Benediction and Sung Amen

Postlude: Vom Himmel Hoch, da komm' ich her'
Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

Following the service, morning tea and coffee are served in the church.

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NOTICES

This Week: **14 December – 20 December**
Sunday 10.00am Morning Worship
 11.30am Shared Lunch in Lounge

Next Week: **21 December – 27 December**
Sunday 10.00am Morning Worship
Wednesday 11.15pm Christmas Eve Service
Thursday 10.00am Christmas Day Service

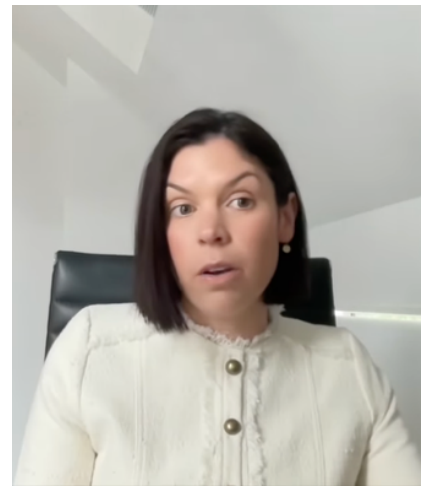
Christmas Baking - On Sunday 7th and 14th December, Christmas mince pies, quince jelly and a selection of cookies will be for sale in the Church foyer. Cash only. Any contribution towards butter etc. would also be welcome - see Rochelle Howley.

Sunday lunch in December: There will be no shared lunch at the B&W Café, Avonhead this month. The plan for 18 January is to **change venues** and meet for lunch at **Urban Eatery** in Barrington. Details to follow closer to the date.

Can you help: We need one or two volunteers to assist, from time to time, with flower arrangements for the Church. Please talk to Rochelle Howley / Jean Brouwer or contact the office.

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. For further information or options contact: office@knoxchurch.co.nz ph: 379 2456.

The Elephant



The Elephant, taking its title from the phrase "the elephant in the room", is a podcast series produced by Miriama Kamo and Mark Crysell. In this episode it asks "is New Zealand broken", and invites input from Dave Leteli (community advocate), Shamubeel Eaquad (economist) and Jacqui Maguire (psychologist). Near the end of the podcast, Jacqui describes "languishing" as the opposite state to "flourishing". Since we have been reflecting today on "flourishing", and since Advent is about cultivating the "new world", this podcast might be worth a watch.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwNXARXy-CY>

Flourishing - being fully alive



In his book subtitled "Reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus", the late Bishop Geoffrey Robinson reflected on the famous phrase of Irenaeus: "The glory of God is a human being fully alive". "This is a marvellous statement" he says, *"that is as strong today as it was when it was first spoken eighteen hundred years ago. It means that God does not find glory in millions of human beings bowing down in obedience and fear. God's glory is to be found in human beings who are fully alive. . . . This will involve the development of the whole person – the physical, intellectual, emotional, social, artistic, moral and spiritual being. . . [T]o be 'fully alive' involves recognising our [lives] as God's gifts, greeting them with wonder and gratitude, developing every [life] to its full potential and seeking to use it for the good of other people, recognising the [lives] of other people and being grateful for them too, avoiding the futile comparisons between others' talents and our own, and accepting that every talent is also a challenge and hence a responsibility."*

Kia ora, Talofa, Hello,

Seasons Shift, Spirits Soar: Spring's Grace Gives Way to Summer's Glory

As the days grow longer and the air fills with the fragrance of blooming gardens, we find ourselves in a beautiful moment of transition. From the gentle renewal of spring to the radiant warmth of summer. This season invites us to reflect on growth, gratitude, and the joy of community.

In 2025, New Zealand's economy began recovering from a prolonged recession, with inflation easing, interest rates falling, exports surging, and new investment initiatives boosting growth. However, this year still tests the resilience of many across Aotearoa. Families, youth, and older people are navigating a landscape marked by economic uncertainty and rising costs, child poverty, mental health and family hardship remains a pressing issue. Many older adults face housing insecurity and young people struggle to find stable employment and affordable living options.

Yet, in the face of these challenges, your parish communities continue to be a source of light and love. Through donation, pastoral care, and simple acts of kindness, you offer more than aid, you offer hope.

Thank you for your support of our work, your loyalty fuels a movement of change and compassion, and futures can be re-written. Our efforts are powered by your generosity and compassion. May this time of year bring light to your heart and peace to your spirit.

Meri Kirihimete me te Hape Nū Ia!



Please know you are welcome to contact me anytime to learn more about our services, donate or get involved in volunteering.

Ma te Atua koe e manaaki, e tiaki - God bless and protect you.

Rae - *Donor and Community Relations Coordinator*

Message From our CEOs **Strength in Connection**

Kia ora koutou,

Stories of resilience, care, and community

Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi
With your basket and my basket, the people will thrive.

Every day, we're reminded of the power of people coming together. Across the Upper South Island, we see whānau, older people, and young people finding new strength, confidence, and hope, often during some of life's toughest moments.

This year has brought plenty of change, especially in a challenging funding environment, but it has also shown the creativity and care that shine when communities pull together. Our teams continue to adapt, building strong relationships and finding new ways to ensure the right support is there, at the right time, for those who need it most.

Family Works continues to walk alongside families, helping parents, children, and young people find safety, connection, and hope through counselling, mentoring, and practical support. We see every day how care and encouragement can help whānau rebuild confidence, strengthen relationships, and move toward brighter futures.

Enliven brings people together through community programmes that nurture belonging, purpose, and friendship. From laughter shared over morning tea to creative activities and outings, older people are staying active, valued, and connected in ways that enrich their wellbeing.

Your kindness makes these stories possible. Together, we're creating stronger, more connected communities where everyone feels valued, supported, and empowered to build brighter futures. Thank you for walking beside us.

Ngā mihi,

Barry Helem - Tumu Whakarae Tauīwi / Co-CEO

and

Kim Manahi - Tumu Whakarae Māori / Co-CEO

Advent and Christmas 2025 - "Towards the new world"

21 Dec Nine Lessons and Carols



ADVENT 4

Following some well-worn readings that trace humanity's deep spiritual need from the beginning, we sing some favourite carols and enjoy hearing some brand new originals written especially for the occasion.



I have loved you for a long time

A candlelight service

11:15pm, Christmas Eve

Retiring offering for Christian World Service



Welcome to the new world

10:00am, Christmas Day

Retiring offering for Christian World Service



Project Esther

Women & their families

Kia ora Matthew,

Bronwyn has just done a delivery to us. Can you please pass onto the kind people of Knox how grateful we are to those who have put together the Christmas bags of gifts for the women referred to Project Esther.

We will enjoy giving them out to those who will benefit from the generosity, those in our (and other) emergency/temporary accommodation, those from the Corrections dept doing drug and alcohol reintegration, one navigating homelessness and sleeping in her car, and others. The gift bags are both kind and practical, we so appreciate the efforts.

God Bless, Ngā mihi nui

Daphne.

Manager Project Esther Trust



**Christian
World Service**
Celebrating 80 years

This Christmas
we are focusing
on helping our
global partners
to provide safe
water.

Give water Give life

"But let justice roll on like a river"
Amos 5:24

Over 1.4 million people in developing countries, mainly children,
die each year from diseases caused by lack of safe water for
drinking, for hygiene, and/or for sanitation.

World Health Organisation, 2024.

Photo: Christian World Service

DONATE NOW

www.cws.org.nz



One of the ways that Knox supports the Christian World Service Christmas Appeal is by taking a retiring offering at the end of our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.



The Bible readings for next week will be:

Genesis 3: 3-15

Isaiah 11: 1-9

Luke 2: 8-16

Genesis 22: 15-18

Luke 1: 26-38

Matthew 2: 1-11

Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

Luke 2: 1-7

John 1: 1-14

Knox Directory

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Keeping in Touch

Would you like to give our office your contact details so that we can send you our quarterly magazine and other Knox communications?

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