



# KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

## Order of Service 21 December 2025

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## NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

## 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 prayers in this service were written by Matthew with no styling assistance by Artificial Intelligence.

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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.

*We express our thanks to Jeremy and the Knox Singers, who have worked hard to assemble a good selection of anthems for today's service. And a special welcome to **Sarah McCracken, Amandine Guerin, Philippa Lodge and Naomi Hnat**, members of today's string quartet. Thank you for being with us this morning.*

### **A Note about the Service of Nine Lessons and Carols**

*In 1918, the Very Reverend Eric Milner-White, the Dean of the Chapel at King's College in Cambridge, shocked his congregation by introducing an innovation to the Chapel. It was a service called "The Nine Lessons with Carols". As the name suggests, the backbone of the service was a collection of nine bible readings, tracing the story of God's goodness from the fall of humanity, through the hope of the prophets, to the incarnation of God's Son, Jesus Christ. The lessons and carols were supported by anthems from the choir.*

*The fellows of King's College surprised themselves by responding well to the new liturgy, and it was decided to observe it again in 1919. It has been held every year since, and Churches all around the world have copied the format.*

**Organ Prelude:** Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme, BWV 654  
J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

## **The Greeting and Welcome**

### **The Notices**

#### **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 east,  
dangerous leader, born to be pleader,  
prophet and priest;  
come with your judgment, voice for the poor,  
born to collision God's righteous vision  
here at our door.

*Shirley Erena Murray (1931-2020)*

#### **The Candle of the Story Begun**

On the Sunday before Christmas, perhaps there is a sense of growing momentum in the people's longing for the coming of the new world. Perhaps we long to hear the story told of how the aching and longing of the ages was met as Christ was born - the dangerous leader, born to be pleader, prophet and priest, the One knocking on our door.

Lighting this candle, we affirm our conviction that ancient hopes were met faithfully in the life of Jesus, and we look forward to completing of all things through his "coming again".

*The candle is lit*

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

## The Opening Hymn:

Irby

H. J. Gauntlett (1805-1876)



*Verse 1 is sung by a soloist.*

*Verse 2 is sung by choir only.*

***The congregation stands and starts singing at verse 3***

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. <i>Once in royal David's city<br/>stood a lowly cattle-shed<br/>where a mother laid her baby<br/>in a manger for his bed:<br/>Mary was that mother mild,<br/>Jesus Christ her little child.</i></p>                        | <p>2. <i>He came down to earth from heaven<br/>who is God and Lord of all,<br/>and his shelter was a stable,<br/>and his cradle was a stall;<br/>with the poor and mean and lowly<br/>lived on earth our Saviour holy.</i></p> |
| <p>3. And our eyes at last shall see him,<br/>through his own redeeming love,<br/>for that child so dear and gentle<br/>is our Lord in heaven above;<br/>and he leads his children on<br/>to the place where he is gone.</p>     |  |
| <p>4. Not in that poor lowly stable,<br/>with the oxen standing by,<br/>we shall see him; but in heaven,<br/>set at God's right hand on high;<br/>when, like stars, his children crowned<br/>all in white shall wait around.</p> |  |

*C. F. Alexander (1818-1895)*

*We sit for*

## The Bidding Prayer

**... 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.**



**First Lesson:** Genesis 3: 3-15

**Carol:** Sans Day Carol  
John Rutter (b. 1945)

**Second Lesson:** Genesis 22: 15-18

*We stand to sing*

**Hymn:**

Puer Nobis

Piae Cantiones, 1582



1. Unto us is born a Son,  
king of quires supernal:  
see on earth his life begun,  
of lords the Lord eternal.
2. Christ, from heav'n descending low,  
comes on earth a stranger;  
ox and ass their owner know,  
be cradled in the manger.
3. This did Herod sore affray,  
and grievously bewilder,  
so he gave the word to slay,  
and slew the little childer.
4. Of his love and mercy mild  
this the Christmas story;  
and O that Mary's gentle Child  
might lead us up to glory.
5. O and A, and A and O,  
*cum cantibus in choro,*  
let our merry organ go,  
*benedicamus Domino.*

*Latin, 15th Century*

*translated Percy Dearmer (1867-1936)*

*We sit for*

**Third Lesson:** Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7

**Carol:** A Hymn to the Virgin  
Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

**Fourth Lesson:** Isaiah 11: 1-9

*We stand for*

**Hymn:**

Sussex Carol

English traditional melody



1. Above the peaks the angels sing,  
across the snow their voices ring,  
and musterers come riding down,  
to find the little country town  
where Christ is waiting to be born,  
our summer Child, this Christmas morn.
2. Across the hills the rata spread  
their signal fires of smokey red;  
by golden sands and whit'ning shell  
pohutukawa flames to tell  
that Christ is waiting to be born,  
our summer Child, this Christmas morn.
3. Beneath a Southern Cross of light,  
led by Pointers, through the night  
three travellers are hast'ning home  
from distant lands to find their own;  
for Christ is waiting to be born,  
our summer Child, this Christmas morn.
4. We too would sing that ancient song  
and join the busy, hurrying throng,  
and take the road once more to find  
that hallowed place in heart and mind  
where Christ is waiting to be born,  
our summer Child, this Christmas morn.

*Colin Gibson (1933-2022)*

*We sit for*

**Fifth Lesson:** Luke 1: 26-38

**Carol:** Silent Night  
arr. Dan Forrest (b. 1978)

**Sixth Lesson:** Luke 2: 1-7

*We stand for*

**Offertory Hymn:**

The First Noel

English traditional melody



1. The first Nowell the angel did say  
was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay,  
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep  
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.  
*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,  
born is the King of Israel!*
2. They lookèd up and saw a star,  
shining in the east, beyond them far;  
and to the earth it gave great light,  
and so it continued both day and night:  
*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell . . .*
3. Then let us all with one accord  
sing praises to our heav'nly Lord,  
that hath made heav'n and earth of naught,  
and with his blood salvation bought:  
*Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell . . .*

*English traditional carol, arranged by David Willcocks*

*We remain standing for*

**The Dedication of the Offering**

We make this offering in love, hope and praise.

**MAY GOD DIRECT ITS USE,  
MOVE US TO LIVE LIVES OF SERVICE,  
AND BLESS ALL PEOPLE THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON.  
AMEN.**

*We sit for*

**Seventh Lesson:** Luke 2: 8-16

**Carol:** The Three Kings  
Richard Oswin (b. 1957)

*Written by Richard for this service, this carol is being presented for the first time.*

**Eighth Lesson:** Matthew 2: 1-11

**Carol:** Tomorrow shall be my dancing day  
James Burt (b. 2006)

**Ninth Lesson:** John 1: 1-14

*We stand for*

**Hymn:**

Adeste Fideles

John Francis Wade (c.1711-1786)



1. O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant,  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold him  
born the king of angels;  
*O come, let us adore him . . .*  
*Christ the Lord!*

2. God of God,  
Light of light,  
lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;  
very God,  
begotten, not created:  
*O come, let us adore him . . .*  
*Christ the Lord!*

3. Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing all ye citizens of heaven above.  
'Glory to God,  
glory in the highest':  
*O come, let us adore him . . .*

*John Francis Wade (c.1711-1786)*

**Benediction and Sung Amen**

**Postlude:** In dulci Jubilo, BWV729  
J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

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



## NOTICES

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

**Next Week:**       **28 December – 3 January**  
Sunday           10.00am   Morning Worship

**Christmas Baking** - Thank you to all the butter fairies, those of you who donated towards ingredients and everyone who purchased Christmas Baking over the last two weeks. We raised a total of \$1,149.20 for church funds. **THANK YOU!**

**Shalom** - resuming on Sunday 25 January 2026. Richard Milne will be sharing about his experiences regarding the Camino de Santiago Trail he walked a few months ago. All welcome.

**Office Hours** - the office will close at noon on Tuesday 23 December, opening for the new year at 9:00am on Tuesday 6 January 2026.

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](mailto:office@knoxchurch.co.nz) ph: 379 2456.

## Christmas 2025 - Towards the new world



**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



## Statement from Canterbury Interfaith Society on the Bondi Tragedy



The Canterbury Interfaith Society expresses its deepest condolences and solidarity with all those affected by the recent tragedy in Bondi, Australia. Our hearts go out to the victims, their families, and the entire community during this time of profound grief. Such acts of violence remind us of the urgent need to foster compassion, understanding, and unity across all faiths and cultures. For us in Christchurch, these events strike painfully close to home. We still carry the memory of the mosque attacks in our own city. These tragedies underscore the importance of rejecting hatred and affirming the values of peace, respect, and human dignity.

We also acknowledge the extraordinary courage and bravery shown by the local fruit shop owner, identified by media as Ahmed al Ahmed, who disarmed one of the attackers. His selfless act is a powerful reminder that even in the darkest moments, humanity and heroism shine through.

As our Co-chair reminds us: **“God is One, Religion is One, and Mankind is One.”** These words reflect the essence of unity and shared humanity that we must uphold.

We call upon our communities to support one another, offer prayers for healing, and work collectively to ensure that love and empathy prevail over fear and division. In moments like these, let us reaffirm our shared commitment to building a world where every person feels safe and valued.

## Knox collected Christmas gifts for PILLARS during November.

PILLARS have sent us, in response, an example of what these gifts mean for some of the people they support.

*"Thank you S. (social worker) and Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou for all your support this Christmas. I am raising my four younger siblings after both our parents went to prison. Things have been very stressful this year, so this Christmas will be an important time for me and my siblings to come together and celebrate in our own way. Without having my own waka, it is tough to go out and do the shopping that everyone else gets to do for Christmas. It was so incredibly helpful to have Pillars support; the amazing Christmas kai and gifts dropped off to us so we could have things to put under our Christmas tree. Many thanks once again."*



**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](http://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:

- Matthew 2: 13-23
- Hebrews 2: 10-18

## 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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