

**KNOX CHURCH**

love faith outreach community justice

# **KNOX LIFE**

**December 2021**



## A Peace Community is willing to untangle something important.



In the cartoon, preparing his decorations for Christmas, Teddy is presented with a tangled mess of Christmas tree lights. He notes the problem posed by the tangle; he looks at it from a number of different angles; he tries to do the untangling. What will he manage to do? How will this go? The final frame has him, having just chucked his tangle into the Christmas tree as it is, deciding instead to drink a glass of wine and read a good book.

The untangling challenge, in this instance clearly seemed not to be worth it; and indeed some challenges aren't. One has to pick one's challenges intelligently. And part of intelligence is working out when daunting challenges are better let go or determined worthy of our effort.

This year, at Knox, we've had to change our life many times as new Covid realities presented themselves to us. We've changed the way we've worshipped, several times. We've engaged in lengthy conversations with our neighbours about how they are welcome in the buildings. We've made plans to do things that eventually we weren't able to do. It's left us a bit weary, I think.

This has not been peculiar to Knox. All our neighbours, friends and family have been doing the same. In the news, and also in my "walking

around our neighbourhood”, I’ve experienced a weariness, that in some quarters is mutating into an anger. This has been fed by ridiculous provocation from some social media sources. We are newly “cranky”. Maybe we can throw our lights into the Christmas tree, pour a drink and take up a good book.

Someone recently made the observation that following the European pandemics of the middle Ages, the end of the disease didn’t necessarily signal the end of the challenge. In fact, following the resolution of the disease, major shifts occurred in societies as social classes redistributed power, responded to long-standing grievances, sought some kind of social-structure resolution to what had been experienced. The experience of suffering and surviving something physical heralded a major social readjustment.

I’m interested in (maybe generally persuaded by) this observation. I suspect that the weariness *cum* anger we’re seeing just now may take quite a while for our society to process. We are church at a time when we’re going to need to find good ways of responding to the anger around us. Either that, or we could just throw the challenge into the Christmas tree, pour a drink and find a distracting book.

I mentioned, in my last “not in lockdown pastoral newsletter” (5 November), that I’d spent my study leave exploring issues of conflict and peace. I’ve got four seminars ready for us, to help us think more deeply about the commitment we articulated in our mission discernment process to be a community of peace. Pandemic issues, along with the way it seems to be shifting the way public discourse works, and the way we deal with people of differing opinion, convince me that thinking about peace, speaking about peace, modelling peace in our own life, are vital at this time.

The seminars will be held following worship on Sundays 20 and 27 February, and 6 and 13 March. I encourage you to consider attending the seminars. Genuinely, I think they will be an important part of our making a good contribution for peace to our country and world during a time of real need.

In the meantime, good luck untangling whatever you use to celebrate Christmas! May you find the wisdom to stick with the untangling when it’s appropriate, and when it’s more productive not to be burdened by that, may God lead you to a good book and a nice drink!

Arohanui,

Matthew.

## Two Links

In recent times, Matthew's attention was drawn to a few online posts.

Reflecting on his family's regular practice for Thanksgiving dinners, where the family begin by thinking it needs to add more to the Thanksgiving table to keep traditional requirements, Joshua Becker, of USA, notes that every Thanksgiving meal has tended to end with people feeling like they've had too much, and don't really want ever to eat anything more. He ponders consumerism's encouragement of us to always want more, and gently suggests that sometimes we "have enough".



His article "You already have enough: let it change your life" is at:

[https://www.becomingminimalist.com/you-have-enough/?fbclid=IwAR3OQmDIxjn4QoyXsqcPOj1sOYdZ3R8f67GwoOZO6qwQKqjI9YhG4\\_CBxTw](https://www.becomingminimalist.com/you-have-enough/?fbclid=IwAR3OQmDIxjn4QoyXsqcPOj1sOYdZ3R8f67GwoOZO6qwQKqjI9YhG4_CBxTw)

Sponsored by the Maclaurin Chapel of the University of Auckland, the New Zealand Christians in Science group, broadcast an interview with Dr Ashley Bloomfield on the topic "Faith and Anxiety in an Age of Pandemic". With questions from an online audience, it's quite long, but it's really interesting to get a glimpse not simply of the Director General of Health's faith, but also what sorts of questions the pandemic is causing other Christian people to ask. The link is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbEmdXe6dQw>

## Church Council Notes

The Knox Council was pleased to have Rev Hugh Perry acting as moderator for the September and October council meetings. With Matthew away on his study leave we were fortunate to have Hugh taking our Sunday services during that time as well as leading the council meetings and the weekly Bible Study group.

Matthew's studies centred on issues of peace and conflict and next year, during February and March, he plans to hold a series of seminars on

these topics. Matthew has also suggested that we set up a Public Issues group. Several people in the congregation have indicated interest in participating in such a group.

The restrictions imposed by Covid Protection measures have affected us all, and Knox has been operating very cautiously. The latest government systems will allow us to gradually relax a little. At a special council meeting held on 28 November it was decided that vaccine passes will be required for anyone attending Sunday services in the church but that anyone without a pass will be able to listen to the services relayed through to the hall. Sunday School has not been able to take place over the last few months but Council resolved to gift a book to each child to let them know that we are thinking of them.

Another change because of Covid restrictions was to the PCANZ General Assembly which had to be held digitally via Zoom and Helen Cannan, our Knox commissioner, reported to council that there were some problems with that method of meeting. Rev Hamish Galloway, currently the minister at the Cashmere Presbyterian Church, was inducted as Moderator of the General Assembly, and took “Empowering Generations” as his theme.

The moderator of the Alpine Presbytery, Rev Barry Ayers, has resigned and processes have begun to appoint a new moderator. Jennifer McKinnon continues to act as Knox’s Presbytery elder.

The Tangata Atū Motu Pacific Health Trust, which for some time has rented some of our upstairs rooms, wished to formally lease their space and this has now been approved by both Presbytery and the Church Property Trustees of the PCANZ. As TAT has increased their staff they are now using all of the available rooms and have worked with us to renovate and upgrade the area. Other hirers of Knox premises have been given clear information about their responsibilities under the Covid Protection regulations.

St Luke’s Anglican Church is no longer meeting in the Knox chapel. The church



has been officially closed and an informal final gathering to mark the closure was held in the Knox hall in October. We have enjoyed our relationship with St Luke's over the years in which they met at Knox.

Many events have been cancelled because of the pandemic but we were delighted to host a wonderful art exhibition by Sue Spigel and Galina Kim during October (*See pictures to right*). We were also able to open the church to the public one Sunday afternoon during Heritage Week.

*Janet Wilson*



## **The Berlin Wall comes to Ōtautahi Christchurch!!**

On 9th November 1989 the Berlin Wall fell, ending the division of the city since 1961. Who can forget that day! Thirty years later, two slabs of the dismantled structure, were installed back-to-back at the Cashel St end of the new Rauora Park in central Christchurch.



**A Section of the Wall in Berlin**

The painted slabs are 3.6 metres tall and weigh four tonnes each. They were gifted to Christchurch in 2016 by the German construction firm which had the job of dismantling the controversial barrier. They arrived here in 2017. The arrangement was brokered by Ministry of Culture and Heritage staff with

the assistance of SCAPE Public Art and Southbase Construction. Over the next year, both segments will be renewed with fresh artwork by local artists. This will be facilitated by Fiksate Studio and Gallery, which specialises in street and contemporary urban art.

The City Council Manager of Events and Arts, Lucy Blackmore, said in 2019, “The segments are symbolic of freedom and unity which are important themes for Christchurch. It’s exciting for this monument to be in place to mark the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November, 1989. It was a momentous time in history and it’s wonderful to have this physical reminder of what was a peaceful transition towards greater inclusiveness. This monument will resonate with local people and it will provide a focal point for a new public space in the central city.”



Alexandra Töniges, National German Adviser, reported that the “Deutsch in Christchurch” centre, in cooperation with Christchurch City Council and the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, held an official welcome of the Berlin Wall piece into Ōtautahi on 7 November in Rauora Park, 210 Cashel Street. The day’s programme included welcome speeches followed by the official unveiling of the Wall, live music, an exhibition with photographs and eyewitness accounts, and children’s entertainment. Snacks and drinks were also available. The artists who painted the Wall in Christchurch were present to share their perspectives and meet with attendees. The Berlin Wall in Christchurch is a great spot to visit!

*Bronwyn Wiltshire*

# **A COVID Reflection**

**by Rev Don Reekie**

We expect governments to do their best to protect the whole population. Some countries insist children be protected according to the collective wisdom. The United States “Land of the Free” does this for 4 diseases but not yet for covid!

Through our government, we have a duty of care to ensure and enforce proper professional responsibility to protect the vulnerable from danger of transmission. In schools and in medical environments the duty of care by the “we, the majority” must I think prevent teachers, carers and medical staff, including midwives, from practising their professions unless they are double vaccinated.

Pat Newman, head of Te Tai Tokerau Principal’s Association, said recently about teachers who won’t get vaxed, “Individual freedom is great, but it is not free. Individual freedom brings with it a cost and the cost is you have a social and moral responsibility to your community, to your families and to society. And this is what they have forgotten.”

We know that vaccination is the best known contributor to protecting individuals and populations against Covid-19. The Covid-19 vaccines, especially Pfizer, are more thoroughly verified than vaccines in previous history in their early decades.

If we can now vaccinate the whole population down to 5 years old to above 90%, then we will have put ourselves into a position where normal public health systems will maintain protection with minor levels of infection which are easily managed.

We have a government whose declared aim is to leave no one behind to be vulnerable to the virus’s deadly attacks. We know that is the wisest public health choice.

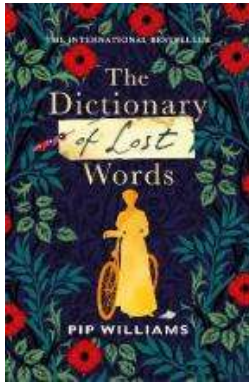
We should morally and compassionately combine our efforts to protect all. Some argue those who choose not to be vaccinated have chosen their path and its consequences for themselves and their children. Those who choose such alternative measures probably agree.

*(abridged)*

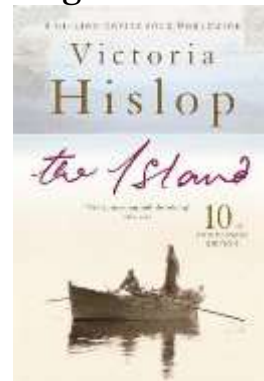


## Faith, Film and Fiction: Preview for 2022

As you know, we had somewhat of a recess in 2021. So here are some books that we will catch up with in 2022. I know that some people are keen to get a head start!



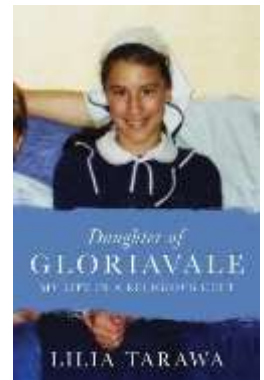
*The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams. For me, this was The Book of 2021. It tells of the development and first publication of The Oxford English Dictionary through the eyes and life of a young woman whose father is one of the team of lexicographers gathering words and creating the first Oxford dictionary. As a child, she discovers words that have been discarded, which leads her to realise that the dictionary has a male, middle-class orientation. The author is an experienced journalist, and the book is historically accurate and detailed.



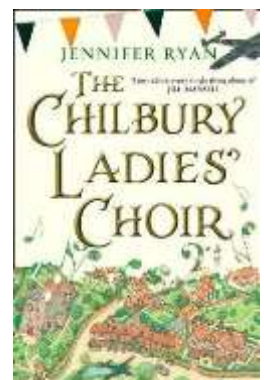
*The Island* by Victoria Hislop is set on the tiny, now-deserted island of Spinalonga, which was Greece's former leper colony. It is a gripping and interesting tale of family, tragedy, war and passion.



*See you in September* by Charity Norman. A young woman accepts an invitation to join a seemingly idyllic farming collective in a remote part of the North Island of New Zealand. Yes, there are similarities to certain cults we could think of, and the book clearly outlines the ways that cults use to attract people. I would also like to compare it with the inspiring book *Daughter of Gloriavale* by Lilia Tarawa, the harrowing autobiography of the granddaughter of its founder.

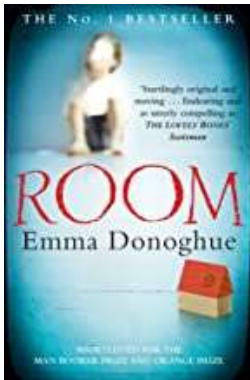


*The Chilbury Ladies' Choir* by Jennifer Ryan. Set in Kent starting in 1940, the church choir in the village of Chilbury has stopped because all the men are at war. The ladies of the choir decide to keep going. The book is uplifting, about survival, friendship and courage – and is based on a true story told to the author by her grandmother.





We will also reactivate *The Music Shop* by Rachel Joyce, with the film *Once*. And the latest book by Rachel Joyce, *Miss Benson's Beetle*, is one of the strangest and most intriguing books I have ever read. The author must be an amazing conversationalist at a dinner party!



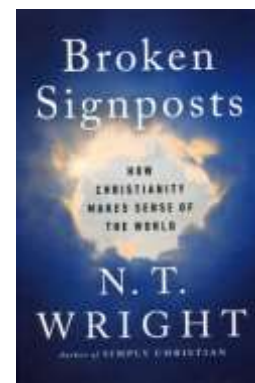
There is also *Room*, by Emma Donoghue, which has been made into a film. Happy Reading!!

The fabulous presentation by Rose Orbell about labyrinths planned for this year, was a victim of the lockdowns. It will become a Knox Café event in 2022. Watch this space!

*Bronwyn Wiltshire*

## Light for our Journey

John's Gospel is a wonderful guide to making sense of the world. There are books about the Bible, many of them very scholarly and demanding to read. Then there are books about the world we live in, many of them a bit daunting too, if only because the future looks difficult. Linking those two things together in our journey of faith can be hard to do, or to find good guides for. Well, here's one - *Broken Signposts: How Christianity makes sense of the world*, by N.T. Wright (HarperOne, 2020) - one of Britain's top biblical scholars. This has just been added to the Knox library.



One of the dominant themes of John's Gospel is the way in which Jesus constantly shows up his own Jewish tradition as falling short of its divine purpose. Jesus' response to that tradition will be replaced by his own divine fulfilment of what God intended - to the fury of the authorities. Wright takes this aspect of John's Gospel to work on the theme of broken signposts. We dream of and long for a better world. The traditions from

Moses were designed to deliver a world where divine love was reflected in society, but it never fully delivered. It offered only broken signposts.

Wright applies this idea to seven universal human longings, for justice, love, spirituality, beauty, freedom, truth, and power. These things in our human hands always come out short of our dreams. It is not a theme we would automatically think of with John's Gospel. Wright, however, makes the connections wonderfully in an enlightening book that helps us understand John's Gospel and our challenging faith journey in a complex and difficult world.

*Ken Booth*

## **COVID Traffic Light Protocols at Knox**

Kia Ora Knox Community,

The Knox Church Council has been discussing Knox's position around attendance at worship as we move to the 'traffic light' Covid-19 Protection Framework.

The new traffic light system is designed to allow those holding gatherings to provide a level of safety. Under the system, it is our intention that attendance at worship in the main church building will be for those vaccinated (and those who are not able to be vaccinated, e.g. children under 12).



In order to aid this, we will invite you to register your vaccination status with us. You can do that at church on a Sunday morning - we will have people on the doors with scanners, and they'll be able to help with advice about downloading your vaccination certificates. Or, if you prefer, you can ring Lynda at the office (Wednesday to Friday, 10:00am to noon), and she'll organize for someone to help you.

If you have decided not to be vaccinated we would love you to make contact with us (either Matthew, our minister, or Jean, our Health and Safety officer) to talk about how we can help you remain closely connected with the church and how we can care for you at this time. And

we will be offering alternative ways for you to worship with us - with an audio feed of the service piped through into the Knox Centre Hall where suitably distanced seating will be set up for unvaccinated people. We are offering this option, since the only legal alternative is to turn people away, and this does not sit well next to our commitment to inclusiveness.

We are happy to announce that with the reduced risk offered by the traffic light system, we now feel comfortable with singing again in church. We also feel it appropriate to begin celebrating communion (in a careful way) from January next year. We are not comfortable, however, about serving morning tea after the service just now, so we will not do that for the moment.

We are very open to feedback and conversation about all of this. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to talk.

For the Knox Church Council,

Janet Wilson, Council Clerk  
Matthew Jack, Minister  
Jean Brouwer, Health and Safety Officer

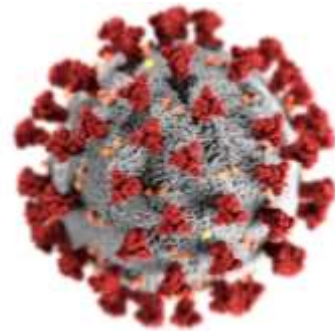
### **So, on Sundays:**

Augmenting our welcoming teams on the church doors, we will have some willing volunteers (who deserve our thanks) who will help clarify your vaccination status as you come to church. To do that clarification, they have a number of options. They can:

- scan any electronic proof of vaccination you might have in your phone
- scan any printed proof of vaccination you might have in your purse or pocket
- for the moment, sight any card issued at your second vaccination

The Traffic Light people will also have printed forms, which, once you've shown your vaccination status, you can fill in to allow us to enter you onto a confidential register that will enable us not to have to check you each subsequent week

Since scanning and explaining will probably be a bit time-consuming, we suggest you leave plenty of time to get through the door. And we thank you for being patient as we get used to this new way of gathering.



Also, since proof of vaccination becomes more important at this time, please let us know if you are having any difficulty working out how to get that proof. Many pharmacies are offering help with this, and a quick call to our office will result in a phone call back with some helpful advice.

## On the Swag

His body doubled  
under the pack  
that sprawls untidily  
on his old back  
the cold wet dead-beat  
plods up the track.

The cook peers out:  
oh, curse that old lag—  
here again  
with his clumsy swag  
made of a dirty old  
turnip-bag.

Bring him in, cook,  
from the cold level sleet:  
put silk on his body  
slippers on his feet;  
give him fire  
and bread and meat

Let the fruit be plucked  
and the cake be iced,  
the bed be snug  
and the wine be spiced  
for the old cove's night-cap  
for this is Christ.

*R.A.K. Mason*

# Coming Services and Events

## Advent 2021 - A Season of Letters

- 5 December, Advent 2: 10am Dear Philippi - "to the slowing ones"
- 12 December, Advent 3: 10am Dear Bethlehem - "to the little ones"
- 19 December, Advent 4: 10am Dear Theophilus - "to the wondering ones" - a service of Christmas music
- 24 December: Christmas Eve 11.15 pm: "Delivering the mail by hand" - a gentle meditative service (with contributions from the Knox Choir! It will be wonderful to have them back!)
- 25 December: Christmas Day 10 am "It's a parcel!"
- 26 December: Boxing Day. NO SERVICE AT KNOX

January 2022: Sunday services at 10.00 am as usual.

## Events

Sunday lunches together as usual on the third Sunday of the month at noon in the Urban Eatery Cafe, 92 Stourbridge Street, Barrington. Names may be put on the list at church, emailed to [<jannekenyuysink@gmail.com>](mailto:jannekenyuysink@gmail.com) or given to the Church office.

NB. The church office will be closed from Christmas until Monday 10 January.

**Cover Picture:** The pulpit fall for Advent wonderfully produced by Barbara and Rochelle Howley to grace our worship space.

The picture of the lectern fall is opposite.



# Knox Church Complex

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10.00-12.00

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Pastoral Assistant: Jan Harland, 027 356 0215

Knox Council Clerk: Janet Wilson, (03) 338 7203

Church Office Administrators: Jane & Lynda, (03) 379 2456

Visit us on the internet at: <http://www.knoxchurch.co.nz>

On Facebook search: Knox Church Christchurch.

