

KNØX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

KNOX LIFE

March 2022



Going for a Walk

Thinking about God, humanity and the world in general, I went for a walk around the neighbourhood.

The first eye-catcher was the bright yellow dahlia in a pot down my driveway. It's very tall; so tall in fact that I've had to use a stake to keep it upright. It had grown so tall that it had fallen over under its own height. I had boasted about how well it was doing the other week, only to be told by a clever person that its excessive height wasn't a sign of it doing well. Seemingly, when they aren't getting enough light, they grow in search of light, and sometimes fall over. I needed to move it into a place of greater light. It needed more light.



The second eye-catcher was a couple of painters on some scaffolding, painting the soffits of a house behind a tall fence. I'd never noticed the house before, probably because it's behind a tall fence; but there was something about two figures raised up high (heads above the parapet?) that drew my attention. The house has lovely leadlight windows and is obviously a well-cared-for place. I wondered who lives there, behind the very tall fence. Sometimes all we see is the fence.

The third eye-catcher was the empty play equipment in Erica Reserve. No child was playing on it. I remember when the play equipment in a reserve in my old neighbourhood was taped off as a Covid precaution. I remember seeing the emptiness back then and recalling the Cat Stevens' song "where do the children play?" It's a song about progress and the building of cities, and how sometimes we "develop" our way out of naturalness and the goodness of creation. Seeing this empty set of slides and swings, I found myself pondering the fact that some children in the world do indeed have nowhere to play.

The fourth eye-catcher was the council lawnmower operator taking care of some grass near the narrow Halliwell path that runs along the back of Proctor Street. As I came down the path, he paused his mowing until I had passed. I suppose it's a local government health and safety thing

about not operating machinery when members of the public are within short distance of the equipment. Nevertheless, I felt like some courtesy had been extended to me. One human being had created space for another.

The fifth eye-catcher was a greyhound on a lead. With its human, it was walking down the next bit of the Halliwell path towards me. When it became clear that the dog was not being troubled by the minister walking in the opposite direction, the dog's human said "good boy!" I replied "he **IS** a good boy". She said "he is; it's his first day; he's a foster dog; it's working out OK so far". A dog who needs care is receiving care, and is becoming a "good" dog. "When I needed a neighbour, were you there?"

I have seen many different houses on my short walk. There are some neighbourhoods where colour schemes are compulsory (under subdivision covenants, etc), but my neighbourhood isn't one of them. Mine has houses of different cladding, roof materials, styles, even degrees of tidiness and neglect. One or two of them seemed empty, as if waiting either for refurbishment or demolition. In some respects, part of what I walk through is "solid as houses"; other parts quickly come and go. Someone wrote "we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands".

Coming back to my own home, I see my tall yellow dahlia, and for a moment it looks a bit like a sunflower. I am reminded of an elderly Ukrainian woman I saw on the news. She was offering sunflower seeds to a young Russian soldier who had just invaded her neighbourhood. She invited him to put the seeds in his pocket, so that when he was dead and abandoned, sunflowers would grow from his body. The sunflower is the national flower of Ukraine.

Thinking about God, humanity and the world in general, I went for a walk around the neighbourhood.

Teach me, O God, to see the world as you do.

Arohanui,

Matthew.

Current Settings for Gathered Worship

On Sunday 27 February, near the end of the service, we had a wee congregational kōrero about how we wanted to manage Covid measures at Knox during a time of increasing community transmission. By the end of the conversation there seemed to be a general agreement that we wanted to continue meeting, rather than move our worship online. We did however decide that it was prudent for now to add a few extra security measures to our risk management.

We decided to suspend congregational singing for the moment and to re-install the ticks and crosses on the pews, as an encouragement to people to practise proper physical distancing. We have updated the Health and Safety notice we're wrapping around our orders of service, setting out clearly what measures we are taking to keep Knox open and safe.

For those who are becoming reluctant to attend in person, or those who required to isolate for a period, we are continuing to produce "Sermon Practice" each week, a video of Matthew practising the sermon set for the following Sunday. Links to these videos are posted each week on the website.

Church Council Notes

The meeting opened with Devotions. Matthew read us very timely Devotions from the newsletter of the Ohopo Presbyterian Church in Dunedin. [*Excerpts from the Devotions are printed below*] Based on readings from Ephesians and Colossians, the gist of the message was: We are given the gift of words and language. What do you plan to do with this gift?

- A letter of thanks was sent to the St Nicholas Charitable Trust, who had kindly donated us a vacuum cleaner when our one broke.
- A letter of congratulations will be sent to Bronwyn Hayward in recognition of the Supreme Award she has received at the annual Women of Influence ceremony. In 2021 she was also made a member of the New Zealand Order of Merit, and is a member of the core writing team for the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. There was also a feature article about Bronwyn in *The Press* on

Saturday 19 February. [*More on Bronwyn Hayward's work is included below*]

- Matthew's report was received, with details of his activities since 15 December.
- The Finance Committee report and the Treasurer's report were received. It was noted weekly donations had decreased but property income had increased. The cost of insurance has also increased significantly, due to higher replacement values of the Knox properties. It was noted that the book sales raised almost \$800 over the year.
- The Worship Committee reported on a wealth of services, events and Knox Cafés planned for this year. A new highlight for Easter will be the Maundy Thursday Tenebrae service at Knox, at which Ben Ashby and Matthew will read the entire Gospel of St. Mark, with refreshment time in the middle. The four Sunday Peace Studies seminars, which Matthew developed on his study leave last year, will be postponed until the Covid news is clearer later in the year.
- The Pastoral Committee reported that Jan Harland and Matthew were continuing contacts with people. There will be no morning tea or Communion until we go to Orange or Green.
- The Property Report noted that work on the flat upstairs is proceeding slowly, due to the current situation with contractors and supplies. Work will begin next week to replace the six noisy high lights in the church. It turns out that LED lights would in fact not be suitable as they are less durable than the current ones. Knox was able to purchase six future spares. Other venues are also reaching the same conclusions about the long-term unsuitability of LED lights. Due to the generous support of the Knox Annual Appeal, almost the entire cost of the lighting repairs and replacements was covered.
- A discussion and decision about continuing services in church, or live streaming, or using Matthew's prepared You Tube videos will be made at the March meeting. Matthew's Pastoral Newsletter of 6 February gives further details of the monitoring process.

Devotions - February 2022

This morning I thanked God for the gift of words and language. I got thinking about how one word can convey so much . . . I looked for some verses about language and words and there were three that really struck me:

- Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Eph 4:29
- But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Col 3:8
- Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. Col 4:6

Is it possible to achieve this? Not to allow emotion to dictate the words that would or could flow? Asking that question has now brought me to another: how often do we allow emotion to prompt the direction of conversation?

Yes, I want to reiterate my thanks to God for the gift of words. Words can open doors, can give solace, joy, hope, wisdom, and laughter. They can be used as a weapon if chosen, and lack of words can also be used as a weapon if chosen. God's gifts of words was given to us to use for good, in good faith or to show our faith in God. Next time I see you (any who actually read this) I plan to use the gift that was given to me, preferably to make you laugh or at least smile. What do you plan to do with this gift?

Meegan Cloughley (Opoho Presbyterian Church)

God be in my head, and in my understanding;
 God be in my eyes and in my looking;
 God be in my mouth and in my speaking;
 God be in my heart and in my thinking;
 God be at my end and at my departing.

More on Bronwyn Hayward's Work:

The Press:

10 February 2022: Bronwyn as Supreme Winner of the Women of Influence Award. [Click Here](#)

19 February 2022: Bronwyn as Influential Climate Advocate: [Click Here](#)

Radio New Zealand:

1 March 2022: Bronwyn interviewed on Morning Report in connection with the recent IPCC Report. [Click Here](#)

Recent publications:

- Hayward B. (2020) *Children, citizenship and environment*: (London: Routledge)

- Hayward, B. (2017) *Sea Change: Climate Politics and New Zealand*. (Wellington: BWB. out of print - try the Library).

Books and Films and TV Series: Some suggestions

In this time of Covid, when our Faith, Film and Fiction group is on hold, we still keep reading and viewing. Here are some more books, films and TV to try.

The one I found particularly interesting, enlightening and well written was Rosemary Riddell's memoir *To be fair: confessions of a District Court judge*. I don't own it but was able to borrow a library copy and can recommend it. (recommended by Vivienne Boyd)

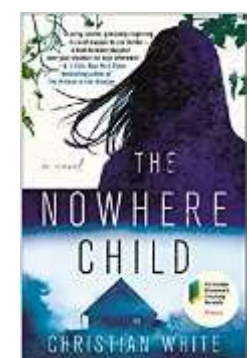
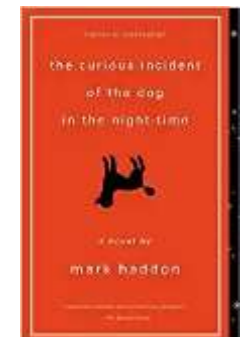
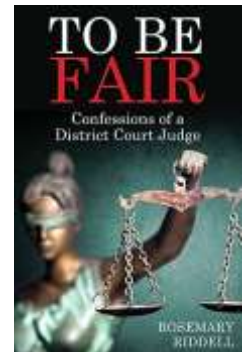
Russian at Heart: Sonechka's Story by Olga and John Hawkes is part biography and part autobiography, published here in Christchurch. A brilliant story! (recommended by Stephen Best)

Has anyone read *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon? First published in 2003, it is a brilliant novel, which was also adapted into a play presented by the Court Theatre. It is the story told by Christopher Boone, a fifteen year old with Asperger's Syndrome. Honest, funny and heart-breaking, it will resonate with any reader.

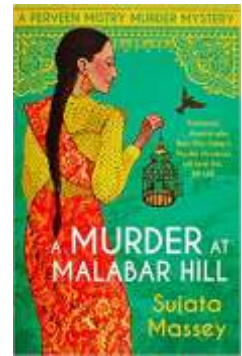
The Nowhere Child by Christian White, deals with the question "Who took Sammy Went?" Sammy was a two year old girl who was abducted from her family home in Kentucky, USA. Is she connected to photographer teacher Kim Leamy in Melbourne, Australia? This book deservedly won Victorian Premier's Literary Award in 2017.

A Murder at Malabar Hill by Sujata Massey is an outstanding murder mystery set in early twentieth century Bombay.

Perveen Mistry is a young Indian woman with a legal education from Oxford, who has joined her father's law firm, becoming one of the first female lawyers in India. The reader is treated to a fascinating immersion in Indian life and culture of the time, enhanced by insights from the

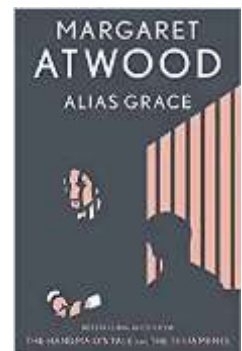
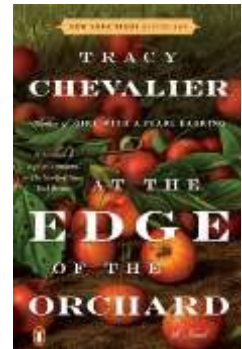


multicultural background of the author. The book won several international awards. Sequels are to follow!



Two books set in North America in the mid nineteenth century, both by highly regarded writers:

- *At the Edge of the Orchard* by Tracy Chevalier about a very poor family struggling in the Black Swamp of Ohio, and the son who goes to California to make a new life. Very interesting material about the giant sequoia trees, gold mining, and especially about apple trees. It turns out that all apple trees in Europe and North America can be traced back to a single graft which was brought from China!
- *Alias Grace* by Margaret Atwood, the very famous Canadian writer, is based around the true story of Grace Marks who was convicted of murder in 1834 at the age of sixteen, and was imprisoned for life. She was released twenty years later, her innocence based on observations by various doctors. This book was first published in 1996, and will soon be appearing as a series on Netflix.



“The Queen’s Gambit” (series of six episodes on Netflix). An excellent adaptation of the book by Walter Tevis that we looked at last year.

“Belgravia” (TV series on TVNZ 1 On Demand). Highly recommended by several of my friends. Directed by Julian Fellowes, who was responsible for *Downton Abbey*, it is set in nineteenth century London, and has already been screening on TV One.

Happy reading and viewing!!

Bronwyn Wiltshire

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main . . . Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. *John Donne 1571-1631. English poet.*

Gems from the Writings of Matthew Fox

Julian of Norwich: Wisdom in a Time of Pandemic – and beyond. by Matthew Fox, (iUniverse, USA, 2020).

Introduction by Len Pierce

Rose Isbell has joined us at Knox in the last year. Her interest and studies have included women's spiritual traditions, woman mystics, including the Rhineland, 12th Century mystics Hildegard of Bingen, Mechtild of Magdeburgh and Mother Julian of Norwich in England.

Last week some of us joined her to talk about how we could give a lead to Knox's mission in reaching out to the people of our city who have lived through tumultuous times, suffering mental stress and trauma that brings us to focus on our decision to be a "Peace church" and to explore the resources of our traditions, especially the Wisdom tradition and the healing ministry of Jesus)

Review of Matthew Fox's Book, by Rose Isbell.

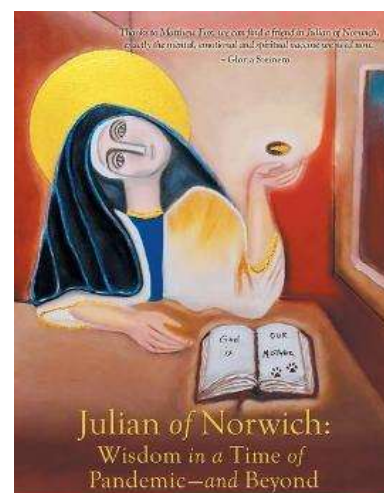
Julian's Time of Pandemic and Ours

Julian lived in Norwich, England, 1342-ca.1429. The plague first struck when she was 7 years old, and it returned in waves for the next 55 years. By the 1370s, when she wrote her first treatise, the population of England was cut in half. The bubonic plague was terrifying and ugly. One would typically be dead in three to four days. One could go to bed at night healthy and be dead in the morning!

Julian's response to the pandemic was grounded in a love of life and gratitude. Instead of running from death, she actually prayed to enter into it, and it is from that experience of death all around her and meditating on the crucifixion of Christ, that her visions arrived.

Facing the Darkness

Julian's lesson about a dark night of the soul is to face it for what it is. Julian urges us to move beyond fear of pain or suffering. She assures us that we are stronger than we think and that we can endure much that life



Matthew Fox
Foreword by Mirabai Starr

asks of us. We must also do the tasks at hand: wear the mask, bury the dead, provide food to the hungry, and care for the sick and the elderly.

Goodness, Joy and Awe

Julian's *Showings* went beyond death to what matters most – goodness, joy and awe. For her, recovering a sense of goodness is at the heart of combating suffering and evil. And when it is hard to see the goodness of things, and when one is mired in the darkness and chaos, it is all the more important to remember the goodness of things.

Julian instructs us to take delight and joy in life, and to respond “with reverence and humility”. “This holy awe is the experience we most deeply long for because it creates a wonderful sense of security, true faith, and certain hope.” “Holy awe cannot be separated from love ... You cannot have one without the other.”

Why Julian? Why Now?

Julian's book offers some valuable insights for our world today. Thanks to the women's movement, the ecology movement, the Black Lives Matter movement, and to the coronavirus and the facts of climate change, we are awakening to what we have done – and the price we have paid.

“Maybe, suggests Matthew Fox, we were not ready to hear from the creation mystics until now. Maybe we were not worthy. We had chosen a path of domination and destruction, of power over, of patriarchy, of rugged individualism and survival of the fittest.” Julian's teachings, such as “the fullness of joy is our birthright”, could assist us with the reinvention of our culture.

A Prophet for the Twenty-First Century

Matthew Fox concludes by saying that a pandemic is too important to waste, and this pandemic is here to wake us up. To what? To a “new normal”.

- One that honours the sacredness of the earth and all of its life forms.
- One that honours the divine feminine alongside a sacred masculine.
- One that honours the human body and its basic needs, along with those of the earth's body.

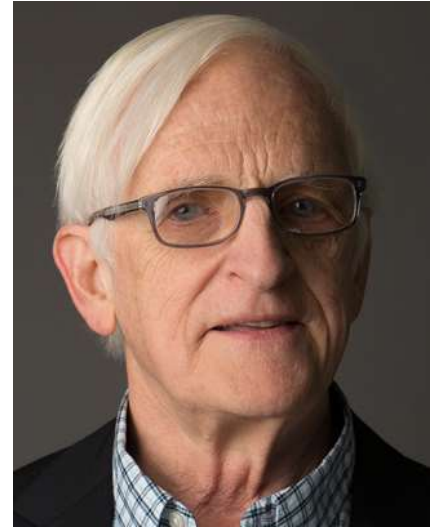
You can subscribe to Matthew Fox's *Daily Meditations* here:

<https://dailymeditationswithmatthewfox.org>

More on Matthew Fox from Len Pierce

Matthew Fox for forty years has worked to restore to us lost traditions of creation-centred spirituality. He emphasises that we live in a cosmos of beauty, brilliance and unfolding that is energized by our loving God.

Fox is now eighty and is still writing with vigour and intelligence. His latest book is his 35th and his voice of passion and sanity are a gift the universe has tossed up to help save the earth. He joins a chorus of voices calling humanity to a transformed consciousness before it is too late.



Although the next few weeks will see us “hunkering down” while Omicron sweeps through us, be assured there are some people thinking and praying to try to “break through” in mission discernment, a process we began last year.



As part of that reflective discernment, a useful tool is a labyrinth, a circle maze based on the labyrinth in Chartres Cathedral. Rose has one in the back courtyard of her home in Spreydon. St Luke’s have one on their site on the corner of Kilmore and Manchester Streets. They intend to restore it fully for public use once some other work has been done on the site.

The Gift

An artist to his very soul,
he stands before the easel,
his brush, like a wand,
creating magic on the canvas set before him.
He is oblivious to all else.
He works quickly - inspired -
having need for nothing.
Absorbed, excited,
his moments of such
are precious, treasured.

Who but he can understand these feelings,
measured out yet sometimes unattainable.

Does he have control over his creativity?
Do any of us?
Are we the artists or merely the instruments?

Does an unseen benefactor stand at our side
prompting, inspiring, urging us to explore
the realms of possibility
felt screaming within our soul?
How often are we silent enough
to hear that inner voice?
When we are, there is nothing else comparable.

There is no consistency to our creativity.
On our own we can try,
but is our production always relevant?
We know those moments of supreme satisfaction
only too well
They are not continuous.
They are gifts -
moments in our lives when we are blessed
with an experience of love.
When we gaze upon that gift,
do we give thanks to the Giver
or merely content ourselves
with pride in our achievement?

Soli Deo Gloria

Lorraine Quinn

Created from one essence, people are members of a
single body. Shall one member suffer pain, the rest shall
too. You who feel no sorrow for the distress of others
cannot be called a human being. *Saadi Shirazi, 13th
century Persian poet.*

Autumn Reflection

Autumn in Christchurch is a beautiful season. The beastly easterly drops away, the sun is not too hot and not too cold and the skies can be blue for hours on end. What's not to like?



Given the church's origins in the northern hemisphere, translating the gospel story down south provides some challenges. "See amidst the winter's snow" at Christmas made sense originally, but is impossible to sing here. The church has had quite a useful time providing some new Christmas music to match the season, but has done less well with Autumn. We associate

Easter with new life, but that is harder to link with the Autumn season as you rake up the dead leaves and the garden growth as it comes to an end as compost.

Autumn is a season of great beauty if you take in the exotic trees Europeans brought here. Who cannot but delight in the colours on display in Central Otago or around Christchurch at this time of year.

There is a powerful connection between Autumn and our faith journey. We reserve our celebrations for Easter Day, But that is only part of the story. In John's Gospel Jesus points out to his disciples when some Greek foreigners want to see him, that "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. . . . unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies, it bears much fruit"



(Jn 12:23f). It is only because Jesus is willing to die for love of the whole human family of God that new life in the Spirit of Christ is possible. That is why it is called Good Friday. Without Good Friday, Easter is meaningless. Autumn with its fading beauty and decay has its own place in our faith story.

Ken Booth

Fifteen exercises we'd be better off without

- Jumping on the bandwagon
- Wading through paperwork
- Running around in circles
- Pushing your luck
- Spinning your wheels
- Adding fuel to the fire
- Beating your head against the wall
- Climbing the walls
- Beating your own drum
- Dragging your heels
- Jumping to conclusions
- Grasping at straws
- Fishing for compliments
- Throwing your weight around
- Passing the buck

(From www.mikeysFunnies.com and quoted in a 2015 issue of the Alpine Presbytery Newsletter)

The first casualty of war is Truth.

The rest are mainly civilians.

Coming Services and Events

April 14 - Maundy Thursday 7pm - a reading of Mark's Gospel by Matthew Jack and Ben Ashby. Light refreshments halfway through.

April 15 - Good Friday service - 10am

April 17 - Easter Sunday - 10am

May 1 - Art Exhibition in the church - "Matthew's Gospel" by Peter Majende

May 8 - Art Exhibition in the church - "Matthew's Gospel" by Peter Majende

May 22 - Knox Cafe evening with Maxine Piarama from PILLARS and Daphne Marsden from Project Esther

NB

Matthew's four Peace Seminars, which were planned for February and March, will now take place at a later date.

Ben Ashby is the son of Andrew Ashby and Bronwyn Haywood and is a recent graduate of Toi Whakaari, the NZ Drama School. He has appeared in comedy series Wellington Paranormal as well as in several short films. His stage credits include One Night Only and Shakespeare at War, where he played the lead. Most recently he played Tim Shadbolt in the NZ drama The Panthers

Picture on Front Page. A statue on a roundabout on the outskirts of Derry, Northern Ireland.

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