



KNOX CHURCH

love faith outreach community justice

Pastoral Letter not during lockdown

27 January, 2023

Kia Ora Knox Community,

As is the Knox custom now, in the months when we don't have a "Knox Life", I send out a pastoral email newsletter.

The Previous Year

While, in many ways, 2022 was a difficult year, and there were many bad news stories, the BBC compiled some good news stories for 2022. A telescope enabled us to see things we'd never seen before. A child made a wooden bowl for charity. A man rescued children from a fire and made up with his girlfriend. Someone worked on a cancer cure, and someone else looked for a cure for alzheimers disease. In the midst of trouble, some good things happened. Here is the link to the broadcast:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/w3ct4m2w>

Also on the Radio - look out for your neighbours

Greg Partington can usually be found making ads for TV - and when tragedy struck his own life he turned to what he does best - making adverts - to try to make a difference and prevent the same thing happening to another family.

He's created an ad campaign to encourage us to say hello and periodically check in with the older members of our community. Are you keeping an eye on the people who live close to you?

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/afternoons/audio/2018872097/the-hello-project-to-help-out-older-neighbours>



Created for joy



I sometimes forget
that I was created for Joy.
My mind is too busy.
My Heart is too heavy
for me to remember
that I have been
called to dance
the Sacred dance of life.
I was created to smile
To Love
To be lifted up
And to lift others up.
O' Sacred One
Untangle my feet
from all that ensnares.
Free my soul.
That we might
Dance
and that our dancing
might be contagious.

~Hafiz

Dave Allen notices signs



Irish comedian, Dave Allen (1936-2005), spoke of a door he saw in a theatre in Manchester. On the outside of the door was a sign that said "this door is neither an exit nor an entrance and must be kept closed at all times". Dave wondered whether the door mightn't best be replaced by a wall.

He spoke also of a sign that says "have your ears pierced while you wait". Dave wondered, obviously, about not waiting while your ears were pierced.

When looking around a house, with the view of buying it, Dave was shown into a kitchen. The person showing him around the house said "this is the kitchen". No!

Are certain cultures better than others at "commandment signalling" and guilting people into good behaviour?

Many years ago, an Australian progressive theology collective to which I belonged thought it would be interesting to explore whether general public and parliamentary bad behaviour could be linked to the ebbing of discourse about commandments and "God is watching you". Of course, while captivated by the idea, we never got around to writing or publishing anything!

I recently heard a radio presentation about Japan's high rate of lost property return - and the role the interviewer argued was playing in the Japanese concept of people's lives being lived under the scrutiny of the "eye of society".

<https://www.bbc.com/reel/playlist/cultural-quirks?vpid=p0bk8s7x>

On the death of Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI

The then Pope Benedict XVI preached at St Patrick's Cathedral in New York in 2008, using the image of the church's stained glass windows to speak about how the world inside the church has colours not appreciated from the outside.



I would like to draw your attention to a few aspects of this beautiful structure which I think can serve as a starting point for a reflection on our particular vocations within the unity of the Mystical Body. The first has to do with the stained glass windows, which flood the interior with mystic light. From the outside, those windows are dark, heavy, even dreary. But once one enters the church, they suddenly come alive; reflecting the light passing through them, they reveal all their splendour. Many writers – here in America we can think of Nathaniel Hawthorne – have used the image of stained glass to illustrate the mystery of the Church herself. It is only from the inside, from the experience of faith and ecclesial life, that we see the Church as she truly is: flooded with grace, resplendent in beauty, adorned by the manifold gifts of the Spirit. It follows that we, who live the life of grace within the Church's communion, are called to draw all people into this mystery of light.

"This is no easy task in a world which can tend to look at the Church, like those stained glass windows, 'from the outside': a world which deeply senses a need for spirituality, yet finds it difficult to 'enter into' the mystery of the Church. Even for those of us within, the light of faith can be dimmed by routine, and the splendour of the Church obscured by the sins and weaknesses of her members. It can be dimmed too, by the obstacles encountered in a society which sometimes seems to have forgotten God and to resent even the most elementary demands of Christian morality. You, who have devoted your lives to bearing witness to the love of Christ and the building up of his Body, know from your daily contact with the world around us how tempting it is at times to give way to frustration, disappointment and even pessimism about the future. In a word, it is not always easy to see the light of the Spirit all about us, the splendour of the Risen Lord illuminating our lives and instilling renewed hope in his victory over the world (cf. Jn 16:33). Yet the word of God reminds us that, in faith, we see the heavens opened, and the grace of the Holy Spirit lighting up the Church and bringing sure hope to our world."

Knox's Christmas Tree

Thank you Bronwyn H for the gift of a Christmas tree to Knox. Year after year you provide us with one - and every year the tree is the best one ever!



Lent and Easter, 2023

The many forms of Humanity

Lent 1

26 February



Humanity falling

Readings:

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Matthew 4:1-11

Preliminary thoughts:

Who is that person in the chair, and why is he distressed?

Lent 2

5 March



Humanity travelling

A communion service

Readings:

John 3: 1-8

Genesis 12:1-4a

Preliminary thoughts:

Spiritually, could we stay put? And if not, to what extent will our journey have social implications?

Lent 3

12 March



Humanity thirsting and wondering

Readings:

Exodus 17:1-7

John 4:5-14

Preliminary thoughts:

As water flows from the rock, to save the people, how do we cope with wonder?

Lent 4

19 March



Humanity searching, while not knowing what it's looking for

Readings:

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Ephesians 5:8-14

Preliminary thoughts:

How, actually, do we know what we're looking for?

Lent 5

26 March



Humanity dying

Readings:

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Romans 8:6-11

Preliminary thoughts:

Dry bones, once symbolising death, come to life. Paul reflects on dying flesh and living spirit.

Palm Sunday

2 April



Humanity voicing its praise

Readings:

Matthew 21:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Preliminary thoughts:

In the midst of current events, the people are moved to sing for an outsider.

Tenebrae

6 April



Humanity not able to say what is needful

A communion service

Reading:
John 18:13-27

Preliminary thoughts:
The people close to home, particularly Peter, fail to speak when a defence might save the day.

Good Friday

7 April



Humanity telling lies and using Hate Speech

Reading:
Isaiah 53:7-9

Preliminary thoughts:
Meanwhile, others tell lies and incite hatred among the public - to what end? How will we judge them? Easter comes.

Easter Day

9 April



Humanity telling the greatest story

A communion service

Reading: Acts
10:34-43

Preliminary thoughts: Peter began to speak - the new gift of speaking into a new creation.

Sermon Practice

Some time ago, in response to the pandemic fact that some people felt a need to stay at home, rather than to be present onsite at Knox, Knox decided to provide weekly sermons via youtube. The low-tech videos (mostly recorded at Matthew's home) are available for about four weeks after the live sermons are preached at Knox. Feel free to share the videos via any of your social media connections. If you would like to receive weekly updates of the latest "Sermon Practice" videos, just let the office know.



Sunday 29 January, when fundamentalist people often fall into thinking that New Testament writings and the Hebrew scriptures can be pasted for all time onto our current world, what do we make of the call to see old issues in a new way? This sermon is something of an "apologetic" for a gay minister who feels called to serve in an old structure. <https://youtu.be/WNaFE8Lu5F8>

Sunday 22 January, what place do commandments play in our religious life? And can people ever grow into full human maturity without living under a self-depreciating failure of the "commandment life"? A suggestion that commandments provide a "vision" for humanity, and that grace and forgiveness are the best religious principles through which to understand the Christian Faith. <https://youtu.be/KStFn4fl62g>

Sunday 15 January, can love ever be understood as a disembodied abstraction, slightly classical and clean, or will it always involve the messiness of human beings? What does it mean to understand oneself as "I have been loved"? <https://youtu.be/SGJ0zaxMZBQ>

A Swim in the Sea

A friend lives in Point Chevalier, Auckland; and for many years has enjoyed walking from her house, down to the beach for a swim. For a bad, long time now, she's not been able to do so (for various things related to cancer and cancer's treatment). Her recent victorious trip to her local beach (not for a swim) made me think that I, also, ought to get myself down to my local beach for a swim. I'd not been in the salt water since 2019, when I was in Fiji for a family gathering.

My first attempt to visit the sea (for this article's purposes of which means New Brighton beach) found lots of wind and cool

temperatures. It also found a sign on the beach (put there by dutiful life-savers) telling me I could expect holes, rips, and stinging jellyfish. Needless to say, I decided not to swim, but came back home. The next day, I returned to the beach, finding much better conditions for swimming. I came out of the water feeling most happy for having been in there.

In my first parish (Blockhouse Bay), someone told me about the immense benefit to him (for his sobriety) in making sure that his bare feet trod on the earth quite regularly. Not quite in his same situation, I also find that it is good, sometimes, to get myself into the sea. It's good to immerse oneself in salty big-ness.

Please, because people drown in the sea (and 2023 is off to a very bad start with respect to drownings), always and only ever swim in between the flags! And also, why are large piles of "slash" killing twelve-year-olds in Gisborne?



Sorry WE
ARE closed TODAY.
DUE TO SHORT PEOPLE.
We will be Back on
WEDNES DAY.

Sorry for
imCONVENIENCE.
THANK YOU !!

Spicy
Avocado, Spicy mayo,
AND Tempura flakes + MISO sou
Sesame Seeds



\$ 8.99



Material for Knox Life

If you have any material you think might go well into the next edition of Knox Life, just send it to the office. The deadline for contributions is Monday 13 February.

Arohanui, Matthew.

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